



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday 13th September 2022

Committee: Council

Date: Thursday, 22 September 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting. The Agenda is attached

Members of the Council – a briefing note will be circulated by e-mail prior to the meeting with important housekeeping details and arrangements for the meeting.

Members of the Public – If you wish to attend the meeting, please e-mail democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check whether a seat will be available for you.

Members of the public will be able to access the live stream of the meeting by using this link:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/council22september2022/>

Tim Collard
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Vince Hunt (Chairman)	Steve Davenport	Heather Kidd
Brian Williams (Vice Chairman)	Mary Davies	Christian Lea
Lezley Picton (Leader)	Julian Dean	Hilary Luff
Ed Potter (Deputy Leader)	Geoff Elner	Nigel Lumby
Roy Aldcroft	David Evans	Elliott Lynch
Jeff Anderson	Julia Evans	Robert Macey
Caroline Bagnall	Roger Evans	Richard Marshall
Nicholas Bardsley	Paul Gill	David Minnery
Joyce Barrow	Rob Gittins	Dan Morris
Bernie Bentick	Nat Green	Pamela Moseley
Thomas Biggins	Kate Halliday	Alan Mosley
Ed Bird	Simon Harris	Cecilia Motley
Andy Boddington	Nigel Hartin	Peggy Mullock
Peter Broomhall	Nick Hignett	Ian Nellins
Julia Buckley	Ruth Houghton	Kevin Pardy
Garry Burchett	Richard Huffer	Vivienne Parry
Gwilym Butler	Tracey Huffer	Tony Parsons
Dean Carroll	Kirstie Hurst-Knight	John Price
Steve Charmley	Mike Isherwood	Chris Schofield
Ted Clarke	Mark Jones	Dan Thomas
Gerald Dakin	Simon Jones	Robert Tindall
Rosemary Dartnall	Duncan Kerr	Edward Towers

Kevin Turley
David Vasmer
Alex Wagner

Claire Wild
Mark Williams
Rob Wilson

Paul Wynn

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 July 2022

4 Announcements

To receive such communications as the Chairman, Leader and Head of Paid Service may desire to lay before the Council.

5 Public Questions

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is 10am on Thursday 15th September 2022

6 Annual Treasury Report 2021/22 (Pages 13 - 30)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

7 Annual Assurance Report of the Audit Committee to Council 2021/22 (Pages 31 - 48)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

8 Alternative Budget Process

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

9 Modern Slavery Statement (Pages 49 - 64)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

10 Update on Cornovii Developments Contracting Arrangements (Pages 65 - 74)

Report of the Assistant Director Homes and Communities is attached

Contact Jane Trethewey Tel: 01743 254917

11 Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre (Pages 75 - 204)

Report of the Executive Director of Place is attached

Contact Mark Barrow Tel: 01743258919

12 Establishment of a Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Stakeholder Board (Pages 205 - 214)

Report of the Executive Director of Place is attached

Contact Mark Barrow Tel: 01743258919

13 West Mercia Youth Justice Plan 2022 - 2023 (Pages 215 - 250)

Report of the Executive Director of People attached

Contact Tanya Miles Tel: 01743 255811

14 Interim Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2022

Report of Returning Officer is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact: Andy Begley, 01743 258675

15 Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer

The Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2000, to designate one of its officers to discharge the functions of statutory scrutiny officer and that officer may not be the head of the authority's paid service, the authority's monitoring officer or the authority's chief finance officer. Council is asked to agree that Tom Dodds, the Council's Scrutiny Manager, is appointed as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer with immediate effect

16 Appointment to Committees

Communities Overview Committee

Councillor Mark Williams to replace Councillor Nigel Hartin as a member of the Communities Overview Committee.

Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Chris Schofield to be appointed as a member of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

Southern Planning Committee

Councillor Richard Huffer to be appointed as a member of the Southern Planning Committee

Councillor Cecilia Motley to be appointed as a substitute member of the Southern Planning Committee

Councillor Viv Parry to be appointed as a substitute member of the Southern Planning Committee

Councillor Mark Williams to be appointed as a substitute member of the Southern Planning Committee

Councillor Paul Wynn to be appointed as a substitute member of the Southern Planning Committee

17 **Motions**

The following motions have been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

1. The following motion has been received from Councillor Rosemary Dartnall and is supported by Councillor Kate Halliday and members of the Labour Group

Small Lots of Public Land and the Right to Grow Food

Shropshire communities face a perfect storm of escalating prices for food, for energy just as the evidence for the climate crisis is unfolding before our eyes. This motion requests the council to make available small plots of public land for community food growing.

This initiative seeks to help Shropshire neighbourhoods become more sustainable and increase resilience by making it easier for community groups to grow more food for local people on underused, or unused, public land, on plots as small as 4 – 5 m². Even contaminated land could be used for composting or beekeeping.

Under current rules, it can be complex and costly to access such land – for example, residents can request to take on responsibility for sections of road margin but this includes provision of public liability insurance and includes the obligation for costly tree and hedge management, if any are present.

However, there are great examples of groups that have pushed on with community growing despite the challenges, such as the Street Allotment Project* in Shrewsbury, Incredible Edible groups in Ludlow and Wem and Bridgnorth Community Garden Project, and this shows what can be achieved. The Shropshire Good Food Partnership is set up to support communities across the county to access the skills and resources they need to get started and sustain community growing activities. However, more small lots are needed to take this excellent initiative forward and get more fresh food to more Shropshire people.

The Right to Grow Food will help communities help themselves in really difficult times. Successful projects have potential for even more benefits than nourishment. Through common purpose, improved mental and physical health, reduced loneliness and isolation and more connected and supportive communities can be achieved and this comes with economic benefits far beyond helping out with shopping bills. This is linked to a national initiative on the Right to Grow Food with a proposed Community Food and Land Bill at

Westminster.

This council resolves to facilitate community growing in Shropshire as follows;

- Establish and maintain a list of small lots of public land suitable for cultivation or environmental enhancement by community groups, for the medium or even short term
- Community groups, locals and volunteer groups could apply for a certificate of lawful use to cultivate the land for an agreed period without rental charge or ownership change
- The certificate of use should contain a level of standards which, if found to be breached, would be removed or transferred to another community group
- Councillors would be able to seek out land in their division available for community food gardens
- Promote the initiative via the council's website and signpost residents to access advice and land plots, as well as connecting with The Shropshire Good Food Partnership and existing community growing groups

Weblinks

[Street Allotment Project](#)

[ABOUT US | SHROPSHIRE GOOD FOOD](#)

Before and after images of the Street Allotment Project's recent work in Monkmoor, Shrewsbury



18 Questions from Members

To receive any questions from Members, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2.

Report **TO FOLLOW**

19 Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items.

20 Exempt Minutes (Pages 251 - 254)

To approve as a correct record the exempt minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 July 2022

21 Shropshire Council Smallholding Estate

Exempt report of Executive Director of Place is **TO FOLLOW**

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258676

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Committee and Date

Council

22 September 2022

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022

In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

10.00 am - 2.05 pm

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Councillors Vince Hunt and Lezley Picton (Leader), Brian Williams (Vice Chairman), Ed Potter (Deputy Leader), Roy Aldcroft, Jeff Anderson, Caroline Bagnall, Nicholas Bardsley, Joyce Barrow, Bernie Bentick, Andy Boddington, Peter Broomhall, Julia Buckley, Garry Burchett, Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Steve Charmley, Ted Clarke, Gerald Dakin, Rosemary Dartnall, Steve Davenport, Mary Davies, Geoff Elner, David Evans, Julia Evans, Roger Evans, Rob Gittins, Nat Green, Kate Halliday, Simon Harris, Nigel Hartin, Nick Hignett, Ruth Houghton, Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Mike Isherwood, Mark Jones, Simon Jones, Duncan Kerr, Heather Kidd, Christian Lea, Hilary Luff, Nigel Lumby, Elliott Lynch, Robert Macey, Richard Marshall, Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, Cecilia Motley, Ian Nellins, Kevin Pardy, Vivienne Parry, Tony Parsons, John Price, Chris Schofield, Dan Thomas, Robert Tindall, Edward Towers, David Vasmer, Claire Wild, Mark Williams, Rob Wilson, Leslie Winwood and Paul Wynn

23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Biggins, Ed Bird, Julian Dean, Paul Gill, Richard Huffer, Tracey Huffer, David Minnery, Alan Mosley, Peggy Mullock, Kevin Turley, Alex Wagner, and Rob Wilson

24 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have an interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillor Jeff Anderson declared an interest in agenda items 19 and 20 and stated that he would leave the meeting and take no part in the item

Councillor Lezley Picton declared an interest in agenda items 19 and 20 and stated that she would leave the meeting and take no part in the item

Councillor Claire Wild declared an interest in agenda items 19 and 20 and stated that she would leave the meeting and take no part in the item

25 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved, and signed as a correct record.

26 Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mark Williams to his first meeting following his election as the Member for the Highley Division.

The Chairman advised the meeting that he proposed to amend the order of the agenda to take item 19 after item 21.

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Vice Chairman since the last meeting of the Council on 12 May 2022, which had been circulated by email.

27 Public Questions

Public Questions

The Speaker advised public questions had been received from Bob Saunders, Tina Teearu, Pamela Pink, Stephen Mulloy, Darren Childs and Kris Welch. A copy of the questions and the responses provided are attached to the signed minutes and available from the web page for the meeting.

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 7th July, 2022, 10.00 am — Shropshire Council](#)

28 Report of Returning Officer - Highley Division

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Vince Hunt, and seconded by the Vice Chairman Councillor Brian Williams that the report of the Returning Officer, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received, and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and approved.

29 Financial Outturn 2021/22

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources, Councillor Gwilym Butler, and seconded by the Leader Councillor Lezley Picton that the report of the Executive Director of Resources, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed

In response to a question from Councillor Duncan Kerr regarding the level of reserves that the administration considered prudent the Portfolio Holder agreed to provide a response outside of the meeting.

In response to questions from Councillor Ruth Houghton regarding when the temporary accommodation agreed by the council would be delivered and addressing the pressures on home to school transport providers caused by the increase in fuel prices, the Portfolio Holder agreed to provide a response outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That in respect of the revenue budget:

- A. Members note that the outturn is a overspend of £2.505m.
- B. As a result of the outturn position Members note that the level of the General Fund balance stands at £11.522m, which is below the recommended level.
- C. Members note the decrease in the level of service-related Earmarked Reserves and Provisions of £8.152m.
- D. Members note that the Council has received revenue funding relating to Covid-19 in 2021/22 which covered all Covid-19 costs in the year, and so no additional costs have had to be funded by the Council's base budget.

Relating to ringfenced funding, Members:

- E. Note that the outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2021/22 is an underspend of (£0.251m) and the resulting level of the HRA reserve is £11.592m.
- F. Note that the level of school balances stands at £8.191m (£5.995m in 2020/21).

In respect of the capital programme, Members:

- G. Approve net budget variations of £3.598m to the 2021/22 capital programme (in Appendix 11) and the re-profiled 2021/22 capital budget of £83.572m.
- H. Approve the re-profiled capital budgets of £132.724m for 2022/23, including slippage of £1.245m from 2021/22, £82.009m for 2023/24 and £34.077m for 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix 15.
- I. Accept the outturn expenditure set out in Appendices 12 and 13 of £82.327m, representing 98.5% of the revised capital budget for 2021/22.
- J. Approve temporary application of capital receipts of £18.273m to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.398m in 2022/23.

30 Workforce Strategy

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources, Councillor Gwilym Butler, and seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Digital, Data and Insight, and Built Housing Councillor Rob Gittins, that the report of the Executive Director of Resources, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed

Councillor Gittins asked whether it would be possible for Members to be included in any future staff surveys. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Member Liaison Group

RESOLVED:

That Council having considered the contents of the draft Workforce Strategy 2022 to 2025 adopt this as the strategy for the Council going forward.

31 Report of PMSC re Climate and Ecology Bill Task and Finish Group

It was proposed by the Chair of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Claire Wild, and seconded by Councillor Joyce Barrow that the report of the Scrutiny Officer, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Shropshire Council writes to the sponsors of the Climate and Ecology Bill, to express its broad support for the Bill, but to not support the requirement to set up a national citizens panel.

32 Annual Report of the Portfolio Holder for Digital, Data & Insight and Built Housing

It was proposed by Councillor Rob Gittins, Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder for Digital, Data & Insight and Built Housing that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor Gittins presented and amplified his report and responded to questions, concerns and comments.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

33 Amendments to the Constitution

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Vince Hunt, and seconded by the Vice Chairman Councillor Brian Williams that the report of the Assistant Director – Legal and Governance, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received, and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council

- A. Agree to increase the value of the threshold for a 'Major' contract in the Contract Procedure Rules under Part 4 of the Constitution from £140,000 to £170,000;

- B. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Legal and Governance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources to devise and implement a process to allow for the use of an electronic version of the Council's seal to be used to execute documents and to make any necessary changes to Part 2 of the Articles of the Constitution to allow for the use of both electronic and physical application of the Council's seal.

34 **Allocation of Committee Seats and Appointments**

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Vince Hunt, and seconded by the Vice Chairman Councillor Brian Williams that the report of the Assistant Director – Legal and Governance, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received, and agreed.

Councillor Vasmer commented that he felt that regulatory committees should not be included in the political balance calculation and asked that this be considered at a future meeting of the constitution Working Group.

RESOLVED:

That the Council confirms the revised allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the 2021/22 municipal year as a consequence of the change in group membership as follows:

- a) That the composition and revised allocation of seats on its committees and other bodies as detailed in the report be approved.
- b) That the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group provides notification of which of its members will be appointed as a member of the Southern Planning Committee

35 **Councillor Viv Parry**

As Councillor Parry was present this item was withdrawn.

The Chairman expressed his best wishes to Councillor Parry for a continued recovery.

36 **Motions**

The following motions have been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

From Councillor Rob Gittins and supported by Councillors Roy Aldcroft, Dean Carroll, Paul Gill and Paul Wynn

A41 Whitchurch to Hinstock

Following large numbers of accidents, the A41 from Whitchurch to Hinstock is fast becoming one of the most dangerous stretches of road in country and needs urgent action to protect road users and residents from harm.

This council resolves to: -

1. Ask road traffic engineers to commission a report detailing how to make junctions more visible, replace worn signage and introduce appropriate line markings where necessary and look at how this could be done on a limited highways budget.
2. Lobby the police and crime commissioner for active speed enforcement and average speed cameras along the full stretch of the A41.
3. Lobby the DFT for larger capital monies to widen junctions, increase visibility splays and for carriageway surface improvements.
4. Work with the emergency services to obtain real time KSI data so that the council can make more effective decisions on road safety.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Paul Wynn.

By way of amendment Councillor David Vasmer proposed that the following be added to the motion: -

5. Adopt a "Vision Zero" strategy for the whole Shropshire Council area to end traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by taking a systemic approach to road safety.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Nigel Hartin.

On taking a vote the amendment was defeated

On taking a vote it was **RESOLVED** that Council:

1. Ask road traffic engineers to commission a report detailing how to make junctions more visible, replace worn signage and introduce appropriate line markings where necessary and look at how this could be done on a limited highways budget.
2. Lobby the police and crime commissioner for active speed enforcement and average speed cameras along the full stretch of the A41.
3. Lobby the DFT for larger capital monies to widen junctions, increase visibility splays and for carriageway surface improvements.
4. Work with the emergency services to obtain real time KSI data so that the council can make more effective decisions on road safety.

From Councillor Duncan Kerr and supported by the Green Group

In Sept 2020 Shropshire Council adopted LTN 1/20 which sets new standards for cycling provision and accessibility.

Five months after adopting this standard the Council sought, and gave itself, planning permission to breach the standard in constructing an access bridge to its proposed new innovation park in Oswestry. As can be seen from the accompanying

3D diagram this bridge would require a cyclist to dismount up to 6 times and is inaccessible to many disabled persons.

On the 14th June 2021 the Council received a letter from Rupert Furness Deputy Director at the Department of Transport and inviting the Council to express interest in receiving capital funding for a mini-holland scheme. This letter stated that the guidance in LTN 1/20 should be followed by Local Authorities “regardless of whether they are seeking Government funding”.

On the 9th June 2022, the Future Oswestry Group, a partnership established by Shropshire Council with representatives from Oswestry Town Council, Oswestry BID and the local community received this drawing. This was the first time the group had been consulted on the Council’s design for this bridge. This multi-agency group passed a resolution expressing their clear opposition to the building of a structure that is both non-compliant and gives a very poor visual impression at a key gateway into the town.

The risks to the Council in progressing with its current design are very high. If built as designed the bridge will become a highly visible symbol of Shropshire disregard for active transport and will prejudice the ability of the Council to secure the future funding it is seeking both for the innovation park and for active transport.

As the recent peer review on finance reported, quality bids showing genuine and real commitment, are the only way Shropshire will secure additional resources from Government. Now is the time to admit this bridge was a mistake and correct the situation before it is built.

In support of the Future Oswestry Group; and in recognition of the risk to current and future funding applications if the Council persists in building this non-compliant infrastructure; this Council instructs the Cabinet and Portfolio Officer to bring forward a new design for this bridge which improves its aesthetics and ensure and is fully compliant with LTN 1/20. The Council’s LUF 2 application provides the opportunity to seek additional funding for this.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Mike Isherwood

On being put to a vote the motion was defeated

From Councillor Joyce Barrow and supported by Councillors Roy Aldcroft, Simon Harris, Chris Schofield and Les Winwood

When a tenant of social or affordable housing sadly passes away bereaved family and friends have very little time, sometimes as little as two weeks, to empty the property of the loved one recently lost before having to hand back the property to the housing association. This is a very difficult time for those who are bereaved and often involves a lot of work to organise funerals and put the affairs of the recently departed in order, adding such little time to empty a property with potentially a lifetime of memories into that period can push people who are already fragile into serious distress. Whilst we appreciate the urgent need to bring social and affordable properties back into use as quickly as possible, we also believe that the current arrangements are unreasonable and lack regard for the recently bereaved.

Therefore this Council resolves to:

1. Ask the Leader and Chief executive to request that STAR Housing review their policy on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone
2. Ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to Registered Social Landlords operating in Shropshire Council's area to ask them reconsider their policies on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone
3. Ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to ask them to consider legislating or updating guidance to the sector on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone

By way of amendment Councillor Duncan Kerr proposed that point three be amended to read

Ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to ask them to consider legislating or updating guidance to the sector on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone and to review Housing Benefit legislation in order to ensure that benefit is available for a longer period than currently.

Councillor Barrow agreed to accept the amendment

On taking a vote it was **RESOLVED** that Council:

1. Ask the Leader and Chief executive to request that STAR Housing review their policy on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone
2. Ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to Registered Social Landlords operating in Shropshire Council's area to ask them reconsider their policies on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone
3. Ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to ask them to consider legislating or updating guidance to the sector on this subject to consider a minimum four week period for vacating following the death of a tenant who lives alone and to review Housing Benefit legislation in order to ensure that benefit is available for a longer period than currently.

From Councillor Roger Evans and supported by the Liberal Democrat Group

This Council notes

1. There are several National Lotteries, but the money raised by them is distributed nationwide. This Council wishes to help our smaller local organisations and charities to deliver the financial help our residents need.
2. Over 100 Local Authorities are assisting and helping their local communities by holding their own Lotteries operated by an External Lottery Manager (ELM) who manages the Lottery on a Council's behalf. Their management role will include website management, administration of ticket sales and payments, prize management and marketing. It will not include generating profit for a management company.
3. By taking this forward, we would help to keep the Shropshire pound in Shropshire.
4. A community lottery would offer a valuable, additional income stream to our community and voluntary sector in Shropshire, enabling them to tackle specific issues around loneliness.

This Council resolves that

The Community Overview Committee as an urgent item be asked to look at how a Community Lottery could be run and so help our many smaller groups who are helping residents of all ages in Shropshire.

This was seconded by Councillor Andy Boddington

By way of amendment Councillor Ed Potter proposed the following amendment:

That the Community Overview Committee at its next meeting consider whether the subject of how a Community Lottery could be run and so help our many smaller groups who are helping residents of all ages in Shropshire, should be added to its work programme.

Councillor Roger Evans agreed to accept the amendment and on taking a vote it was **RESOLVED**:

That the Community Overview Committee at its next meeting consider whether the subject of how a Community Lottery could be run and so help our many smaller groups who are helping residents of all ages in Shropshire, should be added to its work programme.

From Councillor David Vasmer and is supported by the Liberal Democrat Group

Motion: Shropshire should be included in rural fuel duty relief

Council notes that:

- Households in rural areas pay £114 a week on transport costs, almost £40 more than those in urban areas.
- Petrol prices have risen to a new record high of 182.3p a litre, meaning the cost of filling a typical 55 litre petrol car has risen to over £100.
- Rural households are paying out almost £2,000 more a year on transport than those in urban areas.
- Fuel duty relief is currently offered to fuel retailers in remote parts of the UK where prices at the pumps are higher to the tune of 5p per litre of petrol or diesel.
- Currently, only 10,500 residents in England live in areas benefitting from the relief.

Council resolves to:

- Write to the Department for Transport in support of;
 - Doubling support provided under the rural fuel duty relief scheme to 10p per litre.
 - Expanding the rural fuel duty relief scheme to include a wider area including rural Shropshire.

The Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure agreed to meet with Councillor Kidd to agree which areas of Shropshire should be included in the request.

On being put to a vote the motion was supported

37 Questions from Members

The Chairman advised that the following questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15. A copy of the report containing the detailed questions and their formal response is attached to the signed minutes.

Received from Councillor Kate Halliday and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Councillor Dean Carroll in relation to transport infrastructure for the proposed health and Wellbeing Hub in Shrewsbury. By way of supplementary question Councillor Halliday commented that at a meeting of Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin ICS meeting it had been stated that the programme board were working with Shropshire Council to ensure that there was a specific bus route and that there was section 106 money available to support this and asked the Portfolio Holder whether this was his understanding. The Portfolio Holder advised that he would liaise with colleagues and provide a written answer.

Received from Councillor Julia Evans and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Councillor Dean Carroll in relation to a review of the Council's Car Parking Strategy. There was no supplementary question.

Received from Councillor Roger Evans and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Councillor Dean Carroll in relation to street lighting. By way of supplementary question Councillor Evans asked why would it take to the winter of 2023/4 to complete the work to change street lighting to LED lights? The Portfolio Holder explained that previously there had been issues with the supply of replacement columns. He added that officers were endeavouring to get changes made as quickly as possible.

38 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

It was proposed by Councillor Nigel Hartin and seconded by Councillor Paul Wynn that the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority be noted.

39 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the provisions of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items

40 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved, and signed as a correct record.

41 Shropshire Community Leisure Trust Contract Extension

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure and Tourism and Transport, Councillor Cecilia Motley, and seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources Councillor Gwilym Butler that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved

42 Disposal of Economic Growth Assets

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Councillor Dean Carroll, and seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources Councillor Gwilym Butler that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved

43 Shrewsbury Acquisition

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Councillor Dean Carroll, and seconded by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning, Councillor Ed Potter that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet 07 September 2022	
Audit Committee 15 September 2022	
Council 22 September 2022	<u>Public</u>

ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2021/22

Responsible Officer

James Walton

e-mail: James.Walton@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: (01743) 258915

1. Synopsis

As at 31 March 2022, the Council held £164m in investments and had £292m of borrowing. This report shows the borrowing & investment strategy for 2021/22 and outturn position for the financial year. It also shows the investment performance of the internal treasury team over 2021/22 and the last 3 financial years and confirms activities align with the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The report informs members of treasury activities for Shropshire Council for 2021/22, including the investment performance of the internal treasury team to 31 March 2022. The internal treasury team outperformed their investment benchmark by 0.24% in 2021/22 and performance for the last three years is 0.38% per annum above benchmark. Treasury activities during the year have been within approved prudential and treasury indicators set and have complied with the Treasury Strategy.
- 2.2. During 2021/22 the performance of the Treasury Team delivered an under spend of £2.195 million compared to budget as highlighted in paragraph 5.2 of this report. This was mainly due to Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) savings of £1.163m, net total savings of £0.573m in relation to interest payable, interest receivable and other financing arrangements, net overachievement on contributions from other local authorities and public sector organisations of £0.302m.
- 2.3. The Council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2021/22. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury

Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Members are asked to accept the position as set out in the report.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 4.2. There are no direct environmental, equalities or climate change consequences arising from this report.
- 4.3. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council's Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance together with the rigorous internal controls will enable the Council to manage the risk associated with Treasury Management activities and the potential for financial loss.
- 4.4. The Council's Audit Committee is the committee responsible for ensuring effective consideration of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and policies. The Audit Committee will consider the report and appendices on 15 September before approval is sought at Full Council on 22 September.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The Council makes assumptions about the levels of borrowing and investment income over the financial year. Reduced borrowing as a result of capital receipt generation or delays in delivery of the capital programme will both have a positive impact of the council's cash position. Similarly, higher than benchmarked returns on available cash will also help the Council's financial position. For monitoring purposes, assumptions are made early in year about borrowing and returns based on the strategies agreed by Council in the preceding February. Performance outside of these assumptions results in increased or reduced income for the Council.
- 5.2. The 2021/22 performance is above benchmark for the reasons outlined in paragraph 2.2 of this report and has delivered additional income of £2.195 million which has been reflected in the final Revenue Monitor report for 2021/22.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy includes proposals to deliver a reduced carbon footprint for the Council therefore the Treasury Team is working with the Council in order to achieve this. There are no climate change impacts arising from this report. Shropshire Council's investment portfolio has no level 1, 2 or 3 emissions. It comprises of straightforward cash deposits with financial institutions and other Local Authorities.

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council defines its treasury management activities as "the management of the authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks".
- 7.2. The Council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2021/22. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 7.3. Changes in the regulatory environment place a much greater onus on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. Minimum reporting requirements are that the Council should receive the following reports:
- An annual treasury strategy in advance of the year.
 - A mid-year treasury update report.
 - An annual report following the year describing the activity compared to the strategy.
- 7.4. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management states that these reports should be scrutinised by a nominated committee. These reports were scrutinised by the Audit Committee before they were reported to full Council for approval. The Audit Committee has received two training sessions during the year from Link in 2021/22 and the internal Treasury team 2022/23, which is a requirement to fulfil their duties under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
- 7.5. In addition to the minimum reporting requirements, the Executive Director's and Cabinet also receive quarterly treasury management update reports for information.
- 7.6. The Treasury Strategy for 2021/22 was approved by Council in February 2021, the mid-year treasury update report was approved by Council in December 2021. This Annual Report sets out our actual treasury performance for the year and shows how the

actual treasury performance varied from our estimates and planning assumptions.

8. Borrowing Strategy and Outturn for 2021/22

8.1. The Council's Borrowing Strategy and Outturn position for 2021/22 can be found in Appendix C.

9. Debt rescheduling

9.1. No debt restructuring was undertaken during 2021/22. Further information is included within Appendix C.

10. Investment Strategy & Outturn for 2021/22

10.1. The Council's Investment Strategy and Outturn position for 2021/22 can be found in Appendix C.

11. Compliance with Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators

11.1 Compliance with the Council's Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators can be found in Appendix B & C.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Council, February 2021, Treasury Strategy 2021/22.

Council, December 2021, Treasury Strategy 2021/22 Mid-Year Review.

Council, February 2022, Treasury Strategy 2022/23.

Cabinet, September 2021, Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2021/22.

Cabinet, December 2021, Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2021/22.

Cabinet, February 2022, Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2021/22.

Cabinet, July 2022, Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2021/22.

Cabinet Member:

Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Resources

Local Member

N/A

Appendices

A. Debt Maturity Profile as at 31 March 2022

B. Prudential Indicators 2021/22

C. Council's Borrowing & Investment Strategy and Outturn Position 2021/22

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APPENDIX B

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/22

- C1. The Prudential Code requires the Council to set Prudential Indicators in the Treasury Strategy and report performance against those indicators in the Annual Treasury Report.
- C2. The ratio of financing costs compared to the net revenue stream of the Council was lower than expected in 2021/22 due to net revenue stream being higher than estimated.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Actual
	%	%
Non HRA Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	7.6	7.1

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Actual
	%	%
Non HRA Ratio of financing costs (net of investment income) to net revenue stream	7.2	6.8
HRA Ratio of financing costs to HRA net revenue stream	39.9	38.0

- C3. It can be seen from the tables that the authority was well within the approved authorised limit and the operational boundary for external debt for 2021/22.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Estimate	2021/22 Actual
External Debt	£m	£ m
Authorised Limit:		
Borrowing	661	292
Other long-term liabilities	96	94
Total	757	386

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Estimate	2021/22 Actual
External Debt	£ m	£ m
Operational Boundary:		

Borrowing	546	292
Other long-term liabilities	96	94
Total	642	386

- C4. Gross borrowing was as anticipated due to no general fund borrowing being undertaken in 2021/22. A key indicator of prudence is that net borrowing should not exceed the capital financing requirement. It can be seen from the following figures that the Council continues to meet this prudential indicator.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Estimate	2021/22 Actual
Net Borrowing & Capital Financing Requirement:	£ m	£ m
Gross Borrowing (inc. HRA)	366	292
Investments	150	164
Net Borrowing	216	128
Non HRA Capital Financing Requirement	419	278
HRA Capital Financing Requirement	95	87
Total CFR	514	365

- C5. Non HRA was higher and HRA capital expenditure was lower than anticipated during the year. Explanations for these under/overspends were included in the 2021/22 final capital outturn report.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Actual
	£ m	£ m
Non HRA Capital expenditure	114.2	80.3
HRA Capital expenditure	20.1	8.1

- C6. The level of fixed rate and variable rate borrowing were within the approved limits for the year.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Estimate	2021/22 Actual
Upper Limit for Fixed/Variable Rate Borrowing	£ m	£ m
Fixed Rate (GF)	615	292
Variable Rate	308	0

C7. The level of fixed rate and variable rate investments were within the approved limits during 2021/22.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Estimate	2021/22 Actual
Upper Limit For Fixed/Variable Rate Investments	£ m	£ m
Fixed Rate	250	124
Variable Rate	250	40

C8. No longer term investments were held at the year-end. Shrewsbury Shopping Centres are no longer held as long-term investments. They are now accounted for on the balance sheet as Property, Plant & Equipment (PP&E).

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Estimate	2021/22 Actual
Upper Limit for Sums Invested over 364 days	£m	£m
Internal Team	70	0
External Manager	30	0
Shrewsbury Shopping Centres	60	0

C9. The maturity profile was within the limits set in the Treasury Strategy.

Prudential Indicator	2021/22 Upper Limit	2021/22 Actual
Maturity Structure of External Borrowing	%	%
Under 12 months	15	0
12 months to 2 years	15	2
2 years to 5 years	45	1
5 years to 10 years	75	13
10 years to 20 years	100	34
20 years to 30 years	100	21
30 years top 40 years	100	18

40 years to 50 years	100	2
50 years and above	100	9

Appendix C

Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22

The Council's borrowing requirement identified within the Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 was self-financing prudential borrowing of £118.909m therefore no external borrowing was required but based on the prospects for interest rates outlined in the Treasury Strategy, the Council would adopt a pragmatic approach if circumstances changed when considering any new borrowing.

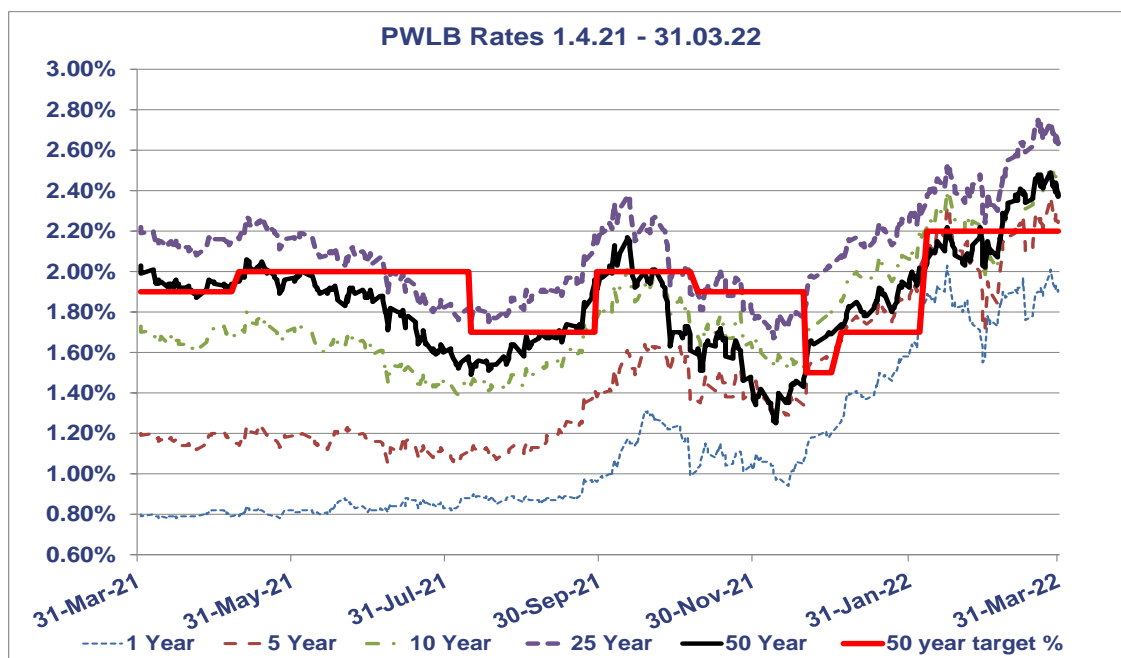
Short term Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates were expected to be significantly cheaper than longer term borrowing rates during the year therefore borrowing in the under 10 year period early on in the financial year when rates were expected to be at their lowest would be considered. Variable rate borrowing was also expected to be cheaper than long term fixed rate borrowing throughout the year.

An alternative strategy was to defer any new borrowing as long term borrowing rates were expected to be higher than investment rates during the year. This would maximise savings in the short term and also have the added benefit of running down investments which would reduce credit risk.

Consideration of changing strategy would be taken if it was felt that there was a significant risk in a sharp fall in long and short term rates then long term borrowings will be postponed. If it was felt there was a significant risk of a sharp rise in long and short term rates then the portfolio position would be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates were still relatively cheap.

Borrowing outturn for 2021/22

The Treasury Team take advice from its external treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, on the most opportune time to borrow. Movements in rates during 2021/22 are shown in the graph below.



Members have previously been advised of the unexpected change of policy on PWLB lending arrangements in October 2010 following the Comprehensive Spending Review. In addition, in October 2019, the Treasury and PWLB announced an increase in rates of 1% across all borrowing periods. This made new borrowing more expensive and repayment relatively less attractive. That increase was then, at least partially, reversed for some forms of borrowing on 11th March 2020, but not for mainstream non-HRA capital schemes. A consultation was then held with local authorities and on 25th November 2020, the Chancellor announced the conclusion to the review of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates; the standard and certainty margins were reduced by 1% but a prohibition was introduced to deny access to borrowing from the PWLB for any local authority which had purchase of assets for yield in its three year capital programme.

The table below shows PWLB borrowing rates for a selection of maturity periods. The table also shows the high and low points in rates during the year, average rates during the year and individual rates at the start and the end of the financial year.

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
01/04/2021	0.80%	1.20%	1.73%	2.22%	2.03%
31/03/2022	1.91%	2.25%	2.43%	2.64%	2.39%
Low	0.78%	1.05%	1.39%	1.67%	1.25%
Low date	08/04/2021	08/07/2021	05/08/2021	08/12/2021	09/12/2021
High	2.03%	2.37%	2.52%	2.75%	2.49%
High date	15/02/2022	28/03/2022	28/03/2022	23/03/2022	28/03/2022
Average	1.13%	1.45%	1.78%	2.10%	1.85%
Spread	1.25%	1.32%	1.13%	1.08%	1.24%

Following discussions with Link, as general fund borrowing rates were

significantly higher than investment rates during the year it was agreed that if any new borrowing was required during the year it would be deferred in order to maximise savings in the short term and reduce credit risk by reducing investments. No new external borrowing was required in 2021/22.

The Council's total debt portfolio at 31 March 2022 is set out below:-

Type of Debt	Balance £m	Average Borrowing Rate 2021/2022
General Fund Fixed rate - PWLB	159.02	4.90%
HRA Fixed rate - PWLB	83.35	3.51%
Fixed rate - Market	49.20	4.10%
Variable rate	0	N/A

The maturity profile of the debt is evenly spread to avoid large repayments in any one financial year. The average debt period for PWLB loans is 18 years, market loans have an average debt period of 48 years. The total debt portfolio has a maturity range from 1 year to 56 years.

The Treasury Strategy allows up to 15% of the total outstanding debt to mature in any one year. It is prudent to have the Council's debt maturing over many years so as to minimise the risk of having to re-finance when interest rates may be high. The actual debt maturity profile is within these limits (Appendix A).

Debt rescheduling

No debt restructuring was undertaken during 2021/22. The introduction of a differential in PWLB rates on the 1 November 2007, which was compounded further following a policy change in October 2010 and subsequent changes in 2019 and 2020, as outlined above has meant that large premiums would be incurred if debt restructuring was undertaken, which cannot be justified on value for money grounds.

Although these changes have restricted debt restructuring, the current debt portfolio is continually monitored in conjunction with external advisers in the light of changing economic and market conditions to identify opportunities for debt rescheduling. Debt rescheduling will only be undertaken:

- To generate cash savings at minimum risk.
- To help fulfil the Treasury Strategy.
- To enhance the balance of the long term portfolio by amending the maturity profile and/or volatility of the portfolio.

Investment Strategy for 2021/22

Our treasury advisor originally felt when the strategy was approved by Council in February 2021 that the bank rate would remain at 0.10% during 2021/22. These forecasts were based on the Bank of England assuming that the emergency level of rates introduced at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic would still be required to protect the economy.

The Governor of the Bank of England made it clear that he thinks that such a move would do more damage than good and that more quantitative easing is the favoured tool if further action becomes necessary. Investment returns were likely to remain exceptionally low during 2021/22 with little increase in the following two years.

The below forecast table was included in the Treasury Strategy report 2021/22.

Link Group Interest Rate View		9.11.20													
	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	
5 yr PWLB	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	
10 yr PWLB	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	
25 yr PWLB	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	
50 yr PWLB	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	

The below forecast table was included in the Mid Year Treasury Strategy report 2021/22.

Link Group Interest Rate View		8.11.21													
	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	
BANK RATE	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	
3 month ave earnings	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	
6 month ave earnings	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	
12 month ave earnings	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	
5 yr PWLB	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	
10 yr PWLB	1.80	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	
25 yr PWLB	2.10	2.20	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70	
50 yr PWLB	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	

In 2021/22 investment of surplus cash continued to be managed by the internal treasury team. The strategy for the in-house team was influenced by the need to keep funds relatively short for cash flow purposes. Lending continued to be restricted to UK banks, one overseas bank, three Building Societies, two Money Market Funds (AAA credit rating), Part Nationalised Banks, UK Government and other Local Authorities in line with the Council's policy on creditworthiness which was approved in the Annual Investment Strategy.

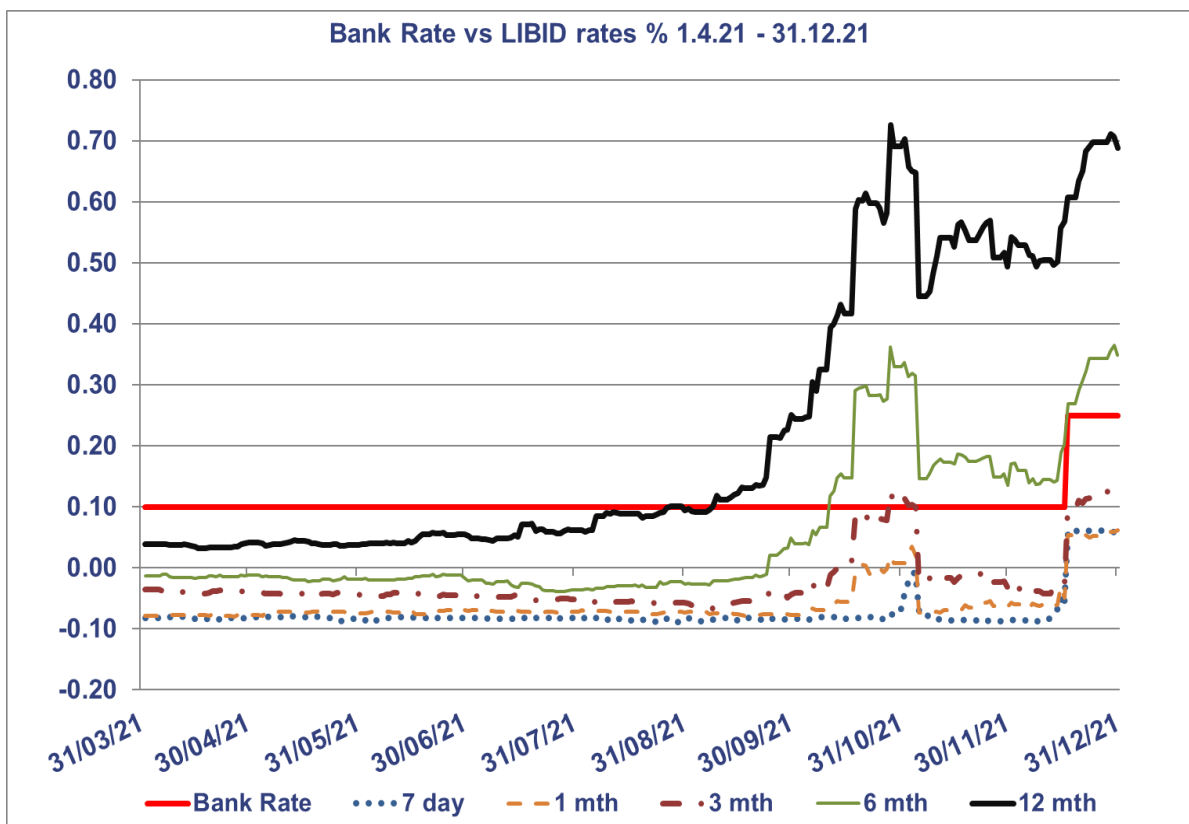
Investment outturn 2021/22

Over the last two years, the coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and to economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March 2020 to cut Bank Rate to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings until raising it to 0.25% at its meeting on 16th December 2021, 0.50% at its meeting of 4th February 2022 and then to 0.75% in March 2022.

The UK economy has endured several false dawns through 2021/22, but with most of the economy now opened up and nearly back to business-as-usual, the GDP numbers have been robust (9% y/y Q1 2022) and sufficient for the MPC to focus on tackling the second-round effects of inflation, now that the CPI measure has already risen to 6.2% and is likely to exceed 8% in April. The Government also supplied huge amounts of finance to local authorities to pass on to businesses. This meant that for most of the year there was much more liquidity in financial markets than there was demand to borrow, with the consequent effect that investment earnings rates stayed suppressed for most of the year.

To counter the low investment rates and following advice from Link, use was made of direct deals with main UK banks, for various periods from three months to one year. Direct deals offered enhanced rates over the equivalent rates available through brokers. This provided opportunities to lock into higher, long term rates at times when it was thought they offered substantial enhancement over short term benchmark rates. Enhanced market rates when compared to bank rate has resulted in the total portfolio outperforming the benchmark. Use of instant access accounts with Svenska Handelsbanken was continued, together with use of Money Market Funds with Aberdeen & Insight Investment. These accounts offered instant access to funds, however they also saw suppressed yields in line with levels when placing short term deposits through brokers.

Movements in short term rates through the year are shown in the below.



Throughout the first half of the year, the average interest rate earned on investments was suppressed due to the low bank rate, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. However, as detailed earlier, the MPC started to increase rates from December 2021 with a further two increases in February 2022 and March 2022. This resulted in the internal treasury team achieving a slightly higher level of interest on revenue balances than budgeted. This slightly higher than projected amount earned on investments was coupled with an under-spend on debt charges due to no long-term general fund borrowing being undertaken in 2021/22. The total £2.195 million underspend was mainly due to MRP savings following a review of the Council’s policy and interest payable savings.

At 31 March 2022 the allocation of the cash portfolio was as follows:

	£m
• In-house short dated deposits for cash flow management	104.5
• In-house long dated deposits (up to 1 year)	31.0
• Other Local Authorities	28.0
Total	163.5

The following table shows the average return on cash investments for the internal treasury team during the year and for the last 3 years to 31 March 2022. Recognising the need to manage short term cash flow requirements, the target for the internal team is the 7 day LIBID rate.

	Return 2021/22	Return 3 years to 31 March 2022
	%	% p.a.
Internal Treasury Team	0.17	0.51
Benchmark (7 Day LIBID rate)	-0.07	0.13

Due to the economic shock and historically low rates in 21/22, even though rates started to increase in the latter part of that year; the benchmark rate was in a negative position for most of the financial year.

The conclusions to be drawn from the table are:

- During 2021/22 the internal treasury team outperformed their benchmark by 0.24%.
- Over the 3 year period the internal team's performance has been 0.38% per annum above the benchmark.

Compliance with Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators

All borrowing and lending transactions undertaken through the year have complied with the procedures and limits set out in the Council's Treasury Management Practices and Treasury Strategy. In addition, all investments made have been within the limits set in the approved counterparty list. No institutions, in which investments were made, showed any difficulty in repaying investments and interest in full during the year.

Appendix B shows the Prudential Indicators approved by Council as part of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 (revised estimate) Treasury Strategies compared with the actual figures for 2021/22. In summary, during 2021/22 treasury activities have been within the prudential and treasury limits set in the Treasury Strategy.

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council: 22 September 2022 10am

<u>Item</u>
Public

ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE TO COUNCIL 2021/22

Responsible Officer

e-mail: James.walton@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258915

1. Synopsis

A key part of the Audit Committee’s role is to report annually to Full Council on the Committee’s findings, conclusions and recommendations. Audit Committee has some concerns but on balance can provide reasonable assurance.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Attached to this report is the Audit Committee’s Annual Assurance Report to Council for 2021/22. This provides Council with independent reasonable assurance that it has in place adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; internal and external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects and maintains consistently
- 2.2. The Audit Committee recognises and is concerned about the limitations identified in the internal control framework as reported in the Head of Audit’s Opinion and the potential impact on value for money but on balance, can provide reasonable assurance, founded on those reports, explanations and assurances received, throughout the year.

3. Recommendation to Council

- 3.1 Council is asked to consider and comment on the contents of the Annual Assurance report for 2021/22 before recommending accepting this report.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The Audit Committee's Annual Assurance Report is part of the overall internal control arrangements and risk management process. The Audit Committee objectively examines and evaluates the adequacy of the control environment through the reports it receives and in turn can provide assurances to Council on its governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; internal and external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements that inform the Annual Governance Statement
- 4.2. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. There are no direct environmental, equalities, consultation or climate change requirements or consequences of this proposal.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report. In assessing the internal control environment, risk management and governance aspects of the Council, the Audit Committee can provide a perspective on the overall value for money of these.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. This report does not directly make decisions on energy and fuel consumption; renewable energy generation; carbon offsetting and mitigation; or on climate change adaptation. Therefore, no effect to report.

7. Background

- 7.1. A key part of the Audit Committee's role is to report annually to Full Council on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations; providing its opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; internal and external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements. In addition, the Audit Committee should report to Council where they have added value, improved or promoted the control environment and performance in relation to its Terms of Reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose and functions.
- 7.2. The Audit Committee has a well-established role within the Council, and it is important that an Annual Assurance report based on the work of the Committee is produced and recommended to Council. In compiling this assurance report, information provided at the Audit Committee meeting on 20th July 2022 has also been considered.

7.3. In addition, this report has been reviewed to ensure its continuing compliance with CIPFA¹'s Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 edition. This requires the Audit Committee to be held to account on a regular basis by the Council specifically in relation to:

Whether the;

- committee has fulfilled its agreed terms of reference;
- committee has adopted recommended practice;
- development needs of committee members have been assessed and whether committee members are accessing briefing and training opportunities;
- committee has assessed its own effectiveness, or been the subject of a review, and the conclusions and actions from that review and,
- what impact the committee has on the improvement of governance, risk and control within the Council.

8. Conclusions

8.1. The annual assurance report to Council for 2021/22, attached to this report, is an aid to addressing the key areas where the Committee should be held to account

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

CIPFA's Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 edition

Audit Committee reports 2021/22

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Lezley Picton, Leader of the Council and Brian Williams, Chairman of the Audit Committee

Local Member N/A

Appendices:

Appendix A - Draft Audit Committee Annual Assurance Report 2021/22



¹ The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22**STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

1. Governance in and of the public sector continues to be high profile with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) supporting good practice in local government. In Shropshire we have a Code of Corporate Governance which is reviewed annually in line with the best practice issued by CIPFA and SOLACE; we have also produced an Annual Governance Statement, again in line with best practice and legislative requirements. Being well managed and well governed are important attributes in helping to improve performance and in reducing the risk of failing to achieve our objectives and providing good service to our community.
2. Shropshire Council has an Audit Committee that is long established in seeking to maintain and improve our governance procedures. The Committee is a key component of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and a major source of assurance of the Council's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment and reporting on internal and external audit functions and financial and non-financial performance.
3. The benefits to the Council of operating an effective Audit Committee are:
 - Maintaining public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting.
 - Reinforcing the importance and independence of internal and external audit and any other similar review process; for example, reviewing and approving the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.
 - Providing a sharp focus on financial reporting both during the year and at year end, leading to increased confidence in the objectivity and fairness of the financial reporting process.
 - Assisting the co-ordination of sources of assurance and, in so doing, making management more accountable.
 - Providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review.
 - Raising awareness within the Council of the need for governance, internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations.
 - Providing assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management arrangements and reducing the risk of illegal or improper acts.
4. The Committee continues to have a professional and arm's length relationship with Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, who

attend all meetings of the Committee to offer their advice where needed.

5. The Committee undertakes a substantial range of activities and works closely with both internal and external auditors and the Chief Finance Officer (Executive Director of Resources /Section 151 Officer) in achieving our aims and objectives. We have put together a work and development plan for the year to enable key tasks to be considered and completed.
6. As Chair of the Audit Committee, I see training as a key priority for members to undertake our roles effectively. The Committee continues to undertake a full and extensive programme of training and this year has been no exception. Training has been received in relation to:
 - What to expect from Internal Audit reports?
 - Counter fraud
 - Audit Committee self-assessment
 - Update on the Statement of accounts
 - Risk management
 - Financial management
 - Treasury management
 - Resources Directorate and how the revised structure will help provide assurance on the internal control, risk management and governance environment of the Council
 - People Directorate and how Adult and Children's Services are working to provide assurances on the internal control, risk management and governance environment of the Council
 - Strategic risk management
 - Governance replacement for the Clinical Commissioning Group going forward and the Assurance processes for the Council.

Members also have access to CIPFA's Better Governance Forum network which provides specific information in the form of regular briefings, training events, and an informative web site and received various communication updates throughout the year on the following topics:

- The latest strategic, finance and governance issues and briefings that will have implications for audit committee members
 - Supporting improvements to risk management arrangements
 - Defining the relationship between the audit committee and the scrutiny function
 - Consultation on local audit and audit committee arrangements
 - NAO Climate change risk good practice guide
 - Guidance for audit committees on cloud services.
7. This year the Committee has held five planned meetings including the meeting held on 20th July 2022. We have received and considered a substantial number of reports across key areas of the Council's activity (see Annex A).

Audit Committee Membership and Dates of Meetings

8. Membership of the Audit Committee for 2021/22 was made up of the following Councillors: Brian Williams (Chairman), Simon Harris (Vice Chairman), Rosemary Dartnall, Nigel Lumby and Roger Evans. Substitutes were invited to attend and contribute at all meetings and training.
9. Meetings of the Committee have been held on:
- 15 September 2021
 - 22 October 2021
 - 22 February 2022
 - 12 May 2022 (Election of Chairman and Vice only) and
 - 20 July 2022.

Training sessions have also been held on the following dates using Teams:

- 17 June 2021
- 10 September 2021
- 2 December 2021
- 17 February 2022.

Details of Reports/Information Received

10. **Annex A** provides a summary of the key reports and information received by the Audit Committee at its meetings. These appear categorised in the areas which, under the Terms of Reference, Audit Committee have a responsibility to consider and report upon. They are
- Governance;
 - Risk management framework;
 - Controls, including specific focus on:
 - Contracts and partnerships
 - Fraud, corruption and whistleblowing
 - Value for money

A detailed audit work plan has been agreed for the current year.

11. Following receipt of the reports the Audit Committee:
- Resolved that there were reasonable arrangements for corporate governance and where improvements are required there is a clear improvement plan with dedicated lead officers that will be monitored by Members.
 - Resolved that the risk management and assurance framework was fit for purpose and operating as intended.
 - Recognised the increased risks in the control environment and resolved that there is still a need with pressures on resources and following the Council's response to COVID and changes to major systems, to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike on the internal control environment. Members focus will remain on areas critical to the Council, i.e. internal

control environments in respect of the embedding of ERP software, IT management and cyber security, major contracts and commercial activities.

- Resolved that there were effective arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, and for enabling whistleblowing (confidential reporting).
- Resolved that there was evidence of effective arrangements in place to support Value for Money but recognised the links to good financial management and sound internal controls in minimising opportunities for waste and fraud and maximising income and use of all assets, and the need to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike given the reported direction of travel of the internal control environment.
- Resolved that Financial Statements reflected the Council's true position, were complete including all transactions, and were prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

12. The Head of Audit has offered limited assurance for the 2021/22 year on the Council's framework for governance, risk management and internal control. There are a continuing and increased number of high and medium risk rated weaknesses identified in key individual assignments that are significant in aggregate but where discrete parts of the system of internal control remain unaffected. Management of Coronavirus has introduced unprecedented pressures and responses, and this inevitably has impacted upon her opinion. Managers' priorities have been diverted to business continuity pressures and this has reduced capacity to plan and deliver improvements to known internal control processes, leading to maintained and increased risks in some areas that may impact on delivery of the Council's objectives. The year has continued to be challenging with the embedding of key fundamental line of business systems (financial and human resources), changes of key managerial posts, alongside a challenge to deliver savings, increase income and respond to changing Coronavirus pressures, at times on a daily and weekly basis.

Audit Service Staff

13. The key staff are James Walton, the Section 151 Officer, Ceri Pilawski, the Head of Audit and her deputies, Principal Auditors: Katie Williams, Peter Chadderton and Barry Hanson. The Council is fortunate that these officers have all been in their roles for several years now and their lengthy experience is greatly beneficial to the Council.
14. Without the support of all Audit staff and of the officers mentioned above, it would not be possible for the Audit Committee to be as greatly effective as peer comparisons show us to be. My fellow Audit Committee members will wish to join me in thanks and appreciation of the high professional competence and dedication of the Head of Audit and all her staff.

