


<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	7	
<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	
<b>Date:</b>	27 April 2026	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Acceptance of £2 million Place Capital Funding from Sport England for the Manor Leisure Centre Redevelopment, subject to the project progressing to construction	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 Fenland District Council has been awarded £2,000,000 from Sport England's Place Capital Fund to support the construction of the redevelopment at the Manor Leisure Centre. This is the maximum sum that Sport England may grant to a project.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval to accept the funding and delegate authority to the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers to enter into all necessary legal and financial arrangements to secure and manage the funding, subject to the project going ahead.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Following a Place-Based approach to capital investment adopted by Sport England, the Manor Leisure Centre was highlighted as a project that is of significant importance in Fenland and would be suitable to apply for Place Capital funding. Following a submission to the local Place Based process, Manor was identified as a project that should be considered by Sport England.
- 2.2 Subsequently, a discussion with a Sport England officer took place at the Manor Field and leisure facility regarding the project outline, expectations and a review of the existing facilities. The Manor's location, close to the town centre, close to housing and nestled within the town park that is the large Manor Field, alongside other community facilities, makes it an ideal project to further develop the activity hub of facilities within the Manor Field Space.
- 2.3 Sport England asked FDC to submit a formal Expression of Interest for grant funding for the Manor Redevelopment project. A review of this application then led to Sport England asking for a formal main application for grant funding to the Sport England Place Capital Fund.
- 2.4 This formal application process was completed and on 23 March 2026 FDC was informed that it had been successful in its application for £2,000,000.

### 3 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 3.1 Approve the acceptance of the £2,000,000 Place Capital grant allocation from Sport England.
- 3.2 Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to enter into all relevant legal and financial arrangements necessary to bring this decision into effect and manage the funding in accordance with grant conditions.
- 3.3 Note that any drawdown of this grant will be subject to construction commencing on the Manor Leisure Centre redevelopment project. A paper is expected before Cabinet in July 2026 where Cabinet will consider the Manor redevelopment project and make a decision whether to construct the new facility or not.

Wards Affected	All	
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/23MAR26/01	
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 Services
Contact Officers	Phil Hughes Carol Pilson	Head of Leisure Services Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer
	Peter Catchpole	Corporate Director and Section 151 Officer
Background Papers		

### 1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 As part of the Fenland Inspire! project, Elected Members have highlighted the redevelopment of the Manor Leisure Centre as a key project. The existing facility is beyond its useful life, is inefficient to manage and run and requires, in its current form, condition survey work costing in the region of £4.5m to maintain the facility.
- 1.2 Further to the Cabinet paper of February 2026, the expected construction cost for the redeveloped facility is currently estimated at £17.67m. Third party support to reduce this cost, alongside an increase in income from the

Council's operating partner, Freedom Leisure will increase the affordability of proceeding to the construction phase.

1.3 Sport England is the national governing body for sport and physical activity in the UK with a Vision and Mission to;

- *We're here to champion the life-changing impact of being active, and ensure everyone across the nation can benefit from it.*
- *We're determined to tackle deep-rooted inequalities and unlock the advantages of sport and physical activity for everyone.*

As the governing body Sport England has the ability to offer significant funding to improve facilities across England ensuring that more people are active, whilst also aiming to decrease inequalities in accessing sport and active leisure.

1.4 Sport England is the first place that a large redevelopment project, such as the Manor, would consider for supportive funding.

1.5 Following a considered process, the Council has been fortunate to be awarded the maximum Place Capital grant available for a project such as the redevelopment of the Manor Leisure Centre.

## **2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Acceptance of the funding aligns with the Council's corporate priorities around regeneration, community engagement, and economic development.
- 2.2 Delegating authority to the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer ensures that the funding will be managed efficiently and in compliance with all relevant financial and legal requirements.

## **3 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 There has been consultation with the public, stakeholders and Sport England on the project which has led to expansion on the original brief and numerous beneficial changes in the draft design. Facilitating improved accessibility, flexibility, and enhancing the project in line with Sport England's, stakeholder's, and the public's preferences, thereby enabling us to attract the funding.

## **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Members could decline the funding and not make the changes requested by Sport England however, this would mean less funding for the project to offset FDC costs and a reduced specification which would disadvantage the general public.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Legal Implications**

5.2 FDC's third-party legal support will assist the Monitoring Officer in reviewing the Sport England legal documentation for this funding ensuring that the Council's interests are protected.

**5.3 Financial Implications**

5.4 Acceptance of this grant will reduce the Council capital costs should a decision to construct the redeveloped facility be made at July 2026 Cabinet.

**5.5 Equality Implications**

5.6 A number of enhancements specified and funded by Sport England will support a number of different members of the community to access the facility.

**5.7 Any Other Relevant Implications**

N/A