Agenda Item No:	7	Fenland
Committee:	Cabinet	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Date:	24 February 2025	
Report Title:	Leisure Centre Facility Strategy improvement projects	- potential refurbishment and

1 Summary - Developing a Leisure Facility Improvement and Refurbishment Plan for years 0 - 3

- 1.1 Cabinet has instructed officers, working with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, to assess Fenland's leisure centres and develop a planned investment programme to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose for the future in line with the Council's Inspire programme.
- 1.2 The report highlights costs of potential projects covering all four leisure facilities in Chatteris, Wisbech, March and Whittlesey and offers Cabinet suggested options to move work forwards.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 This report details potential investment opportunities for the Council's leisure facilities which could be progressed alongside the essential and ongoing condition survey works.
- 2.2 The projects highlighted within the report contain facility improvements that will improve customer satisfaction, with some projects, detailed in the report, expected to generate additional revenue that may be used to support some of the associated capital borrowing costs.
- 2.3 In 2021 a condition survey assessment identified standstill works to the Hudson, Manor and George Campbell centres was required. Chatteris, being newer, at that time, did not require any work. Following investment of £1m in capital work, there remains £9.155m of identified outstanding condition survey work across the Hudson, Manor and George Campbell facilities to be completed in the next 5 years.
- 2.4 The Council's current capital programme funds condition survey works within the leisure centres to the sum of £2.160m. This sum included energy efficiency work which is in addition to the condition survey work. Therefore, an additional circa £7m of condition survey work is required just to keep the centres in good working order in the next 5 years before any additional investment in improved facilities is considered.
- 2.5 A recent assessment of the Chatteris facility has identified a further £50,000 of condition survey work. The relatively young age of this facility means that ongoing capital costs continue to remain low.
- 2.6 In November 2023 Cabinet authorised work to assess improvement and refurbishment costs to ensure that Fenland's leisure facilities are fit for the

- future. This report offers Cabinet options and a financial analysis for the next steps that the Council can take with projects across all leisure centres in the district.
- 2.7 Given the value of the capital work options for the leisure centres, Members need to give serious consideration to the financial impact, potential financial risks and overall affordability as a part of their considerations of this report. Therefore, the financial cost of each potential option is emphasised, whilst noting the community benefit that any enhancement would bring.
- 2.8 Members may wish to agree to all, none or a combination of the proposals, noting that the condition survey works are essential to the operational integrity of the centres and cannot be easily avoided if Members wish the centres to remain open. Of course, in some cases, these condition works will be superseded by new capital investment if selected by Members e.g. the Manor Sports Hall roof will not be replaced if a new single refurbished site is selected as an option.
- 2.9 Members will note that there is a significant series of planning stages associated with leisure investment projects such as the creation of new swimming pools (Chatteris) and redesigned centres (Manor). There are also considerable upfront costs to develop these proposals prior to any construction work commencing, therefore before commissioning works to develop these proposals, Members need to have a high level of certainty that they are committed to delivering these projects to the final stages of completion and opening to the public otherwise there will be sunk cost that will have to be attributed to the revenue account if there is not a physical asset at the end of the process.
- 2.10 Given the publication of the government white paper in relation to English Devolution and local government organisation, it is likely Fenland District Council will be abolished in March 2028.
- 2.11 Members need to note and consider the timeframe of each potential project and when it is likely to be completed to inform their decisions around which projects to support.
- 2.12 Investment in leisure centres is one of many proposals that Members are considering as part of the Fenland Inspire programme. The financial investment outlined in the report for leisure is significant and unprecedented and at a scale not undertaken previously. Members need to consider any investment in leisure centres alongside any other potential aspirations for other Fenland Inspire projects given the large scale financial investment required, acknowledging that all projects may not be able to be funded if they come later in the Fenland Inspire programme.

3 Ongoing condition survey work

3.1 To agree to budget for and include in the capital programme the outstanding condition survey work for the Hudson, Manor and George Campbell Centres of up to £7 million over the next 5 years.

4 Manor Leisure Centre project

4.1 Options:

- 1. Continue to offer the facilities and carry out condition survey works at a cost of £4.3m. The Council has already budgeted for £2.1m but the remaining £2.2m for this option will attract an annual revenue cost of £156,855 for the next 40 years.
- 2. Carry out a major change as described in the report, adding padel courts, moving exercise class and soft play facilities into a remodelled and refurbished swimming pool centre and demolishing the old sports hall. Adding in the options of a new replacement rifle range and new sports hall.
- 4.2 Option 2: Manor Leisure Centre financial assessment (excl. rifle range (£750,000) and sports hall (£2,500,000);

2025/26	RIBA stage 3 & 4 costs	£626,463	
2026/27	Construction costs	£10,240,000	
	Total project costs		£10,866,463
Funded by:	Identified condition survey costs	£4,331,745	
	Borrowing funded by revenue	£4,850,000	
	Additional borrowing	£1,684,718	
	Total funding		£10.866.463

- 4.3 The change in Council's financial position, as a result of this project, is a requirement for additional borrowing of around £6,534,718 on top the borrowing detailed in 5.1 Option 1 and will cost a further £461,351 annually for the next 40 years but will be offset by the additional revenue raised by the new Leisure Centre estimated at £345,000 per year. Adding the options of the rifle range and sports hall will increase borrowing costs further.
- 4.4 Significant financial risks for this project include:
 - The inclusion of additional facilities will increase the cost and add additional borrowing requirements.
 - Inflationary adjustments and UK economy uncertainty may increase costs.
 - RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will develop detailed designs to complete preconstruction works and these stages may identify additional costs. This is prior to construction contracts being signed, so cost mitigation measures may be implemented to maintain construction costs in the region of £10.24m.
 - If the decision is not to go ahead with the new construction, then the RIBA costs of £626,463 will be a sunk cost and reverted back to revenue.
 - Note the swimming pool will be closed during construction works for around 6 months. The current gym, based within the swimming pool building will be transferred to the sports hall building for the period of the swimming pool building remodelling to ensure continued service for customers and income to Freedom Leisure, with little impact on use of the gym and exercise classes.
 - With the new facilities increasing footfall to the centre, along with the
 consolidation of the facilities into one space, it is predicted the centre will
 increase revenue by approximately £345,000 annually. This sum includes
 approximately £44,000 (pro-rata for this facility) should the Council follow
 an agency agreement approach to our ongoing contract with Freedom

- Leisure. The estimated borrowing costs funded by revenue are derived from this projected £345,000 uplift in income to the Council as a result of the project and the agency agreement.
- Positive discussions have been held with our leisure operator, Freedom Leisure, in regard to this project and an increase in the management fee paid to FDC to reflect the new facilities should be in the region of this sum, but is subject to further discussions and a formal legal arrangement.

