



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet 27 April 2022

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

Whitchurch Swimming Centre Feasibility Study

**Responsible
Officer**

Mark Barrow, Executive Director Place
mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk
01743 255003

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report and attached Appendices provide detailed information on a feasibility study for the provision of a new Swimming and Fitness Centre in Whitchurch. The report seeks approval that 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.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 At its meeting on 30th June 2021 Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:

- I. Approve that option 6 is the emerging preferred option and should be taken forward to the next stage of feasibility and due diligence. (Option 6 - New alternative build - 6 lane x 25m with moveable floor, 35 station fitness suite, dance studio, Café 20 covers)
- II. Delegate to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Tourism and Transport, the ability to progress the feasibility and due diligence on the emerging new build option, including:
 - Project requirements prepared.
 - Accommodation Schedule.
 - Further review of the business case.
 - Undertake site appraisals to develop opportunities and constraints diagrams to identify opportunities and initial key project risks.
 - Strategic appraisal of planning considerations.
 - Prepare project brief including outcomes.
 - Commissioning relevant surveys.

- Development of block plans.
 - Quantity Surveyor costings.
 - Programming.
 - Prepare initial block massing 3D views and sections to explain relationship with the existing building and scale of proposal/s.
 - Prepare precedent image and concept images for the proposal.
 - Developing Project Strategies
 - Pre-application Planning Advice.
 - Implementation of a public/stakeholder engagement/consultation exercise.
- III. Approve that the additional feasibility work includes a needs assessment for a new library facility in Whitchurch and, also explores the potential for and, cost/benefits of co-locating the library in any new leisure facility development on the site. Noting that if co-locating the library emerges as part of the preferred option a specific public consultation on this will be required.
- IV. Agree that the findings of the additional feasibility work be reported back to a future cabinet meeting.

2.2 A copy of the feasibility study is attached at Appendix 1.

2.3 The cost plan estimates the provision of the facility to be £12.100m. This includes a moveable floor to half the pool which increases the amount of swimming lessons and other activities that can be programmed and improves the business case by an estimated £55,000 per annum. Further detail is provided in section 5.3 of this report. Full details are provided in the cost plan contained in the feasibility study.

2.4 The feasibility study has been directed by the following guiding principles and critical success factors:

- I. Shropshire will be a county where healthier, active lifestyles are encouraged, supported, and facilitated for everyone.
- II. Improve the health and well-being of our residents and visitors, through increasing participation, in physical activity/sport.
- III. Investment in a high-quality leisure offer in the town centre which provides accessible and inclusive activities for all, retains the opportunity to swim in the town centre and provides complementary facilities for fitness and well-being.
- iv. An improved leisure offer - for residents and visitors and to engage people in leisure and physical activities who may not traditionally engage. Maximise the potential of the site and the opportunities for additional income generation opportunities from the facilities.

- v. 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.
- vi. The development is operationally sustainable in the long term and positively contributes to environmental sustainability, carbon neutral targets and, encourages users to adopt active travel - cycling and walking.

2.5 Subject to Cabinet and Council decision the design proposals will be developed in more detail at the relevant design stages.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to

- I. Note and acknowledge progress and actions undertaken to meet the recommendations of the Cabinet report in June 2021
- II. 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.
- III. Agree that subject to the outcome of the public consultation exercise and Cabinet's consideration of that report, the business case for the project be presented to Council with a recommendation that the development of the Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre be included in the capital programme.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1 Opportunities Appraisal - The need for improved swimming and fitness provision in Whitchurch

4.2 Built in 1972, Whitchurch Swimming Centre comprised a 25m x 5 lane pool and changing facilities.

4.3 This report provides details of the feasibility study that was commissioned to develop initial design for consideration regarding the future provision of this important community facility. 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.

4.4 Property Services Group 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 had to be commissioned to ascertain the structural integrity of the pool and this 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."

4.5 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

4.6 Shropshire and Shrewsbury Health priorities identified in the JSNA (Health and Well Being Board Shropshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan 2016-2021) include mental health, including dementia, rising obesity, child poverty and the aging population.

4.7 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.

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

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Priorities		Links to Corporate Plan Priorities
Strategic Priority 1	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 young and older people.	Yes - all
Strategic Priority 2	To support the resilience of local communities and the development of Place by strengthening local communities through sport and physical activity.	Yes - all
Strategic Priority 3	To support economic growth by developing opportunities for people to reach their full potential by providing employment, volunteering and tourism opportunities.	Yes - all
Strategic Priority 4	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.	Yes - all
Strategic Priority 5	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.	Yes - all

Table 1 Shropshire Council priorities for sport and physical activity

4.9 Evidence of Need - Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM)

- 4.10 The Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM) for pools in Shropshire was produced in July 2019.
- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 Swimming pools in Market Drayton and, prior to its closure Whitchurch, addressed this gap in accessibility.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 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.