Annual Statement of Assurance

15. Based on:

- The work carried out by the Internal and External Auditors and their reports presented to this Committee;
- Reports from service managers and;
- The work carried out by the Section 151 Officer, Head of Audit and their reports presented to this Committee

The Audit Committee recognises and is concerned about the limitations identified in the internal control framework and the impact on value for money. However, on balance, the Audit Committee can provide reasonable assurance, founded on those reports, explanations and assurances received, that the Council has in place adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control systems; internal, external audit functions and financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects.

RECOMMENDATION – Council is asked to accept this report

Signed Date.....

On behalf of the Audit Committee
Brian Williams

Summary of assurance reports received by Audit Committee

Governance

- **Management report; Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and a review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls and Shropshire's Code of Corporate Governance**

Report of the Section 151 Officer on the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and the production of the Annual Governance Statement. In addition, he reported on compliance with the Corporate Governance Code as reasonable. It confirmed the Council's commitment to the principles of good corporate governance and set out clear improvements targeted at managing known strategic risk areas for 2022/23.

- **Internal Audit – Annual review of Internal Audit, Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) 2021/22**

Report of the Head of Audit confirmed, following a self-assessment quality assurance review 2021 (QAIP), that Internal Audit complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and where there is some limited partial conformance, this is normal in local government environments and not significant enough for escalation in the Annual Governance Statement. An external assessment was planned for the current year, in compliance with the PSIAS, details of which had been confirmed with the Chairman and Section 151 Officer. Following receipt and consideration of several quotations the contract had been awarded to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for an assessment of the self-assessment process.

Report of the Head of Audit reported that CIPFA conducted an external assessment and concluded that; 'Shropshire Council's Audit Services self-assessment is accurate and they FULLY CONFORM to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA Local Government Application Note'. The results of the review have been shared with all customers to demonstrate the level of compliance and quality of the Service.

Report of the Section 151 Officer which provided Members with the results of the 2022 self-assessment of the Internal Audit Service against the requirements of the Public Sector Audit Standards, compliance against which demonstrates an effective Internal Audit service. There are no areas where the Internal Audit function is not complying with the Code and, whilst there are areas of partial compliance, these are not considered significant and do not compromise compliance with the code. It was noted the report should be read in conjunction with the Internal Audit Annual Report.

- **Annual review of Audit Committee terms of reference**

Report of the S151 Officer which ensures that the Council continues to provide an effective Audit Committee. Terms of Reference are considered and approved by members annually. There were no significant changes proposed in 2021.

➤ **Annual Audit Committee self-assessment**

Report of the Section 151 Officer which requested members to review and comment on compliance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's guidance on the function and operation of audit committees. There is significant compliance with the code and an improvement plan to address a few areas of partial compliance.

➤ **Internal Audit Charter**

Report of the Head of Audit which set out the requirement for an annual review of the Internal Audit Charter which had been completed. The Charter demonstrates how Internal Audit complies with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The Audit Committee approves the Charter which incorporates the mission, code of ethics, definition and core principles of Internal Audit. There were no significant changes.

➤ **Draft Audit Committee annual work plan and future learning and development requirements 2022/23**

Report of the Head of Audit which provided a proposed Audit Committee work plan and sought discussion and agreement around a learning and development plan for members to ensure they were well informed and appropriately skilled to fulfil their role. Therefore ensuring the integrity of the financial reporting and governance of the Council.

Following membership changes, early training focus has been around the role of Audit Committee and bringing new members up to speed on the Committee's demands of them, enhanced with more detailed training as the calendar of work progresses.

➤ **Annual Assurance report of Audit Committee to Council 2021/22**

Report of the Section 151 Officer in respect of the Audit Committee's Annual Assurance report to Council.

The Audit Committee resolved that there were reasonable arrangements for corporate governance and where improvements are required there is a clear improvement plan with dedicated lead officers that will be monitored by Members.

Risk Management Framework

➤ **Management report: Risk Annual Report 2020/21 incorporating strategic risks update**

Report of the Risk and Insurance Manager who provided assurances on and an overview of the activity of the Risk, Insurance and Resilience Team during 2020/2021 with a synopsis of the current risk exposure of

the Council in relation to strategic, operational and project risks. It also identified key activity for 2021/2022.

The team includes both business continuity management and the civil contingencies responsibilities of emergency planning and because of this have continued to experience unprecedented workload given significant weather events, recovery to and response from Coronavirus. The team has worked tirelessly to respond to all these incidents whilst maintaining delivery of the day job. A 'good' assurance level was achieved following a risk management audit and confirmed that robust policies and procedures were in place, including a shared site for all risk registers allowing for real time updating and reporting. The Opportunity Risk Management Strategy is reviewed annually and reported to the Executive Directors, Cabinet and Audit Committee and all 128 operational risk registers have a named lead officer as the overall risk owner

➤ **Management report: Strategic risks update**

Reports during the year from the Risk and Insurance Manager set out the existing strategic risk exposure. There were currently 17 strategic risks on the strategic risk register. Risks have been reported on separately for Cyber Attack and ICT Infrastructure and Reliance. The Economic Impact of Brexit was managed under the Economic Growth Strategy and therefore removed as a Strategic Risk, the Strategic Vision and Strategy was to be reviewed at the annual Strategic Workshop. Members reviewed and noted the position reported to them.

Strategic risks are monitored to enable achievement of Council priorities and outcomes and are linked, where appropriate, with the Annual Governance Statement Targeted Outcomes.

➤ **Internal Audit report of the review of Risk Management audit 2021/22**

Report of the Principal Auditor which summarised the detailed findings identified in the Internal Audit review of risk management of which the overall control environment had been assessed as Reasonable, with minor control weaknesses identified. The focus of the review was on user compliance with processes around operational and project risks.

➤ **Draft Internal Audit Annual plan 2022/23**

Report of the Head of Audit on the proposed risk based Internal Audit Plan for Audit Committee approval. Designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's risk management, internal control and governance processes across all Directorates and report this in the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23. Given the need to respond flexibly to both the Council's demands and the available resources in the team, at different times throughout the year, the plan is designed to ensure that all externally contracted work for the service is completed and for Shropshire Council, must do areas of work are delivered alongside an element of high risk audits. This leaves an unplanned element to be allocated as resources become available. Allocations will be made on risk priority matched to auditor skill sets from

high risk areas within the Council not covered in the planned element. She also referred members to the appendix, which set out those low risk areas that would not be considered for review by Internal Audit on a rolling basis, to allow Members to consider first line assurances, if required, from managers on these areas.

Members noted the ongoing impact of the Pandemic but recognised that business areas were picking up. The current low staffing position of the Audit team was understood and the measures being taken to address the vacancies were noted. The Head of Audit stressed that the quality of the work provided by the team remained sound, as exemplified by the external assessment.

The Audit Committee resolved that the risk management and assurance framework was fit for purpose and operating as intended.

Controls

➤ **Management Report: Highways Term Maintenance update (exempted)**

The Executive Director of Place provided an update on progress towards a resolution of the issues identified by Audit relating to the management of the Council's Term Maintenance Contract with its Highway's provider.

➤ **Management report: Highways Term Maintenance Contract**

The Executive Director of Place updated Members with continued progress towards a resolution of the issues identified by Audit relating to the management of the Council's Term Maintenance Contract with its Highway's provider. An update on the implementation of Fix my Street was also provided.

➤ **Internal Audit performance report and revised annual audit plan 2021/22**

Report of the Head of Audit which provided Members with an update of the work undertaken by Internal Audit throughout the year. By September Members were informed that 32% of the revised plan had been completed, the Council's response to COVID continued to have an impact on Internal Audit resources at the beginning of the year, these pressures were reducing and there was an opportunity to recruit to vacancies and a need to reduce planned activity in the short term to reflect resignations of long service staff. The fluidity of the plan was discussed and that any significant changes responding to the risk environment would be shared with the S151 Officer and reported back to the Committee.

By the year end the Head of Audit informed members that 97% of the revised plan had been completed and Internal Audit continued to add value to the Council in supporting its business continuity processes and the

delivery of bespoke pieces of work, including sharing best practice and providing advice on system developments.

➤ **Internal Audit Fundamental recommendations (Exempted 2,3,7)**

The exempted report of the Head of Audit set out five fundamental recommendations for the Audit Committee, three from the public update report and two within the exempt report. The information was noted.

➤ **Internal Audit annual report 2021/22**

Report of the Head of Audit on achievements against the revised internal audit plan for 2021/22 and the annual internal audit assurance. The Head of Audit gave limited assurance for the year that the Council's framework for governance, risk management and internal control is sound and working effectively.

Business continuity plans were mobilised for the complete year and this impacted on delivery in terms of changing scopes as did the impact of reduced resources, but activity still provided sound coverage for her opinion. Revisions were made to the plan to reflect both changing resources and risks. She explained that there are continuing, and increased number of high and medium risk rated weaknesses identified in key individual assignments that are significant in aggregate but where discrete parts of the system of internal control remain unaffected. Management of Coronavirus has introduced unprecedented pressures and responses, and this inevitably has impacted upon her opinion. Managers' priorities have been diverted to business continuity pressures and this has removed capacity to plan and deliver improvements to known internal control processes, leading to maintained and increased risks in some areas that may impact on delivery of the Council's objectives. The year has continued to be challenging with the embedding of key fundamental line of business systems (financial and human resources), changes of key managerial posts, alongside a challenge to deliver savings, increase income and respond to changing Coronavirus pressures, at times on a daily and weekly basis.

The Audit Committee recognise the increased risks in the control environment and resolved that there is still a need with pressures on resources and following the Council's response to COVID and changes to major systems, to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike on the internal control environment. Members focus will remain on areas critical to the Council, i.e. internal control environments in respect of the embedding of ERP software, IT management and cyber security, major contracts and commercial activities.

Controls: Fraud, Corruption and Whistleblowing

➤ **Fraud, special investigation and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) update (Exempted by categories 2, 3 and 7)**

Members are provided with exempt reports of the Principal Auditor providing an update on the current fraud and special investigations undertaken by Internal Audit and current RIPA activity.

➤ **Annual review of Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Strategy and activities, including an update on the National Fraud Initiative**

Report of the Head of Audit outlined the measures undertaken in the last year to evaluate the potential for the occurrence of fraud, and how the Council managed these risks with the aim of prevention, detection and subsequent reporting of fraud, bribery and corruption. It also provided an update on the action plan to ensure continuous improvement and an update to members in response to national and local issues. It was confirmed that the Strategy had been reviewed and updated to reflect both best practice and to continue to be aligned with the updated Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy 2020. The Council can never be free from fraud activities, but continues to be focused on acknowledging, preventing and pursuing fraud, bribery and corruption and Audit Committee members reaffirmed the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Strategy.

➤ **Annual Whistleblowing report**

Report of the Assistant Director of Workforce and Improvement which detailed the cases reported under the Whistleblowing arrangements. Assurance was provided as to the currency of the Whistleblowing Policy and its effectiveness.

The Audit Committee resolved that there were effective arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, and for enabling whistleblowing (confidential reporting).

Controls: Value for Money

Sound internal controls lead to the effective, efficient and economic use of Council resources (VFM), assurances are taken from the robustness of the internal control environment, management of risks, soundness of governance and any additional reports add weight to these.

➤ **External Audit: Pension fund audit plan 2021/22**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) setting out the Pension fund plan for the year ending 31 March 2022.

➤ **External Audit: Audit fee letter 2021/22**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) setting out the audit fee for the year ending 31 March 2022.

The Audit Committee resolved that there was evidence of effective arrangements in place to support Value for Money but recognised the links to good financial management and sound internal controls in minimising opportunities for waste and fraud and maximising income and

use of all assets, and the need to ensure continual monitoring by management and members alike given the reported direction of travel of the internal control environment.

Financial reporting

➤ **External Audit: Shropshire County Pension Fund Audit Findings (Information) 2020/21**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) summarised the findings for the year ended 31 March 2021 on the audit of the Pension Fund financial statements. It confirmed that there were no issues around the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern and that it was intended to issue an unqualified opinion to the Pensions Committee.

➤ **External Audit: Audit progress report and sector update**

Report of the Engagement Lead (Grant Thornton) which highlighted progress and provided a summary of emerging national issues and developments of relevance to the Council. Including changes to arrangements for securing Value for Money to be included in the Auditor's Annual Report. The Engagement Manager explained that there was a slight delay in reporting on the Whole of Government Accounts, due to a delay with the workbook.

In February he confirmed that the audit of the 2020/21 financial statements had been substantially completed with just a couple of areas awaiting evidence. Certification of the Housing Benefit grant had been completed and work ongoing for the Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts and Teachers Pensions returns.

Sector updates were provided on: Supporting local economic growth by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities and Consultation - Changes to the capital framework: Minimum Revenue Provision.

➤ **Financial outturn report 2021/22**

Report from the Section 151 Officer providing details of the revenue outturn position for the Council and the full year capital expenditure and financing of the Council's capital programme.

➤ **Appointment of External Auditors, Changes to Arrangements for**

Report of the Section 151 Officer asked Members to consider and propose the most efficient and effective way of procuring an External Auditor from April 2023, to Council for their consideration and final decision.

The current arrangement with External Audit was coming to an end and the Council needed to go through the process of appointing a new External Auditor. There were three options contained in the report, two of which would place enormous demand on officer time along with unnecessary expense and therefore the Committee agreed to using the

Sector Led Body, the PSAA by indicating an option to “opt-in” as the preferred approach be recommended for approval to Council.

➤ **Approval of the Council’s Statement of Accounts 2020/21 including a review of accounting policies**

September: Report of the Section 151 Officer on the final unaudited outturn position for the financial year 2020/21 and detailed amendments made to the draft Statement of Accounts during the audit process to date.

The report identified what each of the amendments since the draft position were and included a summary of the reasoning for that change. The External Audit of the accounts was ongoing and therefore an additional meeting in October was arranged to consider and sign off the Statement of Accounts and any adjustments.

➤ **Final approval of the Council’s Statement of Accounts 2020/21 and the External Audit: Draft Annual Audit Findings Report 2020/21**

Report of the Section 151 Officer which presented members with the audited outturn position for the financial year 2020/21 and detailed amendments made to the Draft Statement of Accounts during the audit process. Grant Thornton had substantially completed the audit and no material changes were identified during the audit to date, however there had been one amendment to the core financial statements and a few other amendments made to the disclosures. The main changes were summarised and in summary the adjustments included amendments to the balance sheet and the group balance sheets in relation to the classification of a grant, an adjustment had also been made in the group income and expenditure statement of accounts and some adjustments had been made in the accounting policies in relation to non-current assets as well as critical judgment and applying accounting policies. Amendments had also been made to a few notes to the accounts which were listed on the report. The Interim Director of Strategic Finance confirmed that the final audit opinion would not be available until the audit had been completed however External Audit were anticipating an unqualified opinion pending the satisfactory conclusion of outstanding matters. The Annual Governance Statement had been approved by the Audit Committee on 30 July 2021.

Report of the Engagement Lead which set out the findings from the audit that were significant to those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260. He was hopeful that they would be able to report back to the Audit Committee at its December meeting.

➤ **Approval of the Council’s Statement of Accounts 2021/22**

Report of the Section 151 Officer on the final unaudited outturn position for the financial year 2021/22.

Treasury Management

➤ **Annual treasury report 2020/21**

Report of the Section 151 Officer providing information on treasury activities for Shropshire Council for the year including the investment performance of the Internal Treasury team to 31 March 2021. He reported that the Internal Treasury team had continued to outperform their investment benchmark by 0.47% and that performance over the last three years was 0.40% per annum above benchmark delivering an underspend of £3.21 million. This was mainly due to a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision savings following the Council's review of the policy and interest payable savings as no borrowing was undertaken.

Treasury activities during the year had been within approved prudential and treasury indicators set and have complied with the Treasury Strategy.

➤ **Treasury Strategy 2021/22 mid-year report**

Report of the Section 151 Officer which provided an economic update for the first six months of 2021; including a review of the investment portfolio and borrowing strategy for 2021/22 and confirmed compliance with Treasury and Prudential limits. The report was prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. As of 30 September 2021, the Council held £175m in investments and had £292m of borrowing.

➤ **Treasury Strategy 2022/23**

Report of the Section 151 Officer which proposed the Treasury Strategy for 2022/23 and the recommended Prudential Indicators for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Audit Committee resolved that Financial Statements reflected the Council's true position, were complete including all transactions, and were prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council 22 nd September 2022

<u>Item</u>
Public

Modern Slavery Statement 2021

Responsible Officer

James Walton

Tel: 01743258915

1. Synopsis

The Council have a legislative requirement under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to publish a Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking statement which sets out its Policy and steps taken to ensure modern slavery is not taking place in the organisation's own business and its supply chains.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act") requires large businesses to disclose the steps they have taken to ensure their business and supply chains are free from modern slavery (that is, slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking).
- 2.2 The Council last year published voluntarily a statement (see attached appendix B).
- 2.3 The Council is now required under the Act to publish an annual Statement.
- 2.4 Our Statement shows the steps we have taken over the last 12 months to ensure our business and supply chains are free from modern slavery.
- 2.5 Our statement also shows the further steps we are planning within the next 12 months to achieve the same aims.
- 2.6 The statement describes our supply chains, our policies and procedures, Adult and Children safeguarding and confirms our zero tolerance to modern slavery and human trafficking. It also sets out the next steps we intend to make over the next 12 months to

continue to safeguard against Modern Slavery, Trafficking and exploitation and to promote awareness throughout the Council.

- 2.7 The Council's draft Modern Slavery Statement for 2021/22 is attached (see appendix A) for approval to allow it then to be published on our website and also on the Government's central register.
- 2.8 If approved by Cabinet, the statement needs to be signed by The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Shropshire Council's Modern Slavery Statement 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A is approved for publication.
- 3.2 That the Statement is signed by The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council and the statement is published as required.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. By making this anti Modern Slavery statement there is a direct positive impact towards the protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults as well as a person's human rights. Without a statement and further actions we run a greater risk of allowing modern slavery to take place.
- 4.2 Although there are no penalties under the Act for failing to comply with the publication requirement (except that the Secretary of State can apply for an injunction to compel us to comply), a failure by the Council to publish an accurate and robust slavery and human trafficking statement may attract criticism and negative publicity from our key stakeholders and others in the community. In turn, this has the potential to attract negative publicity that affects our brand.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 By making this anti Modern Slavery statement there are no direct financial implications

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 By making this anti Modern Slavery statement there is expected to be 'no effect' on the following:-

- Energy and fuel consumption
- Renewable energy generation
- Carbon offsetting or mitigation
- Climate change adaptation

7. Background

7.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced changes in UK law that focused on increasing transparency in supply chains. Specifically, large businesses are required to disclose the steps they have taken to ensure their business and supply chains are free from modern slavery (that is, slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking). 'Commercial organisations' (body corporates or partnerships carrying on any part of their business in the UK) that supply goods or services and have a minimum turnover of £36 million (including turnover of subsidiaries) are required to produce a slavery and human trafficking statement each financial year. The statement should include the steps taken to ensure modern slavery is not taking place in the organisation's own business and its supply chains (this does not mean the organisation must guarantee the entire supply chain is slavery free).

7.2 The Council voluntarily published a statement adhering to the requirements of the Act for 2020/21 earlier this year see appendix B.

7.3 Whilst previously the publication of a statement by the Council was voluntary the Council is now under a legal obligation to Publish a statement annually under new provisions of the updated Act.

7.4 The statement needs to be approved by Council and signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The statement must be published on our website.

7.5 We therefore have prepared an anti-slavery and human trafficking statement for 2021/2022 ready for publication.

7.6 The Act includes information about what may be included in the statement, such as a statement about our policies in relation to modern slavery, our due diligence processes, and a statement about the parts of our business and supply chains where there is a risk of modern slavery taking place (including the steps we have taken to assess and manage that risk).

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

A. Modern Slavery Statement for Shropshire Council 2020/21

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Lezley Picton

Local Member not applicable

Appendices

A. Modern Slavery Statement for Shropshire Council 2021/22

B. Modern Slavery Statement for Shropshire Council 2020/21

Shropshire Council – Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement (Financial Year 2021/2022)

Introduction

The Council is committed to improving our practices to combat slavery and human trafficking in carrying out our functions and providing services and in ensuring that the Council's supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out Shropshire Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to our services and businesses and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our own services and businesses and our supply chains.

As an organisation within Local Government organisation, the Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking which also includes its responsibility as local authority to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking further to section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Council recognises that people of all ages can be the subject of slavery (which can take various forms such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour) and human trafficking and if so, are the victims of a violation of their fundamental human rights, illegal exploitation and crime. The Council wishes to disrupt such criminal activity where possible and will report suspected criminal matters to West Mercia Police. The Council is committed to working with partner organisations, including West Mercia Police, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, The Probation Service, all health providers and the voluntary and independent sector to help raise awareness and respond to the risks of modern slavery in our community.

Organisational structure and business

As a Local Government Authority, Shropshire Council provides and commissions a wide range of public services to the people of Shropshire, as well as undertaking a number of corporate activities for the proper operation of the Council and its administrative facilities and functions across the County. The Council only operates within the United Kingdom.

This statement covers the activities undertaken by the Council's direct employees and agency workers engaged by the Council and services delivered on the Council's behalf by third party organisations as part of the Council's supply chains.

Our supply chains

Our supply chains include: Adult and Children Social Care Providers, Food and Catering suppliers, Clothing and Equipment suppliers, Passenger Transport Providers, Highways Maintenance & Work Contractors, Construction and Building Contractors, Property Maintenance Contractors, Waste Collection & Disposal Contractor, ICT Supplies, Systems and Services Providers and Various Professional Services Providers.

We recognise that some of these supply chains may contain higher risk activities and aim to direct resources as appropriate to address such risks.

Our policies and procedures

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. Our policies and procedures reflect our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to take steps to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in our supply chains.

The Council's policies and procedures which assist to prevent and respond to issues around modern slavery and human trafficking in the wider community of Shropshire include:

- **The Council's recruitment and selection policies for employees**

These policies help us ensure we are recruiting the right people to the right roles within the council and includes robust processes for checking:

- the entitlement of applicants to work in the country
- gaps in employment
- qualifications (where required)
- references (one of whom must be their previous manager)
- statutory checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service and relevant professional bodies (where appropriate to do so)

These processes help prevent us from recruiting both victims and perpetrators of modern slavery and human trafficking.

- **Employee Code of Conduct**

The code makes it clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour in all its operations and when managing our supply chain.

- **Whistleblowing Policy**

The Council has adopted both a Staff Whistleblowing Policy 'Speaking up About Wrongdoing' and a whistleblowing policy for members of the public to encourage all its workers, customers, business partners and members of the public to report any concerns relating to unlawful activity or activity that does not meet established standards or working practices. The Council's whistleblowing procedures provide specific contact points and a Hotline number and are designed to make it easy for people to come forward and voice concerns and make disclosures, without fear of retaliation or victimisation. It is part of the Council's general contract terms that Contractors ensure their employees are made aware of the Council's whistleblowing policy

- **Safeguarding Adults process**

The Safeguarding Adults in Shropshire document explains when we expect concerns to be raised with Shropshire Council about adults with care and support when they are experiencing or at risk of abuse. The definition of abuse includes all forms of exploitation. If exploitation is identified, a safeguarding enquiry will be undertaken with the person affected which will include the development of a safety plan.

Once the enquiry is completed, if the risk remains, the person will have a Safeguarding Plan in place until the risk has been reduced or removed. Other tools available to support this work include:

- Working with Risk
- Working with People who Self-Neglect

An adult exploitation pathway pilot has been rolled out this year. Six people were supported through this process and as a result of inter-agency working, two people who were at high risk had their risk reduced to low.

A presentation was delivered to providers of Adult Social Care to help raise their awareness of the role they could play in preventing Modern Slavery.

- **Child Exploitation Pathway**

The Child Exploitation Tools and Pathway have been developed to respond to concerns when children are identified as being at risk of exploitation. The tools available to support this work include:

- Child Exploitation Initial Assessment Tool
- Child Exploitation Initial Assessment Tool Practice Guidance
- Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance for Practitioners
- Intelligence Report Form
- Childrens Threshold Document
- Joint Board Criminal Exploitation and County Lines Learning Briefing

The Child Exploitation Panel actively plans the protection of Children experiencing exploitation on case by case basis.

- **Self Assessment and Action Plan for Serious and Organised Crime**

In response to the risks to the Council relating to Serious and Organised Crime the Council has developed a checklist together with an action plan. The checklist has been completed and evidenced in liaison with Directors, Heads of Service and key Procurement and other Officers to reach a high level, but balanced assessment of our exposure to the risks and in doing this, actions have been highlighted as part of an improvement plan for managing those risks on an on-going basis.

- **Corporate Contract for Agency workers managed service**

The Council uses only specified, reputable employment agencies to source labour and the majority of our agency placements are made through our appointed managed service provider. It verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency. The contractual audit process with the managed service provider supplies the required evidence of panel providers abilities to comply.

- **Taxi contractor Policy**

Our Taxi Policy states: Shropshire Council ('the Council') is Particularly concerned to ensure: a zero tolerance approach towards modern slavery and human trafficking (modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights and can take various forms such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking

Corporate Procurement

The Council's Corporate Procurement Team work with service areas to ensure the procurement of larger value goods and services on behalf of the Council include relevant due diligence to mitigate the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring in our supply chains. This includes Tenderer's declarations during the procurement process in respect of their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and confirmation that they are not involved in such prohibited activity.

Supplier adherence to our values

We have zero tolerance to slavery and human trafficking. To ensure all those in our supply chain and contractors comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 we require all tenderers to confirm that they are compliant with the annual reporting requirements under the Act, where it is applicable to them. Suppliers are required to demonstrate that they provide safe working conditions where necessary, treat workers with dignity and respect, and act ethically and within the law in their use of labour. However, serious violations of the Council's supplier expectations will lead to the termination of the business relationship.

Training

To ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains and our business, we provide awareness raising training to our staff and Members.

Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership - A Modern Slavery Statement template has been produced and agreed for partnership use.

Further steps

Following a review of the effectiveness of the steps we have taken to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains we intend to take the following further steps to combat slavery and human trafficking, which will include:

- Undertaking and providing access to further mandatory awareness training for staff involved in Commissioning and Procurement Activities and to continue awareness raising in Members induction training. Directors have mandated the training and this will be rolled out over the next 12 months.
- Undertaking and providing access to mandatory awareness training for all council staff about Community Safety matters which will include tackling modern slavery and human trafficking.
- To continue to review and update our mitigating activity in relation to serious and organised crime.
- Undertaking further work to strengthen our processes and awareness raising for those areas that are identified as higher risk within our supply chains.
- Developing information for Tenderers to raise their awareness of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains and clarify the Council's expectations of those organisations with whom we do business.
- Embedding the work from the Adult Exploitation Pathway Pilot into everyday practice.
- Arranging a discussion session for public body commissioners to raise awareness and provide an update on Modern Slavery and identify current issues for public body commissioners.
- SSCP plan to produce safeguarding and community safety information targeted host families and Ukrainian visitors.
- This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Shropshire Council's Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement. This Statement has been approved by the Council's Chief Executive and the Leader of Shropshire Council. This Statement will be reviewed and updated annually.

Signed

Signed

Date

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Shropshire Council – Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement (Financial Year 2020/2021)

Introduction

The Council is committed to improving our practices to combat slavery and human trafficking in carrying out our functions and providing services and in ensuring that the Council's supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out Shropshire Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to our services and businesses and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our own services and businesses and our supply chains.

As an organisation within Local Government organisation, the Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking which also includes its responsibility as local authority to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking further to section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Council recognises that people of all ages can be the subject of slavery and human trafficking and if so, are the victims of illegal exploitation and crime. The Council wishes to disrupt such criminal activity where possible and will report suspected criminal matters to West Mercia Police. The Council is committed to working with partner organisations, including West Mercia Police, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, The Probation Service, all health providers and the voluntary and independent sector to help raise awareness and respond to the risks of modern slavery in our community.

Organisational structure and business

As a Local Government Authority, Shropshire Council provides and commissions a wide range of public services to the people of Shropshire, as well as undertaking a number of corporate activities for the proper operation of the Council and its administrative facilities and functions across the County. The Council only operates within the United Kingdom.

This statement covers the activities undertaken by the Council's direct employees and agency workers engaged by the Council and services delivered on the Council's behalf by third party organisations as part of the Council's supply chains.

Our supply chains

Our supply chains include: Adult and Children Social Care Providers, Food and Catering suppliers, Clothing and Equipment suppliers, Passenger Transport Providers, Highways Maintenance & Work Contractors, Construction and Building Contractors, Property Maintenance Contractors, Waste Collection & Disposal Contractor, ICT Supplies, Systems and Services Providers and Various Professional Services Providers.

We recognise that some of these supply chains may contain higher risk activities and aim to direct resources as appropriate to address such risks.

Our policies and procedures

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. Our policies and procedures reflect our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to take steps to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in our supply chains.

The Council's policies and procedures which assist to prevent and respond to issues around modern slavery and human trafficking in the wider community of Shropshire include:

- **The Council's recruitment and selection policies for employees**

These policies help us ensure we are recruiting the right people to the right roles within the council and includes robust processes for checking:

- the entitlement of applicants to work in the country
- gaps in employment
- qualifications (where required)
- references (one of whom must be their previous manager)
- statutory checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service and relevant professional bodies (where appropriate to do so)

These processes help prevent us from recruiting both victims and perpetrators of modern slavery and human trafficking.

- **Employee Code of Conduct**

The code makes it clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour in all its operations and when managing our supply chain.

- **Whistleblowing Policy**

The Council has adopted both a Staff Whistleblowing Policy 'Speaking up About Wrongdoing' and a whistleblowing policy for members of the public to encourage all its workers, customers, business partners and members of the public to report any concerns relating to unlawful activity or activity that does not meet established standards or working practices. The Council's whistleblowing procedures provide specific contact points and a Hotline number and are designed to make it easy for people to come forward and voice concerns and make disclosures, without fear of retaliation or victimisation. It is part of the Council's general contract terms that Contractors ensure their employees are made aware of the Council's whistleblowing policy

- **Safeguarding Adults process**

The Safeguarding Adults in Shropshire document explains when we expect concerns to be raised with Shropshire Council about adults with care and support when they experiencing or at risk of abuse. The definition of abuse includes all forms of exploitation. If exploitation is identified, a safeguarding enquiry will be undertaken with the person affected which will include the development of a safety plan.

Once the enquiry is completed, if the risk remains, the person will have a Safeguarding Plan in place until the risk has been reduced or removed. Other tools available to support this work include:

- Working with Risk
- Working with People who Self-Neglect

- **Child Exploitation Pathway**

The Child Exploitation Tools and Pathway have been developed to respond to concerns when children are identified as being at risk of exploitation. The tools available to support this work include:

- Child Exploitation Initial Assessment Tool
- Child Exploitation Initial Assessment Tool Practice Guidance
- Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance for Practitioners
- Intelligence Report Form
- Childrens Threshold Document
- Joint Board Criminal Exploitation and County Lines Learning Briefing

The Child Exploitation Panel actively plans the protection of Children experiencing exploitation on case by case basis.

- **Self Assessment and Action Plan for Serious and Organised Crime**

In response to the risks to the Council relating to Serious and Organised Crime the Council has developed a checklist together with an action plan. The checklist has been completed and evidenced in liaison with Directors, Heads of Service and key Procurement and other Officers to reach a high level, but balanced assessment of our exposure to the risks and in doing this, actions have been highlighted as part of an improvement plan for managing those risks on an on-going basis.

- **Corporate Contract for Agency workers managed service**

The Council uses only specified, reputable employment agencies to source labour and the majority of our agency placements are made through our appointed managed service provider. It verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency. The contractual audit process with the managed service provider supplies the required evidence of panel providers abilities to comply.

- **Corporate Procurement**

- The Council's corporate Procurement Team work with service areas to ensure the procurement of larger value goods and services on behalf of the Council include relevant due diligence to mitigate the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring in our supply chains. This includes Tenderer's declarations during the procurement process in respect of their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and confirmation that they are not involved in such prohibited activity.

Supplier adherence to our values

We have zero tolerance to slavery and human trafficking. To ensure all those in our supply chain and contractors comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 we require all tenderers to confirm that they are compliant with the annual reporting requirements under the Act, where it is applicable to them. Suppliers are required to demonstrate that they provide safe working conditions where necessary, treat workers with dignity and respect, and act ethically and within the law in their use of labour. However, serious violations of the Council's supplier expectations will lead to the termination of the business relationship.

Training

To ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains and our business, we provide awareness raising training to our staff and Members.

Further steps

Following a review of the effectiveness of the steps we have taken to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains we intend to take the following further steps to combat slavery and human trafficking, which will include:

- Undertaking and providing access to further awareness training for staff involved in Commissioning and Procurement Activities and to continue awareness raising in Members induction training.
- Undertaking and providing access to mandatory awareness training for all council staff about Community Safety matters including tackling modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Promotion of LGA E-learning training until mandatory training is put in place.
- To continue to review and update our mitigating activity in relation to serious and organised crime.
- Undertaking further work to strengthen our processes for those areas that are identified as higher risk within our supply chains.
- Developing information for Tenderers to raise their awareness of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains and clarify the Council's expectations of those organisations with whom we do business.
- Working with and assisting our partner organisations, including Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership, to raise awareness of the risks of modern slavery and encourage

voluntary publication of Modern Slavery Statements, including by providing a template document for use.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Shropshire Council's Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement. This Statement has been approved by the Council's Chief Executive and the Leader of Shropshire Council. This Statement will be reviewed and updated annually.

Signed 

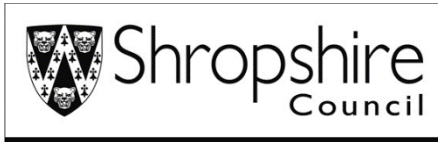
Lezley Picton, Leader, Shropshire Council

Signed 

Andy Begley, Chief Executive, Shropshire Council

Date 29 March 2022

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council 22 nd September 2022

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

Update on Cornovii Developments Contracting Arrangements

Responsible Officer

e-mail: Jane.Trethewey@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254917

1 Synopsis

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the procurement and contracting arrangements of its wholly owned development company, Cornovii Developments Limited (CDL).

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 In July 2019 CDL was incorporated further to the final approval and delegations in the Council report of the 28th February 2019, *Addressing Unmet Housing Need – Establishment of a Wholly Owned Local Housing Company*. Based on the legal advice received prior to incorporation of the company, the Council proceeded on the basis that CDL would not have the status of a 'contracting authority' and therefore not be subject to Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the PCR"). In other words it would not be subject to the public procurement regime.
- 2.2 Since its establishment however, CDL has grown as an organisation moving into direct delivery phase, supported through a strengthened board and staff team. Alongside this the Council strengthened its shareholder function, providing oversight and monitoring of the Company's activities. The evolution of these structures and the relationship between CDL and the Council has set the context for a review.
- 2.3 In response to a query raised by CDL about its procurement position as a local authority owned company and the need to undertake formal procurement processes, the Council and CDL appointed

Counsel to provide an opinion on the matter, as an initial legal review concluded that the issue was finely balanced on the circumstances.

- 2.4 The subsequent opinion provided by Counsel has concluded, that whilst the issue is not clear cut, on balance CDL probably does have the status of a body governed by public law and is therefore a 'contracting authority' that is subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 when it lets contracts for goods, works and services.
- 2.5 Furthermore, Counsel has provided an opinion on the current management supervision arrangements in place between the Council and CDL, concluding that it is more likely than not that current management supervision of CDL would meet the definition of 'control' similar to that which the Council exercises over its own departments, such that CDL would be classified as a controlled legal person.
- 2.6 This creates an exemption from PCR, sometimes referred to as the 'Teckal Exemption', and may mean that the Council is able to award contracts to CDL without meeting the obligations of PCR in future.
- 2.7 This report sets out the basis upon which Counsel has reached his conclusions and the implications of his opinion.
- 2.8 CDL have assessed the implications and specifically the requirement to undertake formal procurement processes as a "Contracting Authority" in accordance with PCR. and has confirmed that there would be no impact on its current Business Plan, its anticipated delivery and expected returns.
- 2.9 The reports notes that the outcome of Counsel's opinion does not change the objectives of CDL, its current Business Plan or the arrangements and structure in currently in place between the Council and the Company. Although there will be no material change to the way in which CDL operates, or to its arrangements with the Council, its recognised procurement status is changed from that envisaged when the Company was established and that this needed to be brought to the attention of members of the Council.

3 Recommendations

That members:

- 3.1 Agree the position that Cornovii Developments Limited is subject to public procurement obligations, meaning that it must meet the requirements of Public Contract Regulations, when procuring, works, goods and services (noting the arrangements in place between the Council and the Company also gives rise to the potential for a 'Teckal' arrangement in the future).

- 3.2 Authorise, as required, the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Governance; and Portfolio Holder for Digital, Data Insight and Built Housing, to determine and approve any appropriate amendments to the detailed governance or operation of Cornovii Developments Ltd identified as a result of Counsel's advice.

REPORT

4 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 As a 'Contracting Authority' CDL will be required to engage in formal procurement arrangements in accordance with the PCR. CDL have taken independent legal advice on this matter, reviewing their financial regulations and standing orders accordingly. CDL have confirmed that they do not consider the obligations imposed upon them as a Contracting Authority will impact their ability to deliver the outputs contained within the current Business Plan, either housing numbers or expected return to the Shareholder.
- 4.2 As a Contracting Authority CDL will be bound by the PCR when it lets contracts for goods, works and services, and whilst this is a matter of compliance for CDL and its board of directors, the Council, through the Housing Supervisory Board, and its Client function will seek assurance that all obligations are being met. To this end CDL will work with Shropshire Council's Procurement Team and independent procurement advisors to take advice and guidance on all procurement activity which may meet the 2022 PCR thresholds. Procurement activity of the company will be audited as part of the Company's Internal Audit Programme. Under the terms of the Shareholder Agreement the Company is obliged to share the findings of all internal audit reports with the Housing Supervisory Board.
- 4.3 As a 'Contracting Authority', where CDL also satisfies all conditions of Regulation 12 of the PCR (see further below), this would present an opportunity for the Council to contract directly with CDL (without itself undergoing a formal procurement exercise), enabling the expertise and resources of the Company to be utilised to support the Council's wider residential and development ambitions. Appropriate advice would be obtained from the Council's procurement team or from an independent procurement specialist before considering the letting of any contracts to CDL directly to ensure that the requirements of Regulation 12 are met at the relevant time the Council wishes to let a contract to CDL.
- 4.4 As the commissioner of services, the Council, prior to the award of any contract to CDL would need to be satisfied that it delivered best

value, with alternatives, both internal and external, also considered and discounted alongside the option of delivery by CDL.

- 4.5 Whether or not CDL is a contracting authority and whether it satisfies all conditions under Regulation 12 of the PCR is a fluid classification. This means that the circumstances of CDL which mean it fulfils the conditions to enable the Council to contract with the Company, without first going through a competitive tendering process, are subject to review. Continued monitoring of the arrangements between the Council and the Company and the operations of CDL will be undertaken to ensure that the conditions against which its status has been determined remain unchanged, or not changed to the extent that the conditions are no longer met.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 CDL does not expect that financial returns to the Council, as predicted within its current Business Plan, will be impacted negatively by its status as a Contracting Authority
- 5.2 CDL's funding arrangements are unchanged. The company remains financed through loans provided by the Council at commercial rates and equity investment, currently provided through the exchange of land at Crowmoor and Ifton for shares in the company.

6 Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 There are no direct Climate Change implications arising from this report. CDL's proposals to deliver against the Council's Climate Change ambitions remain unchanged and continue in line with the 2022 approved Business Plan.

7 Background

- 7.1 CDL was established by Shropshire Council as a wholly owned company in July 2019. The Council's intention at that time, based upon legal advice from Trowers and Hamlin LLP, was to establish a commercial company to help address unmet housing need in its administrative area. The Council decision-making reports, in respect of the establishment of CDL noted that the Company would not be subject to public procurement obligations, this was based upon legal advice received at the time and the Company structure being proposed.
- 7.2 The Council's intention was that the Company was established as a legal entity with an 'industrial or commercial character' and as such was deemed not to meet all of the criteria relating to a 'body governed by public law' as defined in Regulation 2 of the PCR and

was therefore not a Contracting Authority for the purposes of the PCR.

- 7.3 Since its establishment CDL has developed as an organisation, growing its portfolio of schemes, and strengthening its board and staff team. The Council has also developed its shareholder function through regular meetings of the Housing Supervisory Board, development of an officer group, the CDL Monitoring Board, and appointment of a Clienting and Commissioning Manager to oversee its activities. The evolution of these structures and relationships has set the context for a review of the company's original structure and has given rise to queries as to whether the company still has a 'industrial and commercial character'.
- 7.4 In response to a query raised by CDL in respect of its status as a Contracting Authority, the Council and the Company took Counsel's advice to clarify the status so that any relevant and compliant procurement process can be followed going forwards. In addition to Counsel's advice on CDL's procurement status, advice was also sought as to whether, if the Council is deemed to have 'management supervision' of the Company, this would satisfy the control requirement of the PCR, enabling the Council to contract directly with CDL.
- 7.5 Counsel offered an opinion based on the actual operations of the Company and the substance of the arrangements between the Council and the Company. This has allowed for a review of the substance of the arrangements and structures as they have developed in a way that was perhaps not anticipated when the Company was established.

8 Counsel's Advice

- 8.1 Counsel was requested to advise on the following matters:
- a. Does the Company fall within the definition of a Contracting Authority for the purposes of Regulation 2 of the Public Contract Regulation 2015?
 - b. If the answer to a) is yes, including where the Council is deemed to have 'management supervision' of the Company through its governance arrangements, then does this amount to the Council control over the company (equivalent to that it would exercise over its own departments) so as to satisfy the 'control' requirement under Regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations?

- 8.2 In providing their opinion in respect of matter (a), Counsel has concluded having considered the facts that CDL “probably has the status of a body governed by public law under Regulation 2 of the Public Contract Regulation” and therefore is a Contracting Authority, subject to public procurement obligations. CDL is therefore deemed to be bound by the obligations of PCR when tendering for goods, works and services and issuing contracts.
- 8.3 In respect of matter 8.1 (b), Counsel’s opinion was that the current management supervision arrangements in place between the Council and the Company, would satisfy the definition of ‘control’ under Regulation 12 PCR. This exemption from PCR is sometimes referred to as the ‘Teckal Exemption’. It should be noted that ‘management supervision’ forms one condition of the test and that all conditions, as outlined below, be met before this exemption can be applied.
- a. The contracting authority exercise over the legal person concerned a control which is similar to that which it exercises over its own departments
 - b. More than 80% of the activities of the controlled legal person are carried out in the performance of tasks entrusted to it by the controlling contracting authority or by other legal persons controlled by that contracting authority; and
 - c. There is no direct private participation in the controlled legal person with the exception of non-controlling and non-blocking forms of private capital participation required by national legislative provisions, in conformity with the Retained Treaties, which do not exert a decisive influence on the controlled legal person
- 8.4 If satisfying all of the above conditions, the Council is able to award contracts to CDL without meeting the obligations of Part 2 PCR which would require a full procurement process to be undertaken. Appropriate advice would be obtained from the Council’s procurement team or from an independent procurement specialist before considering the letting of any contracts to CDL directly.
- 8.5 It is the opinion of Counsel that it is more likely than not that current management supervision of CDL would meet the definition of ‘control’ similar to that which the Council exercises over its own departments, such that CDL would be classified as a controlled legal person.
- 8.6 In reaching this view Counsel took account of the Council’s control of the Company through the Articles of Association, and the terms of the Shareholder Agreement, to include the requirement for CDL to gain Shareholder consent for such matters as the approval of the Business Plan and approval for the acquisition of land or assets at a low financial threshold. Counsel analysis of the Shareholder Agreement concluded that the activities of CDL are exclusively

carried out in the performance of tasks entrusted to it by the Council, furthermore, that the arrangements and structures in place means that the Council controls CDL's strategic objectives and significant decisions.

9 Additional Information

- 9.1 CDL's objectives remain unchanged, the Company will continue to trade commercially, building homes to meet unmet housing need and generating financial returns for the Council.
- 9.2 CDL does not expect that the outputs for financial return or housing deliver, as predicted within its current Business Plan, will be impacted negatively by its status as a Contracting Authority.
- 9.3 The current governance structures in place to monitor the activities of the Company remain unchanged. The Shareholder Agreement (unchanged) will continue to regulate the relationship between the Council and the Company. The Housing Supervisory Board's Terms of Reference remain unchanged with continued support provided by the CDL Monitoring Board and the Homes and Communities Clienting function.
- 9.4 CDL will continue to work as a separate company, with its own financial regulations, standing orders, policies, branding, funding arrangements and board of directors. This will ensure CDL retains its commercial edge, best position the company to move forward development sites and support Shropshire Council with the delivery of the Shropshire Plan.

10 Conclusions

- 10.1 Council is asked to receive the report setting out the contracting status of CDL, raising as appropriate any issues.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Meeting Unmet Housing Need in Shropshire. Cabinet Report of 7th November 2018

Report: <http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s20261/Meeting%20Housing%20Need%20in%20Shropshire.pdf>

Addressing Unmet Housing Need -OBC to Establish a Wholly Owned Local Housing Company. Council Report of 13th December 2018

Report:[http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s20628/Addressing Housing Need - OBC to Establish a Wholly Owned Local Housing Company.pdf](http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s20628/Addressing_Housing_Need_-_OBC_to_Establish_a_Wholly_Owned_Local_Housing_Company.pdf)

Addressing Unmet Housing Need – Establishment of a Wholly Owned Local Housing Company. Council Report 28th February 2019

Report:<http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s21380/AUMHN%20-%20Establishment%20of%20a%20Wholly%20Owned%20LHC%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Rob Gittins Portfolio Holder Digital, Data & Insight and Built Housing

Local Member All

Appendices

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Committee and Date

Council meeting
22nd September 2022

Item

Public

Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre

Responsible Officer Mark Barrow

e-mail: Mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258919

1. Synopsis

1.1 Following the outcome of the consultation exercise, and Cabinet agreement on 7th Sept 2022, this report recommends to Council that the business case for the rebuilding of Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre is approved and the project is added to the capital strategy.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 At its meeting on 27th April 2022 Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:

- Note and acknowledge progress and actions undertaken to meet the recommendations of the Cabinet report in June 2021
- Agree that the proposed plans be the subject of a formal public consultation exercise and that a further report be brought to Cabinet following completion of the consultation.
- Agree that subject to the outcome of the public consultation exercise and Cabinet's consideration of that report, the business case for the project, as set out in this paper, be presented to Council with a recommendation that the development of the Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre be included in the capital programme.

2.2 The public consultation has now been completed and added to subsequent engagement with key stakeholders, it demonstrated overwhelming support for a proposed new Swimming and Fitness Centre at Whitchurch. There were 286 respondents to the public consultation, with 89% agreeing with the location, and 73% agreeing that the proposed facility mix was adequate. 44% of respondents had previously used the swimming pool weekly, with 77% arriving by car, 59% by foot and 30% by cycle. A concern was raised about the potential loss of water vole habitat, which will be investigated. The full consultation and

engagement report is available at Appendix 1 and an updated Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

- 2.3 The total cost of the facility is now estimated at £13.100m. The Feasibility Study for the new Centre is attached at Appendix 3. The report asks for Cabinet to make certain recommendations to Council to enable the rebuild to proceed as quickly as possible, bearing in mind inflationary pressures. If there are major issues or the capital budget is exceeded and there is a need for increased capital spend, a further paper will be taken to Council for consideration.
- 2.4 Providing development to the next stages goes as planned, building should start in 2024, with the new Centre completed in 2025.
- 2.5 On 7th Sept 2022, Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:
- Agree the business case for the project, as set out in this paper, be presented to Council with a recommendation that the development of the Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre be included in the capital programme with an initial budget of £13.100m, funded from Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).
 - Acknowledge the significant average annual revenue pressure of £0.509mm arising from approval of this scheme, reaching a maximum of £0.530m in 2028-29, and recommend that Council delegate resolution of this pressure to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism.
 - Recommend that Council delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, to procure, negotiate and agree the terms of any agreements/contracts necessary for the delivery of the project including, but not limited to:
 - Agreeing the procurement strategy
 - Design Team procurement and appointment
 - Site Surveys and Investigations and relevant reports
 - Planning permissions
 - Tendering activities
 - Main contractor procurement and contract sign-off
 - Construction
 - Hand over

3. Recommendations

That Council:

- Agree the business case for the project, as set out in this paper, with a recommendation that the development of the Whitchurch

Swimming and Fitness Centre be included in the capital programme with an initial budget of £13.100m and funding source assumed to be prudential borrowing from Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).

- Acknowledge the significant average annual revenue pressure of £0.509mm arising from approval of this scheme, reaching a maximum of £0.530m in 2028-29, and recommend that Council delegate resolution of this pressure to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism.
- Recommend that Council delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, to procure, negotiate and agree the terms of any agreements/contracts necessary for the delivery of the project including, but not limited to:
 - Agreeing the procurement strategy
 - Design Team procurement and appointment
 - Site Surveys and Investigations and relevant reports
 - Planning permissions
 - Tendering activities
 - Main contractor procurement and contract sign-off
 - Construction
 - Hand over

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1 Opportunities Appraisal - the need for a new facility in Whitchurch

- 4.2 According to a [recent report by Swim England](#), weekly swimming saves the NHS and social care system more than £357m each year.
- 4.3 They comment that *"It is vital there are appropriate facilities in the right locations to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of swimming and every child has the opportunity to learn an essential life skill."*
- 4.4 At the current rate of pool replacement nationally, it is estimated that there could be 40% fewer pools by the end of the decade.
- 4.5 This investment in a new swimming centre in Whitchurch, will help ensure high-quality, cost-effective facilities for the growing population in the area.
- 4.6 Built in 1972, Whitchurch Swimming Centre comprised a 25m x 5 lane pool and changing facilities. The centre has been closed since March 2020, initially due to the Covid-19 pandemic national lockdown. Structural problems were then identified whilst investigating the cause

of a leak from the pool tank which include underpinning issues and deterioration in the fabric of the building, and the Centre was not considered cost effective to repair.

4.7 The aim of this project is to improve health and well-being at all stages of life and that physical activity is an integral part of this.

4.8 This will be achieved through the creation of a new Swimming and Fitness Centre in Whitchurch, which will replace the existing facility.

4.9 Key aspects include:

- Support for the creation of a high quality and sustainable indoor leisure facility mix, which provides accessible and inclusive activities for all Shropshire residents leading to increased participation and active lifestyles, thereby meeting community need
- Recognising the importance of leisure facilities as relevant community spaces, accessible to all and offering opportunities for the delivery of a wide range of activities, services, support and entertainment to local communities and people
- A commitment to work with a wide range of partner organisations and individuals as co-creators and co-deliverers of leisure facilities so that they best reflect the differing needs of local communities.
- There is a collective priority (Shropshire Council, Health and Wellbeing Board, Energize (Active Partnership) to improve community health and well-being at all stages of life, and that physical activities are integral to this, with a focus on older and young people and families

4.10 County demographics

4.11 It is important to consider the demographic profile of Shropshire and how this shapes demand for access to leisure and wellness facilities. Energize Active Partnership identify the following key statistics in their Strategy – Actively Improving Lives 2022:

- 1/3 of the Shropshire population will be 65+ by 2033
- 42% of those aged 55+ are active
- 4 out of 5 young people aged 5-15 are not active enough; more than 1/3 are leading sedentary lives by the age of 15
- 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school; more than 1 in 5 children are overweight or obese by school reception year
- Families within lower socio-economic families are more likely to be inactive

4.12 These demographic groups can especially benefit from swimming provision, which is an activity that can be enjoyed by all. There is a

need to ensure that provision (services, activities and facilities) is relevant and sustainable for all groups.

4.13 Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM)

4.14 The Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM) for pools in Shropshire was produced in July 2019.

- All three of Shropshire's main market towns – Ludlow, Oswestry and Shrewsbury provide a main swimming pool, or the equivalent of this (minimum 25m x 6 lane) and a learner pool or a learner function. All communities in Shropshire are within 30 minutes of one of these facilities, except for the communities in the north.
- Swimming pools in Market Drayton and, prior to its closure Whitchurch, addressed this gap in accessibility.
- Swimming pools offer more scope than any other indoor sports facility type, to contribute to an active and healthy lifestyle by residents. They are the only facility type which provides for participation by all age groups and from cradle to grave. Also, swimming is one of the few indoor activities where female participation is higher than male participation and it is also a family-based activity.
- The real issue in Shropshire is not the level of provision, but the age and quality of swimming facilities, particularly those providing for community access such as Whitchurch.
- Whitchurch Swimming Centre had an estimated used capacity of 82% in the weekly peak period, this was over the 70% 'comfort level' recommended by Sport England. This demonstrates that when open, Whitchurch Swimming Centre had a very high level of use. Accessibility to other facilities is a challenge in the area if one does not have access to a private car; bus services are limited and do not always enable sufficient time to access the next nearest pool.

4.15 According to the census, in 1971, 11,410 people were resident in Whitchurch Place Plan Area, compared to an estimated 15,728 residents from the 2020 mid-year population estimates. The census data from 2021 is not yet available but it is expected that the population has continued to increase.

4.16 When open, Whitchurch Swimming Centre had an estimated used capacity of 82% in the weekly peak period, this was over the 70% 'comfort level' recommended by Sport England. This demonstrates that when open, the Centre had high level of use. With a growing population, the demand is expected to increase.

4.17 Impact of not proceeding with the new Centre

4.18 The impacts of not progressing the project have been considered and are summarised below:

- The swimming centre remains closed which reduces the opportunities for the Whitchurch community to be physically active which impacts on long term health and social issues.
- To access pay as you play swimming facilities Whitchurch residents will have to travel some distance, this can have a negative impact on the Council's climate change agenda and carbon reduction targets. Residents without access to a car are disadvantaged as public transport routes to other facilities mean lengthy travel times.
- Visits by Whitchurch residents to other facilities adds pressure to already busy centres.
- There is a negative impact from young children not being able to learn to swim which is an important life skill.
- Primary schools have a statutory duty to provide swimming lessons for children up to Key Stage 2 Level which they will struggle to fulfil.
- Does not provide any opportunity to deliver the goals of the Shropshire Plan.
- This option is contrary to recommendations in the Council's adopted Indoor Leisure Facility Strategy 2020 – 2038.

4.19 Providing a new facility will:

- Encourage increased participation in physical activity, delivering increased health benefits (physical and mental) to more people as a result of taking part in physical activity
- Contribute positively to the Healthy People and Healthy Environment priorities in the Shropshire Plan
- Fully fulfil a recommendation in the Council's adopted Leisure Indoor Facilities Strategy 2020 – 38
- Contribute to a more active environment at local level, as people do not have to travel so far for facilities
- Be more cost-effective and efficient to operate than the existing facility as a stand-alone pool requires a high level of subsidy. The financial impact of developing a new facility is detailed in section 5 of this report
- Provide the opportunity for young people to be able to learn to swim and help fulfil the statutory duty of primary schools to provide swimming lessons for children up to Key Stage 2
 - Require significant capital investment but secure the provision of a valuable community facility for the long term

4.20 A feasibility study has been completed, which illustrates an initial design for consideration regarding the future provision of this important community facility (Appendix 3).

