

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Cabinet

## Agenda Item 23

**Subject:** Withdean Community Pool

**Date of meeting:** Thursday, 17 July 2025

**Report of:** Cabinet Member for Sports, Recreation & Libraries

**Lead Officer:** Name: Corporate Director- Operations

**Contact Officer:** Name: Sophie Sargeant

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**Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Reason(s) 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 The council's Sports Facilities Investment Plan 2021-31 (SFIP) was approved by Policy & Resources Committee in June 2021 and was published and launched as the strategic plan for investing in, improving and providing financially sustainable indoor sports facilities across the city.
- 1.2 One of the key findings was that the current demand for pool water in the city exceeds supply, and that any closure or loss of a facility will result in a significant pressure on the remaining facilities for use of the public and club swimming. Work has been undertaken since the launch of the SFIP in 2021, and will continue, to carefully consider the options for increasing the amount of pool/water space in the city to meet the current and future needs. This will include feasibility work to bring forward new sports facilities, including a swimming pool, in the East of the city where we know there is some of the greatest need.
- 1.3 This report, and the proposed new community pool aligns with the objectives set out in the Council Plan 2023-27 – creating a city to be proud of by investing in our city, ensuring a fair and inclusive city by creating safe public spaces that are accessible for all, and building a healthy city where people thrive by living and ageing well. It will also contribute to the key priorities and outcomes of the council's 'Let's Get Moving' physical activity strategy, launched in 2024, to empower local communities to influence and develop opportunities that enable more people to lead active lifestyles in the city and to ensure our facilities offer safe, accessible spaces for our residents.

- 1.4 The report previously taken to Policy & Resources Committee in March 2024, agreed in principle to the development of a new swimming pool at Withdean Sports Complex and an initial budget of £451,000 (via capital borrowing) was agreed to complete the detailed design and survey work required to take the project through to Planning stage.
- 1.5 In January 2025, the council appointed ReCreation as their lead development consultant to manage a professional team of architects and engineers to develop the design. The team has an excellent track record of designing and delivering similar facilities, and in particular are the leading provider of above-ground pools which is an important element of this project.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to review the designs for the new pool and the delivery costs associated, in order to progress with building this new facility for the city.

## **2. Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees to the current designs shown in Appendix A being progressed to a submission of a full planning application.
- 2.2 Approves a total project budget of £6.880m to deliver this new facility (inclusive of the previously approved £0.451m for Design Stages 2-4 to date) to be funded from a combination of s106 and capital borrowing.
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Operations, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to take all steps necessary to award and enter into a suitable contract with a main construction contractor, together with all associated contractual warranties and documents.
- 2.4 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Operations, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member to take all steps necessary to enter into an ongoing professional services contract with the preferred bidder, together with all associated contractual warranties and documents.

## **3. Context and background information**

### **Facility Design & Build**

- 3.1 As indicated on the site plan in Appendix A, the location of the new pool building within the site at Withdean Sports Complex has been recommended by the project team in order to be able to integrate the new facility with the existing leisure centre, which will also be of benefit to the user experience whilst also enabling more effective operational management.
- 3.2 As part of the feasibility work, which involved a group of key stakeholders/user groups, other locations on the site were explored but this one has the following advantages: easier buildability (resulting in more competitive tenders from potential contractors), reduced build risk, cost

efficiency due to significantly less retaining structures being required, a lower roof-level, less impact on biodiversity, reduced impact on the west access road during construction and benefit for neighbouring residents in having the pool plant located further away (within an acoustic enclosure).

- 3.3 One area of impact of the proposed location is the loss of 37 car parking spaces. The council's architects and transport consultant have however explored multiple options to ensure the impact is minimized by identifying other land on the site to create additional overflow parking that would reduce the overall loss of spaces to just 7. With careful management, a robust site-wide travel plan and appropriate timetabling of the pool programme, it is envisaged that the parking provision on-site will have sufficient capacity to meet the anticipated additional usage from the new pool as well as the planned Padel tennis development. The site management team are aware of the need to manage car-based trips and will therefore continue to promote the adoption of sustainable travel, in line with the council's commitment on environmental sustainability and Net Zero. More detail, including parking data analysis is set out in Appendix B.
- 3.4 The proposed new facility will include a 5-lane 25m community pool with changing village, toilets and other ancillary facilities. The current designs and visuals are included in Appendix A but have been informed by extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement as set out later in this report in section 5.
- 3.5 Building a sustainable facility for long-term environmental and community benefit is a key objective of this project and the sustainability aspects of the design will go some way to mitigating its impact. The new swimming pool has been designed to reduce environmental impact, support local biodiversity and create a healthy, energy-efficient building for future generations. The aim is to meet high sustainability standards throughout design and construction, including BREEAM 'Very Good' (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method).
- 3.6 Key sustainability features include:
- the required 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) through new planting and wildlife-friendly landscaping
  - roof-mounted solar panels (PVs) to generate clean, renewable energy on site
  - using sustainable materials which are low impact, durable and have been chosen for long-term performance
  - taking a fabric-first approach with high-levels of insulation in walls, roof and floor to reduce heating and cooling demand
  - efficient heat recovery ventilation – capturing heat from outgoing air to warm incoming fresh air, reducing energy use
  - low-energy (LED) lighting with automatic daylight and occupancy controls to minimise waste
  - systems to monitor, detect and control usage to help reduce overall consumption of the new pool facility and minimise waste

