

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer responsible for Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 working days have passed and the Chief Officer responsible for Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

- (1) That the Capital Business Case for the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness on an invest to save basis, reproduced at Appendix A in the attached report, be approved and that approval be given to proceed with the refurbishment work from the funding allocated in the approved capital programme.**
- (2) That the update on the refurbishment programme for the facility be acknowledged and supported.**

2. Date of decision

30 July 2025

3. Reasons for decision

The refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness forms part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review approved by Executive in November 2024, which identified the opportunity to expand and refurbish the facility and achieve a net reduction in running costs of £355,000 per annum. This resulted in an allocation for the scheme in the 2025-35 Capital Programme of £2.5 million, on an invest to save basis; this requires approval of the associated Capital Business Case and approval to proceed with the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness from the funding allocated in the capital programme.

The current facilities at Kempston Pool and Fitness require modernisation and refurbishment. The changing facilities are in poor condition, the sauna and steam room have been decommissioned after reaching the end of their operational life, and the fitness facilities require refurbishment and are too small for the current and potential future user base. Expansion of the fitness facilities will enable additional income to be generated, helping achieve a reduction in the net operating costs of the facility of c.£355,000 per annum, thereby contributing to the objectives of the Sports Facility Strategic Review and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The option of doing nothing was rejected as the facility would not be able to generate additional income, thereby not achieving the objectives of the Sport Facilities Strategic Review by securing a reduction in the net operating costs. The condition of the changing facilities in particular would deteriorate further, resulting in the loss of customers and increased maintenance costs.

The Sports Facilities Strategic Review identified costs of £2.7 million to achieve the initial proposed improvements. Design options have been reviewed to achieve the objectives within the confirmed £2.5 million capital programme allocation, resulting in the removal of a planned extension to the building and its replacement with a new mezzanine. This achieves the revised budget requirement and additional items whilst also ensuring an increase to the size of the fitness suite.

5. How decision is to be funded

The approved capital programme includes the sum of £2.5 million for the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Not Applicable

Signed 

Date: 30 July 2025

Name of Decision Taker: Mayor Tom Wootton

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer responsible for Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published:31July2025.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: ...11August2025.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor

Date of Report: 30 July 2025

Report by: Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience (including Leisure, Recreation and Culture) and Service Director for Public Realm, Highways and Waste Management

Subject: KEMPSTON POOL REFURBISHMENT – UPDATE AND BUSINESS CASE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the refurbishment programme for Kempston Pool and Fitness, which is required to modernise and enhance this well-used community leisure facility and ensure an improvement in income generation, thereby delivering a reduction in the net operating cost of the facility.
- 1.2 The refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness forms part of the Council's Sports Facilities Strategic Review, approved by Executive in November 2024. An allocation of £2.5 million for the project in the 2025-35 Capital Programme, on an invest to save basis, was approved by Council in February 2025. This report, therefore, requests approval of the associated Capital Business Case and approval to proceed with the refurbishment project from the funding allocated in the capital programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Mayor is invited to consider and, if satisfied, to:
 - (i) **Approve the Capital Business Case (Appendix A) for the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness, on an invest to save basis, and to proceed with the refurbishment work from the funding allocated in the approved capital programme.**
 - (ii) **Acknowledge and support the update on the refurbishment programme for the facility.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness forms part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review approved by Executive in November 2024, which identified the opportunity to expand and refurbish the facility and achieve a net reduction in running costs of £355,000 per annum. This resulted in an allocation of £2.5 million for the scheme in the 2025-35 Capital Programme, on an invest to save basis; this requires approval of the associated Capital Business Case and approval to proceed with the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness from the funding allocated in the capital programme.
- 3.2 The current facilities at Kempston Pool and Fitness require modernisation and refurbishment. The changing facilities are in poor condition, the sauna and steam room have been decommissioned after reaching the end of their operational life, and the fitness facilities require refurbishment and are too small for the current and potential future user base. Expansion of the fitness facilities will enable additional income to be generated, helping achieve a reduction in the net operating costs of the facility of £355,000 per annum, thereby contributing to the objectives of the Sports Facility Strategic Review and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 3.3 RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) design development work has been completed, identifying how the objectives of the refurbishment scheme can be delivered within the available capital programme allocation. Following the completion of further detailed design stages it is intended that refurbishment work would commence on site in April 2026.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Kempston Pool and Fitness first opened in 1991 and is now in need of refurbishment and modernisation. The facilities consist of a 25m swimming pool, gym, fitness class studio and health suite. The changing facilities in particular are considered unacceptable by users, with high levels of wear and poor drainage and layout being consistent causes for complaints, in addition to the decommissioning of the sauna earlier in 2025. There are well-used fitness facilities which are undersized for the potential membership levels identified in a latent demand analysis which formed part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review and are, therefore, limiting additional income generation opportunities from gym memberships.
- 4.2 Initial designs were developed with the engagement of the Council's leisure facility operators Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), a cross-party advisory group and other stakeholders, and were informed by an independent latent demand analysis. The following was proposed at an estimated total cost of £2.7 million:

- Refurbishment of the current entrance and surrounding area, including reception
- Remodelled and refurbished Changing Village
- Extension to accommodate increased and refurbished gym facilities
- Focus on community health work with conversion of meeting rooms to a fully functioning health suite
- Installation of sauna and steam rooms on pool side.

4.3 A comprehensive public consultation process was undertaken during April and May 2025, with the results informing the development of the refurbishment proposals at RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design), completed in June 2025. These involved reviewing design options to achieve the objectives of the scheme within the confirmed capital programme allocation of £2.5 million. This has identified the removal of the extension proposal and its replacement with a mezzanine over the existing gym, which achieves the required expansion to the floor area of the fitness facilities within the available budget, without compromising other elements of the facility improvements.

5. **DETAILS**

5.1 Initial designs for the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness incorporated the elements identified at 4.2 above at a total estimated cost of £2.7 million. The scheme design was subsequently reviewed and amended at RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) with the available capital programme allocation of £2.5 million, incorporating feedback from the public consultation process and stakeholders including GLL. The revised scheme removes the proposed addition of an extension to the facility, achieving the same increase in footprint of the fitness facilities through the addition of a mezzanine level over the existing gym. The scheme includes:

- Ground floor:
 - Welcoming reception (47 m²) and lobby (21 m²) areas
 - Spacious Fitness Suite (177 m²) accommodating a variety of equipment
 - Flexible multi-purpose Studio (46 m²) for group classes and events
 - Refurbished Changing Village (134 m²)
 - Wellness suite including sauna (6 m²) and steam room (6 m²)
 - Poolside viewing area (43 m²) for comfortable spectator access
 - Additional support areas including meeting room (11 m²) and refurbished toilets (19 m²).

- Mezzanine:

- Secondary Fitness Suite (100 m²) with views over the main gym
- Plant/storeroom (28 m²) with designated low head-height zones
- Open glass balustrade to maintain visibility and openness
- Wheelchair refuge area, platform lift, and new staircase ensuring full accessibility.

5.2 The refurbishment of the facility received strong support through a public consultation process, involving both surveys and focus group sessions, undertaken between April and May 2025. A report summarising the findings of the consultation exercise is included at **Appendix B**.

5.3 The consultation process included a survey which received 683 responses, with 51% of participants identifying as active users of the facility. The results of this survey demonstrated exceptionally strong community interest in the project, with 80% of all respondents indicating that a redevelopment would encourage them to either use the facility more or start using it. Respondents prioritised enhancements to the swimming pool and changing facilities, the gym and group exercise class facilities, and the reinstatement of a sauna and steam room. The Healthwise programme and fitness classes received the highest satisfaction ratings, with 68% and 64% of respondents rating them as “Good” or “Very Good” respectively. The gym and health suite received lower satisfaction ratings, suggesting these should be areas of focus for improvement through the refurbishment.

5.4 Key findings from the consultation process were:

Redevelopment focus: based on the strong interest in redevelopment, that the Council and its leisure operator should prioritise areas that have the greatest potential to meet community needs, such as enhancing core facilities, improving sustainability and expanding fitness offerings.

Address key barriers: the Council and its leisure operator should seek to tackle common barriers such as cost, time and access to facilities by offering more flexible and affordable options, promoting time-efficient programmes and improving facility accessibility.

Target engagement strategies: the Council and its leisure operator should seek to develop programmes and marketing that resonate with the community's motivations for exercise, health, fitness and wellbeing, while focusing on confidence-building and social opportunities to boost participation.

Improve satisfaction with underused facilities: the Council and its leisure operator should focus on improving user satisfaction with facilities like the gym and health suite through targeted improvements or new offerings, while continuing to leverage the popularity of the swimming pool and fitness classes.

Support sustainability and environmental goals: that plans for the facility should incorporate sustainable, eco-friendly solutions to align with the community's environmental priorities.

