Agenda Item No:	9	Fenland
Committee:	Cabinet	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Date:	7 November 2025	
Report Title:	Manor Leisure Centre - Fenland Project Update	I Inspire! Redevelopment

#### 1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To update Cabinet regarding progress of the Manor Leisure Centre redevelopment project. This report will cover:
  - An up to date design which includes Sport England input
  - Community and Stakeholder consultation and feedback
  - Sport England's feedback on designs and additional inclusions stipulated in order for the Council to seek significant Sport England funding
  - Local elected Member feedback regarding access for disabled people and the proposed community events space, associated bar and kitchen areas
  - The elected Member feedback regarding the inclusion of an enhanced rifle range within the project footprint
- 1.2 To highlight the current estimated costs of the project.
- 1.3 To seek Cabinet's decision to the 'freezing' the footprint of the substantive elements of the design in order that the project team is then able to submit a planning application and continue the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 3 design process as well as starting the RIBA Stage 4 process.

#### 2 Overview

- 2.1 The redevelopment of the Manor Leisure Centre is a Fenland Inspire! project. The existing facility has reached the end of its useful life with an expected conditions survey cost identified as £4.331m to allow the existing facility to 'stand still'. The existing pool was built as an outdoor lido and then covered in the early / mid 1980's. The Sport Hall building contains the hall and changing rooms for football. Football is no longer played at the Manor, with the rest of the facility being exceptionally tired. Additionally, managing 2 buildings is inefficient, not customer focussed and increases operational and maintenance costs.
- 2.2 This project will redevelop and expand the pool building and demolish the sports hall building, leaving the local community with a facility fit for purpose for the next 20+ years. The focus is on financial viability by attracting more users whilst keeping operational and maintenance costs low. The footprint for the redevelopment (please see Appendix 1 proposed redevelopment facility footprint) is a very tight design, reducing unnecessary space and the subsequent cost of that space. The focus on financial viability also means that space that is not going to generate revenue is not possible to be included.

- 2.3 In February 2025 Cabinet approved the project to move through the Royal Institute of British Architects pre-construction phases (RIBA Stages 2 4) to deliver a scheme that would have planning consent, a firm contractual construction cost and a construction partner on board by mid-2026. The approved RIBA Stage 2 4 work is a significant project and will cost around £1m.
- 2.4 Completion of the RIBA 2 4 Stages of pre-construction work will provide the Council with cost certainty, along with a detailed construction programme allowing Council to decide to proceed with construction or not. The current project programme expects a Council decision in July 2026, with construction commencing on site in August 2026 and completing the main swimming pool redevelopment and extension work in December 2027, should a construction decision be made.

#### 3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council has appointed Alliance Leisure through the UK Leisure Framework to take the redevelopment of the Manor Leisure Centre through all pre-construction stages to the end of RIBA Stage 4. This work is progressing with a project team consisting of leisure specialists from Alliance, architects, mechanical and electrical (M & E) specialists and, importantly, the construction company. This multi-disciplinary approach is tried and tested through the UK Leisure Framework with the inclusion of the construction company meaning that by the end of the process the Council will have a firm contract price to construct the facility and no further procurement to carry out.
- 3.2 This report is submitted at the end of RIBA 2. Freezing the substantive elements of the footprint for the new building is critical at this point in order that RIBA 3 and 4 can move the detailed design and planning submission forwards. Minor adjustments will be necessary in the future, likely as a function of the complex M & E requirements or planning feedback during the planning application process, with the substantive elements remaining fixed.
- 3.3 Any further changes to the substantive elements of the building are likely to add delay and increased costs to the project.

#### 4 Financial concerns

- 4.1 Based on current interest rates and MRP over 30 years, for every £1m borrowed, it is estimated that it will cost the Council £81.3k for each year that it is borrowed.
- 4.2 The General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February, projects a financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.432m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28. Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address
- 4.3 The General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February, projects a financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.432m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28.

4.4 Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address.

#### 5 Recommendations

- 5.1 For Cabinet to note the report and the progress of this important community project.
- 5.2 That Council notes the significant financial situation that the Council faces and pays close attention to the financial assessment section of this report in 12.1.
- 5.3 To note and consider that potential cost mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce the overall project costs as identified in section 11.
- 5.4 To discuss and approve the attached footprint in order that the substantive elements of the footprint remain fixed allowing the project to progress smoothly through RIBA stages 3 and 4 and the planning process.
- 5.5 To note that the Council is working with Sport England to secure supportive funding that will offset design improvements required by Sport England that have enhanced initial designs.

Wards Affected	Whittlesey and the surrounding area								
	Users for the Manor facility also travel from the March area as well as from Peterborough								
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/24AUG23/02 KEY/22JAN25/02 KEY/22JAN25/03 KEY/22JAN25/04 KEY/22JAN25/05								
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Steve Count	Portfolio Holder for Fenland Inspire! Leisure Centre Projects							
	Cllr Chris Boden	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance							
Report Originators	Phil Hughes	Head of Leisure and Open Spaces							
Contact Officers	Carol Pilson  Peter Catchpole Sian Warren	Monitoring Officer and Corporate Director S151 Officer and Corporate Director Chief Accountant							
Background Papers	Cabinet Report June 2025 Cabinet Report February 2025 Cabinet Report November 2023 Cabinet Report January 2025 2021 Condition survey reports Alliance Leisure documentation								

#### 6 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- The redevelopment of the Manor Leisure Centre is a Fenland Inspire! project. The existing facility has reached the end of its useful life with an expected conditions survey cost identified as £4.331m to allow the existing facility to 'stand still'. The existing pool was built as an outdoor lido and then covered in the early / mid 1980's. The Sport Hall building contains the hall and changing rooms for football. Football is no longer played at the Manor, with the rest of the facility being exceptionally tired. Additionally, managing 2 buildings is inefficient, not customer focussed and increases operational and maintenance costs.
- 6.2 This project will redevelop and expand the pool building and demolish the sports hall building, leaving the local community with a facility fit for purpose for the next 20+ years. The focus is on financial viability by attracting more users whilst keeping operational and maintenance costs low.
- 6.3 The February 2025 Cabinet report highlighted indicative costs as follows:

Core facility cost £10.24m Sports Hall £2.50m Rifle Range £0.75m Padel courts £0.45m £13.94m

- 6.4 The Cabinet report also highlighted pre-construction costs for RIBA stages 3 and 4 of £626,000 for the core facility. This cost, following the additions highlighted in paragraphs 6.3 and 6.5, has increased to £876,000.
- In addition, during the February Cabinet meeting, Members decided that it was desirable to enhance the rifle club to allow its use for regional events, ensuring a wider appeal for the facility, attracting a larger membership from across the Peterborough region. The current project achieves this, following consultation and discussions with Whittlesey Rifle Club, by way of the addition of a 10m air rifle range, as well as a widening of the 25m small bore range. Importantly the new facility will meet accessibility requirements. This work means that the enhanced facility will be much larger than the footprint of the original rifle venue and this has impacted cost.
- 6.6 Members have previously been informed that Sport England grant funding is likely to come with conditions that will increase construction cost, whilst also enhancing the building following Sport England's published design guidance. Members are keen to see Sport England's involvement, despite potential additional costs, if that involvement and subsequent grant funding would mean an enhanced facility at a net cost that is the same or lower than a building lacking the enhancements that Sport England will stipulate. This is the case as demonstrated in the financial section of this report. The project team is engaged with Sport England, has received feedback from the Sport England team, and has incorporated this feedback into the current design.
- 6.7 The project team has also engaged with the local community, key stakeholders and local elected Members. An engagement report is attached in Appendix 2, with a summary within the report below regarding community feedback.

