

Jubilee Square (CCOS South)
Post Project 'Lessons Learned' Record
V1.0 July 2026

1. Scope

In project management, lessons learned is a useful means of sharing information from recently completed project activities with others. The principle is that identifying and then sharing lessons learned within an organisation helps to ensure that things that did not go so well during a project are not repeated. It also allows innovative approaches and good work practices to be shared with others for adoption.

This note captures the main points discussed during a series of individual lessons learned workshops and discussions held in relation to the Council's Jubilee Square development. It captures the main themes raised during these sessions and where appropriate presents the lessons in the form of recommendations on future approaches, highlighting where potential improvements or modifications that could be applied in the future.

2. Executive Summary

Jubilee Square, formerly the City Centre Opportunity Site South (CCOS S), was a complex, multi-phase regeneration project delivered by St Albans City and District Council over nine years. The concept of redeveloping this part of the city centre had been much talked about for many years prior to that.

The Council acquired multiple land parcels together with an existing planning permission for a development scheme, and this formed the basis of the initial business case.

During the months that followed, the scheme was deliberately revised through a number of approved business cases, taken through the governance structure that existed at the time, and in response to design progression and planning advice. These revisions reflected increased residential and commercial provision, underground parking, and a higher standard of architectural quality, façades and public realm. Each iteration was assessed on a balanced basis against anticipated outcomes and long-term value, resulting in a materially larger and higher quality development than that originally proposed when the land and original planning permission was acquired.

The completed development successfully achieved its core objectives: delivering regeneration of a central urban site, enhanced public realm, high-quality mixed-use architecture, 93 new homes, approximately 55,000 square feet of commercial space and 101 underground car parking spaces.

The scheme comprises two main buildings, Francis Bacon House and Eleanor Ormerod House, each providing a mix of residential and commercial accommodation and a pavilion, which is a standalone small commercial unit.

The project was delivered across two political administrations and through significant external change, including regulatory shifts, stakeholders experiencing their own pressures, construction market volatility due to the war in Ukraine, the Covid-19 pandemic and considerable design evolution. Notably, despite prolonged delivery and exceptional external pressures, the scheme was delivered within c.5% of the budget approved by Council in 2020. **This outcome was supported by strong cost management, proactive decision making at key stages, appropriate use of contingency, and a disciplined approach to balancing scope, quality and budget throughout delivery.**

This note consolidates lessons learned from project documentation, workshops, contractor and consultant feedback, programme records, governance history and Council officer experience. The findings highlight strengths, recurring challenges and opportunities to strengthen the delivery of future Council-led capital projects. This includes consideration of the project finances, but it is not a detailed financial analysis as that is not the purpose of a lessons learned process. This note should be read and interpreted with that context.

3. Project Background & Context

3.1 Original Objectives

- Regenerate a major brownfield site in the city centre.
- Provide high-quality public realm linking Civic Close, Bricket Road and Victoria Street.
- Deliver new homes prioritised in the draft Local Plan.
- Replace commercial space lost through permitted development conversions.
- Improve pedestrian flow within the city core.

3.2 Scope Delivered

- 93 residential units (33 social rent, 60 shared ownership).
- 55,000 sqft commercial space (flexible use).
- 101 underground parking spaces.
- Complete redesign between 2018–2021 (from Angle Planning Permission to new SADC-led scheme).
- Basement formation, structural frame, high-quality façade, and public realm upgrades.
- Management of entire development transferred to Watford Community Housing (WCH), now Chime, for the entire development.

3.3 Stakeholders (not exhaustive)

- Internal: Senior Leadership Team, Councillors, Capital Projects Team, Estates, Legal, Finance, Local Planning Authority, Sustainability, Procurement, Communications.
- External: Multiple external consultants including Morgan Sindall (main contractor), Broadfield UK (solicitors), Space & Place & Pick Everard (architects), Turner & Townsend (cost consultants), Aitchison Raffety & Lambert Smith Hampton (commercial agents). Other important stakeholders - Civic Society, Quakers, Watford Community Housing (now Chime), Building Warranty Provider - National House Building Council (NHBC).

