



Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation Proposals – Results of Public Consultation and Authority to Proceed

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1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report presents the results of the recent public consultation on proposals to transform the Shrewsbury Sports Village with new swimming and fitness facilities. Approval is sought to proceed to Full Council to request the project is accepted into the Capital Programme and grant authority to proceed with the design and build.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The proposed approach will maintain the current facilities at the SSV but add new facilities to create a multi-feature centre which is more appealing to a wider demographic, is more accessible, will attract greater revenue to be financially sustainable and be an energy efficient, all electric modern building.
- 2.2 The scope of the proposal would include:
- 25 metre x 8 lane pool – suitable for competitions, galas, and general swimming (as recommended by Swim England for county level competitions), but with easy access steps to encourage maximum useability.

- 17 x 10 metre studio teaching pool with easy access steps and moveable floor to provide flexibility for learners and other water sports and to include a children's water party module.
- Seating and space in the main pool hall sufficient to hold county level competitions including at least 250 Spectators and 250 Competitors.
- A changing village plus two group changing rooms.
- 'Poolpod' access lifts to both pools for wheelchair users, disability access toilets and changing rooms, and a Changing Places facility.
- A new reception area and lobby with café overlooking the studio pool with new children's soft play area adjacent to café, to encourage family use.
- A new 130 station fitness-suite, new dance studio and new 30 station cycle spin studio.
- Multi-purpose studio with access to existing kitchen - divisible into 2 areas for group activities and events.
- Refurbishment of the existing dry changing facilities.
- Subject to the results of a full transport study – replace lost car parking spaces
- The new facility would be designed and built to sustainable building principles and would aim to achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) excellent standard. It would be all electric making use of make use of new photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps to minimise the carbon footprint. The project would include landscape enhancements and demolition of the former caretaker's house.
- The proposals would maintain all other internal and external facilities on the SSV site including: the main sports hall with 8 badminton courts, 16 football pitches and football changing, Football Academy offices, in-door bowls hall, cycle track and 8 Netball courts.

2.3 Public consultation on these proposals ran for 8 weeks from 15th March until 8th May 2024. Consultation was conducted through two online surveys: one for the general public and one for children and young people. The surveys were available on the Shropshire Council website and promoted through social media, press releases, posters, and flyers. Paper copies of the surveys were also available at the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre, Shrewsbury Sports Village, and other council facilities. Two-day drop-in sessions were held at the Sports Village, Lantern Centre, Darwin Centre and Quarry.

2.4 In total, 1,367 responses were received to the surveys. 1,287 responded to the main survey either online or through paper copies, and 80 to the youth version of the survey. Most of the survey respondents (95%) submitted as members of the public, but many respondents also identified themselves as speaking on behalf of organisations and groups in Shropshire.

2.5 Key findings were that:

- Most respondents were satisfied with the proposals overall and felt that they met the key objectives.
- The inclusion of new swimming pools at the Sports Village was highly popular, as well as the competition seating aspect.
- The health and fitness suite, the gym and dance studios, and the café and seating were also attractive facilities among respondents.
- Travel and transport access was a major barrier and concern for many respondents, who highlighted the need for more car parking spaces, better public transport links, and safer and more accessible cycling and walking routes – these issues will be addressed in the detailed planning stages prior to applying for planning permission.
- Respondents also suggested ways to make the proposals more inclusive and accessible for different groups, such as people with disabilities, older people, and low-income households.
- Some respondents expressed doubts about the costs, feasibility, and impact of the proposals, and raised questions about the future of the Quarry pools.

- 2.6 Revised capital cost estimates for the complete design, build and fit-out of the facility are **£28.86 Million**.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the project is approved into the Capital Programme and the funds would be sought from a combination of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) plus any grants and capital receipts that would be available during the course of the project.
- 2.8 In financial terms, the new facility is expected to recover sufficient new income to repay the borrowing and generate a modest budget saving.
- 2.9 Should the proposal be approved, it would take 3 years to complete the detailed design, build and be opened to the public. The first stage would be selecting a design and build specialist contractor, completing the detailed designs and obtaining planning permission which is expected to take a year.
- 2.10 This report is seeking permission to proceed with these first stages which are estimated to costs **£2.248 Million**. The project would then return to Cabinet and full Council to seek authority to proceed with the build once we have a firm price for the build stage and planning permission is obtained.
- 2.11 The success and lessons learned from the new pool and fitness centre under construction in Whitchurch suggest that the Council continues its successful relationship with Denbighshire Council's UK Leisure Framework to support selection of a suitable firm to undertake the design and build of the new facility.
- 2.12 At the Cabinet meeting in January 2024, it was stressed that no decision has been made regarding the future of the Quarry facility, and this message was stressed throughout the public consultation. The position remains the same, and the Council will look at future