- 6.8 A significant issue identified by local elected Members was the planned use of outside caterers for all hall functions and events, with no permanent kitchen to be fitted in the redeveloped building. Feedback from local Members is that this would be a serious omission as Whittlesey has no quality event hall and the current offer from the Manor is only underused due to the poor condition and quality of the building. This feedback has been addressed by the project team with a kitchen space being added to the footprint. This space is 225% the size of the existing Manor kitchen and will be kitted out as a commercial kitchen including appropriate flooring, stainless surfaces and wall backing, appropriate ventilation and fire suppression system. This approach will give the redeveloped facility every opportunity to attract conferences, events and functions from the local community, with a potential reach into the eastern Peterborough catchment are as well – if the offer and pricing is compelling and competitive. It is anticipated that Freedom would work with a catering partner to ensure that every opportunity is made of the new event space and adjacent kitchen and bar areas.
- As highlighted in paragraph 2.2 the focus on the redevelopment is ensuring that the facility is financially viable for the future. Additional space has been removed to reduce costs and ensure that the new facility is attractive to the local community and is generating as much footfall (and subsequent income) as possible to ensure financial viability. Unfortunately, this approach does mean that space that might be nice to have, but not is revenue generating, cannot be afforded within the construction cost. Good examples of this might be the addition of a small meeting room, a staff only toilet, an external toilet for field users, a first aid room that is not shared as a timing space for galas, space for Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid, external storage rooms for equipment that the community or non-facility clubs may want to use on the fields this list could be expanded. Adding space costs money and if it is not generating footfall and income it would impact on both the cost of construction and impact the future financial viability of the facility.

Any change in the footprint past this point will incur delays and additional costs.

#### 6.10 Summary

This project will redevelop and expand the pool building and demolish the sports hall building, leaving the local community with a facility fit for purpose for the next 20+ years. The focus is on financial viability by attracting more users whilst keeping operational and maintenance costs low. The footprint for the redevelopment (please see Appendix 1 – proposed redevelopment facility footprint) is a very tight design, reducing unnecessary space and the subsequent cost of that space. As highlighted above, the focus on financial viability also means that space that is not going to generate revenue is not included.

#### 7 Redevelopment Proposal

#### Appendix 1 – proposed redevelopment facility footprint

- 7.1 The attached Manor RIBA Stage 2 redevelopment floorplan demonstrates how the new facility will appear. The are some minor adjustments to be made to this diagram, including:
  - Reassessing external door positions in the hall for event access
  - Adding an external serving shutter to facilitate catering vans
  - Fencing and gates between the plant room and kitchen buildings
  - Removal of the hall storage area
  - Some amendments to the poolside storage / first aid areas

#### 8 Stakeholder, Community and Member Engagement

- 8.1 As part of the RIBA 2 process the project team has carried out face to face stakeholder engagement sessions, as well as a face-to-face Member engagement session. Alongside this work, a survey was conducted that has received 581 responses. An additional drop-in session was also provided in the town marketplace for community members to attend and discuss and feedback regarding the footprint and the same took place in the foyer of the leisure centre for centre users to engage with project officers.
  - The engagement report following this work is attached at Appendix 2 for reference.
- 8.2 The engagement work highlights the following, with project team comments below in blue:
- 8.3 There is a strong, consistent public desire for significant investment, as the current Manor Leisure Centre is widely considered outdated, cramped, and poor value for money when compared to modern alternatives. The primary barriers preventing greater use are the poor, dirty, and outdated facilities (28%) alongside membership costs deemed too high relative to the low quality (22%).

Feedback regarding 'dirty' facilities has been passed onto Freedom Leisure and monitoring will remain in place regarding these comments across all FDC leisure centres. An older facility such as the Manor lends itself to these comments, with a forthcoming deep cleaning session, though positive and welcomed, likely to make little significant difference to these comments and the appearance of this elderly leisure centre.

The current configuration of the changing rooms is an issue when attempting to clean. The male / female split means that unless closed, staff of the opposite gender cannot access the facilities to inspect or clean them or support team members doing the same.

A village style facility – as proposed – will address this issue.

8.4 Users overwhelmingly prioritize substantial improvements to the main amenities, demanding modernised and accessible swimming facilities (17%) that include warmer water and better public timetables, alongside the urgent need for improved changing rooms and toilets (16%). The gym is criticised for

being too small and lacking equipment, necessitating a larger, modernised gym (20% of suggestions), ideally with 24/7 access.

The pools are run at appropriate temperatures following national guidance from the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group.

Public timetables are difficult to manage alongside demands from schools, learn to swim programmes and swimming clubs. The management team aims for a balanced programme but is unlikely to be able to please everyone.

8.5 A major finding is the need for the centre to evolve into a true community destination, with the addition of a cafe/social space (27% of suggestions) being the single most common free-text request to encourage longer visits and social interaction. There is also consistent demand for reintroducing spa and wellness amenities (10% of suggestions), such as a sauna and steam room, and integrating health services like physiotherapy or mental health support.

A spacious reception area and café space is included in the proposed development and is crucial for the success of modern leisure centres. The additional revenue is important from an operational perspective, but the sociability that a café and seating space offers to customers is the key aspect. Customers will become social, will enjoy the activity element, but even more so the social element. This supports community mental health and community resilience and cohesion. For the facility this means that customers are likely to continue to use the facility with their new friends – ensuring that the facility remains more financially viable as a result.

A spa and wellness facility is not a commercially viable facility and will not be included. The current sauna and steam facilities have not been in use since covid.

The planned development includes community space that is anticipated to be used by NHS colleagues / the CCC Behaviour Change Team, for Cardiac Phase IV, mobility, falls prevention classes and older people's sessions, as well as potentially supporting youth work in the town.

8.6 Specific local clubs require facility improvements; the Rifle Club's preservation and enhancement (18.6% of specific priorities) and the resurfacing of Netball and Tennis Courts (13.7%) are concerns.

Improvements in the new rifle club have been highlighted by the Leader of the Council as a Member priority in February Cabinet and are reflected in the proposed footprint for the redeveloped facility.

The tennis / netball courts were repainted, with some minor surface works carried out, in 2024. As a result of this feedback, FDC will seek a third-party assessment of the surface. Please note that the tennis / netball facilities do NOT form part of the scope of this Fenland Inspire! project.

It should also be noted that the facility had limited tennis use over the summer and that netball is played one evening a week. The new

PlayZone, due to be developed adjacent to the tennis / netball courts is likely to be opened in February 2026 and will accommodate netball, albeit on a smaller court, as determined by Netball England and the Football Foundation's design guidance for the PlayZones.

8.7 Crucially, disabled people and those with accessibility needs (12%) are the most cited group requiring better support, including equitable pricing, improved physical access, and specific pool access equipment.

This is noted and has also been discussed with Sport England and significant accessibility improvements are included as part of the proposed redevelopment.

8.8 Operational planning for the move to the new facility involves significant coordination, including operator preferences for Life Fitness gym equipment and the Lynxsight pool swimmer safety support system.

Noted.

8.9 Logistical actions include confirming the Skatepark relocation prior to main works and remediating existing changing rooms for temporary gym use.

FDC has the changing rooms and temporary gym work in the planning stage.

Skatepark project work is likely to commence with engagement and consultation with local young people in late November 2025.

8.10 Swimming clubs requested a 3-month delay to construction to mitigate financial deficits.

Accommodating such a request will increase FDC's development costs because of inflation and will also mean that the project would commence in the winter.

The project is seeking to support the swimming clubs (March Marlins and City of Peterborough) by way of the Social Value opportunities that the project may present.

8.11 External safety is also a concern, requiring improved parking, lighting for walkways, and external CCTV coverage.

Noted

#### Face to face engagement day - 30 October 2025

- 8.12 The face to face engagement day on 30 October saw around 70 people engage with project members at Whittlesey Marketplace and the Manor Leisure Centre. These sessions reflected the feedback gathered online with the community excited regarding the redevelopment and looking forwards to it moving forwards.
- 8.13 Across the day three people raised concerns about the village changing approach that will be adopted for the swimming pool, as it is in most modern pools, and has been in operation in Wisbech and March swimming pools for more than a decade:

The vast majority of the local community who attended are knowledgeable and satisfied about the swimming pool changing village approach. This was

particularly the case for families who recognise the issues that the current split facilities mean for parents of the opposite gender attending with their child over 8 years old. People were familiar with these changing rooms in other facilities within Cambridgeshire, but also in holiday resort swimming pools and particularly Center Parcs in the UK.

