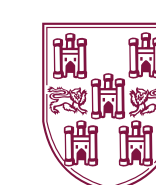


Former Leisure Centre Site

Welcome

You can: **learn about the bids received, the recommendation being made to Cabinet and ask questions of the project team**



Winchester
City Council

What could the site be used for?

Every council is required to have a Local Plan – it is an important document which plans for sustainable and appropriate development and outlines what land can or can't be used for. The Winchester District Local Plan has been through several rounds of consultation.

In the Local Plan it says that this former leisure centre building site can potentially be used for development for the following uses:

Class F.1 (non-residential educational and cultural uses)

- Education provision.
- Display of artwork (not for sale or hire).
- Museum.
- Public library or reading room.
- Public or exhibition hall.
- Public worship or religious instruction.
- Law court.

Class E(d) (indoor sport and recreation)

- Indoor sports and recreational activities

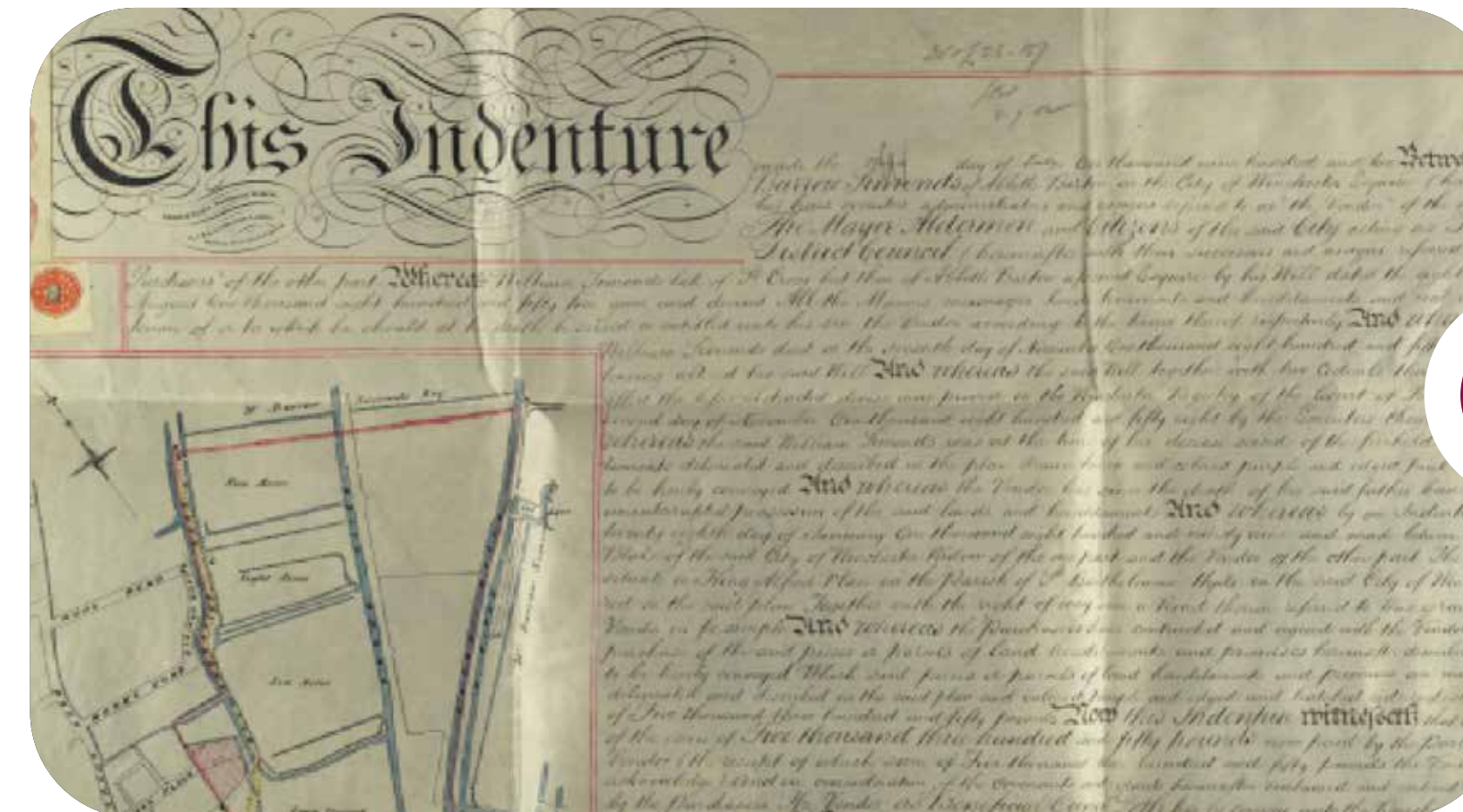
Proposals that broadly deliver the leisure, recreation and community objectives that have historically been associated with the site, and which underpin the allocation, are likely to be acceptable uses.



Key considerations

Any new investor in the site must be aware that there are some important considerations about the site that will have an impact on what can and can't be there.

- Planning
- Views
- Scheduled monuments
- Adjacent uses
- Best consideration
- 1902 Indenture
- Protecting the river and managing flooding
- Access
- Financial viability
- Local government reorganisation



Key considerations explained

Planning

The area proposed is the former leisure centre building site only. Potential new uses for development under the Local Plan are:

- Class F.1: Education, museums, libraries, public halls, places of worship, law courts.
- Class E(d): Indoor sport and recreation.

Proposals that broadly deliver the leisure, recreation and community objectives that have historically been associated with the site, and which underpin the allocation, are likely to be acceptable use.

The recommended proposal will be asked to bring forward a planning application and during that process would need to demonstrate it meets the policies in our Local Plan.

Views

The site is close to the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

There are important views into, out of and within the site, including:

- Views towards the South Downs National Park.
- Views of Winchester Cathedral.

These views must be taken into consideration for any future redevelopment plans.

Protecting the river and managing flooding

The site is close to the River Itchen so flood risk must be managed – most of the site is in flood zone 2, but some of the outskirts is higher risk (zone 3)

Any new use must show it will manage flood risk, by

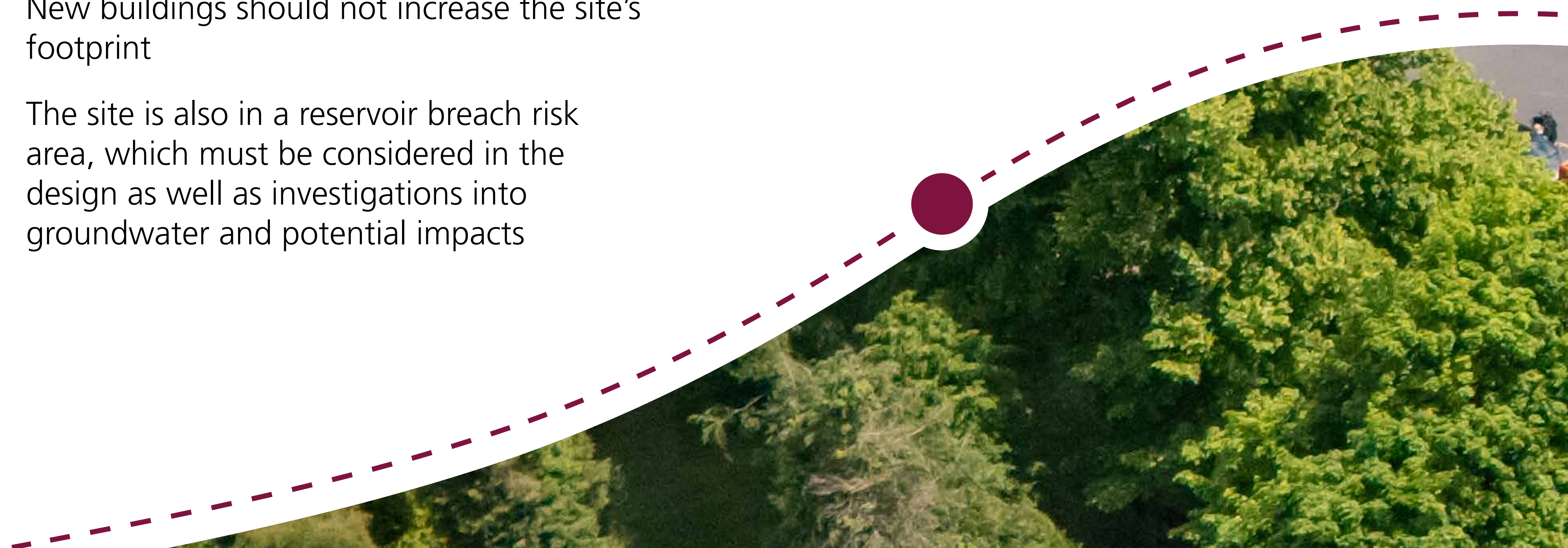
- avoiding buildings in the most flood-prone areas.
- keeping an 8m buffer next to rivers to not only manage risk but to protect water quality and important wildlife.
- encouraging ways to manage water, such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting and soft landscaping

New buildings should not increase the site's footprint

The site is also in a reservoir breach risk area, which must be considered in the design as well as investigations into groundwater and potential impacts

Scheduled monuments

- Hyde Abbey Gardens includes remains of a former Benedictine monastery.
- The gardens extend into the car park and grounds of the former leisure centre.
- Hyde Gateway and the Bridge are the only substantial Scheduled Monuments that remain.
- The site's western boundary is next to the Winchester Conservation Area.
- Any development must respect the site's historic and conservation significance.



Key considerations explained

1902 Indenture

- In 1902, the then district council for Winchester purchased the land at River Park for £5,350. The indenture states that the land is for the purpose of a public park and recreation ground. It also allows for buildings on the land which will benefit the city. The only part of this land now under consideration is the former leisure centre site. (The land was not gifted, it was purchased by the predecessor of the council).
- Under the indenture, residential development (homes) is not permitted.

Access

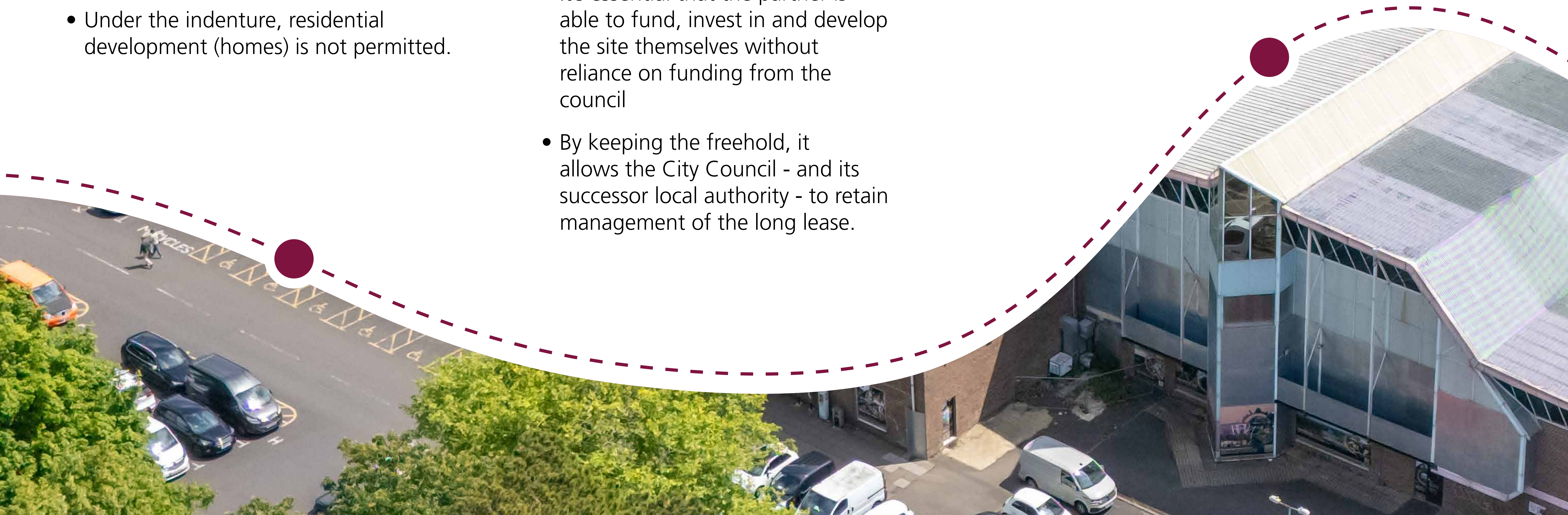
- There is good walking and cycling access to the site
- Vehicle access is via Gordon Road, a residential street off North Walls (one-way system).

Financial viability

- It's essential that the partner is able to fund, invest in and develop the site themselves without reliance on funding from the council
- By keeping the freehold, it allows the City Council - and its successor local authority - to retain management of the long lease.

Adjacent uses

- The outdoor skate park and provision of indoor bowling will be protected
- Any redevelopment must consider and respect these existing uses.



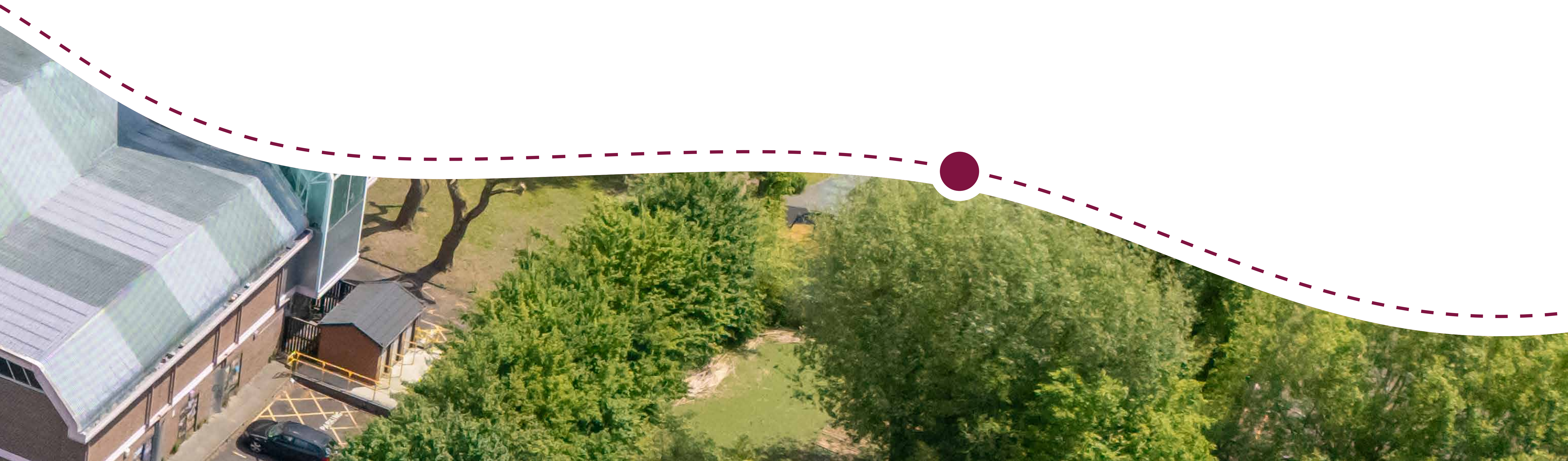
Local government reorganisation

The size and shape of councils across Hampshire is changing.

- There are currently 15 councils across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Following the government's decision in March, there will be four new councils on the mainland, replacing the current 14.
- This autumn, we're expecting new legislation called a Structural Change Order. Following this, existing council decisions on major matters (like large contracts or land sales) would require consent from the new 'shadow' or successor authority.

Best consideration

- By law, councils are obliged to obtain the 'best consideration reasonably obtainable' (Section 123(2) Local Government Act 1972).
- Best consideration can be achieved by undertaking a competitive marketing process, followed by an independent valuation (known as a section 123 valuation).
- Best consideration is not automatically the highest price. Other factors can be taken into consideration such as likelihood that the transaction will take place and lower planning risk. It is the overall package that represents the best consideration.



What you told us

Last year, 993 residents responded to the council's questionnaire on the future of the site, demonstrating strong support for retaining it as a public recreational asset and green space. The most popular suggestions included a lido, community hub, family-friendly leisure facilities, performance space and sports provision.

This was reinforced during the public engagement earlier this year, which received a further 758 responses. Key themes included:

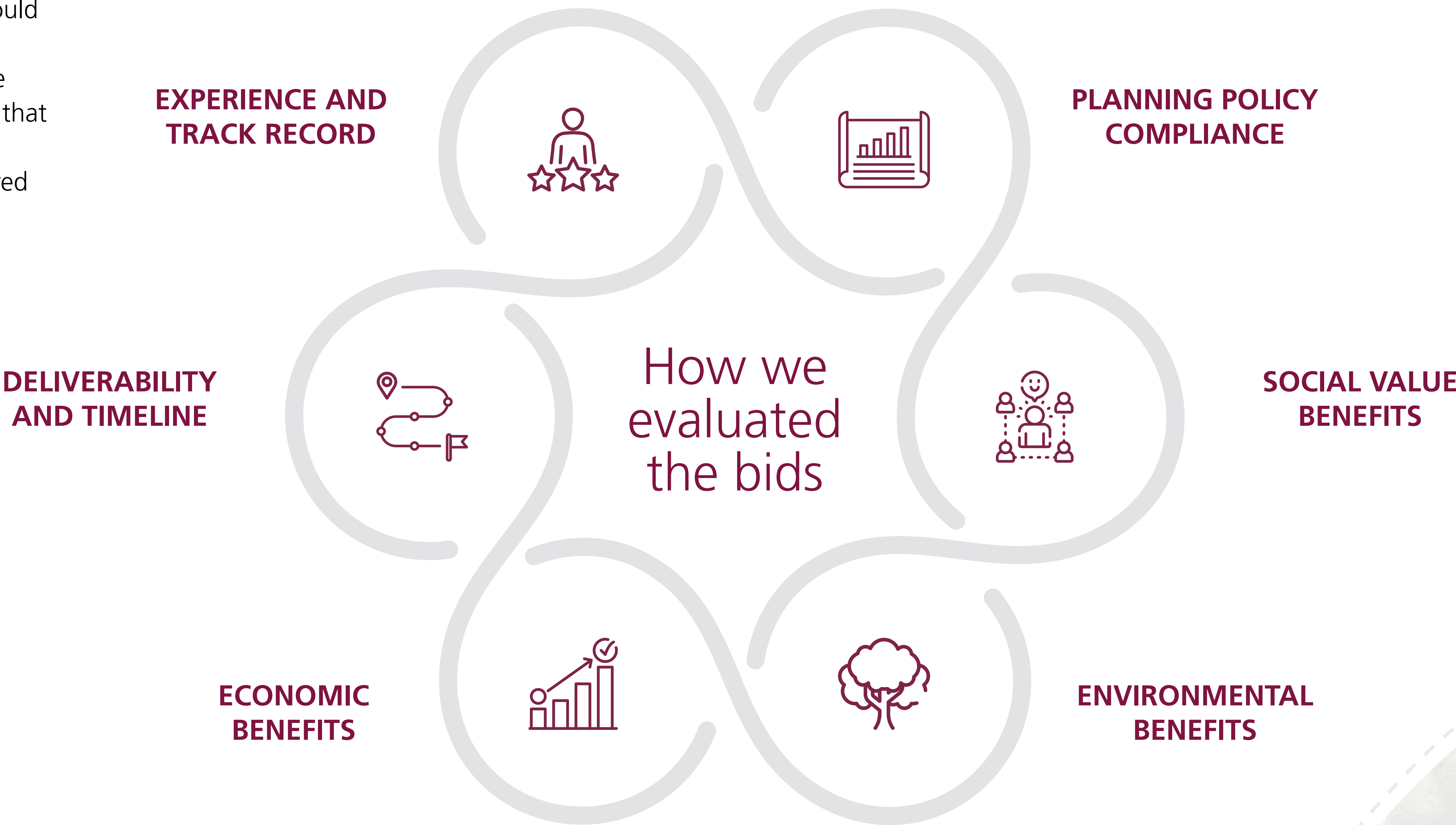
- **Strong support for a lido**, with 77% of respondents mentioning it as a preferred future use.
- **Demand for a wider community hub**, with 43% supporting a mix of leisure, wellbeing, youth and community facilities.
- **A desire for affordable and accessible facilities** that can be enjoyed by residents of all ages.
- **The importance of environmental sensitivity**, including respecting the site's riverside setting and green space.
- **Strong support for retaining the site's recreational purpose** and ensuring public access for future generations.

