Oakham Sports Facilities

Feasibility & Redevelopment Strategy

April 2026 v1.2

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Oakham Sports Facilities: Feasibility & Redevelopment Strategy

1. Strategic Rationale

Oakham Town Council (OTC) is reviewing the long-term future of the Tennis and Bowls Club buildings. Both facilities are ageing, increasingly costly to maintain, and no longer meet modern participation standards required for safe, inclusive and sustainable sports provision. Continuing to operate sub-standard facilities presents a growing statutory and safeguarding risk for the Council as landowner.

2. Survey Findings (July 2025)

Surveyor reports completed in July 2025 identified significant works required to maintain and modernise both buildings. Bringing them up to modern participation standards would require £95,000, with a further £46,500 of essential repairs needed simply to keep the Tennis Club building operational. OTC holds only £15,000 in earmarked reserves for all three of its public buildings, leaving a substantial unfunded liability

3. Why Immediate Repairs Are Not the Preferred Approach

Although the Council could use CIL or seek borrowing approval to undertake repairs, this would not address long-term suitability, statutory compliance, or the wider strategic issues associated with the ageing buildings. Using CIL would also jeopardise the Victoria Hall refurbishment, a separate priority project. Short-term repairs would commit resources without resolving underlying liabilities or future-proofing provision.

4. UKSPF Funding Opportunity

OTC has access to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) support, which provides a time-limited opportunity to undertake feasibility, valuation and site-search work at minimal cost to the local taxpayer. Updated national guidance requires all expenditure to be defrayed by September 2026, creating a narrow but viable window for commissioning Phase 1 work following the Council's Apri 2026 decision point. No successor programme is expected, making this a one-off opportunity to secure external funding for feasibility work.

5. Potential Access to RCC Land

OTC is in discussion with Rutland County Council regarding the possible transfer of several green spaces. While suitability is not yet known, including these sites in the feasibility process broadens the evidence base and may reduce future acquisition costs if any prove viable

6. Strategic Importance of the Existing Site

The current site is a strategically important location within Oakham. Redevelopment has the potential to deliver wider community benefit and support modern, compliant sports provision. Any future decisions must be informed by robust evidence on building condition, statutory responsibilities and long-term asset management considerations.

7. Procurement Strategy

The procurement strategy sets out how OTC will commission the specialist services required for:

- Phase 1: Feasibility, site search, valuation and financial appraisal

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- Phase 2: Concept design and early costing
  It ensures compliance with Financial Regulations, value for money, and effective use of UKSPF funding

8. Procurement Objectives

- Secure specialist expertise
- Ensure value for money through phased commissioning
- Avoid premature expenditure
- Maintain governance and auditability
- Support any future Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) borrowing application
- Use £25,000 of UKSPF funding to initiate Phase 1

9. Use of UKSPF Funding

£25,000 of UKSPF will fund Phase 1, covering:

- Sports facility feasibility
- Site search and landowner engagement
- Planning feasibility
- RICS Red Book valuation
- Development appraisal
- Initial legal review
  This approach minimises local financial impact and strengthens the Council's evidence base

10. Phase 1 Procurement

Phase 1 will establish whether relocation is viable. Commissioned work will include:

- Sports facility feasibility
- Site search
- Planning feasibility
- Light-touch legal input
- RICS valuation
- Development appraisal
  Procurement will be via competitive quotes or direct award where continuity is essential .

11. Phase 2 Procurement

If Phase 1 confirms viability, Phase 2 will commission:

- Architect (concept designs)
- Quantity Surveyor (cost estimates)

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- Planning consultant (pre-application)
- Light-touch project management
  Procurement will again use quotes or direct award to maintain continuity and avoid duplication

12. Direct Award Procurement Statement

Supplier: *Sports Land Solutions Ltd*

Scope: *Sports facility feasibility, recreational land agency, site identification, landowner engagement, and planning feasibility.*

12.1 Legal and Regulatory Basis for Direct Award

A direct award is permissible under OTC's Financial Regulations where the specialist nature of the services, the limited number of suitable providers, and the need for continuity make competitive tendering disproportionate. The proposed commission falls within this category. The work requires an integrated combination of sports facility feasibility, recreational land agency, site identification and early planning feasibility services that must be delivered coherently to ensure accuracy, auditability and compliance.

