

Agenda Item No 6

Executive Board

15 October 2025

**Report of the Interim Corporate Director,
Streetscape**

**Atherstone Leisure Centre
Construction Programme**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Council has agreed to replace the Atherstone Leisure Centre and Memorial Hall. Ensuring that the right delegated authority is in place to make decisions on aspects of the construction and agreeing a capital commitment will help expedite the delivery of the leisure build project.

Recommendation to Council:

- a That a capital commitment of up to £27m be made for the delivery of the replacement Leisure Centre in Atherstone, and that authority be delegated as set out in the attached report to commit expenditure within this sum; and**
- b That all decisions required to deliver the project to RIBA stage 7 including, but not limited to, those set out in section 3.8 of the attached report be delegated to the Interim Corporate Director, Streetscape in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chair of Community & Environment Board, the Member Leisure Working Group, S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.**

2 Consultation

- 2.1 All Councillors have been invited to the Community and Environment Board on the 13 October 2025. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3 Report

- 3.1 The details of the recommendations are set out in the attached report which will be considered at the Community and Environment Board meeting to be held on 13 October 2025 (Appendix A).

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4 Report Implications

- 4.1 The implications of the recommendations are set out in the attached report.

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Dix (715341).

Agenda Item No 9

Community & Environment Board

13 October 2025

Report of the Interim Corporate Director - Streetscape

Atherstone Leisure Centre Construction Programme

1 Summary

- 1.1 The number of issues and closures of the pools at Atherstone Leisure Centre since the start of the year have raised questions about how much longer the existing facilities can remain open without further significant investment, and a strong argument can be made to fast track the construction programme of a new facility to minimise disruption and reputation to the service and reduce the impact of inflation on the capital cost of construction.
- 1.2 In November 2024, Members instructed officers to proceed with the design, planning and procurement of a new leisure facility at Atherstone, to replace the existing Atherstone Leisure Centre and Memorial Hall off Long Street. In May 2025, Members selected a brief for the new leisure facility and in August 2025 Members instructed officers to progress with a preferred design concept for the new building.
- 1.3 This report sets out how the delivery programme can be expedited by delegating decisions to ensure that the new facility can be completed and opened by Spring 2028.

Recommendation to the Community & Environment Board:

- a That the report be noted;**

Recommendation to the Executive Board:

- b That a capital commitment of up to £27m be made for the delivery of the replacement Leisure Centre in Atherstone, and that authority be delegated as set out in the report to commit expenditure within this sum; and**
- c That all decisions required to deliver the project to RIBA stage 7 including, but not limited to, those set out in section 3.8 of this report be delegated to the Interim Corporate Director, Streetscape in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chair of Community & Environment Board, the Member Leisure Working Group, S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.**

2 Consultation

- 2.1 All Members have been invited to a drop-in session in advance of the Community & Environment Board. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3 Condition of the Atherstone Leisure Centre and the Memorial Hall

- 3.1 The Atherstone Leisure Centre and Memorial Hall have served the community well for over 50 years, but they are now at the end of their economic lives.
- 3.2 In the past 12 months there have been 16 closures of the pools in ALC, including eight instances where the closure has been for one or more days, with the longest period being 15 days. The Memorial Hall is also in poor condition and the roof leaks into the main hall.
- 3.3 Because of the condition of the existing facilities and ongoing closures, which are frustrating for users and incur significant expenditure for repairs, Members have agreed to progress with a replacement facility and AtkinsRealis have been appointed to lead the Design Team.
- 3.4 Members are keen to progress with the construction of a new facility as soon as possible. There is a risk that further closures may be un-economic to resolve and could result in the permanent closure of Atherstone Leisure Centre and/or the Memorial Hall well in advance of a contractor being appointed to build the new facility.
- 3.5 In addition, construction inflation is expected to increase by 13% over the next three years, with inflation for complex Mechanical & Electrical works (such as those required for swimming pools) to increase further owing to a skilled labour shortage. Consequently, delaying the start of the construction of the new Atherstone Leisure facility would result in less purchasing power for the Council's budget.

