

**Shropshire Council**  
**Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)**  
**Stage One Screening Record 2024**

**A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions**

<b>Name of proposed service change</b>
Leisure Service Review: proposal to consult on ceasing to operate Much Wenlock Leisure Centre for community use on behalf of William Brookes School and withdraw revenue funding.

<b>Name of the officer carrying out the screening</b>
Peter Davis Leisure Services Manager – Culture, Leisure and Tourism

<b>Decision, review, and monitoring</b>
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<b>Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	X	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		X

*If completion of a Stage One screening assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above, and complete both part A and part B of this template. If a Full or Stage Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.*

<b>Actions to mitigate likely negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations</b>
<p>Ahead of consultation, the likely impact is assessed as low to medium negative across all nine Protected Characteristic groupings as set out in the Equality Act 2010, as all current users of the centre will potentially be affected by the service change. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women – all ages</li> <li>• Men – all ages</li> <li>• Babies, children and young people</li> <li>• People with disabilities, whether physical disabilities, sensory or mobility disabilities, mental health, or disabilities including neurodiverse conditions and Crohn’s disease</li> <li>• People in older age groups</li> <li>• People undergoing gender reassignment</li> <li>• People of different religions and faiths</li> </ul>

The particular groupings for whom this may be medium negative, rather than the low negative that would be likely to result from any service reduction, are children of school age, who currently use the pool and other facilities; people in the groupings of gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity; people with disabilities, including children of school age and older people; and people in low income households and/or those who have difficulty accessing private or public transport to travel to facilities that are further afield. This final grouping is within the additional category that we use in Shropshire, where we seek to consider social inclusion factors.

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 likely key issue for respondents, this corroborates the need to ensure consideration of financial challenges for households and individuals as well as availability of public transport. Additionally, safeguarding concerns are likely to be expressed by respondents, as this has been the case with Shrewsbury Sports Village consultation and will need to continue to be factored into efforts to ensure that the facilities present as a safe environment for all.

An 8-week public consultation period will enable assessment of a depth of responses from stakeholders and members of the public, and the results will be reported to Cabinet and to the public.

To mitigate the potential negative impact on some groups who will prefer Shropshire Council to continue to operate the facility or might face barriers to accessing alternative facilities if community use were to cease, the following actions are proposed:

- Engage with the existing service users and stakeholders and seek their feedback about the impact of the proposed changes.
- Engage with existing service users and stakeholders and seek their views on alternative suggestions or ideas for meeting the savings target as outlined in the MTFS.
- Provide clear and timely information and communication about the service change and address any concerns or queries that may arise.
- Liaise with William Brookes Academy Trust and 3-18 Education Trust, to consider all alternative operating models to enable community use to continue beyond the notice period.

**Actions to mitigate likely negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations**

As a “joint use” centre, the school/academy has exclusive use of the facility during school hours. Outside school hours and during school holidays it is available for community use. During the school term the centre is available for community use for 56.25 hours each week. This availability varies during school holidays according to demand. This has then meant that health and wellbeing benefits have been there not only for school children, for whom exercise is a known factor in promoting health and wellbeing, but also a range of people across the community as well.

Additionally, swimming is a life skill for children to learn, and a form of exercise that may be accessed by people of all ages, as well as being a low impact exercise that is of benefit for those recovering from an illness or injury. It therefore has positive benefits for people in the grouping of Age and Disability, and any reduction in access to somewhere where they may swim or learn to swim will therefore present as a negative.

The likely impact of changes in provision will need to be quantified through public consultation as well as through analysis of existing data in relation to these groupings of consideration. A further grouping of consideration, for whom there is likely to be a negative impact that will require mitigation, are those in need of quiet times such as people with neurodiverse conditions, and dedicated slots, such as for women.

Changes in provision will also create a likely impact in relation to the following strategic goals and policies for Shropshire Council regarding Healthy People, as these goals will take longer to achieve:

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

### **Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations**

There will be a 12-month notice period to enable William Brookes Academy Trust and their parent trust, 3-18 Education Trust, to consider alternative service provision. Their stated position is for community use of the facility to continue.

Future service provision could be on a lettings only basis for some elements of the facility – swimming pool, sports hall, multi-use games area, outdoor pitches – should the school/trust decide to operate the centre directly.

The Academy Trust could undertake a procurement process to engage a third-party operator. However, this would likely require a tapered funding agreement with Shropshire Council.

The 3-18 Education Trust currently engages a third-party operator to manage a joint-use centre within their portfolio of schools. This would enable a 'step-in' arrangement for the operator to manage community use at Much Wenlock. This would also likely require a funding contribution from Shropshire Council but would enable a different operating model to be implemented prior to the end of the 12-month notice period.