Overall, feedback has consistently highlighted a desire for an inclusive, community-focused destination that promotes health, wellbeing and recreation.



The Evaluation Criteria

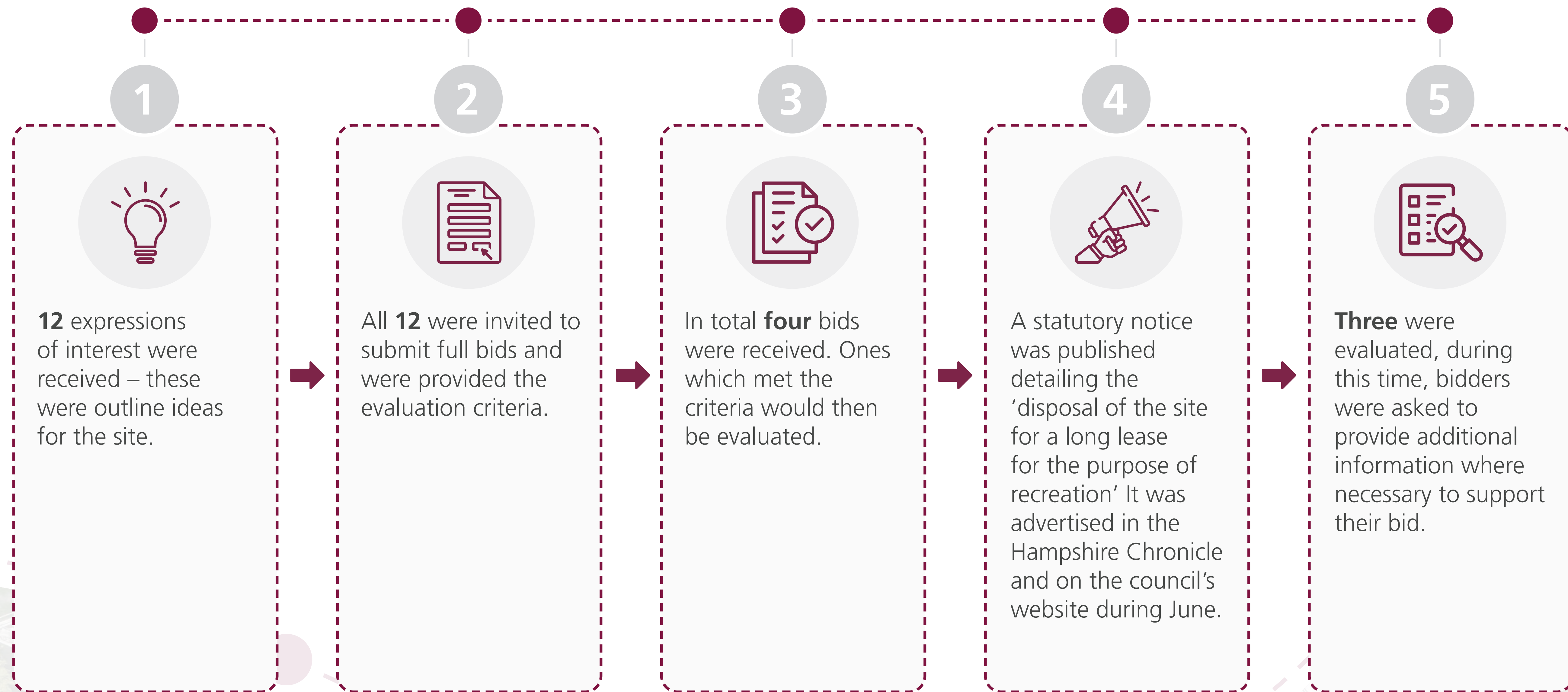
We used certain criteria to assess and evaluate the bids and this information was shared with all bidders so they could prepare their bids. As guided by best consideration requirements, bids were ranked in terms of highest offers and that was then balanced against the rest of the evaluation criteria. These considered factors other than price including the ability to deliver and other benefits.