5 Chatteris Leisure Centre condition surveys work

5.1 A recent assessment of the leisure centre has identified minor works to keep the facility up to standard, with costs of approximately: £50,000

Total funding by additional borrowing

£50,000

5.2 The annual revenue impact of this additional borrowing will be £3,530 over the life of the asset.

6 Expanding Chatteris Leisure Centre

- 6.1 Elected Members have expressed a desire to add a swimming pool to the Chatteris Leisure facility to fill a gap in provision in the town.
- 6.2 A business case for a 25m x 4 lane swimming pool has been developed.
- 6.3 The estimated net running cost is £106,823 per year. This will impact on the revenue costs to the Council and demonstrates that the project cannot generate a positive cashflow to support any borrowing to support the capital project.
- 6.4 The high level feasibility cost estimate for the construction of the facility is £7.434m, excluding necessary additional car parking capacity at the site.
- 6.5 Chatteris Swimming pool financial assessment:

2025/26	RIBA stages 0-2 costs	£164,482
2025/26	RIBA stages 3 & 4 costs	£513,623
2026/27	Construction costs	£6,888,286

Total project costs £7,566,391

Total Funding by additional borrowing £7,566,391

- 6.6 The annual revenue impact of this additional borrowing will be £534,187 over 40 years.
- 6.7 Significant financial risks for this project include;
 - Inflationary adjustments and UK economy uncertainty may increase costs.
 - RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will develop detailed designs to complete preconstruction works and these stages may identify additional costs. This is prior to construction contracts being signed, so cost mitigation measures may be implemented to maintain construction costs in the region of £6,888,286.
 - Significant borrowing costs.

- Will run at an annual operational deficit.
- No discussions have been had with Freedom over potential operation as yet.

7 George Campbell Leisure Centre

7.1 This project will comprise of a mixed approach to condition survey work, some improvements and refurbishments will cost in the region of £2.89m

George Campbell	Financial Assessment
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2025/26	Minor improvements	£390,000	
2025/26	Condition survey work	£450,000	
2026/27	Condition survey work	£550,000	
2027/28	Condition survey work	£750,000	
2028/29	Condition survey work	£750,000	
	Total project costs		£2,890,000
Funded by:	Identified condition survey costs	£2,500,000	
	Additional borrowing	£390,000	
	Total funding		£2,890,000

7.2 The annual revenue impact of this additional borrowing will be approximately £204,034 over 40 years.

8 Hudson Leisure Centre

- 8.1 A mixed approach to short term improvements (0-2 years) and medium term improvements (2 3 years) is recommended.
- 8.2 A realistic financial assessment is not available at this time as further costing works are required for refurbishment and enhancement projects.
- 8.3 Expected spending already identified is as follows:

2025/26	Padel courts	£450,000
2025/26	Condition survey work	£450,000
2026/27	Condition survey work	£550,000
2027/28	Condition survey work	£550,000
2028/29	Condition survey work	£500,000
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Costs excluding enhancement and refurbishment work £2,500,000

Funded by: Identified condition survey costs £2,050,000

Borrowing funded by revenue £450,000

Total funding £2,500,000

8.4 The annual revenue impact of this additional borrowing will be approximately £176,500 over 40 years.

9 Financial summary

The works identified above total:	£23,872,854
Necessary, sunk, condition survey costs total £9	,155,000
(only £2,106,000 is currently in the capital programme)	
Borrowing funded by increased revenue total £6	,100,000
Borrowing rqd additional to condition surveys £8	<u>,617,854</u>
Total Funding	£23,872,854

Total Funding not included in the current capital programme or supported by increased revenue:

£15,612,854

A summary of total borrowing costs is available in Schedule 2

- 9.1 As the report discusses, the Council does need to continue investment in the leisure centres for condition survey works, otherwise the facilities will fall into disrepair and will not be able to deliver the level of service required for the community and within the contract with Freedom Leisure.
- 9.2 Enhancement projects will improve the leisure offer to residents. Those that generate revenue to offset capital borrowing costs are, arguably, more affordable that those that do not generate additional revenue. Other projects, other than the condition survey work, which do not increase revenue to offset borrowing costs should be considered alongside Cabinet's other ambitions for capital spending as part of the emerging Fenland Inspire Project.
- 9.3 Cabinet should note that enhancement projects at the Hudson Centre are not yet costed and do not feature in the overall total cost. However, it should also be noted that some of the Hudson works may be funded by the Government funded Wisbech Long Term Plan for Towns funding, from 2026/27 subject to a revised Government prospectus and Town Board approval.
- 9.4 Delivery in the timeframes indicated will be challenging and may require additional staffing capacity, especially in the context of further Fenland Inspire projects coming forwards, to ensure effective delivery with those staffing costs added into the capital programme. Any cost would be insignificant in the context of the project costs detailed.

Recommendations

- 9.5 Subject to the careful consideration of the information above, and the various options and their costs presented in the report below, and recognising that the Council could opt to continue with only condition survey works at a total cost of £9.155m, various decisions are available to Cabinet are as follows:
- 9.6 Continuing condition survey work within the leisure centres
- 9.7 That Cabinet agrees that condition survey work across the leisure facilities remains necessary and should remain funded within the capital programme. 5-year costs are estimated to be £9.155m.
- 9.8 That Cabinet instructs the S151 officer to make continued provision for condition survey work by adding an additional **£7m** into the capital programme in the next three years, adjusted as necessary to be included within other leisure capital project options detailed below.