options for the Quarry site once the SSV project is sufficiently advanced, which would be subject to a separate consultation in due course.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- 3.1 Agree the results of the public consultation and the business case for the project, as set out in this paper and in Appendix 6, be presented to Council with a recommendation that the design and development of the Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation be included in the Capital Programme with an initial budget for the design and planning stages of £2.248 million. The project to be funded from Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and any available grants and capital receipts which may be available during the project.
- 3.2 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 the design and planning stages of the project including, but not limited to:
 - Commissioning the UK Leisure Framework to support the procurement strategy.
 - Selection of a prime design and build contractor and other suppliers.
 - Site surveys and investigations and relevant reports.
 - Detailed designs and planning application.
 - Contract preparation for the build stages.
- 3.3 Agree that a report is brought to Cabinet and Full Council after the design stages; following the determination of the planning application and once the project has established the full build costs. This subsequent report will seek a decision on whether to approve the full project budget and to proceed with the build stage.

Report

4 Risk Assessment and Proposal

- 4.1 There are currently two leisure facilities in Shrewsbury owned by Shropshire Council and managed by Shropshire Community Leisure Trust: The Shrewsbury Sports Village (SSV) and Quarry Swimming & Fitness Centre. The two centres in their current form are not a long-term viable solution for Shrewsbury's swimming and fitness needs, in particular because of:
- **Poor financial viability of both sites** – neither site has the optimal mix of facilities, which limits the revenue they generate. As a result, the Council must make a significant annual subsidy to the operator.
 - **Development of a competition standard pool for the County** – There is currently no pool available in Shropshire which can host major swimming competitions. Currently the County Championships are held at Wolverhampton, with parents, carers and swimmers having to travel out of County to participate. A modern 25 metre pool with sufficient seating and space for spectators and participants, along with easy access and parking is currently not available.
 - **Poor utilisation of the Shrewsbury Sports Village** – SSV is focussed on traditional sports particularly football, but it is currently under-utilised for large periods of time. Diversifying and enhancing the range of facilities would make the site more appealing to a wider demographic, provide better social value to the Shrewsbury community and generate greater revenues.
 - **The need to meet carbon reduction targets** – The Council has committed to ensuring all new buildings meet sustainable building standards and to reduce its carbon footprint. Leisure facilities are one of the Council's largest users of power and producers of CO₂. Developing new energy efficient and electric facilities and would be a significant step towards meeting the Council's carbon targets.
 - **The need to meet accessibility standards** – with new standards for accessibility at leisure centres and public buildings and an aging population, there is a need for new leisure facilities which meet these standards and adopt new access features. This will promote inclusion not only in regard to physical and sensory disability and mobility needs of people as they age, but also needs of people with neurodiverse conditions or other hidden conditions such as Crohn's disease.
 - **The need to refresh and broaden the Council's health and fitness provision** – Health and wellbeing of the whole community are a key objective of the Shropshire Plan. Current facilities at the SSV are limited in scope, which reduces levels of participation by large proportions of the population. More modern and more diverse offerings are needed to improve health and fitness participation levels across a range of demographics and needs.
- 4.2 One approach to addressing these challenges would be to maintain the current facilities at the SSV but add additional new facilities to create a multi-feature centre which is appealing to a wider demographic, will attract greater revenue and delivered in a modern, energy efficient building.

4.3 The proposal would meet many of the goals set out in the Shropshire Plan, most noticeably around Healthy People:

Shropshire Plan Goals	Strategic Fit
<p>The Shropshire Plan - Healthy people: 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.</p>	<p>The proposal will provide new and extended fitness facilities. The scope includes specific facilities to aid wellbeing for all generations – particularly the young through a learner pool, competition opportunities and active play and older people or those with special needs, through accessible swimming and a toning studio.</p>
<p>The Shropshire Plan - Healthy Economy: Develop a vibrant destination that attracts people to live in, work in, learn in and visit.</p> <p>Deliver excellent connectivity and infrastructure, and increasing access to social contact, employment, education, services, and leisure opportunities</p>	<p>The new swimming and fitness facilities are significant to attracting investment and new residents.</p> <p>The facility will provide major new leisure opportunities for Shrewsbury and the surrounding communities.</p>
<p>The Shropshire Plan - Healthy Environment: reduce our carbon footprint, including the adoption of low-carbon energy for our assets and for communities</p>	<p>The new facility will be energy efficient and all electric with photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps which will contribute to meeting the carbon reduction targets</p>
<p>The Shropshire Plan - 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.</p>	<p>The proposals have been subject to a public consultation and are designed to provide fitness and wellbeing facilities that meet the needs of all sections of the population.</p>
<p>We will 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.</p>	<p>The facility will be more efficient to run and attract sufficient new income to become as near self-financing as possible and therefore will offer better value for money.</p>