Blue text denotes initial project feedback.

Comments were made regarding:

- Cubicle height above the floor;
   These will match Sport England guidance
- Could visibility of the changing facility be increased from poolside;
   The project team will consider this possibility whilst being mindful of cost and ventilation requirements for the changing facilities

The project team will consider if an all-gender private changing room could be fitted within the facility space

It should be noted, for the avoidance of doubt and misunderstanding, that the changing rooms afford all individuals privacy by way of:

- 1. Private cubicle showers
- 2. Private cubicles for changing in including family sized or 2 person cubicles for family use or increased space should an individual require this, alongside single person cubicles
- 3. Separate male and female toilet areas

This facility design approach will allow:

- Improved safeguarding of children as families will be able to change in the same location and monitor their children
- Reduced chance of children being bullied as they have their own changing cubicle and the facility's high footfall would naturally prevent unwelcome behaviour
- An increased level of cleanliness as cleaning for the staff team will be possible, whatever gender the team members are.
- The increased footfall within the facility means that the area will have more
  users milling around in the area preventing any unwelcome behaviour for
  instance vandalism, poor language.

The facility layout has been reviewed and by Sport England's facility team and the technical facility officer from Swim England with no concerns regarding the current layout.

#### 8.14 Sauna Room

One consultee mentioned adding a sauna.

Local authority facilities do not usually offer this sort of facility due to the cost of running, cleaning and maintenance compared with user numbers and the subsequent net cost of providing the facility.

#### 9 Financial Assessment

#### Review and update to the original budget of February 2025

- 9.1 The original project budget, including sports hall / padel and original rifle club replacement from Cabinet in February 2025 was £13.94m with additional RIBA Stage 3 and 4 pre-construction costs of £876,000 (increased above the report value of £626,463 to accommodate the addition of the sports hall / padel courts and rifle range above the base cost project).
- 9.2 Additionally, for a project of this size a contingency budget is necessary. The size of the budget is a function of the cost of the project and in this case the contingency budget is £676,000. The Council must allow the budget for this within the project cost estimates, whilst also anticipating that this contingency should be significantly *underspent* if the project is well-managed and that the site does not hold any unexpected issues discovered during the construction phase. There is a project risk register and, whilst risks cannot be fully mitigated during project development, the formal approach to the management of a substantial project like this one, should ensure that risks that do crystalise into an issue are anticipated, though not expected, with a pre-determined approach to hand, with other risks logged and mitigated to become insubstantial through the project management process.
- 9.3 A further significant cost that the project budget must bear is inflation. The original cost of the project was estimated in December 2024. Construction is not anticipated to commence until July / August 2026. There is an inflationary impact across this timeframe and then also built into the construction period that is currently in excess of 1 year. The current inflationary budget for this project is £570,000. If the Council moves into construction, this figure will be confirmed within the contract and form a cost of the construction contract.
- 9.4 Rifle club enhancements requested by Cabinet have increased the floor area of the facility significantly. It was anticipated that such a change in size would require a proportionate increase in construction cost. However, the rifle range is a relatively low-value element of the overall build. This is primarily due to its simple construction and reduced requirements for glazing, finishes, and mechanical and electrical installations when compared to the leisure and pool facilities. It also benefits from cost efficiencies through the utilising the planned roof structure, external wall and reduced need for cladding upgrades to the existing pool hall wall. This being the case, the expected increase in cost for the enhancements to the range are just £200,000 above the original £750,000 estimate.

9.5 The additional of a commercial kitchen is does add a significant cost increase to the project. The building of the space, at 90 square metres, adds approximately £306,000 - £400,000 to the construction cost, with fit out costs estimated at between £300,000 and £400,000, including early costed items as follows:

Main Kitchen £170,000
Finishing Kitchen £60,000
Extraction canopy £25,000
Buffet Service Items/ Service Pass £13,000

A prudent estimate for the cost of the completed kitchen is currently £800,000. It is anticipated that once an equipment list is confirmed, the cost will be reduced to some extent. At this early stage assuming a cost of £800,000 is the safest way to budget for the development of a kitchen in this project.

9.6 Paragraphs 9.1 to 9.5 can be summarised as below highlighting the estimated budget, including elected Member-led enhancements and necessary project provisions for inflation and a contingency budget, at a total of £17.062m:

Manor Leisure Centre Rede	velopment Proje	ect										
February 2025 Cabinet Report	£m	£m										
Base cost	10.24											
Sports Hall estimate	2.5											
Rifle range per current	0.75											
Padel courts	0.45											
Original Cabinet report construction costs to	otal	13.94	Para 4.2	of Feb 2025 C	abinet Rpt	Costs dete	rmined in D	ecember 20	024, excl. ir	ıflation & co	ontingency	
ADD RIBA 3 & 4 costs		0.876	Para 4.2	of Feb 2025 C	abinet Rpt	(Actual su	m is higher o	lue to incl. o	of additiona	l aspects -	rifle / SH / Pa	idel)
Cabinet Paper initial budget		14.816										
Cabinet discussions added:												
Enhancements to rifle range	0.2		Determin	ed by increas	sed size of	facility, tho	ugh essenti	ally a box, so	lower con	nparitive co	st to rest of f	acili
Necessary potential Project Costs added:												
Add necessary contingency	0.676		Necessa	y for a projec	t this size,	but cost co	ntrol to red	uce the maj	ority of it's ι	ıse will be i	n place	
Add inflationary estimate	0.57		Estimate	stimate at 30 September 2025								
		1.446										
Revised Initial budget from February 2025 C	abinet	16.262										
Subsequent Member addition - kitchen budget cost 0.8			Early esti	mate £606,0	0,008 <b>£</b> - 00	000. £800,0	000 is prude	nt approach	at this ear	ly stage		
Budget following Feb 2025 Cabinet & Memb	er input	17.062										

#### RIBA Stage 2 current cost estimates

- 9.7 The RIBA Stage 2 cost estimate sits at £17.18m, including the contingency budget, an inflationary estimate, the addition of a kitchen, enhanced rifle range and sports hall space for events.
- 9.8 As anticipated, Sport England's assessment of the early RIBA Stage 2 footprint for the facility highlighted enhancements that will improve the facility that come at additional cost. These enhancements are as per Sport England's published design guidance for leisure facilities. They enhance a facility, but do not add any further commercial advantage to the facility. These enhancements are detailed, with cost estimates, as follows. Note that the total additional cost is currently estimated at £1.489m. These enhancements considerably improve provision for disabled people and also increase space within both changing facilities.