4. Methodology for Lessons Learned Review

This review is informed by:

- First hand delivery experience from SADC's lead project officer covering the full design and construction period, as well as an extended post completion occupation phase. It is important to note the project has not yet completed, and lessons are still being learned but in the interests of transparency and to ensure the lessons captured to date can be shared whilst still relevant this note is being made available.
- Review of action logs, risk registers, Compensation Event logs, planning trackers, and finances.
- Review of procurement records, governance documentation, technical issues and post-completion actions.
- Analysis of quality concerns, client/contractor interactions, design development challenges and external influences.
- Three dedicated separate workshops (Internal Project Team with SADC appointed consultants, Morgan Sindall and Ward Councillors) plus extensive conversations with a wide range of SADC colleagues and Councillors.

This document has been prepared by SADC officers based on direct project experience and internal review. Whilst it draws on discussions with external parties, it does not represent a formally agreed nor endorsed position of all stakeholders.

5. Summary of Key Themes & Findings

5.1 Governance & Leadership

Strengths

- Governance structure established from 2018 onwards.
- SADC officer senior leadership ensured project continuity at a strategic level.
- Political commitment remained strong across administrations.

Challenges

- Seven changes of Project Managers within SADC disrupted continuity at an operational level.
- Legal resource capacity constraints delayed critical decisions, including utilities, leases and compensation events.
- Reliance on key individuals and succession planning.
- The project was delivered with a lean internal team, demonstrating a high level of commitment and ownership by SADC officers. While this approach created challenges in terms of capacity and resilience, it also reflects the Council's ambition to directly lead and deliver a project of this scale.
- No internal handover was established for the occupation phase, resulting in extended Project Management involvement from Capital Projects Team.
- Internal resourcing assumptions did not include allowance for revenue stage activities, for example - commercial negotiations, CAT A delivery (first stage of fitting out commercial spaces), estate management transition.

- Handover of completed construction project to relevant teams/companies. There were no allowances for time or finances for the project manager and project support officer to remain on the project after practical completion.
- The Council's existing Estates service was not resourced to take on the new commercial properties; this resulted in the Project Manager and Project Support Officer retaining control of the development post the construction phase.

Lessons

- Major multiyear projects need consistent resourcing, structured handover processes to the correct teams, strong governance support and clear file systems so that all decisions, approvals, designs and documentation are properly recorded. They also rely on close collaboration across multiple companies and disciplines.
- To deliver this effectively, SADC need more internal support and a more realistic level of resource. Consideration also needs to be taken with regards to handing over the completed development to the correct departments/companies.
- It would be beneficial to review how private developers structure their project teams and consider resourcing our projects internally with a more appropriate number of staff. Future projects must explicitly plan for post-completion roles, duration and resourcing, recognising that completion is a transition point rather than an end-point.

5.2 Design Development & Planning

Strengths

- High design quality achieved in the final development, evidenced by strong market interest and positive feedback from commercial tenants, who have recognised the quality of the buildings and public realm.
- High-quality development for residents, users, visitors etc.
- Public realm scheme well received.

Challenges

- Early design development was heavily influenced by public consultation, design competitions and extensive pre-application engagement, contributing to a complex scheme and extended design process.
- Planning feedback evolved throughout the pre-application process, reflecting the complexity of the scheme and multiple stakeholder inputs, which contributed to design iteration.
- Coordination between architectural, structural and Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) designs/clash detection was not sufficiently resolved at technical design stage, resulting in conflicts on site, requiring rework during construction.

Lessons

- Design assurance should be front loaded, with robust technical coordination and clear decision making processes established early in the process.

- While stakeholder engagement and public input are invaluable, their influence must be clearly defined to avoid unnecessary complexity and late-stage design change.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on completing coordinated Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 4 technical design and clash detection before entering into contract.
- Allowing sufficient time to plan, prepare and resolve design issues in advance will reduce reliance on resolving problems during construction and improve programme and quality outcomes.

5.3 Procurement & Contract Management

Strengths

- PAGABO framework enabled swift procurement and early contractor engagement, supporting cost certainty and helping to mitigate the impact of construction inflation through early agreement of pricing and programme assumptions
- Pre Construction Services Agreement arrangements helped manage early risk, and allow design works to take place while the full construction contract was developed.
- The inclusion of appropriate contingency and structured cost planning also supported budget control.

