



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 20 NOVEMBER 2024
Subject	LEISURE STRATEGIC OUTCOMES PLANNING MODEL
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects – Cllr Tim Sumner Email: tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Director of Place – Phil Martin Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Leisure Strategy Manager – Rachel Biles Email: rachel.biles@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the findings and recommendations proposed by consultants commissioned to develop a leisure based Strategic Outcomes Planning Model for the district.
Annexes	Annex A – Summary of service and facility interventions. Annex B – Full Strategic Outcomes Planning Model report.
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Endorse the findings of the consultants and approves the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model, including its recommended key interventions.2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects, to work in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders to establish the feasibility and funding sources for the projects and interventions identified and to prepare business cases, where opportunities arise to bring them forward for consideration.3. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects, to undertake a Leisure Management Options Appraisal to determine the most suitable delivery model, Contract scope and Contract terms for the Council owned leisure assets, when the current contract expires in

	July 2027 and allocate £15,000 from the 2025/26 leisure budget.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Key stakeholder consultation – Active Oxfordshire, Disability Services Oxfordshire County Council, ICE Centre, Integrated Care Board, Greenwich Leisure Limited, Publica Officers – Planning Policy, Healthy Communities and Climate change team. 2) Online community survey – 842 residents responses received. 3) Informal Executive. 4) Leisure and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the headline facility and service interventions that have been established through the development of a Leisure Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) for the district and provides a vision for future improvements to the Council's leisure and wellbeing services.
- 1.2 Executive is asked to endorse the findings and approve the SOPM for adoption and implementation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 12th July 2023, the Executive agreed to undertake a districtwide SOPM, to develop a clear strategic approach to ensure any local investment provides effective and sustainable physical activity and leisure opportunities for local communities in the long term.
- 2.2 Leisure and wellbeing services have historically operated on low margins to ensure inclusivity and accessibility to all sectors of the community. Although the pandemic, economic and budgetary pressures (cost of living crisis and rising utilities) have accelerated the need for Councils to adapt and re-evaluate its leisure and wellbeing services, so that they are delivering the local community needs, whilst contributing to broader strategic outcomes to deploy and utilise resources effectively.
- 2.3 In addition, the financial position that leisure operators are facing is having a knock-on effect in the services they provide, which could have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of residents and the future viability of the sector.
- 2.4 Taking into consideration all the points above and that the current Leisure Management Contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited is due to expire 31st July 2027, the Council needs to ensure it has a clear strategic direction, in terms of outcomes, contract scope and preferred operating model for its leisure facilities going forward.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 Leisure consultants Max Associates were commissioned to undertake the SOPM on behalf of the Council, utilising Sport England's guidance to develop the report. This guidance was launched in 2019, to support local authorities to make informed decisions about the development of capital projects and investment in Council owned leisure assets and services. The guidance was revised in 2021 to consider changes in the leisure sector post Covid-19.
- 3.2 The model follows a place-based approach, which builds on the Council's Built Sports Facilities Strategy (2021) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2022 – refreshed 2024). It also considers physical activity opportunities linked to active travel and open spaces, as leisure centres are not the only assets people use to be active.
- 3.3 The strategic outcomes approach is structured around four key stages.
 - a) Stage 1 Outcomes - Developing shared local outcome for your place.
 - b) Stage 2 Insight - Understand your community and your place.
 - c) Stage 3 Interventions - Identify how the outcomes can be delivered sustainably.
 - d) Stage 4 Commitment - Secure investment and commitment to outcome delivery.