- installation of air-source heat pumps to provide efficient, low-carbon heating
  - fitting water-saving technologies in showers, taps and toilets to reduce water and hot water use
- 3.7 The current design, and energy summary, proposed to reduce the regulated energy and carbon dioxide emissions of the proposed new pool building by a total of 18.26% and 15.35% respectively when compared with Building Regulations Approved Document Part L, Target Emissions Rate (TER) Baseline.
- 3.8 The proposed construction methodology of an above-ground pool is recognised by the construction industry to reduce build costs and timeline compared to conventional pool builds. This approach will in no way affect the quality of the facility for the end user and would still create a facility with an anticipated lifespan of up to 40years if maintained effectively.
- 3.9 Another key objective for this project is to create a new facility which is designed for inclusion and wellbeing – something which we know from the engagement undertaken to date is very important to residents. The council is committed to creating a swimming facility that is fully accessible and inclusive so that more people can enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of swimming. To ensure access for all users, the design includes the following:
- Ramped and stair access to suit all levels of mobility
  - A Pool Pod lift and walk-in pool steps to allow independent pool entry
  - Accessible WCs and showers located in the changing areas
  - Wheelchair accessible changing cubicle
  - A changing village and toilets with individual cubicles, accessible cubicles and family-size cubicles, designed with inclusivity in mind
  - Designated wheelchair spaces in the spectator area for equal visibility

The council is working with stakeholders to ensure the facility meets high standards for inclusive design – not just in compliance. The design follows leisure industry guidance from those such as Sport England and also aligns with interim guidance and best practice regarding equalities. A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed, of which a summary can be found later in this report in section 9.

### Financial Viability

- 3.10 Based on the recent Stage 3 Cost Report provided to the council, the estimated total budget required for delivering this new facility is £6.880m, subject to full design stage drawings and specialist advice from our structural and civil engineers. Table 1 below shows the capital investment and funding summary:

Table 1 - Capital investment and funding summary		Total £'000
<b>Capital Cost:</b>		

Total Construction Cost	5,222
Professional Fees*	896
Design & Risk Contingency (10%)	611
<b>Total Capital Cost</b>	<b>6,880</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>	
S106 receipts	346
Borrowing	6,534
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>6,880</b>

\*inclusive of the £0.451m previously approved and spent to date for the design stages 2-4.

- 3.11 It should be noted that the revised cost of £6.880m is an increase of £1.080m on the figures stated in the previous report taken to the Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Economic Development (CHSTE) Committee and subsequently to Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee in January 2024, for the following key reasons:
- An inflationary increase in construction costs over the past 18months
  - Upon considering lessons learnt from other recent council projects, the design and risk contingency allowance has been increased (as the design develops further it is anticipated this will reduce)
  - A capital cost uplift to making the building all-electric
  - The inclusion of a fixed furniture and equipment (FFE) budget
  - Additional capital cost for creating additional car parking provision on-site to mitigate the spaces lost due to the development
- 3.12 These estimated costs are based on industry benchmarking for costs per m2, engagement with supply chain and from the experience of our development consultants who have designed and delivered other swimming pool facilities recently with a similar specification.
- 3.13 As the council has no earmarked reserves or unallocated capital receipts, the main funding route for this project is capital borrowing. Officers will however continue to identify any possible grant funding which could help support the costs for this project.
- 3.14 The new pool itself, supported by other income generated through the wider leisure contract and recent capital investments, will therefore need to make sufficient income to meet operating costs and service loan repayments. There is however an amount of £0.346m s106 monies allocated to this site which will be used to reduce the overall capital borrowing to £6.534m. Table 2 below sets out the annual capital loan repayments and demonstrates how that will be serviced over the life of the facility:

<b>Table 2 – Cost and funding of required borrowing</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Total Capital Borrowing Required	6,534
Annual loan repayment (4%/40yrs)	330
Annual repayments to be funded by:	
Estimated annual surplus for the new pool	229
Utilising existing revenue budgets created from additional income generation from recent capital projects at	101

Withdean Sports Complex e.g. Padel Tennis (due to be complete/in operation by Autumn this year)*	
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\*subject to approval of full business case – surplus income subject to changes

- 3.15 The financial analysis uses financial data from the council's current leisure operator, as well as benchmarking from other similar facilities, and is considered to be realistic and achievable. A more detailed financial analysis of projected income and expenditure/running costs can be provided but below are the annual totals indicating the net surplus anticipated.

<b>Table 3 – Estimated Income &amp; Expenditure from new swimming pool</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Total Income	(568)
Total Expenditure	339
<b>Total Annual Surplus</b>	<b>(229)</b>

- 3.16 As the council's leisure management contract is currently being re-procured and likely to come into place as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027, the current designs and plans have been shared with potential leisure operators as part of an early market engagement process. The feedback on the plans were positive and there were no concerns raised on being able to operate this new facility as part of the new contract within the affordability envelope.
- 3.17 As with any new swimming pool facility, key factors in achieving a surplus position include: a commercial management approach, a realistic pricing structure, a varied and full pool programme, dynamic marketing and promotion, lean staffing structure and tight controls and management of expenditure.

### **Main Contractor Procurement**

- 3.18 In order to take the project forward, officers have been exploring a suitable strategy for procuring a main contractor to build the new facility, as well as the continuation of a professional team, some of whom will be transferred over to the main contractor with the project management and QS remaining on the client side to oversee the project on the council's behalf.
- 3.19 The recommended procurement route for appointing the professional team is via the YPO (Consultancy Plus) framework, ensuring the council continues to get best value and the expertise it needs, and to be able to get the consultants in place according to our timeline/programme. An open tender published on the South-East Shared Services Portal would then be the recommended route for appointing a main contractor under a JCT Design & Build contract. Collateral warranties will be received for all sub-contractors and consultants as well as the main contractor.
- 3.20 As per the recommendation in this report, the Corporate Director City Operations will provide the authority to award these contracts, and as stated

in the Annual Procurement Forward Plan agreed at Cabinet in February 25, the Lead Member for Procurement will also be involved in the process to maintain oversight.

- 3.21 The intention is to run the main contractor procurement exercise throughout the summer, so that upon receiving planning consent in the Autumn, the team is in place and construction can start on-site swiftly in early 2026.

### Programme Timeline

- 3.22 Below is a high-level programme to show the key milestones for this project going forward and to enable an anticipated completion in Spring 2027:

	July 25	Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26
<b>Ongoing engagement and consultation</b>								
Cabinet Meeting								
Submission of Planning Application								
Stage 4 Technical Design (including ongoing cost review)								
Main Contractor Procurement								
Planning Approval								
Stage 5 Begins – Main Contractor Onboarding + Enabling Works								
Construction Starts On-Site (build duration of 12 months)								

- 3.23 A more detailed project programme has been developed until the end of Stage 4 and as part of the main contractor procurement a detailed programme for construction will be provided.
- 3.24 An internal governance structure, including a Project Board (with designated SRO) and regular Lead Member briefings, is already in place and will remain throughout the duration of the project to monitor progress and as a vehicle for making recommendations for any further decisions required at a Senior Officer or Member level.
- 3.25 An external communications plan will be devised in order to provide regular updates to residents and key stakeholders, outlining progress and opportunities for further engagement and consultation. This will ensure people are kept informed and continue to have their views heard. This plan

will cover the remainder of the design process, the statutory consultation relating to the formal planning application, and then the construction period.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 Feedback from previous consultations and current resident views highlight the importance of ensuring there is adequate pool provision for the city as a priority for resident's health and wellbeing. The council must look to address this in order to meet the demand and also mitigate the loss of existing pool/water space given the poor condition and age of existing facilities. Data tells us that swimming remains the most popular activity for our residents and as a coastal city there is a need to ensure our children and young people have the opportunity to learn to swim.
- 4.2 The new facility proposed to replace the King Alfred Leisure Centre won't be complete until Spring 2028 at the earliest, and further feasibility for our future leisure centre in the east of the city is still required, which means the challenge of keeping the council's current pools open and operational will remain for a number of years.
- 4.3 In addition to the strategic case, the financial case included in this report demonstrates how a new community pool can be delivered in a sustainable and affordable way for the council.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 There has been ongoing stakeholder engagement since the inception of this project a number of years ago.
- 5.2 In April 2025 an initial stakeholder workshop was held and attended by 3 swimming clubs/aquatic clubs, community organisations representing disabled people, a local primary school, the council's Healthy Lifestyles Team, Freedom Leisure as the council's leisure operator and the national governing body Swim England. The feedback provided from this group was used to directly inform and shape the emerging designs and plans as below:

<b>They Said</b>	<b>We Did</b>
Ensure the facility is fully accessible and inclusive	The design now includes ramp access (as well as stairs) into the new facility, accessible WC/shower/changing, a changing village with individual cubicles, accessible/blue badge parking, acoustic controls to minimise noise, Pool Pod and gradual walk-in stairs to enable independent access into the pool for those with mobility issues/disabilities. The design team are also looking into the possibility of an additional hoist for wheelchair users.



Consider how people will travel to the site and find their way around the new facility	Parking spaces lost due to the development will be re-provided elsewhere on the site to minimise the impact on parking provision. Temporary options for parking during the construction period are also being explored. New secure cycle parking in a better location for those travelling by bicycle and for triathlon clubs wanting to host events. New signage and wayfinding to help those who are visually impaired, neurodivergent and which is dementia friendly.
Getting the layout of the changing village right is key	The design now includes a buggy store/park and shoe changing area, lockers that are usable for all, larger family/accessible change areas for school groups to use and contrasting colours and materials will be used which are suitable for those who are visually impaired.
Consider how the new facility will accommodate groups who may want more privacy	There will be separate access control into the new pool facility meaning it won't be overlooked by others using the rest of the existing centre and could be closed off for groups wanting more privacy. The glazing inside the pool hall will bring in natural light but will be frosted glass to ensure privacy remains.
There needs to be a good balance of public swimming time alongside club usage	The council and its leisure operator will work with stakeholders to ensure there is a balanced programme that provides something for all, including: public lane swimming, club and school use, swimming lessons, aqua fit and sessions for families.
Ensure there is adequate parking provision for those who will want to drive	The current top car park will be re-configured as part of the development to maximise the number of spaces available, and the project team have identified additional space on the wider site which could be used as overflow parking. There is analysis underway to better understand the current usage of the car park and to estimate how this may change because of the new pool.

5.3 More recently, the council has undertaken more extensive public consultation to enable residents and the local community to have their say on the current designs and plans for the new pool. An online survey was launched on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June using the council's Your Voice platform and was open for 4 weeks. In addition, the designs and plans were presented at a number of drop-in events at Withdean Sports Complex and also Westdene Library. The key findings from the consultation are set out below, with a more detailed analysis provided in Appendix C:

- 942 responses
- Over half of respondents aren't currently a member/user of Withdean Sports Complex

- Over a quarter of respondents don't currently swim
- Those respondents who do currently swim are using the council's other swimming pools as well as travelling to other facilities outside of the city
- 84% of respondents said they would be likely or very likely to use the new pool
- Of those who would likely use the new pool, 57% said they would travel by car, 42% would walk, 21% would cycle, 13% would use the bus and 2% or less would travel using a Berryl bike or motorbike/moped
- The most popular activities people wanted to take part in were: lane swimming (72%), open swimming/family swimming (58%), aquafit (33%), swimming lessons (23%), children's birthday parties (16%) and club swimming (14%)
- There were also suggestions for women-only sessions, rehabilitation sessions for those with disabilities/mobility issues and classes for babies.
- 69% of respondents like how the outside of the proposed new pool building looks
- The following design features were considered most important to people: having a mix of individual and family/accessible changing cubicles, having a Pool Pod and walk-in stairs to enable independent entry into the pool and clear signage to help people find their way around the facility
- All of the sustainable and environmental aspects of the design were somewhat important or very important to the majority of respondents (80% or more)
- Some respondents were unconcerned about the minimal loss of parking spaces, noting the availability of alternative transport, however others did raise concerns about insufficient parking given the existing pressures in nearby streets and anticipated increased usage at the site
- Accessibility and inclusivity were recurring themes amongst respondents who stressed the importance of truly accessible facilities for disabled users, including changing rooms, showers, blue badge parking and hoists for wheelchair users
- Concerns about safeguarding and privacy were raised by 16% of respondents in relation to toilet and changing room provision, with some respondents stating a preference for separate, single-sex areas as opposed to a changing village for all with individual cubicles.