4.21 The feasibility study proposes the following facility mix:

- 25 metre x 6 lane pool with moveable floor to half of the pool.
- 35 station fitness suite.
- Large multi-purpose room - divisible into 2 studio areas for dance, fitness, and youth sessions.

- Changing village plus dry side changing and Changing Places facility
- Reception/servery
- Café/vending area
- Outdoor activity area for informal sport, physical activity, and play.

4.22 The rationale for the facility mix is:

- Increased participation and revenue impact from a larger pool; the previous operator has identified significant potential for increasing swimming lessons in the area based on demand. The old facility delivered 600 swimming lessons per month Equally, there is potential to increase the number of swim memberships.
- A facility offering both fitness and swimming is likely to appeal to a wider range of participants; this provides the opportunity to offer a new swim and gym membership and provide opportunities for revenue generation.
- Increased water space also facilitates an increased capacity for casual i.e., pay and play, swimming.
- The multi-purpose room can be programmed to cater for a range of dance, fitness and young people activities which increases throughput and income generation opportunities.

4.23 Risk Assessment

4.24 Full consideration of the risks have been undertaken. Key risks and mitigations are summarised in Table 1 below.

4.25 Table 1- Summary of significant risks

Risk	Mitigation actions
Inflationary pressures, material cost increases and availability is leading to greater contractor insolvency rates.	Procurement Strategy to consider mitigations and background checks.
Costs of the overall project are unaffordable in the current financial climate.	The capital and revenue costs will be reviewed to firm up cost certainty and explore where improvements can be achieved. If project not to proceed there could be abortive costs.
Car Park is leased to Tesco and access/ changes to car parking will need to be negotiated with them.	Early engagement with Tesco will be undertaken.
The consultation identified that there may be water voles in the brook on the site. Water voles are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are also a material	Further investigation around the issue of water voles will be undertaken. Proposals do not remove the habitat, but it will need protecting.

consideration in the planning process.	
Timeframe for developing a new facility expands leading to significantly higher development costs through build cost inflation and fluctuations in interest rates.	Ensure realistic project programme, with key decision milestones identified and a project team suitably resourced in place to undertake the work.
Reputational damage as Whitchurch Swimming Centre is the focus of considerable public interest and announcements have been made on commitment to building a new facility.	Project team established to manage the new project. Clear communications plan developed to keep stakeholders informed.

4.26 Consultation and engagement feedback

4.27 The full consultation report is shown in Appendix 1. It brings together feedback from:

- Emails and letters provided as part of the public consultation exercise.
- Survey responses gathered between 6th June and 31st July 2022.
- Feedback from 7 engagement workshops and meetings (including Whitchurch Town Council, local businesses, schools and local sports and leisure groups).

4.28 The summary of findings is shown below:

Summary

The responses consultation were very helpful and despite some concerns, very described and communicated, most comments were positive and optimistic about the prospect of swimming facilities returning to Whitchurch.



Engagement: Feedback was provided from 274 survey respondents, 12 written consultation responses and 7 stakeholder meetings and workshops.



Location: 89% of survey respondents agree with the proposed location covering the existing site and closed Enterprise North-East Youth Centre. The stakeholder meetings and workshops included some suggestions for a larger out of town site.



Ecology: 7 of the 12 written responses and 9 of the 274 survey respondents highlighted significant concerns over the impact the build could have on water voles living in the brook on the site. These concerns were reflected in conversations with stakeholders.



Travel: Survey respondents' preferred method of travel to the location is the car (48%) followed by walking at 37%. Cycle use was the third top preferred method of travel (9%). Active Travel was commented on throughout the engagement with stakeholders highlighting opportunities to improve cycling facilities on site and throughout the local area. Parking facilities were also commonly mentioned.



Facility mix: Feedback calls for a learner/child pool, large pool, private changing, family changing and child/youth facilities as priorities. There are mixed views on the gym and café.



Health: The main barrier to physical activity highlighted by 52% of all the survey respondents was a lack of easy access to facilities and inconvenience. 38% of survey respondents cited cost, followed by insufficient time (24%). The feedback included a wide range of suggestions for facilities and activities to address health and wellbeing.



Community: There was strong support for new opportunities to encourage wider community use of the new centre. Exercise on prescription, social prescribing community groups, sessions designed for older people and consideration of use by schools and young people were all highlighted within the suggestions from the survey and at stakeholder workshops.



Accessibility: 70 survey respondents and more workshop/meeting attendees highlighted the importance of accessibility. Comments covered wheelchair access, pool and changing access, non-slip surfaces, lifts, hoists moveable floors etc. Other comments covered noise issues including design for people with hearing impairment and quiet sessions design for sensory needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.



Environment: 80 survey respondents and more workshop/meeting attendees highlighted the importance of sustainability and minimising climate impact. Suggestions covered energy efficiency, solar power, heat pumps, green walls, recycling, natural planning and low impact methods to clean the water and centre, and healthy/local food provision.



Overall views: 82% of survey respondents were satisfied with the proposals and additional support was voiced by stakeholders. The feedback overall was very positive.

4.29 The feedback from the consultation and engagement was overwhelmingly positive and supports the redevelopment of the site.

4.30 **Equality, Social inclusion and Health Impact Assessment**

4.31 An Equality, Social inclusion and Health Impact Assessment has been carried out (Appendix 2).

4.32 The findings from the initial and second screening were that:

- The equality and health and well-being impacts across Protected Characteristic groupings in Shropshire, and within Whitchurch are anticipated to be positive. This is in line with the policy approach of the service area and the Council, and with consideration for Shropshire as a large and sparsely populated rural county in which market towns provide a sense of place and belonging as well as an access point for facilities and services, including leisure facilities. There are also positive impacts anticipated in relation to our tenth grouping in Shropshire, around social inclusion, provided that efforts are made to consider the needs of people in low-income households with regard to pricing structures.
- There is further potential for additional benefits for grouping such as those undergoing gender reassignment, and those for whom single sex swimming opportunities are necessary in order to ensure compatibility with and respect for the requirements of their faith. This may be maximised through attention to changing room configurations, and swim time opportunities.
- Proceeding with the development of a new facility, will mitigate the current negative impacts of the swimming centre being closed, and promote social inclusion as well as physical and mental health and well-being. It will be necessary to work closely with the SC elected councillors for the area, as community leaders, as well as with all relevant stakeholders

4.33 The results from the consultation and engagement report are positive and help demonstrate the positive equality, social inclusion and health impacts and have been included in the ESHIA second screening. In response to the consultation and engagement, the following will be incorporated into the development going forward:

- Opportunities to improve active travel options will be considered
- Environmental and carbon impacts will be addressed as an integral part of design and construction, as discussed in Section 6 of this report. This will include protection of water vole habitat. A preliminary ecological appraisal of the site was undertaken in December 2021 as part of the initial feasibility study. Shropshire Council officers will continue to take appropriate expert advice and ensure more detailed surveys are undertaken during subsequent stages of the project, with the aim of proceeding sensitively to take

full consideration of the need to safeguard the water voles inhabiting the brook.

4.34 Health impacts will be positive. It has been highlighted that, as reflected in the consultation and engagement feedback:

- There is further potential for additional benefits for grouping such as those undergoing gender reassignment, and those for whom single sex swimming opportunities are necessary to ensure compatibility with and respect for the requirements of their faith. This may be maximised through attention to changing room configurations, and swim time opportunities.
- Once the facility is completed, sessions that encourage health and wellbeing can be encouraged, including support for older people, school use and activities for young people
- The design will consider those people with mobility issues and other impairments, enabling key improvements compared to the existing facility

4.35 It will be necessary to continue to work closely with the SC elected councillors for the area, as community leaders, as well as with all relevant stakeholders. This should include engagement with adults with special needs, and young people, as part of the broader public.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 This report is written in the context of the Council's medium term financial strategy and on the assumption that the Council wishes to support the continuing availability of public swimming in Whitchurch for the benefit of the community, but that given financial constraints, it must be provided and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible.

5.2 Various options for the facility mix of the proposed new development have already been considered and were presented to Cabinet in June 2021, with the recommended favoured option (Option 6 – summarised in point 4.17) now advanced to this point. Initial estimates had presented the option with a capital cost of £6.300m, however detailed feasibility studies as well as the changing economic environment mean that the same project is now estimated to cost £13.100m.

5.3 The breakdown of the £13.100m as included in the feasibility study report and required to deliver the facility is as below:

	£
• Construction costs (includes moveable floor, green technology & general fixed equipment)	7,490,308
• External works	1,551,583
• Professional fees	855,983

• BREEAM Excellent	169,838
• Contingency	849,190
• Inflation	1,210,733
• Additional inflation to the inflation included within the feasibility to take total inflation up to 20% to safeguard and mitigate this project risk)	972,647 in addition
• Total	13,100,282

5.4 **Non controllable Costs**

5.5 Construction cost inflation (from feasibility date to tender return and mid-point of construction) as determined at January 2022 was estimated to be 11.05% based on the proposed construction programme included in the feasibility study. This equated to an estimated cost of £1,210,733. In the current climate, inflation is a significant project risk but difficult to forecast, alongside significant supply chain pressures and material availability. In order to acknowledge the significant inflationary pressures in the market currently, construction cost inflation has been increased to 20% by adding an additional £972,647 to the amount included in the feasibility study.

5.6 The feasibility study shows that to accommodate the scale of facility proposed the entire site area will be required. Preliminary geo-technical studies show that significant works will be required regarding piling and dealing with the sloping site. Estimated costs for this element are £0.400m.

5.7 The feasibility study also includes the provision of additional car parking which may or may not be a condition of planning. Estimated cost £0.624m.

5.8 **Controllable Costs**

5.9 Contained within the agreed facility mix there have been some additional controllable costs included, the provision of a second lift at £0.060m and the replacement of multi-use games area with active landscaped area and associated works at £0.211m. Whilst not strictly required as part of the previously agreed facility mix, the provision of these will make the facility more accessible, upgrade infrastructure to ensure current uses can continue, and will encourage future use.

5.10 Detailed revenue modelling has taken place, using operational income and expenditure forecasts provided by Strategic Leisure Ltd, taking advantage of their knowledge and experience of the market.

5.11 The feasibility study shows that the proposed facility mix, including the moveable pool floor, can deliver an estimated average annual operational surplus over its first ten years of £0.150m. However, when considering the financing of the project currently assumed to be 100%

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) over a 40-year term, annual borrowing repayments of £0.662m must also be included in the model.

5.12 In the initial financial modelling contained within the April 2022 Cabinet report, the costs of borrowing were modelled at an interest rate of 2.5% and so were calculated at £0.486m per year. The current PWLB interest rate is assumed at 4%. This significant rise is a direct result of the national economic situation and in the longer term it is anticipated to rise further still.

5.13 Table 2 below summarises the projected income and expenditure position for the proposed development for the first 10 years following its proposed completion in 2025 and this highlights an average forecast revenue pressure of £0.509m each year, reaching a maximum of £0.530m in 2028-29, Further due diligence will also be undertaken on all figures contained within the model including regular updates at project board level, as areas such as energy costs remain extremely volatile. At the current moment there are no existing budgets that could plug the annual funding gap, nor are there options of significantly reducing the borrowing liability. Consequently, approval of this scheme will result in a significant annual budget pressure which will need to be addressed in future financial strategies.

5.14 Table 2- Projected income and expenditure

Whitchurch Swimming & Fitness Centre (£m)	Year 0 2025/26	Year 1 2026/27	Year 2 2027/28	Year 3 2028/29	Year 4 2029/30	Year 5 2030/31	Year 6 2031/32	Year 7 2032/33	Year 8 2033/34	Year 9 2034/35	Year 10 2035/36
EXPENDITURE		1.840	1.893	1.935	1.966	1.999	2.032	2.065	2.098	2.131	2.163
Borrowing Repayments	-	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662	0.662
Operational Costs	1.017	1.178	1.231	1.273	1.304	1.337	1.370	1.403	1.436	1.469	1.501
INCOME/SAVINGS	1.138	1.325	1.365	1.404	1.444	1.483	1.523	1.562	1.602	1.641	1.681
New Income	1.138	1.325	1.365	1.404	1.444	1.483	1.523	1.562	1.602	1.641	1.681
NET COST TO THE COUNCIL	- 0.121	0.515	0.528	0.531	0.522	0.516	0.509	0.503	0.496	0.490	0.482

5.15 The existing revenue budget for the Whitchurch Swimming Pool contract is £0.135m, this budget is currently surplus and has been used to offset immediate pressures in the Leisure service area and wider Place directorate. For this reason the saving has not been factored into the above figures.

5.16 Work has been carried out to explore potential funding sources that could contribute to the project in order to reduce the borrowing liability. These have included:

- Community Infrastructure Levy - there will be further consideration of CIL funding as the design process progresses.
- Grant aid from sources such as Sport England, the Levelling Up Fund and UK Prosperity Fund - these are not being pursued. Sport England is unlikely to fund the single facility, and the design requirements to secure this funding are not likely to be affordable.

Other priorities were agreed for the Round 2 Levelling Up funding and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has a total of £12m for all priorities, with 80% revenue funding, so is not suitable for large capital projects. Applications will be submitted if suitable funding is made available within the timescales of the development.

- A review of the leisure operator market and potential input into financing the new facilities - Both Sport England and Strategic Leisure Ltd have commented that operators will often contribute to the fit out of facilities, e.g., fitness equipment and catering areas but in their experience contributions into the actual capital build costs are rare.

5.17 Leisure Market

5.18 Strategic Leisure Ltd has carried out a review of the current position of the operator market. In summary the review states:

- *"Although the UK leisure operator market was significantly impacted by Covid 19 in Lockdowns, there has generally been good recovery across the sector; on average operators are now achieving circa 72% of pre- Covid income levels.*
- *Interest in new procurement opportunities, which obviously reduced during the pandemic period, is now on the rise again. Experience across consultants managing and delivering leisure management tender processes is that the forward market seems positive and buoyant with prices better in most cases than current business case estimates.*
- *Contracts which comprise at least some newer, or brand new, facilities are of considerably more interest to operators. This is because there is far less risk in the operational management of a new facility with the latest energy and other technologies, that has been designed as a fit for purpose building. Operators are willing to take responsibility for lifecycle maintenance on a new building, but not on older assets.*

5.19 The proposed timing of the development does not coincide with the Council's incumbent operator being able to contribute as the current management contract has been agreed for a further five years, which would not provide sufficient time for the operator to make a rate of return on any financial contribution.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 A sustainability strategy for the project was developed with the Council's Climate Change Team. The sustainability requirements for the project are set out below:

6.2 Carbon Offsetting or Mitigation and Climate Change Adaptation

6.3 Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and in 2020 adopted its Strategy for achieving net zero on carbon emissions by 2030. In line with this, this project will explore the potential for passive design principles and ensure that the Council can track the lifetime carbon performance of the building. This will include the provision of an audit trail, including quantitative performance measures, including Sport England Sustainability Target Metrics, that provide documentary evidence on a design stage by stage approach to minimising the carbon footprint of the facilities and climate change impact. The lifetime carbon performance study will be used to demonstrate how the design and materials used have taken account of the carbon reduction and climate change agenda and that the performance of the building is operating within the design Parameters. The design will incorporate Sport England design guidance on sustainable facilities. This will have a positive effect.

6.4 Energy and Fuel Consumption

6.5 Building to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating and a DEC A rating. Design to provide for a passive standard of operation at the facilities, the aim being to achieve as low a carbon footprint as possible at a reasonable cost over the life cycle of the project. This will include the provision of a report to compare the sustainability performance of the existing facility with the new development with the aim that this demonstrates a net improvement. This will have a positive effect, with early investment in the structure of the building consistent with Passivhaus principles helping to significantly reduce energy revenue costs over the lifetime of the building.

6.6 Renewable Energy Generation

6.7 The Design will take account of the opportunity to be serviced by air or ground water source heat pumps and on-site renewable energy generation such as Photo Voltaic Cells. This will have a positive effect.

6.8 The feasibility study contains initial information on how the above aspects will be developed as the design progresses. See sustainability section pages 26 – 27, carbon reduction section pages 35 – 36 and building efficiency section pages 38 - 39.

6.9 Carbon offsetting or mitigation

6.10 Opportunities to capture carbon as part of the landscaping for the redevelopment will be considered as the design progresses. This could include tree planting and other measures.

6.11 Climate change adaptation

6.12 The new development means that measures can be taken within the design process that will help ensure the building is adapted for more

extreme weather and improve resilience to increased risks to the health and wellbeing of Shropshire's residents.

7. Background

7.1 There are several Leisure Centres and facilities owned or managed by Shropshire Council across the county. These include:

7.2 Sites operated by Shropshire Community Leisure Trust, with Serco Leisure Ltd as their managing agent:

- Oswestry Leisure Centre - opened September 2011
- Shrewsbury Sports Village - opened 2005
- Quarry Swimming & Fitness Centre - opened 1864 – extensive modernisation in 1968/69 - refurbishment 1994
- Market Drayton Swimming Centre - opened 1995 – fitness suite extension built 2013

7.3 Sites operated by Teme Leisure:

- Ludlow Leisure Centre – opened 1995 – swimming pool built 1997
- Cleobury Mortimer Sports Centre – sports hall opened 1985 – additional facilities 2001 & 2007

7.4 Sites operated by Shropshire Council:

- SpArC (Bishop's Castle) - swimming pool opened 1972 – additional facilities 2006
- Church Stretton Sports Centre - managed on behalf of South Shropshire Academy Trust and St Lawrence CE Primary School - swimming pool opened 1980 – sports centre 2010
- Much Wenlock Leisure Centre - managed on behalf of William Brookes School - opened 2010
- Meole Brace Golf Course - management agreement with golf professional – opened 1976

7.5 Sites operated by Halo Leisure- these are not owned by Shropshire Council:

- Severn Centre, Highley – opened 2004
- Bridgnorth Endowed Leisure Centre – opened 1975

7.6 Whitchurch Swimming Centre, which was opened in 1972, closed in March 2020 initially as a result of the national Covid 19 lockdown. The closure continued after a major leak to the pool was found and further structural problems identified whilst investigating the cause of the leak. The structural investigation work identified that it was not viable to undertake remedial repair works due to the age of the facility and inadequate foundations.

7.7 This means that redevelopment of the Centre at Whitchurch has been prioritised to ensure the much-needed facilities are available to residents.

7.8 The recommendations in this report are made based on the evidence contained in the feasibility study, the consultation and engagement report and relevant strategies.

8. Additional Information

8.1 Shropshire Plan

8.2 The new Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre will help achieve the priorities set out in the Shropshire Plan 2022-25. These include:

8.3 Healthy people

- We'll tackle inequalities, including rural inequalities, and poverty in all its forms, providing early support and interventions that reduce risk and enable children, young people, adults and families to achieve their full potential and enjoy life.
- We'll support Shropshire residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, choosing healthy lifestyles and preventing ill-health, reducing the need for long-term or hospital care.

8.4 Healthy Economy

- We'll develop Shropshire as a vibrant destination that attracts people to live in, work in, learn in and visit.
- We'll deliver excellent connectivity and infrastructure, and increasing access to social contact, employment, education, services and leisure opportunities.

8.5 Healthy Environment

- We'll deliver the council's Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, promoting the means to tackle climate change and reduce our carbon footprint, including the adoption of low-carbon energy for our assets and for communities.

8.6 Healthy Organisation

- We will communicate clearly and transparently about what Shropshire Council delivers, signposting to the right places for services and support, and listen to what communities say about their place and what they need.
- We'll put our resources in the right place using accurate data, insights, and evidence to support the delivery of the organisation's priorities and balance the books.

8.7 Vibrant Shropshire Cultural Strategy 2021-31

8.8 The Centre will also help deliver the aspirations of the Cultural Strategy for Shropshire. These include:

8.9 Enjoy - Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected

- Help deliver health and wellbeing programmes, including the Integrated Care System, social prescribing, exercise on referral, physical activity and mental health initiatives, working in partnership with the NHS and other health and care providers
- Transform leisure provision in Shropshire, so that there's a more joined-up, commercial approach that works with local communities for the benefit of all

8.10 Live - Harnessing 'ownership' and pride in local places for the benefit of all

- Increase accessibility to cultural attractions and activities
- Ensure existing venues are energy efficient and accessible

8.11 Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy

8.12 The Shropshire Council priorities for sport and physical activity, as set out in the Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy, are identified as follows :

- To work with partners to support the people of Shropshire to live longer, healthier and quality lives through sport and physical activity, with a focus on younger and older people
- To support the resilience of local communities and the development of Place by strengthening local communities through sport and physical activity
- To support economic growth by developing opportunities for people to reach their full potential by providing employment, volunteering and tourism opportunities
- To take a cross county place-based approach to the delivery of high-quality leisure facilities through targeted investment, partnership opportunities, community empowerment and commercial acumen in order to reduce levels of subsidy
- To aim to reduce our carbon footprint in line with the commitment of Shropshire Council to the declaration of Climate emergency to become carbon neutral by 2030.

8.13 Through the strategic objectives work that has been completed, it has become clear that there is an overarching collective priority, for Shropshire Council and partner organisations, to improve health and well-being at all stages of life, and that physical activity is an integral part of this. Culture, leisure, and creative sectors make a significant

contribution to physical, mental and community health and well-being through providing access to affordable activities and experiences. They can contribute to tackling health inequalities through delivering educational opportunity, promoting community cohesion and generating economic growth.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The Feasibility Study (Appendix 3) provides detailed evidence and insight on the opportunities and risks of developing a new swimming and fitness centre in Whitchurch. It shows that a new development can be accommodated on the site and that the proposed facility mix improves the business case compared to the old facility.
- 9.2 The consultation and engagement report demonstrate public and political support for the Centre to be rebuilt, and Appendix 1 confirms the need for a new Centre.
- 9.3 The second screening ESHIA show positive impact for equalities, social inclusion and health (Appendix 2).
- 9.4 The new Centre would help deliver Shropshire priorities, as set out in the Shropshire Plan, Cultural Strategy and the Leisure Indoor Facilities Strategy.
- 9.5 As Whitchurch has been without the provision of a swimming pool for a lengthy period it is recommended that the development be given high priority. Due to the current and projected increases in costs, delegated authority is recommended to enable the project to proceed at pace.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Shropshire Council – A Vibrant Shropshire Cultural Strategy 2021 -2031

Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2020 – 2038

JSNA (Health and Well Being Board Shropshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan 2016-2021)

Energize Shropshire Telford and Wrekin - Actively Improving Lives 2022

[Cabinet Report- Whitchurch Swimming Centre Feasibility Study, 27th April 2022](#)

[Cabinet Report- Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre, 7th September 2022](#)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Cecilia Motley - Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism

Local Member

Cllrs Gerald Dakin, Peggy Mullock, and Tom Biggins

Appendices

Appendix 1 Stakeholder engagement and consultation report

Appendix 2 Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Appendix 3 Feasibility Study

Whitchurch Swimming and Leisure Centre Public Engagement Report

August 2022



Background

Monday 6th June saw the start of an 8 week consultation designed to engage the community, partner organisations and other interested groups and organisations in the future of Whitchurch Swimming and Leisure Centre. The consultation set out the proposals for the new centre and encouraged feedback following agreement to consult by Shropshire Council's Cabinet on the 27th April 2022.

Shropshire Council announced the permanent closure of Whitchurch Swimming Centre in June 2021 following the discovery of extensive structural issues that were identified during the closure of the facility due to coronavirus. It's now a priority of Shropshire Council to provide a new facility for the community in Whitchurch with a projected opening in Autumn 2025.

Business case modelling and a facility mix study have been undertaken as part of a detailed feasibility study (led by Strategic Leisure Ltd) to provide a replacement facility in Whitchurch that will have the following core aims:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of Whitchurch residents through more physical activity/sport.
- Invest in a high-quality leisure facility in the town centre which provides accessible and inclusive activities for all.
- Engage people who may not traditionally engage in leisure and physical activity.
- Be operationally sustainable and environmentally sustainable with carbon neutral targets, and encourage users to adopt 'active travel' – cycling and walking.

As set out within the consultation survey, the proposed new facility will include:

- 6 lane x 25m swimming pool with a moveable floor for flexibility.
- 35 station fitness suite.
- A large multi-purpose room divisible into 2 studio areas for dance, fitness and youth activities.
- changing village plus dry side changing, incorporating a Changing Places facility to make the facility fully accessible.

- Reception/servery
- Café/vending area
- Outdoor activity area

Shropshire Council recognised the old centre had some limitations and was missing an accessible reception, adequate accessible toilet provision, good access through doorways and the building. As a result accessibility was a strong theme through the engagement and specific questions were included to try to ensure needs of all members of the community can be met. The feasibility study suggested the following accessible facilities:

- Accessible changing room
- Changing places (wet and dry access)
- Accessible toilet facilities
- Lift to first floor

The extensive feasibility work undertaken also highlighted issues of location. The preferred location for the new facility is on the site of the now closed Whitchurch Swimming Centre and the proposals are that the new centre will utilise the footprint of the also closed Enterprise North-East Youth Centre.

The engagement feedback is presented within this report and the findings of the public engagement will inform decision making. Views were sought on location, facility mix, design requirements and any other community needs. This report brings together feedback from:

- Emails and letters provided as part of the public consultation exercise.
- Survey responses gathered between 6th June and the 31st July 2022.
- Feedback from 7 engagement workshops and meetings (including Whitchurch Town Council, local businesses, schools and local sports and leisure groups).

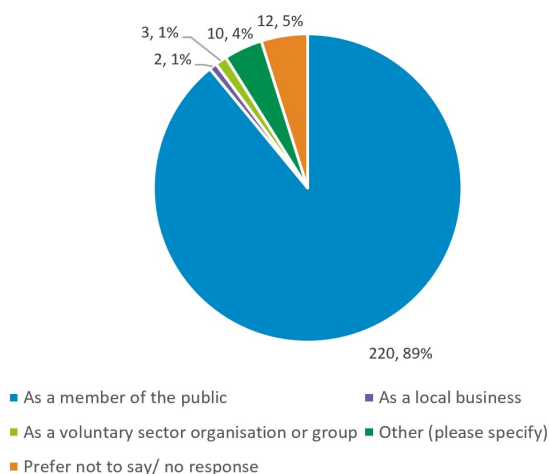
The next section of the report looks more closely at the survey response and the respondent characteristics.

Feedback response

The survey resulted in 274 responses and 12 written consultation responses were received. Important additional feedback was provided through workshops and meetings (all of which were written up to ensure key issues and feedback has been captured and will be considered in the next stage of work). Overall the combination of these methods has provided a lot of information to help Shropshire Council better understand priority issues and common themes.

Information about respondent characteristics was collected for the survey (allowing anonymous responses) but was not appropriate for the other forms of information gathering. Understanding the characteristics of survey respondents is helpful and can determine whether feedback is representative of the wider community or limited to people who share similar characteristics or backgrounds. Core questions are asked (these are all optional). The results highlighted that 80% of survey respondents were members of the public and only 15 surveys were completed by people representing businesses, voluntary and community sector groups and organisations and other bodies. Those who gave their group or organisation name included a range of local community groups and sports groups.

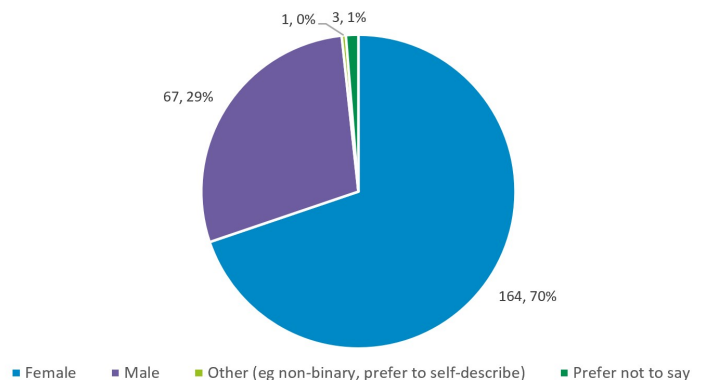
Type of survey respondent



The survey resulted in more responses from females compared to males and the comments highlighted that many women were keen to represent the needs of their children.

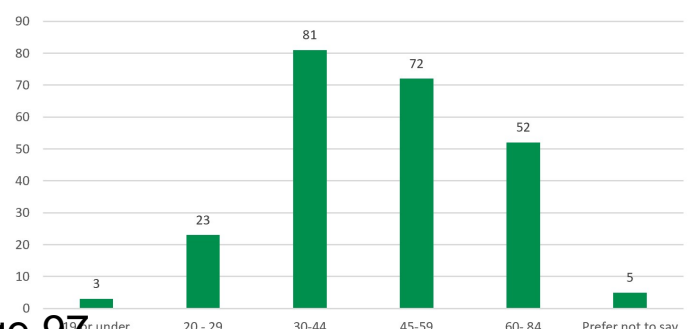
Overall 70% of feedback was from females and the comments highlighted that not only did more women describe the needs of their children but they also had more concerns about changing facilities, privacy and opening times (some commented on school holidays and sessions after school). There were also comments relating to children learning to swim and the needs of women with babies/ children in prams and pushchairs.

Gender of survey respondents



The survey was responded to by people from a range of age groups but the largest group was 40-44 year olds (34%). There was also a very good response from 45-59 year olds (31%) and 60-84 year olds (22%). Often the age group of survey respondents for Shropshire Council surveys is slightly older, on average, so this may again reflect the response from parents who wished to feedback for the whole family. All age groups were represented and it was encouraging to see responses from younger people. 38 of the survey respondents chose not to answer the question.

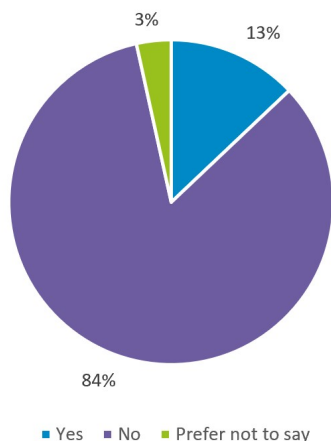
Survey respondent age groups



The survey respondents were asked about their ethnic background and the results show that 92% were from White British backgrounds. There was a helpful comment included from someone conscious of the different needs people may have depending on religion and belief. The comment made suggested women only swimming sessions and highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive sessions including hair products. This is something that could be explored further in future engagement as work progresses. Comments like this are helpful and sometimes more informal feedback methods or trial sessions may be planned to test demand once facilities are open.

Survey respondents were also asked 'Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your daily activity?' 13% of the survey respondents answered 'yes'. Representation from people with different levels of mobility is particularly important within a consultation of this nature. Specific questions were included about accessibility but positively it was a theme that was included within earlier comments without prompting. The results suggested widespread community support for design that will meet a wide range of needs and this is explored in more detail later in the report. Within the comments there were survey respondents who also mentioned suggestions to meet the needs of dependents, relatives and friends.

Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your daily activity?



The survey explained that Shropshire Council undertakes equality, social inclusion and health impact assessments (ESHIA) and asked for any comments on diversity, equality or social inclusion. Example comments are shown in the blue box.

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact

Gender needs and changing facilities

- *“Please take into account that for many women, including those of particular religions, or women who might have experienced sexual or domestic violence, sharing changing facilities with men is unnerving and for some a complete barrier to attending fitness facilities. Whilst the village changing facilities are great for families, there is quite a bit of evidence that women can experience unwanted attention in these types of changing rooms. Please take into account the wishes of some women to have a female only space.”*
- *“Baby changing facilities in male changing rooms as well as in female changing rooms. Different membership options e.g. off peak use, gym only, swim only, gym and swim. Pay as you go or annual payment.”*
- *“Family change areas.”*
- *“Women only classes.”*
- *“Provide family changing areas to meet their social, cultural and privacy needs.”*
- *“Toilet facilities should possibly have male/female/other I don't feel children should mix in these facilities and parents are not always going to be with them.”*

Physical and sensory needs

- *“Provisions for accessibility for sensory processing and over stimulation individuals.”*
- *“Include all children in sensory sessions. Not just those who have an official diagnosis as that's a very long drawn out process.”*
- *“Kids, especially hypermobile ones, run around. Don't make the new centre too compact. They need space to move away from doors and desks!”*
- *“I have osteoarthritis but can't see that on this survey. Affects my mobility..”*
- *“I think having different sections dependent on level of experience in regards to fitness/gym would be a real benefit for those who feel self conscious or inexperienced. One of the common fears of people I spoke to within the community is participating in fitness around those who are experienced and that it deters them from going. I think having something to combat this would draw the most vulnerable in to feel safe and included.”*
- *“Please consult local adults with learning disabilities directly as this online survey is unlikely to be accessible to them.”*

The next page shows some more comments covering other issues of equality across a wider range of themes including location.

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact cont.

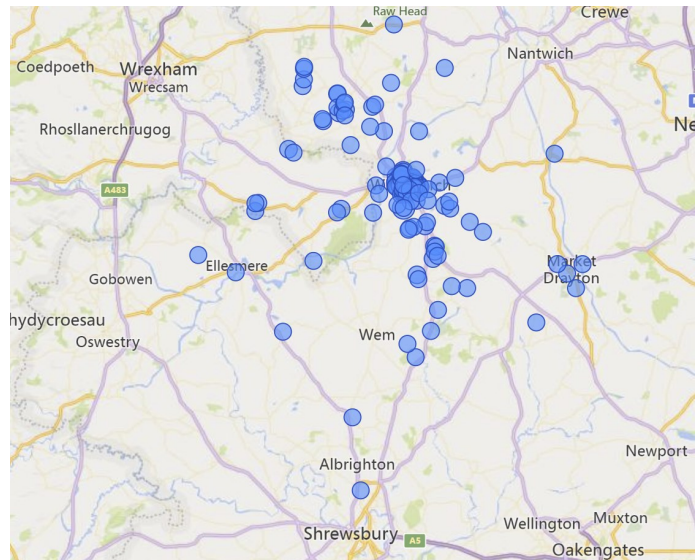
Other equality issues

- *“Just don’t forget those who are not part of the protected characteristic. They do get excluded sometimes.”*
- *“I think you’ve done enough. You need to make it work for the majority.”*
- *“The use of payment for lockers and car parking: Many young people no longer carry coins, which can make some lockers difficult to use. For example, my partner often has to take money out from a bank machine, then buy something in a shop, just to get change in order to use a locker at the swimming pool they go to. Many older people aren’t confident using non-cash technology (such as contactless payments). The parking arrangements and locker arrangements should be easily usable by everyone.”*
- *“Clear bias towards younger, fitter members of population i.e. active travel. Young mothers & older population will be main users of facility during the day. Location of facility should be on ring road.”*
- *“Think the council needs to start thinking about Equity rather than equality. Equality means that each individual or group is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognises that each person has different circumstances or starting points and therefore different resources and opportunities are needed to reach an equal outcome.”*
- *“No equality between money spent on Shrewsbury residents compared to Whitchurch. Older residents in Whitchurch not considered yet population demographics shows town has older residents. Know of people moving out of the county due to lack of leisure facilities. School leisure centre appropriate for younger residents only.”*
- *“This can’t happen soon enough. It’s a much needed centre for all in Whitchurch. Whitchurch is almost a forgotten town.”*

The responses to the question on equalities show real diversity of views as well as the importance of understanding a broad range of issues beyond the protected characteristic groupings. This information can be used to update the Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment for the Whitchurch Swimming and Leisure Centre as work progresses and it may also be helpful information for the staff members who will run the service when it opens.

There were two more important questions included in the survey: where people live and how often they used to visit the old swimming and leisure centre before it closed. The feedback can inform an understanding of catchment area and demand for the facility when it opens. The map below shows where the survey respondents live (approximate locations mean no one can be identified from the map shown and dots do not represent any accurate location/address).

Map of survey respondent locations (approximate)

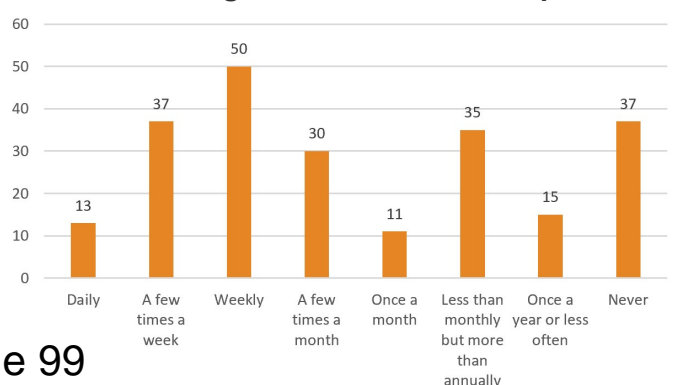


Map image based on Microsoft Bing Maps and MapPoint Web Service

The survey respondents predominantly live within driving distance of Whitchurch. Of the 214 survey respondents who provided a postcode, 167 (78%) live in the SY13 postcode area.

All survey respondents were asked how frequently they had visited the old swimming centre and the results are shown below (some commented they had moved to Whitchurch more recently). Of those who had used the old centre, there were a mix of responses with weekly being the most common (22%).

How frequently did you use the old Whitchurch Swimming Centre when it was open?

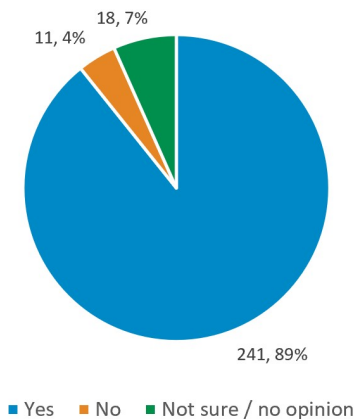


Location

Finding the right location for the swimming and leisure centre in Whitchurch is incredibly important. The feasibility studies undertaken highlighted that the preferred location for the new facility is on the site of the now closed Whitchurch Swimming Centre and the also closed Enterprise North-East Youth Centre. Understanding whether members of the public agree with this proposal was a key objective of the consultation.

The chart below illustrates the results of the survey question on location. A huge majority (89%) agree that the current site is the best location for the new centre to be built. Only 11 survey respondents (4%) disagreed and 18 were not sure or didn't have an opinion.

Do you believe this to be a suitable location for a replacement swimming pool and centre in Whitchurch?



The survey provided space for comments on the proposed location of the site. The table highlights the main themes from the comments and examples are also included. 41% of the comments included some concerns about the site, including size, water voles, access from the road and parking space. Many comments didn't necessarily suggest concern about the location but there were comments highlighting that the size of the plot is limited so may not be able to accommodate everything. Many of the stakeholder workshops highlighted questions about the location. There were suggestions that Sir John Talbot's School, the Rugby Club and a site off the ring road could be alternative locations.

The feasibility study had highlighted challenges with other sites. The advantages of a Shropshire Council owned site were also a focus. The overall feedback from the survey and workshops suggests that although there are some size concerns and other suggestions, the majority recognise the benefits of a central, town location. Some feedback referenced the opportunity to consider youth facilities (replacing the old Enterprise North-East Youth Centre).

Theme from comments	Count	%
Concern about road and access to site	3	4
Site too small	6	8
Need adequate car parking	8	11
Suggest alternative location e.g. ring road, school	5	7
Concern: water vole impact	7	10
Importance of active travel to site	4	6
Support for proposed location/current site	23	32
General support	2	3
Importance of public swimming and leisure facilities	9	13
Opportunity to develop/combine the Youth Centre	2	3
Other comments	2	3
Total	71	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- "Would benefit from being somewhere else in Whitchurch with plenty of parking."
- "I'm not sure because I wonder if the site is big enough, as you mention Gym as well. I moved to Whitchurch in May 2019, and haven't used the old facility so can't imagine the pool is too large..."
- "Yes, if there is enough space for a gym, 25m pool and learner pool with viewing area for swim galas. If not, an alternative site should be sought."
- "The new centre needs to be considerably larger than the current pool. The population of Whitchurch and surrounding areas are far, far greater than when the original pool was designed and built."
- "Near bus station and shops so multi journey for a family."
- "It needs to be central and accessible by public transport, cars and local pedestrians. This is the best site."
- "Good central location that people can walk to. If it is further out of town people will drive. Being in town it will encourage people to use other local services."

Ecology was not a theme included within the consultation questions but the survey and written consultation responses highlighted significant community concerns over the impact the build could have on water voles living in the brook adjacent to the site. 7 of the 12 written responses focused on the issue (see extracts below).

Written consultation responses - Extracts

- *“In the brook, right where your cafe steps and again underneath your children’s play area, live a colony of water voles. Water voles are a legally protected species and you are not allowed to impact on their habitat. I and many others have been monitoring these water voles for nearly 20 years and have logged over 400 sightings. The colony has featured on Springwatch and West Midlands Today, and is well known and loved by many townfolk. Please revise your plans so that they leave the water voles in peace and no laws are broken.”*
- *“I am very concerned about your proposal to concrete part of the bank for a new swimming pool in Whitchurch which is occupied by water voles, including the children’s play area over the top of another section..... It is crucial that the design of the swimming pool is changed so that the brook’s wildlife, including the water voles, can thrive. To have a population of water voles in Whitchurch at such a critical time is admirable, they need your protection.”*
- *“Please urgently take into consideration impact on wildlife in all your proposals but impact on waterways in particular and their precious fragile habitats for rare mammals and invertebrates- the future of our ecology is in your hands and it’s destruction is a large price to pay for human’s ‘leisure’ pursuits.”*
- *“Whilst I like the design of the building and am delighted at the prospect of a swimming pool again in Whitchurch I am exceedingly worried about the area on the drawing over the stream which depicts plans for a children’s play area and cafe steps. This will impact negatively on the legally protected water voles in that area.”*
- *“...the brook which runs along the Tesco car park has been a breeding stronghold for Water Voles for at least 15 years and is a critical habitat for this nationally declining protected UK species.... I would like to know what is the proposed mitigation for the protected species on site?...”*

9 of the 274 survey respondents included comments about the water voles in their survey responses. Some example comments are below.

Survey responses - Example comments

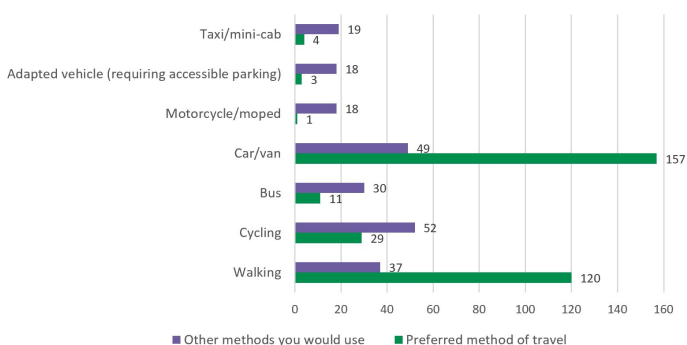
- *“I would just like to ensure the development does not impact the water voles in anyway. I would use this facility having a 3 year old son but I think it’s more important to him to grow up around wildlife which is conserved and protected.”*
- *“The brook adjacent to the site supports an important and well known colony of water voles [a protected species]. The brook and its banks need protection from disturbance both during construction and afterwards. The artist’s impression does not take account of this!”*
- *“...This is a well known habitat of protected species - Water Voles. The construction period must protect their habitat and no ‘management’ of the banks of the brook so the water voles are not disturbed Please plant more trees around all sides of the site.”*
- *“Development here would seriously impact an endangered species that is already on the Red List for England & UK.”*
- *“The current plans will impact the water voles in the stream. It looks as if you plan to concrete part of the bank and put a children’s play area over the top of another section. Please can you re think this to protect the water voles’ habitat.”*
- *“Impact on water voles will be an enormous worry for me if the proposed play area over the stream goes ahead. It is really vital also to ensure that they are not affected during construction.”*

Responses included feedback from people living much further away from Shropshire. The artists impression of the site caused concern with regards to the location of tiered decking over the brook to the south of the site. Although comments were made that Shropshire Council had not conducted an ecological survey, a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site was undertaken in December 2021 as part of the initial feasibility study. Shropshire Council officers will continue to take appropriate expert advice and ensure more detailed surveys are undertaken during subsequent stages of the project, with the aim of proceeding sensitively to take full consideration of the need to safeguard the water voles inhabiting the brook.

Travel and active travel

Travel to the new Whitchurch Swimming and Leisure Centre was a theme explored through the engagement and consultation. It had been highlighted as an important issue within previous engagement and the consultation provided the opportunity to explore the theme further and to build in active travel considerations. The survey asked how people would most likely travel to the centre and the results are shown below.

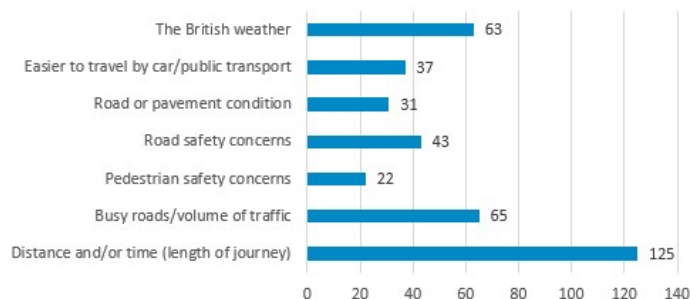
What forms of travel are you most likely to use to get to the centre?



Of the preferred methods of travel the car is the top choice with 48% of all responses followed by walking at 37%. The results suggest clear preference towards the car or walking but there were quite a few comments in the survey about cycle use and it was the third top preferred method of travel (9%). There were 11 other suggestions including electric car options, the train and the need for an accessible vehicle. 3 of the 11 comments highlighted lack of available public transport and 4 commented that car is the only option for those living further from the site.

The next question asked whether people would experience any barriers to prevent walking or cycling to the new centre (recognising the health, environmental and other benefits of active travel). A number of suggestions were provided within the question but there was also an opportunity to add other suggestions and comments. The results show that distance or time/length of journey was the main barrier and many commented that they live in surrounding villages. Busy roads/traffic and the weather were other top barriers.

Are there any barriers that would prevent you from walking/cycling to the new centre?



There were 55 comments provided in relation to travel and access, each was read and categorised into themes shown in the table below. The theme with the most comments was that the centre would be well located for walking and cycling, followed by concerns about the availability of buses and travel other than car. There were also comments about the need for parking space.

Theme from comments	Count	%
Active whilst at the centre	5	9
Mobility issues/accessibility important	1	2
Limited options other than car/lack of public buses	9	16
Awareness of travel options limited	1	2
Live too far away for active travel	5	9
Great location/ able to walk or cycle	13	24
Improve local cycle routes and facilities	4	7
Safety concerns	5	9
Provide electric car charging	1	2
Importance of adequate parking space	7	13
Other comments	4	7
Total	55	100

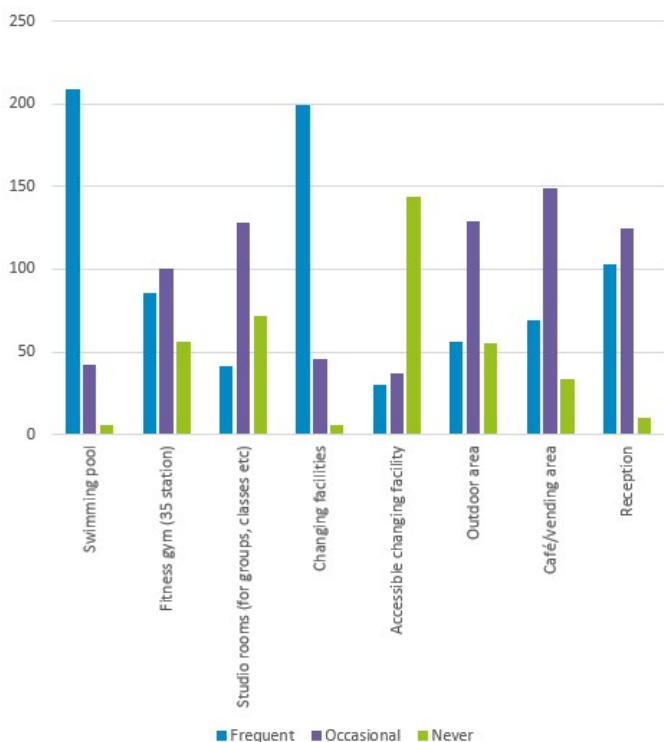
Survey responses - Example comments

- “Active travel not particularly relevant if users are going to be swimming or participating in fitness. Discriminatory policy for those who have an impairment of disability.”
- “Improve cycle routes and likely more people will cycle!”
- “If you live in town, with the proposed location it’s pretty easy to get to.”
- “It is central an easily accessible by active transport and by having a facility of the proposed standard should improve fitness, health and active transport likelihood of residents.”
- “The site is very close to the bus station and has ample parking too I can’t see any issues.”

Facilities

The survey and workshops gathered information on the facilities people would like to see at the new centre (the written responses tended to be more focused on particular issues and are incorporated into other themes within this report). The survey included a question which read ‘Thinking about this proposed provision, which facilities do you think members of your household would be likely to use, and how frequently?’ The chart below displays the results.

Anticipated use of centre facilities



The feedback shows that the swimming pool and changing rooms are the main priority for the survey respondents and they anticipate far greater use of this than the gym, studios or outdoor space. Most survey respondents expect to use the café/vending area more occasionally. 11% of the survey respondents suggested that they will need to use the accessible changing facility.

The next question within the survey asked whether the proposed facility mix was adequate and whether there were any other facilities people would like to see included. There were 89 comments in response. Some people provided comments covering more than one theme (these

were counted separately). The table below shows how diverse the feedback was and how many themes were covered. A shallow learning pool and warmer children pool was a common request and this was highlighted throughout the whole survey, suggesting this is important to many people. Other common requests included sauna/whirlpool and therapy facilities, sports courts and a larger pool.

Theme from comments	Count	%
Learning pool/ warmer children's pool	18	19
More thought to studio room proposals	2	2
Changing facilities for women and children/ privacy	4	4
Community meeting rooms or multi-use large space	3	3
Sauna, whirlpool, therapy and meditation space	9	9
Outdoor splash space and youth activity areas	4	4
Children's swimming slides/fun space/ equipment	6	6
Library facilities at the centre	2	2
Focus on the pool/provide larger pool	8	8
Gym facilities and free weights	4	4
Spectator area for the pool	5	5
Climbing wall	2	2
No gym space needed/ gym facilities elsewhere in town	6	6
Running track, triathlon training space	3	3
Courts: squash, badminton, tennis, indoor cricket etc.	8	8
Other comments and suggestions	11	12
Total	95	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- “I think you have the plans right.”
- “Whitchurch could do with a meeting room (say for 12-15 people) that voluntary organisations and local charities could book and use for free. The town is very short of such places since both the Wheatsheaf and the Dodington Lodge closed.”
- “An outdoor splash park/pool for children.”
- “Training pool/toddler pool.”
- “Slides, diving boards, fun swimming elements to encourage younger generations.”
- “Will there be a separate learner pool or one for young Children? A 6 lane pool is not very big for swimming if there are groups of children and parents and adult only times are usually limited.”

Example comments continued...

- *“Centre North east was a dedicated Youth Centre. This new development gives the opportunity to incorporate dedicated space not a shared space which has to be packed away after every session. The young people of Whitchurch deserve a better focus....”*
- *“The youth centre (what was Centre North East) could have space there too, and like in other areas a football/games area could be on top on the roof to maximise space.”*
- *“More focus on making the best possible pool. What about slides? Paddling area or pool for early swimmers. I'd sacrifice other uses for a more attractive swimming facility. Cafe great idea and outdoor area too. We have the civic and other rooms to hire elsewhere. There are gyms already. We don't have and never have had an amazing swimming pool!!”*
- *“Larger pool. Fitness gym not necessary there are several other facilities in the town.”*
- *“Viewing gallery for spectators for swimming galas.”*
- *“Please ensure segregated changing facilities but also family changing areas for parents with babies/ young children.”*
- *“Perhaps a small suite for a sauna and whirlpool to encourage a quiet space for mental health. Mental health facilities should be considered in today's society to coincide with physical health.”*
- *“The provision of an accessible warm pool that could be used for hydrotherapy/aquatic therapy would give you a facility that would benefit a large proportion of Shropshire residents who struggle to access these facilities. The Oval in Bebington is an excellent example of a truly accessible pool set up for those with disabilities.”*
- *“Small lockup to secure road bikes. Triathlon training. (Out of pool onto road bike.)”*
- *“Tarmac running track.”*
- *“The gym needs to have a range of pin and plate weight machines, as well as free weights, squat racks, deadlift stations. A variety of barbells and plenty of plates so people of all abilities can progressively overload.”*
- *“Flexible Sports hall where people can use facility during the day e.g. badminton, indoor cricket, netball, table tennis. Town's population has to travel outside the town currently which is ridiculous.”*
- *“No gym or dance studio needed. We currently have 5 gyms in town all competing to keep head above water. Same as dance studios 4 in town already!”*
- *“Sports courts are severely lacking in the area due to the school being the only location to hire and being unavailable quite often. A multi use indoor sports court would be of benefit as well and possibly the addition of outdoor courts as well.”*

The stakeholder workshops included a focus on facility mix and local groups and organisations were encouraged to highlight their priorities. Some example issues, themes and extracts have been pulled together below to give a flavour of the comments made. To retain anonymity, comments have not been attributed to the workshops or groups/organisations represented but the contributions of young people are helpful to consider separately in order to meet needs so those have been highlighted separately.

Stakeholder workshops - Facilities requested

- A shallow learner pool.
- A competition size pool.
- Design to allow hosting of galas.
- Spectator area and seating.
- Poolside storage.
- Adjustable starting blocks, electronic timing and display board.
- Question over moveable floor—will it be slow to move between sessions, unreliable and prevent diving?
- Swimming-specific training equipment in suites.
- An outdoor activity area to compliment the facility.
- A nursery/child area.
- A café is preferred to a vending area.
- Concerns about enough parking.
- A question of whether the fitness offer is big enough?
- Provision for youth sessions in the programme.
- Covered Multi Use Games Area with good lighting and drainage.

Requests from children and young people

- An area for young people in the Gym.
- A skateboard park by the new centre and a covered bench.
- Retain and improve the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)
- A slide.
- Inflatables.
- A higher diving board.
- Car parking space was also mentioned in the feedback from young people.

The workshop feedback reflects the survey feedback and there are some common requests across the two sets of data. Centre facilities are also referred to in some of the following sections of the report. The next section covers facilities and services in relation to health and wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing

Through the consultation and different forms of engagement, the aim to improve the health and wellbeing of the community through physical activity and sport was communicated. The survey encouraged people to think about how the new centre could support improved health and a question was also included to better understand existing barriers limiting participation in sport and physical activity. The results are shown below.

Do you experience any barriers that limit your current levels of physical activity/sport?



