



**Economy and
Environment Scrutiny
13th November 2025
Cabinet 21st January
2026
Council 26th February
2026**

Item

Public



Sports Village Development

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):		Cllr James Owen	

1. Synopsis

This report presents proposals for the transformation of the Shrewsbury Sports Village. The proposal is to develop a major extension containing a range of swimming, health and fitness facilities that will appeal to a wider range of users and so better meet the needs of Shropshire residents. The transformation will make the Sports Village more financially and environmentally sustainable.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. Council on 26 September 2024 agreed an initial Capital budget of £2.248 million to appoint a design and build team, develop detailed designs and prepare a planning application for a major extension to the Shrewsbury Sports Village. It was agreed that the project would return to Council at a later date; once planning permission had been secured and a firm cost to complete the build had been obtained; to seek agreement on whether to proceed with the construction stage of the project.

- 2.2. The designs are sufficiently advanced now that a decision needs to be made by the Cabinet and Council on whether to proceed the construction.
- 2.3. The proposed approach will maintain all the current facilities at the Sports Village 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. The scope has been amended following comments from the public consultation and Members in 2024. This will include:
- a. 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, a pool pod for wheel chair users and a half pool sized moveable floor to allow the maximum number of different uses for the pool but still allow diving at swimming galas and competitions.
 - b. 17 x 10 metre studio teaching pool with easy access steps, moveable floor and wheel-chair pool pod with adjacent children’s splash play area.
 - c. Seating and space in the main pool hall sufficient to hold county level competitions including at least 250 Spectators and 250 Competitors as recommended by Swim England for competition pools (see Appendix 1).
 - d. A changing village with private changing cubicles including family changing; two separate group changing rooms for school and club groups. The changing village will be configured to allow it to be divided into separate male and female changing areas if and when required. A full range of private and pre-swim showers and separate male, female and all gender toilets.
 - e. The changing rooms will include a Changing Places facility for disabled people who require the support of a carer as well as separate disabled toilets and changing rooms.
 - f. A new reception area and with seating area overlooking the studio pool and splash play area to encourage family use.
 - g. On the second floor there will be a new 130 station fitness suite together with a dance studio and immersive studio to host a full range of group activities.
 - h. There will be a new cycle spin studio on the ground floor and a new larger children's activity play area to cater for wider range of age groups. The existing cafe will be maintained.
 - i. A wellness studio is proposed on the ground floor. This will be a small private specialist gym using power supported fitness equipment. This is designed to support elderly, disabled or convalescent users for whom a fitness gym is not appropriate.

- j. Additional car parking spaces will be created close to the football pitches to cater for peak weekend usage and will be more environmentally sustainable by using a grasscrete type covering rather than tarmac.
 - k. 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. The new facility would be powered by electricity and will make use of photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps to minimise the carbon footprint.
 - l. The project would include landscape enhancements, tree planting and demolition of the former caretaker's house which is unsafe and become a focus for anti-social behaviour.
- 2.4. At the Cabinet meeting on 11th September 2024, Members discussed and asked the project to investigate the feasibility of adding solar panels over the Sports Village car parks. A case study from Wharfedale community hospital in Otley was recently implemented for £1.1 million and saved £75K per annum. A similar scheme could be implemented at Sports Village but would need an additional £1.1 - 1.2M of capital borrowing.
- 2.5. In addition, Members requested that project investigate the feasibility of making the original Sports Village building all electric. Such a decarbonisation scheme could be implemented for an additional £3m of capital. Unfortunately, the Government funding scheme (PSDS) is no longer available and such a large investment may be better spent at bigger gas users on the Council estate. An alternative approach to Decarbonisation would be implementing a local heat network scheme at the Sports Village and local neighbourhood utilising biochar which could be pursued as a stand alone project.
- 2.6. A public consultation on these proposals was run 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. 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.
- 2.7. 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. A full report of the consultation is in Appendix 2, and the headlines are summarised below:
- a. 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).
 - b. Swimming pools - the majority of respondents from both surveys (73% in the main survey and 89% of youth survey respondents) were "very satisfied" or "satisfied"

c. The consultation responses suggest that the new facilities will be more popular than the existing offerings. In particular:

- I. 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.
- II. The 2 new gym and dance studios were also popular among both respondent groups, with 38% and 34%
- III. 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.
- IV. The new wellness and toning centre was popular among main survey respondents, with 39% saying they would be most likely to use this facility.

2.8. The cost to complete the detailed design are now estimated to be £2.003 million. Now that the designs are sufficiently advanced, it is estimated that the total cost to complete the construction and fit out will be an additional £27.096 million This gives a total project cost estimate of £29.099 million; as summarised in the table below.

Item	Design Stage Committed	Build Stage Cost to Complete	Total Project Cost
<i>Council Costs</i>	£298,015	£96,000	£394,015
<i>Design Costs</i>	£1,363,275	£0	£1,363,275
<i>Build (Inc Inflation)</i>	£0	£24,565,203	£24,565,203
<i>Project Management</i>	£341,606	£477,776	£819,382
<i>Fittings & Equipment</i>	£0	£1,296,778	£1,296,778
<i>Contingency</i>	£0	£660,000	£660,000
Total Costs	£2,002,897	£27,095,757	£29,098,654

Summary of Project Cost Estimates

2.9. The council is also running a project in parallel to appoint a new operator for its Leisure Centres, there are dependencies between both projects which need to be aligned.

2.10. This is a capital project and is included in the capital Strategy as a priority project. The strategy proposes that £4.5 million is made available from both Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and capital receipts and that the balance is funded through borrowing.

2.11. If approved, it is estimated that the construction and fit out will take 19 months to complete and be open to the Public. For example, if approved at the Council meeting on 26th February 2026, the facility would be open to the public at the end of 2027.

2.12. If the project is not approved, the costs to date of £2,002,897 would be written off to the Council's revenue account.

2.13. No Council decision nor formal consultation has been undertaken on the future of the Quarry Pool, which will be of significant concern to many Members. The building is end of life and not financially viable but has a strong local following and plays an important role in the community. Closure and disposal or transfer would support the business case for SSV but comes with other risks and lowers the social value of our offer. Rebuilding as a community pool could be implemented – but with a financial impact on the overall scheme. The new Administration acknowledges that the SSV scheme and the Quarry are linked and have asked officers for several options to be investigated regarding continued community swimming provision in central Shrewsbury. This will come back to Scrutiny at a future stage.

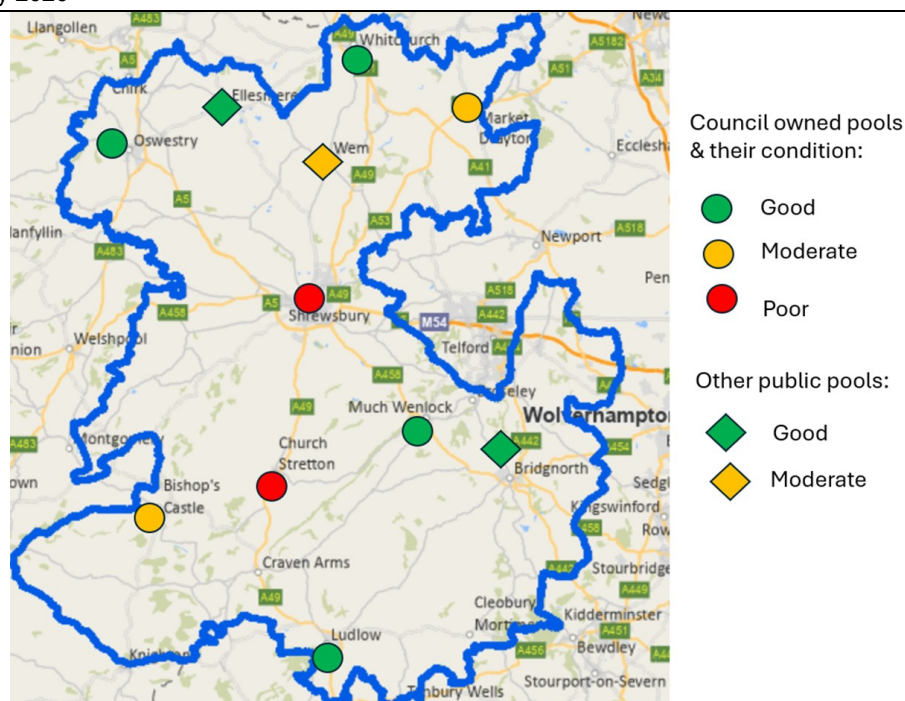
3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the proposals within the report which will be taken to Cabinet on 21 January 2026 and Council on 26th February 2026 for a final decision on whether to proceed with the proposed recommendations to borrow and develop the Sports Village.
- 3.2. We invite the Scrutiny Committee to open communications on decarbonising the site via the Solar Panels and the Heat Network. Although they would be separate projects they could be run in parallel to the main project.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The quality of council leisure and pool facilities varies across the County, with excellent new facilities in Whitchurch and good to medium quality centres in the main market towns. Investment is being made in pool facilities at Bishops Castle and Market Drayton to sustain swimming at these key locations. Shrewsbury does however lag behind as the existing Quarry pool and Fitness centre built in the late 1960's is now end of life and significant structural failures in recent years have resulted in long closures and high repair costs. There is a risk that these outages and costs will become worse in the near future.