4.4 The following key risks have been identified that relate to the proposal:

Ref	Item	Description	Mitigation
1	Inflation	Issue – UK Inflation high and has driven up build costs and materials threatening the financial affordability of the Project and making accurate forecasting difficult.	UK Inflation has been high during the project planning stage. Rates have fallen in recent months and are currently at 3.1% (July CPI). This has resulted in the project costs increasing substantially in the past two years. The cost model has been uplifted for inflation and includes allowance for inflation.

2	Interest Rates	Issue – UK Interest rates have been rising and this affects the cost of borrowing to the Council on Capital Projects and can make projects unaffordable.	The Council can borrow from the Government via the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), albeit the current rate is 4.5% and may rise in the coming months. Seeking capital funds from other sources can reduce the borrowing costs e.g.: from Capital Receipts and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
3	Scope Creep	Risk – Adding new features or conditions to the project will inevitably increase both the time and cost of the project – threatening the Project viability	The project should agree a fixed scope through the Council approval process. Strong change control and project governance is required to avoid scope creep and should not vary without the appropriate approvals
4	Public response	Risk – This proposal will be viewed purely in terms of swimming - and not seen as creating a range of new viable health and fitness facilities at the SSV as well as a new modern energy efficient and accessible pool offering.	The response from the Public Consultation was very positive albeit a minority of respondents were dissatisfied and expressed concern for the closure of the Quarry. The Council has confirmed that no decision regarding the future of the Quarry facility has been made. The Council will look at future options for the Quarry site once the SSV project is sufficiently advanced, which would be subject to a separate consultation in due course.
5	Availability of Capital funds	Issue – The Council's Capital Programme includes reference to a Swimming in Shrewsbury initiative and the project is recognised as a priority need- however, there are no capital funds yet secured to enable implementation.	The proposal requires both Cabinet and Full Council decisions to be made on whether to proceed with Capital funding and approve the inclusion of the project in the Capital Programme. The Council should explore all means of Capital funding, including Public Works Loans Board, Capital Receipts, CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), grants and any other available.

5 Results of Public Consultation

- 5.1 The Cabinet meeting in January 2024 agreed to a Public Consultation of the Sports Village Transformation Proposals. The consultation ran from 15th March to 8th May 2024 and consisted of two online surveys: one for the general public and one for children and young people. A full report of the consultation and the results is presented in Appendix 1. The aim of the consultation was to gather feedback on the proposed inclusion of a swimming pool and other facilities at the Sports Village.
- 5.2 The consultation was run by in-house teams and conducted through two online surveys: one for the general public and one for children and young people. The surveys were available on the Shropshire Council website and promoted through social media, press releases, posters, and flyers. Paper copies of the surveys were also available at the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre, Shrewsbury Sports Village, and other council facilities. The consultation team also held a series of two-day drop in-sessions to answer public questions directly, these were held at the Sports Village, Lantern Centre, Darwin Centre and Quarry Pool and Fitness Centre. Face to face meetings were also held with the Shrewsbury Town Council, Indoor Bowls Club and a number of Head Teachers from primary schools in Shrewsbury. A copy of the consultation materials from the website and used at briefings and drop in sessions is presented in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 The surveys asked respondents about their current use sports facilities in Shrewsbury, their satisfaction with the proposed facilities, and their views on the overall proposals. The surveys also included demographic questions and an opportunity for respondents to provide additional comments.
- 5.4 Respondent Profile: In total, 1,367 responses were received to the surveys. 1,287 responded to the main survey either online or through paper copies, and 80 to the youth version of the survey. Most of the survey respondents (95%) submitted their responses as members of the public, but many respondents also identified themselves as speaking on

behalf of organisations and groups in Shropshire such as sports groups or Town and Parish Councils. The average age of respondents was fairly consistent with the average age in Shropshire and overall, there was also a good mix of respondents across age groups, including those over 60. Some children and young people responded to the main survey, but 80 completed the youth survey.