The main barrier highlighted by 52% of all the survey respondents was a lack of easy access to facilities and inconvenience. The second main barrier highlighted by 38% of survey respondents was cost, followed by insufficient time (24% of all respondents). The barriers that may be considered more personal such as lack of self-confidence, no one to exercise with, lack of energy and lack of motivation were not selected in large numbers. This feedback suggests that barriers are much more practical than emotional and through provision of the new centre some of these barriers may be overcome.

An open comment box was included to encourage survey respondents to describe any other barriers limiting their current levels of physical activity. There were 53 comments provided and the comments covered a wide range of themes. The themes are all shown in the table with common comments describing that the centre has been closed, cost concerns, injury/health and disability barriers and comments calling for longer opening times.

Theme from comments	Count	%
No barriers - very active	7	13
Childcare facilities/ Mum and child activity	2	4
Access to a gym	1	2
Need extended opening times	5	9
Would like activities, classes, pool for older people	2	4
Need improved facilities and amenities	3	6
Sports centre has been closed - too far to travel elsewhere	11	21
Injury, mobility, disability and health	8	15
Cost issues important - need affordable facilities	8	15
Other comments	6	11
Total	53	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- *"There isn't a sports centre! It shut 2 years ago."*
- *"No swimming pool is very limiting, there is nowhere to train for triathlons."*
- *"No classes or sports available for age. What is the significance of concentrating of youth activities when there are plenty in Whitchurch via school and attached leisure centre and the town has an older population?"*
- *"My arthritic hips and knees like gentle exercise like swimming. I don't like walking far especially in cold winter so warm pool is ideal."*
- *"Gyms are expensive and not for everyone due to self confidence, whereas swimming is enjoyable and a cheap alternative to be able to do twice a week."*
- *"Local' swimming pools are in privately run clubs which are too expensive and usually require membership rather than 'pay and swim'."*
- *"There is no general gym in Whitchurch at a reasonable cost. "*
- *"Have long opening times as a lot of people work and there needs to be a lot of flexibility so people find time to use it."*
- *"I have my child with me at all times so we need to be able to exercise together."*
- *"Nothing in town for a disabled person."*
- *"Many of the council run facilities could be open later due to long / late hours in work I struggle to reach some places before closure."*

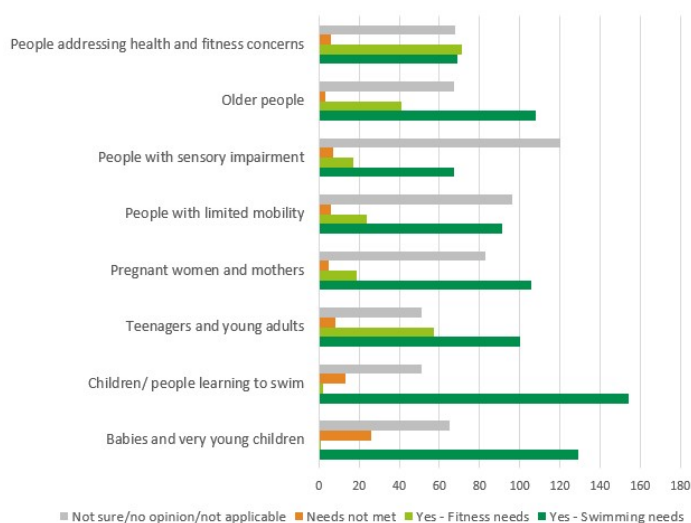
The next section on community use further builds on the theme of health and wellbeing.

Community use

Health and wellbeing continued as a theme through the survey when people were asked if there were any opportunities they'd like to see developed at the new centre to increase wider community use. There was more feedback received from the written consultation responses and the stakeholder workshops and that has been incorporated.

Survey respondents were asked to consider if the proposals for the new centre were likely to meet the different needs of all ages and all abilities. The results are shown in the chart below.

Do you feel the swimming and fitness needs of different age groups and members of the community can be met by the proposed new centre and its facilities?



The feedback suggest that survey respondents believe the proposed new centre can meet the swimming needs of children, people learning to swim and babies/very young children. There is also some confidence that the swimming needs of other groups can be met including pregnant women and mothers, older people and teenagers and young adults. There is less confidence over whether the new centre will meet fitness needs but the comments suggest that more detail on the provision of activities is needed before people can have a more informed opinion. The orange column suggests concerns over whether needs will be met. On average only 9 people have concerns

each group listed but there were more concerns about whether the needs of babies and young children could be met by the centre than for any other group (this may reflect the fact that a smaller proportion compared to other groups will be able to swim, and swimming is more dependent on the engagement of parents and carers). The comments are much more helpful in describing the views of the survey respondents. 96 comments were provided and exercise on prescription and social prescribing were commonly suggested followed by more specific suggestions for community groups use, sessions designed for older people and consideration of use by schools and young people.

Theme from comments	Count	%
All ability classes	4	4
More activities for young children	2	2
Exercise on prescription and social prescribing	18	19
Sessions designed for older people	10	10
Mental health support and facilities	5	5
Space for therapists, coaches and alternative health	6	6
Mother and baby sessions	3	3
Swimming Club	2	2
Youth sessions and access for schools	9	9
Swimming lessons for all ages	4	4
Ideas for community groups and use	12	13
Accessibility and disabled swimming	6	6
Lane swimming	2	2
Affordable/ season tickets	4	4
Other comments	9	9
Total	96	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- "There could be facilities for chair exercise groups to get the folks who are lethargic to move and get healthier. Line dance groups, Pilates."
- "Exercise classes with a social aspect to improve mental health and loneliness, supported to achieve a healthy group mentality."
- "Older adult/ disability accessible and appropriate fitness classes and groups."
- "More clubs for the retired to use."
- "Definitely exercise on prescription."
- "Managing anxiety classes for mental health, relaxation etc."

Survey responses - Example comments cont...

- *“A mental health hub or rooms to rent for wellness coaches to operate out of.”*
- *“Having someone to coach and motivate.”*
- *“The usual classes but for all levels of ability.”*
- *“Classes that encourage all abilities to attend. Some can be seen as very competitive e.g. spinning & a gentle intro. to such classes may encourage more to attend.”*
- *“Children's and adults exercise/fun sessions such as gymnastics, dance, cheerleading etc. An indoor recreational area to include table tennis, pool etc.”*
- *“Activities for teenagers are desperately needed. A more attractive, fun pool would mean more of them visiting. If we must have a gym and rooms to hire, put on youth sessions for kids of all ages to benefit.”*
- *“Youth Boxing facility was discussed some time ago, linked to the possible renovation of Centre North East. This could now be part of the new development.”*
- *“Mother and baby classes. 'Walking' sports. Charity events. After school clubs. Soft play.”*
- *“It would be a good base for the local running club to meet and organise runs from.”*
- *“A home for Whitchurch Swimming Club.”*
- *“Design to allow swimming galas and competitions to be run effectively, including poolside space for teams and sufficient spectator/ viewing space and electronic timing equipment. Facilities to allow other water sports such as scuba diving, kayaking, water polo, inflatables, parties.”*
- *“I think learning from what Crewe has done is key. The facilities there are excellent except parking. They also do disability classes which my elderly father loves, for social and health reasons. It will certainly improve things for us as I won't have to travel to Crewe. They also link with the local CCG and provide exercise for health.”*

The written consultation responses and the workshops also included very helpful feedback on the theme of community use. Some extracts and key points from discussions have been used to illustrate the comments made. The feedback demonstrates a strong interest in maximising the opportunities offered by the new centre and working to ensure as many needs of the local community and groups can be met as possible (including health needs). The feedback also emphasises the importance of inclusion and working to ensure members of the community are not excluded on issues such as travel, cost, age or fitness. The next page includes more feedback on the theme of inclusivity gathered through the survey.

Written consultation responses - Extracts

- *“...in the context of the redevelopment of this site, Shropshire Council would propose to consider incorporating meeting rooms and exhibition facilities in this scheme, perhaps in a quasi self contained context ,to provide for use by different local cultural organisations...”*
- *“...I feel sorry for the children deprived at the moment of fun and the opportunity to learn to swim. Swimming is such a good way to keep them slim and healthy.”*
- *“I am SO happy to hear of proposed plans. I used the old pool two or three times a week as my arthritic hips and knees respond well to non impact exercise . Now that I cannot walk as far as I could when younger, I rely on swimming for my main exercise....Without a pool, I felt bereft. Not just for physical exercise but also for the mental health benefits.”*
- *“I absolutely appreciate that a development of this nature can't be everything to everybody. I also believe mental health and physical wellbeing go hand in hand. We're dealing with some big topics which with a genuinely caring holistic approach could make this concept pound for pound a fantastic facility for everyone in Whitchurch and become a really worthwhile investment for Shropshire Council at a time when money is very thin on the ground and we have growing needs with poverty in the mix.”*

Stakeholder workshops - Community use

- Multiple stakeholder groups highlighted the importance of making the centre affordable to use.
- Specific consideration was requested for low income groups. Ensuring people are not excluded from the centre on the basis of affordability.
- It was suggested that the centre could offer a community meeting place for free activities/groups to use to benefit low-income families.
- An opportunity for children to connect with others, keep fit and have a base for community activities.
- Stakeholders commented on the importance of providing some facility for a nursery/child area to allow mothers and parents to exercise.
- There were some concerns about anti-social behaviour locally and the need to offer young people opportunities for more positive activities.
- School use of the centre was raised in stakeholder workshops as an important issue.
- Although stakeholders main focus was on local residents, there were questions whether the centre could attract people from across Shropshire, North Wales and Cheshire.
- The needs of the wider swimming community and ability to host visiting swimming groups etc. for groups was highlighted.

The survey stated 'We want to consider the needs of all ages and all abilities when working to implement the new centre. Do you feel the swimming and fitness needs of different age groups and members of the community can be met by the proposed new centre and its facilities?' There were 60 comments provided. The table below summarises the main themes from the comments. Some of the issues highlighted elsewhere in the survey were repeated but there were also other themes highlighted such as privacy, safety, membership and many comments about the importance of everyone having the opportunity to learn to swim at any age. Many comments related to the needs of different age groups. Example comments are shown to illustrate some of the points raised.

Theme from comments	Count	%
Privacy and safety issues	4	7
Lane swimming options	2	3
Design for Mums, babies and small children	2	3
Links to GP, Social Prescribing and health support	2	3
Age group designed sessions (young people, older people etc.)	9	15
Learner and small child pool	11	18
Accessibility (e.g. moving floor, hoist, ramp, non-slip)	6	10
Swimming lessons	6	10
Fitness classes and sessions	3	5
Opening hours, membership and information	5	8
Other comments	10	17
Total	60	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- "Good online information about what's available, pricing, booking and opening hours."
- "Open 7 days a week. Early open times (E.g. 6am) and late closing times (E.g. 10pm) to fit around working lives."
- "Warmer toddler pool for babies and young children learning to swim - allows the main pool to be used simultaneously."
- "Movable floor or learner pool with viewing area to encourage competitive swimming and help out Whitchurch on the map for future Olympic hopefuls. The Tri club has European champions as members who are currently unable to swim in the town!"
- "Structured swimming sessions for children who can swim well but don't want to be competitive."
- "Walk in pool (as like the sea shallow to deep), small pool for toddlers/babies and a slide/wave pool something for the older children."

- "Please make sure there is a deep end for diving and free diving training - potentially scuba dive training. The current local pool while the swimming centre is closed does not have a deep end and it's very limiting in terms of sports/higher end fitness training."
- "I have visited other centres that allow schools to use the pool to do swimming classes during the day. This allows variation for the children on exercise and gives them the ability to have swimming lessons parents may not be able to afford."
- "More swimming lessons with smaller class sizes and consistent teachers. Swimming club Masters swimming Aqua aerobic classes Baby and toddler swimming Youth swimming and fitness classes."
- "Gym time for children over 12 years. Single sex and age graded times for swimming and gym use."
- "One centre I used to live near had a couple of gym sessions for youngsters 15 to 17 at a slightly cheaper rate to get them interested in going."
- "Make it fun for children after missing out for so long it would be nice if it was actually worth the wait."
- "Viewing area poolside needs to be open so parents can reassure young children during lessons. Market Drayton is good. Vibration machines are great for rehabilitation from injuries and improving general fitness; include one in the gym please. Make sure the cafe serves healthy options!"
- "Please ensure that when the children are on half term break that it's open. Other local baths keep to normal timetables and it means it's empty when you could get children active and bring in money."
- Aqua natal, swimming lessons for children with appropriate temperature of pool, good swimming slots for just younger children. Healthy snacks available as a lot of gyms have just vending machines with sugary snacks. Appropriate changing facilities for babies."

In the same way as previous responses to the survey, people used the open comment box to highlight the request for a learner pool or pool suitable for smaller children. Other common issues mentioned within the comments included activities and sessions designed to meet the needs of different age groups, the importance of providing swimming lessons for the community, and the need to open the centre at a range of different times to allow people with different lifestyles to visit. Providing membership/payment options and good information about available activities was also highlighted. Another issue mentioned within this question response was the importance of privacy and feeling safe (mention was given to concerns such as mixed changing rooms and large windows allowing people to look in).

Accessibility and design

The importance of accessibility was raised throughout the consultation, through survey feedback, written responses and the stakeholder workshops. The survey had included a question to prompt feedback but the comments throughout the survey highlighted that members of the public were already very aware of the importance of accessibility in design and a wide range of very helpful suggestions were provided. The main question included read ‘Are there any other specific design requirements you'd like to see considered in relation to accessibility and inclusivity of use of the facility (for example hearing and acoustics)?’ There were 70 comments.

The comments have each been read and categorised into themes shown in the table below. Themes included the need for changing areas to allow family changing, and accessible design for wheelchair access, pool and changing access and non-slip surfaces. Lifts, hoists and other alternatives were also commented on. Other comments covered noise issues including design for people with hearing impairment and design for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (such as quiet sessions). The example comments are a more helpful way of understanding the accessibility issues expressed.

Theme from comments	Count	%
Hearing needs considered (e.g. minimise echo)	6	9
Wheelchair access pool and changing, non-slip surfaces	9	13
Pushchair and buggy access and spaces	3	4
Baby changing for men and women	5	7
Quiet sessions and autism awareness	7	10
Lift/hoist or equivalent facilities to allow access	6	9
Spectator area	3	4
Light and visual impairment aware design	4	6
Family changing	9	13
Gender neutral changing	2	3
Private changing facilities, men/women/family	5	7
Other comments	11	16
Total	70	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- *“I suggest consulting with a range of service users who have various access needs to ensure these facilities are sufficiently designed and positioned.”*
- *“Disabled inclusivity in the grounds and facility areas.”*
- *“Quiet swimming/quiet gym/class periods for those who are over stimulated by competing sounds e.g. those of a busy pool/loud music for a class.”*
- *“Consideration of noise... Autism friendly.”*
- *“Clear Tannoy. Audio loop.”*
- *“Acoustics are very important for people with mild to moderate hearing loss. Hearing loop availability for exercise classes, not just at reception.”*
- *“Less echo the better; should be calming not stressful.”*
- *“Lighting and colour schemes suitable for people with compromised vision. As much natural light as possible.”*
- *“Lighting, my daughter would not use the old pool due to ‘scary’ dark environment.”*
- *“Hoist, autism friendly noise absorbing cladding, graded entry.”*
- *“Lifting equipment into the pool for disabled accompanied swimmers.”*
- *“Appropriate equipment to help less able people in and out of the pool.”*

Written consultation responses - Extracts

- *“I am writing to ask if steps down into the water can be included as a ladder is OK for the fit and healthy but steps are the very thing that is needed as we all get older, when young you never think of these things. I have had to have a knee replacement and had to travel to Chirk twice a week for water aerobics.... A hoist is great for those who need it but many do not...”*

The Feasibility Study contained a robust focus on accessibility and inclusivity but this will need to remain a focus through the next stages of work, drawing on advice from experts, as more detailed designs are prepared and moved forward. The feedback obtained through the consultation was varied and a helpful addition to the work that has taken place to explore good practice examples from elsewhere in the UK and available guidance.

Environmental design

The stakeholder and community engagement carried out as part of the consultation highlighted the aim to ensure the new centre will be operationally and environmentally sustainable with carbon neutral targets. This aim was strongly supported in the feedback received and there was a lot of interest in the opportunity to apply sustainability through the design. Members of the public and other stakeholders made some very helpful suggestions and those are summarised below.

There were 80 comments provided within the survey. Some comments covered the issues that are most important to people (such as the facilities, ecology, private changing areas, accessibility and car parking) but a wide range of environmental considerations were also highlighted, as shown in the table below, such as energy efficiency and solar power, natural planning and low impact methods to clean the water and centre, recycling, healthy/local food provision and many other suggestions. Some comments related to the active travel theme covered earlier in the survey.

Theme from comments	Count	%
Electric car charging points	4	5
Easy to book classes and sessions (Inc. walk in)	6	8
Quality refreshments with local produce (not vending)	6	8
Environmental design and energy efficiency e.g. solar power	13	16
Plants, natural, clean environment (ozone treated water)	9	11
Recycling	4	5
Affordable	3	4
Consideration of ecology (water voles)	4	5
Garden space and outdoor facilities	2	3
Cycle parking	5	6
Disabled swimming and good accessibility	5	6
Private, clean showers and changing facilities	4	5
Central location, easy to get to	2	3
Car parking space	3	4
Other comments	10	13
Total	80	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- “Ozone treated water rather than chlorine. Better for us and the environment.”
- “Exeter Council have just delivered a Passivhaus level swimming pool. Please ensure you learn from their experience to achieve a similar result. The building itself should be designed to limit carbon emissions in the build fabric, and the use of Passivhaus will ensure you have a low carbon building operationally...Suggest use of ground source heat pumps for maximum COP gain with the heating you will still need.”
- “I would appreciate visible measures of how the centre is performing against its environmental targets....consideration should be taken with regards to future proofing the car park for more electric charging points to be installed (i.e. placing the infrastructure in the ground now, so it's easier/cheaper to add more charging points in the future).”
- “I would like to see heat pumps used to cool the gym areas and heat the swimming pool water, drives me mad to see so many gyms cooled with outside units dumping energy into the atmosphere when the pool water is an ideal heat sink. Roof should be covered with solar panels. I would not go for carbon neutral as it will just mean throwing money at tree planting of dubious quality, but go for good logical long term carbon and cost reducing solutions as above. You could consider working with the local supermarket to take away the waste heat from their fridges and freezers which normally goes into the atmosphere too.”
- “Provide recycling bins for customers and staff.”
- “Adequate bike storage, not just prioritising cars.”
- “It should be economically viable as well as environmentally sustainable - environmentally sustainable but not at the cost of residents who are already taking a hit from fuel and energy price hikes.”
- “Any Cafe/food outlet to support local producers.”
- “Low impact ventilation. Solar. Indirect lighting. No cash environment.”
- “Grass roof wildlife area, recycled water system.”

The feedback from the written survey responses and stakeholder workshops is considered on the next page.

The written (email and letter) responses to the consultation included some comments about the environment and suggestions for environmental design. Some extracts are shown below to illustrate the main points made.

Written consultation responses - Extracts

- *"I am very concerned about your proposal to concrete part of the bank for a new swimming pool in Whitchurch.."*
- *"...Some ideas to share:*
 - *External living Green Walls*
 - *A Grass Roof*
 - *Use of Wood and Glass in the Structure*
 - *Tree planting and imaginative seating giving a real welcome to the Building and connecting to the Outdoor area, stream etc*
 - *Possible public Art..*
 - *Imaginatively designed Recycling Bins which could continue out into the Town centre.*
 - *A cycling hub that offers both safe bike parking for folk to go shopping in town whilst connecting to the Towns Cycle routes (These are very underused and could form part of an holistic mental health/well being plan revitalising the routes so folk use their bikes more.*
 - *There's also a network of walks around Town.*
 - *These were being monitored by an Organisation involved with the LCWIP who look at Town Centre Walking and Cycling Networks.*
- *"....green walls. They're great for absorbing CO2 but also other particulates that can be damaging to our health. If this were introduced to the Swimming Complex....I've seen examples in London and other places they completely change a place. Greening our Towns and Villages is vital going forwards..."*

The stakeholder workshops touched on the importance of the environment and sustainability. It wasn't a main theme, because more attention was paid to community use and facilities, but where issues were raised these have been summarised in the following box.

The main points included energy efficiency and heating, protecting the surrounding environment (reflecting the section covered previously on the water voles living in the brook), and a range of comments about the location of the new centre and the benefits that would bring for active travel (comments included looking at more opportunities to improve cycle provision in the area).

Stakeholder workshops - Environmental design

- The stakeholder feedback highlighted the history of the area including some geology and environmental issues. These issues are known from feasibility work, but remain helpful feedback for the build phase, and emphasise the value and importance of local stakeholder involvement.
- The feedback from stakeholder workshops and meetings included the suggestion of primary heat source from either Air Source Heat Pumps or Ground Source Heat Pumps. These options will be explored within the more detailed design phase and work will take place with experts to understand the options - most appropriate for the site in terms of capital cost and operational benefits.
- The stakeholder workshops included comments on the value of PV cells to make use of solar power. This was also a common suggestion from survey respondents.
- Stakeholders suggested that the exterior of the new centre could add to wellbeing and suggested the idea of green walls.
- The stakeholders also highlighted the concerns from members of the community relating to the impact on the environment, particularly the book and its water voles.
- Active travel and cycle provision were commented upon in the workshops and opportunities for improved cycle provision on and off site were mentioned.

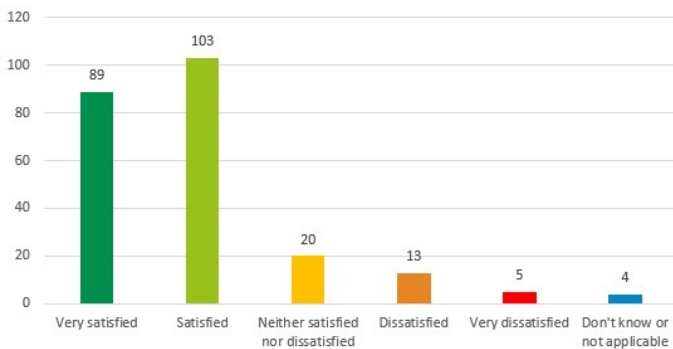
The next section of the report covers more general feedback. The survey was designed to gauge overall views and also included an open comment box at the end to gather any other feedback members of the community and stakeholders wished to highlight.



Overall views

The feedback obtained through the consultation was very constructive and appeared very positive overall, however, to test overall opinion, the survey asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with the proposals for the new swimming and fitness centre in Whitchurch?' The chart below shows the result. The response shows that 82% of survey respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the proposals. 8% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and the remainder felt neutral or did not have an opinion/didn't know. This is a very positive result.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the proposals for the new swimming and fitness centre in Whitchurch?



Closer analysis suggests that there are two main concerns held by those dissatisfied: concerns about the impact on water voles (including the assumption that an ecological survey hadn't been carried out) and concerns that more attention needs to be paid to maximising swimming pool provision rather than additional facilities such as the café, studio rooms, gym and other proposed facilities.

The last survey question was 'Are there any further comments or observations you'd like to make about the proposed new facility?' There were 96 comments and the table displays the main themes. The comments included comments that a café and gym may not be needed because these facilities exist elsewhere in the town. Another common comment focused on delivering the new centre as soon as possible and without delay.

Theme from comments	Count	%
Open centre as soon as possible	22	23
More information/engagement/updates	6	6
No external management e.g. Serco	3	3
Missed old pool	3	3
Water Voles and ecological impact	8	8
Need affordable use	6	6
Too small/larger competitions pool	6	6
Additional facilities e.g. gym/weights, running track, courts	5	5
Environmental design	2	2
Accessibility	2	2
Don't need a gym and/or café	8	8
Focus on children and youth	6	6
Healthy food, drinks and vending	2	2
General positive comments	7	7
Concerns and negative comments	3	3
Other comments	7	7
Total	96	100

Survey responses - Example comments

- "Swimming pools are never made long enough for fitness swimming 100ft is a good length."
- "My only concern is that the proposed site is quite small, limiting any future expansion ... open outdoor area for football, running, tennis, other sports and even community sport events that would be better."
- "A gym and a cafe isn't needed when we have both a 2 minute walk away."
- "We really don't need another gym or dance studios Why waste the money when it could all be spent on a fabulous swimming centre to save family travelling miles out of town every time. i.e. Wrexham swimming baths and Plas Madoc etc."
- "Keep it affordable for everyone, concessions for lower income/pensioners/disabled and local users of the facilities."
- "Can't wait to see the new facilities up and running, cannot come soon enough."
- "We desperately need this. In whatever form it takes. Our community and particularly our children have missed out on so much because of Covid and our old pool closing...."
- "I think it is a vital need in the town and the whole community would benefit from this proposal."
- "An excellent proposal. Great to hear of something so positive in the pipeline for the local community. Well done to all concerned!"
- "So far everyone I have spoken to is optimistic, encouraged and excited about the proposal."

Summary

The responses consultation were very helpful and despite some concerns, very described and communicated, most comments were positive and optimistic about the prospect of swimming facilities returning to Whitchurch.



Engagement: Feedback was provided from 274 survey respondents, 12 written consultation responses and 7 stakeholder meetings and workshops.



Location: 89% of survey respondents agree with the proposed location covering the existing site and closed Enterprise North-East Youth Centre. The stakeholder meetings and workshops included some suggestions for a larger out of town site.



Ecology: 7 of the 12 written responses and 9 of the 274 survey respondents highlighted significant concerns over the impact the build could have on water voles living in the brook on the site. These concerns were reflected in conversations with stakeholders.



Travel: Survey respondents' preferred method of travel to the location is the car (48%) followed by walking at 37%. Cycle use was the third top preferred method of travel (9%). Active Travel was commented on throughout the engagement with stakeholders highlighting opportunities to improve cycling facilities on site and throughout the local area. Parking facilities were also commonly mentioned.



Facility mix: Feedback calls for a learner/child pool, large pool, private changing, family changing and child/youth facilities as priorities. There are mixed views on the gym and café.



Health: The main barrier to physical activity highlighted by 52% of all the survey respondents was a lack of easy access to facilities and inconvenience. 38% of survey respondents cited cost, followed by insufficient time (24%). The feedback included a wide range of suggestions for facilities and activities to address health and wellbeing.



Community: There was strong support for new opportunities to encourage wider community use of the new centre. Exercise on prescription, social prescribing community groups, sessions designed for older people and consideration of use by schools and young people were all highlighted within the suggestions from the survey and at stakeholder workshops.



Accessibility: 70 survey respondents and more workshop/meeting attendees highlighted the importance of accessibility. Comments covered wheelchair access, pool and changing access, non-slip surfaces, lifts, hoists moveable floors etc. Other comments covered noise issues including design for people with hearing impairment and quiet sessions design for sensory needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.



Environment: 80 survey respondents and more workshop/meeting attendees highlighted the importance of sustainability and minimising climate impact. Suggestions covered energy efficiency, solar power, heat pumps, green walls, recycling, natural planning and low impact methods to clean the water and centre, and healthy/local food provision.



Overall views: 82% of survey respondents were satisfied with the proposals and additional support was voiced by stakeholders. The feedback overall was very positive.

August 2022

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Appendix 1: Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre Feasibility Study



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- 8.0 Structural and civils report
- 9.0 MEP and sustainability report
- 10.0 Cost report, programme and procurement

APPENDICES

- 1. Alternative site layouts considered during design process
- 2. Business case

Built in 1974, Whitchurch Swimming Centre comprises a 5-lane, 25m pool and changing facilities.

The centre has been closed since March 2020, initially due to the national lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and further to that as a result of the structural problems identified whilst investigating the cause of a leak from the pool tank, which include underpinning issues and deterioration in the fabric of the building.

Shropshire Council's Property Services Group has commissioned investigation work to identify the immediate, medium and, longer term maintenance requirements and costs associated with these to be able to re-open the existing facility and maintain it to an acceptable standard. However further structural investigation work has also taken place which has resulted in the structural engineer stating:

"We caution that the swimming pool is likely to continue to settle due to the inadequate foundations to the swimming pool and structure. Further cracking and lifting of tiles to the pool and pool surround will continue to occur. Whilst further remedial works can be undertaken to address issues at movement joints, lifting tiles, etc we advise that this is not considered cost effective due to the inadequate foundations and the age of the structure. Consideration should be given to the whole life cost of a replacement building and pool over the ongoing running and maintenance costs of the existing facility".

Alongside the maintenance investigation works an outline feasibility study was commissioned, through Strategic Leisure Ltd, to review the business case for investment in a new facility to be able to compare this option with carrying out the necessary repairs on the existing facility.

Of the six options considered for replacement, the option recommended by the Council to be taken forward is **option B new build**, with a 6-lane, 25m pool with movable floor, 35-station fitness suite, dance studio and café with 20 covers.

Architects



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Structural / Civils



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MEP / Sustainability



CGP | MEP

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Ecology



Wildwood Ecology

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Client objectives

To improve health and well-being at all stages of life and that physical activity is an integral part of this.

Client vision

Shropshire will be a county where healthier, active lifestyles are encouraged, supported and facilitated for everyone. Key aspects include:

- Support for the creation of a high quality and sustainable indoor leisure facility mix, which provides accessible and inclusive activities for all Shropshire residents leading to increased participation and active lifestyles, thereby meeting community need
- Recognising the importance of leisure facilities as relevant community spaces, accessible to all and offering opportunities for the delivery of a wide range of activities, services, support and entertainment to local communities and people
- A commitment to work with a wide range of partner organisations and individuals as co-creators and co-deliverers of leisure facilities so that they best reflect the differing needs of local communities.
- There is a collective priority (Shropshire Council, Health and Wellbeing Board, Energize (Active Partnership) to improve community health and well-being at all stages of life, and that physical activities are integral to this, with a focus on older and young people and families
- There is also a need to ensure that provision (services, activities and facilities) is relevant and sustainable

Other client project outcomes

- Put Shropshire back into the community
 - The development of a new facility could present significant opportunities to implement Social Value initiatives
- Consider the impact of the development on the climate:
 - The development of a new facility will be significantly more energy efficient
 - There will be opportunities for renewable energy generation as part of the new building.

- Carbon off-setting or mitigation: there may be an opportunity for tree planting within a landscaping scheme for a new facility
 - A commitment to quantifying carbon performance as part of any detailed design for a new facility will be included in a design brief
 - Climate change adaptation: building designed in such a way as to respond to climate change so will have a positive or no effect
 - Sustainability requirements
 - Carbon neutrality: Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and in 2020 adopted its Strategy for achieving net zero on carbon emissions by 2030. In line with this, this project should explore the potential for Passivhaus and ensure that the Council is able to track the lifetime carbon performance of the building
 - Building expected to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating and will be subject to a formal assessment. The minimum standard accepted will be 'Very Good'
 - DEC A rating
 - Design to provide for a passive standard of operation at the facilities, the aim being to achieve as low a carbon footprint as possible at a reasonable cost over the life cycle of the project. A commentary on the reasons for not adopting the full Passivhaus accreditation route for the design will be helpful as part of our sustainability audit trail for the project
 - Provision of an audit trail, including quantitative performance measures (including Sport England Sustainability Target Metrics, see link below for information), that provide documentary evidence on a design stage by stage approach, to minimising the carbon footprint of the facilities and climate change impact. Provides for tracking the journey of the development through a lifetime carbon performance study which demonstrates how the design and materials used have taken account of the carbon reduction and climate change agenda and that the performance of the building is operating within the design parameters
 - The design must incorporate Sport England design guidance on sustainable facilities: www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/sustainability
 - Providing a report comparing the sustainability performance of the existing facility with the new development with the aim that this demonstrates a net improvement
 - Design must take account of the opportunity to be serviced by air or water source heat pumps and on site renewable energy generation such as PV
 - Focus on outcomes for customers
 - New facilities will provide greater opportunities for participation which supports living a healthy lifestyle
 - Value for money
 - Business modelling has been carried out on the new build option to compare the life cycle costings of developing a new facility against the costs of the current facility.
 - New facilities provide opportunities for generating significant operational surplus compared to the current subsidy levels required
 - Other aims
 - Social Value: The project will reflect Shropshire Council's Social Value Policy.
- The key themes to be reflected in this project are:-
- Support for the local economy through use of local contractors / sub-contractors; local employment; skills building through training and work placements; apprenticeships; supply chain spend
 - Carbon reduction initiatives through low- or no-emission vehicles; low carbon construction techniques and materials; building efficiency; travel schemes
 - Wellbeing schemes targeted at specific groups of people to increase participation in physical activity
 - Minimising non-recyclable waste from activities
 - A section of Shropshire Council's website is also dedicated to Social Value: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/social-value/>
- ### The Active Environment
- In line with Uniting the Movement, the 2021 Sport England Strategy the design proposals should comply with Sport England's published Design Guidance. Sport England Design Guidance is available for download at: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance>
 - PRINCE 2
 - The Council's preference is to follow the PRINCE2 approach and its principles for this project. The Council's Project Boards adopt this approach in terms of key roles and responsibilities; the structure and context provided by PRINCE 2 provides the basis for the Council's approach and decision-making

Feasibility study aims and objectives

- To test the deliverability and affordability of option 6 to further understand the potential to meet the outcomes, costs and ability to generate increased participation and income. (Option 6 is new alternative build, 6-lane x 25m with moveable floor, 35-station fitness suite, dance studio, café 20 covers)
- To explore the potential to co-locate the town's library within the development. It should be noted that if co-locating the library emerges as a feasible proposition, as part of the spatial analysis and site capacity and, forms part of the emerging preferred option a specific public consultation on this element will need to be carried out by Shropshire Council prior to any further recommendation to Cabinet
- Engagement of the Whitchurch community, partners and stakeholders in the feasibility study, including exploring the opportunities for co-location of appropriate other services, e.g. library, is a key objective

Feasibility study output

Feasibility to be developed to RIBA stage 0-1 and must include the following:-

Project requirements

Accommodation schedule

- Site appraisals to inform an opportunities and constraints diagrams to identify opportunities and initial key project risks
- Strategic appraisal of planning considerations
- Project brief including outcomes
- Scoping and commissioning relevant surveys (including but not limited to ground investigation, drainage, utilities and ecological but excluding topographical which is available on request). Collateral warranties from sub-contractors will be required for survey works
- Block plans
- Quantity Surveyor costings (including demolition of the existing building and site preparation costs for the construction of a new facility)
- Indicative project programme
- Initial block plan, massing, 3D views and sections to explain relationship with the existing building and scale of proposal(s).
- Precedent image and concept images for the proposal
- Development of project strategies
- Pre-application planning advice

- Support the Council, through the provision of information and plans, for a review and testing of the business case modelling, by others, to reflect the emerging proposal
- Support the Council with the development and implementation of a public / stakeholder engagement / consultation exercise, including the provision of information, plans and imagery
- The demise of the pool coincides with the transformation plans for Shropshire Council's library services.
- The land adjacent to the current pool footprint accommodates the former youth centre which is not currently used. This is currently owned by Shropshire Council. The feasibility work will need to explore the potential to utilise this area to provide an extended footprint and additional facilities, including the option to relocate the current library service and co-locate this with any new leisure facility development on the site
- The study must consider and compare the pros and cons, including; capital cost, life span, life cycle costings, sustainability and value for money of providing a modern high quality modular facility with a surface mounted pool, compared to a more traditional build

Outcome

Production of a feasibility study report which provides the evidence and insight to enable a recommendation on a preferred development option to be made to Cabinet.

Timescale

Initial draft report by 14 February 2022

Final report week commencing 21 February 2022

Proposed facilities

Sports centre

- Reception
- Café, 20 covers
- 6-lane, 25m pool with a movable floor
- Changing village
- 35-station fitness gym
- Multi-purpose room divisible into two, each half to accommodate 20 persons

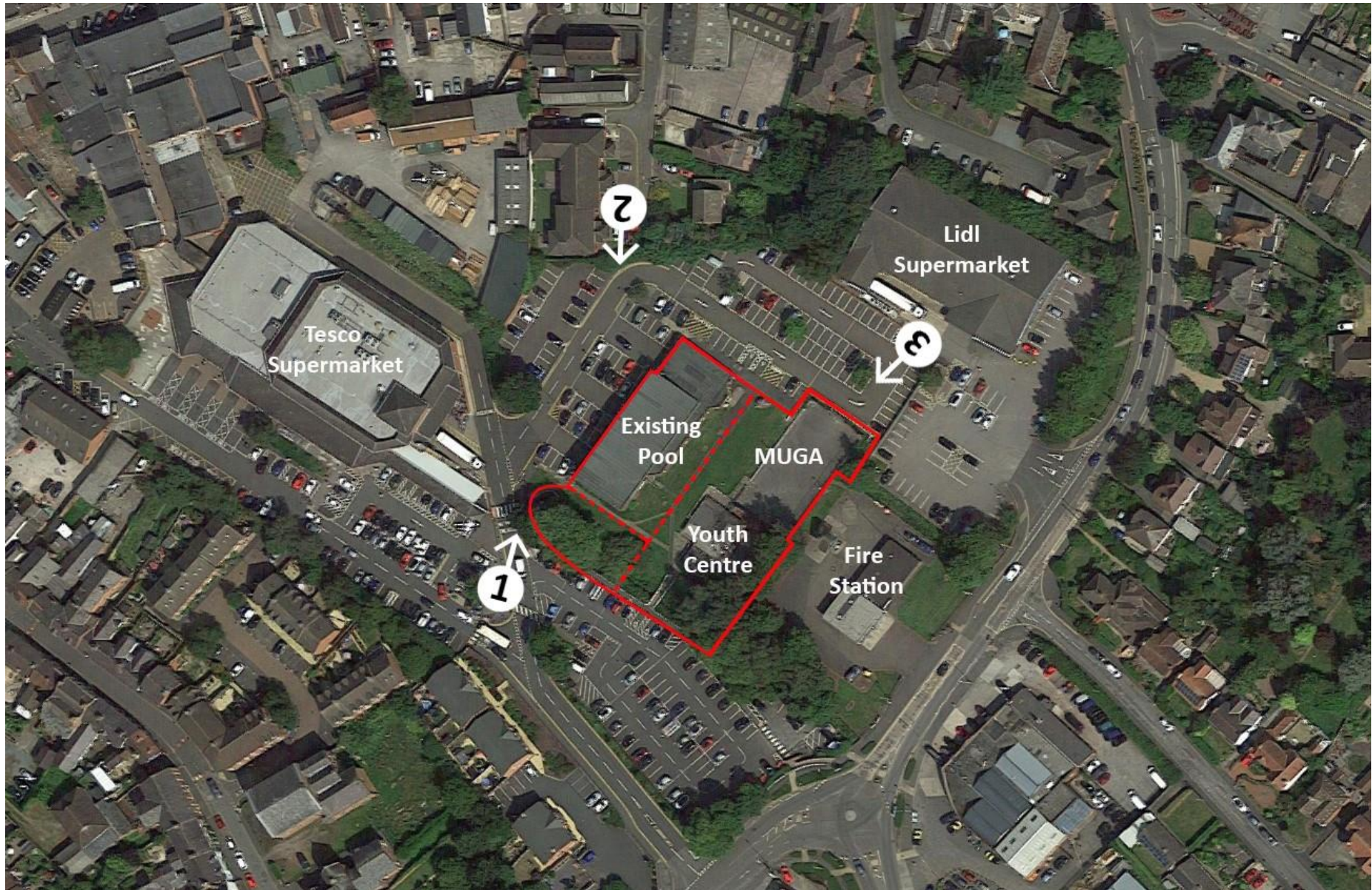
Library

Co-locating the library with the sports centre is to be considered as part of this feasibility study. The brief for the library is to be confirmed.

Rationale for facility mix

Increased participation and revenue impact from a larger pool; the existing operator has identified significant potential for increasing swimming lessons in the area based on demand. The existing facility delivered 600 swimming lessons per month. Equally, there is potential to increase the number of swim memberships from the existing 180.

- A facility offering both fitness and swimming is likely to appeal to a wider range of participants; this provides the opportunity to offer a new swim and gym membership and provide opportunities for revenue generation.
- Increased water space also facilitates an increased capacity for casual i.e., pay and play swimming.
- A new facility could also be designed to allow for the potential future provision of a new library facility in Whitchurch as part of the library transformation programme.



Overview

- Whitchurch Swimming Centre is located in the market town of Whitchurch in northern Shropshire, approximately 20 miles (30km) north of the county town of Shrewsbury. The centre is on a retail park with shared access roads and car parking facilities. Access is from Bridge Water Street (B5395) off the London and Chester Roads (B5395) via the main A41 (Whitchurch Bypass).
- Site address: Whitchurch Swimming Centre, White Lion Meadow, off, Bridgewater Street, Whitchurch SY13 1BA.
- The approximate total site area covers approx. 3,500m²
- The current facility is located on top of the site which then slopes down a grassed area to an unused multi-use games area (MUGA) The current building is rectangular in plan layout, and mostly open plan around the main pool area with segregated changing and office / welfare facilities
- The land adjacent to the current pool footprint accommodates the former youth centre and MUGA which is not currently used. This is currently owned by Shropshire Council. The feasibility work will need to explore the potential to utilise this area to provide an extended footprint and additional facilities, including the potential to relocate the current library service and co-locate this with any new leisure facility development.

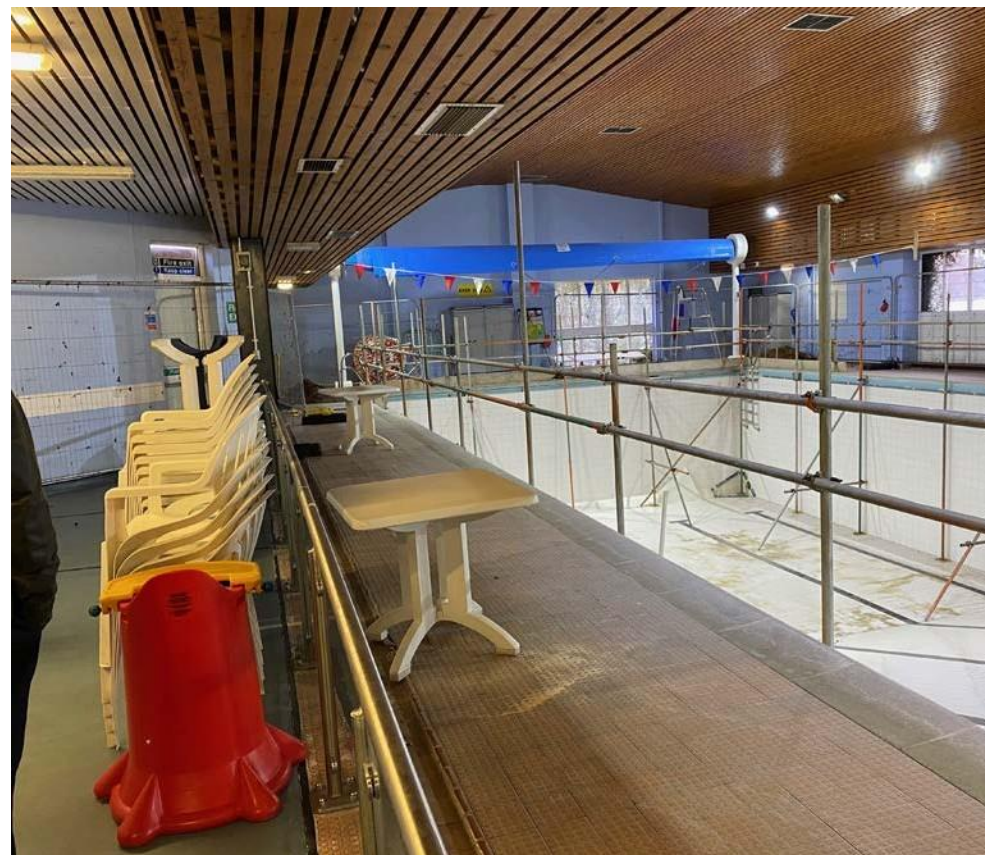
Page 125

Existing swimming pool

- Size: the measured survey confirms the net internal area is 718m²
- Use: leisure
- Age: the swimming pool was built in 1974 (47 years old)
- Heritage designation: N/A
- Building fabric: steel frame building consisting of steel column and beams at regular intervals over clad with cavity brickwork and profiled metal cladding panels. Under mono-pitched and flat roofs with bitumen felt coverings. Windows and doors are double glazed powder coated metal.
- The centre has been closed since March 2020, initially due to the national lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and further to that as a result of the structural problems identified whilst investigating the cause of a leak from the pool tank which include underpinning issues and deterioration in the fabric of the building. A structural engineer's investigation cautioned that the swimming pool is likely to continue to settle due to the inadequate foundations to the swimming

pool and structure, and that further cracking and lifting of tiles to the pool and pool surround will continue to occur.

- The building has a three phase electrical supply. The building has a gas meter with 54mm connection and feeds an 80mm steel gas pipe supplying the low temperature hot water boilers. The main pool is ventilated by a ducted ventilation system with a central air handling unit with heater / frost batteries and a crossover heat exchanger.
- No 'As built' drawings are available.



Existing pool interior

Existing site

Boundaries and ownership

The site comprises the footprint of the existing swimming pool and the land adjacent to it on the east that accommodates the former youth centre and MUGA and which is currently owned by Shropshire Council. The car parking to the west and north of the site is used as overspill parking by Tesco and the legal agreement with Tesco needs to be clarified by the Council, including the number of spaces assigned to the existing swimming pool, existing youth centre and MUGA and any other legal restrictions. The access road to the car park off Bridgewater Street is within the area leased to Tesco and is understood not to be adopted.

Arboriculture

There are a number of existing mature trees on the site, particularly on the southern boundary adjacent to the existing stream. The proposed location of the leisure centre offers the opportunity to retain many of these trees where they are deemed an asset to the overall development and an arboricultural survey will need to be provided. This should also include the root zones for any trees in adjacent properties (particularly on the eastern boundary) to ensure that these are unaffected by building work.

Acoustics

The closest building to the proposed site is the existing fire station immediately to the east of the site. However, there are residential properties approximately 60-70m from the building to the west (along Pearl Yard), the east (along Bridgewater Street), and to the south beyond the car park access road. It is anticipated that an acoustic report will be required to measure the existing background noise and to establish the



Site view ed from the south (view 1)



Show ing existing swimming pool view ed from the north (view 2)



Show ing existing MUGA view ed from the north (view 3)

performance requirements for the building fabric and any plant associated with the new building. Internally, Sport England guidance provides details of the reverberation time required for the pool hall.

Drainage

- Foul water

The existing site foul drainage infrastructure comprises commercial and industrial (trade effluent) sewage from the existing swimming pool building. A drainage survey is planned to confirm where the existing foul water from the site discharges. Details of utilities records are contained in section 8.0.

- Surface water

The existing site comprises predominantly brownfield (buildings, car parking and hardstanding) land. A drainage survey is planned to confirm where the existing surface water from the site discharges. Once a drainage survey has been carried out, the proposed strategy for both foul and surface water will be updated to reflect its findings. For further details and recommendations please refer to section 8.0 of this report, together with details of the utilities records obtained.

Ecology

A preliminary ecological appraisal of the site has been carried out by Wildwood Ecology (December 2021), consisting of a desk study and field survey.

The Stagg's Brook local Wildlife Site runs along the southern boundary of the site and, although the proposals will have no direct impact on it, there is the possibility that it will be indirectly impacted by the proposed new building during its construction. It is therefore recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is produced outlining how the works can proceed with due regard to the local wildlife site. The report identified that the development may result in impacts on wildlife and habitats affecting the following protected species: bats, European otter, nesting birds and water vole. Recommendations are given regarding the protection required prior to and during construction (including a bat survey) and the report concludes that, provided these are successfully implemented, it should be possible for the proposed development to proceed and for there to be no long-term impact upon the key protected species present at the site.

The report also highlighted that there are wall Cotoneaster bushes present on the site in the planters adjacent to the existing pool. These are invasive plant species included in schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and should be removed in a way that will not risk its spread into the wild.

Asbestos

A copy of the asbestos register for the building has been received and has informed the cost plan. An intrusive asbestos survey of the existing buildings on the site that are to be demolished is required to identify the location and extent of hazardous materials.

Flood risk

The site is generally in Flood zone 1, with a strip of zone 3 to the south of the site next to the water course. In accordance with Environment Agency guidance, a site specific flood risk assessment is not required as the total area of the site is less than 1 hectare; however, as there is a section of Zone 3 to the south a Flood Risk Assessment may be required by the LLFA. A small area of the site is subject to localised surface water flooding according to the EA data; however, the area of the site at risk does not clash with the proposed building location or other proposed site infrastructure. For further details and recommendations please refer to section 8.0 of this report

Ground investigations

A geo-technical site investigation needs to be undertaken with a full report to deem the exact ground conditions on the site. Initial assumptions on the ground conditions have been based on geological maps and historic boreholes in close proximity to the site. These suggest that piled foundations and a suspended ground floor slab will be required for the new building. For further details and recommendations please refer to section 8.0 of this report.

Topography

The site generally slopes down from the west (location of the existing swimming centre) to the east (existing MUGA location), and along its southern edge there is a steep bank falling towards the stream. A topographical survey based on OS data was prepared by Shropshire Council Property Services Group in November

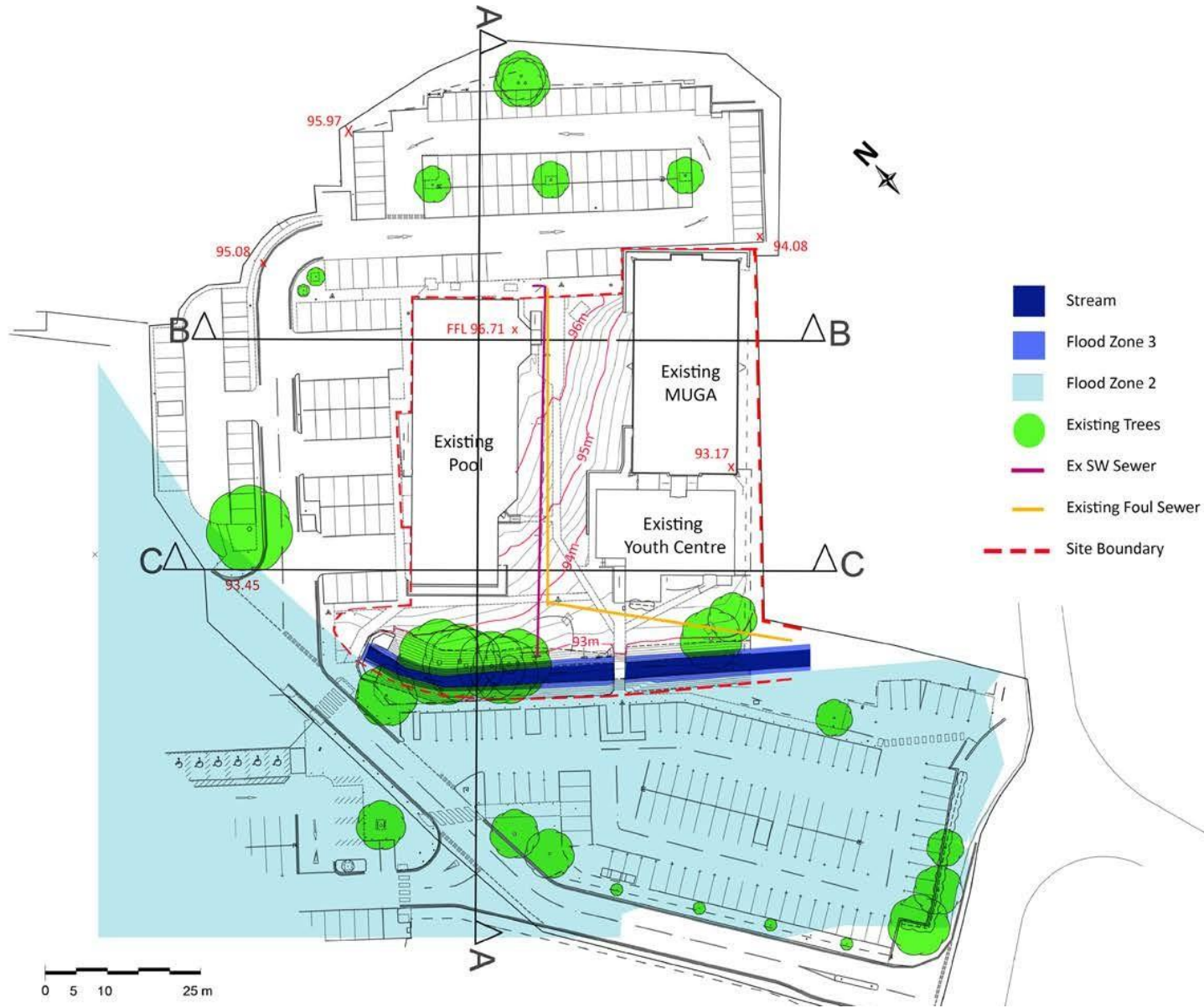
2019, which was used by the design team in the preparation of preliminary design proposals. A more detailed topographical and below ground services survey has been commissioned for the next stage of the design process.

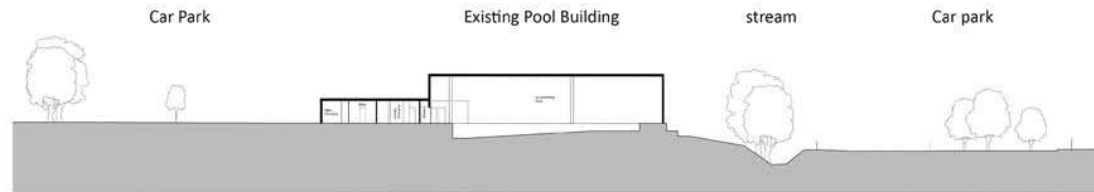
Traffic and highways

The site is well located centrally with in the town. It is a 10-15 minute walk from the railway station and is served by adjacent bus stops. There is parking adjacent to the site; however, this is subject to a legal agreement with Tesco which needs clarification (see Boundaries and ownership earlier). A Transport Assessment is likely to be required to determine the parking requirement for the next stage and to assess any traffic impact.

Utilities

A report of the existing utilities on the site has been commissioned from Groundwise Searches Ltd, as summarised in the MEP and sustainability report (section 9.0).

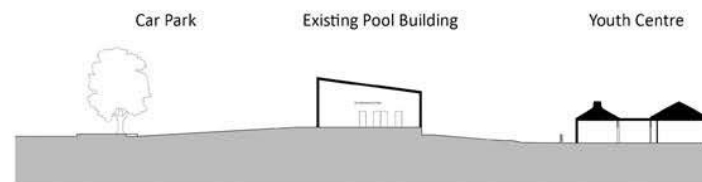




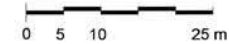
Existing Section A-A



Existing Section B - B



Existing Section C - C



Consultation

No formal pre-application consultation has yet taken place with the planning authority, as this is anticipated to be most usefully undertaken during RIBA stage 2 based on this formalised report. The headings below represent our assumptions and are based on our experience and understanding of typical planning considerations.