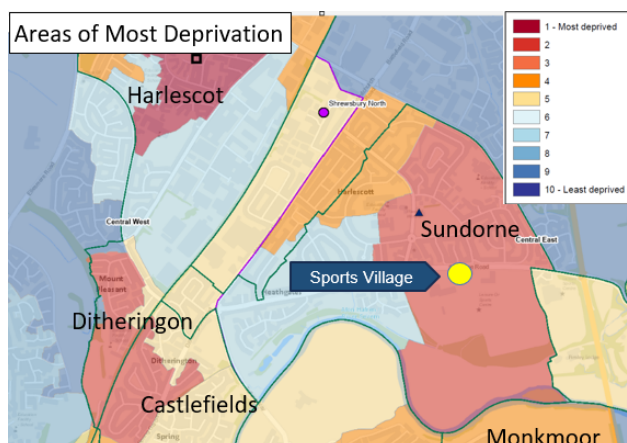


Summary of Public Pool and fitness provision in Shropshire

- 4.2. 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:
- The 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.
 - The need to making the new facility a low energy and all electric solution – reducing operating costs and making a significant contribution to the Council's carbon neutral target.
 - The need to make new fitness facilities available to people with disabilities and groups not previously catered for by the current Sports Village offerings.
 - The need for new swimming facilities, to address the risk posed by the aging Quarry Pool; providing continuity for schools swimming and making a facility which meets the standards necessary to hold county level swimming competitions.
- 4.3. The need to address these issues has become financially critical both because of the scale of operating subsidy required to keep both facilities open; but also, the compound effect of inflation is making any future replacement less financially viable. The costs of the Sports Village extension proposed here will increase by £1 million per annum at current inflating rates.
- 4.4. Continuity of swimming provision is essential if primary schools in Shrewsbury and Central Shropshire are to continue to meet their obligations to provide swimming

lessons. It is a Key Stage 2 requirement that all children should be able to swim 25 metres before they leave primary school.

- 4.5. The proposal to locate the new swimming and additional fitness facilities in Sundorne demonstrates that the Council would be investing where social need is greatest. The evidence shows that 30% of the households within a 15- minute walk of the Sports Village are from deprived households and the Districts within North Shrewsbury: Harlescott, Castlefields and Ditherington, Monkmoor and Sundorne represent amongst the most deprived areas in the County.



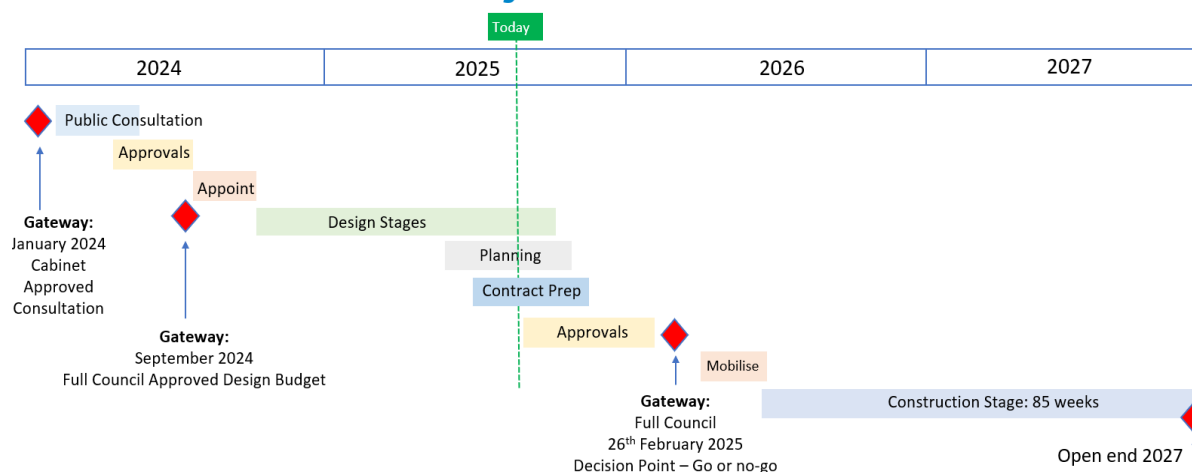
Ranking of Wards in North-East Shrewsbury Place Plan Area in metrics

Indicator of Deprivation	Harlescott	Castlefields & Ditherington	Monkmoor	Sundorne
Unemployment	1	1	12	3
Child Poverty	1	2	4	6
Income Deprivation	1	4	2	6
IMD Scope (2019)	1	4	2	5
Long term unemployment	8	4	3	7
General fertility rate	2	4	21	5
Low birth rate	17	24	2	31
A&E attendance- under 5s	9	20	10	16
Emergency Admissions- under 5s	13	27	3	11
Emergency admissions for injuries under 15s	1	5	39	11
Average Rank (1 is county worst)	1	3	4	5

Deprivation indices in North Shrewsbury

- 4.6. If approved, at the Council meeting on 26th February 2026, the new facilities would be open to the public by the end of 2027.

Project Timescale



- 4.7. Alignment to the Shropshire Plan:

Shropshire Plan Goals	Strategic Fit
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.	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.
The Shropshire Plan - Healthy Economy: Develop a vibrant destination that attracts people to live in, work in, learn in and visit. Deliver excellent connectivity and infrastructure, and increasing access to social contact, employment, education, services, and leisure opportunities	The new swimming and fitness facilities are significant to attracting investment and new residents. The facility will provide major new leisure opportunities for Shrewsbury and the surrounding communities.
The Shropshire Plan - Healthy Environment: reduce our carbon footprint, including the adoption of low-carbon energy for our assets and for communities	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
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.	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.
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.	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.

4.8. Risk Table:

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 3.8% (August 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, but inflation will increase the project costs by £1 million per annum if delayed.
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. The scope of the project will be fixed at that detailed in this report.

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 potential closure of the Quarry Pool. The report suggests commencing a new project to look at future options for the Quarry which is end of life.
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, to date there have been 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. Financial Implications

5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members 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. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):

- scaling down initiatives,
- changing the scope of activities,
- delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
- extending delivery timescales.

5.2. The detailed designs are nearing completion, and the cost to complete these designs are now estimated to be £2.003 million. Now that the designs are sufficiently advanced, it is estimated that the total cost to complete the construction and fit out will be an additional £27.096 million This gives a total project cost estimate of £29.099 million; as summarised in the table below.

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<i>Total Costs</i>	<i>£2,002,897</i>	<i>£27,095,757</i>	<i>£29,098,654</i>

Summary of Project Cost Estimates

5.3. This project is included in the current capital strategy as a priority project. The strategy now envisages that £4.5 million will be made available from a combination

of capital receipts and CIL funding. The remainder of the funding will be sought from public borrowing. The borrowing would have to be repaid over a 40- year period.