- 3.4** Stage 1 involved the review of local and national strategies to identify common priorities and themes, along with stakeholder consultation with Members, Officers and external partners to find trends and links to themes. From stage 1 all the objectives and key messages were grouped into three priority strands:
- a. Good health for life.
 - b. Socially integrated communities.
 - c. Active Environments.
- 3.5** Stage 1 also identified that there is the ambition to increase collaboration amongst key stakeholders to develop joint initiatives, programmes and sharing networks, particularly focusing on those groups who face the greatest barriers to being active. Another key issue that emerged was the green agenda and the support for active travel and low carbon initiatives.
- 3.6** The next stage of the process is data insight and analysis to gain an understanding of the socio demographic context of the Council up to 2031. This includes a review of demographic profile, health profile, physical activity rates and active travel participation. It also incorporated a community survey which received 842 responses.
- 3.7** The research and intelligence gathered in stage 1 and 2 resulted in the establishment of interventions to deliver the outcomes sustainably – see Annex A. These interventions are aligned to the three themes established in stage 1 and are broken down into facility interventions, which will enable the Council to effectively deliver its strategic outcomes and service interventions, which aim to encourage target groups to be more active and should inform the future service delivery and priorities for leisure, including the leisure management contract.
- 3.8** The correct governance will be put in place to ensure the successful delivery of the SOPM which will include both the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Delivery of all the interventions will require partnership working and supporting business cases, and Officers will seek approval to progress as the opportunities arise.
- 3.9** The full SOPM report is included in Annex B.
- 3.10** As mentioned in 2.4, the SOPM forms the strategic direction to take the Council's leisure services forward, but a further piece of work is required to inform the contract scope and preferred operating model for its leisure facilities. Therefore, Officers are recommending that a management options appraisal is undertaken to explore the various delivery models, contract scope and term for the Council owned leisure facilities. This will help the Council to determine the most suitable management option to achieve financial sustainability.
- 3.11** Throughout the development of the SOPM regular briefings have been held with the Informal Executive and an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, established to oversee the process.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1** Members could choose not to accept the report and/or its recommendations. The implications of not adopting the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model, could disadvantage the

Council when bidding for future external funding and seeking developer contribution towards specific projects and interventions – further risks are also identified in section 7.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There will be financial implications for consultancy support to undertake the leisure management options appraisal. The Council will use a procurement framework to obtain a fee proposal for this piece of work. Using a framework mean that the consultants have already been through a series of due diligence check and demonstrate competitive fees.
- 5.2 It is request that the Council allocates funding of £15,000 for the options appraisal from the 2025/26 leisure budget.
- 5.3 The specific intervention recommendations set out in the SOPM will, if taken forward, have financial implications for the Council in the future. However, the SOPM will be used to provide evidence and support in securing external sources of grant funding and Section 106 contributions, which can be used to support individual business cases. If the SOPM is approved, further reports will be submitted to members identifying sources of funding for consideration and will request approval to progress the recommendations as opportunities arise.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.2 However, the SOPM is an important component of the wider evidence base supporting the Local Plan making process. This report together with other assessments, studies and strategies will help to ensure that future growth and planning policies accord with national policy including the Government's tests of 'soundness.'

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Failing to adopt the SOPM could disadvantage the Council when bidding for future external funding and seeking developer contributions, towards specific projects and schemes. It would also directly affect the Council's ability to keep the West Oxfordshire District Local Plan up to date.
- 7.2 Should the Council not undertake a leisure management options appraisal it may have a costly impact on the Council's finances, as we may not achieve value for money through the selected operating models. It would limit our understanding of the level of risk that the Council may be taking on, which could lead to unforeseen financial, service and operational impact and would ultimately decrease chances of achieving our desired outcomes.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 Any projects/ interventions emerging because of the SOPM will be assessed individually for equalities impact. This is reinforced under the priorities of the Corporate Plan, where a range of actions have been identified to improve equal access to quality services and opportunities across the district.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no climate change implication arising immediately from this report.
- 9.2 The specific interventions and projects emerging from the SOPM's recommendations will have climate change implications and opportunities for carbon reduction. This will be considered at the feasibility stage of each project and reported on at a later stage. To

maximise the opportunity for carbon reductions through individual interventions and projects, carbon reduction will be included as an objective from the start of the design process, and a realistic estimate of the quantified carbon reduction benefit will be made in each case.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)