12.2 Market Assessment and Provider Availability

A review of the market confirms that while several firms offer individual components of the required work, very few can deliver the full integrated scope within a single commission. Splitting the work across multiple providers would introduce coordination risk, inconsistent assumptions, duplicated effort and extended timescales. The market is therefore considered narrow, and a direct award is the most proportionate route to securing the necessary expertise.

12.3 Proportionality and Value for Money

The commission is time-limited, tightly scoped and supported by external UKSPF funding. Running a full competitive process would add delay without meaningfully expanding the pool of viable suppliers. A direct award is therefore proportionate to the scale and nature of the requirement and represents the most efficient means of securing specialist support while maintaining value for money.

12.4 Continuity, Risk Reduction and Programme Requirements

[redacted] is able to deliver all required elements within a single commission, ensuring continuity across feasibility, land search, valuation and planning inputs. This reduces the risk of fragmented reporting and supports a coherent evidence base for future decision-making. Given the time-limited UKSPF defrayal deadline, avoiding unnecessary procurement delay is essential to prevent programme risk and potential loss of external funding.

12.5 Compliance and Audit Assurance

The direct award approach complies with OTC's Financial Regulations and is supported by clear justification based on market limitations, proportionality, continuity and risk management. This statement will be retained in the audit file as evidence of due diligence, lawful procurement practice and adherence to the principles of transparency and proportionality.

Conclusion

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A direct award to [redacted] is lawful, proportionate and justified. It reflects the specialist nature of the work, the limited market, the need for continuity, and the time-sensitive UKSPF funding window. The approach ensures the Council receives a coherent, high-quality evidence base while maintaining compliance and auditability.

13. Governance, Risk and Borrowing

- Full Council approves the project and budget
- Finance Committee oversees procurement
- Town Clerk/Project Lead commissions work
- Progress reported at key milestones

14. Risk Management

- Fixed-fee contracts
- Commission only required work
- Maintain audit trail
- Ensure Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance
- Appoint full design team only once a site is confirmed
- Seek early legal advice

15. Borrowing Considerations (For Information Only)

If borrowing is required, applications must pass:

1. Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC) statutory pre-checks (2–6 weeks)
2. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) approval (2–6 weeks)
3. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) drawdown notice period (2 weeks)
   No action is required until Phase 1 is complete.

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16. Budget Summary

The estimated ranges reflect the exploratory nature of early feasibility work. As the scope becomes clearer during Phase 1, actual costs are expected to fall toward the middle of the range. Before any commissioning takes place, the Council will obtain fixed fee quotations to ensure value for money and avoid cost escalation.

Phase	Workstream	Estimated Cost Range	Funding Source	Net Cost to OTC
Phase 1: Feasibility and Site Search	Sports Facility Feasibility Study	12,000 – 20,000	UKSPF (partial)	0 – 8,000
	Land and Property Agent	5,000 – 12,000	UKSPF (partial)	0 – 7,000
	Planning Consultant (High Level Feasibility)	5,000 – 10,000	UKSPF (partial)	0 – 5,000
	Legal Input ([redacted]	3,000 – 5,000	UKSPF (partial)	0 – 5,000
Phase 1 Subtotal		25,000 – 45,000	UKSPF (25,000)	0 – 20,000
Phase 2: Concept Design and Costing	Architect (Concept Stage)	15,000 – 30,000	OTC / Borrowing / CIL	15,000 – 30,000
	Quantity Surveyor	7,500 – 15,000	OTC / Borrowing / CIL	7,500 – 15,000
	Planning Consultant (Pre App)	5,000 – 10,000	OTC / Borrowing / CIL	5,000 – 10,000
	[redacted]	2,500 – 5,000	OTC / Borrowing / CIL	2,500 – 5,000
Phase 2 Subtotal		30,000 – 60,000		30,000 – 60,000
TOTAL (Phase 1 and 2)		55,000 – 105,000	UKSPF (25,000)	30,000 – 80,000

Notes:

1. OTC intends to use £25,000 of the £40,000 UKSPF allocation to initiate Phase 1.
2. This covers a substantial portion of Phase 1 costs, leaving a remaining requirement of 0 to £20,000 depending on final quotations.
3. This approach allows the Council to begin the project without borrowing and with minimal immediate impact on the precept.
4. The remaining Phase 2 costs can be met through OTC, CIL, borrowing, or a combination, depending on the Council's preferred funding strategy.
5. Using UKSPF to begin Phase 1 remains financially prudent, accelerates progress, and strengthens the Council's position for any future MHCLG borrowing application

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11. Satellite image of Bowling and Tennis Club