4.16 Shropshire Council Leisure Facilities Strategy, Evidence of Need for Swimming Pools 2020

Whitchurch Swimming Centre	35% out of 100% Facility Quality Score due to pool tank failing	Poor	Significant investment required. The facility is at the end of its useful life.
-----------------------------------	--	-------------	--

Table 2 Leisure Facilities Strategy Evidence of need

4.17 Proposed Facility Mix

4.18 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.

4.19 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.

4.20 The feasibility study has considered a number of modern methods of construction which will be further reviewed at RIBA stage 2. Further details can be found in section 7 of the study.

4.21 Whitchurch Library

4.22 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 initial stages of the feasibility study.

- 4.23 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.
- 4.24 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.
- 4.25 It was decided that as 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 removed from the feasibility study remit.

4.27 Impact of not progressing with the New Swimming and Fitness Centre

- 4.28 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 impact positively on the Council's Organisational Principles.
 - This option is contrary to recommendations in the Council's adopted Indoor Leisure Facility Strategy 2020 – 2038.
- 4.29 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 to a more active environment at local level

- 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
- Provides the opportunity for young people to be able to learn to swim
- Contributes positively to several of the Council's Organisational Principles including climate change and carbon reduction
- Requires significant capital investment but secures the provision of a valuable community facility for the long term
- Fully fulfils the recommendation in the Council's adopted Leisure Facilities Strategy 2020 – 38

4.30 Risk Assessment

4.31 Several risks associated with the successful delivery of this stage of the project have been identified and these are summarised below together with mitigating actions, the most significant of those are summarised in Table 3 below:

Risk	Mitigation actions
Costs of the overall project are unaffordable in the current financial climate.	Production of the Feasibility Study to prepare initial designs and site capabilities. Detailed capital and revenue cost modelling, including identification of other sources of funding carried out to inform the recommendation of what is affordable and option to be progressed.
Abortive costs for the feasibility work if the project does not proceed beyond this stage.	Completion of a robust feasibility study will provide the Council with the necessary information to make an evidenced based decision on progressing the project.
Timeframe for developing a new facility expands leading to significantly higher development costs.	Establish realistic project programme, with key decision milestones identified and a project team suitably resourced in place to undertake the development work.
Reputational damage as Whitchurch Swimming Centre is the focus of considerable public interest and announcements have been made on carrying out maintenance investigation work	Project team established to manage the maintenance investigation work and new build options feasibility report to be able to prepare a report for consideration by Cabinet.

and a needs assessment for a potential replacement facility.	Clear communications plan developed to keep stakeholders informed.
--	--

Table 3 Significant Risks

- 4.32 An initial key stakeholder exercise was carried out during March and April 2022. A list of the stakeholders and feedback received to date is included at Appendix 2.
- 4.33 An initial Equality, Social inclusion and Health Impact Assessment has been carried out, which indicates the following, should the project be approved:
- 4.34 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.
- 4.35 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.
- 4.36 Proceeding with the option set out in the Feasibility Study, to develop 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

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. At this stage no additional finance resource

is required to progress the project to consultation.

5.2 The design and construction of a replacement facility will require significant capital investment by the Council. It is estimated that the capital cost of developing a new facility is £12.100m. This includes the provision of a moveable floor to half the pool which increases the amount of swimming lessons and other activities that can be programmed and improves the business case by an estimated £55,000 per annum.

5.3 Detailed capital costings are included in the feasibility study report. A summary is shown below:

	£
• Construction costs (includes moveable floor & 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
• Total	12,127,635

5.4 It should be noted that costs have increased significantly since the original estimates were developed, the total cost was estimated at £6.300m in the 2022/23 - 2026/27 Capital Strategy. There has been a significant uplift in construction costs and the feasibility study also includes for the following.