Challenges

- New Engineering Contract (NEC) 4 contract required specialist skills; internal teams did not initially have adequate NEC training, though this was mitigated.
- Lack of shared contract administration software created inconsistency in Compensation Event/Early Warning Notification notifications and handling, which made resolving these more complicated than it needed to be.
- Late clarification of warranty requirements (green wall, façades) resulted in delay and additional cost.
- Inadequate early definition of roles/responsibilities, and whether these roles would be provided internally by SADC or by external consultants (project manager, employers agent, cost consultant, design advisor etc).

Lessons

- Major NEC contracts require early investment in specialist skills, clear role definition and appropriate supporting systems.
- Formal NEC training should be in place before contract award, alongside consistent digital tools for contract administration to ensure effective management of Early Warnings and Compensation Events.
- Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined from the outset, including decisions on which functions should be delivered internally and where external expertise is required.
- For complex schemes, a blended resourcing model should be adopted, combining internal leadership with targeted external support to reduce risk, improve certainty and build capability in parallel. However, it has now developed officers enormously, which will have a major benefit within the Council.

5.4 Construction Delivery & Quality Management

Strengths

- High-quality façade and internal finishes in final delivery.
- Strong collaboration in later project phases.

Challenges

- Works progressed before drawing sign-off on multiple occasions.
- Materials selected by contractor prior to approval by the Client and Conservation Officer.
- Major issues with brick slip sequencing, exposed concrete quality, M&E coordination, and specific brackets.
- Contractor continuity with their staff, also insufficient experienced staff provided.
- Contractor and client often held different versions of documentation, for example the contract tracker regarding Early Warnings, Compensation Events, Programme, due to lack of shared software and incorrect versions being shared with client.
- Inspection and Test Plan days were not sufficiently frequent early in the programme and throughout.

Lessons

- Construction quality must be safeguarded through clear approval gateways and disciplined controls throughout delivery.
- No works should proceed without formal drawing sign off and material approvals, particularly where conservation, specialist façades or complex interfaces are involved.
- Early and ongoing technical coordination, including robust M&E integration and sequencing reviews, is essential to prevent avoidable rework and quality issues.
- Contractors must resource projects with suitably experienced staff appropriate to the scale and complexity of the scheme, and maintain continuity where possible.
- Aligned contract administration systems, shared documentation platforms and a structured programme of regular Inspection and Test Plan reviews should be in place from the outset to ensure consistency, transparency and proactive quality management.

5.5 Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Strengths

- Ongoing engagement with Civic Society.
- Long term and continuous engagement with the Quakers as adjacent landowners was critical to the success of the public realm and required sustained officer involvement throughout all project stages.
- Councillors provided constructive community insight.
- Multiple engagement workshops held, to gain insight and thought of residents and interested parties.

Challenges

- Community Design Review was dominated by specialists, not end users.
- Branding, tenure mix and housing association role caused confusion among residents and ward members.
- SADC Housing department was not the end user, which meant not as much assistance with the affordable units design.
- Housing Provider involvement began too late to influence design of affordable units.

Lessons

- Stakeholder and community engagement must be carefully structured, inclusive and proportionate to ensure it adds value without adversely affecting design, cost or programme.
- Clear stakeholder mapping and an agreed engagement strategy should be established at an early stage, defining who is being engaged, when, on what basis, and where decision making responsibility lies.
- Engagement forums should balance professional input with end user perspectives and be aligned with the stage of design. Key stakeholders, including housing providers and internal departments, must be involved early enough to meaningfully influence design outcomes, particularly for affordable housing, to avoid confusion, misalignment and late changes.

5.6 Commercial & Operational Delivery

Strengths

- Residential disposal to WCH completed successfully.
- Joint agency commercial strategy adopted after lessons from early single-agency approach.

Challenges

- Managing Agent appointment complexities caused delay in operational handover.
- Initially a single commercial agent approach was taken; however advice from Commercial Investment Managers highlighted the benefits of shifting to a joint agency approach, with a local firm and a national firm.
- Service charge and estate management arrangements required more detailed early modelling.
- Split responsibilities (SADC/WCH) created challenges in defining maintenance and aftercare routes.

