

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 168

Subject: The King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

Date of meeting: Thursday, 23 April 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Sports, Recreation & Libraries

Lead Officer: Name: Corporate Director - City Operations

Contact Officer: Name: Mark Healy

Email: Mark.Healy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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 This paper seeks Cabinet agreement to progress the King Alfred Regeneration Project to the next stage of implementation following the completion of the technical design stage (Royal Institute of British Architects Plan of Work Stage 4 or RIBA 4) and the submission of the planning application.
- 1.2 Specifically, the paper seeks agreement to allow the Council to enter into the Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services ("Alliance"). Alliance will then enter into the building contract directly with the chosen main contractor Willmott Dixon Construction (WDC) to take forward the on-site enabling works including the demolition of the disused bowling alley area.
- 1.3 The paper also seeks agreement to bring forward the allocation of £3.5m from the total agreed capital budget to fund these works up to November 2026, when construction of the new facility is scheduled to begin.
- 1.4 Ahead of the full construction works commencing, a further paper will be presented to Cabinet in September or October to seek agreement for the final agreed budget and to enter into a further Development Management Agreement with Alliance for the construction of the new facility.
- 1.5 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 the Council enters into Development Management Agreements with Alliance Leisure for enabling works on the new King Alfred leisure facility site including the demolition of the disused bowling alley area.
- 2.2 Agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director City Operations in consultation with the cabinet member for Sports, Recreation and Libraries to finalise the terms of the Development Management Agreements and enter into the Development Management Agreement and any ancillary documentation.
- 2.3 Agrees to bring forward the allocation of £3.5m from previously agreed project capital budget to fund these works up to November 2026.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 At its meeting on 25 September 2025, Cabinet approved recommendations to (i) agree to the design team progressing the King Alfred design proposals up to the submission of the planning application, (ii) agree the overall project budget of £65m, (iii) agree to increase the initial allocation to £5m for professional fees and surveys, and (iv) approve the demolition of the redundant parts of the site.
- 3.2 Since the last decision paper was considered by Cabinet, significant progress has been made in driving the project forward. The key achievements since then are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Completion of on-site surveys

- 3.3 Prior to the commencement of the demolition works and main construction works, an extensive programme of surveys has been completed on site. This has included technical surveys to better understand the ground conditions on site to ecological surveys to understand the extent of biodiversity net gain (BNG) and habitat replacement that may be required. It has also included desk research such as utilities records surveys and heritage reports.
- 3.4 The key onsite surveys and desk reports that have been completed prior to works on site are:
 - topographical, ground penetrating radar (GPR), CCTV, and high-pressure drainage survey
 - utilities records report
 - ground conditions survey, including trial holes
 - land contamination survey and soil investigation
 - air quality report
 - noise report

- arboricultural survey
 - ecology and biodiversity net gain (BNG) survey
 - asbestos survey
 - car park usage survey
 - flood risk assessment report
 - sewer records report.
- 3.5 The ecology and BNG report has informed the ecology mitigation plan which in turn has shaped the design of the planting programme on the adjacent events space which was completed earlier this year to provide BNG and reinstate habitat for local species. This is described in more detail in paragraphs 3.15 – 3.16.
- 3.6 The asbestos survey identified extensive contamination in the disused bowling alley area. This has informed the asbestos removal programme that was conducted between December 2025 and March 2026, as described in paragraphs 3.22 – 3.25.

Prior approval of the demolition works

- 3.7 An application for prior approval to proceed with the demolition of the disused underground bowling alley area was submitted on 4 December 2025. Approval was granted on 2 February, with just one additional condition which required that an Ecological Mitigation Strategy is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the demolition works commence.
- 3.8 The final Ecological Mitigation Strategy is due to be submitted to the planning authority in April 2026, with formal discharge required prior to demolition starting on site in July 2026. Engagement has taken place with the planning authority, who have reviewed the Ecological Mitigation proposals and provided comment prior to planting works starting on site in February 2026.