Summary of potential planning considerations

Access and transport

A key aspect of the design and suitability of the site for the proposed development will be the additional traffic and parking required to serve the enlarged facilities. The Highway Authority is to advise their parking standards. It is assumed that a transport assessment or statement will be required which will include a parking survey and Green Travel Plan. We have assumed that the additional parking will be to a maximum of 1 space per 22m² floor area, with c6% of these provided as accessible spaces, based on the additional floor area created. However, we would expect that this may be reduced from the maximum provision due to its proximity to the bus station and central town centre location. It is also anticipated that the parking arrangements should make provision for coach / minibus parking (for schools, etc.) and for drop-off.

Proximity to conservation area

Although the site is adjacent to, but not in, the conservation area, its proximity may impact on the conservation area setting and consideration should therefore be given to materials and colours to enhance the setting.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The local authority planners are to advise if a formal screening process is required.

Arboriculture

An arboricultural survey and tree protection plan will be required to accompany the planning application.

Ecology

The potential for bats may influence the design of the external lighting in order to minimise impact.

Impact on neighbours

The design will need to consider the impact of noise from internal and external activities (including parking) and building plant on the nearest residential receptors. Additionally, any external lighting will need to be designed to minimise any impact on residential amenity.

External landscaping

The external landscaping around the building and within the parking area should reflect the client's objectives to enhance site ecology, and also designed with consideration of Sport England's 'Active Design Principles' that aim to encourage the inactive to become active through the provision of informal and formal structures that support physical activity.

Flood risk and drainage strategy

The proximity to the stream will generate a requirement to provide an FRA. Surface water run-off will typically require some attenuation and SuDS principles applied.

Signage

A separate external signage application is anticipated to be required.

Stakeholder feedback on public / stakeholder engagement / consultation exercise

No further public consultation has been undertaken at this stage but it is anticipated during RIBA stage 2 and / or stage 3.

Utilities

The utilities companies have been consulted. Details of utilities records have been obtained. The extent of any upgrade to the supplies will depend on clarification by the Council of their sustainability objectives and requirements for electric vehicle charging points within the new parking areas.

Building Control

No contact has been made at this stage. It is assumed that the Council's preference would be to use their internal Building Control rather than use an Approved Inspector.

Parent consultation

Shropshire Council have consulted internally regarding the development of the initial brief and in response to this study. This has included consultation with officers in the Culture, Leisure and Tourism team regarding the library and with Youth Services. Further consultation will be required with schools as a key user group in order to establish their method of transport, patterns and frequency of use and child protection requirements.

Further valuable input into the design and brief has been provided by the client's appointed specialist sports advisors, Design Active Ltd, who have commented on the development of the design throughout the stage 1 design period.

Whitchurch Library

The potential to relocate the existing library from its the town centre location to the proposed new swimming and fitness centre was reviewed in the early stages of the feasibility study.

Discussions were held with the portfolio holder and officers in the Culture, Leisure and Tourism (CLT) team including the Assistant Director Communities and Homes, Head of CLT, Culture and Communities Manager and Head of Libraries. This included a review of a previous report on the civic centre and library which stated that following approval of the Council's Library Services Strategy, 2018 – 2023, the library in Whitchurch has been confirmed as a tier 1 library hub. Library hubs are intended to be conveniently located, multi-functional spaces, gateways to a range of services, and co-located with partners.

It was noted that Whitchurch Civic Centre is on a 99-year lease to Town Council which provides for free occupancy for the Library and that the Library has had significant money spent on it recently.

It was concluded that there were no operational benefits to moving the library, it would add significant capital costs to the proposed swimming and fitness centre and such a move could adversely impact on high street footfall. The potential relocation of the library was therefore removed from the feasibility study remit.

Initial discussions with Shropshire Council Youth Services

Initial discussions have been held with colleagues from Shropshire Council's Youth Service. The proposed new facility provides an opportunity to engage more young people in physical activity and sport and is a positive development in this respect.

Engaging with young people will be important through the initial stakeholder engagement and public consultation process. Youth Service colleagues will be happy to support this process.

The development of an informal external activity area with the ability to provide for a range of informal physical and sporting activities, is seen as an important aspect of the new facilities offer to young people and is required to replace and enhance the offer currently provided by the aging Multi Use Games Area.

Proposed leisure centre facilities and useProposed uses / users

- Customer outcomes: new facilities will provide greater opportunities for participation which supports living a healthy lifestyle targeted at the Local Community and meeting community needs
- Wellbeing schemes targeted at specific groups of people to increase participation in physical activity
- Collective priority (Shropshire Council, Health and Wellbeing Board, Energize (Active Partnership) to improve community health and well-being at all stages of life, and that physical activities are integral to this, with a focus on older and young people and families
- Facilities to be relevant
- Swimming pool
 - Swimming lessons: larger swimming pool provides opportunity to increase use for swimming lessons based on demand (existing facility delivered 600 / month)
 - Opportunity to increase swim memberships from the existing 180
 - Larger pool allows increase participation
 - Increased water space also facilitates an increased capacity for casual i.e. pay and play swimming
 - Movable floor allows flexibility of use, from water confidence and lessons to training and competition
- A facility offering both fitness and swimming is likely to appeal to a wider range of participants; this provides the opportunity to offer a new swim and gym membership and provide opportunities for revenue generation
- Leisure facilities are important relevant community spaces, accessible to all and offering opportunities for the delivery of a wide range of activities, services, support and entertainment to local communities and people
- School use

On completion of this study, we understand that the Council anticipates commissioning Strategic Leisure to review and update their business case in relation to the proposed RIBA stage 1 design.

Schedule of accommodation

Ground floor

- Entrance lobby
- Foyer
- Office / staff room
- Café (20 covers), including reception counter, combined with reception and vending area
- Kitchen
- Café toilets, including accessible toilet (pre-turnstile)
- Changing Places (with dual access both from within and outside of the wet changing area)
- Circulation to ground floor and stairs / lift(s) to first floor
- Changing village with a combination of single, double and family cubicles (44 spaces total)
- 2 school group changing rooms (15 persons each)
- Accessible changing room (wet side)
- Toilets (male / female / accessible)
- Showers (open and enclosed)
- Pool hall, including 25m x 13m pool with moveable floor, easy access steps and pool pod
- First aid
- Moveable floor plant room
- Pool store
- Plant room / pool water treatment / wet plant (incl. 2 chemical stores)

First floor

- 2 studios to accommodate 20 persons each (approx. 100m²) with moveable wall between
- Studio storage (this may be a separate space or an enlargement of the studio space)
- 35-station fitness gym
- Fitness changing and showers
- Fitness toilets (male / female / accessible)
- Accessible change (dry side)

Roof

- Roof mounted plant with screening
- Space for PVs / ASHPs if applicable (refer to section 9.0 MEP and sustainability report)

Design strategies and layout

Site layout

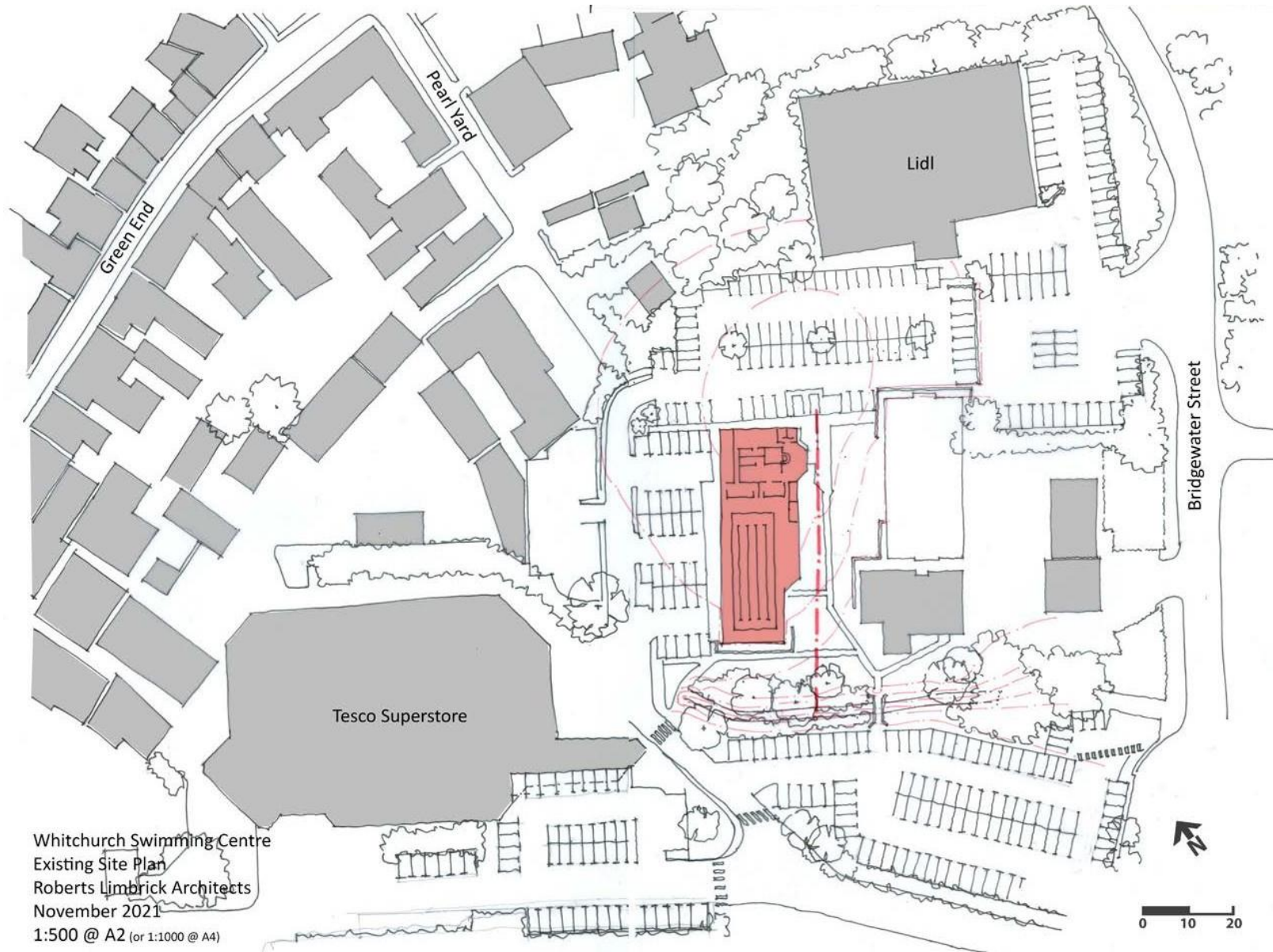
The building is positioned to the east of the site where the existing MUGA and Youth Centre are currently located, close to the boundary with the fire station. This location allows the maximum expansion of the Tesco's overspill carpark and the opportunity to create a drop-off and gathering area in front of the main entrance, which will be to the west elevation. This location places the building equal distances from the residential buildings to the west, east, and south reducing the potential for noise disturbance to residential neighbours.

The pool hall is placed on the south side of the building, with glazing looking towards the stream, but located back from the trees to limit shading from the trees that line the bank over the stream. As the pool hall is a single storey, the massing of the building can be reduced along this southern edge, reducing the impact of the building above the stream and as viewed from the new housing developments opposite.

The 2 storey element of the building is to the north of the site, with the fitness gym and studios placed on the upper floor. The north orientation will reduce the need for cooling. The fitness gym, which will be extensively glazed, is placed along the west elevation above the reception and café, presenting an active and welcoming façade to the primary approach to the building from the west, while the two studios look out over the parking to the north, bringing life and activity to this elevation. The plant room and service areas are to the east where they face the boundary and rear façade of the fire station.

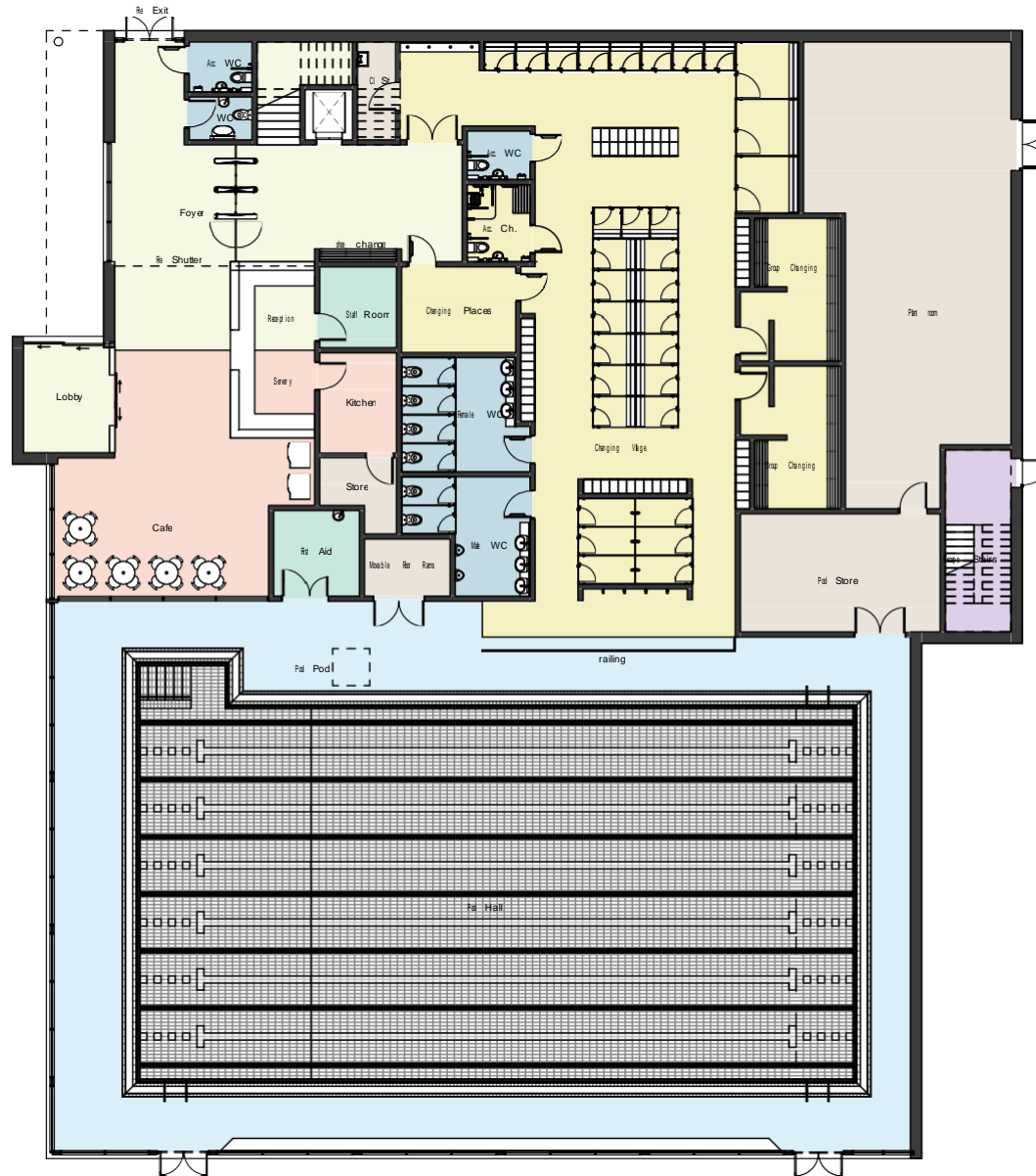
Parking

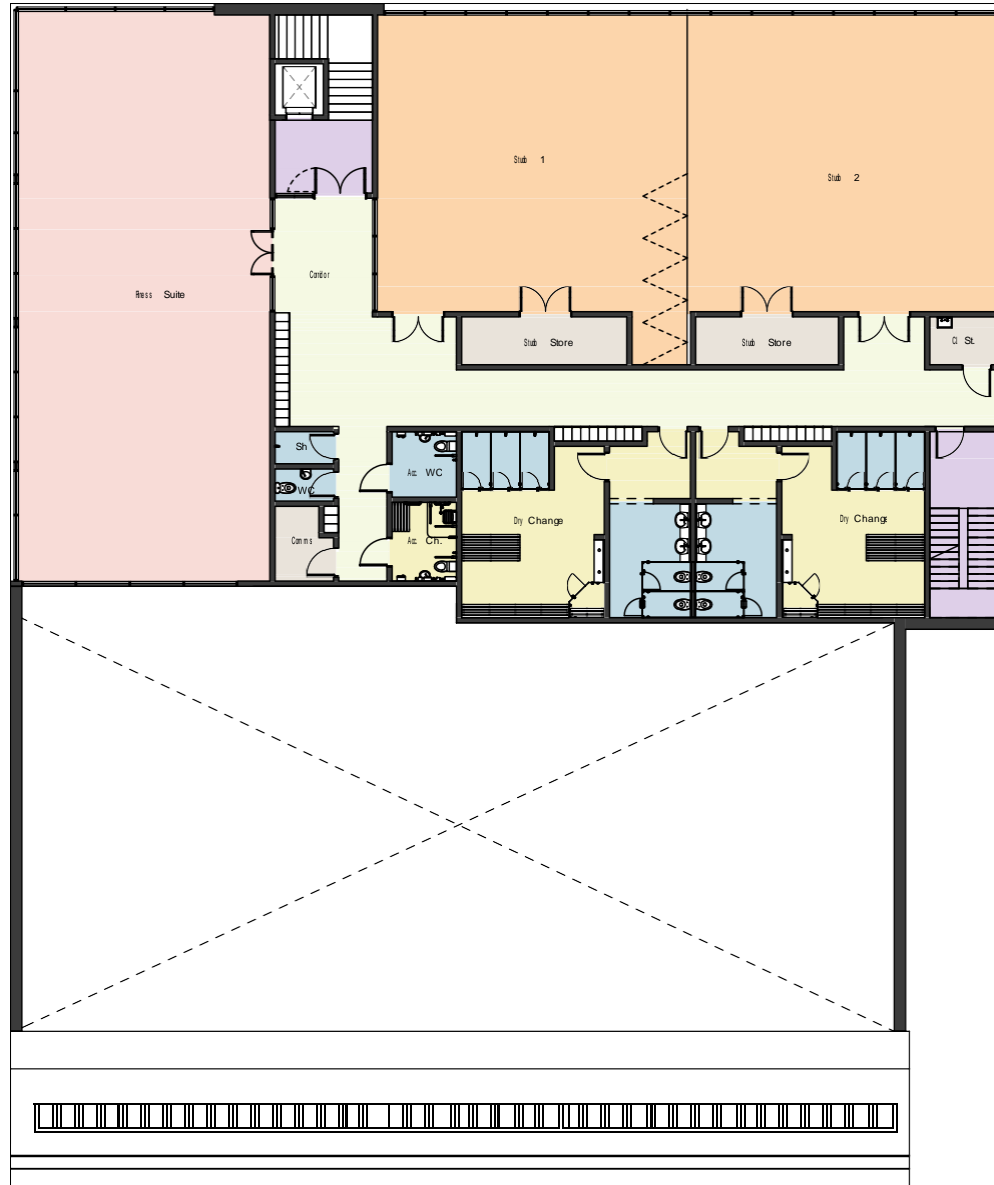
The proposed facility has a GIFA of approximately 1,680m², which is 960m² greater than the existing facility. Using a simple ratio of 22m² per parking bay, this would suggest an increase of 44 spaces from the current provision. Considering the

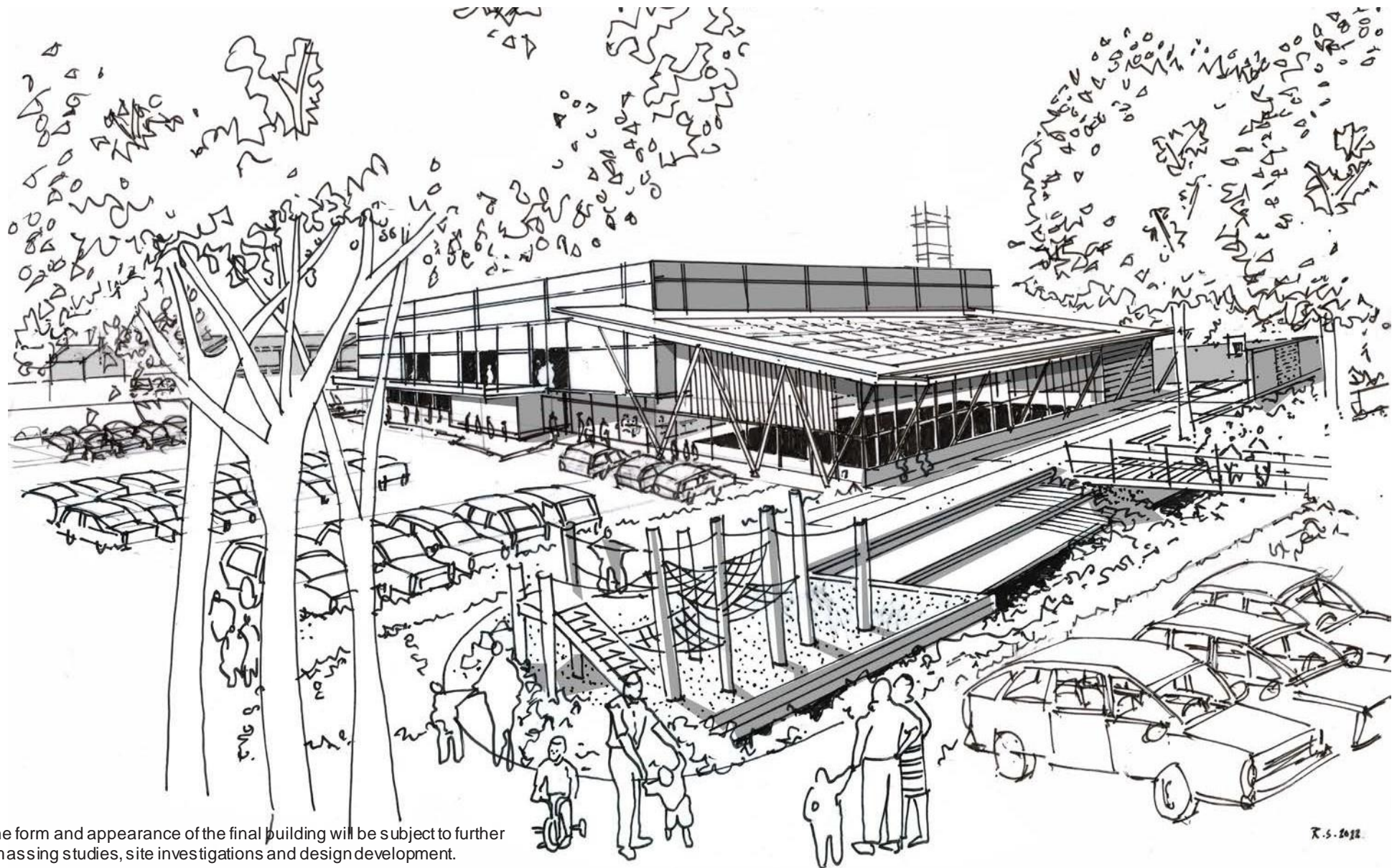


Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Existing Site Plan
Roberts Limbrick Architects
November 2021
1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)









* The form and appearance of the final building will be subject to further massing studies, site investigations and design development.

constraints of the existing site, it is unlikely that this figure will be achieved and a Transport Assessment and a close interrogation of the current arrangement with Tesco will be required to assess the actual additional parking spaces required, in order to limit the amount of additional parking to be provided.

The external layout will provide a car drop-off area adjacent to the main entrance and disabled parking provision (number to be determined by the Transport Assessment Parking Strategy). Previously, coach drop-off to the existing pool was provided in the upper parking area (adjacent to Lidl) and it is proposed that this remains the strategy for the new pool. Coach parking areas could also be provided in this area, if required, although this needs to be factored into the overall parking strategy.

Cycle parking will be provided in close proximity to the main entrance. This is typically required to be covered.

MUGA / outdoor activity space

The preferred location for the new building is on the site of the existing MUGA. Consultees to the client have stressed the importance to provide some freely accessible outdoor activity space as part of the overall development. The design team investigated a number of site options which could incorporate a free access MUGA (see appendix). These options significantly reduced the potential for providing adequate parking on the site and compromised the ability to provide a drop-off and gathering space outside the main entrance. It has therefore been suggested that alternative activity provision be considered which might be a smaller, more informal hard play area with basketball hoop and goals, outdoor gym equipment, skate boarding areas, bike jump track, or adventure activity area (perhaps within the wooded landscape), or a combination of these. Further consultation will be required to determine the final brief for these, which are to be aimed at the local youth but which could also include facilities that could be attractive to the wider community.

Internal layout

The building has been designed as a high quality facility, meeting the expectations of the users and operators. The facilities are designed to be accessible and inclusive, with clear wayfinding a key consideration. The building is designed to comply with Sport England's published Design Guidance.

Ground floor

Entrance foyer and café area

Users of the building will enter the spacious foyer via a draught lobby and arrive directly at the reception desk where they will be greeted by staff. The space will allow for customer queuing and provide secure controlled access to the facilities (via turnstiles if required). The entrance foyer is also designed to act as café with tables and chairs looking into the pool hall. The reception desk and servery for the café will be joined, helping to reduce staffing demand during quiet periods of the day. Behind the desk is a management office / staff room and a kitchen. Storage is provided for kitchen and vending supplies. Turnstiles adjacent to the reception desk (if provided) will control access to the primary circulation corridor with direct access to all the primary activity spaces and changing rooms at both ground and first floor levels.

Pool changing rooms

The final configuration of the pool changing area will require further discussion during the next consultation phase with the client and stakeholders. The current design proposes a mixture of changing village and 2 group changing rooms for school / group use or to suit varying customer requirements, which could include movable signage to allow additional use as male / female change. The changing areas include disabled changing and toilet facilities and there is a Changing Places facility which is accessible from both the wet changing area and from the dry side to optimise the use of this provision. Consideration is to be given to any requirement for gender neutral toilets.

6-lane, 25m pool

The pool is a 6-lane, 25m pool with a movable floor over half the area, allowing for a wide range of uses. The steps into the pool adjust along with the floor level and allow for easy access to the pool for all user groups. There is also a pool pod hoist for wheelchair user access. A first aid room is provided. The location shown allows for access to the outside to the dry side facilities. Further consideration is to be given to the potential for this to be accessible directly from the outside without blocking views from the foyer.

First floor

Access to first floor

A lift and main staircase are provided to the first floor facilities immediately after the turnstiles where they can be seen from the foyer for ease of wayfinding (note: during the design process it was agreed that in the next phase consideration should be given to the provision of a second lift in accordance with Sport England recommendations).

Fitness gym

The fitness gym is designed to accommodate 35 stations (based on an approximate area of 4.5m² per station). With external views across the forecourt, and internally into the pool hall, this will be an attractive and animated space. The primary entrance to the fitness gym is at the head of the main circulation stair. The detailed layout of the fitness gym and the possible inclusion of a separate assessment room will be developed in the next phases in consultation with the operator. Such a room could be used for GP referrals, if required.

Studios

There are 2 studios, each approximately 100m² to accommodate classes of 20+ persons. These studios are divided by a retractable wall that can allow for them to operate as one large studio space. The detailed design of these spaces, from finishes (floor, wall and ceiling), acoustic and audio visual requirements, storage, any black-out requirements, etc. will all be subject to detailed consideration during the next phase of user group consultation and is subject to the range of activities envisaged for the spaces.

Fitness changing

The design incorporates separate male and female changing rooms for the fitness gym and studio spaces. There is also an accessible changing room and separate accessible WC, as well as a unisex toilet and unisex shower for those who would prefer not to use the main changing room. As is common in these facilities, it is envisaged that many users will come to the facility already changed and lockers for sports bags, etc. are provided in the circulation spaces and it has been assumed

that standard changing provision set out in some Sport England guidance could be discounted by c65%.

Plant space

A dedicated wet plant / pool water treatment plant room has been included on the ground floor, with an associated service yard to allow for chemical deliveries and storage of recycled and non-recycled waste. PVs are anticipated to be included on the south facing pool hall roof, with ASHPs and other AHU plant located in a screened enclosure on the flat roof area above the first floor facilities. Stair access to this will be required.

Built form and appearance

The new leisure centre will be built with high quality materials of an appropriate standard to enhance the setting of the building and provide an attractive, durable facade. This will include glazing to the main activity spaces to provide an active frontage which is important both in planning terms and for the commercial success of the facilities.

Access / maintenance / inclusion

Consideration should be given to the maintenance of the building. Externally, this will include providing level areas for maintenance equipment and provision for safe access to the roof. Internally, provision should be relatively straightforward, but access to maintain lighting in the pool hall is a particular consideration.

Acoustics

Considerations include limiting sound break-out from facilities and between facilities, sound attenuation of plant and reverberation within the pool hall, as well as generally within all areas in order to provide good speech intelligibility.

Sustainability

Minimising waste from activities

Related to the use of the building, this is mainly the operation of the cafe. Ways to do this will include minimising the use of single use receptacles, e.g. coffee cups,

and consideration of how deliveries will be packaged. In terms of the operation of the building, this might include the use of alternative media for pool water filtration (reducing use of chemicals). Regarding the build, use of pre-fabricated components will reduce on-site waste, such as pre-cast floor planks, structural steelwork, cladding, etc.

Low carbon building techniques

Options will include re-use of masonry materials, resulting from the demolition of the building, use of alternative low carbon concrete (where appropriate), use of materials with good longevity and use of renewable materials that can potentially be re-used in the future on demolition.

Building efficiency

The building may be designed to high levels of insulation, airtightness and associated detailing to minimise any loss and cold bridging. Passivhaus principles can still be applied even if accreditation is not required (which would require a bespoke standard to be written). Any comparable loss of performance could be off-set by an increase in PVs, etc. which potentially could be a more economical approach than achieving Passivhaus accreditation.

Carbon off-setting / mitigation

The external landscaping will allow opportunities for carbon off-setting via tree planting around the building / within the car parking. However, this will be limited by the site area available. The Council may consider other opportunities for carbon off-setting by incorporating planting / trees at other sites they own and providing renewables, e.g. PVs, at these other sites.

Climate change

The building and external works will need to be designed to take into account climate change. This will entail applying SuDS techniques to limit and attenuate surface water run-off and avoid risk of flooding resulting from the development.

Sport England design guidance

Reference to the sustainability guidance will be made in the developing design. It is noted that this guidance is being updated to reflect current thinking. From our ongoing involvement in developing this guidance, we understand that the general approach is to design the building to use electricity from renewable sources (on-site and grid) to heat, light and power the building, whilst acknowledging that domestic hot water generation can be most economically achieved by retaining the use of natural gas. However, the Council can choose to go beyond this, i.e. using electricity for all aspects, if desired. A carbon consultant may be appointed during the next stage to provide the necessary calculations to document and inform design decisions going forward, as well as lifetime performance and tracking.

Modular construction

Due to the topographic ground conditions and other site constraints, it is unlikely that an 'off the shelf' modular building will meet the requirements of this site and associated brief, including design quality requirements. However, modular building techniques can be used as appropriate. This will include:-

- Improved programme
- Improved quality
- Improved safety
- Reduced wastage
- Reduced risk
- Reduced cost
- Improved labour benefits: factory built, more work in fixed location

The following modern methods of construction have been considered and should be further reviewed as the scheme develops during RIBA stage 2.

i. Off-site

- Volumetric / modular construction: pre-fabricated buildings, good for smaller buildings, e.g. changing rooms, pavilions, spaces of a size and scale that can be bolted together on site or incorporated in larger buildings. However, due to the size of the building, this is unlikely to be suitable for this building.

- Hybrid construction: due to size of spaces in leisure centres, hybrid construction is more relevant, i.e. opportunity to incorporate smaller modular units within the building. However, the design layout of the changing areas are bespoke to this facility, i.e. there are no repeating blocks of changing rooms, etc. as might be the case with multiple changing rooms for football.
- Non-systemised primary structure: framed or mass engineered timber (CLT / SIPs / Glulam, etc.), cold rolled or hot rolled steel or precast concrete members, e.g. load bearing beams, columns, walls, staircases, core structures, slabs, ring beams, piles caps, driven piles and screw piles, pre-cast concrete or stainless steel pool tanks. Some of these methods of construction may be suitable.
- Non-structural assemblies: on-structural walling systems (e.g. pre-cast / finished wall assemblies), roof cassettes, non-loadbearing sanitary area pods, risers and plant rooms, as well as pre-formed wiring looms and mechanical engineering composites, e.g.:-
 - Packaged boiler plant
 - Prefabricated service distribution
 - Prefabricated pool plant

Some of these methods of construction may be applicable to this project as it develops in detail.

ii. Off-site / on-site

- Composite floors: pre-cast combined with in-situ concrete which can be power floated avoiding screeds; this may be applicable to this project.

iii. On- site improvements

- Flat slab construction: flat floor slabs with no beams, quicker to install on site, reduced floor to floor height; perhaps more useful for smaller spans?

Modern methods of design

- Use of BIM / clash detection, potential for better coordinated design, reduction in site errors
- Better developed design enables pre-fabrication
- Designing to reduce wastage

These methods of design will be applicable to this project, i.e. use of BIM.

Adaptability

The building is proposed to be a wide span framed structure. This will allow for future adaptation to allow for possible changing trends in the future.

Fire

The building is proposed to form a single compartment, with areas of higher fire risk enclosed with enhanced fire resistant construction. Two alternative means of escape have been provided to the first floor; these include the use of the main stair as a protected stair and may entail the use of a fire curtain to separate the stair from the adjacent space, and a fire alarm interface on any turnstiles. Boundary conditions will need to be assessed to establish the degree of fire resistance required and the extent of unprotected glazing. A preliminary fire strategy based on BS9999 will need to be developed in the next stage. The client's requirements beyond life safety will also need to be established, if any.

Option for co-location of the library

The initial assessment of site capacity has established that there is insufficient space to accommodate a relocated library and associated parking. In addition, consultation with library services has established that the current town centre location is better than this site and that relocation may negatively impact on the existing, predominantly older user group.

1. INTRODUCTION

Furness Partnership has been appointed as the structural consultant for the design and construction of a new leisure centre in Whitchurch, Shropshire. This report provides an outline of what information about the site can already be found before we conduct our own site investigations. Presented in this document are the preliminary solutions for the scheme. The proposed developments include the following works:-

- Demolition of the single storey swimming pool
- Construction of a 6-lane swimming pool with 2 storeys to make way for fitness suites and studios
- Construction of additional car parking spaces and other external works.

2. SITE AND GROUND CONDITIONS

Site location map and boundaries

The proposed development is located on the site of the existing Whitchurch Leisure Centre. It is located in the town centre situated between a Tesco (West) and a Lidl (East). The leisure centre shares an unnamed road with Tescos for primary access and parking which you turn on to off Bridgewater Street. To the South West there is also the Whitchurch fire station acting as a boundary for the site.

Initially there were two proposals consider on the site. Option one was to have the new leisure centre situated roughly a little furthermore East, with the patch of grassland to the East being used for the new structure creating new car parking spaces. Option two, the preferred option, would see the pool rotated and the site located on the edge of the East boundary. In the second option the building to the Southeast of the existing leisure centre (the disused Youth Centre) would in turn have to be demolished to accommodate this option. This report focuses on the feasibility of the preferred second option.

Site surveys

At the time of when this report was written no surveys had been undertaken in the location of the proposed new building.



Phase 1 desk study and 2 site investigations have been carried out recently. At the time of writing the findings of the intrusive survey have not been issued, therefore there is limited current information regarding the ground conditions of the site. This report will be updated during the next design stage and once the survey report has been published.

To gather some initial information, the British Geological survey website has been used looking at borehole data from previous investigations as well as MAGIC map provided by the government. There are a number of additional surveys that are required to provide further information in order to progress at the detailed design stage.

These include:

- Detailed Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental site investigation
- Ecology survey
- Flood risk Assessment (FRA)
- Archaeological survey

Ground investigation

A geo-technical site investigation needs undertaking with a full report to follow to deem the exact ground conditions on the site. From this, preliminary recommendations can be made on the type of foundations needed or any mitigation methods needed for geo-environmental matters.

In absence of a site investigation ground conditions have been assumed from nearby historical boreholes.

1. Soil strata

Inspecting geological maps it can be seen the site is located in an area of Halite stone and Mudstone with the area also being located in floodplain clayey and loamy soils. There are five historical boreholes in very close vicinity of the site with one actually being located on the south of the site which date back to 1979 and 1987. There is one that goes down 9m below ground level (bgl) with the rest down to 3.5m bgl. The results showed variation but can be characterised as follows:-

0.0 - 0.4m	Topsoil / car park tarmac
0.4 - 2m	Made ground
2.0 - 3.5m	Soft dark brown sandy and silty clay with organic matter and fragments of pottery
3.5 - 21m	Stiff medium to coarse gravelly sandy clay

In the borehole log to the north of the site, roughly 4m higher up in ground level, firm ground was found at 2m bgl; this may be due to being at the top of the incline. In some of the boreholes, the ground found between 3-5m was peaty at times, which shows infiltration of groundwater. Apart from the borehole north of the site, firm ground was not encountered until 8m bgl, with no rock encountered or hard ground, which indicates pile foundations are needed and hence why the existing pool is slumping down into the ground and a closure of the leisure centre was forced.

Also, due to the brownfield nature of the site, it is likely that made ground is present within the ground make-up. If made ground is present and is determined to be widespread across the site, it may be advisable to found

both the pool and the buildings on piled foundations and to suspend the ground floor slab to minimise the risk of settlement.

2. Infiltration testing

To date there has been no infiltration testing carried out. This will be included as part of the site investigation report to be issued after Stage 2.

3. Groundwater

In the historical boreholes data, groundwater is encountered at depths of 1.4m to 2m, with one borehole filling up to a depth of 1.3m bgl upon revisit. This means that it is likely dewatering will need to be carried out while in construction phase, but is subject to confirmation until a recent ground investigation has been carried out.

4. Contamination testing

To date there has been no contamination testing carried out. This will be included as part of the site investigation report to be issued after Stage 2. Contamination testing will compare select soil samples from site to the appropriate trigger levels as specified in the relevant industry guidelines for the following contaminants (among others):-

- Analysis for metals / metalloids
- Analysis for TPH
- Analysis for speciated PAHs
- Analysis for asbestos

Based on the results of the laboratory analysis, a remediation strategy will be recommended which may impact the design of the structure, and may limit the reuse of site-won soil on site within the landscaped areas.

5. Ground gas

To date there has been no contamination testing carried out. This will be included as part of the site investigation report to be issued after Stage 2.

6. Concrete grade

The aggressive chemical environment for concrete (ACEC) for the site is currently unknown as laboratory testing is yet to be carried out on soil samples from site. This will be included as part of the site investigation report to be issued after Stage 2.

Existing services

An underground services survey is in the process of being carried out after receiving quotes back, which will produce an AutoCAD drawing of all the existing services, as well as a CCTV drainage survey to be carried out.

Topographical survey

The topology of the site is yet unknown. A quote has been received for a topographical survey so, like the services survey at the time when the report is written, it has not been completed but will be finished for Stage 2.

Arboricultural survey

There has been no arboricultural survey carried out. This will also be included as part of the site investigation report to be issued after stage 2. This will give us information on any trees within the site and whether they are of any importance and what quality of life they have.

3. DESIGN STANDARDS

Except as may be modified by the latest edition of specifications, drawings and the requirement of the local Authority, the latest edition of the current standards shall apply, and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:-

1. Building Regulations and Approved Documents
2. EN 1990 Eurocode 0:- Basis of structural design
3. EN 1991 Eurocode 1:- Actions on structures
4. EN 1992 Eurocode 2:- Design of concrete structures
5. EN 1993 Eurocode 3:- Design of steel structures
6. EN 1996 Eurocode 6:- Design of masonry structures

7. EN 1997 Eurocode 7:- Geotechnical design
8. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
11. CIRIA document: - C753 The SUDS Manual
12. CIRIA document: - C736 Containment Systems for Prevention of Pollution
13. BS 7533-13:2009:- Guide for the design of permeable pavements
14. Satisfaction of current Environment Agency guidelines

4. BASIS OF DESIGN

Structural design drivers

The main drivers governing the structural design solutions are:-

- Large roof span over pool area
- Open plan studios on the 1st floor
- Dynamic performance of first floor structure
- Potentially require a suspended ground floor slab (subject to site investigation results)
- Pool tank construction
- Lateral stability of building frame

Design life

The elements of steelwork and reinforced concrete within the new building will provide a minimum life of 50 years by means of consistent protective coatings or quality concrete and appropriate cover to steel reinforcing bars.

Substructure proposals

There are various factors affecting the foundation systems, including:-

- The building loads
- Recommendations from the site investigation report which has not yet been undertaken; potential for recommendation of piled foundations for columns and suspended ground floor slab if existing ground conditions are found to be poor.
- Suitability of soil conditions for design of ground bearing swimming pool

slab; as above it is likely that the SI will recommend piles / deep trench strips if the soil will lead to large differential settlement.

1. Typical foundations within the 2 storey building

Based on the expected loads the ground information we currently have available from local boreholes, it is expected that the soil will not be suitable for shallow foundations with firm ground not encountered until deep depths. This could mean that pile foundations will be needed if significant made ground or peaty soil is encountered as the foundations will need to extend to the rock layer or decent soil which would allow for a significantly larger bearing pressure.

If the rock is found to be within 4m of the surface (however unlikely), then the most economical approach may be to use trench strip foundations for under the pool slab, deep mass concrete pads for column loads and suspended RC ground beams to support the masonry façade. If the rock is found to be more than 4m down, then a piled pool slab and piled foundation solution are likely to be the most economical option. The number of piles is subject to the pile capacity following the ground investigation. The diameter of piles will be subject to confirmation of pile capacities following further site investigation. The pile caps will generally be incorporated within the depth of the in-situ reinforced ground floor slab where appropriate and should be assumed to be typically 750mm deep.

2. Ground floor slab

If ground conditions prove not suitable for a ground bearing slab (and by extension pad foundations), an RC suspended ground floor slab c250mm thick will be designed to span between pile caps. Where there are no internal columns in open plan areas, additional piles would be required for support of the ground floor slab.

Pool tank options

There are two main options for constructing a pool for Whitchurch Leisure Centre, which are:-

- A stainless-steel pool which consists of stainless-steel walls supported on a cast in-situ RC base slab;
- A cast in-situ reinforced concrete (RC) pool tank.

The choice of pool system is a critical strategic decision for the client. The Client should deliberate the maintenance implications of both options.

Superstructure proposals

1. Superstructure options

The layout for the proposed Whitchurch Leisure comprise an open pool hall with studios and fitness suite on the 1st floor above the wet changing and foyer. The whole structure comprises of Pool hall, wet and dry changing, a plant room, reception with café, two studios and a fitness gym.

The superstructure will be formed of a reinforced concrete ground floor slab and a two storey steel frame build up. There will also be access to the roof for additional plant that will be fixed to the roof top situated above the dry changing areas.

2. Roof structure

The roof structure is yet to be designed as of yet and is waiting of approval from the architect therefore no framing has been designed. There will be large spanning beams over the pool hall that could be glulam, deep steelwork beams or trusses supporting the roof or a structural deck could span across the pool supporting the roof. Whichever materials used in the process will need to be treated properly to resist corrosion due to the pool environment, and is perforated to aid the acoustics of the pool.

3. Corrosion protection

All steelwork within the pool environment, including the pool hall and changing village will be hot rolled and galvanised to combat corrosion. As previously mentioned, one option for the pool hall roof is a structural roof deck. This must be formed of aluminium if it is to be installed in the pool environment as steel would corrode. As the changing rooms will also be within the pool environment as they are open to the pool hall, all steel would need treating as well. This is due to the chlorides in the air of the pool environment will corrode the metal.

4. Vibration

All suspended floors will be designed to provide a vibration response of 8Hz or better in accordance with SCI guidance for floors subject to rhythmic loading.

5. Deflections and movements

The structure will be designed to control deflections to acceptable limits according to the Eurocodes. In general, imposed load deflection will be limited to span / 360. Horizontal deflections due to lateral loading will be limited to height / 300 both for total deflection and sway, subject to cladding requirements.

5. DRAINAGE

Existing site details and proposed development

The existing site extends over an area of brownfield land adjacent to Bridgewater Street in Whitchurch. The site currently comprises the Whitchurch Swimming Centre building and associated car parking, Youth Centre and sports courts. The total area within the site boundary is approx. 1.62 ha.

The proposed development involves demolishing the existing pool building and constructing a new 2-storey leisure centre facility on the site. The existing car park will be remodelled to suit the finalised building proposal.

Flood risk statement

Considering the Environment Agency Flood Mapping, the site is generally shown to be located within Flood Zone 1 which is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as: *“Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding”*. There is a strip of zone 3 to the south of the site next to the water course.



In accordance with Environment Agency guidance, a site-specific flood risk assessment is not required as the total site area is less than 1 hectare, however as there is a section of Zone 3 to the south a Flood Risk Assessment may be required by the LLFA.

Whilst a site-specific flood risk assessment will assess the risks to the site in detail, the flood risk from river and sea, surface water and reservoir flooding using the Environment Agency Flood Maps has been outlined below:

The site is in flood zone 1 and has a low risk of flooding from the river or sea, according to EA flood maps. A small area of the site is at medium to high risk of localised surface water flooding according to the EA data. However, it is noted that the area of site at risk does not clash with either of the proposed building locations or any of the other proposed site infrastructure.

The site is not at risk of flooding from other sources, such as reservoirs.

Surface water drainage

Existing

The existing site comprises predominantly brownfield (buildings, car parking and hardstanding) land. A drainage survey is planned to confirm where the existing surface water from the site discharges to. Once a drainage survey has been carried out this strategy will be updated to reflect its findings.

The nearest watercourse for discharge is to be confirmed in the next stage. The existing impermeable area within the site boundary is approx. 3500 m² and the existing outflow volume and location from site is to be confirmed following the site survey as part of the next stage of design.

Proposed

The surface water discharge from the proposed development will be made up from the following elements:-

- Building roof area
- Access roads
- Paved areas around new development
- Car parking bays

Surface water discharge hierarchy

The recommended surface water discharge hierarchy set out in the CIRIA SuDS Manual is to utilise soakaways, or infiltration as the preferred option, followed by discharging to an appropriate watercourse. If these options are not feasible then the final option is to discharge to an existing surface water sewer, followed by discharge into a combined public sewer. The strategy is to be completed in the next stage.

SuDS considerations

SuDS will be considered when producing this drainage strategy in an effort to provide effective surface water treatment and slow down the rate of surface water runoff in accordance with National Planning Policy recommendations

and the lead local flood authority SuDS Design Guidance. The following sustainable drainage systems will be considered:-

- Infiltration systems: subject to site infiltration rates.
- Porous pavements: porous / permeable surfaces are proposed for the car park construction as they can provide an effective way to reduce the flow rate of surface water runoff and give the necessary 2-stage treatment required to remove hydrocarbons prior to discharge into the receiving water body.

A suitable maintenance plan for all SuDS features will be produced at detail design stage and should be developed and implemented by the operator once the drainage proposals have been finalised to ensure sufficient operation and treatment is maintained throughout the design life of the development.

Design criteria

All private surface water drains will be designed and constructed in accordance with BS EN 752:2017 and Building Regulations Approved Document H. All adoptable surface water drainage will be designed and constructed to 'Sewerage Section Guidance (SSG) Codes for Adoption' standards, in accordance with the SSG Design & Construction Guidance document.

Foul water drainage

Existing

The existing site foul drainage infrastructure comprises commercial and industrial (trade effluent) sewage from the swimming pool building. A drainage survey is planned to confirm where the existing foul water from the site discharges to. Once a drainage survey has been carried out this strategy will be updated to reflect its findings.

Proposed

Discharge method

A pre-development enquiry will be submitted to confirm whether they have any assets adjacent to the site boundary. This drainage strategy will be updated

once a response is received, however for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that a suitable discharge location will be available. Formal approval to connect into the public drainage network will be agreed through the submission of an S106 application.

Design criteria

New foul drains will be provided to serve all foul producing appliances within the proposed development. All drains will be designed in accordance with BS EN 752:2017 and Building Regulations Approved Document H. All adoptable foul water drainage will be designed and constructed to 'Sewerage Section Guidance (SSG) Codes for Adoption' standards, in accordance with the SSG Design & Construction Guidance document.

Trade effluent

At this stage of the project there is the option to use a microfiltration system rather than a traditional backwashing facility for the proposed swimming pool filters. If a microfiltration system is used then there will be no requirement to discharge trade effluent however for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that a traditional filtration system will be used and trade effluent will be discharged.

Foul waste classified as 'trade effluent' must be connected into the proposed foul network. Formal approval is required to discharge trade effluent and a trade effluent agreement will need to be arranged between the site operator and the operator's chosen water retailer. The trade effluent agreement will stipulate the frequency, volume, and maximum rate at which the operator will be able to discharge trade effluent from their site.

In addition, a pre-development enquiry will be submitted to confirm whether there is capacity within their foul network to accommodate the trade effluent discharge. This drainage strategy will be updated once a response is received however for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that the network will have available capacity.

It is proposed that the discharge rate and discharge volume from the backwashing facilities will be restricted as part of the trade effluent agreement

as it is unlikely that the public network would be able to accommodate the unrestricted backwash rate. Trade effluent from the swimming pool filters will therefore discharge into an isolated foul drainage network and make a separate connection into the main foul drainage network, downstream of a dedicated sampling chamber. The trade effluent network will have a suitably sized backwash storage facility and a mechanism to restrict the flow rate into the main foul drainage network in accordance with the approved trade effluent agreement.

6. CARBON REDUCTION

At Furness Partnership, we understand that as structural engineers we have a huge responsibility to mitigate carbon emissions within the built environment. We calculate the embodied carbon in our structural solutions as standard practice, both early on and at key stages of the project journey. This allows the client to make quantified decisions towards carbon reduction. We follow the following process to achieve embodied carbon reduction in our designs:-



Effective carbon reduction - leisure complex case study

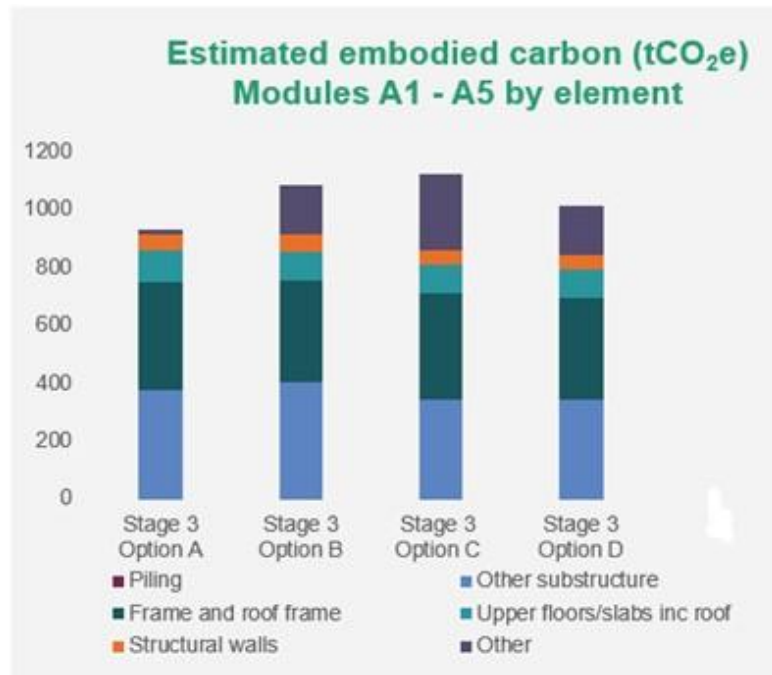
As part of the feasibility and design process we complete a calculation to determine the carbon with our designs and look to mitigate the impacts where possible. At the next design stage, once the structural form is completed for the proposed Whitchurch Leisure Centre, we will be including the assessment we have made to offset the carbon.

In order to inform our designs we have undertaken a theoretical case study to establish design principles for effective carbon reduction. The following paragraphs explain our process:

Carbon calculations were adopted early on in a large-scale sports and leisure complex which ultimately enabled us to achieve a significant carbon reduction of 56kgCO₂e/m². The project involved the structural design of the following:-

- Swimming pool
- First floor fitness suite
- Sport hall
- Changing rooms
- Communal areas

At the first stage of design, 4 schemes were put forward so that the carbon emissions could be compared, and high impact areas identified. The schemes were calculated as follows



These calculations enabled us to target carbon reduction and ultimately improve the SCORs rating by a grade. The following strategies were used to achieve this reduction:-

- Low cement concrete specifications
- Modification of the cladding design to reduce secondary steel used
- Re-use of existing structure where possible
- Improved ground conditions to reduce sub structure
- Optimising the efficiency of design to reduce steelwork

We use these principles at the beginning of the design process to not only design an efficient structural design, but as low carbon option as possible.

7. CIVIL AND STRUCTURAL RISK ITEMS

- Pool tank base design also dependant on findings of further site investigation. Existing ground conditions at pool base level will determine whether pool tank will be designed as ground bearing, suspended between mass concrete trench foundations or piled.
- Clay heave due to removal of trees across the building footprint, and removal of overburden pressure within the pool hall
- Pool type (Myrtha vs traditional reinforced concrete)
- Roof structural form and size of the building still to be finalised by architect.
- Existing foul and surface water drainage connection details still to be finalised following receipt of existing drainage CCTV survey
- Further surveys required to ascertain locations of any existing buried services

8. FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED

The further information/surveys are required in order to continue to the next stage:-

- Flood risk assessment
- Geo-technical and geo-environmental site investigation
- CCTV survey of existing drainage
- Survey of existing buried services
- Confirmation of pool type
- Up to date topographical survey
- Arboricultural survey

1. SITE / INCOMING SERVICES

To be read in conjunction with record drawings received and Groundwise report. Excerpts found at the end of this section.

- It is anticipated that a new sub-station will be required to serve the refurbishment due to the extent of works required and the services strategy. The required load has been applied for from the utility provider. Budget cost of providing new connection is £81,466.
 - The existing incoming gas supply will be stripped out, no gas will be provided to the development. This is due to the design team receiving further information since issuing the original document that, where feasible, sites should be 100% fossil fuel free. A detailed energy strategy will be developed as the design progresses to maximise the use of renewable energy resources and carbon reduction.
 - The existing incoming water supply will be stripped back to the main branch and a new connection provided to serve the new development. The incoming supply will connect to the cold-water storage tank only and serve all sanitary outlets within the building and pool equipment, no outlets will be served directly from the mains cold water supply.
- It is envisaged that new telecommunications supplies will be required from the local infrastructure, however the provision will need to be confirmed by the Client / end user.