Lessons

- Commercial and operational planning should be embedded early alongside design development. Managing agent appointments, service charge structures, estate management responsibilities and commercial letting strategy should be defined and tested at RIBA Stages 2–3 to ensure a smooth operational handover.
- Clear allocation of responsibilities between the Council and third party partners, supported by early input from commercial property specialists, is essential to support timely occupation and income generation.

5.7 Business Case & Financial Planning

Strengths

- The business case went through several iterations, allowing the Council to refine design options, update cost plans, and respond to changing project parameters before the final approval in April 2020.
- Adjusting the scope at contract finalisation by removing the CAT A fit-out enabled the main construction contract to be awarded within the approved budget envelope.
- Deferring CAT A fit-out created several advantages, including the ability to tailor units to tenant requirements, reducing the risk of abortive works and improving occupier satisfaction. It also avoided unnecessary upfront costs and provided flexibility in responding to market demand.

Challenges

- Sales and letting assumptions were over optimistic. Early business case modelling assumed residential sales and commercial lettings would occur immediately after practical completion. In reality, marketing lead-in periods, residential disposal processes, market conditions, and the complexity of commercial negotiations meant absorption was significantly slower.
- The delay in income generation created cashflow pressure, as anticipated revenues were needed to offset borrowing and operational costs.
- The timing mismatch led to budget strain for the Council, as financial planning had been predicated on near-immediate occupation and revenue generation.
- The commercial units were handed over in shell and core condition without coordinated early-stage M&E, drainage, riser planning or route reservation.
- As a result, the Council had to resolve significant design and coordination gaps post-completion, often without the efficiencies provided by the main contractor's site presence.
- The need to tender and commission CAT A works for each tenant extended the time between agreeing heads of terms and tenant occupation, resulting in delayed commercial revenue but it did mean each CAT A fit-out was fit for purpose.

Lessons

- Business cases for mixed-use regeneration schemes must be based on realistic assumptions around sales, lettings and income timing, recognising that post completion absorption periods are often extended.
- Financial models should allow for void periods, market uncertainty and delayed revenue to avoid undue cashflow and budget pressure. Decisions to exclude elements such as CAT A fit-out from the main contract should only be taken with a full understanding of the downstream implications for design coordination, programme, resourcing and exposure to cost inflation.
- Where scope separation is required, early and coordinated technical planning at RIBA Stage 4, particularly for M&E, drainage, risers and utilities, is essential to reduce post-completion risk and delay.

6. Outturn Cost Control & Residential Disposal Strategy

Outturn Cost Control

Despite the prolonged programme, significant design evolution, and unprecedented external pressures, the project outturn cost remained within circa 5% of the budget approved by Council in April 2020. This budget did not include an allowance for the fit-out. The decision not to fit-out until after marketing the commercial space does appear to have been the right one as all of the tenants thus far have wanted significant input to the Cat A fit-out. The c5% variance was achieved notwithstanding related supply chain disruption, extraordinary construction inflation, market volatility, and a number of driven challenges encountered during delivery.

Maintaining cost control within this margin is considered a very strong outcome for a project of this scale and complexity, particularly given the extended delivery period and external shocks beyond the Council's control. This performance was underpinned by continuous cost monitoring, repeated business case reviews, scope management at key decision points, and difficult but necessary strategic choices to protect the approved budget while still delivering the Council's core regeneration objectives.

Residential Disposal Strategy – Bulk Sale to Housing Association

A key commercial decision taken during the occupation phase was to dispose of all 93 residential units in a single bulk transaction to a Housing Association, rather than pursue open market individual sales by the Council. This approach was supported by a detailed offer analysis and comparison presented to Committee for approval.

The adopted strategy delivered several critical benefits:

- **Retention of nomination rights** for all social rent homes, securing long-term housing outcomes aligned with Council objectives.
- Delivery of shared ownership homes through the Housing Association for the remaining units, an outcome that was not achievable had the Council sold the homes directly.
- **Elimination of void risk and holding costs**, including council tax, service charge, utilities and active void management costs that would otherwise have been incurred during phased private sales.
- **Reduced market exposure**, removing uncertainty around absorption rates, pricing volatility and extended sales periods during an unstable housing market.

While the bulk sale reflected a modest discount when compared to headline private market valuations, the offer analysis demonstrated that this was offset by substantial capital and revenue savings. These included avoided estate agent and legal fees associated with multiple individual sales, as well as significant first-year revenue savings from eliminating void related costs. When assessed on a net basis, the bulk disposal represented a robust and lower risk financial outcome for the Council.