9.9 Manor Leisure Centre

9.10 For Cabinet to progress the Manor Leisure Centre significant refurbishment project, detailed in this report, to RIBA Stage 3 at a cost of £276,775, with Cabinet authorising the S151 Officer to add this additional sum and any other relevant expenditure into the Council's capital programme in 2025/26 including the rifle range and sports hall options.

- 9.11 For Cabinet to agree RIBA stage 4 to be completed concurrently with RIBA 3 at an additional cost of £349,688 and authorise the S151 Officer to add this additional cost and any other relevant expenditure into the Council's capital programme in 2025/26 including any additional RIBA 3/4 costs related to the rifle range and sports hall options.
- 9.12 Cabinet should note that upon completion of RIBA Stage 4 a report will be developed offering options for Cabinet to recommend to Full Council to either proceed with construction works or halt the project. Currently construction cost is estimated at £13.49m for the facility (including the rifle range and sports hall options) and could proceed in 2026/27. If Council decides not to proceed with construction, then the RIBA 3 and 4 costs will revert to revenue costs.

9.13 Chatteris Leisure minor refurbishment works

That Cabinet approves refurbishment work of the facility and authorises the S151 Officer to add an additional £50,000 into the Council's capital programme for these works in 2025/26.

9.14 Chatteris Leisure Centre Expansion Project

That Cabinet considers carefully the Chatteris Swimming Pool project and if the capital costs are acceptable authorises the S151 Officer to add an additional £164,482 into the capital programme to develop the Chatteris swimming pool project to RIBA Stage 0-2.

Cabinet to note this is a capital cost, but should the project not proceed past this point, then this expenditure would revert back to a revenue cost.

9.15 George Campbell Leisure Centre minor improvements

- 9.16 For Cabinet to approve to fund short-term projects for the George Campbell Leisure Centre and if agreed authorise the S151 Officer to add an additional £390,000 into the Council's capital programme for these works.
- 9.17 Cabinet notes, in addition to the short term projects above, condition survey works will continue at the site at a cost in the region of **£2.5m**.

9.18 Hudson Leisure Centre short term improvement projects

- 9.19 For Cabinet to authorise the S151 officer to add an additional £450,000 into the capital programme for 2025/26 for the development of three external covered floodlit padel courts at the Hudson Leisure Centre.
- 9.20 For Cabinet to consider whether to instruct officers to develop estimated costs for each of the non-condition survey, short-term, Hudson projects identified, namely:
 - Adapt the multi-function space that is currently used for spinning into an assisted fitness and older persons health and wellbeing space
 - The current gym has unused spare space at the end of the gym this has
 potential for conversion into activity rooms for boxfit, circuit training and
 spin

- 9.21 That Cabinet instructs Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure to bring to Cabinet further refurbishment options for the Hudson Leisure Centre considering:
 - The addition of a kitchen space to generate additional revenue from soft play and soft play parties
 - Remodelling of access to the sports hall and possible soft play improvements to generate increased community use and revenue
 - Consideration of further uses for the sports hall that would generate additional revenue, linked with the new café / kitchen
 - External entrance and reception improvements
- 9.22 Cabinet to note that agreement to pursue any of the projects above is subject to Full Council approval of the Budget on 24th February 2025.

Wards Affected	All				
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/24AUG23/02 KEY/22JAN25/02 KEY/22JAN25/03 KEY/22JAN25/04 KEY/22JAN25/05				
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Alex Miscandlon Cllr Chris Boden	Portfolio Holder for Leisure Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance			
Report Originator	Phil Hughes phughes@fenland.gov.uk	Head of Leisure Services			
Contact Officers	Carol Pilson cpilson@fenland.gov.uk	Monitoring Officer and Corporate Director			
	Peter Catchpole S151 Officer and Corpora Director petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk				
	Phil Hughes phughes@fenland.gov.uk	Head of Leisure Services			
Background Papers	Cabinet Report November Cabinet Report January 20 2021 Condition survey rep Alliance Leisure document	025 ports			

10 The role of Local Authority Leisure Centres

- 10.1 Local authority leisure centres are more than just places to swim, play sports, or work out. They are integral components of communities, contributing significantly to public health, social cohesion, economic development, and overall community well-being.
- 10.2 The provision of leisure centres is a discretionary Council service.
- 10.3 The switch 6 years ago to contracted management under Freedom Leisure has brought significant revenue savings compared with the previous in-house arrangement. This partnership continues to work well and the agreement with Freedom has further 9 years to run.
- 10.4 The council remains responsible for the main fabric of the buildings and all significant mechanical and electrical systems within the buildings.

11 Leisure Centre background details

- 11.1 The three larger centres are all of a significant age and as such, despite ongoing maintenance and some limited investment from time to time, are showing that age. The facilities are falling behind what the community expects of a modern facility.
- 11.2 Leisure facility ages:

Hudson:

- Pool build date c.1974
- Sports hall mid-1970s
- Indoor bowls hall 1980s, conversion to exercise studio & gym in 2019

George Campbell:

- Pool tank, plant room and the original changing rooms (now the older gym section and spinning room) 1960s
- Pool covered and reception area added 1984
- Gym changing rooms added in the early 1990s
- New pool changing rooms 2013, with gym extension and exercise studio

Manor: consisting of 2 buildings, 30m apart

- Dryside building; (hall and soft play) built 1974
- Swimming pool building: open air pool built mid-1960s
- Pool covered in 1984 with changing facilities and reception added
- Gym added at a later date to the pool building

Chatteris Leisure Centre:

• 13 years old, modern design

12 Condition Survey costs for the facilities to standstill

- 12.1 A condition survey of the sites undertaken by CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) in 2021 has identified required work to stand still and the Council has put a capital budget in place to carry out some of these works.
- 12.2 Work has taken place in the past 3 years delivering;

- Leisure centre roofing project replacing roofs across 3 facilities
- Electrical works incl. BMS system replacement
- Boiler replacement works across all three pools
- Refurbishment of the George Campbell gym changing rooms
- 12.3 The annual breakdown of condition survey standstill maintenance requirements is summarised below;

2021 Condition Survey	Identified Work	Completed Work	Outstanding Work	35% Inflationary Adjustment	Total Outstanding	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
George Campbell	2.386	0.331	2.055	0.719	2.775	
Manor	3.268	0.059	3.209	1.123	4.332	
Hudson	2.127	0.610	1.517	0.531	2.048	
Total	7.781	1.000	6.781	2.373	9.155	

- 12.4 As highlighted above, FDC addressed most leisure centre roofs in the past three years. It should be noted that work has **NOT** been carried out on the Manor sports hall roof, pending decisions regarding the future of the building due to the £500,000+ estimate for this roof's replacement cost.
- 12.5 A June 2024 assessment of the two smaller roofs at the George Campbell that cover the original pool changing rooms has revealed that these have exceeded the end of their useful life. The same is true of the plant room roof at the same centre. A project to replace these is underway with high level estimated costs in the region of £450,000 plus design and project management costs.