- 5.5 Current Usage: Most respondents (69%) were users of one or both of the existing sports facilities in Shrewsbury. However, 31% of respondents do not currently use either centre. Respondents to the youth survey were more likely to be users of the Quarry alone, than they were to be users of the Sports Village alone, though 28% of the youth respondents also reported not using either centre.
- 5.6 Views on Swimming Proposals: Regarding the proposals for the inclusion of a swimming pool at the Sports Village, the majority of respondents from both surveys (73% in the main survey and 89% of youth survey respondents) were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the proposals. There was a minority in the main survey of 19% who were either “dissatisfied” or very dissatisfied” but this figure in the youth survey was only 2%.
- 5.7 Regarding Pool seating - a majority of respondents from both surveys (56% in the main survey and 76% of youth survey respondents) reported feeling that this aspect of the proposals was “adequate” though a significant minority of respondents in both surveys reported having “no opinion” on this feature of the proposals, albeit it is an essential component for holding competitions.
- 5.8 Use of Other Facilities: Of the other new facilities proposed for inclusion, the 130-station health and fitness suite was the most popular among both main survey respondents and youth respondents, with 60% and 41%, respectively, saying they would be most likely to use these facilities.
- 5.9 The two new gym and dance studios were also popular among both respondent groups, for 38% and 34% of the respondents in both groups.
- 5.10 The group cycling studio also had interest from respondents of both surveys, with 23% of main survey respondents and 19% of youth survey respondents saying they would most likely use this.
- 5.11 The new wellness and toning centre which is aimed at older people and those with mobility issues was fairly popular among main survey respondents, with 39% saying they would be most likely to use this facility. As expected only 9% of youth survey respondents said they would most likely use this facility.
- 5.12 Among the additional features proposed for the new centre, the café and seating area was the most popular, with 89% of main survey respondents and 99% of youth survey respondents saying they would be most likely to use this feature.
- 5.13 The new soft play area and the children's splash party were also popular among both respondent groups, with 29% and 34% of main survey respondents and 53% and 55% of youth survey respondents, respectively, saying they would be most likely to use these features.
- 5.14 The Changing Places facility for people with severe disabilities and access needs was also well received, with 19% of main survey respondents and 26% of youth survey respondents saying they would be most likely to use this feature. A Changing Places facility is a toilet

and changing room adapted for use by people with severe levels of physical disability that necessitate them to have the help of an assistant. There were several wheelchair users who specifically travelled to the drop-in sessions to discuss the facilities and all who spoke to staff were pleased to see what was being proposed for improved accessibility particularly the easy access steps and 'pool-pods' which are pool side wheelchair lifts.

- 5.15 Views on Facility Mix: When asked whether they felt that there was an adequate mix of facilities proposed for the new centre, most respondents in both the main survey (84%) and the youth survey (99%) said yes. However, the most common comments on the facilities were those requesting the additions they would be likely to use, such as a climbing wall, squash courts, pickleball courts, competition athletics track, as well as diving boards and more fun activities for teens. etc
- 5.16 Overall Satisfaction with the Proposals: The majority of respondents in both surveys were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the proposals overall (90% of youth survey respondents and 70% of respondents to the main survey). While a minority of respondents to the main survey were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" (21%) - Those who are opposed to the proposals have strong views against them.
- 5.17 The main themes that emerged from the comments were:

Table 8. Themes – Other Comments on Whether Proposals Meet Objectives	Count	%
Concerns about accessibility of transport/traffic/enough parking	215	27%
Happy with proposals overall	118	15%
Concerns about cost	95	12%
Concerns about closure of Quarry	92	12%
Certain facilities/sports missing or plans don't go far enough	71	9%
Investment in Shrewsbury and not elsewhere	44	6%
Happy with ease of access	39	5%
Happy with inclusion of competition pool/seating	37	5%
Not enough information provided/not enough research done	33	4%
Prefer single sex changing rooms	16	2%
Other	33	4%

- 5.18 Transport and Travel Access was a key issue: Most respondents from both surveys reported that they find the Sundorne site accessible, and a majority of respondents said that they were satisfied with the proposals for parking. Respondents to the main survey ranked increasing car parking spaces above public transportation and cycling and walking routes as the top transportation access priority. Despite the general satisfaction levels with access to the Sundorne site, travel and transportation access recurred throughout the report as an important barrier for many respondents to attending the site. Public transport access was identified as a problem for many, as were concerns about parking, traffic and the accessibility and safety of active travel routes to the site. Some respondents raised concerns about the proposals encouraging more driving in town and concerned about the associated environmental impact. More work on car parking and public transport will need to be commissioned in the detailed design stages if the project is approved.
- 5.19 In their comments on the initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) that had been carried out ahead of the consultation, respondents raised important

points about how the proposals might better meet the needs of those with Autism or sensory impairments as well as those with complex disabilities, as well as safeguarding and equalities concerns about unisex changing rooms.