Add Sport England variations			
Building Increase - 5m wide circa 250m2 addition	0.5	Increase in size for additional changing area space per Sport England des	ign guidance
Amended WC provision to reception	0.01	Improved disabled persons provision	
Changes to Learner Pool	0.297	Stepped entry and wall between main and learner pool for safety	
Changes to Main Pool	0.178	Stepped entry Stepped entry	
Changes to incorporate disabled seating provision to spectator seating	0.089		
First aid room	0.059		
Significantly increased village change (circa +100m2 to 100% increase)	0.196	Fit out of additional space	
Significantly increased dry side changing facilities (circa +100m2 to 50% increase)	0.16	Fit out of additional space	
Sport England enhancements total		1.489 Sport England enhancements - total budget cost	

- 9.9 The Council will apply to Sport England for a grant of £2m (the maximum financial support available). Netting the potential grant off against the cost of the enhancements stipulated by Sport England would mean a net financial contribution to the project of £511,000.
- 9.10 The addition of the £1.489m estimated costs for the Sport England enhancements brings the total current estimated project budget to £18.67m. The potential of a £2m grant from Sport England would reduce that total cost to £16.67m.
- 9.11 The Council is at the initial stages of the grant process with Sport England and will not know what level of grant would be available to the Council until 2026 likely March or April, but in advance of the Council's decision to construct the building or not.
- 9.12 It is anticipated that the Council will also discuss opportunities for financial support for this project that is significant to the Peterborough sub-region with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

### 9.13 The **end of RIBA Stage 2 cost estimates** for the project can be summarised as follows:

End of RIBA 2 estimated cost								
Projected Fee total 30 September 2025	15.81		Incl.RIBA fees, £500k provisional sum for sports hall demoliti	on /car park & £676k contingency budget				
ADD inflationary estimate	0.57							
ADD - kitchen budget estimate	0.80		Added late October					
		17.18						
Add Sport England variations								
Building Increase - 5m wide circa 250m2 addition	0.5		Increase in size for additional changing area space pe	r Sport England design guidance				
Amended WC provision to reception	0.01		Improved disabled persons provision					
Changes to Learner Pool	0.297		Stepped entry and wall between main and learner pool for safety					
Changes to Main Pool	0.178		Stepped entry					
Changes to incorporate disabled seating provision to spectator seating	0.089							
First aid room	0.059							
Significantly increased village change (circa +100m2 to 100% increase)	0.196		Fit out of additional space					
Significantly increased dry side changing facilities (circa +100m2 to 50% increase)	0.16		Fit out of additional space					
Sport England enhancements total		1.489	Sport England enhancements - total budget cost					
Total revised projected cost		18.67						
LESS - potential Sport England grant		-2						
Total cost estimate, net of potential Sport Eng	land Grant	16.67						

#### **Financial summary**

The following table combines the information above into one financial table highlighting in one place the original budgeted costs, additions that have been added following discussions with elected Members, costs that are added in as necessary when considering the project on the whole (inflation / contingency) and the costs of enhancements stipulated by Sport England.

Manor Leisure Centre Red	evelopment Proje	ect									
February 2025 Cabinet Report	£m	£m									
Base cost	10.24										
Sports Hall estimate	2.5										
Rifle range per current	0.75										
Padel courts	0.45										
Original Cabinet report construction costs	total	13.94	Para 4.2 of Feb	2025 Cabinet F	pt Costs det	ermined in	December :	2024, excl. ii	oflation & c	ontingency	
ADD RIBA 3 & 4 costs		0.876	Para 4.2 of Feb	2025 Cabinet F	pt (Actual su	ım is higher	due to incl.	of additiona	l aspects -	rifle / SH / Pad	del)
Cabinet Paper initial budget		14.816									
Cabinet discussions added:											
Enhancements to rifle range	0.2		Determined by	increased size	of facility, the	ough essent	tially a box,	so lower cor	nparitive co	st to rest of fa	acility
Necessary potential Project Costs added:											
Add necessary contingency	0.676		Necessaryfor	a project this siz	e, but cost c	ontrol to re	duce the ma	ajority of it's	use will be i	n place	
Add inflationary estimate	0.57		-	September 202						İ	
,		1.446									
Revised Initial budget from February 2025	Cahinet	16.262									
Subsequent Member addition - kitchen budg			Early estimate	5606 000 - £800	000 £800	000 is prud	ent annroad	h at this ear	lystage		
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End of RIBA 2 estimated cost											
Projected Fee total 30 September 2025	15.81		Incl.RIBA fees, £5	00k provisional su	m for sports h	all demolitio	n /car nark &	£676k conting	ency hudget		
ADD inflationary estimate	0.57			Jok providential de	iii ioi oporto ii		n roan pank a	207 OK GOTTUNE	oney budget		
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Building Increase - 5m wide circa 250m2											
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Amended WC provision to reception	0.01			led persons pro		a space per	Sport Engle	and design g	uluance		
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Changes to Main Pool	0.178		Stepped entry								
Changes to incorporate disabled seating provision to spectator seating	0.089										
First aid room	0.059										
Significantly increased village change											
(circa +100m2 to 100% increase)	0.196		Fit out of additi	onal space							
Significantly increased dry side changing	0.15										
facilities (circa +100m2 to 50% increase)	0.16		Fit out of additi	onal space							
Sport England enhancements total		1.489	9 Sport England enhancements - total budget cost								
Total revised projected cost		18.67									
LESS - potential Sport England grant	_	-2									
Persition open tembrania Brant											

#### 10 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The redevelopment of the Manor Leisure centre is necessary for the growing community of Whittlesey and surrounding villages. It will also benefit from an increase in revenue and footfall by continuing to import demand from residents in the eastern area of Peterborough.
- 10.2 The project team has focussed on the design of an operationally financially viable facility that generates increased footfall and income whilst keeping the capital costs as low as possible.
- 10.3 The redevelopment replicates the commercially viable aspects of the sports hall building, alongside the modernisation of the swimming pool building and pool changing area. The gym has been made slightly larger to anticipate latent demand within the area, with the necessary gym changing rooms being added. These works will enhance the facility increasing footfall and financial viability.
- 10.4 The reception area is enhanced and will offer a café suitable for facility users and will also cater for children's parties in the adjacent soft play space. These works will enhance the facility increasing footfall and financial viability.
- 10.5 Sport England has added enhancements that improve changing provision and disabled access to all facilities. Whilst at a significant cost, this cost is anticipated to be a negative net cost if a grant from Sport England is forthcoming. These works will enhance the facility increasing footfall and financial viability.
- 10.6 The sports hall area remains a sufficient size for 2 exercise class areas, as well as a badminton court space. These three areas can be combined into one large space that can be used for community events, functions and conference meetings. The adjacent kitchen will cater for those events.
- 10.7 Space that was part of the swimming pool area has been used to accommodate a community room that is anticipated to be used for meetings, training, activity sessions for older people or people with specific medical needs, for example healthy heart classes. This space will enhance the facility increasing footfall and financial viability.
- 10.8 The proposed footprint is the minimum necessary footprint for the redevelopment, considering Member priorities regarding event and kitchen space, the rifle club and its enhancements, and Sport England's stipulations regarding changing facility and disability access enhancements.

#### 11 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 The Cabinet Report of February 2025 identified two other options instead of the redevelopment of the pool, namely:
  - Build a new facility adjacent to the current facilities.
     This option is estimated to cost a further £10m and was deemed unaffordable.
  - Instead of a redevelopment, the existing facilities condition survey spending of £4.331m would allow the buildings to stand still.

It was considered that this would be sunk money on a facility that is no longer fit for purpose and would not serve the community for the next 20+ years.

#### Reductions in the current estimated cost could be made as follows:

#### 11.2 Padel Courts:

The padel courts are an enhancement to the existing facility. The cost of construction is currently estimated at between £350,000 to £450,000. Whilst this cost could be removed from the project, it should be noted that the padel courts are expected to have a fast payback period, bringing in a net income in excess of £90,000 in year 1 rising to £215,000 in a mature year.

A prudent estimate of the payback period for the facility is 5 years.

This financial performance suggests that the removal of padel courts from the project would be both a community and financial detriment.

#### 11.3 Rifle Range:

The rifle range will be used by a limited number of the community and could be viewed as not representing good value for money. Options to reduce the cost of this facility include:

- Reduce the rifle range footprint to the original size, reducing costs by £200,000.
- Remove the rifle range altogether, reducing costs by £950,000.

Elected Members have been clear that these aspects of the project are essential for the local community and should remain included in the project.

#### 11.4 Kitchen and Events Space

The kitchen and events hall aspect of the project adds significant cost for an as yet unproven community and commercial gain. This might also be considered a poor investment and not good value for money.