Submission of the planning application

- 3.9 The main planning application for the construction of the new King Alfred Leisure Centre was submitted on 27 February (planning reference BH2026/00490). The planning application included an application to also deliver a temporary car park on Hove Lawns No.1 (the events space which lies immediately to the west of the site for the existing car park which forms part of site for the new King Alfred facility).
- 3.10 Subject to achieving approval, construction of the new facility is scheduled to begin in November 2026.

Design and delivery of a temporary car park with ecological mitigation

- 3.11 When the construction of the main facility begins in November, a hoarding line will need to extend around the whole of the existing car park for the duration of those works. At that time alternative parking arrangements will be required.

- 3.12 With that requirement in mind, the design team have developed proposals for a temporary car park on the adjacent event space immediately to the west of the site (Hove Lawns No1). The proposed design will initially provide just over 100 spaces on the northern half of the site, of which 6 will be blue badge spaces, and incorporates the option to add an additional row of spaces once the coastal protection project on the south of the site concludes later this year.
- 3.13 The design proposals also feature some element of ecological mitigation to provide biodiversity net gain and the replacement of habitats for local species. The initial phase of this mitigation work began in March. For the planting works, particular attention has been paid to providing new nesting habitats for sparrows and other species of nesting birds along with other measures to mitigate the loss of the green roof area, including sand baths and sources of lime-rich water for the bird species in the area. Those features will be in place for the 2027 nesting season.

Outcome of application to the National Heritage List for England

- 3.14 Before the 2025 Christmas holiday period an application was submitted to Historic England requesting that the current King Alfred Leisure Centre be added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (*application no 1495760*). The existing King Alfred facility had been previously assessed and turned down for listing in 2016 (application reference 1433626). The current King Alfred is not located in a conservation area and is not included on a local heritage list.
- 3.15 English Heritage published their response to the request on 20 January 2026. Having considered the application and the Secretary of State decided not to add the King Alfred Leisure Centre, Kingsway, Hove to the List. The response noted that based on the evidence provided, the King Alfred Leisure Centre, Kingsway, Hove, does not have special architectural and historic interest in the national context.
- 3.16 The full decision from English Heritage can be found here:
<http://services.historicengland.org.uk/webfiles/GetFiles.aspx?av=7A04F977-3F1C-401D-B1B9-B1B811FA7B3B&cn=71AFE20F-A554-4E57-9A8E-A83B86E499FB>

Update on asbestos removal and soft strip works

- 3.17 Ahead of redevelopment of the site, a survey was conducted of the redundant bowling hall during September and October 2025. That survey revealed high quantities of asbestos-containing debris within ceiling voids, beneath the main bowling alley structures, and as loose contamination on several floor areas. These areas are all closed off to staff and to the public.
- 3.18 The survey's results made clear that in order to make the building safe for future work, a comprehensive asbestos removal program will be required. This work necessitated the removal of all asbestos containing materials (ACMs), along with the soft strip-out of internal walls, ceilings, floor coverings, and soft furnishings within the affected areas to mitigate the risk of cross-contamination and the spread of asbestos fibres.

- 3.19 The proposed soft strip works to address the asbestos contamination are not considered demolition, and no planning consent is required to proceed with works of this type. With that in mind, the asbestos removal works began in December, ahead of the submission of the application for a prior notice for demolition. As mentioned in para 3.6, this application was submitted on 4 December, with consent granted on 2 February.
- 3.20 All works were undertaken in a manner fully compliant with relevant health and safety legislation, with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) being provided with statutory notifications at the appropriate times.

Engagement of UK Power Networks (UKPN) to relocate power cables

- 3.21 From Willmott Dixon Construction's (WDC's) previous work on the Crest Nicholson scheme, they are aware of 33Kva and 11Kva cables running to the King Alfred site, which would need to be relocated prior to construction of the new facility.
- 3.22 UKPN require that payment for relocation of high-capacity cables is made in advance. All the necessary agreements and payments were made in November 2025 to ensure that the diversion works will be completed in a timely manner to avoid any delays to the wider programme.
- 3.23 However, following initial investigations, UKPN have informed to the council that it may not be necessary to relocate the cables. UKPN are currently undertaking further investigative work to confirm if the move will be required, and if the results of that investigation confirm that the cables can remain in place, then the majority of the fee paid in November will be refunded (less costs for the investigative survey work).

