

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 29

Subject: The King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

Date of meeting: 18th July 2024

Report of: Cabinet Member for Sports and Recreation

Contact Officer: **Name:** Max Woodford Assistant Director - City Development & Regeneration

Email: Max.Woodford@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

Key Decision: Yes

Reasons Key: Expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the expenditure of the City Council's budget, namely above £1,000,000 and is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This paper seeks a Cabinet decision on the preferred site to deliver the new 'West Hub' facility to replace the King Alfred Leisure Centre.
- 1.2 The replacement of the King Alfred Leisure Centre aligns with the Council Plan 2023-2027, particularly Outcome 1 *A city to be proud of*, which sets out a commitment to *'Deliver improvements to leisure facilities across the city'* and Outcome 3, *'A healthy city where people thrive'*. Replacing the facility is also a specific commitment of the council's Sports Facilities Investment Plan (SFIP).

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees that part of the existing seafront King Alfred site is the preferred site on which to take forward the development of the new sports and leisure facility to replace the existing King Alfred Leisure Centre.
- 2.2 Approves the indicative capital budget for the project of up to £47.4 million to be included in the Medium Term Capital Investment programme to be funded from a combination of capital receipts, government grants and council borrowing.
- 2.3 Approves an initial allocation of £2.7m of these resources to progress the project to planning application stage funded from council borrowing.

- 2.4 Agrees to the commencement of design work for the development of the Leisure Centre on the preferred site, to include procuring the lead architect and professional team to deliver the new facility and delegates authority to the Corporate Director to approve the procurement of the associated professional team and to progress the project to planning application stage.
- 2.5 Notes the inclusion of £1.07 million estimated ongoing revenue commitment within the Medium Term Financial Strategy to recognise the potential net financing costs of the project from 2025/26 onwards.
- 2.6 Notes that as the project progresses to key decision points further reports will be presented to cabinet in line with the timetable set out at 4.16.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The delivery of a new West Hub to replace the existing King Alfred Leisure Centre is central to the Council's Sports Facilities Investment Plan 2021-31 (SFIP). The SFIP was approved by Policy & Resources Committee in July 2021 and is the strategic plan for improving the city's sports facilities.
- 3.2 The proposal in the SFIP was based on full stock condition surveys which highlighted that significant investment and major works would be required in order to keep the centre operational. Due to the building's age and condition, a 'do nothing' option would increase the likelihood of the centre having to close in the short to medium term without any further investment. This would mean the loss of the city's largest leisure centre, without a plan to deliver a new one. Therefore a 'do nothing' option has not been assessed in detail. The option to refurbish the facility has been examined, and this is explained further in the following paragraphs (3.3 - 3.6).

Refurbishment

- 3.3 As a baseline 'reference case', the business case examines the cost and practicality of refurbishing the existing facility. The business case reports that an estimated £13.98m would be required to carry out the minimum remedial works for the facility to continue operating. These works include asbestos removal, structural concrete repairs, reinforcement of foundations, renewal of roof coverings, and replacing the main plant and pool plant. These works are anticipated to extend the usable life of the facility for an estimated 10 years. At that stage, the refurbished King Alfred would then still need to be replaced with a modern facility.
- 3.4 The facility's history as a 1930s building that was extended in the 1980s means that many aspects of the design and layout are compromised and fall short of modern standards and expectations. A refurbishment to the existing building would not address these issues. They could only be resolved by replacement with a modern facility designed and built to reflect Sport England guidance and best practice in modern sports facility operation. For example:

Sports Halls

- The current sports halls are constructed directly above the 1930s swimming pools, which has dictated their size and shape. The halls do not meet Sport England or sports' national governing body (NGB) requirements. The run-off outside the lined areas is constrained, and there are no spectator facilities. The heights of the ceilings, windows, and skylights reflect the original use as pool halls. The natural lighting requirements for newly designed sports halls is very different and the impact of bright sunlight creating glare for users of the current facility is an ongoing issue.