- 5.20 There were 92 (15%) of respondents who expressed concern about the potential closure of the Quarry. The Consultation materials all stressed that no decision has been made regarding the future of the Quarry facility, and this message was stressed throughout the public consultation. Concerns about the Quarry are reflected in 19% of respondents to the main survey expressing a dissatisfaction with the Pool. However, this does not reflect the views of all Quarry users as 44% of respondents did identify themselves as Quarry users and this dissatisfaction was not evident in the youth survey.
- 5.21 Changing Rooms: The proposal is for a single communal Changing Village with high levels of privacy in the cubicles and showers which is the standard approach to new pool facilities across the UK. There will also be single sex toilets and two separate group changing rooms. There were, however, 2% of respondents who were concerned about the single sex aspect of this proposal.
- 5.22 The project team were invited to present the proposals to the Recreation and Leisure Committee of Shrewsbury Town Council on the 8th May 2024. The minutes of the meeting highlight the scope of the discussion and questions raised and are attached in Appendix 8. The minutes conclude with the following statement:

“Members were collectively of the view that this new facility could not be looked at in isolation given the need for refurbishment at the Quarry Pool in the town centre. Whilst they welcomed the investment at the Sports Village, this could in no way be seen as support for the deletion of swimming facilities in the town centre and there needed to be a co-ordinated plan to support the sport across both sites.”

- 5.23 The Project Team have consulted with the local member for Sundorne District, Councillor Pardy, both during the Consultation and in preparation of this report. In his latest response on 18th July Councillor Pardy replied:

“I am happy for the project to continue.

My only reservation is, and it is not in your field, I'm not sure why this policy has not been put on hold whilst Council finances are so fragile.”

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Shropshire Council is currently managing an unprecedented financial position as budgeted for with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 29 February 2024 and detailed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. This demonstrates that significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all Cabinet Reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve
- scaling down initiatives,

- changing the scope,
- delaying implementation, or
- extending delivery timescales.

- 6.2 Neither the current Sport Village nor the Quarry Pool generate enough revenue to cover their operating costs. As a result, the Council is heavily subsidising the operation of both sites. The poor condition and age of the Quarry pool has resulted in increasing repairs and maintenance costs. Recent failures have necessitated closing the main pool and repair costs in 2023/24 of £422,800. In addition, the Council has had to make provision to compensate the operator for loss of revenue in the last financial year. The risk of further building and plant failure continues to grow. Developing a new, modern, accessible, energy efficient pool and fitness centre will take at least three years and whilst no decision has been made on the future of the Quarry pool, there is a pressing need to develop a new pool now which will ensure that the Council can maintain swimming provision for primary schools, clubs and public swimming in the coming years.
- 6.3 The SSV Feasibility study included a detailed cost estimate of the design, construction and fit out of the new facility. These costs have been benchmarked against other similar projects and allowing for inflation to ensure that are representative of current market conditions. The total current costs are estimated at **£28.86 million** at 2024 prices and are summarised as follows:

Project Stage	Capital Cost
Design & Fees	£1,253,934
Construction Stage	£20,556,298
Council and Project Costs	£1,538,113
Fixtures and Fittings	£1,888,000
Contingency and Inflation	£3,626,731
Total	£28,863,076

Summary Cost Breakdown

- 6.4 This report is seeking permission to proceed with the first stages which are estimated to costs **£2.248 Million**. The project would then return to Cabinet and full Council to seek authority to proceed with the build once we have a firm price for the build stage and planning permission is obtained.
- 6.5 Officers have consulted Sport England and unfortunately there is currently no grant funding available for new capital works in Shropshire, as grant aid is only being assigned to specific areas as part of their Places strategy. However, officers will continue to liaise with Sports England should this situation change. Grant aid will also be sought from other sources throughout the project to offset the capital cost to the Council such as green energy.
- 6.6 In accordance with project practice an Outline Business Case (OBC) has been prepared to underpin the investment case and financial modelling, this is presented in Appendix 6.
- 6.7 In summary, if were the Council to fund 20% of the project and borrow 80% from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) - the additional revenue from new facilities would be sufficient to cover the operating costs, repay the annual capital repayment and generate a saving on current subsidies which is forecast to grow over the life of the facility. Other sources of Capital would need to include funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy

(CIL), plus any Capital Receipts and grant aid which can be secured against the project. The investment case for the new facility is as follows:

Opening January 2028

80% PWLB, 20% alternative funding

£millions

£m	Year 1 2027/28	Year 2 2028/29	Year 5 2031/32	Year 10 2036/37	Year 15 2041/42	Year 20 Year 20
EXPENDITURE	(1.988)	(4.759)	(5.025)	(5.390)	(5.754)	(6.119)
Borrowing Repayments		(1.346)	(1.346)	(1.346)	(1.346)	(1.346)
Operation Costs	(1.988)	(3.413)	(3.679)	(4.044)	(4.409)	(4.773)
INCOME / SAVINGS	2.962	4.766	5.070	5.577	6.083	6.590
NET INCOME / EXPENDITURE	0.974	0.007	0.045	0.187	0.329	0.471

Net Present Value (40 yrs @3.5%) **13,673,365**

Average yield **3.34%**

Summary Cost Model – Assuming 80% Borrowing and 20% other Sources of Capital

7 Climate Change Appraisal

- 7.1 Swimming pools and leisure centres are large users of energy. However, the development of a new energy efficient facility at SSV with an all-electric heating solution, making use of solar panels and air source heat pumps offers the potential for the facility to operate at a carbon zero position.
- 7.2 The new facility would be designed and built to sustainable building principles, including striving to achieve the BREEAM Excellent standard. This will include quantifying and reporting the carbon performance of this project using a 'lifecycle carbon assessment' approach.
- 7.3 The project will consider using features which have the potential to capture and store carbon (e.g., landscaping, or low carbon building materials) and ensure the design addresses the challenge of extreme weather associated with climate change (high winds, extreme rainfall, very high or low temperatures etc.).
- 7.4 Transport and travel are currently a major source of carbon emissions in Shropshire – the SSV site is accessible by Public Transport and cycle paths and if approved the project will seek enhancements to both transport modes. The site will also install electric vehicle charging points.

8 Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment

- 8.1 An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) was carried out ahead of the consultation (Appendix 5). The equality and health and wellbeing impacts across the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010 are anticipated to be positive. This includes 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 were 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. Further potential positive impact was anticipated for groupings 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.

- 8.2 The follow up impact assessment records that public feedback confirmed that the proposals are seen as having anticipated positive or neutral impacts on people in the Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings of consideration in Shropshire, as well as on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Shropshire. The proposal aims to provide facilities that appeal to all age ranges, from babies to older people, and that are accessible and inclusive for people with a range of disabilities including neurodiverse conditions such as autism, people undergoing gender reassignment, and those in the Protected Characteristic grouping of pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This then brings in those with caring responsibilities as well, so it was positive that plans for a new soft play area, children's splash party, and café and seating areas were welcomed by respondents.
- 8.3 The Council also seeks to take due regard of the needs of people and households that we may consider to be vulnerable by virtue of their circumstances, including young people leaving care, and households on low incomes or in fuel poverty. With travel and transport access a key issue for respondents, this corroborates the need to ensure consideration of financial challenges as well as availability of public transport. Additionally, the safeguarding concerns expressed by respondents are also noted and will need to continue to be factored into efforts to ensure that the SSV presents as a safe environment for all.
- 8.4 The proposal also offers a wide range of fitness and leisure opportunities that can enhance the physical and mental health of the population, as well as create local jobs and contribute to a low carbon facility.
- 8.5 The proposal does not have any direct negative impacts on any of the groups or categories considered.
- 8.6 In summary, the project provides opportunities to:
- Ensure that the design and operation of the leisure centre are in line with the best practices and standards for accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability.
 - Monitor and evaluate the actual impacts of the leisure centre on people in the Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings, recognising intersectionality between groupings e.g., Age and Disability, as well as on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Shropshire, and report the results and any actions taken to address any issues or gaps.