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 With prior approval to proceed with the demolition of the disused underground bowling alley granted on 2 February, and following completion of the asbestos works described above, the project will progress to the more substantive site enabling works. The scope of these works is outlined below.

Scope of the enabling works

- 4.2 The enabled works are scheduled to commence at the beginning of May 2026 with a view to completion in November 2026, after which, subject to planning, cabinet approval and entry into a delivery management agreement for the construction, construction of the new facility will begin.
- 4.3 Once the delivery management agreements have been signed with Alliance Leisure for the demolition and enabling works, those works will commence. The enabling works will consist of:
- Surveys to bowling area on completion of asbestos removal. Ground investigation, services surveys, and surveys of drainage and the northern retaining wall.
 - Soft landscaping and ecological mitigation works ahead of the delivery of temporary car park. As described in section 3, this will entail planting across the northern boundary of Hove Lawns no 1 where the temporary car park will be delivered, subject to approval of the planning application.

- Delivery of the temporary displacement car park - forming of new car park within the adjacent Hove Lawns no 1 (events space) ahead of existing car park closure for main construction works.
- Creation of a site compound for the demolition. The compound will feature secure boundary hoarding, biometric turnstiles and welfare accommodation for those on site. In addition to enclosing the area to be demolished, the site hoardings will extend along the northern edge and part of the eastern edge of existing car park. This is so that the hoarding can replace the existing car park safety fencing, which due to its current condition would have required imminent replacement irrespective of any other works on the site.
- Completion of the UKPN diversions (if required) as described in section 3 above. The close proximity of the cables to the site means that they may need to be relocated to ensure that construction work could safely take place without disrupting or impacting the cables.
- Diversion of foul and surface water drains to outside of new building footprint.
- Pre-demolition: completion of soft strip and installation of temporary support works and removal of old bowling structure.
- Service yard ramp access, creating an alternative access to the service yard to enable continued use once existing ramp is demolished.
- Main demolition of bowling alley area (*to commence after the nesting season has concluded*). Willmott Dixon Construction's (WDC's) demolition strategy will ensure that the existing facility is protected during these works. Their approach will include taking measures to ensure that the existing building is structurally supported during the works and isolated from vibrations arising from the demolition, as well as installing a secure, weatherproof hoarding to ensure the existing live building is protected. A Principal Designer (CDM) has been appointed and is reviewing all necessary risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) relating to enabling works from a health & safety and compliance perspective, and a temporary works specialist is also undertaking a review of the demolition strategy. By law, the RAMS is provided to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who are the competent body to assess the adequacy of the contractor's ways of working and to arrange for inspectors to visit if required. Wherever possible, materials from the demolition will be used for the new build (foundation materials et cetera).
- Removal of advertising boards and replacement of fencing to perimeter with hoarding.
- Early installation of the main foul water and storm water connection points.
- Main works preparation. Installation of perimeter hoarding to secure site, installation of initial office and welfare arrangements.

Notes on the enabling works

4.4 As main contractor, Willmott Dixon Construction (WDC) will be undertaking the demolition and other enabling works. WDC have been closely involved with the technical and practical design of the new facility and have commissioned the site surveys and asbestos removal ahead of the demolition. More information on the appointment of WDC is set out in section 14, *Procurement*.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The redevelopment of the King Alfred site has been a strong council commitment since 2016, as set out in [City Plan Part 1](#). The current project to deliver the new facility was started in autumn 2022. Close and regular public engagement has been a key priority since then. A detailed overview of the engagement and consultation which has formed part of the project since its inception in Autumn 2022 is set out in the September 2025 Cabinet paper.