Options to reduce the cost of this element of the existing footprint include:

- Remove the kitchen element, reducing costs by an estimated £800,000.
- Remove the badminton court aspect of the hall, saving a significant sum as yet uncosted.
- 11.5 Whilst the savings in 11.2 to 11.4 are significant, elected Members have been clear that these aspects of the project are essential for the local community and must remain included in the project.

#### 12 IMPLICATIONS

#### 12.1 Financial Implications

- 12.2 Based on current interest rates and MRP over 30 years, for every £1m borrowed, it is estimated that it will cost the Council £81.3k for each year that it is borrowed.
- 12.3 The General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February, projects a financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.432m increasing year on year amounting

- to around £3.4m by 2027/28. Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address
- 12.4 The General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February, projects a financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.432m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28.
- 12.5 Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address.
- 12.6 It is noted that the minimum spend required for the existing Manor Leisure Centre to stand still by way of conditions survey works is £4.331m.
- 12.7 Estimates from January 2025 discussions with Freedom regarding the uplift in FDC revenue from Freedom as a result of the initial base redevelopment of the facility was £345,000 p.a. This is sufficient to fund borrowing of £4.85m. It is likely, with the added community space and sports hall and events kitchen that this sum will be increased albeit insubstantially.
- 12.8 The conditions survey works are necessary, and the redevelopment negates this cost. The net additional borrowing can be calculated as:

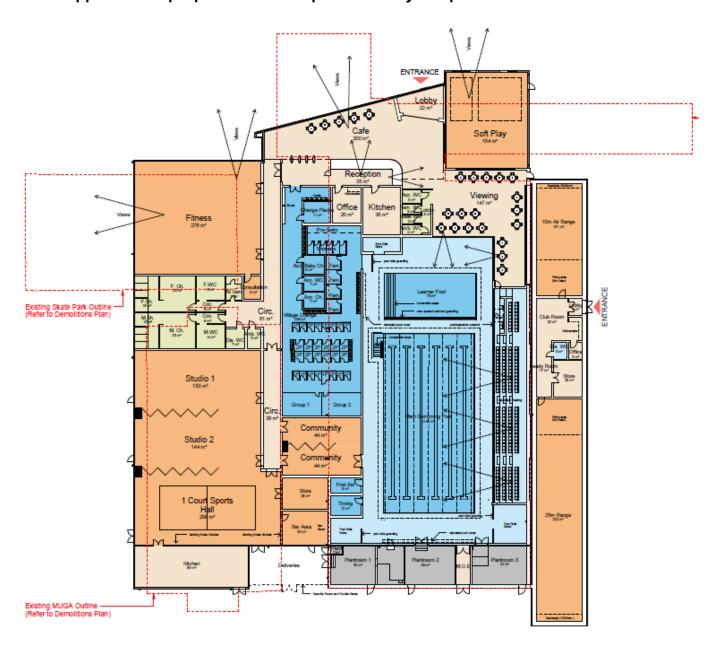
Total cost, net of Sport England potential grant:	£16.67m
Funded by:	
Conditions survey budget	(£ 4.33m)
(as detailed in 12.6 & Feb 2025 Cabinet Report)	
Borrowing funded by increased revenue	(£ 4.85m)
(as detailed in 12.7 & Feb 2025 Cabinet Report)	
Borrowing funded by an average of Padel income	
(Not incl in Feb Cabinet report & detailed in 11.2)	(£ 1.88m)
Additional borrowing requirement	£ 5.61m

As detailed in paragraph 12.2 the cost of borrowing £1m is currently £81,300. This means that the additional net borrowing required for this project will be approximately £456,093p.a. This will be <u>in addition</u> to the borrowing required for the conditions survey works that this project negates.

#### 12.9 Equality Implications

The redevelopment significantly enhances equality of use and access to the facility.

#### 13 Appendix 1 – proposed redevelopment facility footprint



14 Appendix 2 – Stakeholder, community and elected Members Engagement report

# The Manor Leisure Centre Engagement Report.





#### 1. Introduction

Fenland District Council is undertaking a major development to replace the existing Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey, with a proposal to move from two current buildings to one refurbished facility that integrates leisure, health, and community services.

The engagement report was commissioned to gather essential insight from residents, service users, and stakeholders regarding this redevelopment, thereby ensuring the facility design reflects local needs, enhances community access, and supports healthier lifestyles across the district.

The research explores current centre usage, priorities for improvement, and barriers to participation, all of which will directly inform the design and planning of the redeveloped Manor Leisure Centre.

#### **Objectives were to:**

- (i) Understand usage and engagement;
- (ii) Define priorities and barriers;
- (iii) Outline community expectations for the new facility.

**581**participants in survey



#### 2. Executive Summary

The engagement project utilised an online survey which ran in **September 2025 and received 581 responses**. This was supplemented by four public engagement sessions (focus groups) held during September 2025, and stakeholder meetings completed on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September, to ensure comprehensive feedback on the redevelopment of Manor Leisure Centre.

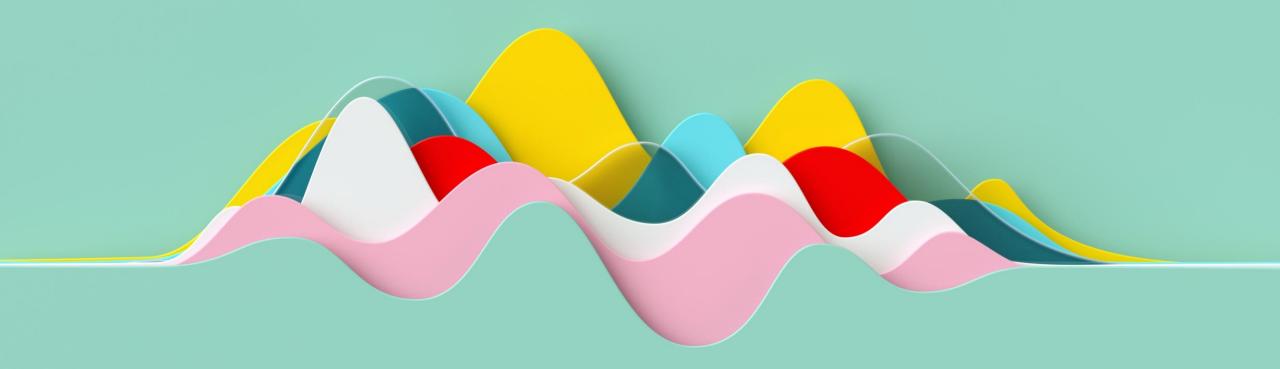
Public feedback reveals a strong desire for significant modernisation, as the existing facility is widely viewed as outdated, cramped, and poor value for money compared to alternatives.

Usage is constrained primarily by **poor facilities** (28%) and **high membership costs relative to quality (22%)** 

Around half of the respondents indicated they would use the centre more if it were refurbished and more affordable.

The top suggestions for the redevelopment include introducing a café/social space (27%) and providing a larger, modernised gym (20%). Users also prioritise improved swimming facilities (18%), addressing changing facilities, pool temperature and availability.

Other key demands involve better support for disabled people and those with accessibility needs (12%) is also strongly recommended. preserving and enhancing the Rifle Club (18.6% of open text priorities), resurfacing the Netball and Tennis Courts (13.7%) to support local clubs.

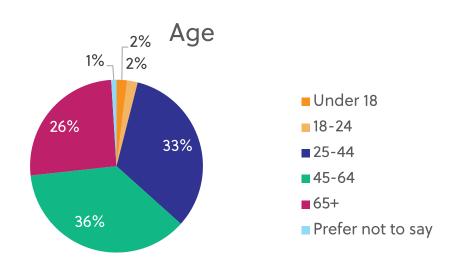


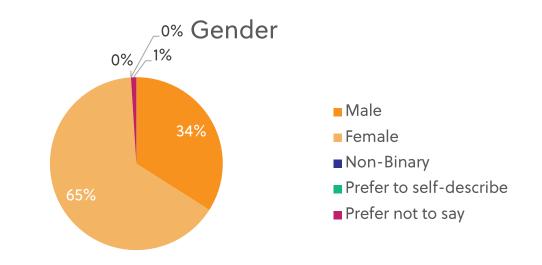


#### **Sample Profile (Demographics and Context)**

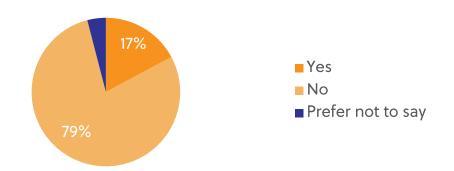
The report provides context on the survey participants:

Sample Size: 581 participants.