- 5.4. Officers have consulted Sport England and unfortunately there is currently no grant funding available in Shropshire, as grant aid is only being assigned to specific areas of the country as part of their Places Strategy. However, this strategy is currently under review and if opportunities arise for Government funding the project will apply as any contribution will reduce borrowing costs and improve the revenue position.
- 5.5. If the project is not approved, the costs to date (£2,002,897) would be written off to the Council's revenue account.
- 5.6. The key challenges for agreeing a viable business case will be agreeing which budgets can be assigned to the project, where the capital receipt will come from and how much CIL funding is available. The Council will then have to approve these allocations.
- 5.7. The draft business case presented here looks at the revenue impact of various funding scenarios for comparative purposes. These include:
- Option 0 – Status Quo: Not proceeding with the project would result in the design costs being written off to the revenue account and increasing costs for maintaining the quarry.
 - Option 1 - Assumes the project is funded entirely by borrowing, with the existing Sports Village subsidy being set against the borrowing costs.
 - Option 2 - Is the same as Option 1, but we also include the subsidy from the Quarry pool to set against the repayments.
 - Option 3 - is the same as Option 2, but we include a Capital Receipt of up to £4 million and a contribution of £0.5 Million from the CIL – this is the Option included in the current Capital Strategy.
 - Option 4 – This is the same as option 3, but the contribution from CIL is increased to £3 million which significantly reduces level of borrowing and thus repayments. This also generates the best revenue position for the council.
- 5.8. The borrowing implications for each of these options is shown below.

	Options - Costs in £ Millions	Borrowing	Cap Receipts	CIL	% Borrowing	Annual Borrowing Repayments	Breakeven Year
Option 0	Status Quo - do not proceed	£0.000	£0.000	£0.000	NA	£0.000	NA
Option 1	Sundorne Budget	£29.099	£0.000	£0.000	100%	-£1.581	NA
Option 2	All Budgets	£29.099	£0.000	£0.000	100%	-£1.581	12
Option 3	All Budgets & Capital Receipt, some CIL	£24.856	£4.000	£0.500	85%	-£1.351	6
Option 4	All Budgets & Capital Receipt, more CIL	£22.356	£4.000	£3.000	77%	-£1.215	1

- 5.9. The revenue impact of each of these options is shown below.

	Options - Costs in £ Millions	Ave NPV 25Yr	Ave NY 25Yr	5 Year Revenue	25 Year Revenue	25 Year NPV
Option 0	Status Quo - do not proceed	-£0.163	£0.000	-£2.429	-£5.319	-£4.066
Option 1	Sundorne Budget	-£0.292	-£0.014	-£2.457	-£9.959	-£7.294
Option 2	All Budgets	£0.044	£0.004	-£0.674	£3.052	£1.112
Option 3	All Budgets & Capital Receipt, some CIL	£0.193	£0.012	£0.248	£8.586	£4.814
Option 4	All Budgets & Capital Receipt, more CIL	£0.280	£0.016	£0.791	£11.846	£6.996

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency on 16th May 2019. This commitment was accompanied by a strategic framework adopted later that year in December, aiming for net-zero corporate carbon performance by 2030. The council's climate strategy and Action Plan was adopted in in December 2020, which outlines how the council intends to reduce its carbon footprint and adapt services to be more resilient to climate impacts.
- 6.2. Leisure centres are amongst the type of buildings which generate the most CO2 on the Council's estate; particularly when they include swimming pools. The table below shows the main CO2 producing council buildings which are in operation (Data excludes Shirehall which is now closed, Whitchurch pool which is all-electric and Bishops Castle Leisure centre which is oil fired and subject to a decarbonisation project).

Ranking	Site/Buildings	GIA (m3)	Gas Annual Consumption (kWh)	Gas Annual Consumption (kWh/m2GIA)	Gas Annual CO2 (tCO2e)
1	Ludlow Leisure Centre	3,642	2,777,355	763	509
2	Quarry Swimming & Fitness Centre	5,294	2,533,143	478	464
3	Oswestry Leisure Centre	4,112	1,753,830	427	321
4	Market Drayton Swimming & Fitness Centre	1,877	1,017,417	542	186
5	Theatre Severn	7,558	977,157	129	179
6	Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre	3,456	781,096	226	143
7	Shrewsbury Sports Village & Bowl Centre (Current buildings)	4,325	565,634	131	104
8	Oswestry Library	1,527	272,893	179	50
9	Shrewsbury Library	1,738	221,840	128	41
10	Ludlow Library	2,889	197,442	68	36

Table of Council buildings producing most CO2

- 6.3. It is proposed that the extension to the Sports Village set out in this project will be an all-electric facility to minimise its carbon-footprint. Air source heat pumps will be used to optimise energy use, and the building will be insulated to high standards,

including triple glazing. Photovoltaic cells will be placed on the new roof to generate electricity to offset demand.

- 6.4. 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
- 6.5. At the Cabinet meeting on 11th September 2024, Members suggested and discussed a number of additional requirements to support the council's programme to achieve carbon net zero. This included to make the whole of the sports village complex all electric, and also to look at installing overhead photo-voltaic cells over the car parks. The Cabinet agreed these were worthwhile proposals and should be explored in the design stages of the project.
- 6.6. The project has undertaken an assessment of the feasibility of making the existing Sports Village buildings all electric. This would require additional insulation being added to the building fabric and converting the current gas boiler heating system to an all-electric solution with the deployment of additional air-source heat pumps. The initial estimates are that this programme of works would costs an additional £3 million. This is similar to the costs and proposal being implemented at the SpArC centre in Bishops Castle. Unfortunately, the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme (PSDS) which provided 70% funding for the SpArC project is now no longer available and so the entire £3 million would need to be funded through additional capital borrowing.
- 6.7. Because the Carbon ranking of the Sports Village is 7th amongst the Council's building estate, such levels of borrowing may be better spent on Council buildings which have a higher ranking.
- 6.8. The project has however undertaken initial investigations into alternative methods to de-carbonise the existing Sports Village. One option would be to develop a local area heat network making use of biomass as a fuel and utilising a Pyrolysis plant to create both heat and biochar as a bi-product. There are potential financial benefits to such an approach and it is recommended that this option is further investigated as a means of providing cheaper heat or electricity to the Sports Village as a parallel project. Such a scheme would require planning permission and a detailed design and tender process if it were to progress.
- 6.9. The proposal to install overhead photovoltaic cells on the existing car parks at the Sports Village is an approach that has been looked at by other Councils in the UK, but the costs are high. A case study of a recent similar sized project with the NHS cost £1.1 million to implement and generated £75,000 in annual energy savings (See Appendix 5).



Case Study for Car Park Solar Panels – By Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Otley

6.10. The NHS project was supported by the former government PSDS scheme which is now no-longer available. However, a basic business case suggests that the savings would be sufficient to balance the borrowing costs - see business case summary below. This report recommends that the project continues to develop such a proposal as an addition to the scope and budget if members wish to proceed and bring such proposals back to Cabinet and Council in due course.

Total Project cost estimate: **£1,100,000**
 Borrowing £1,100,000 Over 25 years
 Alternative funding £0

£m	Year 1 2026/27	Year 6 2031/32	Year 11 2036/37	Year 16 2041/42	Year 21 2046/47
EXPENDITURE	0.000	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)
Borrowing Repayments		(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)
INCOME / SAVINGS	0.015	0.085	0.096	0.109	0.123
NET INCOME / EXPENDITURE	0.015	0.007	0.018	0.031	0.045

25 Year NPV (£m) **0.360**
 Average Yield (25 years) **2.29%**

Outline Business Case summary for Car Park Overhead Solar Panels

7. Background

- 7.1. Planning for new council swimming and fitness facilities in Shrewsbury have been in the planning stages for over 20 years but to date proposals have not progressed beyond the initial design stages due to a lack of political consensus.
- 7.2. In 2020 the Council initiated a Swimming in Shropshire working group which resulted in the publication of the Leisure Facilities Strategy 2019 to 2038 (see Appendix 3). This strategy recommended the priority for the County should be developing new swimming and fitness faculties at Whitchurch, a new pool at the Sports Village and a major new pool facility at the Quarry. The feasibility work for all three facilities was completed but the costs and scope had escalated to a cost of £70 million at 2020 prices (see Appendix 4), excluding fit out costs.