12.6 Leisure Improvements

- 12.7 To further develop the condition survey standstill work and consider possible improvements to the facilities to make them suitable and financially viable for the future, a further comprehensive suite of surveys including mechanical and structural assessments, architectural assessments and demand analysis work and detailed business planning has been undertaken.
- 12.8 This work has highlighted potential improvements to the facilities above the condition survey standstill element, which will allow facilities to be offered to the Fenland community that will be fit for the future, continuing to attract customers, grow the income base and support the Council's aspirations to help our communities become healthier.
- 12.9 If facilities are not able to attract customers, they will become an unviable business proposition. This would mean that revenue costs may become unsustainable in 9 years when the Freedom Leisure contract expires. If this situation occurs and the facilities were not financially viable, the cost of offering leisure facilities to the local community may not be affordable.
- 12.10 Since January 2024, an experienced leisure centre specialist company Alliance Leisure supported by specialist sub-contractors has assessed the three large leisure facilities. Alliance Leisure has completed in excess of 200 facility builds or refurbishments within public sector leisure facilities to a total cost of c.£300m. The Portfolio Holder visited refurbishment projects that Alliance has completed in the East of England. The impact of these refurbishments was plain to see, with the operator reporting reduced running costs and increased attendances and revenue. This report summarises the work completed to date and highlights potential projects to move forwards, with estimated costs. It also considers project affordability when taking into account reduced costs or increased efficiencies and increased income as a result of the projects net of the necessary condition survey costs.

Project options

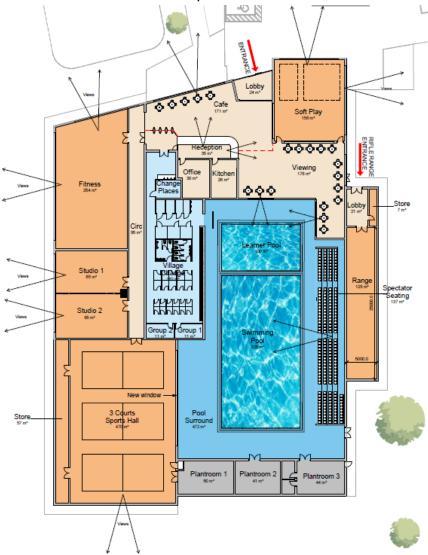
13 Manor Leisure Centre

- 13.1 Whittlesey and the surrounding villages are growing. The link between Peterborough and Whittlesey has been improved with the addition of the Ralph Butcher Causeway. The leisure centre consists of two older buildings that will not be fit for the local community in the short term but are currently outperforming estimates, with the learn to swim sessions proving particularly successful. This performance may also be linked to 'imported' demand from Peterborough, where the main leisure facility the regional pool has been closed permanently.
- 13.2 The Manor consists of 2 buildings that were built (unwisely) 30m apart. This approach is incredibly inefficient in terms of services, maintenance and staff. It is also less than ideal for customers, security and safety. Both facilities have aged and look now externally tatty with significant work required to bring them up to a good standard both inside and out.
- 13.3 The Manor sports hall building requires a new roof over the main hall. This work has previously been estimated at £500,000. However, a recent estimate

- for significantly smaller roofing works at the George Campbell is in the region of £450,000. Taking this into account it is considered that the Manor sports hall roof replacement will cost in excess of £500,000.
- 13.4 The sports hall building is used for soft play (in old, converted squash courts), exercise classes in 2 rooms and the occasional function in the larger room. Function profit in the past year has been below £7,500 with this forming a very small proportion of the Manor's overall customer use. Whilst a sports hall is a community asset, the town does offer other options in this regard, in the secondary school and with the nearby Eastrea Centre being a particularly good venue offering a large smart modern hall and kitchen facilities.
- 13.5 Running costs for the 1974 sports hall building are high as it is an older building and inefficient. The design with a myriad of corridors and old changing rooms no longer reflects what it is used for. Similarly, the large sports hall is used on the whole for exercise classes and cooling such a large space is expensive, with no HVAC (fresh air in, stale air out) provision in place.
- 13.6 Taking this into account, the team's assessment is that the sport hall building should be demolished, with the soft play and exercise class elements then being added into the swimming pool building.
- 13.7 A new build for all Manor facilities is costed at approximately £25m and has been discounted as unaffordable.
- 13.8 Adding the exercise studios and soft play facilities noted above onto a redesigned and refurbished swimming pool building is the only realistic option, bringing the benefits of increased efficiency in terms of staffing, energy, ICT systems, mechanical & electrical systems and overall building maintenance.
- 13.9 In addition, the improvement for customers and the customer experience will be considerable. With the improvements in the pool building and the additional footfall, the addition of a small kitchen and café area will further drive revenue and footfall, improving the business position further.
- 13.10 The current pool building is uninviting, with a very small entrance area and reception, with the front of the building dominated by the wall of the rifle range at the front of the facility. To improve the facility by adding an enhanced reception, café and kitchen and the soft play and exercise class provision from the sport hall building, will require the front of the facility being completely remodelled. This significant investment will ensure that the facility is fit for the future, whilst also attracting more customers, generating more income and the consequential community benefits.
- 13.11 The draft floorplan below demonstrates how the Manor pool building can be remodelled to incorporate all functions desirable within a leisure centre. This work would include replacement of current plant (excluding recent replacements) and refurbishment of the facility that is not remodelled.
- 13.12 Member feedback regarding the necessary removal of the rifle range from the front of the facility, as well as the loss of the little-used events / sports hall space has resulted in options for the addition of the rifle range on the side of the facility, as well as the sports hall to the rear of the building.

