

13 JANUARY 2026**KEY DECISION: NO****REPORT NO. PG2543****ALDERSHOT SKI SLOPE – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND NEXT STEPS****SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A decision on short term investment into the Aldershot Ski Slope is required following recent advice from the replacement structural engineering partner. This follows a clear plan of maintenance and structural amendments that has now passed and left the slope at a point of major investment need or full replacement in the medium term.

The structure has been reported as end of life. However the incoming Structural Engineer has confirmed previous advice that with immediate spend, the slope can remain open short term. A high-level cost analysis has been worked up providing cost of circa £325k to ensure stability over the medium term, being 5 years. However consideration should be given to full replacement/major works package as these works do not provide a long term solution

The key requirement at this point is to approve £99k capital allocation for the prompt structural works needed to keep the slope open at this point. This quantum of forecasted spend was recognised and was to be programmed in for next years planned works requirement. Following the recent condition survey report that has raised concerns, this allocation now needs to come forward with the required work being aligned over the end of this and start of the new calendar year.

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agrees an allocation of £99K consisting of 90k of estimated cost and a 10% contingency from the capital allocation for asset maintenance to undertake immediately necessary capital works to secure the use of the ski slope in the short term.
2. Notes the recommendations for medium term financial expenditure necessary to keep the slope open and that in the longer term, to maintain its structural integrity for public use, a full refurbishment and repair programme will be required or for the structure to be substantially replaced.
3. Agrees that a full strategic business case and option appraisal be undertaken to establish the medium to long term future of the ski slope once the new Leisure Operator is appointed.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the structural maintenance of the ski slope facility including forecasted costs and recommendation for immediate commitment of capital to undertake necessary structural work.
- 1.2. The report also outlines the proposed approach to determining the medium and long term future of the ski slope.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The ski structure was constructed by the army in 1969. This is a steel framed structure comprising of ex-army Bailey Bridge trusses, pinned together and braced with lacing beams to form a raking structure. Above this sits a series of timber planks upon which the ski surface is supported.
- 2.2. The slope operators use a 'Wet Mist System' to aid the ski experience. This has led to dripping through the deck and onto the structure, picking up dirt and depositing it onto joints and steel beams. This has then caused corrosion and weakening of joints and truss members.
- 2.3. Various repairs and renovations have been carried out over the years on the structure. Most recently a series of galvanised frames and foundation bases have been installed to provide additional support to the primary structure. Continuous maintenance is ongoing, including the replacement of the timber decks in small sections so that the slope can continue to be in operation. The slope is now detreating at speed due to its age, compounded corrosion, dilapidated condition and most relevantly the continuous saturation from the elements and water spray/mist system.
- 2.4. In June 2025 the Cabinet considered a report on the options for operating Aldershot Ski Slope following Active Nation ceasing trading and the termination of their contract and associated lease for the site. A temporary arrangement was put in place with Places for People to run the site pending procurement of a new leisure operator for the Council. That process is due to conclude in February 2026 and the running of the Ski Centre has been included but with options to remove it from the contract if required.
- 2.5. In the report in June 2025 the need for structural repair to the Ski Slope was identified as the ski slope has structurally reached the end of its life and there is a significant maintenance liability in the next 5 years that will require funding and is not currently factored into the MTFS and capital programme. It was noted the council will need to undertake a full options appraisal to agree a strategy for the continuation of the facility. The schedule of potential costs was included in Appendix 1 of that report.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. Following the previous structural engineer deciding not to continue consultancy on the Ski Slope a replacement company has been appointed who have reviewed the previous reports and inspected on site. They have advised the existing surveys are robust however the work scheduled for the first two years 2025 and 2026 needs to be undertaken as soon as possible to ensure that the slope remains safe to use. Six monthly inspections of the slope are undertaken to monitor its condition and check whether there is immediate risk. The next inspection is scheduled for January. If the inspection reveals any serious deterioration that requires immediate action, or for works to be brought forward, or alternative action then this would be taken. However, these cannot substitute for undertaking the short term works which both structural engineers have stated need to be undertaken swiftly.
- 3.2. The following summarises recommendations for the short-to-long term retention of the ski slope structure and its continued use. Overall, this concords with the previous recommendations on which the cost estimates were based.
- 3.3. Short Term (1-2 years): -
 - Continue to replace the surface timbers as currently in operation.
 - Install scaffold platform to access all areas to allow modification to the existing steel frame below deck.
 - Replace existing bridging beams with new steel members. This can be carried out by leaving the existing beams in place until the new ones are installed, then removing the existing beams.
 - New beams will be galvanised. This will incorporate all new fixings and bolting into existing trusses using isolating washers if appropriate.
 - Installing new stringing beams alongside existing, incorporating new fixings into existing beams. - Galvanised beams do not need to be replaced at this stage.
 - Prepare steelwork by cleaning down all other bridging beams and re-painting with an appropriate corrosion system.
- 3.4. Medium Term (3-5 years): -
 - Reinspect the structure and undertake a structural analysis to inform any structural alterations required.
 - Repaint all steelwork to reduce risk of further corrosion.
 - All other members are galvanised to 140 microns dft. - Carry out any new plating repairs found to be necessary found prior to cleaning down / painting works.
 - Replace the decking membrane to reduce the moisture / water fall through the decking onto the steel frame below.
 - Investigate lower section of the ski slope – steels and supports currently at ground level and concealed by ground. This can only take place once deck