# Long-term physical or mental illness, impairment or disability?





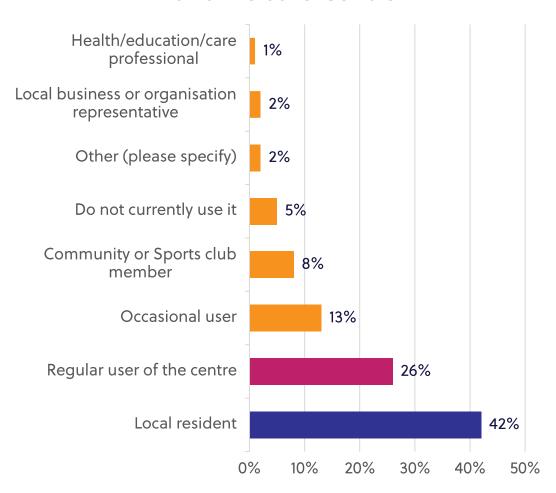
#### **Sample Profile (Demographics and Context)**

 Location: 80.14% of the respondents (456 people) reside in the PE7 postcode area.

#### Top 5 Areas:

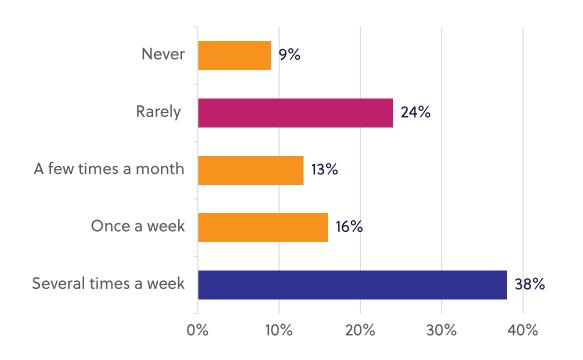
Number	% of Total
456	80.14%
15	2.64%
10	1.76%
9	1.58%
7	1.23%
	456 15 10 9

# What is your relationship to the Manor Leisure Centre?

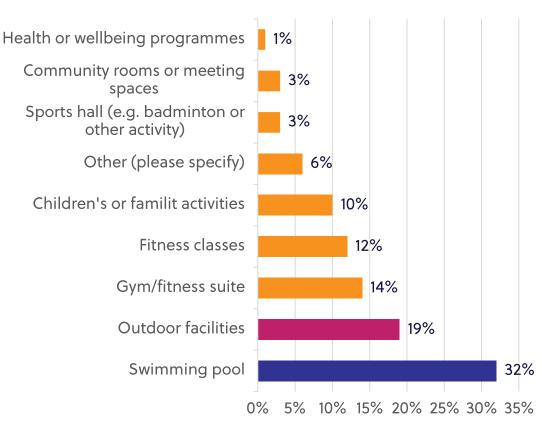




#### 1: How often do you use the Manor Leisure Centre?



#### 2: What facilities do you currently use at the centre?



Open Text Detail for "Other" Facilities Used: Whittlesey Rifle Club / Rifle Range / Shooting: 43.5% of "Other" responses Dog Walking / Fields for Walking: 9.7% of "Other" responses. Dancing / Ballroom Dancing / T Dance: 8.1% of "Other" responses



#### 3: If you do not currently use the centre, please tell us why:

The reasons for non-use are dominated by dissatisfaction with facility quality and cost. The main barriers cited were that Facilities do not meet my needs (32%) and the Cost is too high (29%). Other common reasons, such as preferring other venues (7%), inconvenience (3%), or lack of awareness (2%), played a much smaller role.

# 4: What are your top priorities for the redeveloped Manor Leisure Centre? (Multiple-choice)

Respondents prioritised upgrading core amenities, comfort, and social capacity. The three highest priorities selected were modernised and accessible swimming facilities (17%), improved changing rooms and toilets (16%), and the addition of a Café and social space (14%). Refurbished gym facilities (12%) and improved parking and access (10%) were also prominent concerns.

# Open Text Detail for "Other" Redevelopment Priorities (Specific Demands)

While the multiple-choice focused on general amenities, the specific open-text priorities highlight crucial niche requirements.

The top specific priority requested was the Support and Improvement of Rifle Club / Shooting Facilities (18.6%), with users requesting the maintenance, upgrade, or expansion of the existing facilities.

The second most specific demand was for Improved Netball and Tennis Courts (13.7%), directly linked to enabling local clubs (such as Whittlesey Warriors) to host home matches due to poor surfaces



5: Open Text Question: What would encourage you (or your organisation) to use the centre more regularly? Are there barriers that stop you using the facility at the moment?

Analysis of this feedback revealed a widespread negative sentiment toward the **existing infrastructure**, often described as dated, run-down, and overpriced.

Approximately 28% of responses cited poor facilities, including outdated, dirty, or refurbishment-needed areas. The issue of Cost being too high / poor value for money accounted for ~22% of comments, frequently comparing the centre unfavourably against cheaper, better-equipped competitors like PureGym.

Furthermore, the gym was criticized for being too small, cramped, or lacking equipment (~18%), and swimming issues, primarily the pool temperature being too cold or restricted public timetables, accounted for ~15% of barriers.

6: Open Text Question: Are there particular groups or communities you feel should be better supported at the centre?

The two groups most frequently identified for needing better support were **Disabled people and those with accessibility needs (approx. 12%),** who requested improved physical access (e.g., pool entry) and fairer membership pricing.

This was immediately followed by the **Whittlesey Warriors Netball Club / Netball Users (approx. 10%),** due to the poor condition of the courts preventing them from hosting matches.

Young people / Teenagers (under 18s) (9%) and Older Adults (60+) (7%) were also highlighted as groups requiring specialized activities or spaces.



7: Open Text Question: Please share any other comments, suggestions or ideas that could help shape the redevelopment of the Manor Leisure Centre.

The single most common suggestion was the addition of a Café / social space (~27%), emphasizing its role as a family-friendly community hub and potential revenue generator.

The need for a bigger, modernised gym & fitness spaces was cited by ~20%, with demands including 24/7 access and improved ventilation.

Other key themes included Swimming pool improvements (~18%) such as warmer water and family fun features, and improvements to Parking, access & external facilities (~15%).

Approximately 10% of suggestions requested the reinstatement of spa / wellness facilities (sauna, steam room, jacuzzi).



#### **Overview of Survey Results**

#### **Overall Sentiment and Modernisation**

Public feedback demands significant modernisation, as the current centre is widely considered outdated, cramped, and poor value for money compared to alternatives. Despite these concerns, engagement was high. Overall sentiment is supportive of a project that would spearhead a comprehensive refurbishment to meet modern standards of quality, cleanliness, and accessibility.

#### **Primary Barriers to Participation**

Usage is significantly constrained by poor and outdated facilities (28%) and high membership costs relative to quality (22%). Other major barriers include the small, overcrowded gym (18%) and persistent issues with pool temperature and restricted public timetables (15%).

#### **Top General Facility Priorities**

Core facility upgrades are prioritized, led by the need for modernised, accessible swimming facilities (17%) and improved changing rooms and toilets (16%). Users also strongly requested a refurbished gym with better equipment (12%) and improved parking and site access (10%).