- 13.13 Another enhancement, which will further improve the revenue position of the refurbished facility is the addition of a covered, floodlit, 3-court padel facility. This would likely be positioned on the eastern side of the facility and plans to progress it will be incorporated into the wider facility footprint.
- 13.14 Note that this is a draft floorplan and if the project moves to the next stage, considerable detail and design work will be undertaken to deliver the final proposal. As a draft at this stage, anyone reviewing this floorplan must bear in mind that the final proposal will be different to this draft. It should also be noted that an aspect of moving the proposal forwards is community consultation, as well as local Member consultation.
- 13.15 It is also important to remember the financial impact that changes to the facility may have. Ideally improvements, such as the padel facility, would have a positive impact on the net business position and this improved position can then be used to help to pay for borrowing to fund the capital works.

13.16 Manor Leisure Centre - Draft Floorplan



Estimated costs and the financial impact of the changes proposed to the Manor pool building

13.17 Total project costs

The drawing above, with added padel courts, but **without** the rifle range and sports hall has an estimated cost of £10.24m.

Adding a sports hall (c.£2.5m) and a rifle range (c.£0.75m) increases the cost to £13.49m.

13.18 Necessary committed condition survey funding

The current condition survey costs for the Manor are estimated at £4,331,745. It is necessary to commit this funding to the facility if the Council does nothing other than adopt a standstill approach and as such this required funding is considered a necessary sunk cost.

13.19 Agency Agreements

FDC is investigating the potential of adjusting the current agreement with Freedom into an agency agreement. This is a more tax efficient vehicle than

the current agreement in place. This would bring increased income from Freedom to FDC and is included, pro-rata for this leisure centre, in the improved revenue estimates below.

13.20 Improved revenue position to pay for the cost of capital

Based on the floorplan, excluding the addition of the sports hall and rifle range, the improved annual revenue position (a combination of improved income levels and reduced costs) is estimated to be £345,667 in a mature year.

FDC's investment would require a change in the agreement with Freedom Leisure in order that Freedom pays an additional management fee due to the projected increase in income and reduction in costs. At this stage, whilst costs are uncertain, discussions regarding the projected income figures have been undertaken with Freedom Leisure but are currently estimates and do not form any legal agreement.

Firm figures and a legal agreement would be drawn up prior to proceeding with a contract for construction of the improved facility.

13.21 The annual increase of £345,667 in the Council's revenue position has the potential to fund capital investment of **£4.85m** over a period of 40 years. This capital funding, along with the necessary condition survey costs of £4,331,745 means that the project, subject to firm costings and agreement with Freedom Leisure, will require additional funding from the Council of £1,684,718, given that the condition survey works are unavoidable costs.

Adding in the sports hall capital cost and the rifle range capital cost will increase costs to the Council as those facilities will have a very minor revenue payback improvement implication.

13.22 Financial summary

Manor Leisure Centre project costs (excl. rifle range and sports hall);

2025/26 RIBA stage 3 & 4 costs £626,463
2026/27 Construction costs £10,240,000
Total project costs £10,866,463

Funded by: Identified condition survey costs £4,331,745
Borrowing funded by revenue £4,850,000

Borrowing funded by revenue £4,850,000 Additional borrowing £1,684,718

Total funding <u>£10,866,463</u>

- 13.23 The change in Council's financial position, as a result of the project, is a requirement for additional borrowing of around £1,684,718.
- 13.24 Significant financial risks for this project include;
 - The inclusion of additional facilities will increase the cost and add additional borrowing requirements.
 - Inflationary adjustments and UK economy uncertainty may increase costs.
 - RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will develop detailed designs to complete preconstruction works and these stages may identify additional costs. This is prior to construction contracts being signed, so cost mitigation measures may be implemented to maintain construction costs in the region of £10.24m.

13.25 Manor Leisure Centre project timescales:

- 6 weeks FDC managed local elected Member discussions and a community consultation process regarding draft plans
- 15 weeks RIBA Stage 3
- RIBA Stage 4 may be run concurrently or following the completion of RIBA Stage 3 and will take approximately 20 weeks.

Should the Council then decide to move forwards to construction of the facility, construction will take around 54 weeks, with an additional 6 weeks lead in time.

A summary of the expected time to completed construction looks as below. As highlighted above the programme could be shortened by around 20 weeks if RIBA 3 and RIBA 4 were completed concurrently.

Tasks & Milestones	Otart Data	Fad Data		2025				2026				20	2027	
Tabab of Millepfolles	Start Date	End Date		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Cabinet Report	24/02/2025	24/02/2025	Edit	Tod	abinet Report									
Manor Project Initialisation	03/03/2025	03/03/2025	Edit		Manor Project Ir	nitialisation								
Manor RIBA Stage 3 ordered	04/03/2025	05/03/2025	Edit		Manor RIBA Sta	age 3 ordered								
Community and Local Member consultation	10/03/2025	21/04/2025	Edit		Commun	ity and Local	Member con	nsultation						
RIBA 3 work	23/04/2025	08/09/2025	Edit		RIBA	3 work)							
Cabinet Report re RIBA 3 and decision to move to RIBA 4	15/09/2025	15/09/2025	Edit			-	Cabinet Rep	port re RIBA	3 and decision	n to move to f	RIBA 4			
RIBA 4 lead in time	24/09/2025	12/10/2025	Edit				RIBA 4 lea	ad in time						
RIBA 4 work	17/10/2025	06/03/2026	Edit			L	→ RIBA	4 work						
Cabinet Report re RIBA 4 & construction decision	18/03/2026	18/03/2026	Edit						Cabinet Rep	port re RIBA	& constructio	n decision		
Pre-contract governance work	04/04/2026	19/04/2026	Edit						Pre-contr	ract governan	ce work			
Lead in time for contractor	21/04/2026	09/06/2026	Edit						Le	ead in time fo	r contractor			
Construction	09/06/2026	14/06/2027	Edit								Construct	tion		

