BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

2.00pm 29 JULY 2026

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Thomson (Chair), Sheard (Deputy Chair), Earthey, Nann, Parrott, Pickett, Robinson and C Theobald

Co-opted Members: Michael Doyle (Conservation Advisory Group)

Officers in attendance: Mathew Gest (Planning Team Leader) Maria Seale (Planning Team Leader) Alison Gatherer (Lawyer) and Shaun Hughes (Democratic Services)

PART ONE

28 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

a) Declarations of substitutes

28.1 Councillor Guilmant substituted for Councillor Cattell.

b) Declarations of interests

28.2 Councillors Robinson declared they were included in the early days of the design for the development with the Design Southeast team. However, they remained of an open mind and were not predetermined.

c) Exclusion of the press and public

28.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Planning Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

28.4 **RESOLVED** - That the public are not excluded from any item of business on the agenda.

d) Use of mobile phones and tablets

28.5 The Chair requested Members ensure that their mobile phones were switched off, and where Members were using tablets to access agenda papers electronically ensure that these were switched to 'aeroplane mode'.

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

29.1 **RESOLVED** – The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2026 were agreed.

30 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

30.1 There were none.

31 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

31.1 There were none.

32 TO AGREE THOSE APPLICATIONS TO BE THE SUBJECT OF SITE VISITS

32.1 None for this meeting.

33 TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

33.1 The Democratic Services officer informed the chair and committee that, as there was one application on the agenda, the running order was therefore agreed.

A BH2026/00490 - King Alfred Leisure Centre (part), Public Car Park and Lawn, West of Hove Street South, Kingsway, Hove

1. The Case officer introduced the application to the committee.

Speakers

2. Kerry Herbert addressed the committee as an objecting resident and stated that they were a Blue Badge holder and considered that the application fails on accessibility and the speaker will be personally harmed. The speaker resides in a sea front flat, and their partner has conditions related to Long Covid. A beach hut has been bought with a retirement fund. The plans are to pick up the King Alfred Leisure Centre and put it down on the car park, a designated green space. The development will dwarf the beach huts. There has been no consultation on disabled access. Parking will be 100m away from the beach huts with no access across level land. The proposed undercroft car park will be too low for disabled vehicles.

3. Chris Roche addressed the committee as an objecting resident and stated that they were a Friend of the King Alfred and had spent the last 10 months fighting the application, trying to save the council money. The speaker has been an architect on projects in the USA and Africa and has taught in Europe and therefore felt they spoke with authority. A refurbishment of the King Alfred has not been explored properly. The speaker has repeatedly asked for a public exhibition and debate. The entrance on the east side of the development will be hidden, and the proposed neighbouring residential development will create a wind tunnel effect. An accessible roof terrace would have

been a good idea. The roofing solution is not fit for this size of development as the material is not effective. The north elevation signage uses 'Alfred' in the space previously allowed for "KALC".

4. Rebecca Sage addressed the committee as a legal representative of a resident and stated that they considered demolition of the existing building will be for the wider development, including housing, which should have had a sustainability assessment. The speaker considered that the development did not match up against Local Plan policies DM18, CP8 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The speaker considered that policy did not require demolition and no structural surveys had been carried out to keep the existing building. More information on refurbishment against demolition should be considered and the public allowed to comment. Sport England raising no objections is not sufficient. CP17 policy is not met on efficiency. The development will be 40% smaller than the existing and no like-for-like comparison has been made. The loss of the ballroom is contrary to policy CP17. The heritage of the existing building requires proper consideration by the committee.

5. Emma Andrews addressed the committee as a representative of the 'King Alfred Community Leisure Hub: Save & Expand' campaign and stated that they were weighing up the harm of what is being lost against what is gained. The speaker stated that the proposal falls short of the expanded and diversified sports provision envisaged by both the City Plan and the Sports Facilities Investment Plan. She stated that *a sports-led expansion concept using the existing building at its core was NEVER formally assessed against demolition and rebuild.*. In 2002 the leisure centre was considered in poor condition and in 2012, in good condition. There has been no consultation. An independent inspection is requested to understand if demolition is right. Any increased interaction requires future monitoring. The development proposed is a step backwards, any alternative would be better. The speaker requested that the committee defer the application until a better comparison has been made between refurbishment and demolition.

