

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 14 June 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Community Services  
**Title of Report:** On-site option for future car parking provision for users of the ice rink

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To review and seek approval of the favoured on-site option for future car parking provision for users of the Oxford Ice Rink when the Oxpens car park is closed permanently for redevelopment.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Enable an inclusive economy; Support thriving communities and Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Oxford Local Plan 2036

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Grant project approval</b> for option 1 (car parking at the front of the ice rink) being progressed on the basis of seeking to achieve around 25 spaces in total;</li> <li><b>Recommend to Council</b> to establish a budget of £580,000 within the Council's capital programme, profiled across 2024/25 and 2025/26, to fund the provision of new car parking at the front of the ice rink subject to OXWED's programme for closing the Oxpens car park, and <b>approve</b> the payback of previously spent feasibility funding of £46,000 into the feasibility budget; and</li> <li><b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities to finalise the scope of works, undertake the necessary procurements, and negotiate and enter into all contracts for the detailed design, construction works, and all associated professional services, for the new ice rink car park within the agreed budget.</li> </ol>

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Key Risks and Mitigation
Appendix 2	OIR Car Park Programme
Appendix 3	Initial Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Form

## Introduction and background

1. Cabinet, [on 10 August 2022](#), resolved to:
  - a) Release the requirement in the OxWED LLP Members Agreement with OxWED to make provision in their investment plan for parking at the ice rink.
  - b) Amend the OxWED LLP Member Agreement and/or enter into an easement to secure the access rights for car parking on site at the ice rink.
  - c) Progress options to provide the ice rink car parking, seeking to achieve around 25 spaces in total.
  - d) Progress further work required on car parking options is progressed through the Development Board process, using feasibility funding, to identify the best solution, noting that a further report will be brought to Cabinet on the final option chosen together with a recommendation to Council to allocate any additional funds as appropriate.

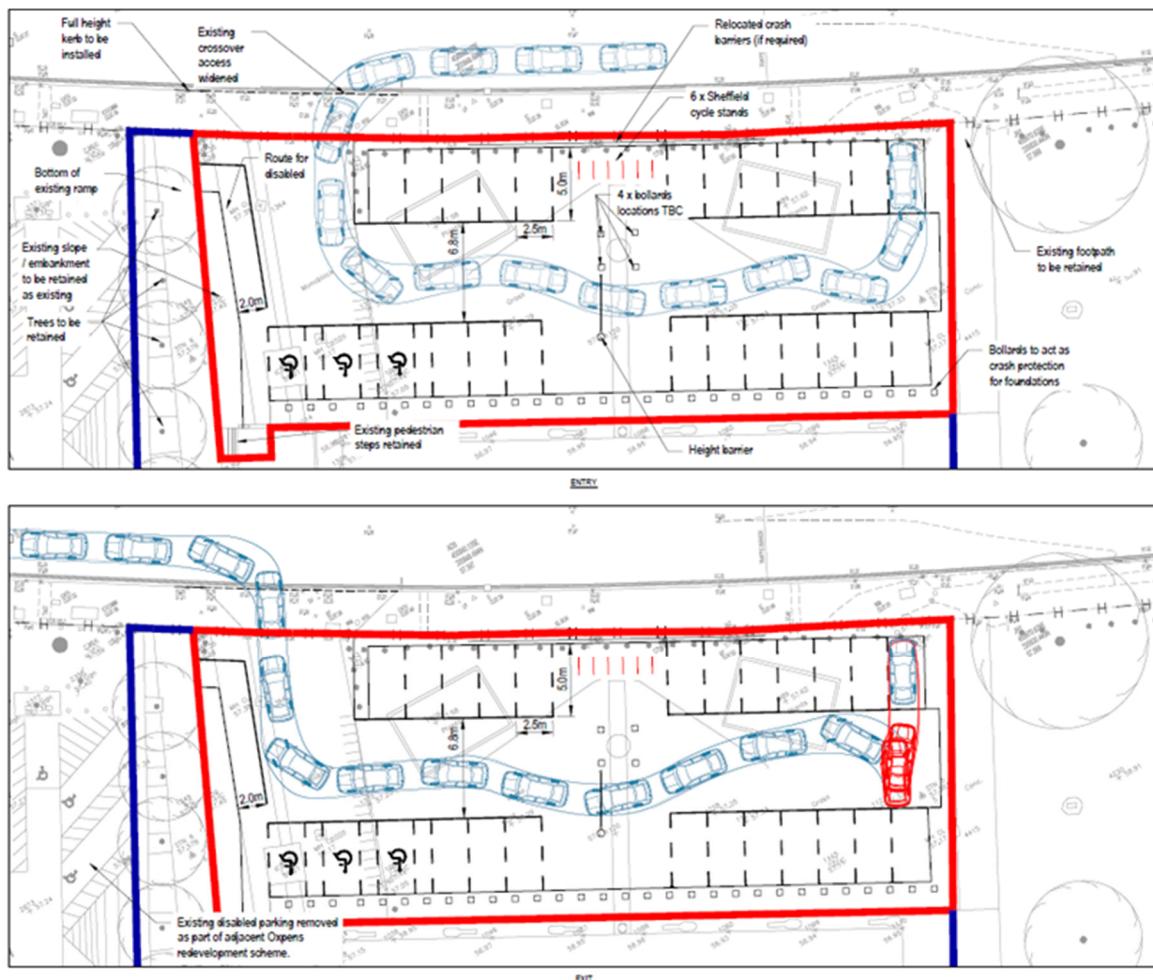
This cabinet report is the “further report” envisaged by the Cabinet Report of 10 August 2022, as Council Officers are now in a position to recommend the final option chosen.
2. The Oxpens public car park adjacent to the Oxford ice rink, is currently used by visitors to the ice rink, but the ice rink operator has no formal agreement with the City Council to use this car park.
3. There are proposals to redevelop the Oxpens car park as part of the redevelopment of the Oxpens site, which is an allocated site in the Local Plan. A planning application was submitted in December last year by OxWED.
4. The original agreement, made on the establishment of the OxWED scheme, had included a requirement from the Council, as an LLP Member, for the scheme to provide 50 car parking spaces relating to the operation of the ice rink. OxWED have sought a release from this requirement due to its inconsistency with the master plan, which seeks a car free scheme, and because the requirement for 50 car parking spaces would reduce the area available for new development on the site.
5. Council Officers have reviewed a number of options for parking provision either at the ice rink site or on the OxWED site, to ensure up to a total of 25 spaces are made available for use by the Oxford ice-rink.
6. Council Officers are keen to ensure that any scheme devised at the current time does not preclude any option for the future of the ice rink either on its current site, or on an adjacent site, as part of the OxWED development.
7. Onsite car parking is not required until the Oxpens car park closes and this date has not yet been confirmed. However, recent advice from OxWED suggests it would be prudent to assume a closure date of 1st April 2025 for estimating purposes.

8. Initially, 7 options were considered, including on-site and off-site parking provision for the ice-rink. These have now been reduced down to 2 preferred options, and further work has been undertaken on these, now renumbered options 1 & 2 (parking at the front of the ice rink building or at the side with the removal of the ramp) as illustrated on the plans set out below at paragraph 10 of this report.
9. The City Council's leisure centre operator contract with Fusion, is coming to an end in March 2024. The City Council has recently started the Tender process to procure a new operator from 1st April 2024. Council Officers will ensure that any changes or proposals that could impact the commercial viability of the Ice Rink are shared with potential Operators at the appropriate times.