is lifted in this area. If the stringers and bridging beams are as the rest of the structure this could become critical in the next 2-5 years.

- Estimated costs are:
 - 2027 - £50K
 - 2028 - £50K
 - 2029 - £45K
 - 2030 - £90K

3.5. For the longer term, to maintain its structural integrity for public use, a full refurbishment and repair programme will be required or for the structure to be substantially replaced.

3.6. It is therefore proposed that a strategic business case and full option appraisal be undertaken in cooperation with the new Leisure Operator to determine the long term future of the ski slope. The Council has received advice from a Ski Slope operator and is of the view itself that a full year's operating income is necessary to complete this exercise. The business case will consider the strategic situation, opportunities and risks and the options appraisal will consider those options that appear viable in more detail. Undertaking this exercise will enable the Council to consider what options exist to secure the facility in the medium and long term. It will also provide a basis to assess the value for money of any future expenditure. The leisure procurement requires the Council to work in partnership with the new operator to consider the future of the facility.

Alternative Options

3.7. To not undertake the immediately required works and to remove the slope from service. This would remove a popular facility from public use which has been included in the Leisure Operator procurement and prejudice future options. It is considered that it is important to ensure a full option appraisal is undertaken before determining the long term future of this Council asset.

Consultation

3.8. The Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders were consulted on the continuation of the ski slope and the potential capital implications previously. The recently completed structural survey has highlighted the necessity of the works previously discussed being undertaken as soon as possible and prior to completion of a full option appraisal.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

4.1. Delay in undertaking the work will result in non-alignment with the Structural Engineers recommendations, which could lead to slope failure and therefore the need to close at short notice in order to mitigate risk to the users of the facility and the Council.

4.2. There is a potential risk that the Council will not continue the use of the ski slope for long enough to achieve best value from the capital expenditure.

Legal Implications

4.3. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report in terms of the proposal for release of funds to undertake the urgently required work. Assurance that the site remains safe for use should be sought by way of a site inspection to take place in January, and any report from the site inspection should specify whether the slope will remain safe for use over the very short-term while preparations are undertaken for the works to commence.

Financial Implications

4.4. A capital allocation of £800,000 for asset management was agreed by Council on 27 February 2025. To date £20,000 has been allocated to Beaumont Community Centre, therefore £780,000 remains available for these works.

4.5. The Ski Slope is currently run by the Council's leisure operator in a temporary arrangement following the Active Nation contract being terminated in April 2025. On 3 June 2025 Cabinet approved an additional budget for 2025/26 of £100,000 to support the reopening of the site. However, in prior years the site has generated an annual income of over £50,000.

Resource Implications

4.6. Capacity is available within the Property Services team. The Senior Programme and Buildings Manager is responsible for progressing client-side responsibilities associated with the delivery of works including procurement, contract management and CDM/site management.

Equalities Impact Implications

4.7. No direct equality implications have been identified from this report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed works are necessary in the short term to ensure the ski slope can remain open. A full option appraisal is required to determine the appropriate medium and long term options for the facility.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Cabinet Report June 2025 OS2510 – Aldershot Ski Centre Proposed Operational Arrangements

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