Shropshire Council will support the William Brookes Academy during the process of identifying alternative service provision options.

It should also be noted as a mitigation action that, whilst the Shrewsbury Sports Village transformation of leisure facilities is not due to go live until 2027 (subject to further approvals), if Much Wenlock were to close following the withdrawal of revenue funding, this won't take place for 18 months, due to the year's notice that would have to be given to the school, after the Council has concluded the proposed consultation process and returned to Cabinet for such approvals.

#### **Associated ESHIAs**

- Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy – Updated 2024
- Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2020-2038
- Vibrant Shropshire Cultural Strategy 2021-2031
- Shrewsbury Sports Village Transformation (Cabinet report 2024)

#### **Actions to mitigate likely negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor the overall impacts with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts**

##### **Climate change**

The service change is likely to have a negative impact on climate change if Shropshire Council ceasing to operate and withdrawing revenue support results in the facility closing to the community.

Serving notice to the 3-18 Education Trust and withdrawal of management services at Much Wenlock Leisure Centre is likely to result in reduction in community use. Those attending swimming lessons and utilising the swimming pool are therefore likely to travel further afield to access similar facilities, resulting in a probable increase in vehicle emissions by private users.

Up to 300 children will need to be transported to alternative facilities to access swimming lessons. 7 primary schools will also be obliged to use swimming pools

elsewhere to fulfil Key Stage 2 requirements. This additional transport requirement will result in increased carbon emissions.

The closest alternative leisure facilities with swimming pools are at Madeley (7.1 miles), Bridgnorth (8.7 miles), Oakengates (10.2 miles), Wellington (11.1 miles) and Shrewsbury (13.8 miles).

**Socio-economic impacts**

Economic:

The service change is likely to have a low negative impact on the local economy. Shropshire Council currently contract 4.1 FTE staff to operate the centre. If the centre closes to community use, or a lettings only operating model is adopted by William Brookes Academy Trust, compulsory redundancies will be required.

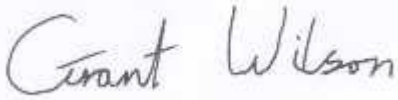
Societal/wider community:

The service change is likely to have a low to medium negative impact on the wider community if the centre is not available for community use. In 2023/24 there were 72,849 individual visits to the centre; 90% of these visits were from within 10 miles. In 2022/23 there were 102,597 individual visits; the swimming pool was closed for 3 months during 2023/24 which explains the reduction in visits last year.

Specific user groups this will affect include:

- Women – all ages
- Men – all ages
- Children and young people
- People with disabilities, whether physical disabilities, sensory or mobility disabilities, mental health, or disabilities including neurodiverse conditions and Crohn’s disease
- People in older age groups
- People of different religions and faiths

**Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage.**

<b>People involved</b>	<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Lead officer for the proposed service change</i> <b>Grant Wilson</b> <b>Infrastructure, Contracts and Compliance Manager – Culture, Leisure and Tourism</b>		
<i>Officer carrying out the screening.</i> <b>Peter Davis</b>		

<b>Leisure Services Manager – Culture, Leisure and Tourism</b>	<i>Peter Davis</i>	
<i>Any other internal service area support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> <b>Mrs Lois Dale</b> <b>Performance and Research Specialist: Rurality and Equalities</b>	<i>Lois Dale</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

*\*This refers to other officers within the service area*

*\*\*This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Performance and Research Specialist for Rurality and Equalities, Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, etc.*

**Sign off at Stage One screening stage.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Lead officer's name</i> <b>Grant Wilson</b> <b>Infrastructure, Contracts and Compliance Manager – Culture, Leisure and Tourism</b>	<i>Grant Wilson</i>	
<i>Officer carrying out the screening.</i> <b>Peter Davis</b> <b>Leisure Services Manager – Culture, Leisure and Tourism</b>	<i>Peter Davis</i>	

*\*This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

**B. Detailed Screening Assessment**

<b>Aims of the service change and description</b>
<p>Shropshire Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy requires changes to leisure provision to create financial savings.</p> <p>The Council's financial challenges require consideration of priorities for spend, including reviewing all service areas that are non-statutory, and exploring ways in which to deliver services in a more financially sustainable manner.</p>

The proposal to cease operating Much Wenlock Leisure Centre and withdraw revenue support will support the Council's Healthy Organisation priority.

Approval is being sought by Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to conduct public consultation.