Swimming in Shropshire Feasibility

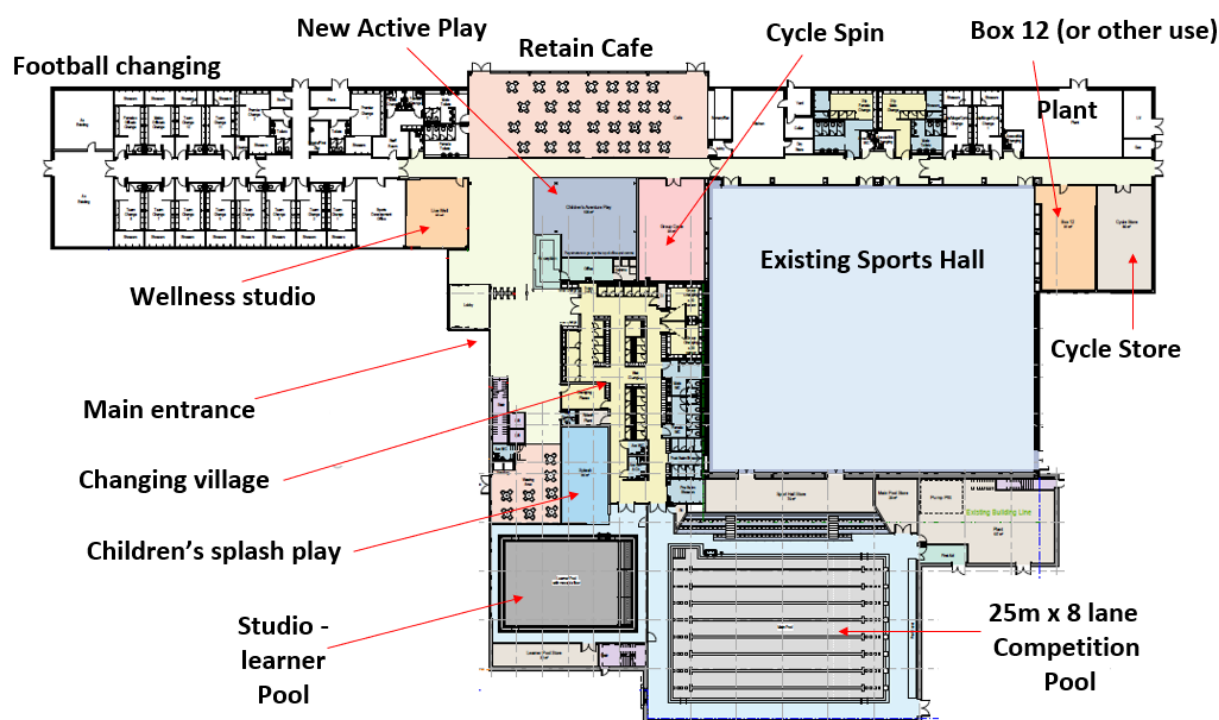
Site	Initial Cost Estimate - 2022
Sports Village	£24,936,300
Quarry redevelopment	£32,558,249
Whitchurch	£13,100,000
Total Estimate	£70,594,549

- 7.3. The then Cabinet concluded that developing all three facilities was unaffordable but that the Council would progress the Whitchurch project as a priority because the pool had closed due to a serious pool tank failure. At the Council meeting of 22nd September 2022 it was agreed to proceed with the new Whitchurch pool and fitness centre alone. This project completed opened to the public on 19th March 2025 at a total capital cost for design, development and fit out of £14.06 million.
- 7.4. Meanwhile, the Cabinet progressed with plans for a scaled back pool and fitness facility as a means of transforming the fortunes of the Shrewsbury Sport Village and ensure continuity of provision of swimming in Shrewsbury because of increasing building failures and increasing costs at the Quarry.
- 7.5. A new feasibility study focused on the Sports Village transformation was prepared and presented to Cabinet on 17 January 2024. It was agreed that these proposals should be subject to a public consultation. The consultation ran for 8 weeks from 15th March until 8th May 2024 and the results are summarised below and presented in Appendix 3.
- 7.6. The decision to hold a public consultation on the Sports Village proposals were challenged by Councillor Roger Green and a further detailed report was presented to Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2024.
- 7.7. The results of the Public Consultation (Appendix 2) were presented to Cabinet on 11th September and Council on 26 September 2024. The reports included a cost estimate for the project of £28.86 million. It was recognised that the construction phase would occur after the council elections in May 2025 and it was therefore proposed that Council would only approve the costs for the design stages of £2.248 million. It was agreed that final approval would be subject to a report to Council once

the detailed designs were completed, planning permission had been determined and firm costs for the construction and fit out had been obtained.

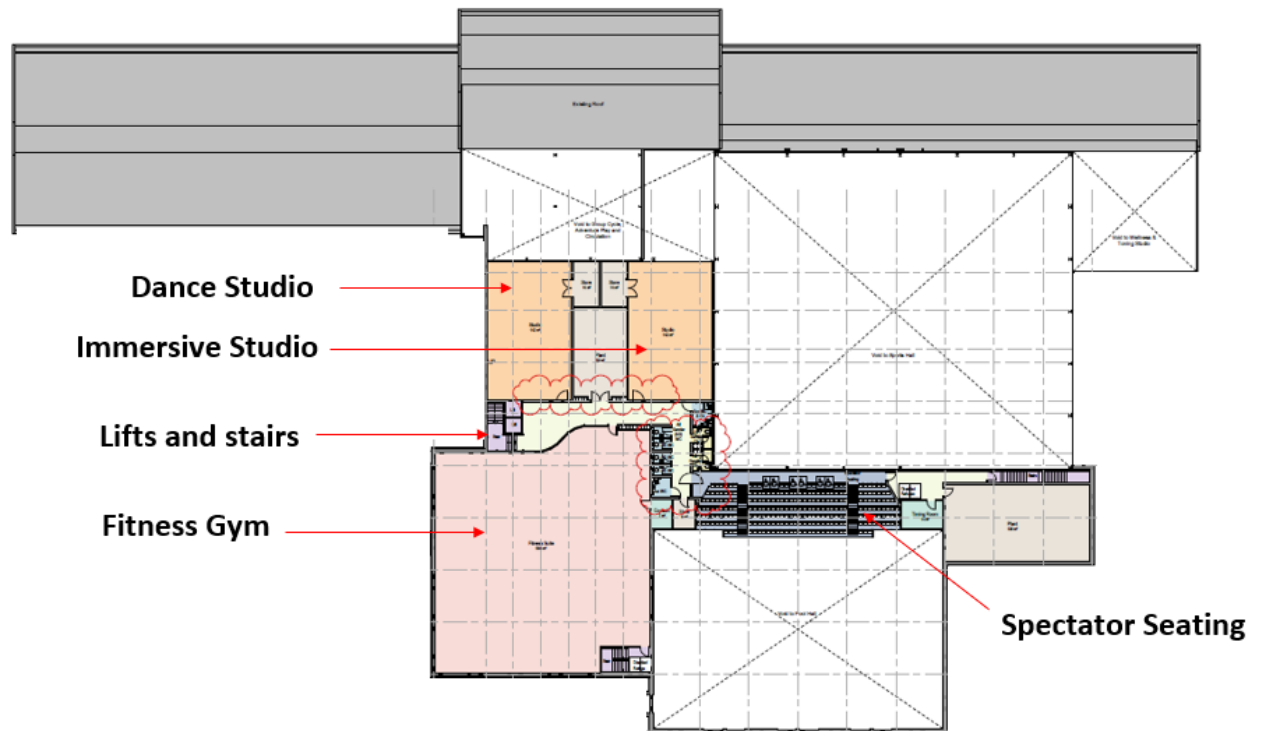
- 7.8. Following Council on 26th September 2024 and a selection exercise was organised through the UK Leisure Framework. A team led by Pellikaan Construction Ltd, with Robert Limbrick Architects was appointed to complete the detail project designs and prepare the planning application. The Northern Planning Committee are anticipated to consider the planning application at their meeting on 18th November 2025, but the highlights of the design proposals are summarised below.
- 7.9. The ground floor extends from the current sports village and develops the new facilities on current car park space.