5.2 In brief, the first phase of that engagement work, from September to December 2022, focused on engaging with core users of the King Alfred such as leaseholders and occupiers, such as the boxing club, sports clubs, and community groups that regularly use the facility. Soon thereafter, from January 2023 we began much wider community groups and residents in the local area and across the city. We engaged with many local resident groups such as the West Hove Seafront Action Group, Hove Civic Society, the Friends of St Aubyns, and many others. In addition, we held many public facing events open to everyone, including an all-day drop-in event in April 2023 and a visioning workshop with residents who had shown an interest in being involved.

5.3 At the beginning of January 2024 we began a further phase of engagement to inform the choice of site for the facility. That phase of engagement included all-day drop-in sessions at the King Alfred centre and other venues in the west of the city, and an on-line questionnaire on the sites and delivery options. That questionnaire generated over 3,600 responses, one of the highest levels of engagement for any project. To ensure high levels of engagement with the questionnaire, we advertised through many channels including social media, posters in libraries, sports centres, and bus shelters, articles in the Argus, and most importantly, a maildrop to over 17,000 local homes.

5.4 From January 2025 we have been engaging with residents on the emerging design proposals. That work has involved further engagement with resident groups such as those mentioned above. In addition, focus groups sessions were held in April and May at the King Alfred to engage with sports clubs, community groups, disabled users, and local residents. During July 2025 detailed 'surgeries' were held with local sports clubs to meet the design team to work through their specific needs.

5.5 During October and early November 2025 we undertook a further phase of engagement, given that the designs were nearing the final versions for submission in the planning application. That phase included:

- a public exhibition held from 9 October to 2 November on site at the existing King Alfred facility, sharing images of the design proposals for new facility and setting out the story of how the design has developed.
- a series of 'meet the design team' days, also held on site at King Alfred from 9 October to 11 October, with around 300 attendees.
- comments and views captured through comment cards and on-line through an on-line survey hosted on the council's YourVoice platform, with around 600 respondents.
- wide press interest generated, with news items in the Argus following the release of the designs and journalists attending the 'meet the design team' days.
- continuing engagement with local community groups and sports clubs, including the Older People's Council, West Hove Seafront Action Group, and others.

5.6 The key messages emerging from the online survey and exhibition days were as follows:

- **Positive overall approval:** The proposals received an overall approval rating of 3.6 out of 5 across key questions (where 3.0 indicates a neutral response and anything above indicates a net positive result).
- **Strong support for interior proposals:** Responses to the interior design proposals were especially positive. Respondents commented on layout, light, and accessibility of the proposed spaces, with 80% of responses being neutral or positive.
- **Design sentiment:** A clear majority (62%) of respondents rated the exterior design as 'neutral to very good', with many appreciating the modern aesthetic.
- **High Intent to use:** There is significant anticipation for the new facilities, particularly the fitness spaces, pools, and family play zones, suggesting the new centre will be well-utilised. This was reflected in the responses with over 91% expressing interest in the fitness options presented in the survey, 93% interest in the pools and swimming facilities and 92% in the family and play zones.

5.7 The results of the engagement were key in shaping the proposals that were submitted in the planning application last month. All of that engagement took place in addition to, and ahead of, the statutory consultation underway now that the planning application has been submitted.

5.8 As part of the design development process, an second all-day review session was convened on 30 October with Design South East's [Brighton & Hove review panel](#), following up the earlier session held on 20 June 2025. The panel provided feedback and challenge on the design, offering suggestions for the design team to consider.

5.9 In addition to the community engagement summarised above, the project team has undertaken early market engagement with leisure operators and continued discussions with Freedom Leisure as the current leisure operator. The procurement of the new leisure contract is currently underway, with the operator expected to be appointed in December. Engagement with Freedom Leisure and the new leisure management operator (if different from Freedom) will continue throughout the project, recognising that their input will be key in informing the design and fit-out of the facility to ensure it is aligned with market demand to help maximise future use and revenue.

6. Financial implications

6.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 25 September 2025 approved an indicative capital budget of £65 million for the project and approved the allocation of a total of £5 million to develop the scheme to RIBA stage 4 including some enabling works and the submission of the planning application.

