

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 13 September 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Community Services  
**Title of Report:** The Leys Pools & Leisure Centre – Youth Hub

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	The project seeks to create a youth hub based in the currently under-utilised space at the Leys Pools & Leisure Centre. This would be made possible by utilising external funding for both capital (building works) and revenue (youth work). The project would be in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Chewe Munkonge Cabinet Member Leisure and Parks
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Support Thriving Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Thriving Communities Strategy and the Equality, Diversity and Strategy

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Grant project approval</b> to create a Youth Hub at Leys Pools and Leisure Centre;
2.	<b>Recommend to Council</b> the addition of £1,120,199 into the capital programme together with £223,907 into the revenue budget for delivery of the project; and
3.	<b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services / Section 151 officer, the Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks to award the construction contract to Oxford Direct Services Ltd subject to it being within budget and value for money.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Site Drawing
Appendix 2	Draft Activity Plan
Appendix 3	Risk Register
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment

## **Introduction and background**

1. An opportunity arose in 2022 to submit a funding application to an external funder. The objective of the fund is to create, expand and improve local youth facilities and their services to drive positive outcomes for young people, including improved mental and physical wellbeing, and skills for life and work.
2. The fund offered a capital element to improve facilities and a revenue element to help kick start youth activities. Confirmation has now been received from the funder (the name is currently embargoed) that the City Council in partnership with the County Council has been successful for £1,120,199 in capital and £223,907 in revenue.
3. We have been working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to explore this opportunity and we were successful in February 2023 to the funder of £26,000 for feasibility funding to help work up our bid. This enabled us to produce drawings, produce initial costings and undertake consultation with key statutory and non-statutory stakeholders.
4. The project will involve some remodelling and bringing to life of underutilised areas in the Leys Leisure centre. As well as recruitment of 5 hub staff to help drive activities with young people. The aims of the fund fit very strongly with the City Council's priorities and particularly our new Thriving Communities Strategy that was shaped by young people and developed with a city wide conversation over the past year [Thriving Communities Strategy 2023 27 Draft.pdf](#). It also aligns with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy | Oxford City Council](#).
5. The fund also strongly aligns to the County Council's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025 \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#). The strategic priority for children and young people at the County Council is to create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential. Within the Children and Young People's Plan the vision is 'Oxfordshire, a great place to grow up and have the opportunity to become everything you want to be' [Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2023](#)
6. Our work with the County Council, partners, local insight and young people identified the Leys as a key priority for this which aligned with the conditions of the funding. Our Youth Ambition programme and the County's work with young people in the area also contributed to this.
7. The Leys Profile highlighted some issues with community access and the quality of the spaces provided within the Leys Leisure Centre, as well as highlighting that there was not enough to do. Our work with young people in the area supported

these statements as well as the fact that there were some areas in the centre that were unused or under utilised.

8. As a result of this, the Leys Leisure Centre was identified as the preferred option that met all of the grant requirements. It also strategically aligns with the City Council's Leisure Futures work that is looking to move from a traditional leisure offer to Active Wellbeing, which includes colocation and more health services being offered, especially in the quieter day times.

### **Feasibility work**

9. The County Council and the City Council worked with young people during the feasibility stage to look at what might be possible at the site and developed three different options utilising different spaces and activities around the leisure centre. The key components of the development were;
  - Space where young people can meet up in groups that is flexible to meet young people's changing needs
  - Some private/quiet space
  - Digital / Music area
  - Community kitchen
  - Climbing wall
  - Art created by young people to bring the spaces alive
10. It was also important to ensure that the Youth Hub has good links into the other areas of the centre including access to swimming and gym, helping to promote wider and better usage of the facility.
11. Jessop and Cook architects and Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODSL) were then commissioned to work up these ideas into deliverable costed construction plans focusing on under utilised or non used spaces within the centre.
12. Three options with different spatial arrangements were produced and young people viewed these and were clear that they wanted something that isn't tucked away at the back of the centre, but is integral to it and front of house. In respect of this appendix 1 shows the preferred option that young people, City Council officers and the County Council are keen to take forward.
13. The option will mean that the existing Creche room will be moved to a different part of the site but will still be available on the ground floor. It does however mean that the small soft play area which is not very well used and past its useful life will not be reprovided.
14. This option has been costed by independent quantity surveyors and high level details are shown in the finance section of this report.

### **Youth Hub Activities**

15. Young people have helped co-create a programme of youth work activities within the hub this includes activities such as cooking, climbing, music, technology and

many others. This is likely to change and evolve as we move forward. A draft programme is shown in appendix 2.

16. The activity sessions will build on existing sessions held at the centre by the Youth Ambition team and will be supported by staff from the County council. To enable maximum impact and enable some detached work, we also applied for revenue funding to cover 4 youth workers and a hub coordinator. These posts will be recruited as City Council staff. The terms of funding will allow these posts to be recruited for a year, although we will explore options to extend these posts.
17. The aim is to make these posts sustainable in the longer term through working with new and existing partners and/or securing additional external funding opportunities. This could involve any future leisure operator or in-house alternative, who are all aware of this project. If funding cannot be secured then the project programme can flex down in accordance with funding and not place any pressure on the City or County Council's revenue streams.
18. Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council will be working together with young people to encourage and empower innovation within the project. We will also develop a clear set of outcomes/kpi's to help us monitor and maximise reach, impact and outcomes for young people with varying levels of need and prevent escalation of need within the community.