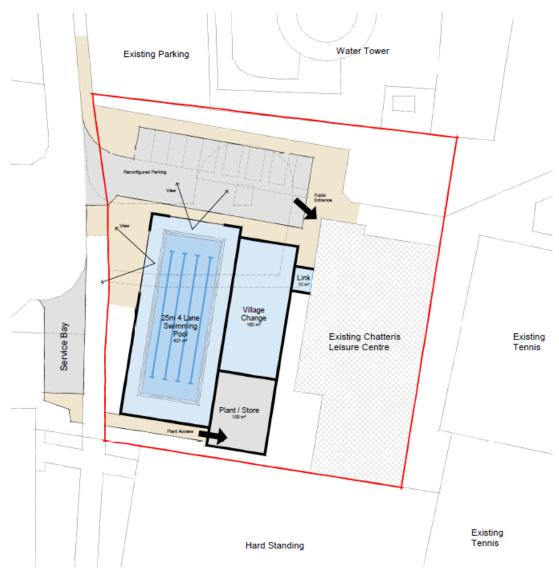
14 Chatteris Leisure Centre – condition survey works

- 14.1 Chatteris Leisure Centre was developed 13 years ago as a gym and an exercise studio. In the past year improvements have been made to the car park at a cost to the Council of £137,000.
- 14.2 An assessment of the current facility has highlighted short term refurbishment costs in the region of £50,000 to be undertaken as part of the condition survey works. This work would include:
 - Carpet replacement
 - Changing room white goods, showers and flooring replacement
 - Dance studio floor covering replacement
 - Dance studio air conditioning capacity improvements
 - Repaint of the gym

It is recommended that this work takes place in 2025/26 as part of the condition survey project.

15 Expanding Chatteris Leisure Centre

- 15.1 Elected Members have expressed a desire to add a swimming pool to the Chatteris Leisure facility to fill a gap in provision in the town.
- 15.2 Officers have worked with experienced cost consultants, leisure architects and a specialist in leisure business modelling to develop the following information:
- 15.3 A swimming pool will fit on the footprint of the land adjacent to the current leisure centre. The land is in the ownership of Cambridgeshire County Council and the current Chatteris Leisure Centre lease would need adjusting to reflect the additional land required and what it is to be used for. This work will need to be undertaken initially, alongside consultation with Cromwell School to avoid any abortive works in the case of a lease being refused.
- 15.4 The footprint for the facility may be seen below. This is an early draft to give Cabinet a good impression of how the facility will sit within the site and how it works together with the current leisure centre. Note that access will be through the existing facility, keeping everything under one roof and controlled by one reception and leisure team.
- 15.5 The swimming pool will be a 25m x 4 lane deck level pool, with a swimming customer only changing village. This pool will be suitable for all manner of swimming from baby sessions all the way through to competitive club swimming.



- 15.6 A business case for this facility has been developed. The estimated net running cost is £106,823 per year. This highlights that the facility cannot support capital borrowing through a net income stream.
- 15.7 The high level feasibility cost estimate for the construction of the facility is £6,888,286 with additional preconstruction costs totalling £678,105.
- 15.8 It should be noted that this does not consider any potential changes to the school's car park capacity. It is apparent that there is space for an additional 30 cars on the site. Early on in the project, consideration of this necessary increase in capacity should be identified, along with associated capital costs, as the pool will generate additional need for parking and any planning application will need to take this into account.

- 15.9 To move this work forwards the following stages are necessary with an approximate timescale laid out below;
 - RIBA stages 0-2 will cost £164,482 and take some 6 weeks to complete.
 - Once RIBA Stage 2 is completed it is anticipated that running RIBA stage 3 and 4 concurrently to develop a detailed design and cost confident estimates would cost a further £513,623. This work will take 18-20 weeks if run concurrently.
 - Construction will take a further 52 weeks once a contractor is procured.
- 15.10 If Cabinet wishes to move this project forwards it is recommended that RIBA stages 0-2 are commissioned at a cost in the region of £162,482, with a report back to Cabinet to follow in 8 12 weeks (due to lead time). At that further Cabinet discussion more accurate figures will be available and taking the step to RIBA Stages 3 and 4 can be discussed with more confidence.

Tasks & Milestones				2025				2026				2027
	Start Date	End Date		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Cabinet Report - RIBA 1 & 2	24/02/2025	24/02/2025	Edit	Today	cabinet Report -	RIBA 1 & 2						
Lead in to RIBA 1 & 2	03/03/2025	24/03/2025	Edit		Lead in to RIB	A 1 & 2						
RIBA 1 & 2 work	31/03/2025	17/05/2025	Edit		RIBA	1 & 2 work						
Cabinet Report re RIBA 3 & 4 decis	16/06/2025	16/06/2025	Edit		•	Cabinet Repo	ort re RIBA 3 &	4 decision				
RIBA 3 & 4 lead in time	30/06/2025	21/07/2025	Edit			RIBA 3 &	4 lead in time					
RIBA 3 & 4 work	21/07/2025	08/12/2025	Edit				RI	BA 3 & 4 wor	K			
Cabinet recommendation to procee	15/12/2025	15/12/2025	Edit				•	Cabinet reco	mmendation to	proceed to con	struction	
Full Council decision to proceed to	15/12/2025	15/12/2025	Edit				•	Full Council	decision to proc	eed to construc	tion	
Construction lead in time	05/01/2026	16/02/2026	Edit					Con	struction lead in	time		
Construction	16/02/2026	26/02/2027	Edit							Construction	n	

16 George Campbell Leisure Centre

- 16.1 The footprint of the George Campbell Leisure Centre means that there is little space for expansion but there remains unused space already within the facility. Altering the use of unused space is far cheaper than building new space.
- 16.2 Assessing local latent demand for the facilities highlights that increasing the size of the facilities is unnecessary. A larger facility will not attract a significantly higher number of users. In addition, a third gym has opened in the town giving more options to residents to exercise.
- 16.3 The Alliance team assessed the current facility. It is of an age and requires substantial improvements to mechanical and electrical equipment (as highlighted in the 2021 condition survey some replacements of which are necessarily ongoing at present, please see the January 2025 Cabinet report for further information).
- The programme detailed in the floorplan below is about replacement of mechanical and electrical equipment, refurbishment of the facility throughout and the remodelling of reception and the two old swimming pool changing rooms into a café space, an advanced spin (exercise bike) studio and increasing the footprint of Studio 1 to make the space more flexible.
- 16.5 The addition of a learner pool has been assessed. The expected cost is just under £2m and would increase the net cost of running the facility, not reduce it. This being the case, and with the large 6 lane pool already in place, adding the learner pool is regarded as an unworthy investment.