6.2 This decision was supported by the business case presented to Cabinet on 18 July 2024: [King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project.pdf](#) alongside an updated land valuation produced by commercial agents SHW, new project costs prepared by the main contractor Willmott Dixon Construction, and updated revenue projections prepared by Continuum Sport and Leisure and The Sports Consultancy presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 25 September 2025: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 25/09/2025 14:00](#). Prior to that meeting, the Cabinet paper was also examined by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on [22nd September 2025](#).

6.3 This report requests the release of a further £3.5 million in advance of the final decision to proceed with the main contract. This additional £3.5m million is contained within the overall £65 million indicative budget and means a total of £8.5 million will be committed and spent prior to any final decision.

6.4 At the time the September 2025 cabinet paper was presented, the project spend profile assumed the £5 million allocation would fund the project activities up to the completion of RIBA 4 in August 2026. However, the need to bring forward some of the enabling works and undertake additional design work means that the £5m is now profiled to be consumed by the end of April 2026.

6.5 This most significant elements of the additional works undertaken include:

- the soft strip and removal of asbestos contamination in the bowling alley area, as described in section 3 (£0.575m)
- the UK Power Network (UKPN) diversions, which, as set out in section 3, required advance payment (£0.680m)
- UKPN point of connection fee (£0.016m)
- BT Diversions (£0.090m).

6.6 Bringing these works forward has meant the demolition of the bowling alley area and subsequent construction of the new facility can proceed without further delay but means resources need to be released earlier for the project to proceed at pace.

- 6.7 There have also been a number of design and other fees which have exceeded the budget allocations of the original fee proposals, these include:
- £0.194 million required for design revisions arising from insurance requirements, resulting in the original timber frame being replaced with a hybrid steel & timber aa fire suppression system (sprinklers) being added.
 - £0.094m required for the temporary car park design, including biodiversity net gain and habitat replacement for local species
 - Other fees for activities which required increased scope for the planning submission, including air quality assessments, sound and vibration assessments, and security needs assessments.
- 6.8 The September 2025 Cabinet report highlighted the inclusion of £6.9 million contingency and £2.9 million tender price inflation which together total £9.8 million contingency within the overall project estimate of £65 million. At this stage it is envisaged these additional costs will be absorbed within those contingencies.
- 6.9 The estimated financial impact of the development on the councils finances was included in the September 2025 Cabinet report. In summary the key assumption is that the scheme is funded from a combination of the Capital Receipt from the sale of part of the site, Infrastructure grant and council borrowing, with the council borrowing to be funded from the increased revenue from the facility within a new long-term contract and an ongoing revenue funding gap.
- 6.10 The September 2025 Cabinet report included an estimated net revenue funding gap of between £0.550m and £1.340 million with the base assumption of £0.890 million pa. The report included a range of options to mitigate this gap, estimated to deliver between £0.800m and £1.25 million, however some of the proposals will not crystallise until closer to the final decision to proceed is considered such as the outcome of the procurement exercise for the new long term Leisure Services partner, and discussions with Homes England.
- 6.11 The overall debt financing of the borrowing for the project has been included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan over the development period and the ongoing financing costs and debt repayment once the facility is operational is assumed to be met from net increased revenue from the facility, existing leisure budgets and the revue budget mitigations in paragraph 6.4.
- 6.12 The financing costs of the additional £3.5 million is included in the 2026/27 budget onwards. The additional £3.5 million equates to a revenue commitment of £0.170million per annum over the life of the asset.
- 6.13 The carpark income that will be lost when the new facility is developed is assumed to be replaced by the temporary car park until the replacement underground carpark within the new facility is operational. The cost of providing a temporary carpark was not included in the original cost plan estimate. However, temporary parking provision is required to (a) protect the parking revenue from that site (currently around £0.4m per year) and (b) to ensure that there is continuity of parking provision so that Freedom Leisure are not unfairly impacted by reduced revenue arising from a reduction in parking provision.