6. Lizzie Whithall addressed the committee as the agent acting on behalf of the applicant and stated that local residents have interacted with officers. The development complies with Local Plan policies SA1, CP17, CP18 and the NPPF. There were no objections from council consultations. The development will offer striking views, a café and other facilities on one footprint not like the existing fractured building. Standards can no longer be maintained at the existing building. The proposal will accommodate more users, increase resident's health and wellbeing and reduce carbon emissions. The speaker requested the committee to grant planning permission.

7. Sam Smith (Head of Placemaking at Brighton and Hove City Council) addressed the committee and stated that they understood the weight of history at the King Alfred and were aware of the many plans submitted then abandoned. The design of the current scheme is different and not unrealistic. Brighton and Hove should not wait for a new leisure centre. The proposals will be elegant and well designed, encouraging active living. The development is functional and inspiring with some amazing place making, brilliant indoors and out with new public realm areas. Families will be able to safely enjoy swimming with laughter and excitement. There will be a first-class gym, and classes for all the community. The development, sitting confidently on the sea front will encourage future athletes.

8. Councillor Alan Robins (Cabinet Member for Sports, Recreation and Libraries) addressed the committee and stated that the King Alfred was an auspicious project. The speaker stated they had learnt to swim at the existing King Alfred; however, it was now not fit for purpose. The building is at risk of closing. The proposals offer a practical leisure centre bringing health and wellbeing to all. The existing building will remain open throughout the construction of the new development. Community groups have been addressed and engaged, submitting a high level of responses. Other the last 30 years have been three stalled attempts to the develop the leisure centre. The current proposal can and will be built. The council has a sound understanding of the project and the issues, balancing parking, sports facilities and the public realm. The development is practical and achievable. The speaker requested the committee support the application.

   Answers to Committee Member Questions

9. Councillor Theobald was informed that the signage shown on the illustrations was indicative and the officers agree that the green coloured cladding illustrated is too dark. The Principal Transport Development Officer stated the undercroft parking would be accessible for most cars. The “no” left hand turn from the Kingsway was assessed under the A259 travel scheme modelling. The design protects cyclists. The Head of Placemaking stated that a full structural survey of the existing building had not been undertaken, however a whole life carbon assessment as part of the development of the business case. The City Regeneration Programme Manager stated that the business case had been set out to Cabinet and noted that the carbon impact would be many times higher for a refurbishment. The current building would be difficult to upgrade to meet standards of sports governing bodies. The loss of the ballroom was recognised. It was noted that officers shared concerns about the north/west elevations initially proposed and therefore gateway features and the higher parapet with King Alfred text, and sports figures on the northern elevation were added along with other design improvements.

10. The City Regeneration Programme Manager stated the proposals reflect accessibility throughout the scheme. The pools will include steps, allowing access.

11. The construction company representative stated the clearance height for the undercroft car park would be 2.1m, and they considered that most accessible vehicles would be under 2m in height. It was also noted that the moveable floors will be included to increase accessibility into the pools.

12. Councillor Robinson was informed that there will be level access from the car park to the promenade at all times. The Principal Transport Development Officer noted that the temporary car park will not be tarmac but may be gravel and access to the beach huts will be via a pathway west of the temporary car park. The final surface has not been agreed and will be conditioned. There will be two disabled parking bays next to the pathway. The layout of the car park is yet to be agreed, so more disabled bays can be added. The permanent car park will have eight disabled bays. The construction company representative stated the roofing membrane has been changed since the start of the application process and now the expectation was the flat roof would last 25 years. The case officer noted that under condition 44, the final design of the turning point roundabout on Hove St South would be agreed. It could be amended and extended, and

the landscaping was to be agreed, to create further space including for drop-off parking. The Highway Regulation Manager noted the A259 scheme would be looking at all aspects of the design. It was noted that emergency vehicle access would be the same as existing with all sides of the proposals being accessible. The architect stated the decentralised heating network would be for the future, and if available connected to any residential development built next door. It was noted that condition 37 required a future proofed plant room. The architect stated the building materials would be easy clean with multiple coatings. It was noted that condition 16 covers graffiti prevention. The architect stated there were no roof lights in the design as control over lighting was preferred. It was noted that there would be a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The architect stated that the A259 scheme would assist construction with an extra pull in off the road, and a tower crane would be used in stage one of the build, and deliveries would be restricted to one-at-a-time. The case officer noted that additions to condition 9 on the late list (CEMP) covered core hours of car park use to avoid conflict.

