Welcome to our exhibition of Options for the modernisation of East Oxford Community Centre
Please tell us your views

Oxford City Council recognises the importance of East Oxford Community Centre (EOCC) to the enrichment of community life in East Oxford and beyond. The condition of many of the EOCC buildings is now steadily deteriorating and they are no longer fit for purpose. The Council need to make improvements to the facilities to ensure the continued success of the centre.

The Council has appointed consultants to explore a range of refurbishment and development options with the aim of creating a facility which is:

- Modern, vibrant and welcoming
- Higher quality and sustainable
- Offers a better multifunctional capacity
- More appealing to a wide variety of groups and visitors
- Compliments existing design features.

Such a facility will benefit the community as a whole by:

- Increasing the number of people using the centre
- Improving cultural cohesion through broader appeal
- Lowering running costs and creating a sustainable facility.

This proposed investment builds on the success of the Council’s city-wide programme of significant investment in leisure and community facilities.

In this exhibition we present the options for your consideration.

We welcome your views at this early stage to ensure that the final proposal reflects what you want out of an improved centre.

Existing Facilities

The most prominent of these is the former St John’s National Boys’ School building (1860’s) which fronts onto Cowley Road and Princes Street. Other buildings on the site include either more recent additions to the school from the 1920’s through to the 1950’s. Many of the buildings are now in very poor condition. For example part of the East building is "condemned" and therefore remains empty and deteriorating. The fourth building suffers from repeated water ingress, due to a failing roof. Across the site improvements are needed to bring the facilities up to a modern standard.

Plan of EOCC site identifying the buildings with a brief description of their condition

Oxford City Council Consultation
30 September to 28 October 2016
To have your say online visit: www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation

Building a world-class city for everyone
As the first stage of this feasibility study, the Council offered tenants and regular clientele of EOCC the opportunity to attend drop-in sessions to express their views about the existing facility, and what they would like from a new facility.

Clear common theme regarding ‘desired improvements’ emerged in the feedback from this exercise.

Any improvement scheme must be self-funding, this means that the costs of the scheme need to be covered by Council raised money.

With this in mind the Council’s consultants undertook a feasibility study to analyse the existing EOCC facilities, and propose potential options for improvement. They also addressed how funds might be raised from development to help fund the improvements.

These options range from ‘do nothing’ to ‘wholesale redevelopment of the site’.

- ‘Do Nothing’ is not an option due to the current poor state of the buildings
- ‘Wholesale redevelopment’ (replacement of all the buildings with new facilities) is not affordable.

As a result, three main options were proposed as shown to the right and on panel 3.

### Option 1 Refurbishment
- Achieves some visual and practical benefits and fixes immediate repair work
- Fails to deliver objective of a more modern flexible community centre
- Ongoing running and maintenance costs remain fairly high

### Option 2 Major refurbishment and replacement of North Building (Block B)
- As for Option 1, with replacement of the currently very poor North building
- Fails to deliver objective of a more modern flexible community centre
- Ongoing running and maintenance costs for majority of site remain fairly high
- High cost to improve small part of the EOCC
Defining the options for modernising East Oxford Community Centre

Option 3
Major refurbishment and new two-story multi-function building

This option more fully responds to the needs of the community now and into the future, through providing:

- A purpose built multi-functional space, allowing for broader range of activities
- Consolidation of community usage and potential collaborations with for example, Film Oxford and EOGH
- Enhanced flexibility of the spaces
- Premises that are able to meet more modern standards
- Site layout that allows for future expansion and development of the centre
- Reduced running and maintenance costs
- Excludes the Advice Centre (highlighted as a potential development site) the services would be re provided in the new development.

Future Expansion

The illustrations right show how Option 3 is designed in such a way to allow further expansion of the facilities, if and when additional funds could be raised. This could include the provision of more buildings to increase capacity, a more modern welcoming entrance building and enhanced landscaping.