### **Intended audiences and target groups for the service change**

All current users of the centre will potentially be affected by the service change, these include:

- Women – all ages
- Men – all ages
- Babies, children and young people
- People with disabilities, whether physical disabilities, sensory or mobility disabilities, mental health, or disabilities including neurodiverse conditions and Crohn's disease
- People in older age groups
- People undergoing gender reassignment
- People of different religions and faiths

As a joint-use centre, the facility is integral to William Brookes School and as such is utilised by their students during school terms. The Senior Management Team at the school/academy have been involved in discussions. Withdrawing the management service and funding will result in the school/academy taking on full responsibility for the centre and associated operating costs. This could affect the availability of facilities for education use.

### **Evidence used for screening of the service change**

Much Wenlock Leisure Centre is a relatively modern wet and dry joint-use leisure centre. Constructed as part of the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme, with £1,008,000 funding from Sport England, it was completed in 2010. As a joint-use centre, the school/academy has exclusive use of the facility during school hours. Outside school hours and during school holidays it is available for community use. During the school term the centre is available for community use for 56.25 hours each week. This availability varies during school holidays according to demand.

The facility mix is:

- Swimming pool (25m x 12.5m)
- Multi-purpose sports hall (33m x 18m) with four courts
- 20-station fitness suite
- Gymnasium (15m x 10.5m)
- Associated Changing Rooms
- Artificial turf pitch - (63m x 102m not floodlit)

- Grass pitches (not floodlit)
- 200m athletics track, 100m straight and long jump pit (not floodlit)
- Multi Use Games Area (floodlit tarmac)

Some areas of the centre are in poor condition, do not meet customer expectations and have contributed to reduced usage and income generation.

Issues include:

- Changing rooms are in poor condition e.g. damaged lockers, ceiling tiles damaged, damaged electrical accessories/sockets, etc.
- Redecoration is required throughout, and tiles are missing/damaged.
- Swimming pool changing room floor needs replacing.
- Swimming pool showers are ineffective and need replacing.
- Fitness suite equipment is old and in poor condition.
- First floor pool viewing gallery flooring needs replacing.
- Athletics track needs resurfacing to bring up to standard
- Multi-Use Games Area used for tennis/netball needs upgrading.
- Vinyl surfacing needs replacement or upgrading in dry changing.
- Ageing pool plant room requires investment.

The school/academy is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the centre and procuring utility suppliers. Shropshire Council engages a specialist contractor to maintain the swimming pool plant. Costs for repairs, maintenance and utility supply are split evenly between Shropshire Council and the Academy.

The annual operating budget for 2023/24 is £280,040. Savings identified in the MTFs for Leisure Services included this annual operating subsidy.

The provision of community use at Much Wenlock Leisure Centre is expensive and the facility requires a high degree of capital investment to enable that expense to be reduced. This is not a Shropshire Council owned facility, and it is unlikely that the Education Trust which owns the school will prioritise this investment. It is therefore not possible for the Council to continue to operate or support the service financially.

Providing community use of leisure facilities is a non-statutory service and the Council's priority must now be to maintain statutory (mandatory) services such as social care, highways maintenance and waste services, which are essential services for keeping residents safe.

### **Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change**

Assuming Cabinet approves the proposal to undertake public consultation (Cabinet – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024), consultation will commence at the beginning of December and run for an 8-week period, extended to take account of the Christmas and New Year break.



The target audience for the consultation will primarily be current facility users to gauge the potential impact of community use reduction or cessation. This would need to include questions about which other facilities they would be likely to use as alternatives, and questions about any disabilities they may have, to help identify current usage by people in this grouping and any practical challenges being experienced including physical accessibility.







Other consultees will include:







- William Brookes Academy Trust – officers & trustees
- 3-18 Education Trust – officers & trustees
- Much Wenlock Town Council
- Shropshire Council local members
- Sports clubs – swimming, cricket, Wenlock Olympians

**Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)**

*Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.*

*Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.*




<b>Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire</b>	<b>High negative impact <i>Stage Two ESHIA required</i></b>	<b>High positive impact <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i></b>	<b>Medium positive or negative impact <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i></b>	<b>Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Stage One ESHIA required.</i></b>
<u>Age</u> (Please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)			 medium negative	
<u>Disability</u> (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			 medium negative	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			 medium negative	
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			 medium negative	
<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				

<u>Religion or Belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				
<u>Sex</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities)			 medium negative	
<u>Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families</u>				
<u>Other: Young people leaving care</u>				

**Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category**

*Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.*

*Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.*

<b>Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire</b>	<b>High negative impact</b> <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	<b>High positive impact</b>	<b>Medium positive or negative impact</b>	<b>Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)</b>
<p><b>Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?</b></p> <p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p>			 medium negative	
<p><b>Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</b></p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p>			 medium negative	
<p><b>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</b></p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p>				 Low negative

**Will there be a likely change in *demand* for or access to health and social care services?**

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?



Low negative

**Report ends.**