13. Councillor Nann was informed that the current building would stay in use whilst the development is being built by condition. The architect confirmed that the design of the building would be on target to be BREEAM 'excellent' on carbon ratings. The heritage team noted that 'harms' could not be added up cumulatively.

14. Councillor Guilmant was informed by the architects that it been noted on a site visit how windy the sea front was and how other business nearby were affected. It was considered that the east elevation position of the front door would work with the urban grain of the design with access from the north and south. Roof terracing was not considered usual for a leisure centre design. A café has been included in the design which opens out onto the public amphitheatre. The construction company representative stated that the green features of the scheme would save approximately 22 tons of carbon monoxide. The solar screening would moderate the swimming pool temperature, including the water and the viewers gallery. The architect's representative stated that the new pools are larger than the existing and the moveable floors are a new part of the design. Swim England have stated that the new pools will be large enough to stage regional galas. With accessibility a priority, the moveable floor will go down from deck level to pool level. It was noted that the gym increase in size was due to the popularity of working out and current trends in health and fitness. The gym will be available for all age groups, juniors and seniors. The gym is predicted to create the most income per month. The architect stated that the building line of the proposals was to maintain existing views. The sports hall was designed to Sports England standards, and the swimming pool internal roof trusses would align with swimming lanes. The heritage team noted the development would cause less than substantial harm at the lowest end of the scale to the setting of nearby heritage assets. The city plan policies should be looked at as a whole within the planning balance, when weighing up the benefits and disadvantages. The existing building did not reach thresholds to be nationally listed, although it is of local and architectural interest, with some townscape merit.

15. Councillor Parrott was informed by the Principal Transport Development Officer that the car park will be available for all users, not just those attending the leisure centre, with eight disabled bays. It was noted there will be guard rails into the pool, 1.5m in width, which enables two persons to pass. An acoustician is being included in design talks. It was also noted that noise from the children's splash pad would be monitored. General noise levels from activities would be dealt with by condition. The councillor requested a

noise control condition for the whole pool. It was considered there was enough space for emergency vehicles to access the building. It was noted that the moveable floors would be 50% of the pool width in the main pool and 100% in the small pool. Acoustic wall panelling will be added to the sports hall, along with acoustic curtains used to divide the space. It was noted the gym will contain accessible equipment. It was noted that the lift design was to be inobtrusive and the external materials would be agreed by condition 16. The architect stated that lightweight concrete would be used in the construction with a hydro-phobic coating for easier cleaning, including graffiti. The reception area will be centrally located to ensure staff can see everywhere and thereby offer passive surveillance. It was also noted that condition 51 covered crime prevention measures. By condition the planting and landscaping would be inclusive and designed for the visually impaired. The City Regeneration Programme Manager stated the soft play area was new, and the design would meet all needs, with a sensory environment. There will be SEND sessions with low capacity and young adults will be able to use the facilities.