Pools

- The main 25m pool and leisure water area use the same shared body of water and have a common filtration system. The leisure water should be maintained at a higher temperature than the main pool, but this is impossible with the current design which a refurbishment could not feasibly address. Contamination in one pool also results in both being closed.
- The main pool has only 6 lanes, rather than 8, which limits use for competitive swimming clubs. The size and layout of the pools and the shallowness of the teaching pool means that separate private sessions for, say, faith groups cannot be accommodated. This issue was raised by some of those we spoke to during engagement as a barrier to them participating.

Gym and health & fitness provision

- The space occupied by the gym was previously the location of the café, and as with the sports halls is not a purpose-designed space. It accommodates 31 stations, much smaller than would be expected for a sports and leisure facility of the King Alfred's size. It could not accommodate the minimum 100 stations proposed for the new West Hub. Relocating the gym elsewhere in the facility would not be feasible without, say, giving up one of the sports halls, further compromising the facility as a whole.
- Gym & fitness remains one of the most popular ways for people to be active in our city, and therefore increasing the capacity and performance of our gyms will enable us to meet the demand now and in the future. Health and Fitness membership (which includes the gym) is one of the most important income sources for a modern leisure centre, and so a constrained gym would also limit the financial viability of the facility.

Voids and wells

- The 1930s parts of the building features a number of prominent void or well areas which are open to the air but not readily accessible for maintenance and cleaning. These represent further unused space within the footprint of the building, in many cases with glazing in poor condition, all of which adds to the heat loss and energy inefficiency issues.

3.5 For a refurbished facility, running costs would remain high. New boilers and other plant would be expected to provide more efficient heat generation.

However, heat losses through the fabric of the building would not be significantly improved by the works listed above. Further detail is provided at appendix 1.

- 3.6 The business case has shown that a refurbishment would represent a poor investment, referenced in paras 4.5. and 4.6 below. The economic modelling shows that the investment would return only 47p for every £1 invested. As described above, a refurbishment would also fail to bring the facility up to modern standards and Sport England guidance. With that in mind, the recommendation to Cabinet is to deliver a replacement facility as set out in section 2.

The need and urgency to replace the existing King Alfred facility

- 3.7 The requirement to replace the King Alfred with a new facility has been recognised for over 30 years. There have been three previous attempts to deliver a new facility with the last project (undertaken with Crest Nicholson) stalling in 2019. The failure of those projects and the lessons learned have highlighted the importance of:
- prioritising financial viability and practical deliverability
 - retaining control of the project
 - keeping the delivery of leisure centre separate from any residential development on the existing site
 - taking a realistic view of what the development is being expected to deliver.
- 3.8 The current project to replace the facility was initiated in late summer 2022. Three key workstreams have been undertaken to create the evidence base which informs the recommendations in this paper. Those are:
- a comprehensive site search, to identify and evaluate all sites in the west of the city with the potential to host the new facility
 - the development of an HM Treasury-compliant ‘Green Book’ business case to comprehensively examine and evaluate the options for delivering the new facility (detailed in section 4, below)
 - a programme of resident engagement to bring residents along with the project as it develops and to provide a means for their views to shape the project where practicable (detailed in section 5, below).
- 3.9 Only two sites emerged from the site search process – the existing King Alfred site (“the existing site”) and the council-owned land south of Sainsbury’s fronting Old Shoreham Road (“LSS site”).

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The delivery options for a new facility on each site were assessed with sport and leisure consultants (Continuum Sport and Leisure) and architects Faulkner Brown using the Treasury Green Book methodology.

- 4.2 The Green Book methodology examines the costs for building and for operating the new facility, and compares that to the future revenue and benefits the leisure centre will deliver. The detailed evaluations for each option are summarised with one headline figure – the benefit cost ratio (BCR). The BCR shows for each option how much beneficial value is delivered for each £ spent.
- 4.3 This value of the benefits is built up by attaching an estimated monetary value to each of the key benefits each option is expected to deliver. These elements comprise:
- the value of the positive health and wellbeing impacts, including reduced healthcare costs to the exchequer and improved quality of life for residents
 - the direct land value uplift (LVU) – which measures the increased value of the site(s) arising from the delivery of the new facility and the delivery of the residential development on some or all of the existing site
 - the spillover land value uplift (LVU) – which measures the increased value of the land in the area(s) immediately around the location of the new sport and leisure facility and the new residential development.
- 4.4 The detailed evaluations for each option are summarised with one headline figure – the benefit cost ratio (BCR). For a delivery option to represent a sensible investment, the BCR must equal at least 1.0, representing one £ in benefits returned for each £ spent. Treasury guidelines consider any BCR between 2.0 and 3.0 as ‘good’, and any BCR greater than 3.0 is considered by Treasury as ‘very good’.