6.14 The project presents a number of significant financial risks and mitigations will need to be identified prior to any final decision to proceed. The current ongoing revenue budget gap assumption is £0.890m per annum before any cost/income mitigations. The risks include:

- Volatility of debt financing costs -current interest rates are between 1% and 1.25% higher than assumed which adds between £0.300m and £0.500m
- Overall contract project cost is in line with projections – a 3% inflation increase above existing inflation provisions will increase revenue debt costs by £0.100m pa.
- Confirmation and level of infrastructure grant from Homes England – the absence of grant funding would increase debt costs by a minimum of £0.250m pa.
- Outcome of the leisure contract tender and income improvement from the new facility – the expected net increased income is between £1.06m and £1.450m pa.
- Timing and level of the capital receipt from the housing element – additional financing costs of £0.100m per month delay.

Name of finance officer consulted: James Hengeveld

Date consulted: 31/03/26

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.

7.2 The Council entered into an Access Agreement with Alliance Leisure under the UK Leisure Framework Agreement ("Framework") for the design and preconstruction services in January 2025. The Framework scope covers the demolition and enabling works proposed by this report, and the work can be completed by one of the admitted suppliers on the Framework under a Development Management Agreements which will permit Alliance Leisure to enter into the building contracts with the admitted supplier for these works. Wilmott Dixon will then sub-contract the works to their subcontractors. The Legal team with external support will assist the City Operations Service in reviewing and agreeing the form of both contracts.

Name of lawyer consulted: Siobhan Fry *Date consulted (19/03/26):*

8. Risk implications

8.1 A comprehensive approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating risks has been implemented as part of the project management process. This

includes regular risk reporting to the project board. The current headline risks for the project are summarised below:

- **Programme delays / inflationary pressures.** A detailed cost plan and a credible programme for delivery has been developed with the design team and main contractor. However, the complexities of the site and its proximity to the coast exposes the project to risk of delays from adverse weather. Cost inflation in the construction sector remains high, so delays to delivery could give rise to further cost increases. This risk is being mitigated by factoring in appropriate contingency to both the programme and budget.
- **Delays at the planning application stage.** Whilst the planning application will relate only to the sport and leisure centre, not the separate residential development, the complexity of the site and the project could result in delays to the planning determination. This risk is being mitigated by the design team and planning consultants beginning early engagement with the planning authority. This has included establishing a Planning Performance Agreement with the planning authority, and a pre-app meeting in November prior to the submission of the planning application at the end of February. The project team has also met with the DesignPLACE review panel twice (on 20 June and 30 October). Feedback from those sessions has informed the subsequent iterations of the design. Ahead of the planning application, a further round of public engagement on the proposed designs took place as described in section 5.
- **Financial risk.** The project is reliant on a mix of funding sources including capital receipts, Homes England Grant Funding, debt financing and potential future revenue. Whilst the financial viability of the project has been examined in detail in the two previous cabinet papers (July 2024 and September 2025) there are risks associated with each of the funding sources. Risks associated with the capital receipt and future revenue are being mitigated through updated land valuations and revenue projections. The project team remain in regular dialogue with Homes England, and have worked with the design team and contractors to identify a comprehensive grant proposal for all of the enabling works which can potentially be funded. The financing costs of the borrowing is affected by macroeconomic factors and world events. The cost of debt has a significant bearing on the net revenue impact on the council. The council retains treasury advisors to support the financing strategy for this project. Inflation assumptions are particularly impacted by world events and therefore an acute financial risk at present. The overall project sum includes £9.8 million for contingency and contract inflation.
- **Practical delivery issues on site.** The complexity and uncertainties associated with the site mean that delays and cost increased could result from issues associated with demolition / enabling works, rerouting of services, maintaining access to the electricity substation and related matters. These risks are being mitigated through site survey work and other relevant investigations commissioned through the design team.