First Floor Design



- 7.10. A first-floor extension is proposed to contain the fitness gym, dance and activity studios and access to spectator seating. This will be accessible by stairs and two lifts from the new foyer.

First Floor Designs

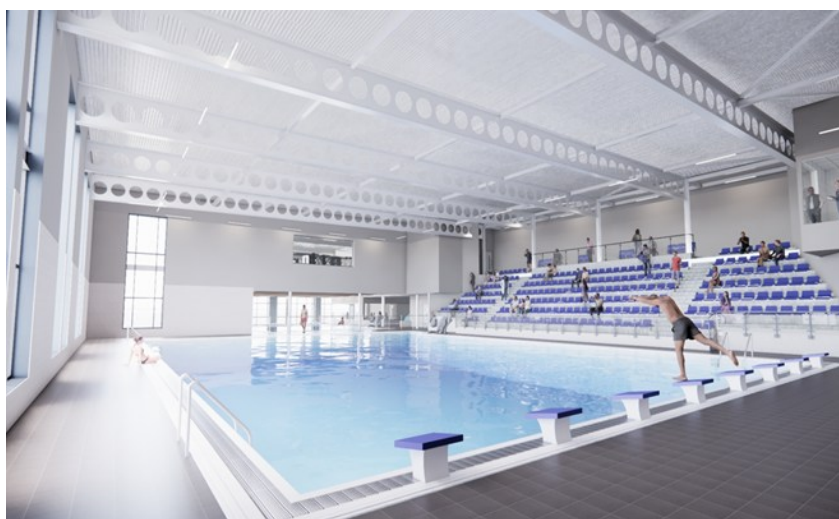


7.11. The following visuals illustrate the exterior of the building.





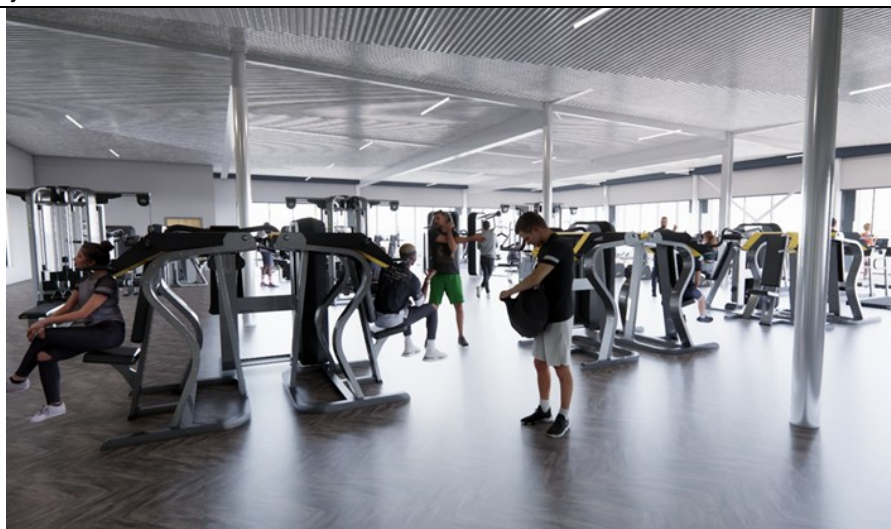
7.12. The following visuals illustrate the interior of the building.



Proposed main competition standard pool



Proposed studio learner pool



Proposed Fitness Gym



Proposed dance studio

8. Results of Public Consultation

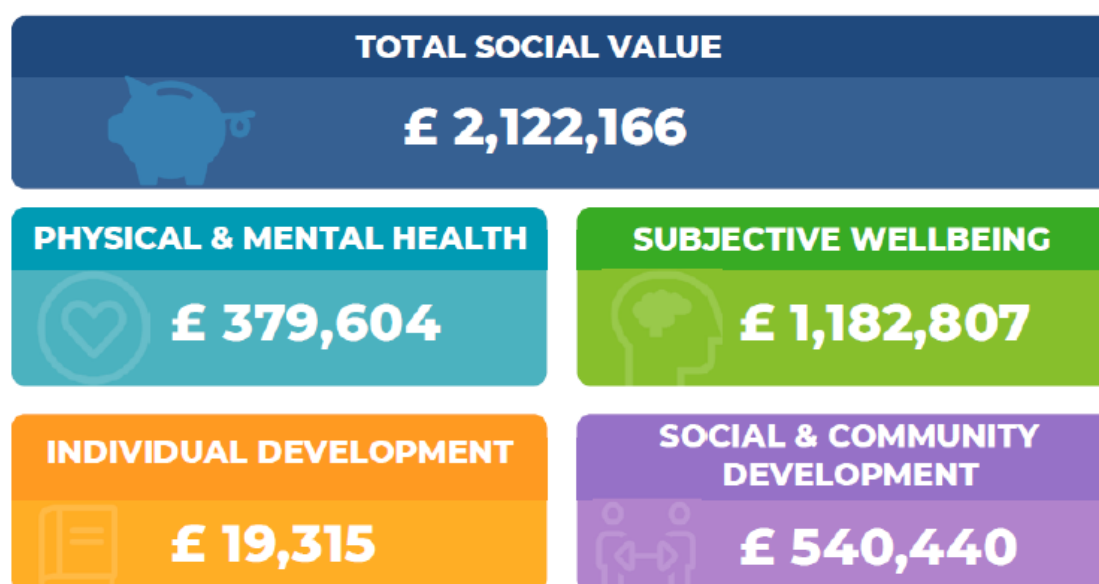
- 8.1. A public consultation on the proposals was run for 8 weeks from 15th March until 8th May 2024. Consultation was conducted through two online surveys: one for the general public and one for children and young people. Paper copies of the surveys were also available at the Quarry Swimming and Fitness 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.
- 8.2. 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
- 8.3. 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. A full report of the consultation is in the appendix.

- 8.4. **Views on Swimming Proposals:** 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%.
- 8.5. **Use of Other Facilities:** Of the other new facilities proposed, 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.
- 8.6. The two new studios were also popular among both respondent groups, for 38% and 34% of the respondents in both groups.
- 8.7. 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.
- 8.8. 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.
- 8.9. 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.
- 8.10. **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%). The main themes in the comments were:

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%

9. Social value, demand and wellbeing benefits

- 9.1. It is a goal of the Shropshire Plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the population in Shropshire and making a range of options available to all sectors of the population is key to these plans. This is vital if the council is to reduce the financial impact of an aging population on council and also NHS finances.
- 9.2. It is established that participation in exercise will improve public health. These benefits can be modelled and a financial attributed to reduced cost of healthcare. Sport England working with the University of Sheffield and 4Global have and the results of an assessment together with a demand assessment by Alliance Leisure are presented in Appendix 6. This show that:
- The current sports Village facilities and usage generate a Social Value of £918,801 per annum.
 - The new Sports village proposal would increase the annual Social Value to £2,122,166 an increase of 131% from 15,321 regular participants. This will include benefits to: physical and mental health, individual development, subjective wellbeing and also improve social and community development (see figure x below)
 - The proposals could increase fitness memberships by 260% to 2,903 reaching a far greater number of people and increasing revenue
 - The typical drive time for people to reach a swimming pool is 20 minutes, and 217,543 Shropshire residents fall within that catchment area or over two thirds of the county's population – making the transformed Sports Village a strategic and countywide facility.
 - The sports village is located to residential areas and there are 7,745 residents that live within a 20 minute walk, including a number of schools.