9 Background

- 9.1 In November 2022, the Council commissioned a feasibility study, to examine the costs and benefits of a simple single storey extension to SSV, which would address several

challenges facing sports and leisure provision in Shrewsbury. The objectives of the initiative would be to provide:

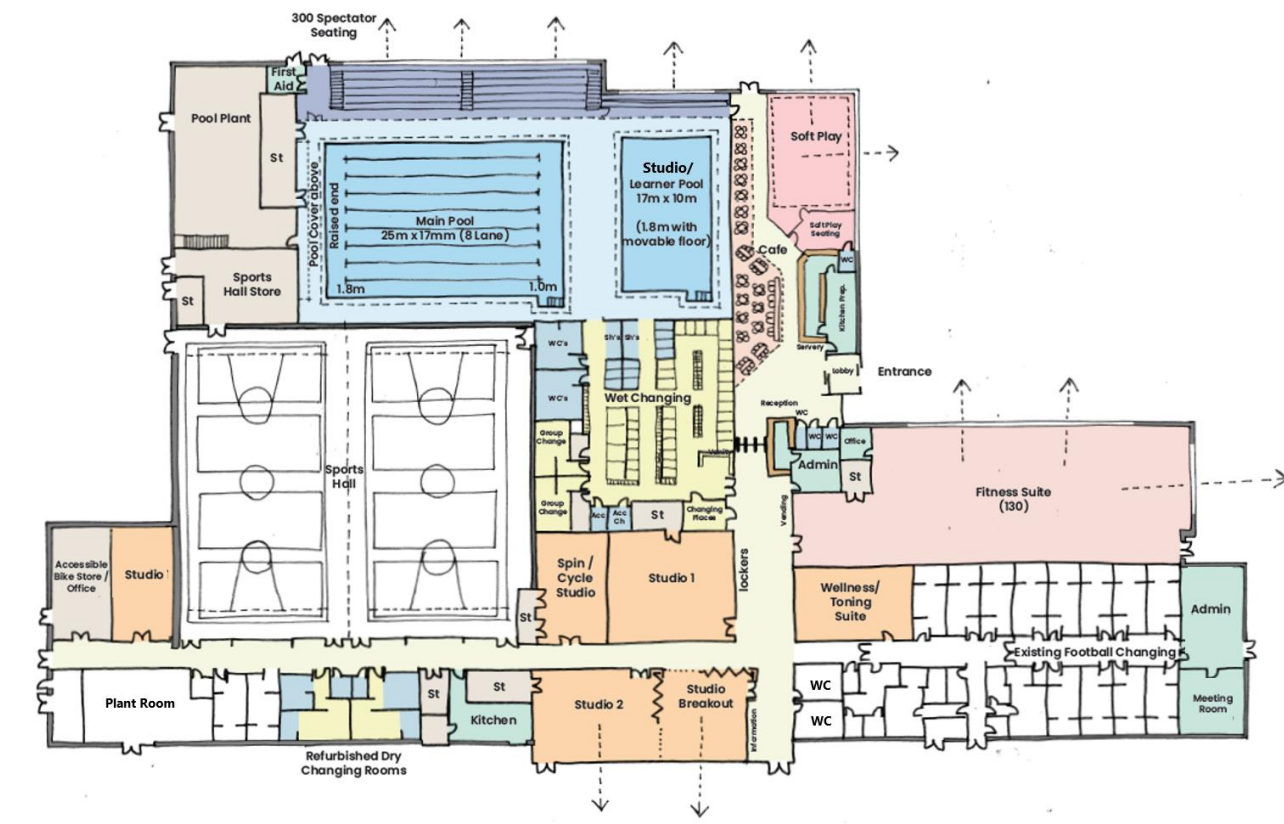
- New leisure facilities for Shrewsbury and the surrounding area which will be cost effective to operate;
- Improved financial viability of the SSV site through an improved revenue stream;
- A carbon efficient facility;
- A wider range of fitness and leisure facilities at SSV which will appeal to a more diverse section of the community, in particular: children, women and girls and people in older age groups including those over 65 ~~the elderly~~,
- Easier access to sports and fitness facilities for people with a range of disabilities and people in older age groups;
- New, high quality pool facilities for: swimming lessons, general swimming, water-based activities, swimming club use and County based competitions and galas.

9.2 Roberts Limbrick Architects and the UK Leisure Framework were commissioned to complete a feasibility study which included a RIBA Stage 1 design for the new facility and a benchmarked cost estimate for completing the design, construction and fit out. A summary feasibility report is contained within Appendix 4.