2. PERFORMANCE

Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and in 2020 adopted its Strategy for achieving net zero on carbon emissions by 2030. Design to provide for a passive standard of operation at the facilities, the aim being to achieve as low a carbon footprint as possible at a reasonable cost over the lifecycle of the project. The design will adopt lean, green, mean hierarchy of design strategies to ensure that the building is as energy efficient and produce minimum Carbon as possible. An LZCT assessment will be carried out to ascertain the viability of appropriate technologies to meet the project energy and Carbon higher level objectives.

A fabric first approach will be adopted to limit energy input requirement; however this will not quite be Passivhaus standards as can cause issues with lack of connection to the external environment and once air leakage goes below a low number the savings in energy rapidly diminish. Heat recovery technology yields far more energy savings

which will be adopted everywhere possible.

The building will be designed BREEAM to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent', with BREEAM 'Very Good' as a minimum. An EPC A rating is targeted and all design strategies will be applicable to provide this. The EPC will be calculated at all design gateways to ensure progressive compliance.

Throughout the design stages continuous monitoring of the design will be undertaken, this will be done using a combination of thermal analysis and data obtained from monitoring of similar projects so both the fabric and building services designs can be aligned to the requirements of the building to maximise efficiency and performance whilst achieving the operational requirements for the building.

3. BUILDING SERVICES STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The mechanical and electrical services strategies will be developed to ensure compliance with the regulations, clients requirements and energy strategy to provide an energy efficient building services solution.

4. PLANT LOCATIONS

The building has 2 main plant areas, one located at ground floor level and the second on the roof which is open to atmosphere.

Ground floor

- Cold water and Cat 5 storage tank
- Cold water booster set
- Hot water generation: likely via ASHP, ground source heat and / or gas boilers
- Low temperature hot water (LTHW) heating generation: likely via ASHP, ground source heat pump
- LTHW pumps, low loss header, pressurisation unit, etc.
- Chilled water pumps (if applicable)
- Mechanical control panel
- Electrical panel and distribution boards
- LV switch room
- Any local ventilation with highly efficient heat recovery devices
- Specialist swimming pool plant

Roof

- External condenser units
- Air handling units with highly efficient heat recovery units

External

- Air source heat pumps (if applicable)
- PV if applicable

5. ENERGY

Energy use within the building will be a key factor as the design progresses with ensure the building not only achieves Building Regulation Part L2A (2013) compliance but also provides an efficient “in use” design solution. Our approach will be:-

- Fabric
- Energy efficient plant and equipment
- Intelligent controls
- Renewable technologies: roof mounted photo-voltaic (PV) cells and ASHP

6. BUILDING

The mechanical, electrical and public health engineering services will be carefully considered throughout ensuring they are aligned with the aesthetic aspirations and requirements for each space whilst providing the required performance for the area served.

Where identified, all mechanical, electrical and public health services within the C4 corrosion zone will be suitably designed and specified as required, this will include all services and associated supporting equipment both within the space and ceiling void of the space.

The ventilation strategy will be designed to ensure a positive environment is provided around the C4 area to contain the corrosive environment to the pool hall as much as possible.

This will be achieved by designing the pool hall to have a negative pressure environment to the surrounding rooms/areas, make-up air to the pool hall will be provided from the wet changing area ventilation system to protect, where possible, areas outside of the pool hall

7. ELECTRICAL SERVICES

The electrical services systems will include the following:-

- Distribution
 - Main board
 - Split metered distribution boards
 - Containment
- Small power and data
- LED Lighting and emergency lighting
- Fire alarm system
- Earth bonding
- Lightning protection
- Security
 - Intruder alarm
 - CCTV
 - Access control
- Pool alarm (if applicable)
- PA system
- Disabled Disability Act
 - Induction loops / arrays
 - Assistance alarms
 - Refuge system (if applicable)

8. MECHANICAL SERVICES

The mechanical services systems will include the following:-

- Heating and cooling
 - Air source heat pump generation
 - VRF to areas
 - Electric panel heaters
 - Ventilation system
- Central air handling units with heat recovery
- Local extract systems where required
 - Controls / building management system
- Public health services
 - Domestic water
- Above ground drainage
- Central cold-water storage and booster set
- Central hot water generation

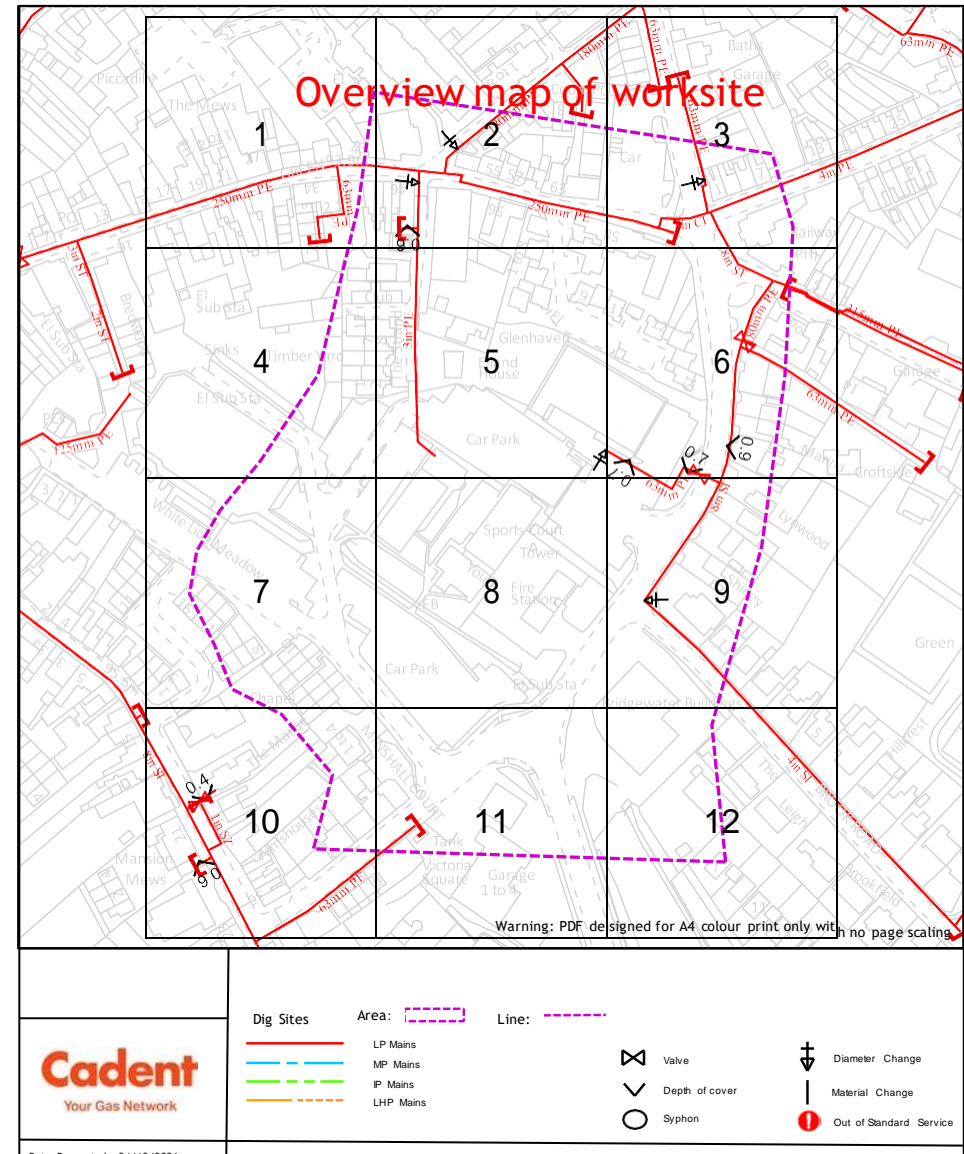
EXTERNAL

Externally with building will be provided with electrical vehicle charging points, external lighting and CCTV coverage.

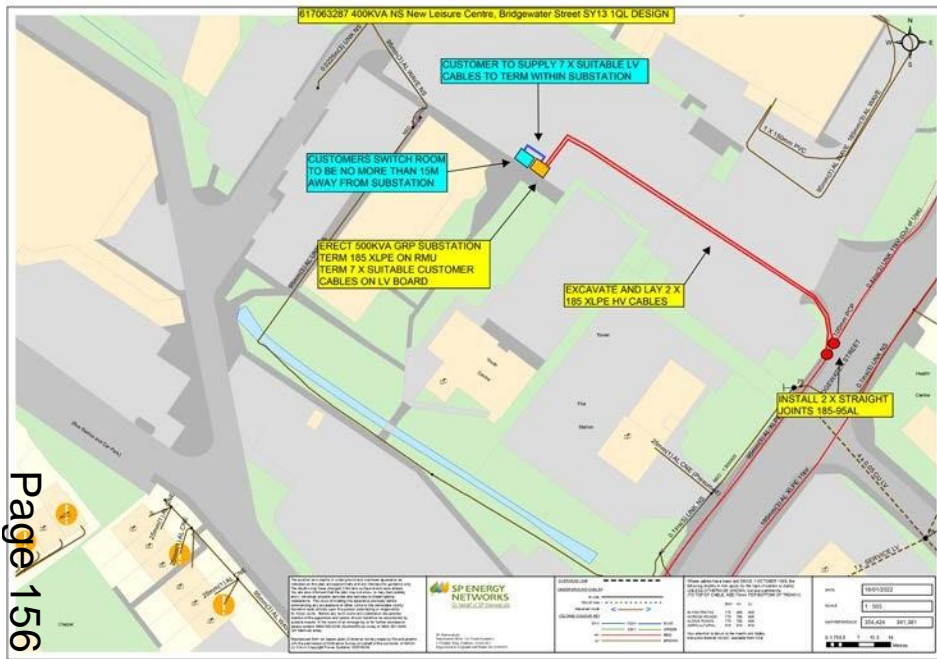
10. BUILDING EFFICIENCY

The different options for each system will be assessed at the next stage of design to ascertain the most efficient and effective solutions for providing the mechanical and electrical services within the building.

As part of the assessment the performance and net carbon impact on the building will be reviewed to ensure all options are clearly defined and their impacts, positive and negative, documented for client review prior to any conclusion.

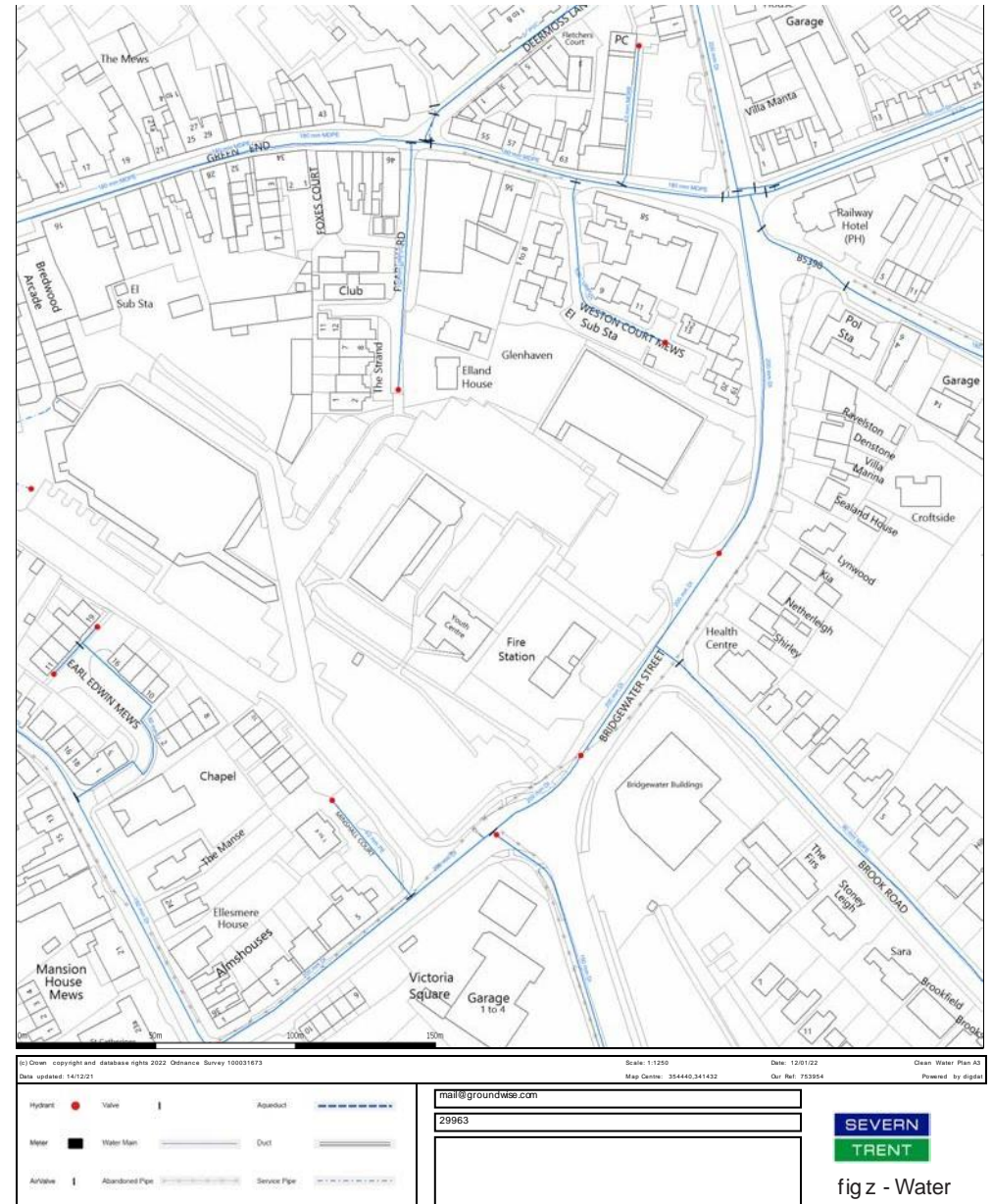


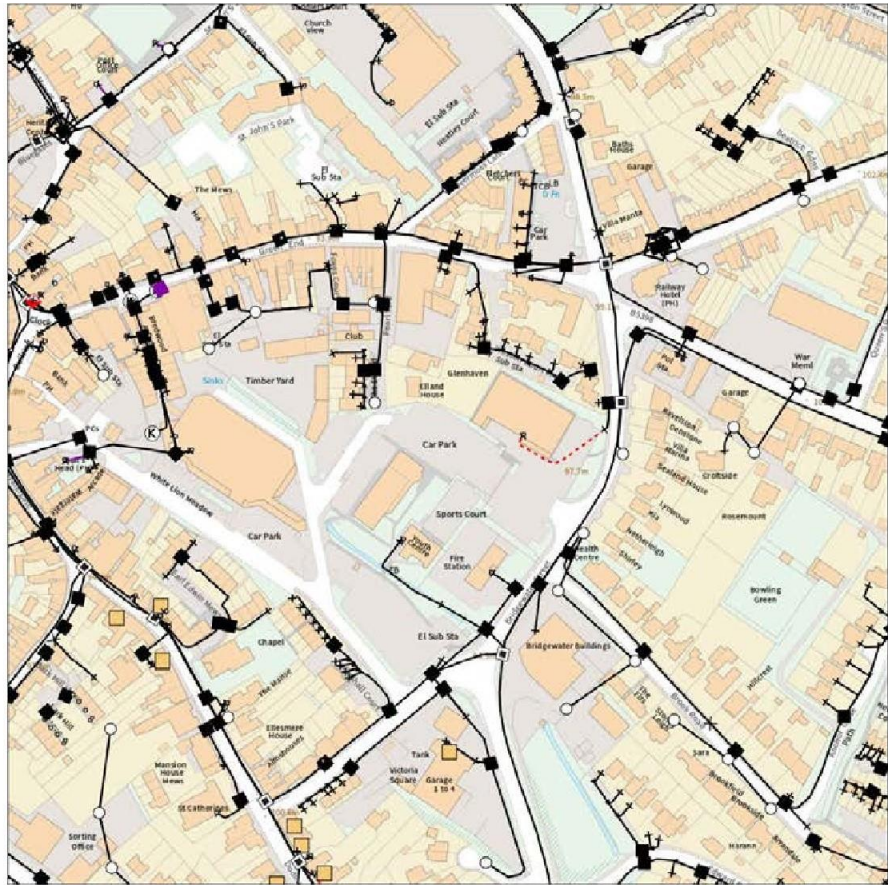
figy - Gas



Page 156

fig x - Electricity





IMPORTANT WARNING
 Information regarding the location of BT apparatus is given for your assistance and is intended for general guidance only. No guarantee is given of its accuracy. It should not be relied upon in the event of excavations or other works being made near to BT apparatus which may exist at various depths and may deviate from the marked route.

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KEY TO BT SYMBOLS		Change Of State	+	Matchings	
Planned	Live	Split Coupling	X	Built	
PCP		Duct Tee	A	Planned	
Pole		Building		Inferred	
Box		Kiosk	K	Duct	
Manhole		Other proposed plants is shown using dashed lines. BT Symbols not listed above may be disregarded. Existing BT Plant may not be recorded. Information valid at time of preparation. Maps are only valid for 90 days after the date of publication.			
Cabinet					
Pending Add	In Place	Pending Remove	Not In Use		
Power Cable					
Power Duct			N/A		

fig q - Telecoms

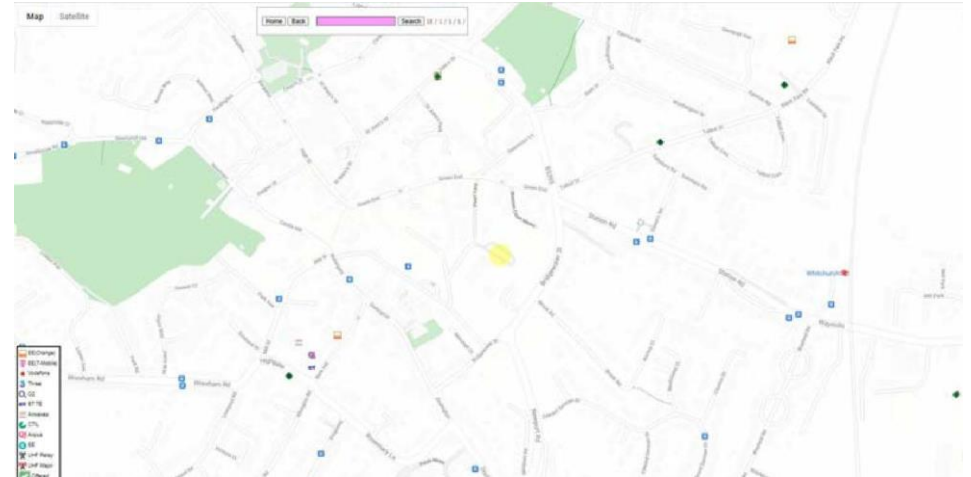


fig w - Mobile phone masts

NOTES ON APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE COSTS

1. The approximate costs in this estimate have been based on the proposed ground and first floor plans issued 19.11.21, the roof plan dated 12.11.21 and site plans dated 12.11.21. It has been assumed that the roof top plant room and access stair as shown on the original drawing dated 12.11.21 will be required. Assumptions on the level of specification required have been made which will require verification with the Architect and Client.
2. We have noted the comments in the brief regarding the problems with the foundations of the existing building, and include an allowance for piled foundations to the new Centre.
3. An existing asbestos survey has been provided which indicates that there is some asbestos present in the existing building. We have therefore included a provisional allowance for asbestos removal.

It has been assumed for the purpose of the estimate that a competitive price will be obtained for the works using a Design and Build procurement route.

The figures have been based at current price levels. An allowance for inflation has been included based on the proposed programme of a Commencement in the 3rd Quarter of 2023 and Completion in the 2nd Quarter of 2025.
6. We have allowed for a PV panel installation to the roof as shown on the roof drawing issued on 12 November 2021, together with an allowance for an Air Source Heat Pump primary heating source to the building with gas back up.
7. The project build costs have been benchmarked against recent projects that have achieved BREEAM VERY GOOD ratings and a further allowance has been made to upgrade this to BREEAM Excellent rating.
8. No other sustainability options or measures to achieve carbon reduction or a carbon 'neutral' project, other than those stated in item 6 and 7 above have been included in the estimate. Further confirmation will be required from the client during RIBA stage 2, to establish the extent of additional fabric improvements beyond Building Regulations compliance, to achieve the low carbon aspirations as proposed in section 7.

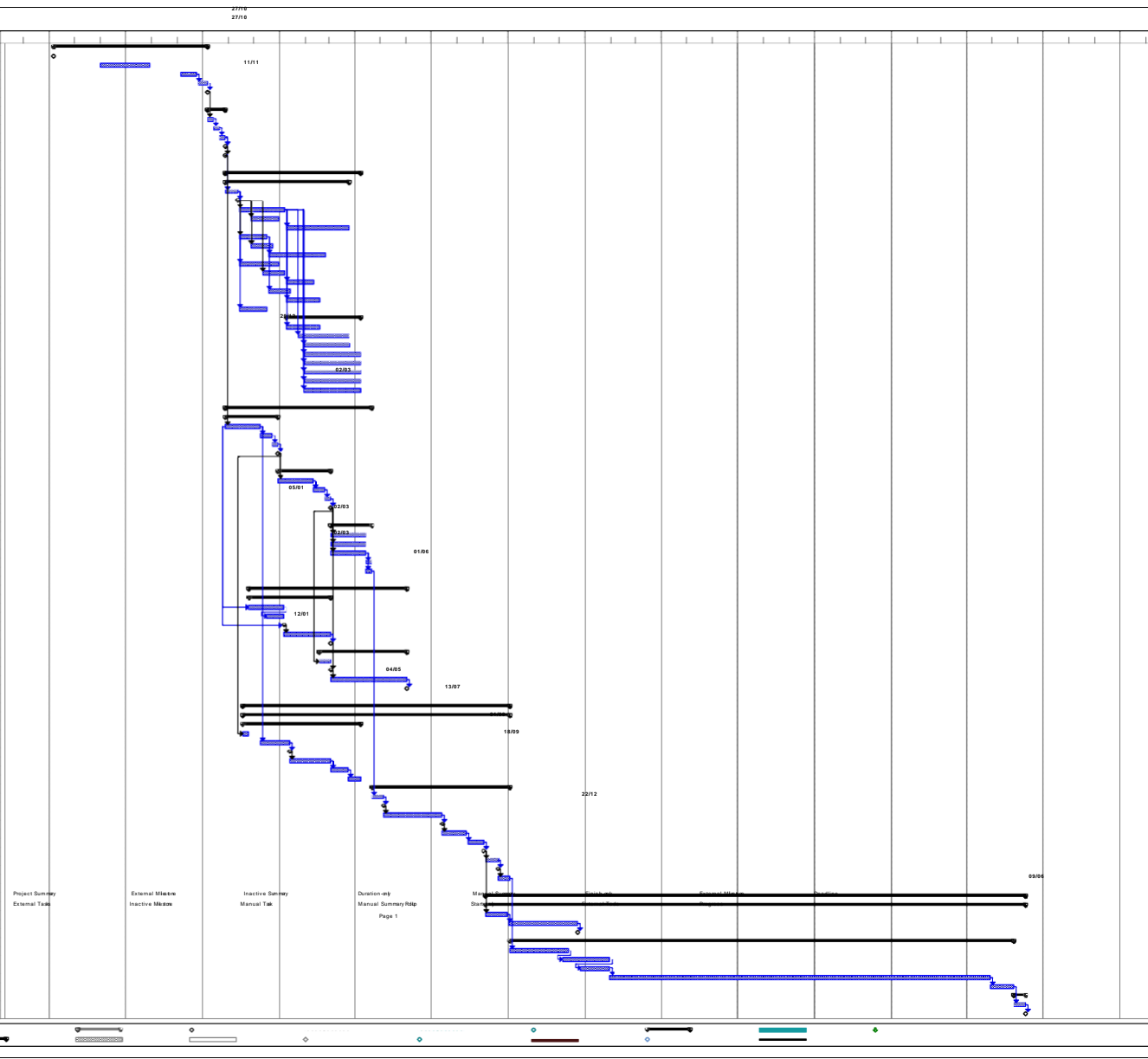
The figures exclude:-

1. VAT
2. Operator procurement
3. Legal costs
4. Ground remediation or measures to deal with contamination.
5. Diversion or lowering of any existing services which may run under, over or adjacent to the site.
6. External works or landscaping beyond the immediate vicinity of the new swimming centre and associated parking as shown on the option 2 base plan dated 12 November 2021.
7. ICT / F,F&E, loose equipment including sports and fitness equipment and Furniture.
8. Any allowance for major cut and fill requirements or retaining works, pending further detail on site levels.
9. Potential Covid 19 impacts or related events
10. Finance charges and legal costs

WINDFARM COUNCIL
WINDFARM COUNCIL
PRELIMINARY DRAFT OVERALL MASTER PROGRAMME BASED ON SINGLE STAGE DESIGN & BUILD TENDER WITH SO

ID	Task Name	Date	Finish	Duration	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
1	CABINET REPORTS / PUBLIC CONSULTATION	Wed 04/04/22	Thu 04/04/22	132 days																

2	Feasibility/Outline Report	Wed 06/04/22 09:42Z	0 days
3	Public Consultation	Wed 01/06/22 Fri 29/07/22	43 days
4	Report to Cabinet outline of Public Consultation (Pre-De)	Mon 05/09/22 Fri 20/09/22	15 days
5	Recommendation to Council to Capitalize Phase 2	Mon 26/09/22 Thu 01/10/22	5 days
6	Council Authorisation Proceeds RBA Stage 2	Thu 06/10/22 Thu 06/10/22	0 days
7			
8	APPOINTMENT	Fri 07/10/22 Thu 27/02/23	15 days
9	Agree Procurement Strategy for Design & M	Fri 07/10/22 Thu 01/10/22	1 wk
10	Design Team / PM Fee Proposal	Fri 14/10/22 Thu 20/10/22	1 wk
11	Authority Consideration / Approval	Fri 21/10/22 Thu 27/10/22	5 days
12	Design Team / PM Fee Proposal	Fri 21/10/22 Thu 27/10/22	0 days
13	Project Launch Meeting / Team	Thu 27/10/22 Thu 27/10/22	0 days
14			
15	SURVEYS	Fri 28/10/22 Fri 09/04/23	116 days
16	SITE SURVEYS/INVESTIGATIONS	Fri 28/10/22 Fri 24/03/23	106 days
17	Review Information Summary/submit	Fri 28/10/22 Fri 11/11/22	11 days
18	Confirm Top of Survey/prepare	Fri 28/10/22 Fri 11/11/22	0 days
19	Prepare Brief / Obtain Survey Proposal	Mon 14/11/22 Fri 05/01/23	40 days
20	Demolition / Access Survey	Mon 28/11/22 Fri 30/12/22 09:00	25 days
21	Obtain Investigation Survey (Stage 1 & Stage 2 Survey)	Mon 28/11/22 Fri 30/12/22	35 days
22	Detailed Topographic Survey	Mon 14/11/22 Fri 01/12/22	25 days
23	Designing Firm/ Fee	Mon 28/11/22 Fri 23/12/22 09:00	20 days
24	Final Fee Agreement / Design Survey	Mon 01/12/22 Fri 30/12/22	30 days
25	Utilities / Services Survey / Assessment	Mon 14/11/22 Fri 27/12/22	35 days
26	OPN Services / Solution Survey	Mon 12/12/22 Fri 09/01/23 09:00	20 days
27	CCPV Drainage Survey	Mon 09/01/23 Fri 03/02/23	20 days
28	Archaeological / Tree Survey / Constraints Plan	Mon 19/12/22 Fri 03/01/23	20 days
29	Noise Survey	Mon 09/01/23 Fri 19/02/23	30 days
30	Ecology Survey	Mon 14/11/22 Fri 19/02/23	26 days
31	REPORTS	Mon 09/01/23 Fri 07/04/23	63 days
32	Archaeological/Desk Top Survey	Mon 09/01/23 Fri 19/02/23	30 days
33	Traffic Impact Assessment / Travel Plan	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	40 days
34	Daylight / Orientation	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	40 days
35	Energy Strategy Report	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	50 days
36	Air Quality Assessment	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	50 days
37	Fire Strategy Report	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	50 days
38	Sustainability Statement	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	50 days
39	BREEM Pre-Assessment	Mon 30/01/23 Fri 24/02/23 09:00	50 days
40			
41	DESIGN	Fri 28/10/22 Thu 09/04/23	135 days
42	RIBA STAGE 2 DESIGN CONCEPT	Fri 28/10/22 Thu 29/12/22	40 days
43	Stage 2 Concept Design	Fri 28/10/22 Thu 09/12/22	6 wks
44	Stage 2 Cost Ref	Fri 09/12/22 Thu 20/12/22	2 wks
45	Report	Fri 29/12/22 Thu 20/01/23	1 wk
46	Authority Sign-off	Thu 29/12/22 Thu 29/12/22	0 wks
47			
48	RIBA STAGE 3 DESIGN DEVELOPED	Fri 30/12/22 Thu 09/03/23	45 days
49	Stage 3 Developed Design	Fri 30/12/22 Thu 09/02/23	6 wks
50	Stage 3 Cost Ref	Fri 09/02/23 Thu 20/02/23	2 wks
51	Report	Fri 24/02/23 Thu 02/03/23	1 wk
52	Authority Sign-off	Thu 02/03/23 Thu 02/03/23	0 wks
53			
54	RIBA STAGE 4 (BIM) TECHNICAL DESIGN	Fri 03/03/23 Thu 28/04/23	35 days
55	Stage 4 Technical Design/Architectural/Managerial B's	Fri 03/03/23 Thu 09/03/23	6 wks
56	Room Data Sheets	Fri 03/03/23 Thu 09/03/23	6 wks
57	Stage 4 Effort At Design	Fri 03/03/23 Thu 09/03/23	6 wks
58	Architect Review AGO-submission	Fri 14/04/23 Thu 20/04/23	1 wk
59	GD Prepare / Finalise Document	Fri 14/04/23 Thu 20/04/23	1 wk
60			
61	PLANNING	Fri 29/11/22 Thu 09/04/23	135 days
62	PLANNING PRE-APP PROCESS	Fri 29/11/22 Thu 09/04/23	70 days
63	Initial Planning Pre-application Consultation	Fri 29/11/22 Thu 08/12/22 14:00	6 wks
64	Prepare Planning Pre-application	Fri 16/12/22 Thu 09/01/23 09:00	3 wks
65	Submit Planning Pre-application	Thu 09/01/23 Thu 09/01/23 09:00	0 days
66	Pre-App Decision Made	Fri 06/01/23 Thu 02/02/23 06:00	3 wks
67	Pre-App Response	Thu 02/02/23 Thu 02/02/23 06:00	0 days
68			
69	PLANNING APPLICATION	Fri 17/02/23 Thu 09/03/23 09:00	2 wks
70	Submit Planning Application	Thu 02/03/23 Thu 02/03/23	0 days
71	Planning Decision Made	Fri 02/03/23 Thu 02/03/23	0 wks
72	Planning Approval/Estimate	Thu 01/06/23 Thu 01/06/23	0 days
73			
74	PROCUREMENT	Fri 16/11/22 Mon 07/04/23	227 days
75	MAIN CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT (Single stage DBB with Prequal)	Fri 16/11/22 Mon 07/04/23	227 days
76	Pre-Selection Process	Fri 16/11/22 Fri 09/04/23	161 days
77	Agree Procurement Rules	Fri 16/11/22 Thu 21/12/22 09:00	1 wk
78	Prepare SO Document / Project Information	Fri 09/12/22 Thu 01/01/23	5 wks
79	Submit Contract Notes	Thu 12/01/23 Thu 19/01/23	0 days
80	SO Response Period	Fri 19/01/23 Thu 02/02/23	30 days
81	Score Responses	Fri 02/02/23 Thu 02/02/23	15 days
82	Shortlist / Interview / Interview & Site	Fri 24/02/23 Fri 07/04/23	11 days
83	MAIN CONTRACT TEAM PHASE	Fri 17/04/23 Mon 07/06/23	117 days
84	Finalise IT Package	Fri 21/04/23 Thu 04/05/23	10 days
85	Dispatch Tenders	Thu 04/05/23 Thu 04/05/23	0 days
86	Tender Point	Fri 05/05/23 Thu 18/07/23	50 days
87	Tender Return	Thu 13/07/23 Thu 09/07/23	0 days
88	Reveal / Score / Tender Backlog	Fri 14/07/23 Fri 11/08/23	21 days
89	Interview Contractor/Client/Team	Mon 14/08/23 Fri 03/09/23	15 days
90	Select Contract	Fri 01/09/23 Fri 01/09/23	0 days
91	Submit Bid	Mon 04/09/23 Mon 04/09/23	0 days
92	Appoint Contractor	Mon 18/09/23 Mon 18/09/23	0 days
93	Formal Contract Execution	Thu 18/09/23 Mon 02/10/23	10 days
94			
95	CONSTRUCTION	Mon 04/09/23 Mon 08/04/23	461 days
96	DEMOLITION CONTRACT	Mon 04/09/23 Mon 08/04/23	461 days
97	Mobilisation	Mon 04/09/23 Fri 08/09/23	4 wks
98	Demolition Works	Mon 02/10/23 Fri 27/12/23	12 wks
99	Completion & Demolition	Fri 27/12/23 Fri 27/12/23	0 days
100	MAIN CONTRACT	Thu 01/10/23 Mon 08/04/23	456 days
101	Contractor Detail Design	Thu 01/10/23 Mon 11/10/23	10 wks
102	Discharge Planning/Obtain	Thu 01/10/23 Mon 29/10/23 09:00	8 wks
103	Contractor Mobilisation	Thu 01/10/23 Mon 29/10/23 09:00	8 wks
104	Construction Period	Thu 01/10/23 Mon 28/04/23	65 wks
105	Testing & Commissioning	Thu 01/10/23 Mon 28/04/23	4 wks
106	CLIENT FIT-OUT TRAINING	Thu 27/05/23 Mon 09/06/23	10 days
107	Client / Operator R-04 / Training	Thu 27/05/23 Mon 09/06/23	2 wks
108	Lease/ Commissioning Public	Mon 09/06/23 Mon 09/06/23	0 days

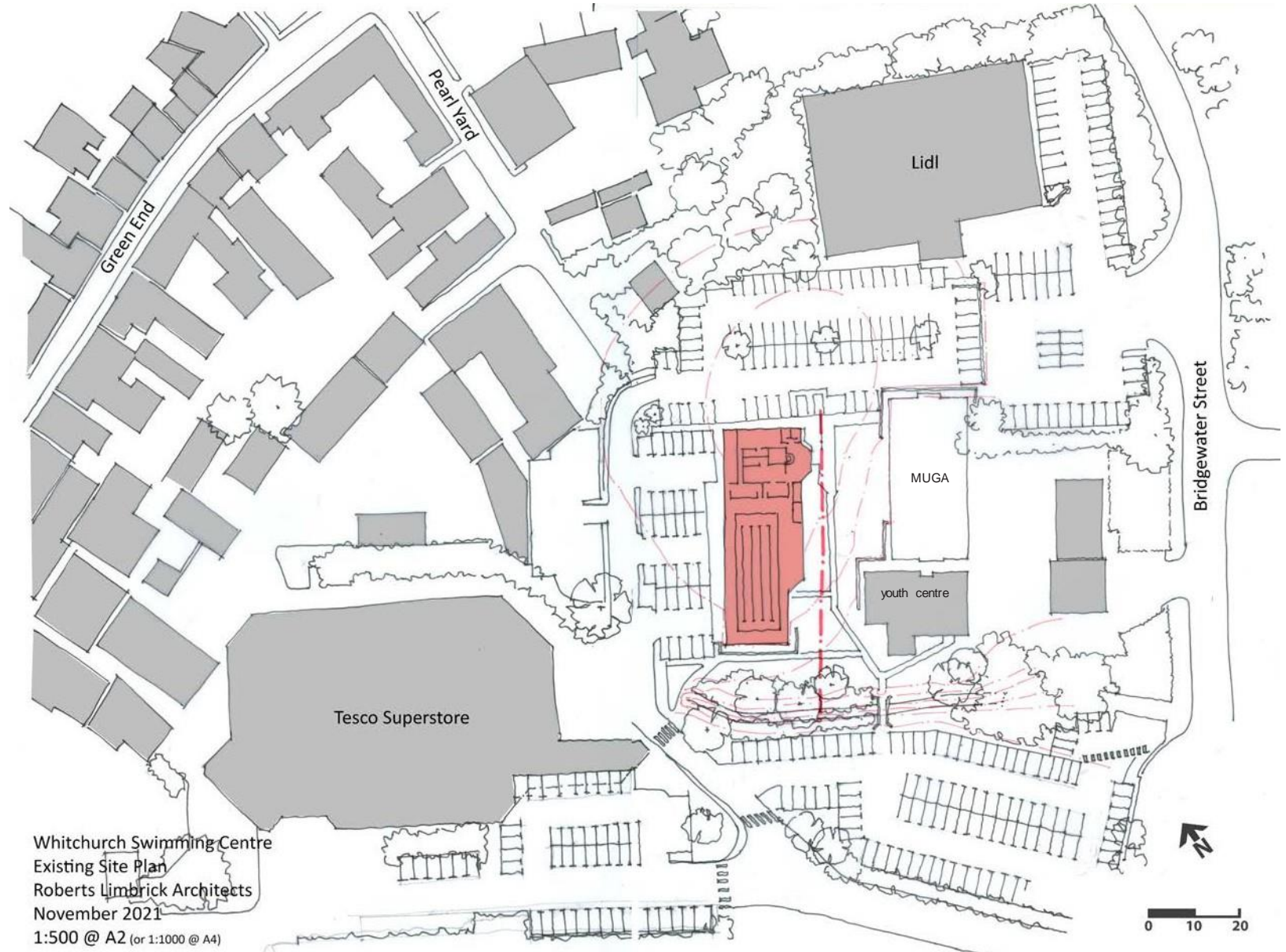


Appendix 1: Alternative site layouts considered during the design process

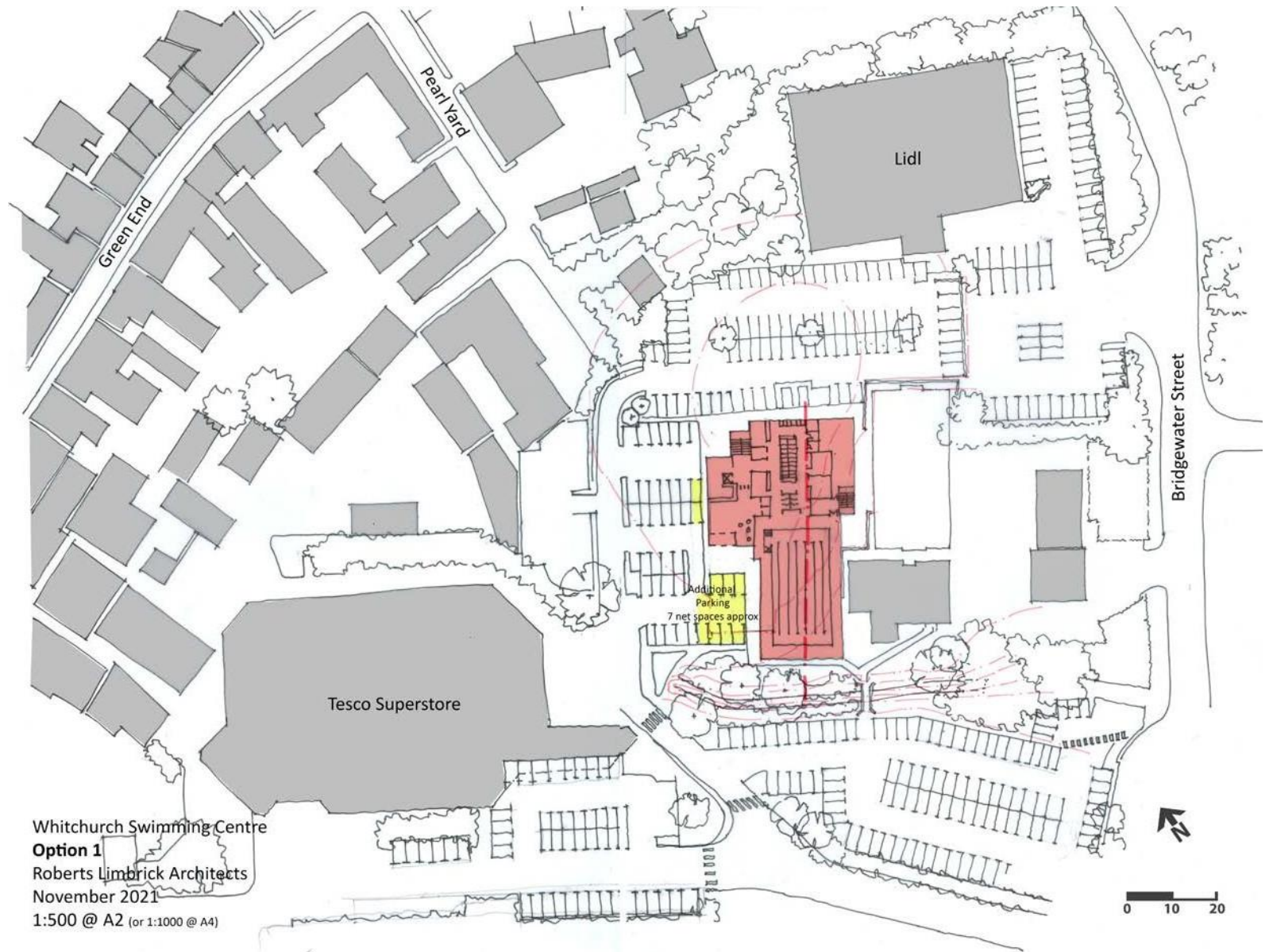
Appendix 2: Business case

Appendix 1: Alternative site layouts considered during the design process

- The existing pool is indicated in red.
- The parking to the north and east of the existing pool building is leased by Tesco.
- The disused MUGA and youth centre are to the east of the existing pool building.

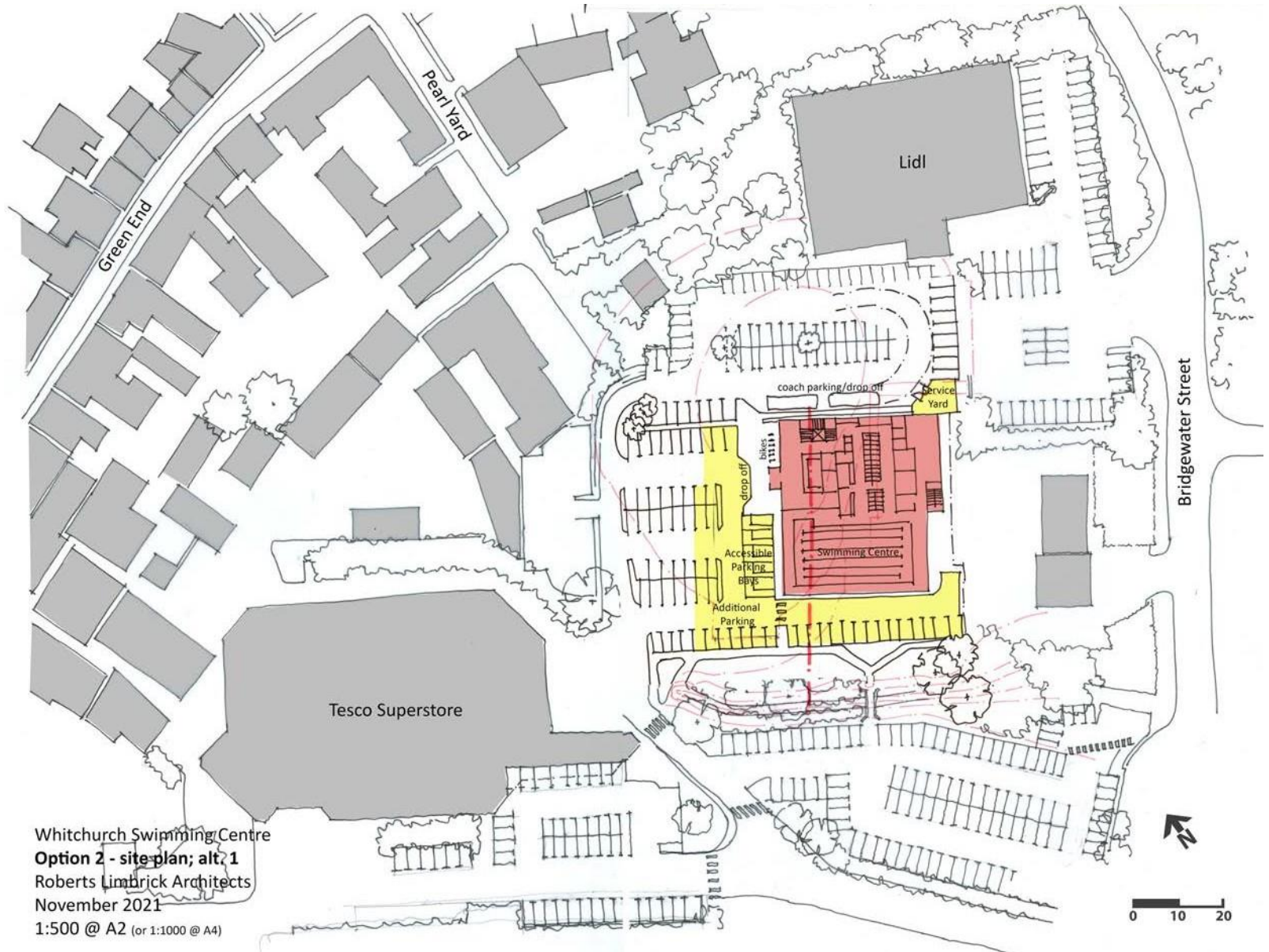


- This proposal places the new leisure centre over the footprint of the existing pool building and the existing disused MUGA and youth centre remain.
- The building arrangement is 'long and thin' and encroaches upon the bank to the stream and the flood zone.
- Very limited additional car parking is provided.



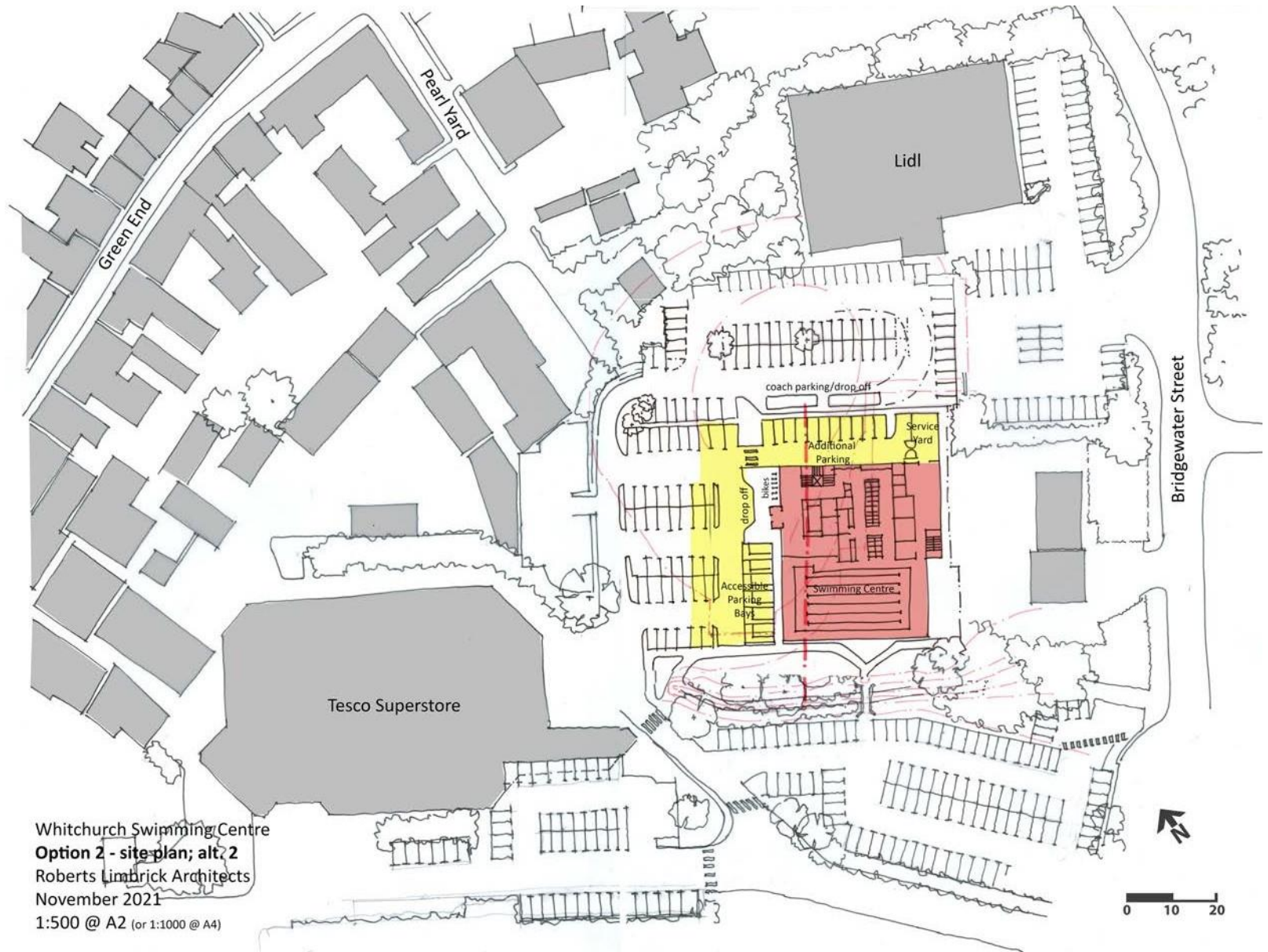
Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Option 1
Roberts Limbrick Architects
November 2021
1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)

- The new leisure centre is placed northeast of the site.
- The building is approximately square in plan and sits over the disused MUGA and youth centre.
- Additional parking is provided to the west and south of the new building. A drop-off area and gathering space is provided at the main entrance to the building to the west.



Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Option 2 - site plan; alt. 1
 Roberts Limbrick Architects
 November 2021
 1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)

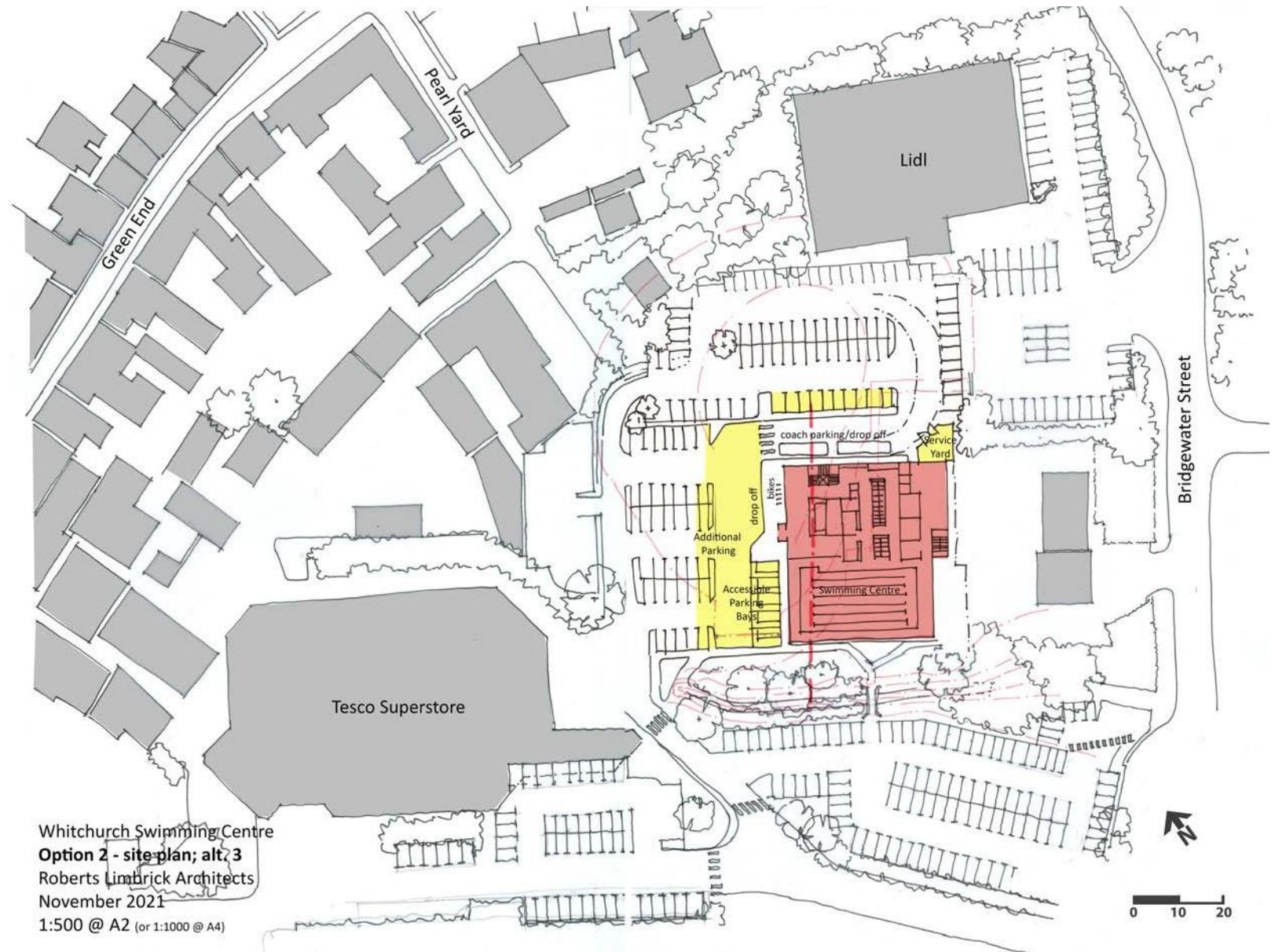
- As option 2 alt 1, but to the south of the site providing parking and service yard to the north.
- **This is the preferred arrangement adopted for the design** (see section 7.0 proposal).



Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Option 2 - site plan; alt 2
Roberts Limbrick Architects
November 2021
1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)

- As option 2 alt 2, but with coach drop-off and parking relocated adjacent to the new building.
- The decision was taken to maintain the existing coach circulation and drop-off arrangement.