Economic benefits

- 4.5 Table 1, below, shows the BCR for each delivery option examined by the business case.

Table 1. comparison of economic costs and benefits of each of the options considered in the business case				
Option	1: Reference Case	2: Existing site - stacked design	3: Existing site - low rise design	4: LSS Site
Economic Benefit (National Scale Impacts)	£9.46m	£85.20m	£59.76m	£124.38m
Gross Economic Cost	£20.09m	£65.36m	£55.72m	£60.25m
Benefit/Cost Ratio (Gross)	0.47	1.30	1.07	2.06
Net Economic Cost	£20.09m	£49.08m	£45.54m	£39.90m
Benefit/Cost Ratio (Net)	0.47	1.74	1.31	3.12

- 4.6 The figures in table 1 show that:

- the reference case (option 1), which entails refurbishing the facility, represents a poor investment, returning just 47p in value for each £1 invested. This reflects the relatively high costs (£13.98m) and the very limited benefits that would be realised in terms of increased participation and improved health outcomes for the city.
- both delivery options examined for the existing site (options 2 & 3) represent acceptable investment options, with the more costly basement parking version (option 2) representing a better overall investment proposition, returning £1.74 for each £1 invested. This is largely due to the increased capital receipt received from the disposal of more of the existing site for development, reducing the need for borrowing.
- the LSS site offering a ‘very good’ investment option, returning £3.12 for each £1 invested. This is in part due to the greater health and wellbeing benefits expected to be generated, in part due to the greater land value uplift achieved, and in part due to the option enabling the maximum capital receipt to be achieved for the existing site. However, there are planning, legal, and other factors which favour the existing site, explained further in paragraph 4.7 below.

Wider factors influencing choice of site

- 4.7 In addition to the economic analysis other factors need to be considered relating to planning policy, legal matters, loss of green space, and the outcomes of public engagement. In brief, these factors are:
- planning considerations, which favour the existing site as it is allocated in the [City Plan Part 1](#) for a sports facility and residential development. Conversely, the LSS site has been designated in the [City Plan Part 2](#) as Local Green Space (CPP2 Policy DM38). This represents the strongest restriction to development equivalent to green belt designation
 - legal constraints at the LSS site, where a restrictive covenant set by previous owners Sainsbury’s would require removal, adding time and cost to the delivery of the project
 - loss of green space and existing amenity value at the LSS site. An alternative ground for Portslade Cricket Club would need to be provided. Sport England are expected to be sensitive to the loss of a playing field, even though the planned development is a sports and leisure centre, and an objection from Sport England could also result in the application being ‘called in’ for determination by the Secretary of State.
 - Whilst the results of the public engagement reflect differing views from different parts of the community the most recent survey work showed a clear preference for the existing King Alfred site. 70% of respondents indicated that a new facility at the existing site would be part of their active and healthy lifestyle, compared with 37% for the LSS site. This is explained in more detail in section 5.

Financial viability

- 4.8. The purpose of the financial case is to identify the delivery option which will be the most affordable for the city. The financial case models the new facility's capacity to increase user numbers and income generation whilst lowering running costs. Crucially, it also takes account of the borrowing costs for delivering new facility, which can be minimised by maximising the capital receipt from the sale of some or all of the existing site.
- 4.9 The capital cost estimates set out in the financial case have been prepared for each of the options based on outline designs. The basic description of these is set out in table 2 below.