Expediting the Delivery Programme

- 3.6 Members are keen that the delivery programme for a new leisure facility is not delayed and have created the Member Leisure Working Group to provide a mechanism that guides officers in advance of recommendations being taken to Board.
- 3.7 The Member Working Group has representatives from all the political groups but does not have decision-making powers. Formal decisions relating to the new build must currently be taken by Board, and this requires a lead-in of several weeks. Consequently, retaining all decisions at Council or Board will constrain the Council's ability to make decisions at the pace needed to minimise the programme and carries the risk that the delivery of the project could be slowed down.

- 3.8 A streamlined decision-making process is therefore required to avoid delay and to minimise the period during which provision of leisure services in Atherstone are reduced or absent. Authority that would need to be delegated includes (but is not limited to):

Programme & Delivery

- Approval of the detailed delivery programme and milestones.
- Authority to accelerate the delivery programme or amending the sequencing of works.
- Decisions on providing temporary service provision during the construction phase.

Design

- Approval on overall design, including Mechanical & Electrical and energy strategy, landscape design.
- Authority to approve amendments of the design.
- Authority to agree Rights of Light decisions and awards, Party wall and resolution of neighbour matters.

Finance:

- Authority to approve spending within the approved budget (for example design fees, surveys, enabling works, Principal Construction Contractor payments).
- Approval to enter into contracts (for example consultants, legal advisor, Principal Construction Contractor).
- Authority to manage variations and contingencies within the approved budget.

Procurement & Contractual Decisions

- Appointment of the AtkinsRealis Design Team from RIBA 4 (Technical design) to RIBA 7 (In-Use, post-handover).
- Tendering and award of the main construction contract on a two-stage basis (Pre-Construction Services Agreement and Main Construction Contract).

Planning & Development Management

- Authority to submit a planning application and associated technical reports.
- Decisions on minor amendments to the scheme to address planning conditions or statutory consultee requirements.
- Undertakings that are necessary to discharge planning conditions.

Land & Property Decisions

- Authority to approve site preparation, demolition and enabling works
- Approvals for land acquisition, easements, or access agreements (if required).

Risk, Legal & Compliance

- Approval of risk management plans and authority to agree mitigation measures.

- Delegation to approve and sign off on legal agreements.
- Authority to develop, approve and apply any policies specific to the project (for example, social value, communications, energy, materials, finishes, fit-out).

Communications & Engagement

- Authority to approve the communications and consultation strategy.
- Decision-making on how to address representations and objections during delivery.

Proposed Approach

3.9 It is proposed that all necessary decisions relating to planning, procurement, design, land, legal agreements, finance (within approved budgets), and stakeholder engagement be delegated to the Corporate Director, Streetscape in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chair of Community & Environment Board, the Member Leisure Working Group, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. The Member Leisure Working Group to be called as required with three working-days' notice, or as scheduled.

3.10 These delegations will:

- Allow the Council to make decisions quickly.
- secure the Principal Construction Partner as early as is practicable.
- Provide the flexibility needed to keep the project on programme.
- Help manage risks effectively while ensuring that the programme remains within the agreed financial envelope and delivery timetable
- Reduce the risk of delay caused by lengthy governance cycles.
- Ensure decisions are made in line with the Council's approved budget and strategic priorities.
- Minimise the impact of inflation and maximise the purchasing power of the Council
- Maintain accountability through ongoing consultation with Members and regular reporting back to C&E Board.

Reporting

3.11 Decisions taken under delegated authority will be formally recorded to ensure transparency and compliance with the Council's Constitution. The Corporate Director, Streetscape will provide regular (retrospective) progress reports to relevant Boards, including updates on programme, risks, costs, and delivery milestones.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

4.1.1 A project of this size will clearly have significant capital and revenue financial implications. These will remain variable throughout the procurement and build phases of the project due to volatility in markets and related inflation. In this

circumstance time really is money and the more expedient we can be the lower the final cost will be.