Non controllable Costs

- Construction cost inflation (from feasibility date to tender return and mid-point of construction) 11.05% based on the proposed construction programme included in the feasibility study. Estimated cost £1,210,733
- 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 £400,000
- The feasibility study also includes for the provision of additional car parking which may or may not be a condition of planning. Estimated cost £624,000

Controllable Costs

- Provision of second lift £60,000
- Replacement of Multi Use Games Area with Active Landscaped area and associated works £211,000
- BREEAM Excellent and green technology £395,000

- 5.5 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. The business case 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 £0.483m must also be included in the model.
- 5.6 Table 4 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 a forecast revenue pressure in excess of £0.300m each year. The existing preference to address this is by obtaining alternative funding to reduce the PWLB repayments, potential options are listed in 5.9 and 5.10. Further due diligence will also be undertaken on all figures contained within the model, and an updated forecast revenue position will be provided before any full budgetary approval for the project.

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		1.661	1.714	1.756	1.787	1.820	1.853	1.886	1.919	1.952	1.984
Borrowing Repayments	-	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483	0.483
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	1.562	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	0.336	0.349	0.352	0.343	0.337	0.330	0.324	0.317	0.311	0.303

- 5.7 The existing revenue budget for the Whitchurch Swimming Pool contract is £0.135m, this budget is now surplus and will be used to offset immediate pressures in the Leisure service area and wider Place directorate. There is a possibility that this budget could be used to partially offset some of the revenue pressure on this project. This needs to be fully explored in the context of the overall financial picture.
- 5.8 Council approved the Capital Strategy in February 2022, in which Whitchurch Swimming Pool was listed as a priority future project, but this remains subject to approval of a business case and, prior to that in the case of Whitchurch, the completion of a public consultation exercise.
- 5.9 Work has been carried out to explore potential funding sources that could contribute to the project. These have included:

- Community Infrastructure Levy

- Grant aid from sources such as Sport England, the Levelling Up Fund or the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- A review of the leisure operator market and potential input into financing the new facilities

5.10 Work is still ongoing, but a summary of the current position is set out below. Progress will be reported to the Cabinet meeting that considers the outcome of the public consultation exercise and will be built into the financial modelling.

I. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Initial discussions have identified that CIL may be able to make a potential contribution and that this project would likely fall into the second list of 'local priority' projects. Additional work is ongoing with colleagues to identify avenues for closing the funding gap prior to further consideration of what levels of uncommitted CIL could be available.

II. Grant aid

Sport England Strategic Facilities Fund

Sport England is supportive of the project but their current priority is Swimming in Shrewsbury.

Levelling Up Fund

Sport England has confirmed that a number of local authorities included leisure facility developments in Levelling Up Funding round 1 applications and were successful.

The round 2 prospectus has now been issued and the proposed development at Whitchurch could meet two of the priority investment themes including:

- **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

Applications to the Levelling Up Fund round 2 must be submitted by July 6th, 2022. Applicants are encouraged to include detail of how their Levelling Up Fund projects would complement other sources of funding, for example the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Shropshire Council is a priority 2 area. As for the first round, the Fund will focus investment in smaller scale, local projects that require less than £20 million of funding. However, there is scope for investing in higher value projects, by exception.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Whilst the UK Shared Prosperity Fund may be able to contribute to the overall costs of the Centre, the Shropshire allocation is insufficient to make a significant difference. The overall objectives of the Communities and Place investment priority theme are:

- Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural, and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
- To build resilient and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.
- Example interventions may include, but are not limited to, visual improvements to town centres and high streets, cultural/visitor economy interventions, litter, waste and graffiti reduction, projects to fight antisocial behaviour, and capital funding to improve neighbourhoods or community projects and initiatives.

III. Leisure Operator Market

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.

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.

The proposed timing of the development does not coincide with the Council's incumbent operator being able to contribute as the current management contract will have only two years left to run 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:

I. 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.

II. 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

III. 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.

- 6.2 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. Further work will be carried out on Climate Change and carbon reduction impacts as the design progresses.

7. Background

- 7.1 Whitchurch Swimming Centre 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.
- 7.2 The recommendations in this report are made based on the evidence contained in the feasibility study and other relevant strategies.

8. Additional Information

8.1 Organisation Principles

- 8.2 The development of the Swimming and Fitness project in Whitchurch can support the following priorities identified in the draft Shropshire Plan, healthy people, healthy economy, and healthy environment. It can also support several Organisation Principles, and these are set out in Appendix 4.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 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.

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
Library Services Strategy, 2018 – 2023

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Cecilia Motley - Communities Place Culture Leisure Tourism & Transport

Local Members

Cllrs Gerald Dakin, Peggy Mullock, and Tom Biggins

Appendices

Appendix 1 Feasibility Study
Appendix 2 Stakeholder engagement feedback
Appendix 3 Initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Appendix 4 Links to Organisation Principles