Lessons

For large mixed-use regeneration schemes, residential disposal strategy should be assessed not solely on gross sale receipts, but on whole life financial impact, risk exposure and policy outcomes. Bulk sales to Registered Providers can offer strong value where they secure nomination rights, enable tenure outcomes unavailable through direct Council sales, reduce operational risk and protect against prolonged void periods. Early, transparent financial modelling and Committee engagement is essential to support informed decision-making where a lower headline receipt delivers a superior overall outcome for the authority.

7. Detailed Project Phase Breakdown

Below is a complete breakdown of each project phase, issues encountered, impacts and lessons.

Phase 1 — Land Purchase, Pre-Acquisition & Pre Site Start Due Diligence (2017–2018)

Initial approval to proceed was secured based on the strategic objective to regenerate a key brownfield site, deliver new housing and enhance the commercial and public realm offer within the city centre. This was approved at Council Wednesday 6th December 2017. The Council proceeded to purchase the land for the development including the police station, principal health centre and car park land in 2018.

Issues Encountered

- The inherited planning permission from Angle Properties created design constraints, which did not fully align with Council priorities and requirements.
- Early surveys (asbestos, utilities, etc) did not provide as much risk mitigation as they should and were not sufficiently integrated into future plans (such as if more asbestos was found during demolition).
- Stakeholder expectations were unclear at outset.

Impacts

- Redesign required shortly after purchase.
- Delays to demolition.
- Confusion around existing baseline vs new aspirations.

Lessons

- Pre-acquisition due diligence must be robust, proportionate and integrated into early project planning.
- Inherited planning permissions should be critically reviewed at the outset to assess alignment with Council objectives and identify likely redesign.
- Contractors should take ownership and carry out their own site investigations early to reduce unknown risk and mitigate issues for the Council. A clear baseline position and project brief should be established prior to acquisition and confirmed immediately thereafter to manage expectations and avoid early delay.

Phase 2 — Demolition & Early Enabling Works (2018–2019)

Issues Encountered

- Unexpected asbestos and utilities conflicts increased cost and programme.
- Party wall and rights of light issues took longer to resolve.
- Archaeology investigation added risk.

Impacts

- Delay to start of enabling works.
- Increased pre-contract cost.

Lessons

- Early enabling works are highly sensitive to ground, boundary and third-party risks and must be underpinned by comprehensive early investigation.
- Party wall, rights of light and utilities strategies should be agreed prior to commencement, with trial holes and intrusive surveys completed at the earliest opportunity and, where appropriate, undertaken by the main contractor to transfer known risks from the Council.
- Early resolution of these matters is essential to minimise programme delay and pre-contract cost growth.

Phase 3 — RIBA Stage 2–3 (Design & Planning), 2019–2021

Issues Encountered

- Planning feedback evolved throughout the pre-application process, reflecting the complexity of the scheme and multiple stakeholder inputs, which contributed to design iteration.
- Public design competition influenced complexity.
- Significant design rework due to Resident Associations and Community Design Review requests.
- Incomplete technical detail at Stage 3 submitted from contractors and consultants delayed planning submission.

Impacts

- Nearly two-year delay to planning approval.
- Increased cost from redesign.

Lessons

- Boundaries of public and stakeholder influence should be clearly defined at the outset to ensure engagement informs, rather than overly complicates, the design process.
- Planning engagement should be streamlined through a single accountable case officer and, where appropriate, supported by a Planning Performance Agreement to provide consistency and certainty.
- Robust internal design assurance should be introduced during RIBA Stages 2–3 to ensure schemes are proportionate, technically informed and supported by sufficiently developed design information prior to planning submission, reducing the risk of delay and costly redesign.

Phase 4 — RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design), 2021

Issues Encountered

- Clash detection insufficient by contractors consultants; design coordination issues persisted.
- Late identification of green wall warranty problems.
- Key decisions on materials were offered to decision makers i.e. conservation officer made too late in programme.
- Lack of NEC contract administration training.

Impacts

- Rework costs.
- Programme extensions and risk of Compensation Event disputes.