- **Site management.** The constrained site, and proximity of the adjacent the A259 cycleways and groyne replacement projects pose a logistics risk. This risk is being mitigated through liaison with both projects to agree practical solutions. In particular, the project team is working with groyne replacement project team to agree use of the adjacent event space to provide temporary parking capacity, and liaising with the A259 project team to agree the most workable plan for routing vehicles into and out of the car park.
- **Homes England grant funding.** Realising the maximum value for the sale of part of the site for residential development will be dependent on securing grant funding for Homes England to support demolition and remediation works. Grant funding is also being sought to support enabling works for the new leisure centre part of the site. This risk is being mitigated through regular close liaison with Homes England, including site visits, with a view to securing grant funding to support both the remediation of the residential part of the site, as well as any eligible enable works and infrastructure costs for the leisure centre development.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Ensuring that the new facility is as inclusive and accessible as practicably possible has been a central theme that has informed the project since its inception. The Council plan for 2023-2027 sets out under its 'outcome 3' the commitment to deliver 'a healthy city where people thrive'.
- 9.2 The successful delivery of the new King Alfred 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.
- 9.3 In particular, the project team has prioritised accessibility for disabled users. Throughout the life of the project we have engaged closely with groups and organisations representing disabled people, including Possability People, The Sussex Sight Loss Council, and the Dolphins Disabled Swimming Club. The team has also engaged closely with the council's equalities and inclusion and drawn on their knowledge and experience in meeting the needs of disabled people. Specific activities have included:
- focus groups held with representatives of disabled organisations, disabled people's sports clubs, and community groups
 - meetings on site with disabled sports clubs to understand their needs
 - a 'simulation walk' for members of the design team, arranged with the Sussex Sight Loss Council, to help the team understand the needs of visually impaired people.
- 9.4 The design team also have extensive experience in designing and delivering accessible facilities. That experience will inform the design of the new King Alfred to ensure the facility can be easily navigated. Some specific features will include:

- a Changing Places facility which is well located for potential users of the centre and also members of the public who may need that level of facility when out and about in the area.
 - both pools will have gradual walk-in steps and a PoolPod to ensure those with mobility needs and disabilities will be able to have independent entry into both pools. The pool pods provide a much better option than traditional 'oxford hoists' for providing disabled swimmers (and others, such as parents with young babies) with independent, safe, and dignified access in and out of the pool.
- 9.5 The design proposals have been reviewed by the council's own accessibility adviser, and by an independent accessibility consultant. Their input has helped inform some of the very detailed elements of the design, such as the exact location of doorways within the building, location and design of opening mechanisms for doorways, and the widths of walkways in the car park area.
- 9.6 That work is set out in more detail in the [September 2025 Cabinet Paper](#). That paper explains more about the development of the project's equalities impact assessment (EIA) and explains how that has informed the project as it has developed.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 From the project's inception, the project team have prioritised ensuring that the new facility reflects best practice in sustainability and energy efficiency. The new facility has been designed to meet the BREEAM 'excellent' standard (a planning requirement) and to reflect the principles of the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard.
- 10.2 The core design team (GT3 Architects, Engenuiti structural engineers, and Van Zyl & deVilliers mechanical and electrical engineers) have an excellent track record in designing and delivering energy efficient facilities including the [Eclipse Leisure Centre](#) for Spelthorne District Council – the first Pasivhaus accredited wet and dry sport and leisure facility in the country. Learning from those projects has informed the design of the new King Alfred.
- 10.3 Further details on the project team's approach to maximising sustainability, including specific requirements set out in the project's sustainability brief, are provided in the [September 2025 Cabinet Paper](#)

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 The new King Alfred Leisure Centre is a key element of the council's [Sports Facilities Investment Plan 2021-2031](#), and as such will play a key role in improving health and wellbeing of the local community.
- 11.2 The business case completed last year examined the health and wellbeing benefits that the new facility could help deliver. This included examining the direct benefits of having more residents participate in active leisure. More

information about the health benefits expected from the new facility are set out in both the [September 2025 Cabinet Paper](#) and the earlier [Cabinet paper, July 2024](#).