5.4 These findings show strong support for the new community pool, both from people who are already members of the existing leisure centre and those who don't currently use it. Positively, the survey has also been completed by residents who don't currently swim but who want to – showing the impact the new facility could have on participation/physical activity levels.

5.5 There were many comments provided by residents who are keen to see the pool built as quickly as possible, with regular updates and transparency around the timeline.

- 5.6 The council's Cabinet, Lead Members and local Ward Councilors have been engaged in the project and have provided positive feedback and highlighted areas for further consideration.
- 5.7 This consultation exercise has provided the project team with rich data and insight to further inform the designs and has highlighted key considerations prior to submitting a full planning application – for example parking provision/travel options.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 If approved, recommendation 2.2 will result in the total £6.880m being moved to approved status in the council's capital investment programme for 2025/26 and profiled across financial years according to the delivery timescale. This includes the budget already approved of £0.451m of which £0.366m has been spent or committed to date.
- 6.2 The business case is summarised in the main body of the report and demonstrates that after s106 funding is applied borrowing of £6.534m is required to fund the construction of the swimming pool. As with any business case there is an inherent risk associated with forecasting future income and expenditure streams. Those outlined are provided using a prudent approach; to help manage financial risk for the council, this approach will allow for there to be sufficient flexibility in the financial projections to manage fluctuations.
- 6.3 The business case relies on future income streams from the introduction of Padel Courts at Withdean. Should this not proceed it will result in a revenue pressure of £0.101m that the service will need to manage within its existing resources. However, there is a high chance of this income being generated so the risk is considered low at this point. If the budget and funding are approved this additional income will not be able to be used against another project or budget pressure in future years, otherwise the council risk creating further financial pressures over the medium term.
- 6.4 If approved any budget variations will be reported to Cabinet via the council's budget monitoring procedure referred to as Targeted Budget Monitoring (TBM).
- 6.5 Borrowing decisions for this project will be made in consultation with the council's Treasury Management team to ensure that it is undertaken in accordance with the council's borrowing strategy, authorised borrowing limits and prudential indicators.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garoghan      Date consulted;  
27/06/25

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1 The council is required to comply with the Procurement Act 2023 in relation to the procurement and award of contracts above the relevant financial thresholds for services, supplies and works. The use of a framework for the ongoing use of professional consultants is a compliant route to market. Additionally, an open procurement procedure for the selection of a construction contractor is also compliant under the Procurement Act 2023.

7.2 The council's Contract Standing Orders will also apply.

Name of lawyer consulted: Eleanor Richards      Date consulted (27/06/25)

## **8. Risk implications**

8.1 The risk of a delay to this decision would be potential inflationary increases in capital costs and a delay to the delivery timeline meaning there'd be no mitigation to the risk of any temporary/ permanent closure of any of our other pools in the city given their age and condition.

8.2 The other key risks relating to the project delivery itself would be:

- An increase to capital costs when tenders are received and/or changes to Stage 4 technical design which may impact on capital costs. This will be mitigated through tight control over design changes between Stages 3 and 4, using a value engineering process (VE) throughout the design stages to reduce cost and draw upon the increased design/risk contingency allowance included within the overall budget.
- A delay to receiving planning consent and/or additional conditions applied which may result in additional costs
- The new facility doesn't generate the anticipated levels of revenue meaning additional funds would be required to service the annual capital borrowing costs. Based on benchmarking and other similar facilities it is felt this is a low risk, however consideration has been given to utilising existing revenue budgets that have been improved through income generation from recent capital investments.

## **9. Equalities implications**

9.1 This new pool facility will have a significant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of all our residents and communities. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed which considers the impact on those with protected characteristics, including multiple intersectional and complex impacts.

9.2 In summary, there will be no disproportionate negative impact on any groups due to this new facility and it is envisaged that many will be impacted positively through modern and effective design, and through the ongoing operational management of the new pool.