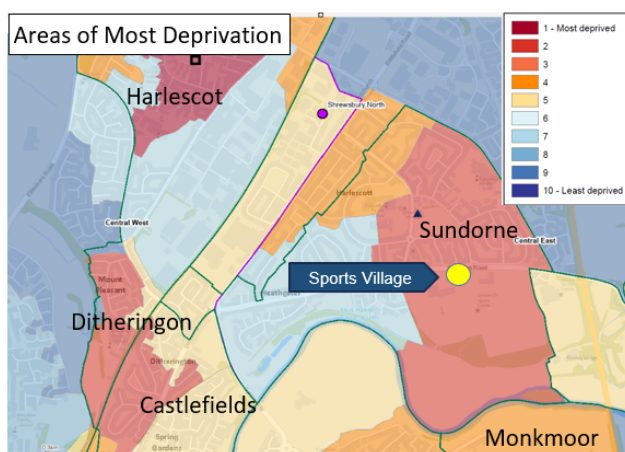
Social Value assessment of Sports Village proposals by 4Global

Outcome	Description
Physical and mental health	
CHD/ stroke	Reduced risk (participants 16+)
Breast cancer	Reduced risk (female participants 16+)
Colon cancer	Reduced risk (participants 16+)
Type 2 diabetes	Reduced risk (participants 16+)
Hip fractures	Reduced risk (participants 65+)
Back pain	Reduced risk (participants 16+)
Dementia	Reduced risk (participants 16+)
Depression	Reduced risk (participants 16+)
Injuries	Increased risk (participants 16+) – this is a negative value in the model

	Description
Subjective wellbeing	
Subjective wellbeing	Improved life satisfaction (participants 16+)
Individual development	
Educational attainment	Improved educational attainment (participants 11 - 18)
Human capital	Enhanced human capital (average additional salary for graduates)
Social and community development	
Crime	Reduced criminal incidences (male participants 10-24)
Social capital	Improved social networks, trust and reciprocity

Factors used to assess Social Value in the model

9.3. Whilst life expectancy in Shropshire is generally good there are significant ward-level disparities, with the wards in the north-east of Shrewsbury having significantly poorer health outcomes. For example, there is a 10-year life expectancy gap between the population of Sundorne (75.3 years) compared to Copthorne (85.8 years). Conditions such as Asthma, Congestive Heart Disease and Hypertension are high in Shrewsbury and Smoking in the north-east of Shrewsbury is higher than average. The Shrewsbury JSNA highlights major health inequalities linked to social-economic deprivation which is a problem in the surrounding wards of Harlescott, Castlefields, Ditherington Sundorne and Monkmoor. Harlescott is one of the most deprived areas nationally.



Ranking of Wards in North-East Shrewsbury Place Plan Area in metrics

Indicator of Deprivation	Harlescott	Castlefields & Ditherington	Monkmoor	Sundorne
Unemployment	1	1	12	3
Child Poverty	1	2	4	6
Income Preprivation	1	4	2	6
IMD Scope (2019)	1	4	2	5
Long term unemployment	8	4	3	7
General fertility rate	2	4	21	5
Low birth rate	17	24	2	31
A&E attendance- under 5s	9	20	10	16
Emergency Admissions- under 5s	13	27	3	11
Emergency admissions for Injuries under 15s	1	5	39	11
Average Rank (1 is county worst)	1	3	4	5

Summary of Deprivation Indices in North Shrewsbury

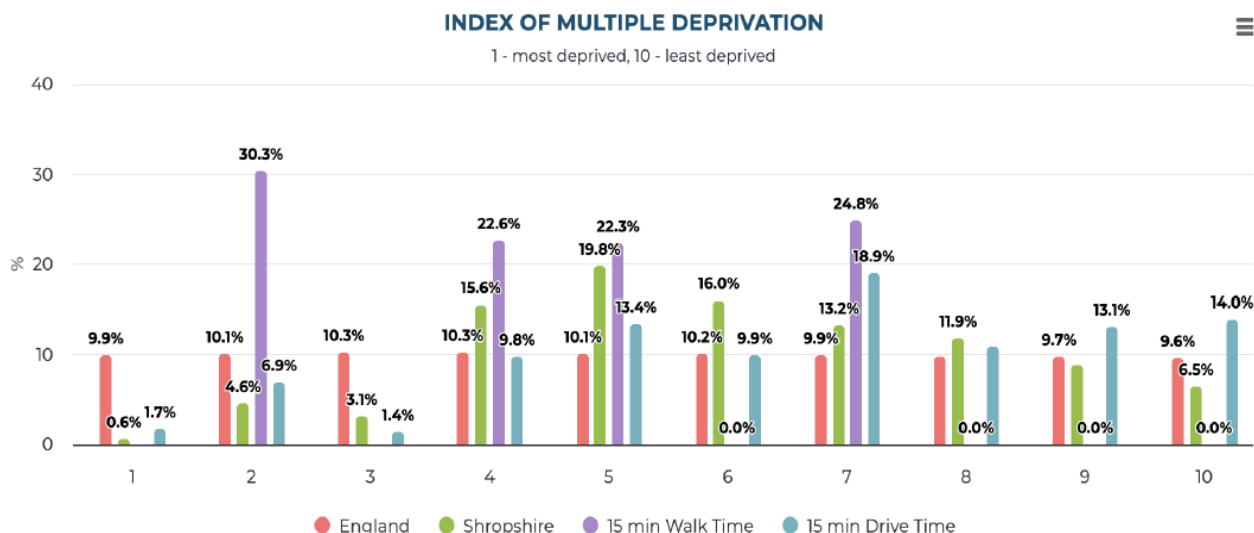
9.4. A survey conducted as part of Shropshire' JSNA reported experiencing challenges to being physically active, the most commonly cited barriers included:

- Time constraints (35%)
- Underlying health issues (34%)
- Cost of facilities (26%)
- Lack of adequate local facilities (26%)
- Mobility issues (15%)
- Lack of motivation (14%)
- Safety Concerns about exercising outside (14%)

9.5. Whilst the most affluent areas of Shrewsbury and Shropshire will have access to private fitness facilities, making public facilities and healthy life choices to the

population of north-east Shrewsbury within walking distance will generate greater health benefit outcomes. These benefits will be enhanced with referrals for physical and mental health services and create opportunities for partnerships between public bodies and the transformed Sports Village.

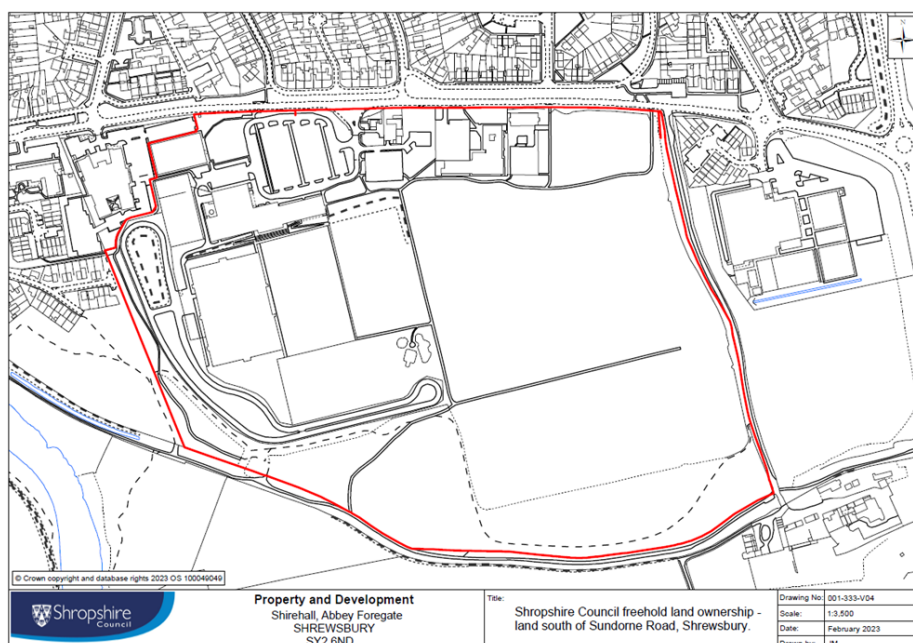
- 9.6. Modelling of the socio-economic make up of the Sport Village catchment area shows that 30% of people living within a 15-minute walk of the Sports Village live in areas of high levels of deprivation, with 10% of those within a 15 minute drive also being within the most deprived groups.