Option	Description	Nominal capital costs
1. Reference Case	Refurbish existing facility to enable it to remain operational for a further 10 years. To include asbestos removal, structural concrete repairs, reinforcement of foundations, replacement of walls, masonry strengthening, renewal of roof coverings, redecoration, replacing the main plant and pool plant and other M&E works, external works and services including external landscaping.	£13.98m
2. Existing site, stacked design	5,925m ² new build leisure centre on part of KALC site with basement car park and remaining site sold for residential development.	£47.38m
3. Existing site, low rise design	5,925m ² new build leisure centre on part of KALC site with surface car park and remaining site sold for residential development.	£39.83m
4. LSS site	7,369m ² new build leisure centre with enhanced specification on LSS site with KALC site sold for residential development	£46.39m

Source: King Alfred Redevelopment Business Case – Final Report March 2024, Continuum Sport and Leisure

- 4.10 Conversations with funders and strategic key bodies in the sport and leisure industry will continue and the council will be closely monitoring and pursuing any available funding streams that are announced for the next cycle. This includes engaging and securing support for the project from Sport England and other relevant government departments.
- 4.11 The costs of financing the net borrowing required have been calculated, together with a detailed revenue projection to provide a Net Project Cost (NPC) for each new build option over a 40-year period. This is shown in table 3 below. The reference case is not included in this table, as it is expected that a refurbishment would extend the operational life of the facility for a maximum of around 10 years, after which replacement would be required.

Option	Capital costs (£m)	Capital receipt (£m)	Financing costs (£m)	Revenue surplus (£m)	Nominal finance costs net of revenue surplus (£m)	Net project costs (£m)	Annual net project costs (£m)
2. Existing site, stacked design	47.4	25.0	37.8	17.9	19.91	42.3	1.06
3. Existing site, low rise design	39.8	15.5	36.5	17.9	18.61	42.9	1.07
4. LSS site	46.4	31.0	31.1	22.3	8.78	24.2	0.6

Source: King Alfred Redevelopment Business Case – Final Report March 2024, Continuum Sport and Leisure
 Note: Reference case (option 1) not included in this table.

- 4.12 The analysis above shows that a development on either site would be economically viable, with the potential for the greatest economic benefits at the LSS site (£3.12 for every £ invested). However, a new facility on the existing site could also deliver significant benefits for the city (up to £1.74 for every £ invested).
- 4.13 Furthermore, as noted in 4.7, there are other factors which favour development on the existing site. The city’s planning policy allocates the existing site for leisure and residential development (City Plan Part 1) whereas the LSS site is protected from development (City Plan Part 2). The legal constraints at the LSS site would require removal adding time, cost, and risk to the delivery of the project. Development on the LSS site would also entail a loss of green space and would require an alternative ground to be found for Portslade Cricket Club.
- 4.14 Responses to the public engagement undertaken have shown a range of views amongst residents, but the majority of those expressing a view favoured the existing site. In the Council Plan 2023-2027 under Outcome 2: ‘A fair and inclusive city’ the council says it will improve engagement and collaboration with the city and its residents. This includes a promise to improve how we listen and respond to residents, as well as how we will collaborate to drive change and improve the city. As a listening council the views of residents who engaged in the consultation have therefore been a key factor in decision making. This is explained further in section 5.
- 4.15 Following Cabinet’s decision, the next stage of the project will be to proceed with the appointment of the professional team including the lead architect to begin the design work for the new facility. Cabinet is not at this stage being asked to express a preference for a low rise or stacked design on the existing site. Further detailed design work will develop this ahead of a agreement to an RIBA Stage 3 scheme by Cabinet.
- 4.16 Below is an indicative timeline for delivery of the project. This may change as the details of the procurement route are developed. We will seek to use the Corporate Director’s delegated authority to pursue procurement

following market engagement and review. This will include examining the options outlined in 11.2.

Table 4. Key project stages and cabinet decision points				
Project stage	Key activities	Start date	End date	Cabinet decision
Gateway 1				
Design	Design team tender	October 2024	December 2024	
	Design stage	December 2024	June 2025	
	Planning pre-app	March 2025	June 2025	Cabinet agree RIBA stage 3 design and give land owners consent for submission of planning application.
Gateway 2				
Planning	Planning application	June 2025	September 2025	
	Technical design stage	June 2025	September 2025	
	Planning approval	September 2025	December 2025	Cabinet decision for full budget approval
	Enabling works	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	
Gateway 3				
Contractor procurement & construction	Contractor tender	December 2025	Spring 2026	
	Contractor appointment	Spring 2026	Spring 2026	
	Construction of new leisure centre	Spring 2026	Spring 2028	
Gateway 4				
Handover and operation		Spring 2028		

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 Since its inception in Autumn 2022, the current project has been accompanied by a wide-ranging programme of public engagement. There have been three key phases of engagement so far, these being:

- phase 1, September to December 2022. Focused on core users of the King Alfred such as the leaseholders (e.g. the boxing club), sports clubs, and community groups that regularly book the facility
- phase 2, from January 2023. Connecting with wider community groups and residents. This phase included the all-day drop-in event in April 2023, and specialist work with partners to engage with minoritised ethnic groups and younger people
- phase 3, beginning of January 2024. Focused on the on-line questionnaire which generated over 3,600 responses.

Key findings from the survey

- 5.2. The outcomes of public engagement are also a significant factor in informing the choice of site. In brief, whilst there has been a diverse plurality of views about the location of the new facility, the survey work conducted in the most recent phase of the engagement showed a preference for the existing King Alfred site. Residents were asked firstly if they would use a new facility on the current site, and then asked if then if they would use a facility on the LSS site. Respondents could therefore indicate if they had a preference for one site over the other, or they could show that they would be equally likely to use a facility on either site. Some 70% of respondents indicated that a new facility at the existing site would play a key role for them in an active and healthy lifestyle, compared with 37% for the LSS site (suggesting 7% would be content with either).
- 5.3. In interpreting these results it is important to consider that current users and those living close to the existing facility represented the largest group of respondents. The overall results are therefore strongly influenced by their views. It is also important to note that although the response rate was high, the profile of respondents was not fully representative of the city's population. Younger people (18-34) and those from minoritised ethnic groups were particularly underrepresented. For example, 28% of the city's population are aged 18-34, but only 10.5% of respondents to the survey were in that age group. Some 11.6% of the city's population identify as Asian, Black, or mixed ethnicity, compared to just 6% of respondents to the questionnaire.

Key findings from the unstructured questions and emails

- 5.4. Of the 3,679 responses received, some 2,287 featured a free-text response for question 18 which asked: '*Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the proposed options?*'. A further 128 emails were sent to the project mailbox featuring comments about the proposals.
- 5.5. A sentiment analysis was undertaken on these responses. That process entailed reviewing each of the responses and then categorising them against a schema in which each comment was mapped to one or more key messages that corresponded with the sentiments expressed in the free text.
- 5.6. Key themes from the sentiment analysis were:
- regular and keen users of the existing facility strongly prefer continuity of provision at the existing site
 - there are some residents close to the existing site who may not use the facility, but who are opposed to any new development on the site
 - some residents close to the LSS site are concerned about the impact of development on the site in terms of noise, traffic volumes, parking, property values, and related matters
 - users of the LSS site, most notably Portslade cricket club, are opposed to the site's redevelopment

- many residents around the Hangleton and Knoll area would welcome a new facility in the area and would prefer the LSS site for the new facility
- some respondents were agnostic about the location but felt it important that the new facility be made accessible for active travel and public transport, families, and children.

5.7. In addition, the sentiment analysis entailed identifying which site the respondent preferred. Based on the responses received, the sentiment of preferred site is as follows:

Preference identified in sentiment analysis	Percentage of respondents
Existing site	60%
Don't proceed with either option	1%
LSS site	14%
No preference expressed	24%
One facility each site	1%
Total	100%

5.8. Of those who expressed a preference, the existing site had around four times as much support (60% of all responses) as the LSS site (14%). However, almost a quarter (24%) expressed no clear preference. As noted above, the self-selecting nature of the survey, and in particular the free text section, functioned to particularly mobilise current users of the facility, most of whom are in favour of keeping the facility at its existing site, as well as mobilising those opposed to development on the existing site and/or development on the LSS site.

6. Financial implications

6.1 The options for the reprovision and enhancement of the leisure facilities at King Alfred Leisure Centre provide compelling investment options from an overall outcome for the city perspective. However the options have different direct financial implications for the City Council, all of which will require a significant increase in ongoing funding for their delivery.

6.2 A robust evaluation of the business cases for the LSS site and the existing site has been undertaken. The evaluation of each site relied on detailed financial assessments of costs, revenues, and key assumptions. These have been applied consistently and demonstrate that the development at LSS provides the lowest direct financial impact on the council as shown in table 3, above. However, the overall assessment favours the existing site after considering wider factors as set out in paragraph 4.7.