---

Building a world-class city for everyone
Funding Options

Summary of options, costs and funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Indicative costs</th>
<th>Potential budget available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Refurbishment</td>
<td>£850,000</td>
<td>£670,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Major refurbishment and replace North building (B block)</td>
<td>£1.145 million</td>
<td>£670,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Major refurbishment with new multi-functional building (two-storey)</td>
<td>£2.3 million to £2.9 million</td>
<td>£2 million to £2.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Option 1 shows that for £670,000 we are not able to tackle the issues the centre has. It would be throwing good money after bad and therefore it is not deemed a viable option.

Council Funding
The Council have identified a budget to invest in an improvement scheme which meets the objectives outlined on Panel 1 – creation of a modern, flexible, multi-purpose facility. However, this budget is limited to £670,000.

External Funding
The Council are exploring all relevant external funding sources. This includes heritage, arts and sports related funding opportunities. However, it is unlikely that significant funds would be forthcoming from these sources.

Capital Receipts
There is the potential to raise funds by relocating Film Oxford and the users of the games hall, both are poor quality buildings. Some activities could be relocated from outlying sites into improved facilities at EOCC, enabling those outlying sites to be developed for housing, generating a capital receipt towards the EOCC project budget.

The additional funds required to create a more significant improvement of facilities at EOCC could be realised by releasing the northern part of the EOCC site for residential development. This is the land currently occupied by the Chinese Advice Centre and the North building.

Community Fundraising
There is also the possibility that the local community have an appetite to consider a community fundraising appeal. This could contribute to the project budget and help enable the delivery of an option which is otherwise not financially viable.

Such an initiative would need to have a clear plan, objective and timescale to avoid prolonged uncertainty regarding securing improvements for EOCC.
As referred to under “Capital Receipts” there is the potential to raise significant capital to increase the project budget through residential development of surplus sites. Two sites identified are:
- East Oxford Games Hall, Collins Street
- Film Oxford, Catherine Street.
These two sites could possibly be released for development by moving their activities into a new modernised EOCC as Option 3. Initial discussions have been held with the main occupants of these properties. Both sites are well suited to residential development (whilst retaining the community garden at Catherine Street), and would provide much needed housing for the Oxford area. Residential development on these sites would need to fit in with the surrounding residential character of the area, and would include a mix of unit types from flats to family housing units, with gardens. The exact type and mix of units for each site would be determined in due course, and planning permission would then be sought.

The rationalisation of community facilities, consolidated at a new modernised EOCC would create benefits such as:
- Opportunities for collaborative working with other users at EOCC (e.g., Fusion Arts and Film Oxford), contributing to cultural cohesion
- Cost savings at East Oxford Games Hall which would otherwise require substantial costly refurbishment and yet still not meet modern standards.

Whilst the potential release of capital from these two sites could increase the project budget to approximately £1.8 million, it would still fall short of meeting the costs of Option 3.

In parallel the development of these two sites (and associated capital release) can only happen if EOCC is modernised in such a way as to provide suitable accommodation for Film Oxford and EOGH clientele to utilise. There needs, therefore, to be an additional source of funding to allow their current sites to be released for development.

Additional Funding Required
This additional funding could be achieved by releasing the northern part of the EOCC site for residential development as shown in the plan.

Option 3 meets our objectives
By releasing the two outlying sites and part of the EOCC site for residential development sufficient funds could be available to deliver Option 3.

The Council consider that Option 3 is the option that best meets the objectives of all interested parties.

We propose that we focus on Option 3 and develop this in more detail. Then we would seek planning permission for the scheme, together with the enabling residential development. We will continue to liaise with all interested parties and the community to ensure we create a successful modern community centre.

Potential next steps
Indicative timeline
- Public Consultation: October 2016
- Scheme Development: November 2016 to February 2017
- Planning Application: March 2017
- Planning Decision: July 2017
- Start on Site: Summer 2017
- Scheme completion: ready to occupy late 2018

Building a world-class city for everyone

Oxford City Council Consultation
30 September to 28 October 2016
To have your say online visit: www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation