Leisure Centre Decarbonisation
North Herts Council

Sarah Kingsley
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North Herts Council

Project Overview

- In Feb 2024, we secured £7.74m Phase 3C PSDS funding to replace end-of-life boilers at 3 leisure centres with air-source heat pumps, fabric improvements and generation of on-site electricity through Solar PV.
- In May 2025 we awarded a construction contract to Willmott Dixon - £17.5m project overall, including customer facing improvements, as well as decarb works.
- Work is complete at Royston leisure centre with other two sites expected to complete in Spring 2027.

Our 'why'

- In 2019 the council declared a climate emergency and Sustainability is one of the Council's priorities. 2030 net zero target for our own operations.

- In 2022-23, gas use from across our three leisure centres accounted for 1,428 tonnes CO_2e. This equates to 45% of the Council's Scope 1-3 emissions.

- **Taking action to remove and replace the gas heating from the leisure centres with low carbon alternatives is the single most effective action we can take to help meet our 2030 net zero carbon target.**

Project Benefits

- Once complete, the project is expected to reduce CO_2 emissions across all three sites by over 60%.
- As the UK's electricity grid continues to decarbonise, residual emissions are expected to fall further year-on-year
- Additional income and enhanced user experience – gym extension, pool flume, change village refurbs and health suite
- The investment ensures our facilities are fit for the future and prolongs lifespan of the buildings

North Herts Leisure Centre Decarbonisation







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Royston Leisure Centre Decarbonisation









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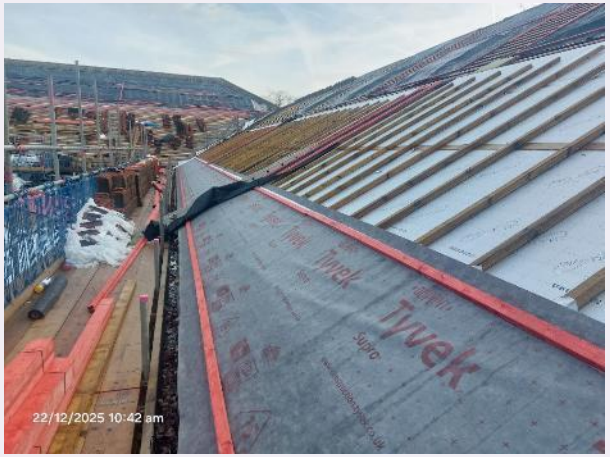
www.north-herts.gov.uk

Hitchin Swimming and Fitness Centre Decarbonisation







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Customer Impacts

LEISURE CENTRE CLOSURE TIMETABLE

Dates correct at the time of publication

Royston	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Pool		18 Aug close	9 Sept re-open						
Gym (including main studio)					17 Nov close		13 Jan re-open		
Sports hall	21 Jul close		8 Sept re-open		21 Nov (partial close)				23 Mar re-open
Full centre								2 Feb close 9 Feb re-open	
North Herts (Letchworth)									
Main Pool (learner pool remains open)			1 Sept close 29 Sept re-open						
Sports hall	21 Jul close			13 Oct re-open					
Gym			1 Sept close 29 Sept re-open						
Softplay			1 Sept close 29 Sept re-open						
Café			1 Sept close 29 Sept re-open						
Full centre								2 Feb close 9 Feb re-open	
Hitchin									
Main Pool (6am - 4pm, Mon-Fri)			29 Sept close						9 Mar re-open
Learner Pool (6am - 4pm, Mon-Fri)			29 Sept close			15 Dec re-open			
Gym				13 Oct close		8 Dec re-open			
Studios			22 Sept close 29 Sept re-open						
Full centre								9 Feb close 16 Feb re-open	

www.north-herts.gov.uk — Part of a £16.4m council investment to make our centres fit for the future. — www.everyoneactive.com