6.3 The indicative capital cost of the recommended option is £47.4 million and the expected ongoing increase in revenue costs to service the net debt after allowing for an improved financial performance of the new facility is £1.07 million. This additional revenue cost is £0.47 million per annum higher than the lowest cost option. The increased revenue cost will add to future years'

budget gaps and therefore result in additional savings required for a balanced budget. The actual direct financial impact is subject to a number of key variables. These include the level and timing of any capital receipts, the success and level of obtaining government grants; overall build costs; financing costs; net change in parking revenue and the increase in net revenue from a replacement facility. The financial risks created by these variables can only be mitigated or fully understood through the development of a preferred option.

- 6.4 The costs of developing the business case to date has been met from the King Alfred development reserve. The estimated cost of completing this business case is £0.191m and this leaves £0.058m towards the next phase of the project.
- 6.5 The development of the recommended option will require significant financial resources that will be at risk. An initial allocation of £2.7 million within the 2024/25 and 2025/26 capital investment programme will support progress to the planning application stage. This investment would be funded from council borrowing with the interest being rolled into the overall project cost until the new Leisure Centre is completed.
- 6.6 This allocation forms part of the overall estimated cost of £47.4 million. However, if the project is not completed this initial investment would need to be covered by one off resources as it would not result in an asset.
- 6.7 The existing Leisure contract currently provides a net contribution to the council of £0.167m. The new facility is expected to deliver a substantial increase in net revenue to offset in part the increased financing costs of the investment. The existing facility has been under severe financial pressure due to the significant increase in costs of energy. The new leisure centre will be highly energy efficient and therefore help to mitigate this risk.

Name of finance officer consulted: James Hengeveld. Date consulted:
(26/06/24)

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council has a power under s.19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide recreational facilities within its area and a duty under NHS Act 2006 to take such steps as it considers appropriate to improve the health of the people in its area. In addition, the Council has the general power of competence contained in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which allows the Council to do anything that an individual may do subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's s.1 power are engaged by these decisions. The recommendations in this report are in keeping with these powers.

Development of new leisure centre

- 7.2 The Council may in the exercise of its duties and powers develop a new leisure centre in its area. This design and build procurement is required to comply with legislation in relation to the procurement and award of contracts above the relevant financial thresholds for services, supplies and works. The Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) will also apply. Using a suitable Framework is a compliant route to market. As a key decision, the procurement route for this project may need to be made by Cabinet at a future date.

Name of lawyer consulted: Siobhan Fry Date consulted: (21/06/24)

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 The council is committed to providing a range of opportunities and provision for residents across the city to participate in sport and be physically active. As set out in the Sports Facilities Investment Plan (SFIP), the successful delivery new West Hub Facility will be a key step in ensuring the council makes good on that commitment. With that in mind, the project team has prioritised engaging with communities representing the diversity of the city and has considered how the delivery of a new facility can help in addressing health inequalities across the city.
- 8.2 Officers began development of an equalities impact assessment (EIA) shortly after the initial project inception in September 2022. The Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion team closely participated in that initial work and remain involved as the project and EIA is developed further.
- 8.3 Early engagement, including the drop-in sessions at King Alfred highlighted the way in which some groups were notably under-represented, in particular younger people and those from minoritised ethnic groups. In response to that officers have sought ways to better engage those groups and to ensure that their voices are represented. That has included:
- commissioning work with the Trust for Developing Communities to undertake focused community research communities representing minoritised ethnic groups and with young people
 - establishing a project reference group, seeking to ensure representation of younger people and those from minoritised ethnic groups, and those representing disabled people.
 - Engaging in face-to-face meetings with groups representing the diversity of the city, including groups representing:
 - **disabled people**, including: Dolphin's Disabled Swimming Club, Possability People East Sussex Sight Loss Council, and The Thomas Pocklington Trust, (a national sight loss charity)
 - **the LGBTQ+ community**, including: Out to Swim (LGBTQ+ swimming club), Older and Out (an over 50s LGBTQ+ group), Brighton and Hove LGBTQ+ Switchboard, and sports clubs with strong LGBTQ+ representation