Lessons

RIBA Stage 4 technical design must be fully coordinated and subject to a formal design gateway prior to construction, supported by independent review where appropriate. Robust clash detection, early material selection and timely engagement with key decision-makers, including conservation officers and warranty providers, are essential to avoid late design change, rework and programme delay. All client and consultant staff involved in delivery should receive NEC contract administration training before contract execution to support effective change management and reduce the risk of Compensation Event disputes.

Phase 5 — Main Contract Construction (2021–2024)

Issues Encountered

- Brick slip sequencing delays and technical limits.
- Programme alignment issues between client and contractor.
- Quality concerns: exposed concrete, M&E routing, finishing quality.
- Delays to building control sign-off (e.g. balcony guarding, SVP issues).
- Road closure communication failures.

Impacts

- Increased Compensation Events.
- Quality assurance interventions required.
- Handover risk.

Lessons

- Construction delivery must be underpinned by clear technical approvals, aligned programmes and disciplined quality controls from the outset.
- Key materials, sequencing methodologies and construction interfaces should be approved at or before contract award to avoid delay and rework.
- A single, shared programme and contract administration platform should be mandatory to maintain alignment between client and contractor and reduce Compensation Events.
- Regular Inspection and Test Plan reviews should be embedded throughout the programme, supported by proactive client oversight to ensure timely planning condition discharge and external approvals, including Building Control, reducing handover risk.

Phase 6 — Construction Handover & Aftercare (2023–2024)

Issues Encountered

- NHBC delays linked to design and construction concerns queries
- Delayed submission of finalised Operations and Maintenance Manuals (O&Ms) from Contractor
- O&Ms provided by the contractor through an online portal, which would require significant costs to retain in that format. Once downloaded the documentation is difficult to read and find as the files are enormous.
- Split responsibilities between WCH and SADC created confusion around defects and maintenance.

Impacts

- Delayed occupation.
- Additional officer resource required.
- Delay in rectifying defects within timeframes previously agreed between SADC and Morgan Sindall
- Significant time spent deciphering O&Ms by PM team, and then subsequently users find it difficult to find information required.

Lessons

- Handover and aftercare should be treated as a defined project phase and planned well in advance of Practical Completion.
- Operations and Maintenance information must be developed, reviewed and approved progressively throughout the project using a clear schedule and standardised templates to ensure usability and long term accessibility.
- Early and continuous engagement with warranty providers is essential to avoid late approval delays. Responsibilities for defects, maintenance and aftercare must be clearly allocated between the Council, Housing Association and managing agent, with agreed processes in place prior to completion.
- Post completion roles, resourcing and exit points should be explicitly defined, with commercial, legal and estate management functions resourced separately from construction delivery to ensure a smooth transition into occupation.

Phase 7 - Occupation/In Use, Residential Sales, Commercial Lettings, Managing Agent & CAT A Fit Out

Issues Encountered

- Shift in approach from SADC selling private residential units individually to combined sale of all units to a Housing Association.
- No formal resourcing or role definition was established for the occupation phase, which resulted in the Project Manager retaining responsibility for:
 - progressing sales of apartments
 - lettings of commercial space
 - appointment of Managing Agent
 - legal agreements and variations
 - oversight of statutory compliance and maintenance
 - defects across residential, commercial, car park and public realm
 - estate-wide operational issues, utilities and parking

- Managing Agent Agreement delayed. Managing Agent services operated without a signed agreement for approximately 19 months, increasing risk to the Council.
- Early decisions regarding parking provision evolved as the scheme progressed, with SADC adapting the approach to include commercial parking on the top deck of Bricket Road car park. This demonstrated flexibility in responding to operational and commercial requirements post completion.

Impacts

- Unnecessary residential agent costs.
- Managing agent arrangements delayed.
- Resident concerns around accessibility and signage emerged late.
- Increased operational risk due to single person dependency and loss of organisational resilience.

Lessons

- Occupation should be planned and resourced as a distinct project phase, with roles and responsibilities for sales, lettings, estate management, compliance and defects clearly defined prior to Practical Completion.
- Managing agent appointments and contractual arrangements must be finalised in advance to avoid operational risk.
- Dependency on single-officer knowledge for business-critical assets should be avoided, and early consideration given to accessibility, wayfinding and the 'in use experience' to prevent late stage issues.