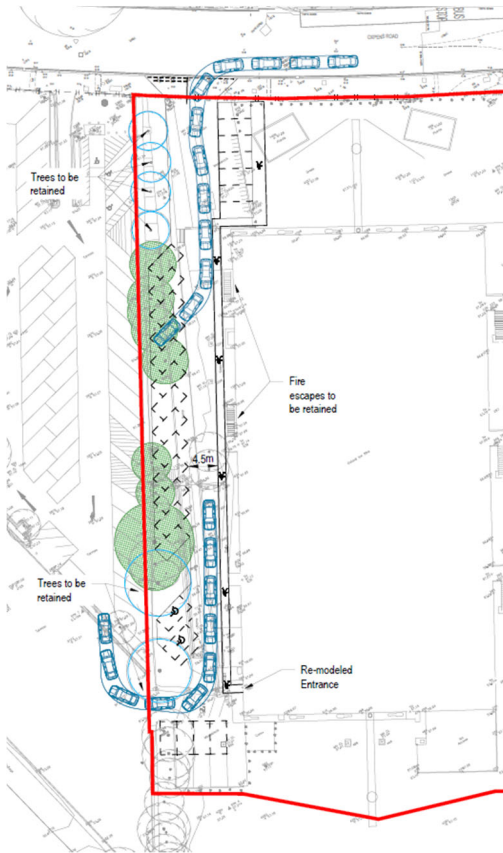
## Proposals and options

10. We have assessed the pro and cons of these two preferred options:

### Option 1 Parking at front of Ice rink (formerly option 2)



## Option 2 Ramp removal and parking to west of ice rink (formerly option 7)



11. This shows a preference for option 1 rather than option 2, for the following reasons:

- 1) Costs (estimated £580k for Option 1 and £980k for option 2)
- 2) Option 1 would result in less disruption to ice rink users because the works are on some relatively unused ground at the front with minimal access currently required.
- 3) Option 1 would not require the closure of the ice rink for internal works; option 2 involves reception being moved from 1st floor to ground, with external elevation changes requiring closure of the ice rink for internal works.
- 4) Exit from option 2 car park would discharge into the adjacent OxWED site and would likely have to pass through a construction site for the first couple of years. We would expect this to mean that various temporary route/s would be required and then a permanent route as construction of the OXWED development progresses.
- 5) Option 2 allows reversing cars to approach pedestrian access path to main reception.

12. The designs are not yet finalised and we are currently awaiting pre-app discussions with the LPA. Initial discussions have been undertaken with the County Council, as Highway Authority to discuss the access point to car park, intensification of use, coach drop-off and pick up points requested by users.

13. The recommended programme and strategy is shown in appendix 2, however, is dependent on when the OxWED car park will be closed. We are advising that a minimum of nine months is required before planned closure in order to mobilise to deliver the parking. This will allow us to finalise designs, update ecology reports, liaise with ODS, or other contractor, and undertake the work. As Planning permission lasts for three years, there is a case for getting this in place so that it can be implemented when required. Equally, we would not want to apply too early as the closure could be further away depending on the commercial decisions of OxWED.
14. The Council's Corporate Property team are continuing discussions with OxWED to ensure access to the rear of the ice rink plant is maintained for servicing and possible egress from option 2.
15. Option 1 is currently our preferred option due to it being substantially cheaper than option 2, less disruptive to the operation of the ice rink, unlikely to require closure of the ice rink (as option 2 would for circa 3 months) and having its own access/egress points to the highway. Option 2 would require the discharge through the OxWED site, which will likely be a construction site for many years, requiring possible alternative exit routes, and need legal agreements.
16. Following advice from OxWED that the Oxpens car park could close in April 2025, the programme has been updated to show the processes required for the installation of the new car parking before closure.
17. There are currently over 21 months between Cabinet date in June 2023 and possible closure in April 2025. Allowing for a 3 month build process to construct the car park, as shown on the programme, we currently have over a year to complete the planning process.

### **Financial implications**

18. The provision of more parking spaces on the ice rink site would also have a cost but would not require a land payment (as the City Council owns the ice rink site), and both options individually and cumulatively would be lower than requiring spaces on the Oxpens site.
19. A budget would still be required, for further internal costs involved with design progression, tendering, contract monitoring, preparation of further reports etc. and a construction budget. The current budget project estimates are £580,000 for the recommended option 1 (parking at the front). The cost of capital on £580,000 is approximately £34,800 per annum.
20. The current budget project estimate is £980,000 for option 2 (ramp removal and parking at side).
21. As the date of construction is not confirmed, it is difficult to assess the inflationary impacts and these are not allowed for in the above figures. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors have predicted a 22% increase in tender prices in the 5 years to 2026, which may now be looking a little undervalued. It would seem prudent to allow for an increase in the costs proposed by 20% between the cost plan date and Q2 of 2025, if the estimated completion date of March 2025 is assumed. This is the basis of the project estimate cost above. We must be aware

the construction date may be sometime beyond the financial year 2024/25, depending the OXWED decision to close the Oxpens car park.