16. The case officer suggested an informative be added to address noise in the swimming pool.

17. Councillor Pickett was informed by the Principal Transport Development Officer that the A259 travel scheme allows one coach to stop and off load. The case officer stated that Hove Street South could potentially accommodate two coaches if they are doubled up. The Principal Transport Development Officer stated the current layout of the turning point roundabout was indicative at this stage, and more drop-off areas could be created. The DHA Transport representative stated that six vehicles could be accommodated in the turning point, and a coach should be able to use the roundabout to turn round. It was noted that will be a 15/20-minute restriction in the drop off area. The planning manager noted that condition 44 required details of the roundabout to be agreed. It was noted that minibuses not able to access the undercroft parking could use the coach bay on A259, and there would be room for two minibuses in the bay. The travel plan will help prevent more arriving at once. It was noted the pools can be heated, but not rapidly, around 1º per hour. The studio space will be flexible use, including dance classes. The City Regeneration Programme Manager stated that passive house standards were not a planning requirement. Other authorities that had proceeded with building to passive house standards had found this to be very expensive. The Head of Net-Zero stated that an EPC performance rating of A is proposed and conditioned by the development. The case officer noted that passive house standards are not in the City Plan. The architect confirmed the new pool would reduce water consumption; rainwater harvesting would be used to flush toilets and corridor buffer zones would be employed to reduce heat loss. There would also be heat recovery system through the ventilation process. It was noted the building would have a predicted life span of at least 60 years.

18. Councillor Earthey was informed that there were two alternatives to access the front door, via the car park or through the building. The undercroft car park will have a clearance height of about 2.1m. The Highway Regulation Manager noted that tweaks could be made to the A259 scheme if required, should the proposals be approved. The Principal Transport Development Officer noted that there were 200 turn lefts per day, 12,000 straight on's per day and 1,500 cyclists per day in the period surveyed. It was noted that the loss of the ballroom was a loss of an amenity, however, the new facilities were balanced against the loss. Boxing will move into the sports hall, along with the occasional dance competitions. The City Regeneration Programme Manager stated that

the sustainability of the existing building has been assessed, and a refurbishment has been balanced against a new building. The operational carbon emissions are considered to be 3 to 5 times over that of a new building. The Head of Net-Zero noted that carbon was different between buildings and the operational efficiency of the building needed to be assessed. The proposals include recycled materials making the building comparable with Net Zero standards. The case officer noted that the late list included an addition to condition 16 requiring the sports figures on the elevations to include local sports personalities including disabled sports people.

19. Councillor Sheard was informed that there was coach parking across the city and there was no current coach parking at the site. The planning manager noted that conditions 44 & 45 addressed parking and servicing and would help prevent competition with other spaces for parking. It was noted from the project architect that the moveable floors were very common, and no issues have been heard of. The case officer noted that the possible inclusion of a replacement bowling alley could not be justified as demolition of the current bowling alley had already been granted. The City Regeneration Programme Manager stated that within the last three months there has been a 18% usage of the ballroom. The maximum usage was 40% in winter. The ballroom is occasionally used for dancing and boxing. The Head of Placemaking noted that there was another hall with a sprung floor in Moulsecoomb. The architect stated they had looked at the colours of the Victorian railings, and other greens, regarding the design and proposed cladding colour. The case officer noted the visuals were indicative only and the final colours were to be agreed. The architect stated that one colour would be chosen and this may not be green.

20. Councillor Thomson was informed that a Roller Derby could be included in the scheme. The architect noted that the design has been through two review panels and the higher parapet was considered to address the massing of the proposals. It was noted that the review panel requested night-time illustrations of the development. It was noted that there would be an accessible ramp, handrails and lots of seating. Parks and garden spaces have been designed following consultation, and it was noted that biodiversity and maintenance were important.

21. Michael Doyle addressed the committee as the representative of the Conservation Advisory Group and stated that the group considered the design and impact of the proposals would cause limited harm to the setting. Whether the proposals preserved or enhanced the setting, the group considered the proposals would cause harm. The sea front and Kingsway are not considered to be enhanced by the scheme which is considered ‘blocky’ in form. The group considers there is no reduction in the revised scheme to the harm caused to the heritage assets of the area which includes three conservation areas and five listed buildings and locally listed buildings. The King Alfred could be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset, and the loss of the building would be an issue. The impact in terms of scale and massing on the nearby listed St Aubyns Mansions would an issue. The Hove conservation area would also be affected. The development will obscure existing views. The two-year time limit for the temporary car park is extendable, causing ongoing harm to the conservation area. Details of the temporary car park are sparse. It is considered the proposals will have a high impact on the community against policy SA1. The harm to heritage must be mitigated. It was a concern that the colours of the development have not been locked in place. The

Conservation Advisory Group object to the proposals and recommend the application be refused.