8. Strategic Lessons for Future SADC Capital Projects

- A. Formalise a Capital Projects Delivery Framework/Toolkit
 - Gateways, templates, standards, risk protocols, governance.
- B. Wider consideration on finances
 - Allow for resource extending past Practical Completion
 - Allow for resource for other elements that are not related to construction
 - Incorporate realistic absorption periods for voids, sales and lettings
- C. Mandatory NEC4/construction contract training
 - Including role definitions, programme acceptance and CE/EWN processes.
- D. Implement a Design Advisor role early
 - Independent technical review before planning submission.
 - Retain Design Advisor throughout all phases
- E. Use of consistent digital tools
 - Programme management, contract administration, CDE, trackers.
- F. Strengthen early stakeholder mapping & engagement strategy
 - Clear roles for public, residents, Councillors, community groups, and partners.
 - Set out parameters and do not amend at detriment of project
- G. Improve continuity planning
 - Succession plans and handover protocols for projects over 3 years.
- H. Embed Commercial & Operational Thinking at RIBA Stage 2
 - Managing agent, service charge, marketing, tenure strategy.

9. Summary of Lessons Learned Workshops

Internal Project Team Workshop - 4 September 2024

Participants: SADC Internal Project Team, Cost Manager (Turner & Townsend), Design Advisor (Kyle Smart Associates)

Key Points:

- Planning (Project Team): The planning process involved a large number of pre-application discussions, which evolved over time and highlighted the need for clearer structure and consistency in engagement. Recommended appointing a dedicated planning officer for large schemes.
- Stakeholder Management (Project Team): Need for a stakeholder communication plan and power vs interest mapping.
- Site Investigations (Project Team): Issues with asbestos and subcontractor management. Suggested robust survey processes and approved contractor frameworks.
- Design & Programme (Project Team): Lack of coordinated designs and programme narrative. Recommended shared programme software and stronger change control.
- Contractual Clarity (Project Team): NEC4 misunderstood; need clearer responsibilities for building regs and S278 works.

SADC & Morgan Sindall Joint Session - 15 January 2025

Participants: SADC Officers, Morgan Sindall Representatives, Independent Facilitator

Key Points:

- Successes (Both Parties): High-quality finish, strong collaboration during early phases, agreed final account.
- Challenges (Morgan Sindall): Design competition caused delays; political changes impacted scope; external influences from different stakeholders complicated decisions.
- Contract Management (Morgan Sindall): NEC contract difficult to manage; advised using SYPRO software and being prepared to say "No" to unrealistic requests.
- Risk Management (Morgan Sindall): Emphasized early due diligence on client and team; avoid starting before ready.
- SADC Perspective: Need for stronger governance, bigger project team, and education for internal stakeholders.

Ward Councillor Workshop - 17 November 2025

Participants: Ward Councillors SADC Project Management Team

Key Points:

- Community Engagement (Councillors): Community Design Review was restrictive, dominated by professionals and lacked diversity. Missed input from residents with accessibility and housing needs.
- Housing Strategy (Councillors): Confusion over tenure mix and Watford Community Housing branding.

- Accessibility (Councillors): Limited wheelchair/scooter access and poor signage. Suggested clearer wayfinding and design improvements.
- Project Management Team: Acknowledged prolonged design process and political changes caused delays. Highlighted need for better continuity, and succession planning.

Consolidated Lessons Learned by Group

Councillors:

- Broaden community engagement.
- Improve accessibility and signage.
- Clarify housing strategy early.

Internal Project Team:

- Strengthen planning engagement.
- Implement robust site investigation and change control.
- Use shared programme software.

Morgan Sindall:

- Do not start until ready.
- Use contract tools effectively.
- Conduct thorough risk assessment.

10. Conclusion

Jubilee Square represents the successful delivery of a major city centre regeneration scheme, providing 93 new homes, significant commercial space, improved public realm and enhanced pedestrian connectivity. The project transformed a complex brownfield site into a high-quality mixed-use development that contributes positively to the vitality and long term sustainability of St Albans.

The scheme was delivered over an extended period and through considerable complexity, including political change, design evolution, stakeholder pressures, market fluctuations, regulatory change and a global pandemic. While the outcome is strong, the delivery journey highlighted important lessons around governance, resourcing, design assurance and the transition from construction into operation.