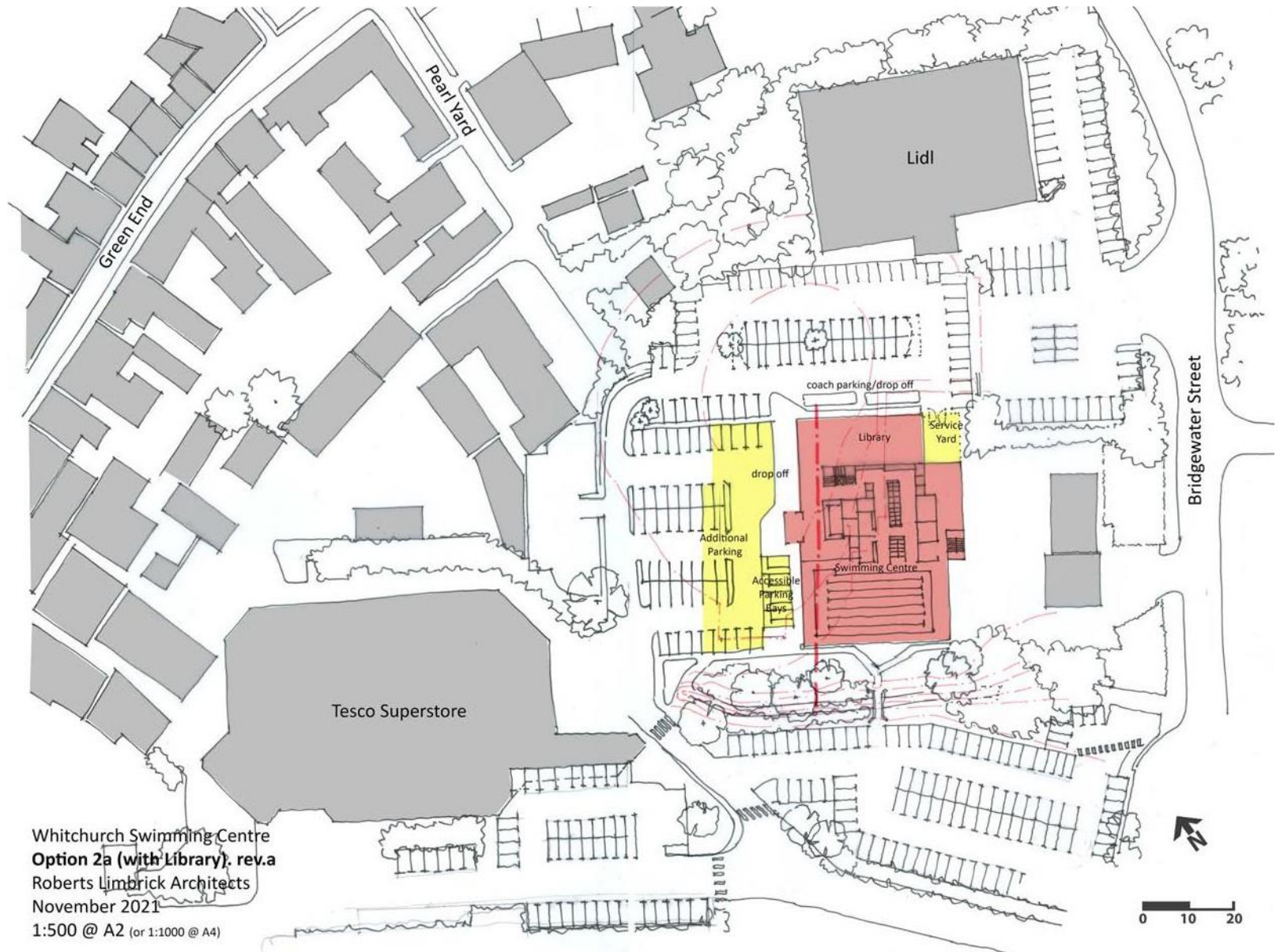
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Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Option 2 - site plan; alt. 3
Roberts Limbrick Architects
November 2021
1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)

- General arrangement as option 2 alt 2, but demonstrating how the library (or other complementary use) could be accommodated to the north of the leisure centre.
- Following the consultation process, the relocation of the library was considered not to be desirable (see section 6.0 other consultation).
- An extension of the new building in this location would reduce the ability to provide additional parking whilst increasing the demand.

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- To replace the existing MUGA, a new MUGA is proposed on the roof of the swimming pool.
- The additional load of the MUGA on the roof will increase the cost of the structure of the building. Two means of escape will be required from the roof.
- The roof top MUGA was considered to be a potential noise nuisance to the neighbouring residences.

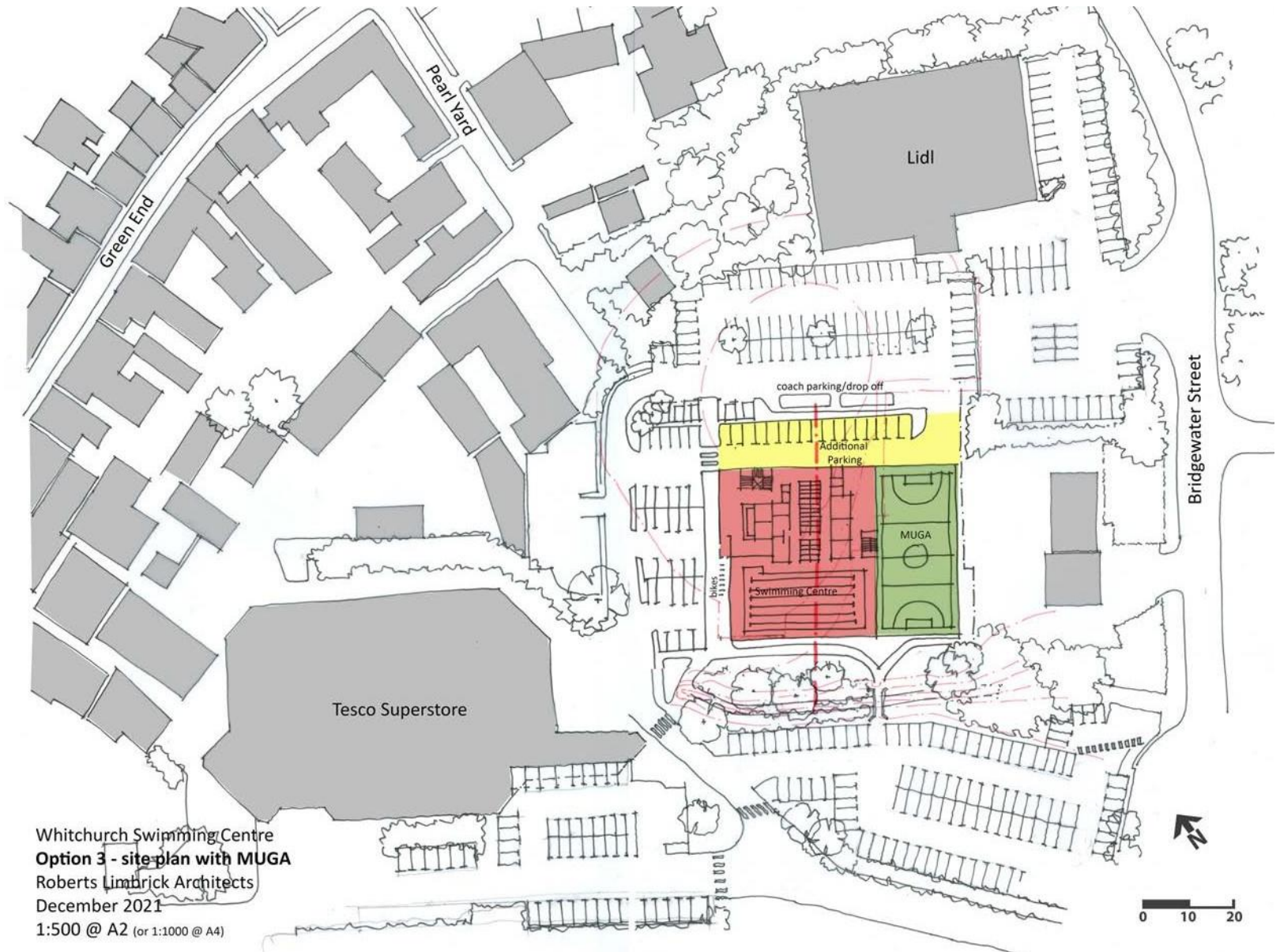
Page 174



Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Option 2 - site plan with MUGA on roof of pool
 Roberts Limbrick Architects
 December 2021
 1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)

- To retain the existing MUGA, the proposed building is moved to the west of the site.
- The provision of additional parking and drop-off / gathering space at the entry to the building is compromised.
- An alternative provision to a formal MUGA comprising an integrated 'active landscape' was proposed during the design process and in consultation with Youth Services (see section 6.0 other consultation).

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Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Option 3 - site plan with MUGA
 Roberts Limbrick Architects
 December 2021
 1:500 @ A2 (or 1:1000 @ A4)

Appendix 2: Business case

Please see Section 5: Financial Implications in the Cabinet report.



Roberts Limbrick

The Carriage Building
Bruton Way
Gloucester GL1 1DG
T: 03333 405 500
www.robertslimbrick.com

Also at:
Newport, South Wales

ISO 9001 : 2015
ISO 14001 : 2015
ISO 45001 : 2018

**Appendix 3: ESHIA for Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre
Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Second Screening, following consultation August 2022**

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Whitchurch Swimming Centre Feasibility Study

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Clare Featherstone, Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	x	
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		x

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

The proposal is for a replacement swimming centre in Whitchurch, which is a large market town in Shropshire, and for which there has been no direct swimming provision since 2020, due to maintenance and structural issues with the existing pool.

The Shropshire Council priorities for sport and physical activity, as set out in the Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2020 - 38 are identified as follows:

Our Vision is that:

Shropshire will be a county where healthier, active lifestyles are encouraged, supported and facilitated for everyone

Three core principles underpin the delivery of our vision:

- Support for the creation of a high quality and sustainable indoor leisure facility mix, which provides accessible and inclusive activities for all Shropshire residents leading to increased participation and active lifestyles, thereby meeting community need
- Recognising the importance of leisure facilities as relevant community spaces, accessible to all and offering opportunities for the delivery of a wide range of activities, services, support and entertainment to local communities and people
- A commitment to work with a wide range of partner organisations and individuals as co-creators and co-deliverers of leisure facilities so that they best reflect the differing needs of local communities.

The equality and health and well-being impacts across Protected Characteristic groupings in Shropshire, and within Whitchurch in particular, are anticipated to be positive. This is in line with the above, and with consideration for Shropshire as a large and sparsely populated rural county in which market towns provide a sense of place and belonging as well as an access point for facilities and services, including leisure facilities. There are also positive impacts anticipated in relation to our tenth grouping in Shropshire, around social inclusion, provide that efforts are made to consider the needs of people in low-income households with regard to pricing structures.

There is further potential for additional benefits for grouping such as those undergoing gender reassignment, and those for whom single sex swimming opportunities are necessary in order to ensure compatibility with and respect for the requirements of their faith. This may be maximised through attention to changing room configurations, and swim time opportunities.

Consultation and Engagement

Community engagement has included:

- Emails and letters provided as part of the public consultation exercise.
- Survey responses gathered between 6th June and the 31st July 2022.
- Feedback from 7 engagement workshops and meetings (including Whitchurch Town Council, local businesses, schools and local sports and leisure groups).

The survey resulted in 274 responses and 12 written consultation responses were received. Important additional feedback was provided through workshops and meetings (all of which were written up to ensure key issues and feedback has been captured and will be considered in the next stage of work). Overall, the combination of these methods has provided a lot of information to help Shropshire Council better understand priority issues and common themes.

Summary below.

The full report is available as Appendix 1 to the Cabinet Report, 7th Sept 2022.

Summary

The responses consultation were very helpful and despite some concerns, very described and communicated, most comments were positive and optimistic about the prospect of swimming facilities returning to Whitchurch.



Engagement: Feedback was provided from 274 survey respondents, 12 written consultation responses and 7 stakeholder meetings and workshops.



Location: 89% of survey respondents agree with the proposed location covering the existing site and closed Enterprise North-East Youth Centre. The stakeholder meetings and workshops included some suggestions for a larger out of town site.



Ecology: 7 of the 12 written responses and 9 of the 274 survey respondents highlighted significant concerns over the impact the build could have on water voles living in the brook on the site. These concerns were reflected in conversations with stakeholders.



Travel: Survey respondents' preferred method of travel to the location is the car (48%) followed by walking at 37%. Cycle use was the third top preferred method of travel (9%). Active Travel was commented on throughout the engagement with stakeholders highlighting opportunities to improve cycling facilities on site and throughout the local area. Parking facilities were also commonly mentioned.



Facility mix: Feedback calls for a learner/child pool, large pool, private changing, family changing and child/youth facilities as priorities. There are mixed views on the gym and café.



Health: The main barrier to physical activity highlighted by 52% of all the survey respondents was a lack of easy access to facilities and inconvenience. 38% of survey respondents cited cost, followed by insufficient time (24%). The feedback included a wide range of suggestions for facilities and activities to address health and wellbeing.



Community: There was strong support for new opportunities to encourage wider community use of the new centre. Exercise on prescription, social prescribing community groups, sessions designed for older people and consideration of use by schools and young people were all highlighted within the suggestions from the survey and at stakeholder workshops.



Accessibility: 70 survey respondents and more workshop/meeting attendees highlighted the importance of accessibility. Comments covered wheelchair access, pool and changing access, non-slip surfaces, lifts, hoists moveable floors etc. Other comments covered noise issues including design for people with hearing impairment and quiet sessions design for sensory needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.



Environment: 80 survey respondents and more workshop/meeting attendees highlighted the importance of sustainability and minimising climate impact. Suggestions covered energy efficiency, solar power, heat pumps, green walls, recycling, natural planning and low impact methods to clean the water and centre, and healthy/local food provision.



Overall views: 82% of survey respondents were satisfied with the proposals and additional support was voiced by stakeholders. The feedback overall was very positive.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

The current facility does not provide facilities such as an accessible reception counter, and accessible toilet facilities for female customers and access throughout the building for wheelchair users is extremely limited. Doors are manually operated and heavy, and manoeuvrability around toilet provision is impeded. An 'AccessAble' report was recently completed and makes several observations on areas for improving access that will be used to inform the feasibility study and how improvements can be made development for the future provision of the facility.

There is also a need to ensure that provision (services, activities and facilities) is relevant and sustainable.

At the moment, residents and visitors to Whitchurch, and those who work there, are being disadvantaged in equality terms as follows:

- The swimming centre remains closed which reduces the opportunities for the Whitchurch community to be physically active which impacts on long term health and social issues.
- To access pay as you play swimming facilities Whitchurch residents will have to travel some distance, this can have a negative impact on the Council's climate change agenda and carbon reduction targets. Residents without access to a car are disadvantaged as public transport routes to other facilities mean lengthy travel times.
- Visits by Whitchurch residents to other facilities adds pressure to already busy centres.
- There is a negative impact from young children not being able to learn to swim which is an important life skill.
- Primary schools have a statutory duty to provide swimming lessons for children up to Key Stage 2 Level which they will struggle to fulfil.
- Does not provide any opportunity to impact positively on the Council's Organisational Principles.

Proceeding with the development of a new facility would mitigate these current negative impacts and promote social inclusion as well as physical and mental health and well-being.

It will be necessary to continue to work closely with the SC elected councillors for the area, as community leaders, as well as with all relevant stakeholders. This should include engagement with adults with special needs, and young people, as part of the broader public.

Associated ESHIAs

An initial ESHIA was attached to the Cabinet Report on 27th April. This can be found [here](#).

Other relevant ESHIAs include:

- A Vibrant Shropshire: Cultural Strategy 2021-2031
- Leisure Indoor Facilities Strategy 2020-2038
- Libraries Strategy 2018-2023
- Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy 2018-2028

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change considerations

In response to the consultation and engagement, the following will be incorporated into the development going forward:

- Protection of water vole habitat- a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site was undertaken in December 2021 as part of the initial feasibility study. Shropshire Council officers will continue to take appropriate expert advice and ensure more detailed surveys are undertaken during subsequent stages of the project, with the aim of proceeding sensitively to take full consideration of the need to safeguard the water voles inhabiting the brook.
- Environmental and carbon impacts will be addressed as an integral part of design and construction, as discussed below.

A sustainability strategy for the project was developed with the Council's Climate Change Team. The sustainability requirements for the project are set out below:

Carbon Offsetting or Mitigation and Climate Change Adaptation

Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and in 2020 adopted its Strategy for achieving net zero on carbon emissions by 2030. In line with this, this project will explore the potential for passive design principles and ensure that the Council can track the lifetime carbon performance of the building. This will include the provision of an audit trail, including quantitative performance measures, including Sport England Sustainability Target Metrics, that provide documentary evidence on a design stage by stage approach to minimising the carbon footprint of the facilities and climate change impact. The lifetime carbon performance study will be used to demonstrate how the design and materials used have taken account of the carbon reduction and climate change agenda and that the performance of the building is operating within the design Parameters. The design will incorporate Sport England design guidance on sustainable facilities. This will have a positive effect.

Energy and Fuel Consumption

Building to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating and a DEC A rating. Design to provide for a passive standard of operation at the facilities, the aim being to achieve as low a carbon footprint as possible at a reasonable cost over the life cycle of the project. This will include the provision of a report to compare the

sustainability performance of the existing facility with the new development with the aim that this demonstrates a net improvement. This will have a positive effect, with early investment in the structure of the building consistent with passivhaus principles helping to significantly reduce energy revenue costs over the lifetime of the building.

Renewable Energy Generation

The Design will take account of the opportunity to be serviced by air or ground water source heat pumps and on-site renewable energy generation such as Photo Voltaic Cells. This will have a positive effect.

The feasibility study contains initial information on how the above aspects will be developed as the design progresses. See sustainability section pages 26 – 27, carbon reduction section pages 35 – 36 and building efficiency section pages 38 - 39.

Carbon offsetting or mitigation

Opportunities to capture carbon as part of the landscaping for the redevelopment will be considered as the design progresses. This could include tree planting and other measures.

Climate change adaptation

The new development means that measures can be taken within the design process that will help ensure the building is adapted for more extreme weather and improve resilience to increased risks to the health and wellbeing of Shropshire's residents

Health and well being

There is a collective priority (Shropshire Council, Health and Wellbeing Board, Energize Active Partnership) and agenda to improve community health and well-being at all stages of life, and that physical activities are integral to this, with a focus on older and young people and families.

Redevelopment of a new larger facility, subject to agreement by Council, has the potential to offer an increased range of facilities which will:

- Encourage increased participation in physical activity
- Deliver increased health benefits (physical and mental) to more people as a result of taking part in physical activity
- Contribute to a more active environment at local level
- Be more cost-effective and efficient to operate through co location of appropriate other services
- Improve service provision and accessibility to individuals and groups in the community.

In response to the consultation and engagement, the following will be incorporated into the development going forward:

- The facility mix will be reviewed in light of the feedback to accommodate views where these are possible within the footprint of the site and the budget
- There is further potential for additional benefits for grouping such as those undergoing gender reassignment, and those for whom single sex swimming opportunities are necessary in order to ensure compatibility with and respect for the requirements of their faith. This may be maximised through attention to changing room configurations, and swim time opportunities.
- Once the facility is completed, sessions that encourage health and wellbeing can be encouraged, including Exercise on Prescription, school use and activities for young people
- The design will consider those people with mobility issues and other impairments, enabling key improvements compared to the existing facility

Economic and societal/ wider community

The Cabinet report has been written in the context of the Council's medium term financial strategy and on the assumption that the Council wishes to support the continuing availability of public swimming in Whitchurch for the benefit of the community, but that given financial constraints, it must be provided and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Regeneration and town centre investment, building on the Towns Fund framework to upgrade eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure; acquire and regenerate brownfield sites; invest in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction; and bring public services and safe, accessible community spaces into town and city centres.

Cultural investment maintaining, regenerating, or creatively repurposing existing cultural, creative, heritage and sporting assets, or creating new assets that serve those purposes including theatres, museums, galleries, production facilities, libraries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces), sports and athletics facilities, heritage buildings and sites, and assets that support the visitor economy

In response to the consultation and engagement, the following will be incorporated into the development going forward:

- Opportunities to improve active travel options will be considered

Shropshire Plan

The new Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre will help achieve the priorities set out in the Shropshire Plan 2022-25. These include:

Healthy people

- We'll tackle inequalities, including rural inequalities, and poverty in all its forms, providing early support and interventions that reduce risk and

enable children, young people, adults and families to achieve their full potential and enjoy life.

- We'll support Shropshire residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, choosing healthy lifestyles and preventing ill-health, reducing the need for long-term or hospital care.

Healthy Economy

- We'll develop Shropshire as a vibrant destination that attracts people to live in, work in, learn in and visit.
- We'll deliver excellent connectivity and infrastructure, and increasing access to social contact, employment, education, services and leisure opportunities.


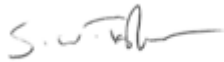
Healthy Environment

- We'll deliver the council's Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, promoting the means to tackle climate change and reduce our carbon footprint, including the adoption of low-carbon energy for our assets and for communities.

Healthy Organisation

- We will communicate clearly and transparently about what Shropshire Council delivers, signposting to the right places for services and support, and listen to what communities say about their place and what they need.
- We'll put our resources in the right place using accurate data, insights, and evidence to support the delivery of the organisation's priorities and balance the books.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Clare Featherstone</i>		18 th August 2022
<i>Amanda Cheeseman Public Health Development Officer</i>	<i>Amanda Cheeseman</i>	19 th August 2022
<i>Any external support** Steve Taylor</i>		19 th August 2022

Performance and Research Manager		
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**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Accountable officer's name</i> Clare Featherstone, Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism	<i>Clare Featherstone</i>	18 th August 2022

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

Built in 1972, Whitchurch Swimming Centre comprises a 25m x 5 lane pool and changing facilities.

The report prepared for Cabinet for 7th Sept 2022, for which this is the second screening ESHIA, provides feedback on the consultation and engagement, and sets out a business case for the new development.

The centre has been closed since March 2020, initially due to the national lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and further to that as a result of the structural problems identified whilst investigating the cause of a leak from the pool tank which include underpinning issues and deterioration in the fabric of the building.

Property Services Group has commissioned investigation work to identify the immediate, medium and, longer term maintenance requirements and costs associated with these to be able to re-open the existing facility and maintain it to an acceptable standard. Further structural investigation work has also taken place which has resulted in the structural engineer stating that due to structural issues repairs will not provide good value for money and will not provide a sustainable facility for the future.

Alongside the maintenance investigation works an outline feasibility study was commissioned to review the business case for investment in a new facility to be able to compare this option with carrying out the necessary repairs on the existing facility.

Full details of the feasibility study are contained in Appendix 3 to the Cabinet report for 7th Sept 2022.

Cabinet is to consider feedback from the consultation and engagement, and the business cases, as set out in the report, and is being recommended to:

- I. The business case for the project, as set out in the paper, be presented to Council with a recommendation that the development of the Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre be included in the capital programme with a budget of £12.1m.
- II. There is a recommendation that Council delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, to procure, negotiate and agree the terms of any agreements/contracts necessary for the delivery of the project including, but not limited to:
 - Agreeing the procurement strategy
 - Design Team procurement and appointment
 - Site Surveys and Investigations and relevant reports
 - Planning permissions
 - Tendering activities
 - Main contractor procurement and contract sign-off
 - Construction
 - Hand over

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All those who live in, work in or visit Whitchurch
Energize
Local MPs
Government Departments and Agencies
Schools
Shropshire Council Councillors for the area
Sport England
Whitchurch Town Council
Other stakeholders involved in leisure facility provision and library provision

This list is not exhaustive and will be added to

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Feasibility Study for Whitchurch Swimming Centre
Shropshire Council – A Vibrant Shropshire Cultural Strategy 2021 -2031
Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2020 – 2038
JSNA (Health and Well Being Board Shropshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan 2016-2021)
Energize Shropshire Telford and Wrekin - Actively Improving Lives 2022

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Consultation and Engagement

Community engagement has included:

- An initial key stakeholder exercise was carried out during March and April 2022.
- Emails and letters provided as part of the public consultation exercise.
- Survey responses gathered between 6th June and the 31st July 2022.
- Feedback from 7 engagement workshops and meetings (including Whitchurch Town Council, local businesses, schools and local sports and leisure groups).

The survey resulted in 274 responses and 12 written consultation responses were received. Important additional feedback was provided through workshops and meetings (all of which were written up to ensure key issues and feedback has been captured and will be considered in the next stage of work). Overall, the combination of these methods has provided a lot of information to help Shropshire Council better understand priority issues and common themes.

The full report is available as appendix 1, attached to the Cabinet Report, 7th Sept 2022.

Information about respondent characteristics was collected for the survey (allowing anonymous responses) but was not appropriate for the other forms of information gathering. Understanding the characteristics of survey respondents is helpful

and can determine whether feedback is representative of the wider community or limited to people who share similar characteristics or backgrounds. Core questions are asked (these are all optional). The results highlighted that 80% of survey respondents were members of the public and only 15 surveys were completed by people representing businesses, voluntary and community sector groups and organisations and other bodies.

Those who gave their group or organisation name included a range of local community groups and sports groups.

Overall, 70% of feedback was from females and the comments highlighted that not only did more women describe the needs of their children but they also had more concerns about changing facilities, privacy and opening times (some commented on school holidays and sessions after school). There were also comments relating to children learning to swim and the needs of women with babies/ children in prams and pushchairs.

The survey was responded to by people from a range of age groups but the largest group was 40-44 year olds (34%). There was also a very good response from 45– 59 year olds (31%) and 60-84 year olds (22%). Often the age group of survey respondents for Shropshire Council surveys is slightly older, on average, so this may again reflect the response from parents who wished to feedback for the whole family. All age groups were represented, and it was encouraging to see responses from younger people. 38 of the survey respondents chose not to answer the question.

The survey respondents were asked about their ethnic background and the results show that the response was not representative of a wide range of backgrounds. 92% were from White British backgrounds. However, 92% is representative of the community based on the last available data. 2011 census 94.7% were classed as White British.

There was a helpful comment included from someone conscious of the different needs people may have depending on religion and belief. The comment made suggested women only swimming sessions and highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive sessions

including hair products. This is something that could be explored further in future engagement as work progresses. Comments like this are helpful and sometimes more informal feedback methods or trial sessions may be planned to test demand once facilities are open.

Comments referred to the following:

Gender needs and changing facilities

- Single sex changing facilities
- Baby changing facilities in male changing rooms as well as in female
- Family change areas.
- Women only classes.

Survey respondents were also asked 'Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your daily activity?' 13% of the survey respondents answered 'yes'. Representation from people with different levels of mobility is particularly important within a consultation of this nature. Specific questions were included about accessibility but positively it was a theme that was included within earlier comments without prompting. The results suggested widespread community support for design that will meet a wide range of needs.

Comments referred to the following:

Physical and sensory needs

- Provisions for accessibility for sensory processing and over stimulation individuals
- Include all children in sensory sessions.
- Include space for children

- Different sections dependant on level of experience and fitness
- Consult local adults with learning disabilities directly

Within the comments there were survey respondents who also mentioned suggestions to meet the needs of dependents, relatives and friends.

Other equality comments included:

Parking arrangements and lockers should be easily usable by everyone. Cash can be an issue for younger people, cash-free for older people




Location of respondents





The survey respondents predominantly live within driving distance of Whitchurch. Of the 214 survey respondents who provided a postcode, 167 (78%) live in the SY13 postcode area




Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)				
<u>Disability</u> (please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)				
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			 Provided that changing room	

			configurations reflect the needs of this grouping	
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Pregnancy and Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			 Provided that changing room configurations reflect the needs of this grouping	
Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)			 Provided that changing room configurations and other priorities reflect the needs of this grouping	
Religion and belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)			 Provided that changing room configurations reflect the needs of this grouping	

<p>Sex (this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)</p>			 Provided that changing room configurations reflect the needs of this grouping	
<p>Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)</p>				
<p>Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)</p>				

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?		Improved fitness and weight maintenance; Regular physical		

<p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p> <p>.</p>		<p>activity; Regular social activity; Reduce risk of non-communicable diseases (obesity, diabetes (T2), CVD); Increased social interaction, social ties and networks; Reduce the risk of developing mental health illnesses; Therapeutic benefits for treating physical and mental illnesses including type 2 diabetes, depression, age related cognitive and physical decline</p>		
<p>Will the proposal indirectly impact an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p> <p>.</p>		<p>Healthy ageing and independence (mental and physical); Healthy childhood development: swimming is important skill to learn from a young age; Community involvement (volunteering)</p>		

		<p>Develop life skills of young people via interactions with peers, parents and coaches; Health equity: community leisure services are accessible for all population groups; Association with health promoting activities and choices; Young ages active play helps develop healthy habits, enjoyment of physical activity and physical literacy skills</p>		
<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p> <p>.</p>		<p>Safe play area for children and young people; Building healthy social and cultural norms; Healthy Communities and sense of belonging; Neighbourhood pride and improved aesthetics; Inclusivity of under-represented groups; Increased levels of</p>	<p>Medium positive: Reduction in loss of productivity from absenteeism or lower productivity due to ill health; Increases in skills and academic performance for young people; Employment and training opportunities</p>	

		perceived safety; Positive effect on educational outcomes, including psychological and cognitive benefits	Identifying talent and future athletes	
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p> <p>.</p>		Reduced burden on health care services and savings from improved mental and physical health; Free up health resources to deal with non-preventable problems;		

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

Climate Change Appraisal

Energy consumption. Retaining the existing facility will not have a positive impact on energy consumption. The development of a new facility will be significantly more energy efficient than the current pool due to the ability to introduce new technology and sustainability practices.

Renewable Energy Generation. There will be opportunities for renewable energy generation as part of the new building.

Carbon offsetting or mitigation. There may be an opportunity for tree planting within a landscaping scheme for a new facility

A commitment to quantifying carbon performance as part of any detailed design for a new facility will be included in a design brief should this option be decided upon.

Health and well being

The development of the Swimming and Fitness project in Whitchurch can support priorities around healthy people, healthy economy, and healthy environment. It also support the Shropshire Plan, as set out above.

It also supports the vision of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy:
“For Shropshire people to be healthy and fulfilled’ and key priorities and focus areas be added - improving population health, building strong and vibrant communities, reduce health inequalities, CYP, mental health, healthy weight and physical activity”

The Feasibility Study provides detailed evidence and insight on the opportunities and risks of developing a new swimming and fitness centre in Whitchurch. The study shows that a new development can be accommodated on the site and that the proposed facility mix improves the business case compared to the old facility. As Whitchurch has been without the provision of a swimming pool for a lengthy period it is recommended that the development be given high priority

Environmental impacts

A preliminary ecology survey has been carried out as part of the feasibility study. Further survey work will take place during the next design phases. Investigations to minimise the habitat for water voles will be a particular focus.

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority’s area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of

a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, an ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the Protected Characteristic groupings and our tenth category of Social Inclusion. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation e.g. young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive. Examples of this approach include the Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Economic Growth Strategy 2017-2021

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to thus visibly show we are taking what is called due regard of the needs of people in protected characteristic groupings

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Part Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts

on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people or households that we may describe as vulnerable.

Examples could be households on low incomes or people for whom there are safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, e.g., Age. Another specific vulnerable grouping is veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces, who face particular challenges with regard to access to Health, to Education, and to Housing.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.–You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for

policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for individual and for communities, and as such we are asking service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, much as they have been doing during 2020-2021, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities. A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a common-sense idea. It is a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and

increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and well being.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community?

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk more, and as there will be reductions in emission leading to better air quality.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and well being of the wider community.

An example of this could be: an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be: a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further information on the use of ESHIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

For further guidance on public health policy considerations: please contact Amanda Cheeseman Development Officer in Public Health, via telephone 01743 253164 or email amanda.cheeseman@shropshire.gov.uk

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council 22 September 2022

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

Establishment of a Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board

Responsible Officer Mark Barrow

e-mail: mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 258916

1. Synopsis

This report recommends the establishment of an Advisory Board to act as a 'critical friend' and to assist the implementation and review of the Council's Corporate Climate Strategy & Action Plan 2020.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The climate crisis represents a significant strategic risk to Shropshire and the delivery of Council and public services. Shropshire Council's adopted Climate Strategy sets out a strategy to achieve the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council by 2030. The associated corporate Action Plan identifies a range of projects which will allow the Council to lead by example' by reducing its own carbon footprint whilst also making a demonstrable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the wider county by supporting the development of strategic infrastructure and local action by businesses and communities.
- 2.2 The Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will discuss, suggest review and recommend projects and initiatives to improve the carbon performance and climate resilience of Council assets and services, as well as supporting wider community and business efforts to decarbonise Shropshire. The Board will ensure that a structured and corporate-led approach supports the successful delivery of the adopted climate strategy, striking an appropriate balance between managing climate risks and financial costs, exploring positive opportunities for growth and operational service delivery. The Board will also review co-ordination with and support for climate and carbon reduction projects and initiatives by local communities and businesses.
- 2.3 The Board will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Ian Nellins and its membership will be drawn from representatives of each of the political groups on Shropshire Council and Council officers, together with representatives of the community-led Shropshire

Climate Action Partnership, the Shropshire Association of Local Councils and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. Attendance from other relevant organisations may be requested, subject to the views of the Portfolio Holder.

- 2.4 As part of its informal inception meeting (30 August) the Board agreed a themed forward programme of meetings, to allow it to focus on the different elements of this very broad agenda. The Board also felt that it was important to share and receive information from stakeholders who are undertaking climate change projects and work.

3 Recommendations

That members approve the establishment and Terms of Reference of a Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board

REPORT

4 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 The climate crisis is a serious threat to the lives of millions of people both globally nationally and locally. The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation measures to build resilience is now urgent and essential to prevent the worst outcomes of the climate crisis. Even if we are successful in mitigating the worst effects, we will continue to experience more pronounced and frequent episodes of extreme weather effects. Within 20 years there is a global threat to food supply chains and economic systems. The much greater frequency of extreme weather events will significantly increase insurance risks and disrupt financial markets. In addition to financial impacts, Climate Change threatens continued access to adequate energy, water, food and housing which are all essential human necessities which affect the health, wellbeing and future resilience of our communities.
- 4.2 The climate crisis therefore represents a significant strategic risk to Shropshire and the delivery of Council and public services. This risk is most likely to manifest itself in terms of financial impacts (e.g. operating costs, impacts on the Shropshire economy) and impacts on the health and well-being of staff and residents as service users.
- 4.3 Taking active steps through the adoption of a corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan and supporting wider community efforts enables the Council to make a demonstrable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the wider county, as well as

'leading by example' by reducing its own carbon footprint. Through its regulatory role and procurement decisions, Shropshire Council is in a position to make a strong positive contribution to help the wider Shropshire community make a positive transition to a low carbon future.

- 4.4 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been carried out which indicates that the adopted corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan is likely to have a positive effect on all groups in society and is intended to do so, given its objective of addressing Shropshire Council's contribution to the climate emergency.
- 4.5 The Corporate Climate Strategy is expected to generate a positive impact in equality terms and in terms of health and well-being, for:
- Council staff and service users, and partner agency staff;
 - Children and young people and vulnerable households across Shropshire including families, older people and people on low incomes who are likely to be most susceptible to adverse impacts from extreme weather events;
 - People living in rural households who are off the energy grid;
- 4.6 Individual Council services will need to engage with their staff and service users to explore the need for, and implications of, service changes which may result from the adoption of carbon reduction measures. The Council will need to keep abreast of national good practice in order to maximise opportunities for equality and social inclusion within the overall policy context of addressing the climate emergency.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Measures to reduce Shropshire Council's carbon footprint and adapt service delivery to address the impacts of extreme weather events may help to reduce future financial risk as well as delivering on our corporate commitment to the environment and our communities. Improving Shropshire Council's carbon performance and resilience may also require investment in energy efficiency, low carbon technologies, renewable energy generation, and other new ways of working.
- 5.2 In considering the financial implications of climate change and climate change mitigation measures, the Council will need to consider relevant costs and benefits over longer timeframes.
- 5.3 Many measures to reduce dependence on greenhouse gasses also offer opportunities to both generate a financial return and to provide community leadership which highlights the 'clean growth' economic potential of new technologies and adaptation measures in the Shropshire context.

6 Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 **Energy and fuel consumption:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of actions to improve energy efficiency and carbon performance across Council services;
- 6.2 **Renewable energy generation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to drive the delivery of additional generation of renewable energy from a range of technologies on Council land and buildings;
- 6.3 **Carbon offsetting or mitigation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of efforts to capture and store carbon and to mitigate the effects of climate change on biodiversity through the management of Council land;
- 6.4 **Climate Change adaptation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of efforts to ensure that Council services and assets are resilient in the face of the challenges of more extreme weather events.

7 Background

- 7.1 The Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will discuss, suggest review and recommend projects and initiatives to improve the carbon performance and climate resilience of Council assets and services, as well as supporting wider community and business efforts to decarbonise Shropshire. The Board will ensure that a structured and corporate-led approach supports the successful delivery of the adopted climate strategy, striking an appropriate balance between managing climate risks and financial costs, exploring positive opportunities for growth and operational service delivery. The Board will also review co-ordination with and support for climate and carbon reduction projects and initiatives by local communities and businesses.
- 7.2 The Board will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Ian Nellins and its membership will be drawn from representatives of each of the political groups on Shropshire Council, together with representatives of the community-led Shropshire Climate Action partnership, the Shropshire Association of Local Councils and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. The involvement of external stakeholders will help co-ordinate action across different sectors and allow the Council to benefit from the expertise and experience which these stakeholders can provide.
- 7.3 It is expected that the Board will agree a themed forward programme of meetings, to allow it to focus on the different elements of this very broad agenda.
- 7.4 Progress with Climate Change projects and performance was reported to Council on January 2022 as part of the Corporate Carbon Performance Monitoring Report 2021.

7.5 The Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will have no decision-making powers and will work within the governance arrangements of the Council so as to inform and promote the Climate Change agenda. Its full Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Whilst the transition to net-zero performance will not be easy or quick to achieve, a positive start has been made to identifying the scale of the challenge and putting in place some of the mechanisms and actions which will be required to deliver it. The establishment of an Advisory Board will help to share the Council's actions and interventions with a wider audience as well as providing the Portfolio Holder and the Climate Task Force with a valuable additional source of advice and guidance.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

- Cabinet 19 January 2022 – Corporate Carbon Performance Monitoring Report 2021

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Ian Nellins

Local Member

All

Appendices

1. Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board Terms of Reference

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Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Stakeholder Board Terms of Reference

Date of Issue: 2 August 2022

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Ian Nellins

Strategic Links: Corporate Climate Strategy & Action Plan 2020

*Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2022/23+**

Commercial Strategy 2020/21-2023/24

MTFS Financial Strategy 2021/22-2025/26

*Economic Growth Strategy 2022/23+**

(ICS) Joint 'Green Plan' 2022

*In draft or Strategy review underway**

Stakeholder Board Sponsor: Mark Barrow

Version No: 0.2

1. Aims of the Programme Board

- 1.1 The Board has been set up to act as a 'critical friend' to assist the Portfolio Holder and the Climate Task Force which was established in 2019 to prepare and implement the Council's response to the challenge of climate change. The Board will engage with internal and external stakeholders and seek feedback to assist the implementation and review of the Council's Corporate Climate Strategy & Action Plan 2020. The adopted Climate Strategy sets out a strategy to achieve the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council by 2030. The associated corporate Action Plan identifies a range of projects which will allow the Council to lead by example' by reducing its own carbon footprint whilst also making a demonstrable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the wider county by supporting the development of strategic infrastructure and local action by businesses and communities.
- 1.2 The Board will discuss, suggest and review projects and initiatives to improve the carbon performance and climate resilience of Council assets and services, as well as supporting wider community and business efforts to decarbonise Shropshire. The Board will ensure that a structured and corporate-led approach supports the successful delivery of the adopted climate strategy, striking an appropriate balance between managing climate risks and financial costs, exploring positive opportunities for growth and operational service delivery.
- 1.3 The Board will also review co-ordination with and support for climate and carbon reduction projects and initiatives by local communities and businesses.

2. Board Membership

- 2.1 Board members are fully aware of the responsibilities of the role as outlined in the Terms of Reference and have given an undertaking to carry them out. Members agree to prioritise their attendance at board meetings.

Board Membership	Name & Job Title of Role Holder
Chair: Portfolio Holder: Climate Change, Natural Assets and The Green Economy	Cllr Ian Nellins
Green Party	Cllr Julian Dean
Independent Group	Cllr Ed Towers
Labour Group	Cllr Rosemary Dartnell
Lib Dem Group	Cllr David Vasmer
Assistant Director Commercial Services	Tim Smith
Climate Change Task Force Leader	Adrian Cooper
Risk & Business Continuity Team Leader	Jane Cooper
Commissioning Development & Procurement Manager	Nigel Denton
Strategic Finance Business Partner (Capital)	Michaela Probert
Shropshire Climate Action Partnership	Chris Deaves

Board Membership	Name & Job Title of Role Holder
Shropshire Association of Local Councils	Allan Wilson
Shropshire Chamber of Trade	Nominated representative
Project Board Secretariat	Jo Hardie/PA team

- 2.2 Members recognise the specialist nature of the subject matter by ensuring that those attending have a deep understanding of the relevant issues by maintaining appropriate representation at Board meetings.
- 3. Frequency of Meetings**
- 3.1 Frequency of future meetings: initially Quarterly, to be reviewed by the Board as required.
- 3.2 Suggested Time to be allowed: 90 minutes
- 4. Decision Making Process**
- 4.1 The Climate Change & Carbon Reduction will have no status as a separate entity and will work within the schemes of delegation and the accountability arrangements of the Council and inform the governance process and decision-making powers held by Shropshire Council's Cabinet, Shropshire Council (Full Council) and Audit Committee.
- 4.2 It is expected that the plan to establish the Climate & Carbon Stakeholder Board will be to formalise the authority through a short paper to Council in September
- 5. Normal Business of Meetings**
- 5.1 Agenda template:
- i. Progress Monitoring Report – Review of corporate carbon performance
 - ii. Progress Monitoring Report – Review of current projects and initiatives
 - iii. Progress Monitoring Report – Support for and co-ordination with community & business-led projects and initiatives
 - iv. Review of Risk Register
 - v. Consideration/Approval of any new policy/project areas
 - vi. Action Log
- 5.2 Reports/papers to be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of the meetings.
- 5.3 A forward programme of meetings, each of which will have a main theme or issue for discussion is expected to be determined at the inception meeting of the new Board.

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council
22 September 2022

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2022-23

Responsible Officer

e-mail: Tanya Miles

Tel: 252811

Fax

1. Synopsis

The annual Youth Justice Plan sets out how the service is structured and resourced and outlines the 2022/23 improvement action plan for the service addressing the priorities agreed by the management board.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire councils. The basic plan preparation is undertaken by the West Mercia Youth Justice Service Management Board according to the deadlines and content requirements set by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB). For 2022/23, marking a departure from previous years, the YJB guidance was prescriptive in terms of the contents and format of the plan, and the plan had to be submitted on a given template. The Youth Justice Plan is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2. The annual Youth Justice Plan sets out how the service is structured and resourced and outlines the 2022/23 improvement action plan for the service addressing the priorities agreed by the management board. A short review of 2021/22 and commentary on the service's performance against the national youth justice indicators is also provided along with key information on children in the youth justice system in West Mercia. The key priorities for the period 2022/23 are grouped under:
 - A. People Themes
 - B. Practice Themes

- C. Partnership Themes
 - D. Governance, Leadership and Management Themes
- 2.3. More detail on these is provided in Section 7 of this report. Actions addressing each of the actions are also included in Section 13 of the Annual Youth Justice Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. **That the Youth Justice Plan as attached at Appendix A be approved**

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The principal aim of the Youth Justice System is the prevention of offending and re-offending by children and young people. The Youth Justice Plan includes an action plan to address the significant risks identified to future service delivery and improvement.
- 4.2. The plan will support the Council in its overall duty to promote equality. In particular, the plan makes proposals to improve the outcomes of children and young people who are in conflict with the law, by ensuring their individual needs are assessed whilst assisting them in accessing services that meet their needs.
- 4.3. A proposal for a process and timeline for a public consultation on the plan was considered by the management board but given the prescriptive nature of the plan this year and that consultation is not a requirement, the board resolved to only consult with key elected members from each local authority and the staff of the service. As consultation on the plan is not a requirement, there are no risks associated with this. Any risks associated with service delivery are identified within the plan.
- 4.4. The content of the plan has been informed by joint workshop of the management board and service leadership team and the staff and elected members consultation.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. These are covered by the existing budgetary contribution, which is sufficient to deliver the Youth Justice Plan.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 We will work with our partners in the West Mercia Youth Justice Service through the Youth Justice Service Management Board to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This will be managed and reported through the governance arrangements set out in the plan.

7. Background

- 7.1. The key priorities set out within the Youth Justice Plan are:
- A. People Themes
 - Supporting Staff Development, Wellbeing and Morale
 - B. Practice Themes
 - Embedding Child First in Practice
 - Improving the Resettlement Offer
 - Improving the intervention and risk plans for our service users
 - Strengthening our restorative approaches
 - C. Partnership Themes
 - Strengthening opportunities for emotional and mental health for service users
 - Improving our work with partner agencies and ensuring the service is embedded across the four areas
 - D. Governance, Leadership and Management Themes
 - Responding to the recommendations and findings of service inspection
 - Improving quality and consistency of practice across the service
 - Supporting, valuing and addressing diversity
 - Hearing the voice of the child

- 7.2. Actions addressing each of the priorities are also included in the delivery plan, in section 13 of the plan.
- 7.3. For comparison purposes, the indicator is expressed as the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system per 100,000 youth population. This rate for the period October 20 to September 21 was 73 for Shropshire. The Shropshire rate is lower than both the rates for West Mercia, 98 and for England 156.
- 7.4. The Police and Youth Justice Service implemented a revised joint decision-making process for out of court disposals during 2020, which brought more young people into scope to benefit from receiving informal interventions to address their risks and needs.
- 7.5. The second indicator is about the use of custody, which is measured as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population. The use of custody performance for 2021 for Shropshire was 0.10, which is similar to both the West Mercia rate of 0.09, and the national rate of 0.11.
- 7.6. The third indicator is re-offending. There are two measures which both measure re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed that young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency rate, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends. The second measure is the proportion (%) of the cohort who re-offended. Due to the way the Ministry of Justice measure this indicator there is a delay in the results being published. The most recent data available for the preparation of the plan was for the cohort identified in 2019/20, whose re-offending was tracked for 12-month period until March 2021. The frequency measure for Shropshire for this period was 3.53 offences per re-offender which is less than the England rate of 3.65. The proportion of the cohort re-offending was 22.4%, which is significantly better than the England performance of 34.2%

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

None

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Kirstie Hurst-Knight

Local Member

All Members

Appendices

Appendix A – WMYJS Youth Justice Plan 2022-23

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WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN



2022/23



Preface

Youth Justice Plan Guidance

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the Act) youth offending partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan which is submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State. The purpose of the plan is to outline how statutory youth justice services, as defined in the Act, are structured, funded and delivered in the area.

All statutory youth justice services within West Mercia are delivered directly or commissioned by West Mercia Youth Justice Service.

This plan outlines the vision and priorities for West Mercia Youth Justice Service and outlines key actions to be undertaken during 2022/23.

The directions of the Secretary of State for the Youth Justice Plan (YJP) are delegated to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) who published the guidance and requirements for the 2022/23 YJP in mid-March 2022.

Marking a departure from previous years, where general guidance for the content of plan was provided, leaving the format, style and other content of the plan to be determined at the local level, for 2022/23 the format for the plan is prescribed, the contents under each subheading in the plan template are also prescribed and plan submitted on a given template.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has been completed on the Youth Justice Delivery Plan for 22/23. The EIA has not identified any significant impacts of the action plan on children, staff or victims who are from the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, however the assessment has identified that there is a potential impact for children from BAME backgrounds as nationally children from BAME backgrounds are over represented in the youth justice system. Although in West Mercia this is not significant with children from BAME backgrounds accounting for 7% of the offending population, and 6% of the general population, this requires regular monitoring, and greater analysis. There is an action in the youth justice plan to provide more regular and detailed reporting on groups of service users over represented in the youth justice system

Youth Justice Plan – West Mercia

Service	West Mercia Youth Justice Service
Service Manager/ Lead	Keith Barham
Chair of YJS Board	Jo Britton

Contents

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1. Introduction, vision and strategy

Forward by the Chair of the Management Board

West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS) is partnership between the Local Authorities, National Probation Service, West Mercia Police, NHS organisations across West Mercia and the Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. The service is accountable to the WMYJS Management Board, comprised of senior officers from each partner agency. The service is hosted, on behalf of the Local Authorities and the partnership by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

The previous year has been continued to be difficult due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed on the service as a result but from our local monitoring the board have been pleased to note that there has been no deterioration of performance in terms of frequency of contact with children and timeliness of key processes. Despite the capacity issues caused by the remote working arrangements, the service has still been able to progress most of the activity set out in last year's plan, those activities that have been delayed have been rolled forward into this year's plan.

In January 2022 the partnership was inspected by HMI Probation, and we welcomed this opportunity for external scrutiny to assist us on our improvement journey. The report will be published in May, and a comprehensive improvement plan will be put in place to respond to the recommendations and findings of the inspection. This will form the basis of our service and partnership improvement plans over the next two years.

The priorities and improvement plans outlined in this Youth Justice Plan are the result of a partnership planning workshop involving the management board members and the leadership team. The plan was approved, subject to amendments, by the Youth Justice Service Management Board on 4th May 2022.

Jo Britton
Chair – West Mercia Youth Justice Management Board
Executive Director of Children Services, Telford and Wrekin Council

Executive Summary

The previous year has been challenging due to the continuing restrictions on working arrangements due to Covid-19. This has resulted in three continuing risks to service delivery; increased caseloads, additional demands on operational managers and the effect the Covid-19 working arrangements have had on staff.

Despite this, service performance against the three national outcome indicators continues to be good. The performance in relation to the rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence is 0.09 custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population, and this rate is below the national rate of 0.11. The proportion of young people re-offending is 26.7% which is significantly lower the national rate at 34.2%. The first time entrant (FTE) rate for the annual period ending September 21 is at 98 FTE per 100,000 compared to the national rate of 156.

Although there is not a significant over representation of BAME children in the overall offending population in West Mercia, we recognise that we need to better understand all of those groups of children that may be over represented in the youth justice cohort, and to improve our practice in meeting the diverse needs of children in youth justice system.

The YJB vision is of a child first youth justice system, and during 22/23 the service will continue work to further understand and embed a child first approach in practice.

Responding to the findings of the HMI Probation inspection of the service will be one of the main priorities for 22/23, and will include work to improve the delivery and oversight of practice and service governance and leadership.

The youth justice partnership have identified the following priorities and key actions for 2022/23

People Themes:

- Supporting Staff Development, Wellbeing and Morale
 - *Training and development plan*
 - *Response to the staff survey*
 - *Staff recognition*
 - *Team development*

Practice Themes:

- Embedding Child First in Practice
 - *Child First Champions*
 - *Development of a child first policy*
 - *Awareness briefings*
- Improving the Resettlement Offer
 - *Training*
 - *Policy review/deep dive*
 - *Appointment of a board champion*
- Improving the intervention and risk plans for our service users
 - *Training*
 - *Revising QA framework*
- Strengthening our restorative approaches
 - *Responding to the restorative health check*

Partnership Themes:

- Strengthening opportunities for emotional and mental health for service users
 - *Complete health needs and provision review*
- Improving our work with partner agencies and ensuring the service is embedded across the four areas
 - *Agree the transition protocol*

Governance, Leadership and Management Themes:

- Responding to the recommendations and findings of service inspection
 - *Development and implementation of an inspection improvement plan*
- Improving quality and consistency of practice across the service
 - *Revising QA framework*
 - *Scrutiny process for out of court disposals*
- Supporting, valuing and addressing diversity
 - *Training*
 - *Regular and detailed reporting*
 - *Amendments to the OoCD assessment tool*
- Hearing the voice of the child
 - *Process for the management board to understand the lived experience of children in the YJS*

Vision

The West Mercia Youth Justice Partnership have agreed a vision statement and underpinning principles for the service following a joint workshop with the service’s management team and a staff consultation.

Vision:

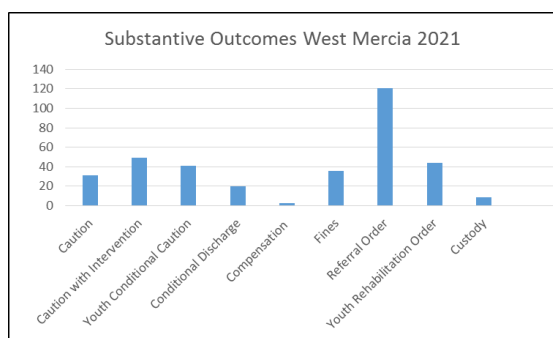
Together, preventing offending and improving lives

Underlying Principles:

- *Ensure that we secure best practice, innovation and outstanding quality in all we do*
- *Reducing demand by preventing offending and effectively managing the risks posed by those who have offended*
- *Offer the best value for money by combining resources*
- *Work with victims and communities to repair harm from offending*
- *Recognising the capacity of young people to grow and develop with the right support*
- *Listen to children’s and victim’s opinions and use them to shape what we do*
- *Building resilience within families and local communities*
- *Recognise the important role families play in preventing children from getting involved in crime*
- *Grow and sustain a positive and stable workforce*

2. Local context

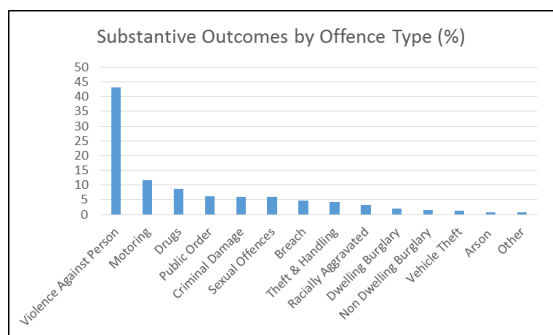
The West Mercia Youth Justice Service operates across the four Local Authority areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire, covering a youth population of approximately 115,388 (10 to 17 year olds). The area is large and predominantly rural covering 2,868 square miles.



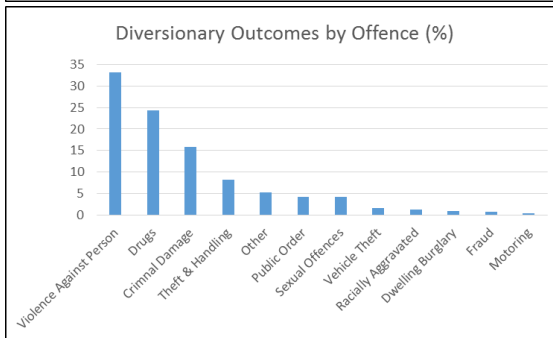
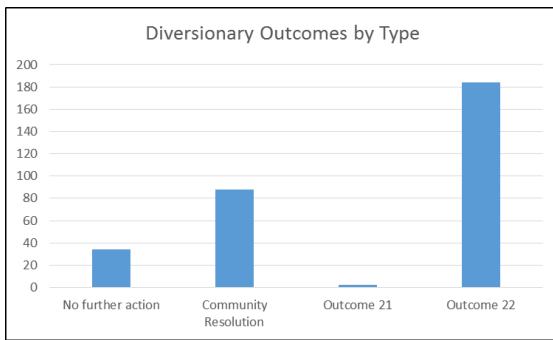
During 2021 255 substantive outcomes (cautions or convictions) were made on children in West Mercia, 96 (38%) of these were cautions, 84 (33%) referral orders, 25 (10%) youth rehabilitation orders and 9 (4%) custodial sentences.