- 9.3 As stated in paragraph 3.9 of this report, this new facility has been designed for inclusion and to ensure access for all users – not just in compliance but also user experience.
- 9.4.0 Additional themes that came through the stakeholder engagement and consultation to date included: ensuring the facility is easy to navigate for visually impaired and neurodivergent users, enabling greater privacy in changing areas and the pool hall for some user groups (e.g. women, faith groups and older people) and creating a safe and inclusive space for everyone by having a changing village with individual cubicles that provides privacy for all.
- 9.5 Section 5 of the report also demonstrates how the direct feedback from those living with disabilities for example, has already been factored into the design of this new facility but the project team will continue to work closely with stakeholders and user groups throughout the life of the project to ensure the design and operational procedures are informed and shaped by their feedback.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 Using a modular, above-ground construction methodology will reduce the carbon footprint of the swimming pool build. Building above-ground can see a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions compared to an in-ground equivalent and could save at least 285 tonnes of material in the construction phase of the pool.
- 10.2 The modern and energy efficient design, as set out in paragraph 3.5-3.7 of this report, will improve the user experience, improve energy efficiency and lower annual maintenance costs, helping to make the facility sustainable. This not only supports one of the key investment principles of the council's Sports Facilities Investment Plan, but it also aligns with the council's wider net zero ambitions.
- 10.3 As per Planning requirements, this development will need to achieve a standard of BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'Very Good' as well as delivering a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on the site to ensure there is no negative impact.

## **11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:**

- 11.1 Sport and leisure facilities, and in this case a swimming pool, are important in delivering against the council's corporate objective to create a 'healthy city where people thrive'. The benefits associated to this new facility will also support the long-term Brighton Health & Wellbeing Strategy and 'Let's Get Moving' physical activity strategy launched in 2024. These all focus on prevention, reducing health inequalities and increasing healthy life expectancy through people being more active.

- 11.2 The health benefits of swimming as an activity are significant, particularly as it is a life-long activity that residents can participate in at any stage in their lives, irrelevant of age and ability. Swimming is also proven to have a positive impact on mental health as well as physical health.
- 11.3 Ensuring our new facility is fully accessible and inclusive is key to enabling people with disabilities to swim regularly and also for those living with long-term health conditions where water therapy is known to help the management of symptoms and reduce impact on their daily lives.
- 11.4 This new facility will provide long-term savings to the NHS and other public services, by increasing the levels of physical activity of our residents and therefore preventing and reducing the need for expensive health and wider support services in future.
- 11.5 This new facility will also help to serve some of the communities in the North-West and East of the city that are less physically active and where health inequalities are more prevalent. As with our other existing leisure centres, we will be looking to implement 'pay and play' options, access via the Leisure Card scheme (providing means-tested discounts for residents), and other targeted programmes that provide access to free and low-cost opportunities to make our facilities as accessible and affordable as possible for all.
- 11.6 The new pool will provide additional pool/water space for the council's leisure operator to expand their learn to swim programme for children and adults – recognising the importance of providing these opportunities for people living in our coastal city to learn this life skill.

## **Other Implications**

### **12. Procurement implications**

- 12.1 The Procurement Act 2023 dictates that the Threshold (including VAT): 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025 for Works contracts is £5,372,609.
- 12.2 Corporate Procurement advises the use of available compliant framework (as set out at 3.18 above) to appoint our current professional team will ensure the council continues to display best value for money and maintain continuity of service from the incumbent expert professional team throughout the construction phase of the project. An open tender under the new Procurement act 2023 via the South-East Shared Services Portal will be our recommended route for appointing a main contractor under a JCT Design & Build contract. Collateral warranties will be received for all sub-contractors and consultants as well as the main contractor

### **13. Conclusion**

- 13.1 The council has a duty to provide adequate and quality sports facilities that enable residents, and visitors, to be physically active and enjoy swimming as a key leisure activity which contributes directly to health and wellbeing.
- 13.2.1 Whilst there are longer-term plans for replacing the current swimming pools within the city in the West and East, there is an urgent need to provide additional pool/water space to meet demand and to also act as a mitigation to loss of provision caused by any planned or unplanned temporary or permanent pool closures.
- 13.3 A new community pool at Withdean Sports Complex would provide much needed pool/water space that can be delivered in a relatively short timeframe due to the innovative above-ground construction methodology chosen. The financial analysis included in this report demonstrates how the estimated surplus from this new facility will be able to service a capital loan repayment over the life of the facility, supported by existing revenue budgets.
- 13.4 If approved, officers will be able to instruct the professional team to progress with submitting a full planning application this summer and will be able to procure a main contractor to start works in early 2026 upon achieving planning consent. It is anticipated that the new pool could be complete by Spring 2027.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

1. Appendix A – Site Plan, Designs and Floor Plans
2. Appendix B – Transport Statement
3. Appendix C – Consultation & Engagement Summary Report

### **2. Background documents**

1. [Previous CHSTE Committee Report from January 2024](#)