- **older and younger residents**, including: the Youth Council, the ‘Active for Life Social Ping’ group (a sports club for older residents), and other sports clubs oriented to older members.
- 8.4 From an equalities perspective, the engagement work and EIA have shown that a new facility on either site offers the potential to improve inclusivity and remove barriers to participation in active leisure. For example, a purpose built new facility will have improved access for disabled people – including being easier to navigate for blind and visually impaired users – which arose as a theme during engagement. Similarly, some women, faith groups, and older people we spoke to indicated a wish for greater privacy in changing areas, studios, and swimming pools, which could be provided with a new facility on either site.
- 8.5 The findings from the engagement work have informed the development of the business case and will inform the detailed design of the new facility once a site is chosen. At that stage officers will engage with the groups mentioned above again, along with any others with expertise in this space, so that the understanding from their professional expertise and lived experience can continue to helpfully inform the project throughout the design and build stage.

9. Sustainability implications

- 9.1 For the outline designs used in the business case, architects Faulkner Brown adopted the same sustainability principles they used for other facilities they have recently designed such as the [Ravelin Sports Centre](#) and the [Britannia Leisure Centre](#). The new facility will be designed to BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ standards. Where possible, it will embody principles of Passivhaus construction.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 10.1 Improving health and wellbeing for the local community is a key priority for the King Alfred regeneration project and supports the wider objectives of the Sports Facilities Investment Plan.
- 10.2 The business case examines the health and wellbeing implications of each delivery option in detail, and this is summarised in section 4. The estimates for health and wellbeing impact have been evaluated using Sport England’s research which follows the Chief Medical Officer’s (CMO) Physical Activity Guidelines 2019. For either site, a new facility is expected to deliver benefits. The greater benefits estimated for the LSS site reflect its closer proximity to the more disadvantaged parts of the city and the greater potential for increased physical activity in those communities.

Other Implications

11. Procurement implications

- 11.1 The approach for procuring the build contractors and professional team will be confirmed once the project progresses to the next stage. Officers are

exploring options, such as using the UK Leisure Framework, which could help to accelerate the procurement process.

- 11.2. The team have been undertaking initial research and soft market testing on the procurement route for the next stages of the project. This is likely to involve the procurement of a consultant and professional team (either via a framework or tender). This team will take the project through the next stages of design and planning and prepare for the appointment or procurement of a contractor to build out the development. There are a number of options including the UK Leisure and SCAPE Frameworks, as well as open procurement.

12. Crime & disorder implications

- 12.1. A new facility will provide an opportunity to positively influence crime rates. Research shows that good quality sports and leisure facilities help to build community cohesion and can assist in reducing levels of anti-social behaviour and other low-level nuisance and criminality.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 The business case, as summarised in section 4, shows that a new facility delivered on either site represents a compelling investment option. The business case shows that the LSS site has the potential to deliver the greatest economic benefits (£3.12 for every £ invested), but also shows that a new facility on the existing site could also deliver significant benefits for the city (£1.74 for every £ invested).
- 13.2 However, the business case also considers other factors which favour the existing site. From a planning perspective, developing on the existing site would be consistent with the [City Plan Part 1](#), whereas the LSS site is protected from development ([City Plan Part 2](#)). In addition, there are legal constraints at the LSS site, (the Sainsbury's restrictive covenant), the removal of which would add time, cost, and risk to the delivery of the project. Development on the LSS site would also entail the loss of green space and would require an alternative ground to be found for Portslade Cricket Club.
- 13.3 Whilst responses to the engagement work have shown a range of views amongst residents from different parts of the community, the majority of those expressing a view favoured the existing site.
- 13.4 Cabinet is asked to consider the information set out in this paper and supporting documents and agree that part of the existing seafront King Alfred site is the preferred site on which to take forward the development of the new sports and leisure facility to replace the existing King Alfred, along with responding to the other recommendations set out in section 2.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Summary of the reference case (refurbishing the existing facility).
2. Summary of the site search process and outcomes.

2. Background documents

1. Brighton and Hove City Council [Sports Facilities Investment Plan 2021 to 2031](#).
2. Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) report by CSA environmental, November 2023.
3. Questionnaire and information booklet for the January 2023 engagement programme.