16.6 George Campbell Leisure Centre Draft Floorplan



Costs and revenue impact of the potential projects at the George Campbell

16.7 Condition Survey Costs

The current condition survey costs are estimated at £2,774,520 in necessarily committed condition survey costs.

16.8 Improvement Options:

- 1. A full refurbishment of the leisure centre, including condition survey works and the alterations to the floorplan as identified above has an estimated cost of £5.4m.
- 2. A mixed approach to condition survey work, some improvements and refurbishments will cost in the region of £2.89m.

Neither option will significantly improve the revenue position of the facility, so the potential to use increased revenue income to offset capital borrowing costs is unlikely.

The best value recommendation for this facility is to consider **Option 2**; **A** mixed approach to condition survey and improvements; total cost £2.89m

16.9 The George Campbell facility requires some roofing works and the replacement of mechanical and electrical equipment as part of ongoing condition survey works. However, the majority of the facility - in terms of user experience and condition - is in a relatively good condition and will not have a significant negative impact on user experience or footfall in the future.

- 16.10 Some of the improvements suggested by the Alliance team that will generate additional customer satisfaction and footfall are relatively simple to undertake, namely;
 - The improvements to reception to establish a coffee servery and a more attractive reception space
 - Changes to Studio 1 to increase useable space, utilizing the old, unused, male swimming pool changing room
 - The addition of a spin room in the former female swimming pool changing room

It is considered that these improvements could be carried out with a limited impact to the ongoing operation of the facility at a cost in the region of £390,000. This investment in the facility would improve the customer offer, but not significantly enough to improve the revenue position to support the costs of the improvements.

In the background condition survey works would continue, with most of these improvements (for example roofing) invisible to customers. The suggested coffee servery, studio 1 and spin room improvements are deliverable in the immediate term.

16.11 An expected delivery timescale of the three improvements works detailed above are as follows:

Tasks & Milestones	Tasks & Milestones Start Date		Start Data	Start Data	End Date				2026
idsks & Milestones	Start Date	Elia Date		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	
Cabinet approval to proceed with m	24/02/2025	24/02/2025	Edit	Today Cabine	t approval to proceed with	minor improvement works	3		
Minor improvement project develop	17/03/2025	30/04/2025	Edit		Minor improven	nent project development			
Contractor procurement	05/05/2025	13/06/2025	Edit		Co	ntractor procurement			
Contract award	03/07/2025	03/07/2025	Edit			Contract award			
Contracts and goverance	14/07/2025	08/08/2025	Edit			Contracts and	d goverance		
Contractor lead in time	18/08/2025	30/09/2025	Edit				Contractor lead in time		
Spin studio handover	21/11/2025	21/11/2025	Edit				Spin stud	dio handover	
Studio 1 handover	05/01/2026	05/01/2026	Edit					Studio 1 handover	
Reception remodelling completed	09/01/2026	09/01/2026	Edit			Recep	tion remodelling completed	•	
Construction	06/10/2025	09/02/2026	Edit				Construction	1	

17 Hudson Leisure Centre

- 17.1 The Alliance team assessed the current facility. Substantial improvements to mechanical and electrical equipment (as highlighted in the 2021 condition survey some replacements of which are ongoing at present) are required with current costs estimated at £2,048,490, with further improvements desirable to the facility itself.
- 17.2 Two good examples of improvements required are the dryside (i.e. non-swimming pool) toilets and changing facilities and the main entrance to the facility. The changing and toilet facilities reflect their 1970's origins and are not at an acceptable level of quality and do not reflect the offer of the gym and exercise classes. The main entrance to the building gives a poor first impression. Work is needed outside the building to develop a more positive impact on current customers and potential customers before they have even stepped into the building.
- 17.3 Discussions regarding an internal remodelling and refurbishment to provide additional activities and improved quality to develop additional revenue streams are underway, but initial efforts have not produced a plan that will offer good value and significantly improve revenue streams and customer satisfaction. It must also be remembered that the Hudson currently serves an important role in elections and any reduction in the sports hall space would have unacceptable consequences on the ability to manage elections in the facility.
- 17.4 A mixed approach to short term improvements (0-2 years) and medium term improvements (2 3 years) is recommended as follows;

Short Term Improvement and condition survey work

17.5 The following improvements can be delivered in the short term and will have an immediate impact on customer satisfaction.

17.6 Condition Survey work

- Refurbished dry changing rooms designs underway as part of condition survey works
- Refurbished swimming pool changing rooms condition survey works
- Mechanical and electrical equipment replacement; fire alarm / intruder alarm / PA system / CCTV system / pool air handling unit replacements are all planned aspects of the ongoing condition survey works with a project for this work underway
- An electrical rewire is planned for 2026 as part of the condition survey work

17.7 Non-condition survey works to improve customer offer:

• Add 3 external, covered, floodlit padel tennis courts to the facility at a cost of £450,000, generating an annual net revenue of £90,000. This revenue will support borrowing of £1.25m over a 40 year period and the project can be delivered in the immediate term, subject to planning approval.

- Adapt the multi-function space that is currently used for spinning into an assisted fitness and older persons health and wellbeing space
- The current gym has unused spare space at the end of the gym this has potential for conversion into activity rooms for boxfit, circuit training and spin
- 17.8 It is recommended that the Council goes to the market for estimated costs for the non-condition survey work detailed above and reports back to Cabinet in mid-2025 with recommendations on how to take the projects forwards and at what cost.