22. The case officer stated that the location was an allocated site for major development in the city, and it was noted that any building of scale would have an impact when compared to the open site. It was considered that there would be harm to the heritage assets, however, the harm was limited and the planning consideration is to look at the development plan policies as a whole and weigh up public benefits. The impact has been considered by the design panel, as well as the heritage officers. The temporary car park will include soft landscaping, and it considered that less than substantial harm will be caused under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The heritage team considered the harms were less than substantial at the lowest end of the scale, with some heritage benefits with regard to sea front shelters and lighting, and it is for the case officer to assess whether there are any wider public benefits that weigh against the heritage harm.

Debate

23. Councillor Sheard stated there was a lot to consider: what can the new building bring, and what is lost? The councillor was not convinced there was much to be lost. The new spaces were better. Any development will impact the conservation areas. The proposals were the best option. A refurbishment of the existing building could mean coming back in 10 years and the asset could be lost. The proposals are good for disabilities and improve the public realm. The councillor supported the application.

24. Councillor Nann supported the officer recommendation, noted the objector's preference for a refurbishment; however, that was not being considered at this committee meeting.

25. Councillor Parrott expressed that they were conflicted about the development. The councillor considered many concerns have been addressed; however, they don't love all the elements, but more than at the start of the meeting. The councillor considered the proposals were good for the city and future generations and supported the application.

26. Councillor Earthey expressed concerns at the access from the A259. They were satisfied that it was not a good idea to refurbish the existing building. The councillor noted that Saltdean Lido was refurbished, which was very expensive; however, they recognised the King Alfred was not the same as the lido. The councillor had some misgivings; however, they supported the application. The conditions were considered sufficient to grant planning permission.

27. Councillor Robinson stated they were conflicted about the application at the start of the meeting. The development is not perfect, with limited harm to heritage. The councillor considered that once the temporary car park had been removed the situation will improve. There is a balance between winning and losing. The development complies with policy, and the public benefit is good. The councillor supported the application.

28. Councillor Guilmant stated they understood objector's views; however, the existing King Alfred has come to the end of its life and refurbishment, which would lead to two years of use, is not possible. The councillor considered the balance was for the public benefit

and sustainable. The councillor stated they were weighing history against what is best for the next generation. The councillor supported the application.

29. Councillor Pickett noted that residents love the existing building; however, there was a need to move forward, having noted the criticism of the building's appearance. The councillor did not consider the A259 elevation appearance was up to scratch and would prefer a passive house approach. The sustainability was considered good, with a possible heat network. The councillor considered the new building would be more efficient; therefore, the councillor supported the application.

30. Councillor Theobald considered the new pool was needed, and the idea of the underground parking was good. The development was, however, on the small size. A 50m pool would be good. The splash pad is very small, and there is not enough for teenagers to do. The front view of the proposals was not good, a design something like the Regency building's opposite would be better. The councillor considered the disabled to be disadvantaged. The proposed banned left hand turn from the A259, and the height of the undercroft car park were not good. The councillor considered that one application, to include the possible neighbouring residential development, would have been better than two. The councillor considered that £65m was a lot for such a small leisure centre.

31. Councillor Thomson considered that all matters had been covered in discussions, and they had some concerns. The councillor considered it was difficult to know the way forward. The councillor considered they had heard objections, which had not been dismissed. The councillor considered the design was growing on them and felt the 'fun' was what happened on the inside of the building. The councillor hoped that all parties felt listened to and they considered the proposals were fit for the 21st century. The councillor was reassured by the conditions and sustainability was good. The councillor supported the application.

    Vote

32. A vote was held, and by 8 to 1 against the committee agreed to grant planning permission.

33. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in the report and resolves to be **MINDED TO GRANT** planning permission subject to the Secretary of State deciding not to call in the application for determination and subject to the Conditions and Informatives in the report.

34 LIST OF NEW APPEALS LODGED WITH THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE

34.1 There were none for this meeting.

35 INFORMATION ON INFORMAL HEARINGS/PUBLIC INQUIRIES

35.1 There were none for this meeting.

36 APPEAL DECISIONS

36.1 There were none for this meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.39pm

Signed Chair

Dated this day of