#### **Niche Community and Outdoor Sports**

Specific community groups require support, particularly the Whittlesey Rifle Club (18.6% of open text priorities) and the Whittlesey Warriors Netball Club (10%). There is a strong desire and demand for resurfacing the Netball and Tennis Courts (13.7%) and improving accessibility for disabled users (12%).

#### Social and Wellness Demands

The single most common suggestion was the addition of a Café/social space (27%) to function as a family-friendly community hub. There is also strong demand for reintroducing spa and wellness amenities, such as a sauna, steam room, and relaxation facilities (10% of suggestions), to broaden appeal.



Stakeholder Engagement



#### 4. Stakeholder Engagement

15 September 2025

#### **Attendees:**

Alliance Leisure, Fenland Council, Rifle Club, Friends of Manor, Disabled Group, Local Clergy and Social Dance Club Chair, Whittlesey Manor Dolphins Swim Club, March Swim Club, COPS – Swimming Club.

## Preserving and Enhancing Niche Facilities (Rifle Club and Swimming)

There was a strong sentiment among existing clubs to ensure their highly specific needs were met in the new design. The Rifle Club emphasised the need for power in the shooting area for computers/machines, security doors, separate IT, and provisions for Paralympic access.

Similarly, the competitive swim clubs (Whittlesey Manor Dolphins, March Swim Club, and COPS) focused on retaining starting blocks, ensuring dedicated storage for equipment (floats, timing pads), and suitable lighting for galas.

#### **Addressing Accessibility and Safety**

A major focus was placed on improving accessibility across the site. The need for Wheelchair accessibility for all areas was noted by the Rifle Club, alongside specific mentions of disabled group provisions like a pool pod (from the Fenhands group). Safety around the site was also discussed, including external CCTV coverage (for car park, play/skatepark), lighting for walkways, and necessary safeguarding specifications for changing cubicles during galas.

#### **Operational and Logistical Concerns**

Stakeholders raised practical logistical issues related to the construction and operation of the new facility. This included concerns over parking for galas (with a need to retain field access for overflow parking), the requirement for an accessible toilet off the corridor rather than the clubroom for privacy and hygiene, and the need to relocate the skatepark prior to the main works.

There was also a notable request to bring two existing changing rooms back into use for gym relocation during the build.



#### 4. Stakeholder Engagement

#### **Operational Preferences and Technology**

Freedom Leisure provided clear preferences for operating the new facility. They favoured the Life Fitness brand for gym equipment over the currently used Techno. For the life support system, Lynxsight was the preferred supplier. They also expressed a preference for padlocks on lockers and using the Gladstone system (Omega) for access gates.

#### **Swimming Pool and Competition Readiness**

The discussion included specific technical requirements for the pool to support high-level competitive use, indicating an intent to host Level 3 competitions. Operational storage was a concern, specifically the need for adequate storage for pool equipment. There was also a question regarding the retention of feature walls in the pool hall and confirmation that contractors are investigating a Hydrolyser preference for the swim pool.

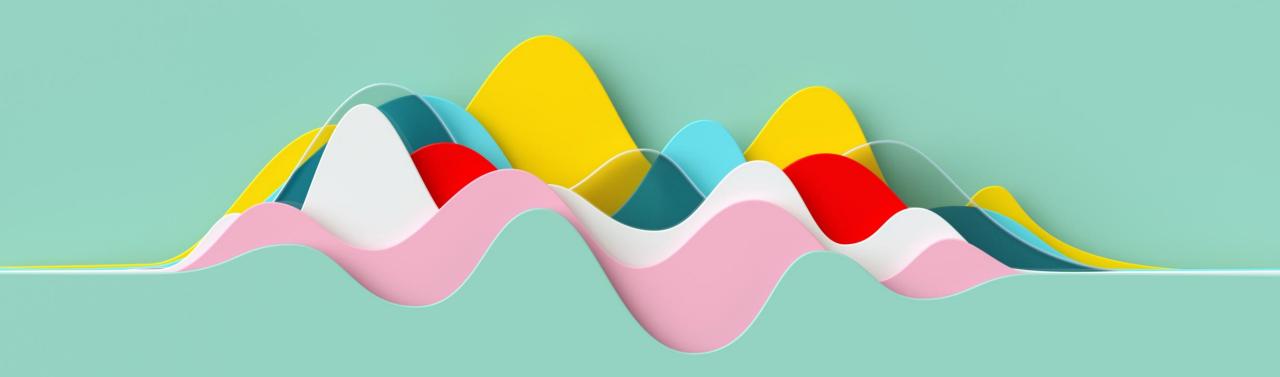
#### **Development Opportunities and Future Amenities**

The operator and Council explored potential revenue-generating additions and upgrades. These included introducing soft play and ensuring the gym size accommodates latent demand.

Consideration was given to the external layout, specifically the potential for Padel courts to be moved adjacent to the building.

#### **Construction Logistics and Site Preparation**

Several actions were noted to prepare the site for the main construction works. This includes confirming that Fenland District Council will organise the gym kit move and that the Skatepark relocation must occur prior to the main works. Additionally, two existing changing rooms need to be remediated (brought back into use) to allow for the gym relocation during the construction period. The creation of a new play zone adjacent to the tennis courts is also planned for early next year through to March.



**Public Engagement** 



#### 5. Summary of Public Engagement Sessions

The public engagement sessions were conducted during September 2025 & October. There were four public engagement sessions in total, split equally between two groups of current users of the facility and two groups of non-users, plus a drop-in session at the market square and Manor Leisure Centre. In total, 12 people attended the four groups, with 70 people attending the drop-in session. The attendance featured an even split between genders and a good range of ages. All focus group sessions were held online and lasted approximately 60 minutes. The drop-in session held face-to-face discussions with the public, elected members and user groups. The focus group sessions were conducted by Active Insight Directors Julie Allen, Mike Hill and Dave Monkhouse, the drop-in session was conducted by Fenland DC representatives and Alliance Leisure.

#### **Key Themes and Findings:**

- Activity Levels and Importance of Wellbeing
- 2. Barriers to Use
- 3. Desired Additional Facilities
- 4. Additional Health-Related Services
- 5. Feedback on the design

#### **Activity Levels and Importance of Wellbeing**

Participants highlighted that wellbeing is supported by accessible, comfortable, and inviting spaces that facilitate both physical activity and social connection.

- **Social Role:** Social interaction was deemed vital for mental well-being, with activities like netball clubs or group walks considered crucial.
- Community Hub: For some, the centre already serves as a community hub, fostering a sense of belonging that enhances overall mental health.
- Welcoming Environment: Participants emphasised the importance of well-lit, welcoming, and inclusive facilities that encourage confidence, especially for new users. Visits were often valued as enjoyable "treats," essential for maintaining mental and physical health



#### **5.1 Summary of Public Engagement Focus Group Sessions**

#### **Barriers to Use**

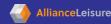
Focus group participants identified several significant barriers that discourage regular use of the existing facilities:

- Childcare: The lack of a crèche was mentioned, making it difficult for young parents to participate confidently.
- Activity Timetables: Limited Group Exercise (GX) classes, particularly on evenings and weekends, restricts access for working or busy families.
- Parking and Social Space: Parking difficulties limit accessibility during peak times, and the absence of a café or social area was repeatedly mentioned as a deterrent for attendees who wished to stay longer and socialise.
- Physical Condition: Frustration was expressed over the current physical condition of the centre's sports courts and surfaces, with attendees emphasising the need for upgrades and future-proofing, especially for tennis and netball.

#### **Desired Additional Facilities**

Participants called for a comprehensive upgrade to create a modern, brighter, and more welcoming leisure centre. Key facilities suggested included:

- Social & Support Infrastructure: A crèche or childcare facility and a café or social area to encourage longer stays and facilitate community socialising were highly requested.
- Core Upgrades: The need for modern, clean, and upgraded showers and changing areas to improve hygiene and comfort was emphasised, with most attendees at the faceto-face sessions pleased to see the changing village approach for swimming, with less than 5% expressing a dislike for that approach.
- New Activities & Spaces: Suggestions included outdoor sports courts (tennis and padel courts) with future-proofed surfaces, multi-purpose sports halls (for gymnastics, dance, etc.), and the addition of climbing or bouldering walls to diversify activities.
- Community Space: Participants requested larger community halls suitable for weddings and larger groups, alongside versatile indoor spaces for a broad range of community and sporting activities.