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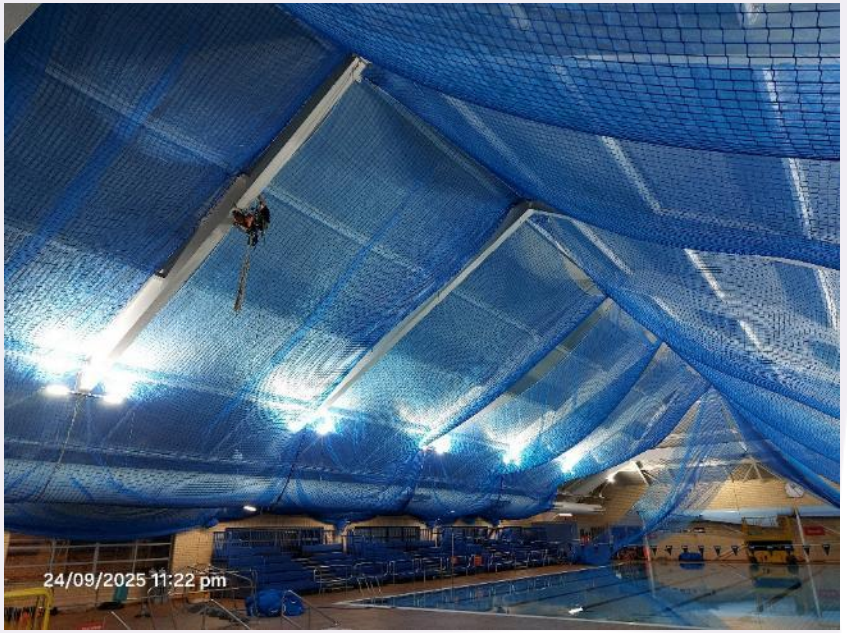
Managing customer disruption

Protecting facility users from works



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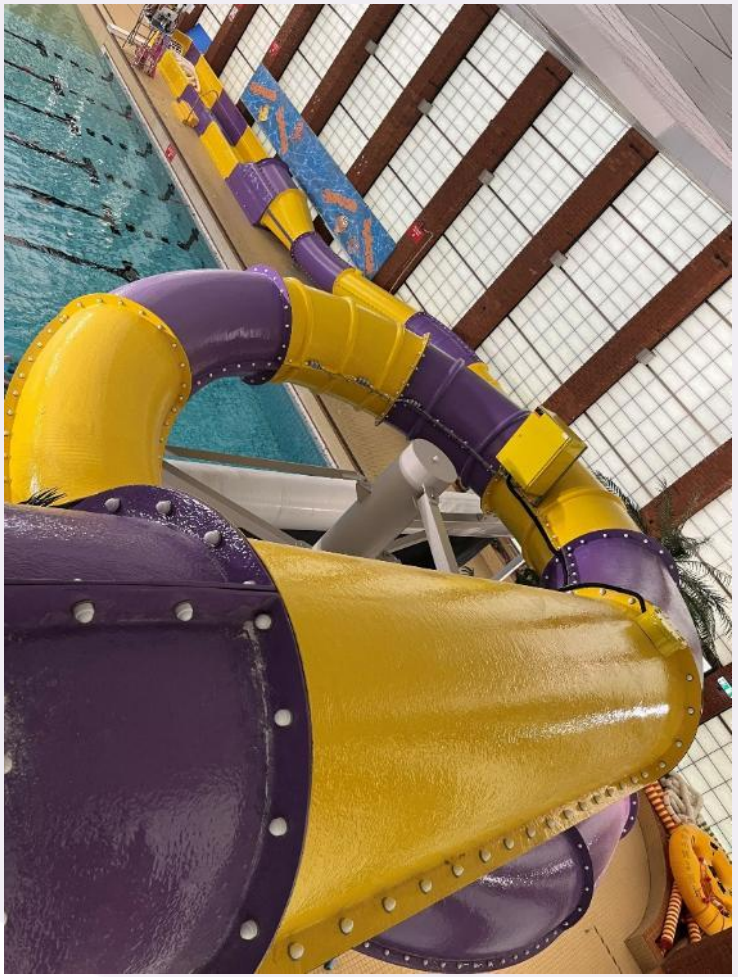
Customer Improvements







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Key reflections

- Govt funding has been critical. Even with PSDS - required significant capital from council
- Spending SALIX funding in right year was a massive challenge
- Bring in QS / project managers early
- Deliver customer improvements alongside decarb
- Don’t underestimate time on legal negotiations
- Careful messaging on carbon savings vs financial savings, due to high cost of switch to electricity

Next Steps

- In October 2024 – developed heat decarbonisation plan for remaining council estate with Low Carbon Skills Funding
- £1.172m Phase 4 PSDS funding received for decarbonising council offices, Hitchin Town Hall / Museum and learner pool at NHLC. Project underway.
- Other projects to further our net zero journey include HVO for large refuse vehicles, electric vehicles for smaller fleet across the council.

Any questions?

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