Critically, these lessons provide the Council with a guide should it, or the successor authority, undertake similar scale projects in the future as well as allowing learnings to be applied to the existing portfolio of projects.

Appendix 1

CCOS S Business Case Comparison – June 2020 Call in Meeting

Item	PP1060 RIBA Stage 1 (£'000)	Sep 18 RIBA Stage 2 (£'000)	Sep 19 RIBA Stage 3 (£'000)	Apr 20 new RIBA Stage 3 (£'000)
Land Acquisition	12,479	12,479	12,479	12,479
Construction	24,944	27,552	31,482	37,300
Contingency (Client)	1,996	2,204	2,518	3,285
Professional Fees	2,993	3,306	2,806	2,806
Project Management	499	551	551	636
Right to Light	616	616	616	616
S106	563	663	663	663
Sales Fees	674	740	850	356
Development Period Interest	1,323	1,422	1,590	1,708
Sub Total - Capital Cost	46,087	49,533	53,555	59,849
Plus Police Profit	4,033	4,885	5,319	4,076
Total - Capital Cost	50,120	54,418	58,874	63,925
Less Market Residential Units	22,579	25,700	26,050	21,820
Less Affordable Residential Units	9,677	9,212	9,304	6,903
Less Car Park Sales	760	288	960	905
Total Borrowing Taken Forward	17,104	19,218	22,560	34,297
Rental income per annum	1,281	1,485	1,866	2,323
Less Cost of Borrowing p.a.	642	721	847	1,288
Revenue Contribution p.a.	639	764	1,019	1,035

Jubilee Square (CCOS South) – Lessons Learned Summary

Overview

Jubilee Square (formerly CCOS South) is a major mixed use regeneration scheme delivered by St Albans City and District Council over approximately nine years. The development has transformed a complex brownfield site into a high-quality urban environment, delivering new homes, commercial space and enhanced public realm. The scheme was delivered within approximately 5% of the approved 2020 budget, representing a strong financial outcome for a project of this scale.

Project Timeline

- 2017 – Council approval to proceed
- 2018 – Land acquisition and enabling works
- 2019 – 2021 – Design development and planning
- 2021 – Technical design and contract award
- 2021 – 2024 – Construction
- 2024 – Handover and aftercare
- 2024 – Present – Occupation and lettings

Key Outputs

- Two mixed-use buildings
- 93 residential units
- c.55,000 sqft commercial space
- 101 underground parking spaces
- Enhanced public realm and connectivity

Key Successes

- Delivered within c.5% of approved budget
- High quality design attracting strong tenant interest
- Major regeneration of a key city centre site
- Strong officer leadership and continuity
- Effective commercial strategy including bulk residential disposal and joint agency approach

Key Challenges

- Programme length and complexity
- Lean internal resourcing
- Design coordination and technical issues
- Delayed income realisation
- Complex transition into operation

Financial Summary

- Delivered within c.5% of approved budget
- Strong cost control, contingency and governance
- Bulk residential sale reduced risk and holding costs
- Flexible CAT A strategy supported tenant led fit out

Occupation & Operational Outcomes

Residential

- 33 social housing flats occupied
- 60 shared ownership flats occupied

Commercial

- Entire Eleanor Ormerod House commercial block let
- Francis Bacon House commercial levels 3 & 4 let
- Francis Bacon House commercial lower ground floor suite 2 let
- Francis Bacon House commercial ground and 1 at agreement for lease stage
- Pavilion commercial space let
- Commercial space still available:
 - Francis Bacon House level 2
 - Francis Bacon House lower ground suite 1

Estate Management - Managing agent in place and operational structure established

Key Lessons Learned

- Early design coordination and decision-making are critical
- Projects require consistent resourcing across lifecycle
- NEC contract capability and systems must be in place early
- Operational planning should be embedded from early stages
- Business cases must reflect realistic income timing

Strategic Takeaways

- Demonstrates SADC capability to deliver complex regeneration
- Future projects should strengthen early planning, resourcing and operational transition

Conclusion

Jubilee Square represents a successful regeneration scheme delivering housing, commercial space and public realm improvements. Despite challenges, the project achieved its objectives within budget and provides a strong foundation for improving future capital project delivery.