- 4.1.2 In establishing the process to drive the governance proposed at 3.8, it is also necessary to commit to the capital expenditure required to deliver the centre. This will form part of the budget setting process in February, which will include the detailed costing and funding proposals that make up the budget.
- 4.1.3 As has already been stated the Council has been working with AtkinsRealis to develop a cost plan for the new leisure centre. The summary of that cost plan is set out at Exempt Agenda Item No 12.
- 4.1.4 The recommendation therefore is that the Council make a commitment of up to £27m for the new leisure centre.

4.2 Safer Communities Implications

- 4.2.1 The Authority's leisure facilities contribute to community safety by providing well-managed services that afford opportunities for positive activity and, therefore, a creative alternative to potential criminal and / or anti-social behaviour.

4.3 Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council has powers under Section 19(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide such recreational facilities as it thinks fit including indoor sports centres. That Act and other legislation gives the Council broad management powers for those facilities.

Freeth's are the Council's external Legal advisor on the project and are working together with the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer to review all legal documentation and provide advice to protect the Council's interests. The Head of Legal Services is consulted before entering any new contracts. Planning permission will be required for any demolition and construction works. The Council is required to achieve best interest and is also required to comply with Procurement Regulations. Legal advice is being sought on any existing third-party legal rights and easements on the Land.

- 4.3.2 The Council is to ensure that Human Rights are not infringed, and that the Council complies with relevant Legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 4.3.3 Legal Services will be consulted before entering any new contracts and in relation to whether any intended changes to processes are legally compliant or expose the Council to legal risk. Specific legal advice on compliance and risk will be included in any reports made to the Council or its Boards.

4.4 Environment, Climate Change and Health Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no direct Environment or Climate Change impacts resulting from this report, but environmental sustainability has been identified as a consideration

to be taken into account as the design of the new leisure centre is developed. The impact on health is set out below.

4.5 Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Implications

- 4.5.1 Leisure facilities have a positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals and the sustainability of local communities by providing opportunities for formal and informal recreation and by contributing to an improved quality of life.

4.6 Human Resources Implications

- 4.6.1 Whilst there are no human resources implications resulting directly from this report, there is a potential impact as we progress through the project. Discussions have therefore already commenced with Unions and staff and will be continued at the appropriate times.

4.7 Risk Management Implications

- 4.7.1 Delivery of a major capital project of this scale carries a number of risks, including:
- Programme risk – delays in decision-making, procurement, or planning consent could impact the delivery timetable.
 - Financial risk – construction inflation, unforeseen site conditions, or design changes could increase costs.
 - Operational risk – closure and demolition of the existing centre during construction will affect service users and income.
 - Reputational risk – failure to deliver the new facility on time or within budget could undermine confidence in the Council.
- 4.7.2 The delegation arrangements recommended in this report are specifically intended to reduce programme risk by enabling timely decision-making.
- 4.7.3 The Council is working with RSM who provide the Councils risk service to establish a detailed risk register that will be maintained and regularly reviewed by the officer project board. Risks will be reported to Community & Environment Board through progress updates.

4.8 Equalities Implications

- 4.8.1 There is a general principle that Councils should exercise fairness in the exercise of their functions. There is no specific statutory duty to consult however a full and meaningful consultation is considered necessary to support the Council's public sector equality duty and is considered good practice, to ensure the local community is engaged and that consideration of local needs such as equality and accessibility is considered at this formative stage. Feedback will inform the future facility.

4.9 Links to Council's Priorities

4.9.1 The proposals to develop a new leisure facility provides a positive link to the corporate priorities in respect of:

- Efficient and Sustainable organisation.
- Safe, Liveable, locally focussed communities.
- Prosperous, active and healthy.
- Sustainable growth, protected rurality.

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Dix (715341).

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date