Formal bids received

Everyone who expressed an interest in the site, was then invited to submit formal bids. These needed to include more detail and evidence of being able to fulfil their proposals, including where their funding will be sourced.

The process



The bids

An outline of the three bids which were evaluated can be found below.

A

Bidder A:

- A heated year-round outdoor pool
- Three outdoor padel courts
- Sauna
- A publicly accessible dry-side space, including a cafe/restaurant overlooking the water, sites heritage in mind using warm natural materials and integrated planting
- Integrated landscape improvements, enhancing the park, riverside corridor and ecological value
- A fully accessible free to use splash pad, supporting family participation and inclusive recreation

B

Bidder B:

- A 12-court indoor community accessible padel facility
- Cafe/bistro servicing users and creating a social hub for the local area and amenities

C

Bidder C:

- State-of-the-art indoor racquet sports destination comprising:
- Multiple indoor padel courts
- Dedicated pickleball courts
- Coaching academy
- Junior development programmes
- Community sports initiatives
- Flexible event and tournament space
- Wellness and recovery facilities
- Café overlooking the courts
- Public viewing terraces
- Roof terrace overlooking the recreation ground
- Alongside the leisure offer: a modern family focused aparthotel of approximately 120 rooms.

The recommended bid

Following scoring against the evaluation criteria, the recommended bid for Cabinet to consider is from the team behind Sea Lanes, Brighton. They have recently reopened Hilsea Lido and opened Sea Lanes Canary Wharf.

Sea Lanes (Bidder A)

- A heated year-round outdoor pool
- Three outdoor padel courts
- Sauna
- A publicly accessible dry-side space, including a cafe/restaurant overlooking the water, sites heritage in mind using warm natural materials and integrated planting
- Integrated landscape improvements, enhancing the park, riverside corridor and ecological value
- A fully accessible free to use splash pad, supporting family participation and inclusive recreation

What are Cabinet being asked to decide?

They are being asked to decide whether they agree with the recommendation and whether they are happy for Sea Lanes to progress to the next stage. This would involve being offered an option agreement, and then submitting detailed plans to be assessed via the planning process.



Submitted CGI of the potential Winchester Lido at River Park

(Images: Design Engine Architects, supplied by Sea Lanes)

What's next