#### **5.2 Summary of Public Engagement Focus Group Sessions**

#### **Additional Health-Related Services**

Participants expressed strong interest in expanding support beyond traditional fitness to include holistic health services:

- Health Assessments: Requests were made for fitness assessments (like Bodytrax), health MOTs, and health screening sessions.
- **Holistic Support:** Participants desired facilities for physiotherapy, reflexology, or alternative therapies.
- Education and Mental Health: Suggested workshops included nutrition education (e.g., healthy eating programmes), health promotion, and access to counselling and mental health support services within the centre.



#### 5.3 Drop-in Session - Feedback on the design.

Manor Leisure Centre Engagement Summary
Overall feedback on the proposals for Maor Leisure
Centre was strongly positive, with many attendees
expressing enthusiasm about the benefits to the local
community. There was particular interest in the future of
the swimming pool and repeated questions regarding
funding sources. Opinions on the proposed changing
village were mixed at earlier stages; however:

Pool Changing Rooms – The vast majority of the local community who attended are knowledgeable and satisfied about the swimming pool changing village approach. This was particularly the case for families who recognise the issues that the current split facilities mean for parents of the opposite gender attending with younger children. People were familiar with these changing rooms in other facilities within Cambridgeshire, but also in holiday resort swimming pools and particularly Center Parcs in the UK. Comments were made regarding:

•Cubicle height above the floor; these will match Sport England guidance.

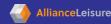
- •Visibility of the changing facilities from poolside, the project team will consider this possibility whilst being mindful of cost and ventilation requirements.
- •Potential for an all-gender private changing room; the project team will consider this within the available space.

For clarity and reassurance, all individuals are afforded privacy via:

- 1. Private cubicle showers.
- 2.Private changing cubicles, including family and two-person options where additional space is required.

Additionally, the changing village approach will allow:

- •Improved safeguarding, as families can change together.
- •Reduced the likelihood of anti-social behaviour due to private cubicles and higher footfall.
- •Higher levels of cleanliness and simpler cleaning processes, regardless of staff gender.
- •Increased passive supervision, discouraging vandalism or inappropriate behaviour.



#### 5.3 Drop-in Session - Feedback on the design.

•Sauna Room - One consultee mentioned adding a sauna. Local authority facilities do not now offer this sort of facility due to the cost of running, cleaning and maintenance compared with user numbers and the subsequent net cost of providing the facility.

The facility layout has been reviewed by Sport England's facility team and the technical facility officer from Swim England, with no concerns raised.

Other feedback included interest in car park access (with a preferred one-way approach), access to toilets for Parkrun users, improved lighting, reassurance that the building will be retained and upgraded rather than replaced, and opportunities for outdoor seating to support community groups, dog walkers and pets. Some comments queried the distance between the kitchen and bar. Renewable solutions such as solar panels and server banks supporting pool heating were positively received



# Overview of Public Engagement



#### 6. Overview of Public Engagement

Importance of Wellbeing and Social Connection - Participants consistently emphasised that wellbeing requires spaces that are accessible, comfortable, and inviting.

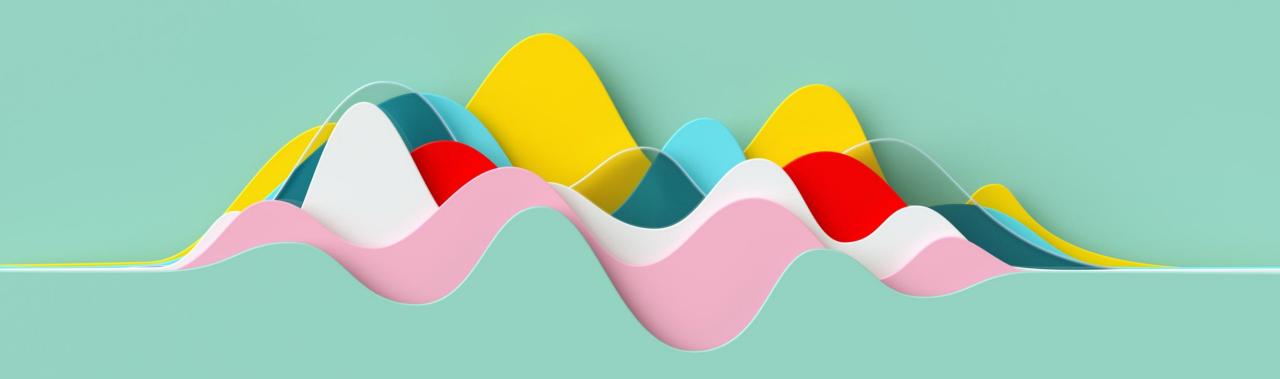
The centre is valued as a community hub that fosters a sense of belonging, with social interaction from activities like netball or group walks deemed crucial for mental wellbeing. Visits are considered enjoyable "treats" essential for maintaining health.

**Primary Barriers Restricting Use -** Major deterrents identified included practical and facility-based issues:

- Parking difficulties during peak times and the absence of a café or social area discouraged attendees from staying longer.
- Lack of a crèche or childcare facilities made confident participation difficult for young parents.
- Limited Group Exercise (GX) classes in the evenings and weekends have restricted access for working families.
- Frustration was expressed over the poor physical condition of the sports courts and surfaces, particularly for tennis and netball, necessitating upgrades.

Desired New Facilities and Services The groups called for a comprehensive upgrade resulting in a modern and brighter centre. Key requests included:

- Adding a crèche/childcare facility and a café/social area to encourage longer visits and community socialising.
- Modern, clean, and upgraded showers and changing areas.
- Introducing diverse activities like climbing or bouldering walls, and outdoor facilities such as Padel courts.
- Integrating holistic health support, such as fitness assessments (like Bodytrax), health MOTs, nutrition education, and access to physiotherapy or mental health support services.



# Key Findings & Themes



#### 7. Key Findings and Themes

There is a strong, consistent public desire for significant investment, as the current Manor Leisure Centre is widely considered outdated, cramped, and poor value for money when compared to modern alternatives. The primary barriers preventing greater use are the poor, dirty, and outdated facilities (28%), alongside membership costs deemed too high relative to the low quality (22%).

Users overwhelmingly prioritise substantial improvements to the main amenities, demanding **modernised and accessible swimming facilities** (17%) that include warmer water and better public timetables, alongside the urgent need for improved changing rooms and toilets (16%). The gym is criticised for being too small and lacking equipment, necessitating a larger, modernised gym (20% of suggestions), ideally with 24/7 access.

A major finding is the need for the **centre to evolve into a true community destination**, with the addition of a café/social space (27% of suggestions) being the single most common free-text request to encourage longer visits and social interaction. There is also suggestions for integrating health services, physiotherapy or mental health support. Wellness amenities (10% of suggestions).

Specific local clubs require facility improvements; the Rifle Club's preservation and enhancement (18.6% of specific priorities) and the urgent resurfacing of Netball and Tennis Courts (13.7%) are key concerns to enable local teams, like the Whittlesey Warriors, to host home matches.

Crucially, disabled people and those with accessibility needs (12%) are the most cited group requiring better support, including equitable pricing, improved physical access, and specific equipment like a pool pod.

Operational planning for the move to the new facility involves significant logistics. Logistical actions include confirming the Skatepark relocation prior to main works and remediating existing changing rooms for temporary gym use, while swimming clubs requested a 3-month delay to construction to mitigate financial deficits. External safety is also a concern, requiring improved parking, lighting for walkways, and external CCTV coverage.