Medium term improvements: 2 – 3 years

- 17.9 In addition to the above short term improvements, further consideration should be given to:
 - The addition of a kitchen space to generate additional revenue from soft play and soft play parties
 - Remodelling of access to the sports hall and possible soft play improvements to generate revenue
 - Consideration of further uses for the sports hall that would generate additional revenue, linked with the new café and also linked to the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation that may negate the need for as large a hall for elections.
 - External entrance and reception improvements
- 17.10 It is recommended that these options should be assessed once the Council has clarity from Government regarding the revised prospectus to the Long Term Plan for Town funding that Wisbech has been promised, as the Town Board has stated its support for improvements to the leisure centre.

18 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 The recommendations are developed from the options for each facility in the report. Any recommendations need to be assessed for their affordability, any potential return on investment and the broader financial context that the Council is working within and specifically any other capital projects that Cabinet has ambitions to deliver in the shorter term.

19 CONSULTATION

N/A

20 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 20.1 The report considers alternatives for each facility.
- 20.2 The Council does have the alterative option of closing facilities (subject to contract negotiations with Freedom Leisure) as they are not statutory services. This option is not presented in the report for any of the leisure centres as it is understood that this is not an option that elected Members would consider.

21 IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

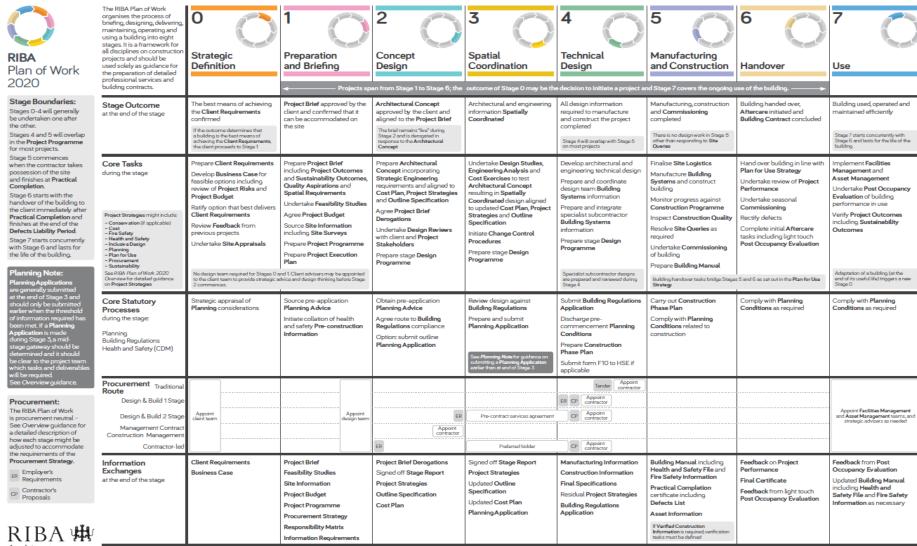
- 21.1 The report lays out the significant costs that all leisure works will require. The Council has the option to settle for the current facilities and continue to carry out condition survey works. Alternative options include investments with a revenue return to fund those improvements and other options that improve amenities for local residents, but do not generate any revenue sums to support borrowing to deliver the capital projects.
- 21.2 As reported throughout the report there is a risk of incurring significant revenue expenditure if the projects do not progress following the feasibility work as outlined in this report. Consideration should therefore be given to the likelihood of each project being delivered before initial expenditure is committed.
- 21.3 Significant capital expenditure will be needed to deliver these projects and without any external funding borrowing will be needed to deliver the outcomes listed above. As stated in the report the cost of borrowing will add material pressure to the projected deficits particularly as the additional revenue generated by these projects will not cover these costs.
- 21.4 Cabinet should consider these all potential leisure projects in the broader context of further ambitions to deliver capital improvements for local residents across Fenland and the affordability of both the leisure and other potential projects.
- 21.5 Although £30m has been factored into the budget over the next three years to support the Fenland Inspire work the projects detailed within this report would

utilise a significant proportion of this fund. Although this can be viewed as a positive investment in important facilities it is clear that the potential impact a large capital development programme on a discretionary function would be significant and could impact other services and the Council's overall financial position.

Equality Implications

21.6 N/A

22 Schedule 1 – detail of the RIBA project stages



23 Schedule 2 – Borrowing requirements and their annual impact on the Council's revenue budget

	Funding Method								40 Years		
Leisure Centre Name		Capital Budgets					Borrowing Costs - MRP and Interest				
		Total	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Maman		40.000.400	COC 400	10.040.000		0	100.047	010.000	010.000	010 000	010.000
Manor		10,866,463	626,463	10,240,000	0	0	199,647	618,206	618,206	618,206	618,206
	Budgeted Conditional Surve	2,110,000	626,463	1,483,537	0	0	0	0	0	0	(
	Condition Survey	2,221,745		2,221,745	0	0	0	50,656	156,855	156,855	156,85
	Additional Borrowing	6,534,718		6,534,718	0	0	0	148,992	461,351	461,351	461,351
		10,866,463	626,463	10,240,000	0	0	0	199,647	618,206	618,206	618,206
Chatteris Conditions Survey	Condition Survey	50,000	50,000	0	0	0	1,140	3,530	3,530	3,530	3,530
Chatteris Swimming Pool	Additional Borrowing	7,566,391	678,105	6,888,286	0	0	15,461	47,874	534,187	534,187	534,187
George Campbell mixed											
approach project	Condition Survey	2,500,000	450,000	550,000	750,000	750,000	10,260	44,310	87,700	140,650	176,500
	Additional Borrowing	390,000	390,000	0	0	0	8,892	27,534	27,534	27,534	27,534
		2,890,000	840,000	550,000	750,000	750,000	19,152	71,844	115,234	168,184	204,034
Hudson Leisure Centre mixed											
approach project	Condition Survey	2,050,000	450,000	550,000	550,000	500,000	10,260	44,310	83,140	120,830	144,730
	Additional Borrowing	450,000	450,000	0	0	0	10,260	31770	31,770	31,770	31,770
		2,500,000	900,000	550,000	550,000	500,000	20,520	76,080	114,910	152,600	176,500
		22 972 954	3 004 569	18,228,286	1 200 000	1 250 000	56,273	200 076	1 206 067	1,476,707	1 526 45