

CABINET

17 June 2026

Draft Minute Extract

WINCHESTER SPORT AND LEISURE PARK IMPROVEMENTS (CAB3561)

Councillor Tod introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Becker emphasising the importance of the WSLP in offering access to different sports and fitness facilities to a wider sector of the community, including NHS referrals. He highlighted that the council owned the WSLP building and it was essential for its offer to be updated to ensure it remained financially viable.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Wallace, Lee and Horrill addressed Cabinet as summarised below.

Councillor Wallace

As chair of Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Wallace expressed concerns that the accelerated timetable bypassed proper scrutiny and the spirit of the council's constitution provisions relating to decision-making. He questioned the justification for allocating £740,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to a successful leisure facility, noting the lack of a clear link to mitigating development impacts. Furthermore, he highlighted the inequity of using funds generated district-wide for city-based projects, particularly when rural areas contribute significantly to the total CIL pot. Consequently, he stated he could not support the recommendation and urged Cabinet to refocus CIL expenditure on its primary purpose of supporting infrastructure throughout the district.

Councillor Lee

Councillor Lee also questioned whether the allocation of £740,000 in CIL funding for improvements at an already successful urban leisure centre represented the fairest or most appropriate use of scarce resources. He expressed concern regarding the pattern of investment across the district and queried whether the proposal addressed a genuine district-wide priority or served to further enhance a niche Winchester town facility. He highlighted the council's own evidence of substantial unmet needs elsewhere in the district and challenged the justification for directing limited CIL funding in the city centre at the expense of other competitive requirements.

Councillor Horrill

Councillor Horrill welcomed the continued success of the WSLP as a district asset but sought clarification on what specific actions were taken to engage residents and users regarding the proposed improvements. She also raised concerns regarding why the project appeared outside of the standard CIL process and decision-making and believed there was a lack of evidence to support the report's claims of long-term resilience. Finally, she emphasised

that while the facility must evolve to meet customer needs, the current proposal lacked transparency.

Councillor Tod thanked councillors for their contributions and also referenced the comments made by Mr Davies during public participation earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Tod and the Strategic Director responded to the comments made including on the CIL process and the high demand for additional group exercise class provision at WSLP. The Strategic Director advised that early engagement had been undertaken with users of WSLP and that further consultation would take place.

The Director: Legal clarified that because the proposed decision was subject to full council approval, it was not an executive decision (i.e. one to be taken by Cabinet) and therefore not classed as a key decision.

The Chief Executive clarified that there was no constitutional requirement for the report to be considered by a scrutiny committee prior to submission to Cabinet. She confirmed that it was for full council to determine whether to approve the capital budget of £740,000.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

That a capital budget of £740,000 be approved to deliver improvements at Winchester Sport & Leisure Park.

RESOLVED:

That subject to budget approval by full Council as set out above:

1. That the allocation of £740,000 of District-wide Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and associated capital expenditure to deliver improvements at Winchester Sport & Leisure Park (WSLP) be approved, subject to Full Council approval of the associated capital budget.
2. That an exception to the Contract Procedure Rules to enable one of the direct award options set out in section 3.6 of this report be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, to approve minor amendments to the detailed design, specification and scope of the project during delivery, provided such changes remain within the approved budget and do not materially alter the strategic objectives or overall outcomes of the scheme approved by Cabinet.