Males accounted for 88% of these outcomes and females 11%.

The three main offence types were violence against the person (48%), motoring offences (11%), and drug offences (9%) followed by public order offences, criminal damage and sexual offences each accounting for 6% of outcomes.



The majority children receiving a substantive outcome were aged between 15 and 17 (82%), with 16 and 17 year olds accounting for 63% of the outcomes. There no children under the age of 12 receiving a substantive outcome and 12 year olds only accounted for 1.6% of the outcomes.



A further 308 children who had offended were diverted from substantive outcomes through the joint decision making arrangements for out of court disposals. Of these 308, 184 (60%) received an Outcome 22, an informal disposal where the child participates in an intervention, and as a result the offence is recorded as a no further action, 88 (29%) a community resolution, 34 (11%) received no further action and 2 received an Outcome 21, which is similar to an Outcome 22, but is for specific offences.

Males accounted for 80% of the out of court outcomes and females for 20%.

The four main offence types were violence against the person (33%), drug offences (24%), criminal damage (16%) and theft and handling (8%).

The majority of young people receiving a diversionary outcome were aged between 15 and 17 (62%), with 13 and 14 years accounting for 28% of the outcomes, 31 (10%) of the children were aged under 14, with 12 aged 11 and 3 aged 10.

3. Child First

The YJB's vision of a child first youth justice system is one where services:

- Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children
- Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society
- Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers
- Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system

Even though activities can be identified which would demonstrate the service has begun to adopt a Child First approach, for example the implementation of the joint decision arrangements for Out of Court Disposals and where appropriate the diversion of children from formal justice system disposals, there is still work to do to before we could claim that a child first approach has been fully embedded in practice. The service also needs to further develop trauma informed practice.

A service conference had been planned for January 2022, where one of the main keynote presentations was to have been made by a sector expert on the child first approach and this was to have been used as the springboard for further development of the service's child first strategy. Unfortunately the conference had to be postponed until June 2022 due to the Covid-19 situation at the time.

In addition to the conference planned for June 2022, the service will be appointing child first champions in 2022/23 who will have the opportunity to undertake the Child First Effective Practice Award, and will assist in further developing the service's child first approach.

4. Voice of the child

One method the service uses to elicit the view of children is the self-assessment, which opens the discussion for the child's contribution to the assessment and planning process. These help identify the needs, strengths, interventions and exit strategies for the child.

The service invites specific feedback from children through an end of order questionnaire (EoOQ). These are reviewed by the case worker when completed and if they contain content that contains imminent concerns, for example the young person not feeling safe, then this is dealt with straight away, informing the management of risk.

The EoOQs are collated at local level each quarter and compiled into an area report. The report is shared with the area team for feedback / suggestions. All area reports and worker feedback suggestions are then discussed in the service's Participation Group quarterly meetings. The Participation Group Lead reports the outcomes of the feedback into the leadership team, highlighting local and service wide issues and trends, and where negative or good practice has been referenced.

In addition to the EoOQ the service has a child friendly comments, compliments and complaints process called "Tell Us". Every child is advised of the process, and given a business card with relevant information about "Tell Us" on it. Responses to "Tell Us" can be made via a form, a dedicated phone number, a dedicated email address and via service's website. Responses received through "Tell Us" are fed through to the participation group, or if they are a complaint handled under the services complaints procedure.

Some tangible examples of how feedback from children has been used to make changes are:-

- Redecoration/refurbishment of reception areas and interview rooms in some locations based on feedback provided
- Changes in intervention programmes and sourcing of new intervention programmes
- Following feedback from children after their experiences of having interventions delivered virtually during the Covid-19 lockdown, a move to a hybrid model of contact for some children
- Changes to the out of court disposal assessment template following feedback from children about their views being fed into the decision making process

The service website is currently being developed to have a secure area that children can access where they will be able to access resources and also submit feedback via the EoOQ.

Children will be providing feedback into the service's staff conference through a video.

Pre-Covid children have attended the management board to talk about their experiences and views on the service and the board have received reports on children's feedback, but the board recognise that they and the service need to better hear the voice of the child and understand their lived experience.

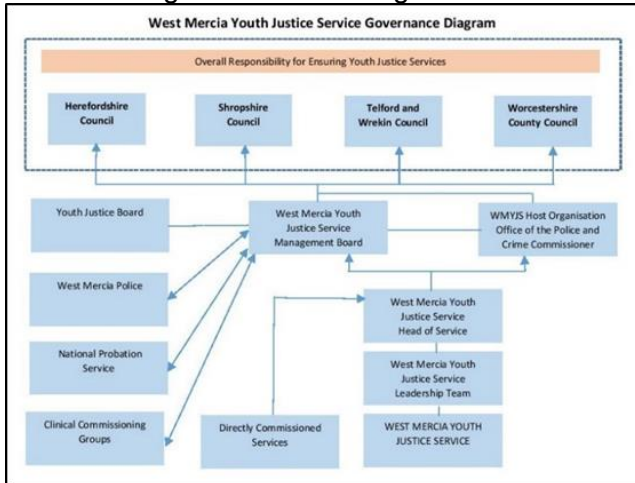
The service and board additionally need to better understand why some groups of children are overrepresented in the YJS, their lived experience, work to reduce the over representation, and ensure there is a sufficient focus on diversity and meeting individual needs including working with protected characteristics, identity, neurodiversity and inclusion.

5. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

Governance

Since 2016, following a review of the hosting arrangements for the Youth Justice Service, the service has been hosted and managed on behalf of the Local Authorities and the WMYJS partnership by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The Youth Justice Service is accountable to the WMYJS Management Board and the Management Board is accountable to each of

the Local Authorities for the commissioning and delivery of youth justice services. The diagram below outlines the governance arrangements of West Mercia Youth Justice Service.



All of the statutory agencies (Local Authorities, Police, Probation and Clinical Commissioning Groups) are represented on the Management Board and the full membership, at 1st April 2022 is provided in Appendix 1 of this plan. The Board is currently chaired by the Director of Children Services, Telford and Wrekin Council. The Board meets every two months and monitors the performance and quality of the service through regular reporting.

The Management Board has considered a number of thematic deep dives and practice presentations. The purpose of which is to identify any issues, in particular with regards to provision of services and multi-agency working, and agree actions for the Management Board or individual board members in order to improve services for children in the youth justice system.

The Head of Service is day to day managed by the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, but has a dual accountability to both the Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Chair of the Management Board.

Partnerships

Management Board representatives understand their dual role when sitting on other partnerships and governance boards, and where appropriate will advocate on behalf of children in the youth justice system or the work of the youth justice service in those boards.

WMYJS is a member of relevant groups under the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in each of the four local authority areas, the children and young peoples' strategic partnerships or equivalent, where these exist, and the early help partnerships. The service is also represented on West Mercia Police's children and young people strategic board.

WMYJS is represented on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships at the unitary or top tier authority level. WMYJS is an active member of the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, the West Mercia Crime Reduction Board, the PCCs Victim and Witness Board and the MAPPA Strategic Management Board.

At an operational level the service is represented on the Channel Panels established as part of the Prevent Strategy, the Serious and Organised Crime Joint Agency Groups and the Child Exploitation Operational Groups. Depending on the local area the service team managers attend other multi-agency meetings according to the needs of the local area, for example Corporate Parenting Boards, SEND meetings, MASH partnership groups and reducing re-offending groups.

Structure

A structural diagram of the service is provided at Appendix 2 of this plan.

The West Mercia Youth Justice Service comprises four multi-agency service delivery teams, aligned to the Local Authority areas, which deliver the majority of services. The reparation service and volunteer services are co-ordinated centrally across the whole service, as are the finance and data and information functions.

Each area based team comprises the following types of posts:

- Team Manager
- Senior Practitioner
- Youth Justice Officers and Assistant Youth Justice Officers
- Education, Training and Employment Officer
- Substance Misuse Officer
- Victim Liaison Officer
- Police Officer (secondment)
- Mental Health Worker (secondment)

The current partnership contribution from health is under review, with an aim to ensure the provision meets the needs of children worked with by the Youth Justice Service and to provide consistency of provision across the area.

Under a national allocation formula the Probation Service contribute two posts to the service, a Probation Officer and a Probation Service Officer. The Probation Officer is located in the Worcestershire Team, but deals with the transition arrangements for any child transferring from the Youth Justice Service to Probation across Worcestershire and Herefordshire. The Probation Service Officer post, currently vacant, will work across the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin teams.

WMYJS is compliant with the minimum staffing requirements outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. There are five registered Social Workers within the staffing group.

6. Resources and services

The Youth Offending Service has a complex budget structure comprising of partner agency cash, seconded staff and the Youth Justice (YOT) Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The table below outlines the provisional contributions for 2022/23, as some contributions were still to be confirmed at the point this youth justice plan was agreed.

Agency	Staffing Costs – Secondees (£)	Payments in kind (£)	Other Delegated Funds (3)	Total
Local Authorities			1,179,999	1,179,999
Police Service	247,503		63,000	310,503
National Probation Service	65,580		5,000	70,580
Health	135,106		36,894	172,000
Police and Crime Commissioner			180,293	180,293
YJB – Youth Justice Grant			1,208,232	1,208,232
Other (movement from reserves)			59,642	59,642
Total	448,189		2,733,060	3,181,249

The YJB Youth Justice (YOT) Grant is provided for the provision of youth justice services with an aim of achieving the following outcomes; reducing re-offending, reducing first time entrants, reducing the use of custody, effective public protection and effective safeguarding. The grant forms part of the overall pooled partnership budget for WMYJS.

The grant, partner contributions and available resources will be used to deliver youth justice services across West Mercia, to implement our improvement plan against the priorities identified for 22/23, to improve or sustain the current performance against the three national outcome measures, improve compliance with National Standards and aid the services recovery and transformation from Covid-19.

The outline draft budget for 2022/23 is provided below; the expenditure against the Youth Justice Grant is included in this budget.

Category	Budget (£)
Employee Costs	2,189,910
Other Employee Costs	30,000
Premises	182,105
Supplies and Services	33,415
ICT	97,118
Third Party Payments	127,452
Transport	73,060
TOTAL	2,733,060

The Youth Justice Service only has one outsourced service, the provision of Appropriate Adults for young people in Police custody. The service is provided by a local voluntary sector organisation YSS. Quarterly contract monitoring and compliance meetings are held with YSS.

7. Progress on previous plan

The following progress has been made against the actions outlined in the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22;

- A deep dive report on resettlement was considered by the management board, and this has led to the service and board agreeing a new resettlement policy which became operational in January 2022. Training for practitioners on the policy and on resettlement practice is in progress.
- A revised quality assurance tool for assessment and planning was put in place.
- Revised processes for gaining feedback from the courts were implemented.
- The emotional and mental health action plan from the deep dive report was completed.
- Initiated, with partners, a review of the health needs and provision.
- Staff consultations on Covid-19 recovery were undertaken.
- A staff survey was conducted. This had led to the establishment of a staff engagement group to put in place an improvement plan from the findings of the survey, and to progress three outstanding actions from the 21/22 plan of putting in place a process for staff to contribute to leadership discussions, developing a staff recognition scheme and an internal communications plan.
- Provided restorative approaches training for key groups of staff.
- Commissioned a restorative justice health check from an independent sector expert organisation.
- Established a group to review and develop intervention programmes.
- Publicised the service vision and underlying principles within the service through the development of a “vision unpacked” briefing paper.
- The revision of the transitions protocol is in progress.

The following actions have been delayed;

- The staff conference, was originally planned for January 2022, but has been postponed until June due to the Covid-19 situation in January. The conference was to have been the springboard for the work planned to raise awareness of the child first approach to practice (see section 3 of this plan).
- The work on a remand strategy has been delayed due to capacity issues.
- The team development training was originally scheduled for March 2022, but due to high levels of leave has been postponed until June 2022.
- Possible solutions for providing access for children’s social care to the services client information system are still being investigated.

Outstanding actions from 21/22 have been carried forward into the priorities and action plan for 22/23 as outlined in section 13 of this plan.

8. Performance and priorities

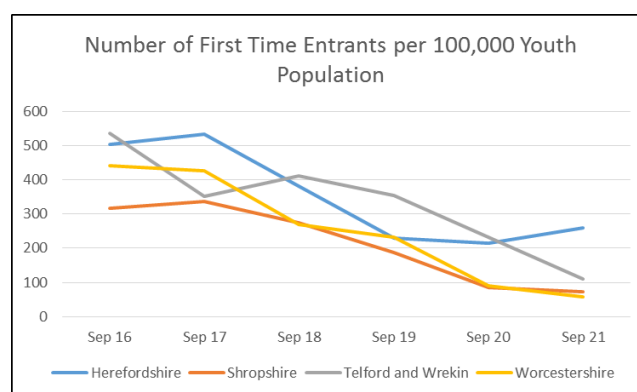
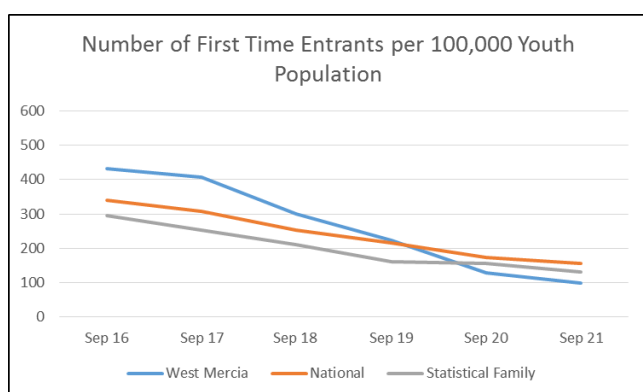
(i) National Outcome Measures

There are three national outcome measures, first time entrants to the youth justice system, use of custody and reoffending.

First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTE)

The FTE indicator is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 youth population for comparison purposes. It should be noted that in two areas with relatively small youth populations in West Mercia, Herefordshire and Telford and Wrekin, small changes in the actual number of first time entrants have a disproportionate effect on the rate per 100,000 when compared to areas with larger youth populations.

The most recent data for FTEs is for the year October 2020 to September 2021.



First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 Youth Population						
Period	Sep 16	Sep 17	Sep 18	Sep 19	Sep 20	Sep 21
West Mercia	433	408	300	222	128	98
National	341	309	253	216	174	156
Statistical Family	296	253	211	160	156	132
Herefordshire	503	534	380	228	214	259
Shropshire	317	337	273	188	86	73
Telford and Wrekin	535	351	412	355	232	111
Worcestershire	441	426	270	232	91	59

FTEs have been reducing since 2009, and since 2017 the West Mercia rate has been reducing more rapidly than the national and statistical neighbour rates, and in 2020, for the first time, the West Mercia rate was lower than both the national and statistical family rates. One area within West Mercia, Herefordshire, has a higher rate than the national rate.

Although the Herefordshire rate increased in 2021 compared to 2020, the overall trend since 2016 is still a reduction and the increase in the rate relates to an additional 12 children becoming FTEs in 2021 compared to 2020.

Part of the reason for the higher rate in Herefordshire is likely to be a combination of the proportion of children coming to the notice of system, 0.68% of the youth population compared to the other areas (which vary between 0.4% and 0.5% of the population) combined with the lowest overall rate of diversion from formal disposals at 38%, compared to other areas which range between 53% and

77%. It is planned to undertake analysis on the reasons for the higher rate of FTEs in Herefordshire and the inconsistencies of diversion rates between the areas.

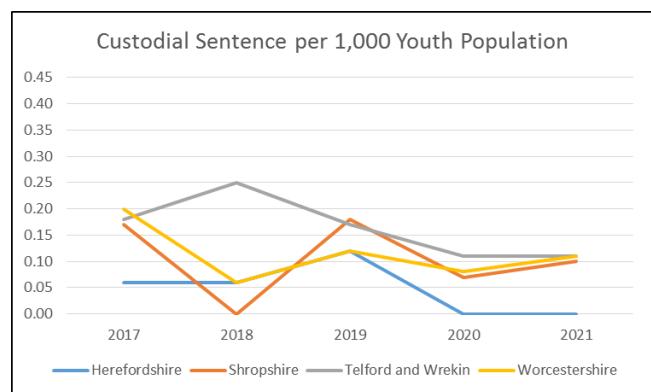
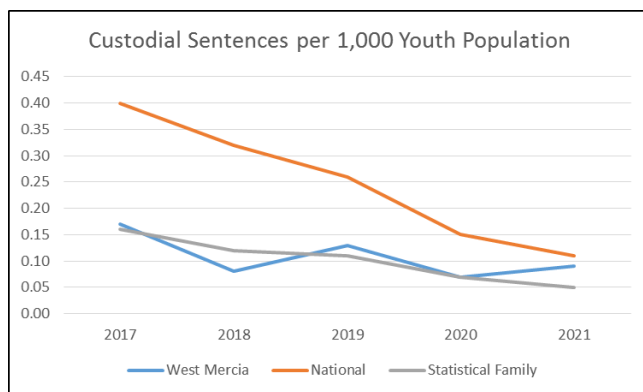
Nationally the FTE rates range from 50 to 440 (median 155), placing West Mercia in the top quartile of the performance range.

The reduction in the FTE rates since 2019 have been contributed to by the implementation of a revised joint decision process for out of court disposals across the four local authority areas between June 2019 and March 2020. The new arrangements bring more children into scope for having their behaviour dealt with through informal out of court disposal interventions rather than formal criminal justice system sanctions.

In the year October 2020 to September 2021 392 cases were considered by the joint decision making arrangements, and 263 of these, 67%, were diverted from formal justice system outcomes.

Use of Custody

The national outcome indicator for use of custody is the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population. The most recent data for this indicator is for the calendar year 2021.



Number of Custodial Sentences per 1,000 Youth Population					
Period	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
West Mercia	0.17	0.08	0.13	0.07	0.09
National	0.40	0.32	0.26	0.15	0.11
Statistical Family	0.16	0.12	0.11	0.07	0.05
Herefordshire	0.06	0.06	0.12	0.00	0.00
Shropshire	0.17	0.00	0.18	0.07	0.10
Telford and Wrekin	0.18	0.25	0.17	0.11	0.11
Worcestershire	0.20	0.06	0.12	0.08	0.11

West Mercia is a low use of custody area, in 2021 the rate of custodial sentences was 0.09, representing 11 custodial sentences across West Mercia. This is a slight increase on the previous year where the rate was 0.07 and the number of sentences 8. The current rate compares favourably to the national rate of 0.11 and is slightly higher than the statistical neighbour group rate of 0.05. As the graphs of the West Mercia areas demonstrate the rates are volatile over time due to the very small numbers of custodial sentences made in each area. In 2021 there were no custodial sentences made on Herefordshire children, 3 on Shropshire Children, 2 on Telford and Wrekin Children and 6 on Worcestershire children.

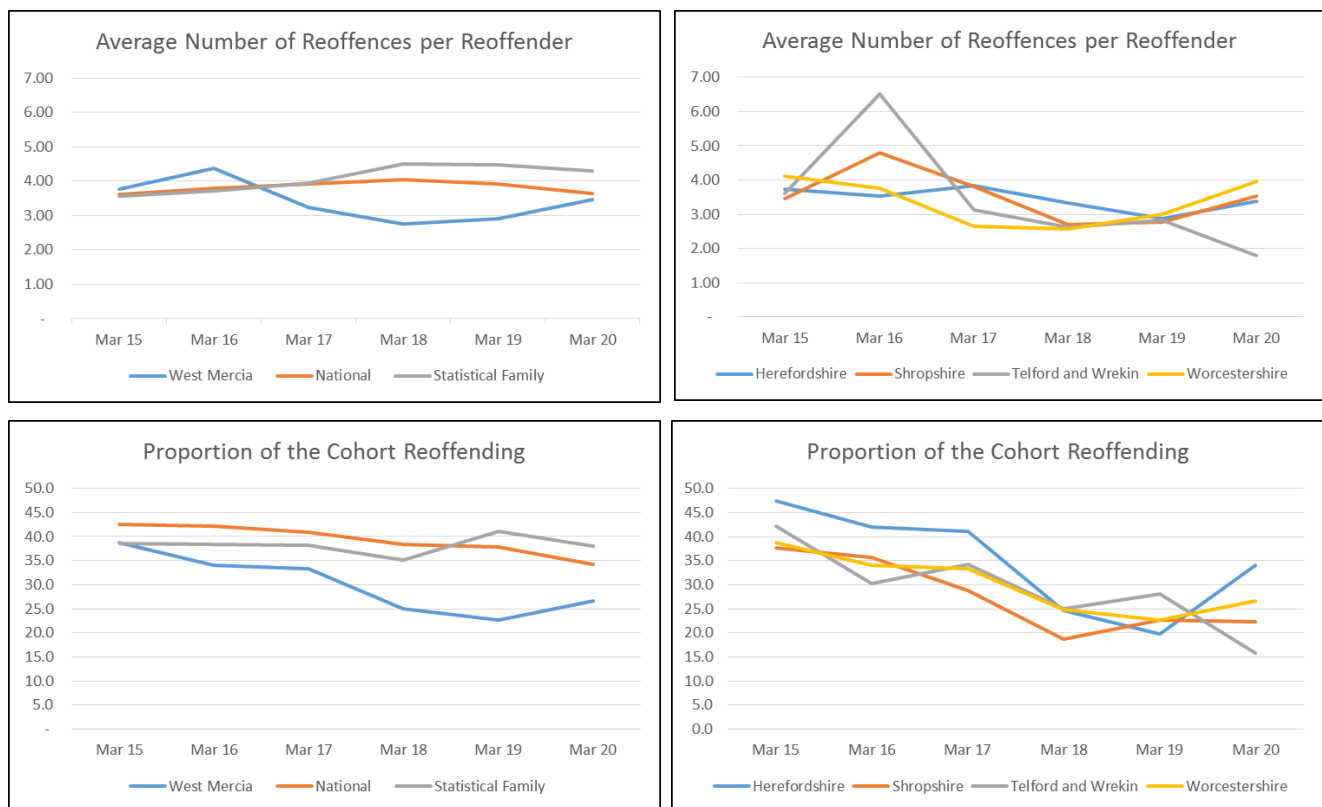
The youth justice service seeks to avoid custodial sentences through the offer of the community based alternative of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance. This programme is a combination of an intensive, up to 25 hours a week, intervention programme and an electronically monitored curfew.

In 2021 the service developed a new resettlement policy in relation to the service provided to children transitioning from custody back into the community, the policy became operational in 2022, and staff training in resettlement is ongoing.

Reoffending

There are two measures used for the reoffending indicator both for the same cohort of children, which is all children receiving a substantive youth justice disposal (caution or conviction) within a 12 month period. The members of the cohort are tracked for twelve months, even if they become an adult during that period, for any proven reoffending. The two measures are the average number of reoffences per reoffender and the proportion (percentage) of the cohort who reoffend.

The most recent data is for the cohort identified in the period April 2019 to March 2020.



Average Number of Reoffences per Reoffender						
Period	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20
West Mercia	3.78	4.38	3.23	2.75	2.90	3.46
National	3.61	3.79	3.92	4.05	3.91	3.65
Statistical Family	3.57	3.71	3.95	4.51	4.48	4.29
Herefordshire	3.72	3.54	3.83	3.33	2.88	3.39
Shropshire	3.46	4.80	3.81	2.70	2.77	3.53
Telford and Wrekin	3.60	6.53	3.12	2.63	2.81	1.79
Worcestershire	4.11	3.77	2.65	2.56	3.00	3.96

Proportion of the Cohort Reoffending (%)						
Period	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20
West Mercia	38.7	34.0	33.4	24.9	22.6	26.7
National	42.6	42.2	40.9	38.4	37.8	34.2
Statistical Family	38.5	38.4	38.2	35.2	41.1	38.1
Herefordshire	47.5	41.9	41.0	24.6	19.8	34.0
Shropshire	37.7	35.7	28.9	18.7	22.7	22.4
Telford and Wrekin	42.2	30.3	34.2	25.0	28.1	15.7
Worcestershire	38.7	34.0	33.4	24.9	22.6	26.7

The frequency rate (average number of reoffences per reoffender) for West Mercia for the April 19 to March 20 cohort, 3.46 is similar but slightly better than the national rate, 3.65 and better than the statistical neighbour rate of 4.29. The frequency rate in West Mercia has been reducing since the March 2015 cohort. The rates for April 19 to March 20 across all four local authority areas in West Mercia are lower than the statistical neighbour rate and three areas, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, have rates lower than the national rate. The graph outlining the rates for the four West Mercia areas demonstrate how volatile this particular measure is over time. Part of the reason for this is that the actual number of reoffenders are quite small, so a few individuals who are persistently reoffending within these cohorts significantly affect the overall average of reoffences per reoffender.

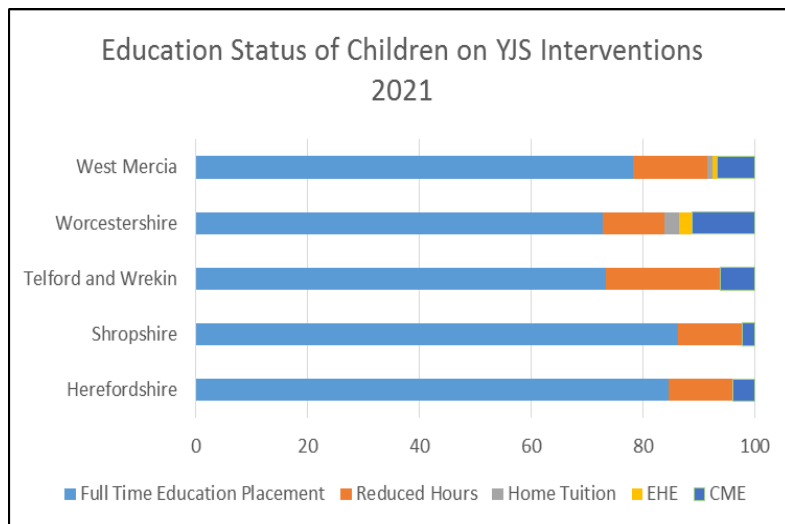
The proportion of children reoffending in West Mercia, 26.7%, is significantly lower than both England at 34.2% and the statistical family group at 38.1%. The proportion of children reoffending in all four local authority areas are also lower than the national and statistical neighbour group; Herefordshire at 34.0%, Shropshire at 22.4%, Telford and Wrekin at 15.7% and Worcestershire at 26.7%.

Promoting desistance from offending is the aim of the service’s work with children, interventions delivered to individual children are based on a comprehensive assessment of risks and needs using the national AssetPlus assessment and planning framework. Training has been provided to staff during 2021/22 on harmful sexual behaviour, suicide prevention programmes and restorative approaches.

(ii) Education

The service has 2.5 full time equivalent Education, Training and Employment Officers. These officers work to secure suitable ETE placements for children on intervention programmes with the service.

In 2021 the Youth Justice Service worked with 226 children of school age, and 207 (91%) were in an education placement, however 30 of these cases were on reduced timetables, meaning the number receiving a full time education was 177 (78%), 15 children (7%) were children missing education (CME).



The proportion receiving a full time education in each local authority area is as follows;

Herefordshire	85%
Shropshire	86%
Telford and Wrekin	74%
Worcestershire	73%

There were 22 children (9%) subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan (Herefordshire 9, Shropshire 2, Telford and Wrekin 1 and Worcestershire 10), 2 children (0.9%) were being electively home educated and 2 (0.9%) in receipt of home tuition.

Thirty of the children were receiving education in an alternative provision. Of the children not in full time education (those in alternative provision, home tuition and CME) 17% are looked after children and 8.5% are from BAME backgrounds.

Data from the 166 open cases in February 2022, showed that 35 (21%) of the cases were identified as having special education needs or disabilities (SEND). A deep dive report on children with SEND in the youth justice system in West Mercia has been prepared which will be considered by the service’s management board in 2022/23. The report has identified areas for improvement in terms of

developing clear partnership arrangements for children with SEND in the youth justice system, improving consistency of practice across the West Mercia area and ensuring the needs of children with SEND are better addressed in planning. Although three of the four areas in West Mercia have previously been awarded the Youth Justice SEND quality mark, these are now due for re-designation. Improvement work in terms of meeting the needs of children with SEND in the youth justice system will be incorporated in the work planned under the supporting, valuing and addressing diversity priority of this plan.

The management board receives regular reports on the ETE status of children open to the service and advised of any barriers or challenges to securing appropriate placements. There are meetings in each area between the Youth Justice Service and the Education Services, to cross reference information and ensure plans are in place to secure provision when necessary.

(iii) Over Represented Children

Within West Mercia the proportion of Black and minority ethnic (BAME) children in the offending population at 7% is slightly higher, but not statistically significant, when compared to the local BAME population at 6%. Black children, however, are overrepresented in the BAME offending group compared to the BAME general population at a 4 percentage point difference, although this is lower than the national difference of 7 percentage points. Overall there needs to be caution interpreting the ethnicity data, as the numbers are so low in the offending cohort, for example there were only 12 Black children in the overall cohort of 297.

During the period October 2020 – September 2021 there were 391 cases referred to the joint decision arrangements for Out of Court Disposals, 23 of whom were BAME children (6%). This is the same proportion of BAME children in the general population. Diversion from formal justice disposals through the use of informal interventions (Outcome 22) was 52% for both the White cohort and the BAME cohort. There was a slight difference in the overall diversion rate, including straight no further action decisions of 2 percentage points, where White children were diverted in 67% of cases compared with 65% for BAME children, however due to the low number of BAME children in the cohort (23), one child accounts for 4 percentage points. It is planned to scrutinise the decisions made for the 23 BAME children through a case audit.

During the same period as above, there were 8 custodial sentences, only one of these was on a child from a BAME background, for a murder committed outside of the West Mercia area. This young person had relocated to the West Mercia from the area in which the offence was committed.

Looked after children accounted for 23% of children receiving a substantive outcome, a caution or conviction, in 2021. Through the joint decision making arrangements for out of court disposals, where at all possible, looked after children are diverted from formal justice system disposals. In the period Oct 20 to Sep 21, 57% of the looked after children referred to the joint decision making arrangements were diverted from formal justice system disposals. There is a draft protocol in place to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of looked after children.

The management board and service will be taking steps in 22/23 and 23/24 to better understand why some groups of children are over represented in the youth justice system.

(iv) Diversion

All children committing and admitting an offence are referred to the Joint Decision Making Panel (JDMP) for out of court disposals, unless they are excluded either due to the seriousness of the offence or other factors identified in the joint West Mercia Police and Youth Justice Service protocol and guidelines. One of the aims of the JDMP is to ensure that where possible those children who have committed low level offences are diverted away from the justice system and receive support for their desistance through informal disposals.

The JDMPs consist of representatives from the Police, Youth Justice Service, Community Panel Members and Social Care, and make the decisions based on an assessment of child conducted by a Youth Justice Officer and information from the victim.

The informal disposals, which may be delivered or part delivered by other agencies, are mainly delivered by the Youth Justice Service and are tailored to address the needs and risks identified in the assessment of the child.

In the period Oct 20 to Sep 21, there were 401 cases referred to the JDMPs across West Mercia and 272 (68%) of these cases were diverted from the formal justice system disposals through the use of no further action, Community Resolution or Outcome 22, 103 (26%) of cases received a Caution or Conditional Caution.

Data on the throughput and decisions of the JDMPs by gender, offence type and ethnicity is collated quarterly and provided to management board and West Mercia Police's children and young people's board.

There is an out of court scrutiny panel for all ages, at which a sample of youth cases are considered. The panel is chaired by the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and has representatives from the magistrates, CPS, Police and Youth Justice.

(v) Serious violence and exploitation

Serious violent crime is not a significant issue in West Mercia. Using the YJB definition of violence against the person offences, robbery and drug offences which have a gravity score of 5 or above, there were 27 serious violence offences involving 25 children in West Mercia in 2021 representing 5% of all offences. This compares to 38 offences in 2020, involving 30 children and representing 7% of all offences. The children involved in serious violence offences in 2021 represent 2.3 per 10,000 youth population, this compares to rates of 5.1 for the West Midlands region and 3.9 nationally.

We recognise, however, that this may become an emerging issue associated with serious organised crime and with the increase in knife and offensive weapon offences with a gravity factor less than 5 from 32 in 2020 to 41 in 2021. As a result the service has established a serious youth violence task and finish group to plan the service's response to serious violent crime. The service already has weapon crime programmes and is a contributing partner in West Mercia Police's knife crime prevention programme, Steer Clear.

In 2021 of 427 interventions, there was child exploitation identified in 12, participation in county lines in 17, 134 assessed as being at risk of exploitation and 17 where there was either suspected gang involvement or risk of gang involvement. The service will, through the pre-court joint decision making arrangements, seek to avoid the criminalisation of young people criminally exploited or on the edges of these activities.

The service works as part of the child exploitation strategy and operational groups and the Serious Organised Crime Joint Agency Groups (SOCJAG) across the area to address the issues of county lines type activity, organised crime group and gang activities. Exploitation is a priority across all four local authority areas and the service contributes to the partnership work in each of local authority areas, including Get Safe Strategic and Operational Groups in Worcestershire and the Child Exploitation Strategic and Operational Groups in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire.

(vi) Constructive Resettlement and the Use of Custody

The service and management board agreed a new resettlement policy, which is based on the principles of constructive resettlement at the end of 2021. Staff training on the policy and resettlement practice is currently in progress. There is still work to progress at a strategic level to ensure that the barriers to the successful delivery of the policy are addressed, in particular timely

identification of suitable accommodation for release and a review of the policy and practice has been planned for nine months after the policy became operational.

The use of custodial sentences is reported on in the section on the national outcome measures above.

During 2021 there were 15 remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA) involving 12 individual children, four of these remands were due to children jointly charged with a murder.

Of the twelve children made subject to YDA, one was Vietnamese, one mixed heritage, one White other and 10 White British, children from BAME groups therefore account for 16% of children remanded. Six of the remands are still active, in three cases the child has either been made subject to bail or a community order, but re-remanded on breach, two have resulted in Youth Rehabilitation Orders on sentence and two in custodial sentences.

One of the actions being carried forward from 21/22 is the development of a new remand strategy and updating the remand protocols that are in place with each local authority.

(vii) Restorative Justice and Victims

The service has a Victim Policy and RJ Strategy, both of these are currently under review as part of the commissioned restorative approaches health check being undertaken by an independent sector expert organisation. The health check final report is expected early in 22/23. The service has 2.5 FTE Victim Liaison Officers (VLO), and victim contact for referrals to the joint decision arrangements for out of court disposals are undertaken by the service’s Police Officers.

In the period April 2021 to September 2021 228 victims were contacted and invited to participate in a restorative process, of those 76 (33.3%) accepted, the majority opting for a letter of apology (33) or indirect reparation (32).

	Number of Victims Contacted	Number accepting a restorative outcome	Type of Restorative Outcome			
			Letter of Apology	Direct Reparation	Indirect Reparation	Face to Face Meeting
Herefordshire	52	21	9	2	9	1
Shropshire	37	15	5	0	9	1
Telford	54	12	7	2	2	1
Worcestershire	85	28	12	3	12	1
West Mercia	228	76	33	7	32	4

In all cases where there is no victim, children are expected to take part in generic victim awareness work as part of their intervention to understand the impact of offending on themselves and others, in most cases there is also an expectation they will undertake community reparation, but this is decided on a case by case basis.

Victims are invited to complete a victim satisfaction form following the end of the intervention. This is currently being revised to better capture impact, and this will be informed by the outcome of the restorative health check. There is additionally a separate feedback form for victims involved in restorative justice conferences.

There were 48 victim feedback forms received in the past 12 months, of those 46 (96%) were positive about the support they received from the service’s VLOs or Police Officers. The two where there was negative feedback were cases which were considered by the joint decision arrangements for out of court disposals, and the negative feedback was only in relation to the disposal outcome.

Priorities

The priorities for 2022/23 have been determined through a joint workshop of the management board and the management team.

People Themes:

- Supporting Staff Development, Wellbeing and Morale

Two years of alternative working arrangements due to covid-19 has had an effect on staff morale. Team development training planned in 21/22 had to be postponed and is now taking place in first quarter of 22/23. A staff survey was conducted in 21/22, and a group established to put together an action plan from the responses from the survey, this work is carried forward into 22/23. The service will have a learning and development plan for 22/23.

Practice Themes:

- Embedding Child First in Practice

Work needs to continue to ensure that the child first approach is understood fully and reflected in practice, this also includes the promotion and development of trauma informed practice.

- Improving the Resettlement Offer

Although a new resettlement policy and guidance was put in place in at the end of 21/22 the service needs to ensure that the new guidance and approach becomes embedded in practice and that the pathways to support services to ensure successful resettlement are in place.

- Improving the intervention and risk plans for our service users

The service has identified risk and desistance planning as an area requiring improvement and work needs to be under taken to strengthen this area of work

- Strengthening our restorative approaches

A restorative health check was commissioned in 21/22, and will report in early in 22/23. The service will need to respond to the outcome of the health check, putting in place an improvement plan if required.

Partnership Themes:

- Strengthening opportunities for emotional and mental health for service users

Although there was good progress against this priority in 2021/22 with the completion of the EMH action plan, the review of health needs and provision of health services to the youth justice service is still in progress and requires completion during 2022/23.

- Improving our work with partner agencies and ensuring the service is embedded across the four areas

The service need to ensure that it is improving joint work with other agencies, in particular with the Probation Service in terms of the transition of children from the youth to adult system and also our work with Children's Social Care.

Governance, Leadership and Management Themes

- Responding to the recommendations and findings of service inspection

The partnership was subject to an inspection in January 2022 and the report will be published in May 2022. The partnership will need to respond to the recommendations and findings of the inspection plan through the development and implementation of an inspection improvement plan.

- Improving quality and consistency of practice across the service

The service needs to improve and develop the quality assurance of practice and promote consistency of practice in key areas of practice, including out of court disposal decision making.

- Supporting, valuing and addressing diversity

The service and board need to understand better the backgrounds of children who are over represented in the youth justice system and ensure that the diverse needs of service users are identified in assessment and adequately taken account of in their plans and the delivery of interventions.

- Hearing the voice of child

The service has feedback processes in place, but the board recognise that they and the service need to better hear the voice of the child, understand their lived experience, and to use this information to inform service planning.

Underpinning all the priorities will be a cross cutting theme of ensuring that that we deliver the best possible service within the resources available. Service capacity and structure will be considered as part of the governance review which will form part of the inspection improvement plan.

9. National standards

A new set of National Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System were published in 2019, these marked a departure from the previous set of standards in that they were not process standards, and were more qualitative in nature, and they contained, for the first time, standards for youth justice service management boards (strategic standards) in addition to standards relating to service delivery (operational standards).

The standards “define the minimum expectation for all agencies that provide statutory services to ensure good outcomes for children in the youth justice system” and “are intended to guide strategic and operational services’ understanding of *what* is expected, but do not prescribe how services should be designed and delivered.”

There are five standards; NS1 – Out of Court Disposals, NS2 – At Court, NS3 – In the Community, NS4 – In Secure and NS5 – Transitions and Resettlement. A self-assessment was undertaken against the standards and submitted to the Youth Justice Board in May 2020. The self-assessment identified improvements were required for the service and management board to fully comply with the five strategic standards and for two of the operational standards for NS1 and NS2.

An improvement plan was submitted to the Youth Justice Board with the self-assessment. The improvement plan has 49 actions and 39 (80%) of the actions have been completed. In 22/23 it is intended to review the outstanding actions including:-

NS	Planned Action
1	Refresher training on desistance
2	Revised remand protocol and strategy
2	Development of a feedback survey for magistrates
2	Development of a disproportionality/diversity strategy
3	Review if and how management board members are involved in auditing
3	Assurance reporting on completion of orders
3	Monitoring involvement of other partner involvement in orders
5	Ensure that Probation Personnel are in place

Any thematic case audits will continue to assess compliance with relevant national standards. It is expected that a further National Standards self-assessment will be required either late 22/23 or in 23/24.

10. Challenges, risks and issues

The following risks to service delivery and development have been identified for 2022/23:-

1. Effective case management is compromised due to increased case loads

Some teams have continued to experience an increase in open cases, partly due to the full implementation of the revised joint decision making model for Out of Court Disposals during 2020.

The short term mitigation has been to increase capacity in those teams affected through the use of temporary increases in hours for staff on less than full time contracts and through some cross service working.

This was identified as a risk for 21/22, and at that time it was thought this may be a temporary issue, but the trend has continued throughout 21/22, so needs to be further monitored, and if the changes in the balance of cases between the service teams is sustained, a reconfiguration of the distribution of resources between the teams will be required in the longer term.

2. Limited management capacity affecting the ability of the management team to pursue development work in a timely manner and potentially affect their wellbeing

The role of the team manager is extensive and was further impacted by the working arrangements that have been in place for most of the previous two years due to Covid-19. There have been mitigations in place during this period of time, including a reduction in report requirements by the management board. The board will be considering the management capacity issues during 2022/23.

3. Effective case management compromised due to lack of consistency and quality of management oversight

Although the report for the HMI Probation inspection on the service is yet to be published, feedback provided by inspectors indicated that over sight of practice was not making enough difference to the quality of practice. There is an action in the delivery plan in section 13 of this plan to revise the quality assurance framework.

4. Insufficient capacity to implement the inspection improvement plan

In addition to reviewing the sufficiency of management resource in the service (see point 3 above), there may be a need for a temporary increase in capacity in short term to implement the inspection improvement plan.

5. Significant proportion of other Local Authorities Children managed by the service

There are a significant number of independent sector children homes within the West Mercia area particularly in Shropshire and Herefordshire. The placement of children with criminal court orders by other authorities in these homes is outside of the control and influence of the service, therefore the service is unable to manage the volume of this additional work load demand. A connected risk, is children being placed within the area who are either particularly at risk of exploitation, or who have profile of committing very serious offences.

11. Service improvement plan

The improvement/action plan against the service priorities for 2022/23 is in section 13 of this Youth Justice Plan, "Looking Forward".

In some respects the service improvement plan for the next twelve to twenty four months will be in response the HMI Probation recommendations and findings from their inspection undertaken in January, which will be published in May 2022.

Key improvements will be required in the quality of assessment and planning, in particular responding to diverse needs, the management oversight of practice and work with other agencies to manage risks to from children in the youth justice system.

The operation of the out of disposal decision making arrangement and policy needs to be reviewed and cross service scrutiny put in place to ensure consistency in approach and outcomes for children between the four panels operating across West Mercia.

The service also needs to ensure that the recently implemented resettlement policy is embedded in practice, makes a difference for children transitioning from custody to the community and that barriers are removed to accessing provision required for successful resettlement, in particular timely identification of suitable accommodation for release.

There are actions in the delivery plan in section 13 of this plan to address these issues, and these are likely to be built on within the inspection improvement plan.

Links to the YJB Strategic Plan

The vision identified in the YJB strategic plan for 2021 – 24 is for a child first youth justice system which sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. We will continue to work during 22/23 to ensure we understand the child first approach and that it is translated into practice, and move towards further embedding a trauma informed approach to practice.

We have actions planned to improve the quality of practice in respect to identifying and responding to diverse needs and also in understanding better and responding to those groups of children who are over represented in the youth justice system.

Responses to Inspections and Learning Reviews

The Management Board consider the findings from HMI Probation thematic reports, and additionally consider the findings and recommendations of any other relevant reports from inspectorates, although the board has yet to consider the thematic reports published by HMI Probation in the latter part of 21/22.

In 22/23 the board will be agreeing and implementing an improvement plan in respect to the findings of partnership's inspection by HMI Probation.

In 2021/22 the board considered one learning review due to a serious incident where a child on a community order was a victim of a non-fatal stabbing. The learning review identified practice developments in respect of safety planning, defensible decision making, roles and responsibilities for care taking cases and seeking MAPPA advice. The board agreed an action plan to address the issues identified and a briefing document on the learning review was circulated to all staff.

Workforce Development

In 21/22 the service commissioned, initially for a two year period, an online training company to provide the safeguarding training for the service, and has made specific training courses from this provider mandatory, the mandatory courses being specific to each job role. Examples of the training courses that are mandatory for managers and practitioners are; Child Neglect, Assessing Mental Capacity, Deprivations of Liberty, Child Protection, Safeguarding and Child Exploitation.

Other training in 21/22 included Brook Traffic Light (Harmful sexual behaviour), AIM3 Assessment and Intervention (harmful sexual behaviour), Storm (suicide prevention), Restorative Approaches, Restorative Management and Supervision and Resettlement.

The service continues to use the Youth Justice Qualification Framework awards, allowing those Assistant Youth Justice Officers who do not hold a relevant qualification to undertake a Foundation Degree in Youth Justice as part the service's progression pathway.

The training plan for 22/23 is still in development, however there currently courses in calendar for resettlement and gang culture, knife crime, NRM and professional curiosity. Team development training for each team in the service, including the management team has also been commissioned and will take place in quarters 1 and 2 of the year.

Management Board Development

In 2022/23 the Management Board intends to undertake a full review of the governance structure, membership and operation and will ensure that YJB guidance "YJ Service Governance and Leadership", informs that process. Any development needs will be identified and addressed as part of the review.

12. Evidence-based practice and innovation

During 2021/22 the service has provided training to practitioners in three evidence based interventions; AIM3 assessment and intervention programme for young people demonstrating harmful behaviour, Strom suicide prevention programme and the Respect Young People's Programme for children who are abusive or violent to their parents.

In 21/22 the service developed a victim awareness programme for children, which is accredited by the OCN.

The service has established a programme development group which is looking to review current practice, develop new programmes and promote innovation.

13. Looking forward


The delivery plan against the priorities identified in this Youth Justice Plan is outlined below.

Priority	Planned Activity	Owner
Supporting Staff Development, Wellbeing and Morale	22/23 Training and Development Plan	Learning & Development Group
	Response to the staff survey results	TM(SW)/Staff Engagement Group
	Internal communication Strategy	
	Staff Recognition Scheme	HoS
Embedding Child First in Practice	Team development training	HoS
	Appointment of child first champions in each team	SP (S)
	Development of CF policy/practice guidance	SP (S)
Improving the Resettlement Offer	CF awareness briefings	SP (S)
	Staff training	TM (W)
	Policy review/deep dive report	TM (W)
Improving the intervention and risk plans for our service users	Appointment of management board lead	TM (W)
	Staff training on planning	TM (S)
	Revising of QA framework to strengthen management oversight of planning	TM (SW)
Strengthening our restorative approaches	Put in place plan to address finding of the restorative health check	VDO/SP (W)/ TM (SW)
Strengthening opportunities for emotional and mental health for service users	Complete the health needs and health provision to the Youth Justice Service review	TM (S)/TM (W)
Improving our work with partner agencies	Agree the revised transitions protocol	TM (SW)
Improving quality and consistency of practice across the service	Revision of the quality assurance framework	TM (SW)
	Put in place cross service scrutiny of OoCD decision making	TM (H)
Supporting, valuing and addressing diversity	Staff training – working with diversity	TM (TW)
	More regular and detailed reporting on groups of service users over represented in the YJ system	TM (H)
	Amending OoCD assessment form to include diversity issues	TM (TW)
Hearing the voice of child	Put in place process for management board to hear the voice and lived experience of children in the YJ system	SP (W)
Responding to the recommendations and findings of service inspection	Development and implementation of an inspection improvement plan	HOS

Action Owners:

HoS	Head of Service
TW (H)	Team Manager, Herefordshire
TW (S)	Team Manager, Shropshire
TW (TW)	Team Manager, Telford and Wrekin
TW (SW)	Team Manager – Service Wide
SP (W)	Senior Practitioner (Worcestershire – JP)
SP (S)	Senior Practitioner (Shropshire – JS)
VDO	Volunteer Development Officer

14. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	Jo Britton
Signature	
Date	30 th June 2022

15. Appendix 1 - Management Board

The Management Board membership as at 1st April 2022

Board Member	Title	Representing
Jo Britton	Executive Director of Children Services	Telford and Wrekin Council
Tina Russell	Chief Executive WCF and Director of Children Services	Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Children First
Daryl Freeman	Corporate Director for Children and Young People	Herefordshire Council
Tanya Miles	Executive Director of People	Shropshire Council
Nigel Webster	Superintendent	West Mercia Police
Jackie Stevenson	Head of Probation - Worcestershire	Probation Service
George Branch	Head of Probation – Herefordshire, Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin	Probation Service
Jade Brooks	Director of Operations	Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG
Zena Young	Executive Director of Nursing and Quality	Shropshire and Telford CCG
Gareth Boulton	Deputy Chief Executive	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Tina Knight	Service Delivery Manager	Providing a social care perspective to the board

The board attendance for 2021/22 is outlined in the table below.

Name of Representative	Agency	May 2021	July 2021	Sept 2021	Nov 2021	Mar 2022
Karen Bradshaw (until Oct 2021)	Local Authority – Shropshire Council	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Tanya Miles (from Oct 2021)					Yes	Yes
Cath Knowles (From April 2021 to September 2021)	Local Authority – Herefordshire Council	Yes	No	No, replaced by Matthew Sampson		
Darryl Freeman (From Oct 2021)					Y	Y
Tina Russell	Local Authority – Worcestershire Council	Yes	No	No, Replaced by Emma Brittain	No, Replaced by Emma Brittain	Yes
Jo Britton	Local Authority – Telford and Wrekin Council	No, T&W represented by TN below	Yes	No T&W represented by TN below	Yes	Yes
Tina Knight		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Morwenna Lansdale (from April 2021 to Feb 2022)	West Mercia Police	Yes	Yes	No	No, Replaced by Sarah Bennett	
Nigel Webster (from March 2022)						No, Replaced by Sally Williams
Jade Brooks	Health – Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG	Yes	Yes	No	No	No, replaced by Hazel Braund
Zena Young	Health- Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin CCG	No, Replaced by Maria Hadley	Yes	No, Replaced by Maria Hadley	Yes	Yes
Jackie Stevenson	Probation Service	Yes	No, Replaced by Paul Woods	Yes	No, Replaced by David Cookson	Yes
George Branch						Yes
Andy Champness (until February 2022)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	Y	Y	N	N	
Gareth Boulton (from March 2022)						Y

Board meetings for 2022 have been scheduled for:-

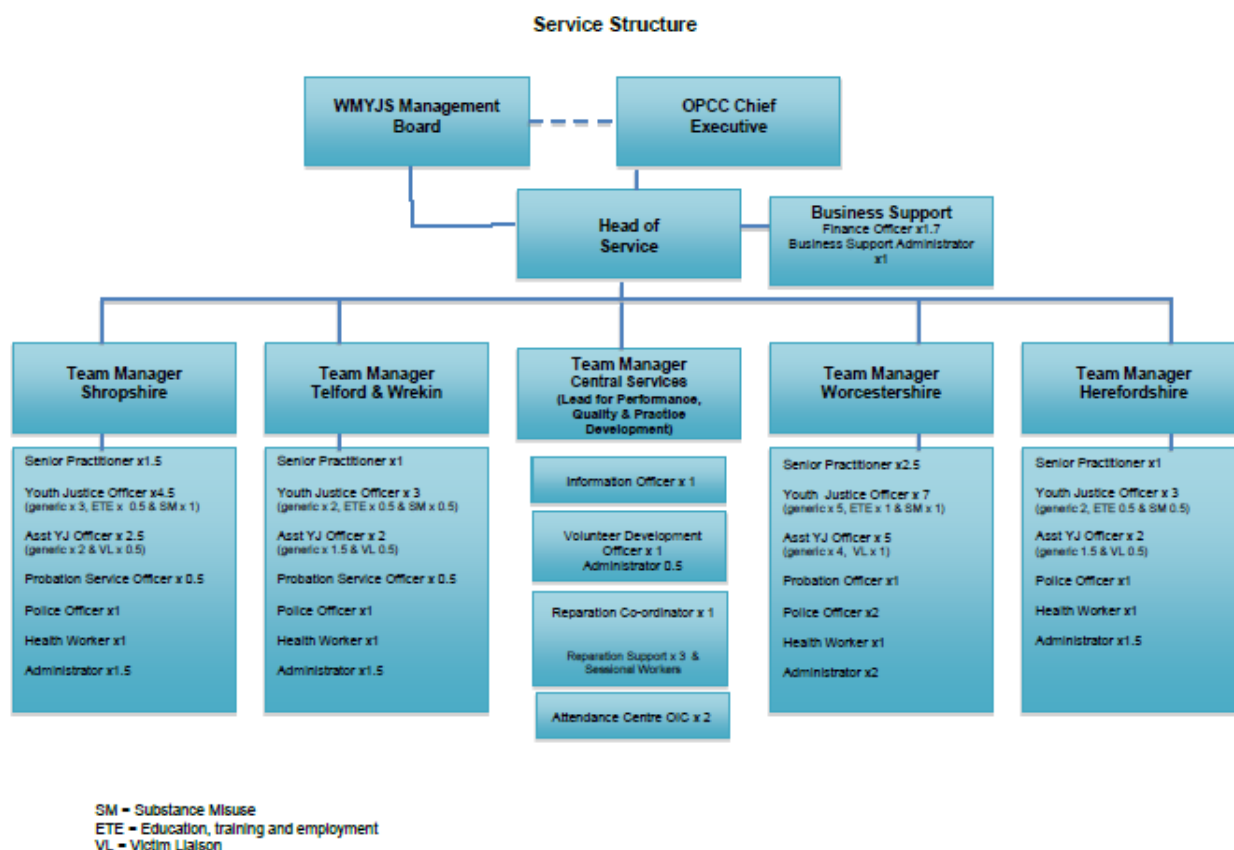
4th May 2022

13th July 2022

14th September 2022

16th November 2022

16. Appendix 2 – Service Structure Chart.



An explanation of the service structure is provided in section 5 of this plan. The Head of Service has a dual accountability to the Chief Executive of the OPCC, who provides the day to day management for the Head of Service, and to the Chair of the Management Board, particularly in regards to practice issues. The service has a dedicated Information Officer whose line manager is the Team Manager (Service Wide) who has the lead for quality and performance.

Staff by ethnicity and gender (number of individual people):

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian								1						2		1	0	4
Black			1														1	0
Mixed																	0	0
White	1			4	20	38	1	11					9	20	1	3	32	76
Any other ethnic group						1								1			0	2
Not known																	0	0
Total	1	0	1	4	20	39	1	12	0	0	0	0	9	23	1	4	33	82

Staff by known disability (number of full time equivalent):

	Strategic Manager	Operational Manager	Practitioners	Administration	Referral Order Panel Volunteer	Other Volunteer	Total
Disabled (self-classified)	0	0	1.5	1.3	0	0	2.8

Common youth justice terms

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment

EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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