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 Following Cabinet's decision in July 2024 to proceed with the project the officer team undertook programme of soft market engagement throughout July, August and September to investigate and evaluate the procurement approaches available for the professional team. That process is described in more detail in the [September 2025 Cabinet Paper](#).
- 12.2 However, in brief, that process entailed examining the available procurement frameworks (e.g. Pagabo, Scape, Crown Commercial Service, and others), considering a restricted tender process, engaging with clients who had recently procured architects and professional teams for similar projects, and visiting a number of sports and leisure centres either recently completed or currently in construction including: Spelthorne Leisure Centre (Passivhaus accredited), Cranleigh Leisure Centre, Winchester Sport and Leisure Park, Ravelin Sports Centre and Kingston Leisure Centre and discussing the key learnings with the clients, architects, and contractors.
- 12.3 The outcome of the engagement was that officers recommended that the architect and professional team for the King Alfred Regeneration Project be procured through the UK Leisure Framework which is accessed through development partner Alliance Leisure. A decision was taken under delegated authority by the Corporate Director City Services to use the framework on 29 October 2024 in accordance with the delegated authority agreed at the July Cabinet meeting.
- 12.4 The UK Leisure Framework provided access to the leading professional consultants and contractors in the leisure sector, and also offered a more rapid means of appointing the team, compared to a tendering approach. Currently, across the construction sector many consultant teams and tier 1 contractors are reluctant to participate in tendering exercises, given the high cost of preparing a bid and the uncertainty in whether the bid will be successful. With that in mind, procurement through a framework frequently provides a more reliable and rapid means of securing the best team. All of the consultants and contractors on the framework will have passed through a qualifying process, which includes examining value for money.
- 12.5 As set out in the September 2025 paper, once the UK Leisure Framework was selected as the preferred procurement route, officers worked with Alliance Leisure to identify the architect and lead consultants on the framework best suited to taking forward the next stages of the design of the new King Alfred facility. A lead professional team was identified which was then considered and agreed by the council's procurement team and the Director acting under delegated authority and appointed by Alliance in January 2025.

- 12.6 In line with the council's procurement requirements, the selection process for identifying the preferred contractor for the construction entailed running a mini-competition with contractors on the UK Leisure Framework. The shortlist of contractors was chosen with Alliance Leisure and the design team and reflected the contractors' experience in delivering similar facilities on challenging coastal sites, and the contractors' capacity and availability to deliver the project to the council's planned schedule.
- 12.7 Through the mini competition process, Willmott Dixon Construction (WDC) emerged as offering the most compelling proposal and best value for money. WDC were appointed on a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA) agreement on 31 May 2025 by the Corporate Director using the delegated authority agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 18 July 2024. The proposal submitted by WDC included their plans for demolition and enabling works in addition to the main construction of the new facility. Separate contracts are being agreed for the enabling and demolition works.
- 12.8 A decision on the appointment of the main contractor will be taken by Cabinet this Autumn. Currently, it is expected that Willmott Dixon will be recommended for that appointment. However, the Alliance Framework enables the council to leave the agreement, and for example, appoint a different main contractor to deliver the new facility, retaining ownership of all the design work created to that point. Opting for an alternative contractor would however have significant implications for the delivery schedule of the project.

13. Crime & disorder implications

- 13.1 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.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the information set out in this paper and supporting documents and agree that the project proceeds, along with the other recommendations as set out in section 2. With that agreement, the Council will enter into contract with Alliance Leisure as delivery partner and Willmott Dixon Construction as main contractor to undertake the demolition of the disused bowling alley area. That work is scheduled to complete in autumn of this year, with the construction of the main facility to begin thereafter in November 2026.
- 14.2 Ahead of the commencement of the main construction work, a further paper will be brought to Cabinet in September to set out the agreed final budget for the new facility and to seek approval to enter into the main delivery agreement for the new facility.

Supporting documentation

1. Appendices

None.

2. Background documents

1. Brighton and Hove City Council [Sports Facilities Investment Plan 2021 to 2031.](#)