9.3 The study demonstrated that a new facility could be delivered on the site including:

- 25 metre x 8 lane pool – suitable for county competitions, galas, and general swimming,
- 17 x 10 metre studio and teaching pool with moveable floor for learners and other water sports including a children’s water party module.
- Seating and space in pool hall for up to 250 spectators and 250 competitors
- Changing village plus Changing Places facility.
- New reception area and lobby with Café overlooking the pool.
- New children’s soft play area adjacent to cafe
- New 130 station fitness-suite.
- Multi-purpose studio with access to existing kitchen - divisible into 2 areas for group activities and events
- New Dance Studio
- New 30 station cycle spin studio
- Refurbish the dry changing facilities.
- Subject to the results of a full transport study – replace lost car parking spaces
- The new facility would be designed and built to sustainable building principles and would aim to achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) excellent standard. It would be all electric making use of make use of new photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps to minimise the carbon footprint. The project would include landscape enhancements and demolition of the former caretakers house.
- Keeping all other internal and external facilities on site including the main sports hall with 8 badminton courts, Box 12 studio, 16 football pitches and football changing, Football Academy offices, bowls hall, cycle track and 8 Netball courts.

9.4 An indicative layout of the new facility would look as follows:



Indicative Plan Layout

10 Additional Information

- 10.1 Competition pool proposals – There is no swimming pool available in Shropshire which meets the Swim England standards necessary to host major short course (25 metre) swimming competitions and galas (See Appendix 3). As a result, major competitions such as the Shropshire County Championship are held in other regional pools, most often at Wolverhampton. Major short course pools are also available in Birmingham and Coventry and Sandwell Council operates the long pool (50 metres) created for the 2020 Commonwealth games.
- 10.2 The proposal would create a pool capable of hosting a major short course competitions and galas and would be available for clubs in Shropshire. The proposal pool would be constructed to competition standards and be 25 metres length with 8 lanes. There would be at least 250 permanent spectator seats with room in the pool hall to accommodate an additional 250 competitors on temporary seating. The SSV site offers good accessibility and parking which is essential for County competitions. In this proposal, the pool hall is elongated and can be segregated to allow different activities to be held simultaneously in both pools – see additional design in Appendix 2.
- 10.3 Election Counts - The main hall at SSV is used for counting elections. General elections are usually held 5 yearly; Police and Crime Commissioner elections and Local Government elections are held 4 yearly. The main hall would be unaltered by the proposals and would be unaffected during construction. In any event, the next elections are not likely to coincide with any construction programme.

11 Conclusions

11.1 The feasibility study has demonstrated that it would be possible to create a new swimming and fitness centre based at the Shrewsbury Sports Village. Such a facility would:

- Be more cost effective to operate and turn a significant financial deficit into a financial surplus.
- Provide a carbon efficient fitness and swimming facility,
- Offer a wider and larger range of fitness and leisure facilities at than is currently available in Shrewsbury,
- Appeal to a more diverse section of the community, in particular: children, women and girls and older people,
- Provide easier access to sports and fitness facilities for people with disabilities and older people, recognising intersectionality of needs,
- Provide a new, high quality pool facility for: swimming lessons, general swimming, water-based activities, swimming club use and County based competitions and galas,
- Improved financial viability of the Shrewsbury Sports Village site through an improved revenue stream.

11.2 The study has produced initial designs for the new facility and the design, construction and fit-out costs are estimated to be £28.86 million, and should it be approved, would take 3 years to complete the design, build and open to the public. The additional revenue generated would be sufficient to re-pay the Capital borrowing and generate a modest budget saving.

11.3 The Public Consultation was transparent and inclusive and has tested whether the proposal aligns with the Shrewsbury community's needs and aspirations. The feedback gathered has been instrumental in shaping the project's direction, with the community's voice playing a central role in the planning and development stages. Huge thanks are extended to the many individuals and organisations that turned out to drop-in sessions and provided valuable feedback through their survey responses.

11.4 This is also an opportunity for the Council to confirm that no decision regarding the future of the Quarry facility has been made. The Council will look at future options for the Quarry site once the SSV project is sufficiently advanced, which would be subject to a separate consultation in due course.

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

Cabinet 17 January 2024, Sports Village Transformation

Cabinet 14 December 2020, Future Swimming Provision in Shrewsbury

Local Member: Councillor Kevin Pardy – Sundorne

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Public consultation presentation materials

Appendix 2 – Report of Public Consultation Results

Appendix 3 – Swim England standards for competition pools

Appendix 4 – Summary of Feasibility Report

Appendix 5 - Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Appendix 6 – Business Case

Appendix 7 – Shrewsbury Town Council - Minutes of the Recreation and Leisure Committee held on 8th Mat 2024