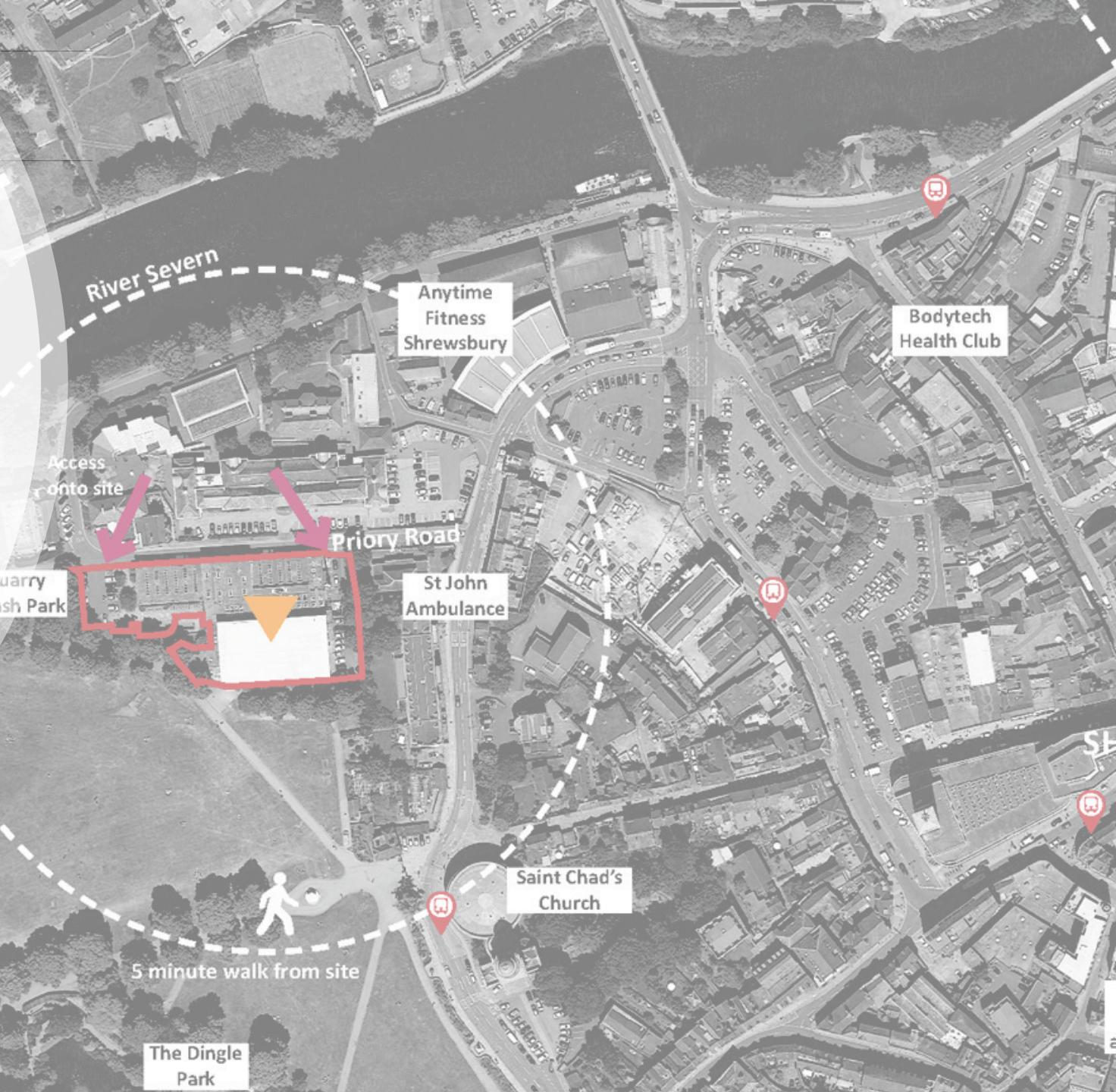


# Case Study

## Shropshire Council

Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) was appointed to support the Council in following the SOPG to inform the options for re-development of, and investment in, the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre.

The Quarry (Shrewsbury's Jewel in the Crown) is a 29 acre grade listed park, the beneficiary of a £1.5m HLF grant in 1998 and the fruition of a £2.3m project completed in 2005. The area has developed over the decades and is now one of the most visited and well used facilities in the town attracting over 1.5m visitors a year. The park hosts the Shrewsbury Flower Show and has a varied events programme throughout the year. The park is bounded by the River Severn as it meanders around the town centre.



## Case Study

### Shropshire Council

The Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre is a Victorian building, comprising 4 pools on two different levels, a small fitness suite, café and reception area. The changing rooms are not of a modern design, the building lacks DDA access, and is increasingly expensive to operate, given the unplanned maintenance issues to be addressed.

None of the existing pools are of a standard size, and there are no studio facilities.

The complexity of providing 3 sets of wet male and female changing rooms, serving 4 pools on 2 levels, leads to greater than normal operational costs, large areas of corridors and maintenance costs.

Fitness suite users with a disability cannot access the 4 pools, as these are only accessible by stairs.

The quality of the existing facility does not meet modern expectations and is impacting on participation in both swimming and fitness.

There is an ageing demographic across Shropshire and in Shrewsbury, with consequent rising health and care costs. Older people in Shrewsbury and the wider County suffer a high level of falls; more accessible, better quality physical activity provision could contribute to a reduction in both these and increasing mental health issues.