Deprivation levels for population within 15 mins drive and walk from Sports Village

10. Site details, Accessibility, Parking and Transport

- 10.1. The Shrewsbury Sports Village site is wholly owned by Shropshire Council, and no external agreements will be required with adjacent landowners to complete the project.



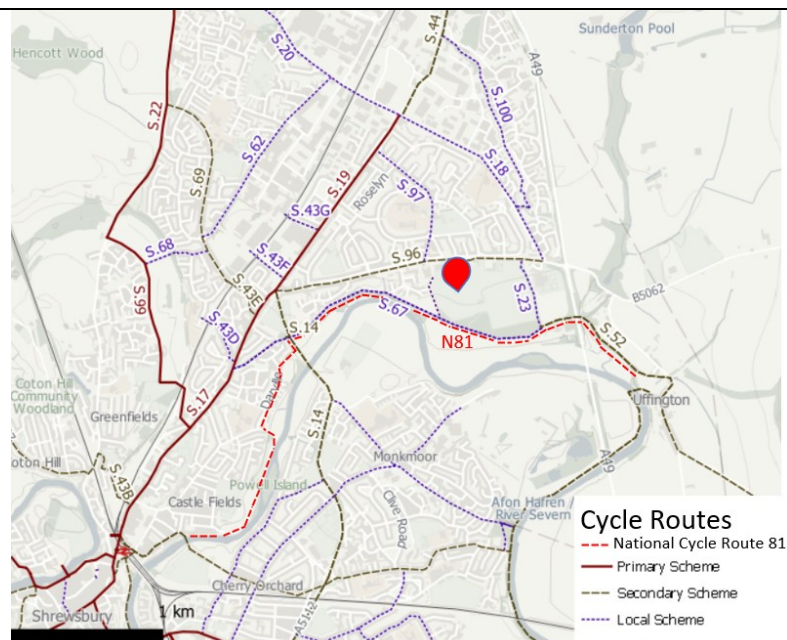
Shropshire Council Land Ownership

- 10.2. The existing sports Village development was part funded by both Sport England and the Football Foundation. The Council is consulting both bodies regarding the proposals in accordance with the original grant agreements entered into by Shrewsbury and Atcham Brough Council. The terms of these grants are due to expire in the coming years.
- 10.3. The Shrewsbury Sports Village is located on the northeast of Shrewsbury on Sundorne Road and close to the Shrewsbury Eastern by-pass providing good road access



Location of Shrewsbury Sports Village

- 10.4. The Shrewsbury Sports Village is also known locally as the Sports Village, Severn Fields or Sundorne. It is proposed that the *Shrewsbury Sports Village* name should be simplified and shortened to the *Sports Village* to reflect its established standing but also recognise that it serves a wider user catchment area than Shrewsbury and reflect its role as a county facility.
- 10.5. The Shrewsbury sports Village is served by a number of Local Cycle routes linking the site to local communities and Shrewsbury town centre. National Cycle Route 81 passes along the site boundary and into the town centre (see plan below) .



Cycle routes serving the Shrewbury Sports Village

10.6. The Shrewsbury Sports Village is on the Arriva bus route 24 which links the site to local suburbs and the town centre. This is a route that receives Council subsidy, albeit like all buses does not run on Sundays. The project has had some discussions with the public transport team and will discuss options to improve the service if the project is approved.



Bus routes – Number 24 passes the Shrewsbury Sports Village

10.7. Of the points of concern raised in the public consultation and by the Town Council in response to the Planning Application was the availability of Car Parking spaces. Typically for leisure centres, most of the users attending the site are expected to

come by car. There are currently 340 car park spaces at the Shrewsbury Sport Village. This is typically more than enough to meet the needs for the current facilities. However, there are times during the football season or when events are being held at the Sports Village that car parks become full. In addition, the proposals involve building the extension on existing car park spaces. For this reason, the project is proposing to provide 100 additional temporary car parking to be used when *burst capacity* is needed. These new car parks will not be covered with tarmac which is bad for the environment and exacerbates run-off and flooding problems. But will be made of *Grasscrete* – a concrete matrix which is interspersed with soil and grass. The net effect will be that car park spaces overall will increase at the Sports Village from the current 340 spaces to 419 spaces, an increase of 23% - but 100 of these will be burst capacity using grasscrete. See plan below.



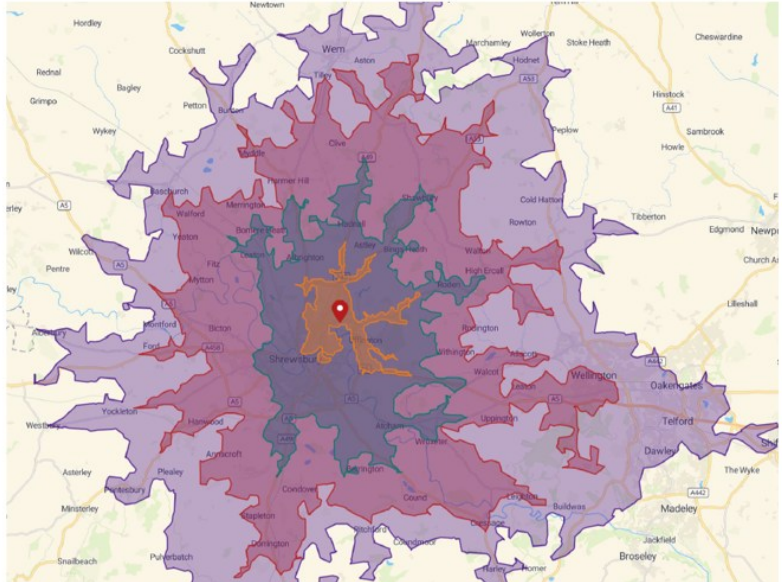
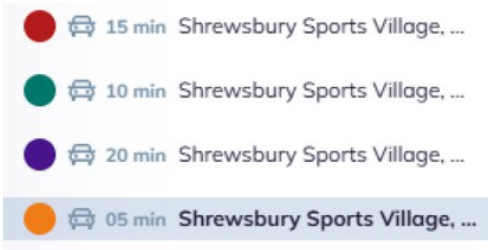
Current: 340 Spaces
Proposal: 419 spaces
ie: 79 (23%) increase
Inc Grasscrete: 100

Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation – Car Park Proposals

- 10.8. The project has modelled the accessibility of the Shrewsbury Sports Village site and this has demonstrated that the site is within a 20 minute drive to 217,543 people, this is over two thirds of the population of Shropshire. Making this a strategically important County wide facility.

Drive Time Catchment Maps

Drive Time (Mins) - Population of Catchment			
5	10	15	20
23,254	72,272	115,510	217,543

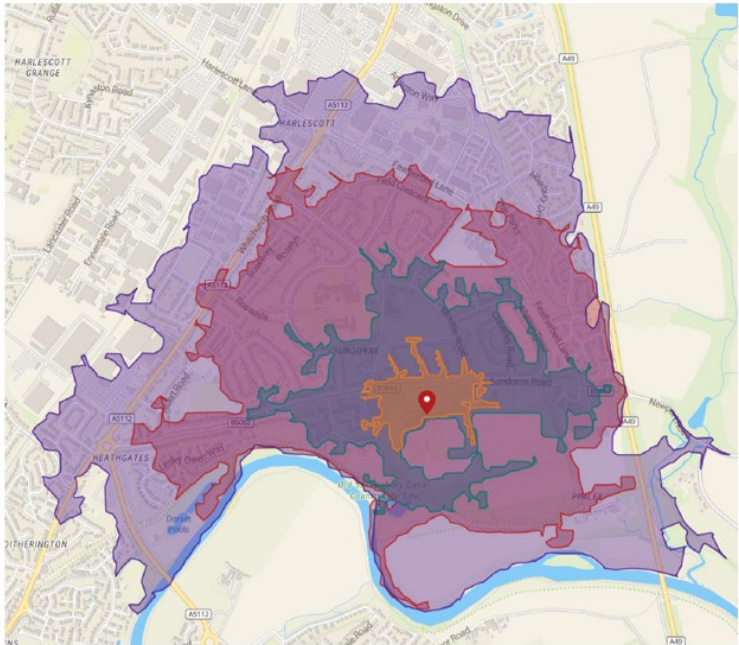
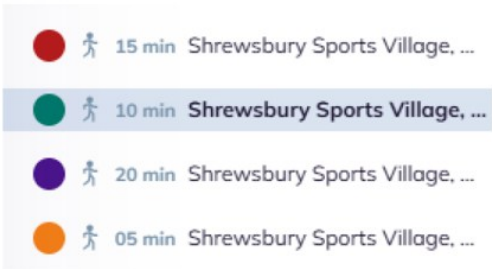


Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation – Accessibility by Car

10.9. The Shrewsbury Sports Village is in a sub-urban location and is within easy walking distance of a number of Primary Schools as well as local communities. The analysis show that there are 7,745 people within a 20-minute walk to the site. – see figure below.