### **Consultation**

19. Young people will continue to be central to how the project and activity programmes develop over time and youth sessions will focus on capturing young people's voice.

### **Construction and Health and safety**

20. An external project manager will be recruited through the Fusion 21 procurement framework and they will manage and administer the construction contract supported by a client team within Community Services, Regeneration and Projects and Property Services. The project budget included funding to cover these elements.
21. We are proposing to contract with ODSL as our construction contractor. ODSL have been involved since the outset and have the necessary skills and experience for this type of construction work. We will be looking to secure a fixed cost contract price for these works.
22. The Construction, Design and Management Regulations will apply and all relevant responsibilities will be discharged in accordance with this.
23. The construction works are planned to start in the autumn of 2023 and finish in the spring of 2024. Where possible we will keep the other areas of the leisure centre open as the area under construction should be easy to contain. We have been in discussions with Fusion Lifestyle who operate the centre to enable this.

### **Carbon and Environmental**

24. The construction work is minor remodelling of areas within the leisure centre and not wider scale mechanical and electrical works. This will include painting, decoration and creating flexible space. We will look to recycle as much of the waste as we can and include elements such as improved LED lighting and similar.

## **Financial implications**

25. The capital costs for the construction contract with ODSL is up to a maximum of £800,000 which includes an inflation allocation, with the remaining funds covering client contingency (15%), surveys, internal services costs and professional services combined of £320,199. Totalling £1,120,199 in capital.
26. We will be looking to secure a fixed price contract with Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODSL).
27. We have secured £223,907 in revenue which covers an additional 4 youth workers and 1 hub coordinator to be employed by Oxford City Council. In line with paragraph 17 the model will promote sustainability but avoid any ongoing costs to the City and County Council.
28. We will ensure an independent quantity surveyor review of ODSL cost plan.

## **Legal issues**

29. Cabinet is empowered to give project approval for projects of £500,000 or over (£1,000,000 for contract awards) (4.5 (10) of the Constitution)
30. Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) is a wholly owned council company and meets the requirements of Regulation 12(1) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) commonly known as the "Teckal" exemption. As such contracts may be awarded to ODSL without the need to comply with the full requirements of the PCR 2015 (19.11 Constitution)
31. Where ODSL is being commissioned for a capital scheme, and the value of the contract is above £150,000 – up to or equal to £1,000,000. A detailed specification and an appropriate contract holding ODSL to account is required. The contract must be justified for state aid purposes as meeting the Market Economic Operator Principle ('MEOP'). The Economic transactions carried out by a public body do not confer an advantage on the other party, and therefore do not constitute illegal aid, if they are carried out in line with normal market conditions. This can be shown by; (i) benchmarking the contractual terms and price being proposed against contractual offers made by third parties contractors; and/or (ii) using the services of independent advisors commissioned by the Council such as an external QS to assess the commercial price or price range for the contract before the contract is let.
32. A funding agreement will need to be entered into. A legal review will be undertaken in relation to the terms and conditions. Contracts with a total contract value over £150,000 must be sealed (Part 21.3).
33. The Council will ensure it complies with Subsidy Control requirements (previous state aid law) and the constitution contract rules in awarding the contract to ODSL
34. The Council will ensure that it complies with procurement law and the Council's constitution rules (if applicable after meeting relevant thresholds) in awarding any contracts for works and services to any other suppliers for the delivery of this project
35. A partnership agreement will be entered into with the Oxfordshire County Council. This will highlight the principles of our working together, shared vision, delivery objectives and agreed KPI's.

## HR Issues

36. We have been successful for £223,907 in revenue to cover an additional 4 youth workers and 1 hub coordinator for one year to be employed by Oxford City Council. In line with paragraph 17 we will be looking at options to sustain these posts in the longer term without putting any pressure on City Council budgets. If we are unable to do this then the project can flex down its resource accordingly.

## Level of risk

37. A risk register has been attached. There are some risks that we will look to mitigate around the construction costs rising which are currently problematic in the industry. Mitigations such as independent quantity surveyor review, fixed cost contract with ODSL, regular cost plan meetings, value engineering, sufficient contingency and inflationary budgets are also included.

## Equalities impact

38. An equalities impact assessment has been created. The centre will be developed to ensure that it is more inclusive and the activity programme will expand to involve and target young people with disabilities.

## Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Implications

39. The opportunity to increase, provide new or refurbished facilities or different leisure pursuits, will give the opportunity for more residents to take part in physical activities. This will support improved outcomes for crime and disorder, whereby opportunities are taken up by young people instead of other less desirable activities.

## Conclusion

40. This is a very exciting opportunity for young people on the Leys and it could act as a springboard for further opportunities of this nature and strongly align to our leisure futures programme. In respect of this, we are asking cabinet to give project approval and to delegate to the relevant Director to enter a construction project contract with ODSL subject to this being within budget and showing value for money in comparison to an independent quantity surveyors pricing.

<b>Report author</b>	Hagan Lewisman
Job title	Active Communities Manager
Service area or department	Community Services
Telephone	01865 252706
e-mail	<a href="mailto:hlewisman@oxford.gov.uk">hlewisman@oxford.gov.uk</a>

**Background Papers:** None