## Case Study

### Shropshire Council

## The SOPG Project

Shropshire Council (SC) is considering the way forward for provision of swimming in Shrewsbury, given the desire to embed physical activity in the future town infrastructure, to facilitate increased activity amongst those who are inactive, or whose health would benefit from being more active on a day to day basis, and the age and condition of the existing Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre; this latter situation makes it very difficult to deliver the Council's Vision for Shrewsbury, and the wider health and wellbeing of Shropshire, because the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre, and other facilities are reaching , or are beyond, the end of their useful lives.

In parallel with this work, the Council is undertaking a review of the leisure service as a whole, including updating the Leisure Facilities Strategy by developing an overarching Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (the headlines of which are currently available in draft format), whilst at the same time reviewing the effectiveness of all its current leisure contracts and front line operations.

Clearly these two work strands are inextricably linked and strategically aligned, and will, as each develops, inform and influence the other. The future of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre is the major project in the sports facilities portfolio because of its role in tying together the visions in the Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Big Town Plan, the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, and the Masterplan for the West end of Shrewsbury.

## Our Approach

SLL undertook a gap analysis of all work undertaken to highlight the tasks on which to focus to complete the investment business case, aligned to the SOPG. This included significant face to face engagement with leading politicians to inform the strategic planning process, given manifesto commitments, which needed to be balanced with a pragmatic approach to investment and deliverability.

Initial consultation identified stakeholder priorities as:

'A town centre attraction, resulting in increased dwell time; more people in the town more often'

Something to support and drive visitor numbers to the town, capitalising on the location on the River Severn, and the opportunity to link formal and informal indoor and outdoor provision

Contribution to cultural quarter

Retaining the Quarry site

The need for some water space

Providing for younger children, teenagers and families

Facilitating pedestrian access through the Quarry Park and into town, as well as linking into the main National Cycle Route 81 and pedestrian and cycle routes along the river

Addressing needs of older people

Contributing to the health and well-being agenda

## Case Study

Shropshire Council

Following extensive engagement and consultation SLL identified the following priorities and needs to inform the options analysis for investment.

Key Priorities	Key Needs
<b>The rapidly ageing demographic</b>	Provision for the elderly, with a specific focus on ageing more actively to avoid falls and mental illness, as well as CV, cancer, reducing obesity and other life limiting conditions
<b>Families in, or moving into, the area needing access to facilities and services, including those providing for physical activity and life skills such as learn to swim</b>	Support for families to become more active in everyday life and reduce obesity
<b>Young people, particularly those who may not be in employment , education or training</b>	Improved and more relevant services for young people, to help address obesity, mental health and physical inactivity
<b>Integration of opportunities to be physically active into daily lifestyles</b>	Increased opportunities for walking and cycling in urban areas
<b>Replacement/re-development of ageing provision</b>	Better quality provision; improved access to services and provision- availability and accessibility
<b>Optimising the green resources in the county, particularly in the urban areas</b>	Better use of parks and open spaces and linking them to access routes, and built facilities
<b>Physical activity and provision at the core of place-making</b>	Ensuring services and facilities are sustainable long term
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Accessible, relevant and well-located physical activity facilities and services, co-located with health, education and other services where possible
<b>Contributing to economic growth and development</b>	A range of services and activities which provide for residents, visits and those who work in the area
<b>Delivery of the Big Town Plan which brings together partnership vision and support for Shrewsbury place-making, with physical activity at its heart</b>	Re-development of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre so that physical activity facilities are part of the re-shaped urban landscape, contribute to the town's economy, and help to optimise the wider assets of the Quarry Park and riverside area

## Case Study

### Shropshire Council

SLL then developed the following shared local outcomes, which subsequently informed the KPI's for the proposed investment:



Healthier and more active Shropshire communities and specifically, improved physical and mental wellbeing especially for older people, families, young people;



A more active older population in Shrewsbury



More inactive young people in Shrewsbury becoming and staying active



More families in Shrewsbury becoming and staying active together



Provision for physical activity and the active environment embedded in the placemaking for Shrewsbury



Increased partnership working and delivery around physical activity provision, with development of outcomes for co-located and integrated service provision, co-created around physical activity



Physical activity provision at the heart of, and contributing sustainably to, economic regeneration in Shrewsbury



Increasing access to the wider open space and river area as part of re-development of provision in Shrewsbury

## Case Study

Shropshire Council



In considering the way forward, SLL identified the potential for two separate but linked investments, which would address community swimming needs in the town centre of Shrewsbury, and also the operational deficit challenges of the Shrewsbury Sports Village, a dryside and outdoor facility on the edge of the town.

The options identified a town centre facility offering a small laned pool providing for use by older people, early morning swimmers, local primary schools and swimming lessons, co-located with a spa, bistro, some leisure water and fitness, to provide a community facility, also attractive to visitors, better linked to the Quarry Park and outdoor informal water-based activities on the river.

Complementing this, investment in an 8 lane x 25m pool with a partial moving floor at the Shrewsbury Sports Village will provide for lane and fitness swimming, lessons, school use, club training and competition. Located directly opposite the most deprived areas in the town, this will, for the first time provide accessible water space for those who are inactive, linked to a new health centre located adjacent to the site. Investing in a new pool, and re-modelled fitness provision at this site will transform what is essentially a weekend facility into a centre used on a daily basis.

### Outcomes

The proposed investment options have been presented to Sport England, who have indicated their interest in supporting the project proposals and are currently being considered by Shropshire Council prior to submitting the SOPG report to Sport England.