22. It should be noted that no allowance has been made for the costs associated with closure of the ice rink. These will be minimal or nil for the recommended option 1. They would be significant for option 2, due to ramp removal, elevation changes and reception relocation from 1<sup>st</sup> to ground floor in option 2.
23. The new car parking will not be required until the Oxpens car park closes, which is not anticipated for around 2 years, but, could be longer. However, it will be necessary to implement a scheme before closure, to ensure the new parking provision is ready and available immediately following closure of the Oxpens car park. Assuming we use the OXWED suggested date of 01/04/2025 for closure of Oxpens car park, then the construction budget will be required in the financial year 2024/25.
24. Therefore, the construction spend is likely to take place in 2024/25 or possibly 2025/26, or later, if the OXWED prediction slips.
25. The initial feasibility budget was just over £46,000. It is anticipated that this figure will be expended by the date of Cabinet. An allowance has been made in the estimate to pay this back.
26. We anticipate future ongoing internal costs to be c£35,000 plus contingency to include planning fees, future PM time and allowances for other internal costs (legal, property, internal finance costs) and updated ecology report. This is on the basis we are able to proceed with option 1, without more intrusive investigations, the most likely scenario. This spend is not anticipated until after the June Cabinet, but most during 2023/24. The precise timing of the spend will be dependent on the agreed timings of the car park build, as outlined above.
27. The budget request in the recommendation is based on progressing option 1 and includes an allowance for inflation based on construction spend in 2024/25, contingency, the payback of previously spent feasibility funding (£46,000) into the feasibility budget and future internal spending.

## **Legal issues**

28. Under the terms of the lease of Oxpens Car Park, OxWED are obliged to give the City Council 3 months' notice of their intention to close the Oxpens Car Park, to allow the Council time to plan ahead and carry out works to secure the new car parking arrangements. Council Officers will work closely with OxWED to maintain an understanding of their programme to close the Oxpens car park, to minimise the risk of being unprepared to provide alternative parking.

## **Level of risk**

29. The Risk Register is attached as Appendix 1.
30. There is a risk that detailed design and planning process reveals new constraints or requirements that alter timescales or costings of parking at the ice rink. Planning pre-app will take place between publication of this report and the Cabinet meeting.
31. The development of the approach to accommodating the minimum level of parking required removes the risk of the ice rink being left without adequate parking affecting its programmes and activities.

## **Equalities impact**

32. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
33. In considering the minimum level of car parking required Communities have taken account of the role of the ice rink within the community, the range of users of the ice rink and those with protected characteristics. In providing parking on the site the parking design will incorporate blue badge spaces, as close to the entrance as feasible, in accordance with current guidance. Option 1 provides clarity of access for inclusion and spaces closest the entrance. However all options will be an improvement on the current arrangement for people needing access to blue badge spaces. This complies with the EQIA initial assessment. As part of establishing agreed options, a fuller EQIA will be undertaken.

## **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

34. During the early design stages, the design team were committed to addressing the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in all design. The greatest opportunity to reduce carbon happens at the early stages of design, when the “build less” principle was the focus. There was a long list of options. The selection of the parking option with the least amount of new construction, by building mostly on an existing parking area.
35. Out of the 2 favoured options, the option chosen does not impact on the existing trees to the west, some of which are substantial trees, allowing the carbon capture element of these trees to remain.
36. The proposal supports the council’s climate emergency commitments to pursue a zero carbon Oxford.

## **Conclusion**

37. The preferred option to progress is option 1, parking at the front, for the reasons outlined above.
38. There is a need to work closely with OxWED to maintain an understanding of their programme to close the Oxpens car park as a JV partner, to minimise the risk of the City Council being unprepared to provide alternative parking. The lease Agreement obliges OxWED to provide the Council with 3 months’ notice of the date on which the Oxpens Car Park will be closed, however in practice, due to the relationship between the parties it is likely that the Council will be made aware of the required closure date in advance of the legal notice period.
39. To reduce this risk, we should proceed with the preparation of tender documents by appointed consultants once planning permission is obtained to reduce the lead-in time to construction.

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<b>Background Papers:</b>
Report to Cabinet on 10 August 2022: <a href="#">Ice Rink Future Parking Provision</a>