Walk Time Catchment Maps

Walk Time (Mins) - Population of Catchment			
5	10	15	20
61	1,049	4,590	7,745



Shrewsbury Sports Village – Walking Distance

11. Town Centre Options and Future of the Quarry Pool

11.1. At the Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2024 posed a number of questions one of them being whether the Smithfield Road development had been considered as a new pool location:

“The report did not consider an option for the Smithfield development in the Town Centre. This will have a leisure offer and some have suggested that a swimming pool and sports complex on this site would draw people into town and also be attractive for those who would like to live in town.”

11.2. Currently there is no Capital project looking at the future of the Quarry Pool albeit an important rationale for the Sports Village Transformation project is that the Quarry Pool and Fitness Centre is over 50 years old and the building is end of life. This was discussed in some detail at the Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2025.

11.3. The use of Smithfield Road and the Riverside site as an alternative for a new Pool complex was originally considered but discounted as a possible location is a study undertaken in 2014 but dismissed (see Appendix 7). The limitation of the Riverside site as a location were most recently set out in the Scrutiny Committee report on 9th February 2024. The site is unsuitable because:

- a. Flood Risk - The Riverside site sits within Flood Zone 3 and has poor ground conditions with a water table very close to the ground surface. Any building on the Riverside site would need to be developed with a 3 metre floor risk in mind. A new facility on the site would need to be raised out of the flood zone, and this would apply to the base of the pool tank, adding to the construction cost.
- b. Environment Agency agreement – any development on the flood plain and or any development which penetrates the water table would require environment Agency agreement and a strong risk that these authorisations would not be agreed. Typically, such authorisations take at least one year to be determined, which would add to the inflation risk and cost of such a scheme.
- c. Conservation Area Aesthetics - If the pool tank is raised above the flood zone, this will significantly increase the construction costs and potentially create large areas of façade. The site is in a conservation area, so creating a massing and aesthetic that fits the Riverside.
- d. Financial Viability – Swimming pools on their own are generally not financially viable – and need to be developed along with other more financially viable end-uses such as gyms and studios.
- e. Opportunity Cost - A swimming pool on Riverside would take up most of the Phase 1 development area. Whilst Shropshire Council intends to anchor the development with the Multi Agency Hub, Plots 5 and 6 are currently intended to be private developer led. A swimming pool and associated fitness facilities would remove this opportunity

11.4. In summary - the challenges posed by a Riverside location are such that Officers are not recommending such a location is pursued.

11.5. Some Member have also challenged officers with looking at the vacant Pride Hill Shopping centre as a potential alternative location for a new Pool development instead of the Sports Village., The project has therefore commissioned Architects Roberts Limbrick and Structural engineers the Furness Partnership to undertake a site visit and initial assessment of the feasibility of this proposal (see Appendix 8).

- 11.6. The Pride Hill site is large and over several stories provides the potential for a range of Leisure activities which would be worthy of further investigation as a means to attract footfall to the town centre. However, the Pride Hill complex poses a number of engineering challenges is a more significant alteration were implement to install two swimming pools one of which is of Competition Standard. The site is built on a raft foundation which is supported by the hydraulic pressure exerted by the water table which is close to the surface - rather than on deep file foundations. Any significant alteration to the balance of the building would have a catastrophic impact on the building stability. Whilst not impossible to deliver, the likelihood that a team could be assembled to undertake the design and development risk is unlikely. In addition, the additional cost of converting Pride hill would likely cost double the cost of the comparable facilities proposed at the Sports Village.
- 11.7. In summary, officers do not recommend that Pride Hill is considered as an alternative location for new Pool facilities – but the site does offer opportunities for less structurally invasive leisure activities.
- 11.8. Finally, this report seeks to address the issue of the future of the Quarry pool and fitness Centre. No Council decision nor formal consultation has been undertaken on the future of the Quarry Pool, which will be of significant concern to many Members. The building is end of life and not financially viable but has a strong local following and plays an important role in the community. Closure and disposal or transfer would support the business case for SSV but comes with other risks and lowers the social value of our offer. Rebuilding as a community pool could be implemented – but with a financial impact on the overall scheme. The new Administration acknowledges that the SSV scheme and the Quarry are intrinsically linked, and have asked officers for several options to be investigated regarding continued community swimming provision in central Shrewsbury. This will come back to Scrutiny at a future stage.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1. The Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation Project proposes a major extension to enhance health and fitness facilities, aiming to increase accessibility, financial sustainability, and environmental performance. The project includes new pools, fitness studios, and wellness areas, designed to meet diverse community needs and support the council's carbon neutral goals.
- a. Project overview: The proposal includes an 8-lane competition pool, a teaching pool with splash play area, a 130-station fitness suite, dance and cycle studios, and a wellness studio for elderly and disabled users, alongside improved changing facilities and additional parking.
 - b. Sustainability goals: The new facility will be all electric, use photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps, and aim for BREEAM excellent standard to minimize carbon footprint and support net zero objectives. Additional measures like electric conversion of existing buildings and solar panels on car parks are being evaluated.

- c. Sustainability goals: The new facility will be all electric, use photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps, and aim for BREEAM excellent standard to minimize carbon footprint and support net zero objectives. Additional measures like electric conversion of existing buildings and solar panels on car parks are being evaluated.
- d. Public consultation: An eight-week consultation received 1,367 responses, with majority support for the proposals. Popular facilities include the fitness suite, studios, cycling studio, wellness centre, and children's play areas. Key concerns involved accessibility, cost, and uncertainty over the future of the Quarry Pool.
- e. Design and planning: Detailed designs by Pellikaan Construction Ltd and Robert Limbrick Architects include ground and first-floor extensions, with planning approval expected in October 2025. Visuals illustrate modern, accessible interiors and exteriors.
- f. Operational considerations: The project maintains existing facilities while adding new amenities to attract wider demographics and increase revenue, with a focus on environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

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

[Council 26th September 2024, Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation Proposals – Results of Public Consultation and Authority to Proceed with Detailed Design and Planning](#)

[Cabinet 17 January 2024. Sports Village Transformation - Proposals for new fitness and pool facilities at Sundorne](#)

[Council 22nd September 2022, Whitchurch Swimming and Fitness Centre](#)

[Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 9th February 2024. Call in - Sports Village Transformation](#)

Local Member: Councillor Mandy Duncan (Sundorne and Old Heath)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Swim England Guidance on Competition Pools

Appendix 2 - Public Consultation Report 2024 – Sports Village Transformation proposals- June 2024

Appendix 3 - Leisure Facilities Strategy 2019 to 2038 - Summary for Consultation (August 2020)

Appendix 4 - Swimming in Shrewsbury – Executive Summary – Feasibility Study February 2022

Appendix 5 – Case Study – Overhead Car Park Solar Panels – Leeds NHS Trust and BAM FM Ltd 2025

Appendix 6– Shrewsbury Sports Village – Demand and Social Value Report – June 2025

Appendix 7 – Quarry pool – alternative Locations – Discussion Paper 5 August 2014

Appendix 8 – Shrewsbury Pride Hill Appraisal – Feasibility Report - 2025

Appendix 9 – Option Business Case Cashflow Models

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