- 5.5 The scheme design is currently at RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) with an identified cost of £2.5 million. An April 2026 start date for construction works carries an estimated risk of up to a maximum of £250,000 additional costs due to inflationary effects on construction costs and supply chain price increases. This will be value engineered out of the scheme at RIBA Stage 3 (Developed Design) in order to deliver the project within the available budget, enabling cost certainty before RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design) and construction.
- 5.6 Following the completion of the remaining detailed design, regulatory compliance and procurement stages, it is intended that refurbishment work will commence in April 2026, with a closure period for the fitness facilities of approximately 16 weeks. It is anticipated that swimming provision will remain available during the majority of this period through the installation of temporary changing facilities.
- 5.7 Independent latent demand modelling and additional revenue projection work carried out as part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review approved by Executive in November 2024 has led to the inclusion of a net movement in operating costs for the facility of £355,000 per annum in the capital business case. This is based on additional income generation from an uplift in health and fitness memberships resulting from the expansion and enhancement of the fitness facilities.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 6.1 The option of doing nothing was rejected as the facility would not be able to generate additional income, thereby not achieving the objectives of the Sport Facilities Strategic Review by securing a reduction in the net operating costs. The condition of the changing facilities in particular would deteriorate further, resulting in the loss of customers and increased maintenance costs.
- 6.2 The Sports Facilities Strategic Review identified costs of £2.7 million to achieve the initial proposed improvements. Design options have been reviewed to achieve the objectives within the confirmed £2.5 million capital programme allocation, resulting in the removal of a planned extension to the building and its replacement with a new mezzanine. This achieves the revised budget requirement and additional items whilst also ensuring an increase to the size of the fitness suite.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Issues

There are no direct implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

7.2 Policy Issues

The scheme supports the Council's Corporate Plan for 2024/5 to 2027/8 through the following priorities and objectives:

- Supporting Individuals and Families – the venue offers a facility that provides opportunities for a wide range of individuals and groups within the Bedford Borough community. People of all ages and abilities are offered the opportunity to participate in physical activity and benefit from the social and physical benefits of sport.
- Stimulating Economic Growth – the scheme supports the objective to revitalise our town centres to make them vibrant hubs, through the provision of leisure facilities.
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing – this priority includes the objective to maximise our sports and leisure facilities, to help residents lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Kempston Pool and Fitness is a key hub for participation and offers many different opportunities to enjoy the benefits of participation in physical activity.

The scheme directly supports the delivery of the Bedford Borough Sport and Leisure Strategy 2024-34, approved by Executive on 9 July 2025, and the Sports Facility Strategic Review, approved by Executive in November 2024.

7.3 Resource Issues

The current approved Capital Programme includes an allocation of £2.5 million for the refurbishment of Kempston Pool and Fitness, with £513,000 in 2025/2026 and £1,987,000 in 2026/2027.

The budget breakdown is provided in the Capital Business Case included at **Appendix A**.

As set out in the Details section above, the project design scope has been revised to achieve the desired outcomes within the confirmed capital allocation of £2.5 million. This is based on current construction prices and there is an estimated risk of up to a maximum of £250,000 additional costs associated with an April 2026 start date, due to inflationary effects on construction costs and supply chain prices increases. This will be value engineered out of the scheme at RIBA Stage 3 in order to deliver the project within the available budget.

The scheme is projected to deliver a net reduction in operating costs for the facility of £355,000 per annum, primarily as a result of increased income from fitness facility usage and gym membership given the expansion of this provision and latent demand modelling. This is based on independent revenue projections carried out as part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review approved by Executive in November 2024. This would result in an invest to save payback period of seven years.

7.4 Risks

Financial – the scheme cost estimate produced at RIBA Stage 2 is £2.5 million, based on an assumed start date for construction work of October 2025. The profiling of the capital programme requires an April 2026 start date, with the design team estimating a risk of up to a maximum of £250,000 additional costs due to inflationary effects as noted at 7.3 above. Any additional costs will need to be value engineered out of the scheme during the RIBA Stage 3 detailed design stage. Risks associated with the estimated additional income generation and resulting net movement in net operating costs of £355,000 is mitigated by alternative revenue scenario modelling completed as part of the strategic leisure review, which incorporated latent demand analysis.

Reputational – the current sauna has been out of use for several months having reached the end of its operational life. This featured highly in user consultation responses as a key part of the service. The option to complete the sauna works in advance of the main refurbishment has been reviewed but is not cost effective. The Council will need to continue to work with GLL to ensure that customers are kept informed about project timescales and progress.

7.5 Environmental Implications

Kempston Pool and Fitness has recently undergone environmental sustainability improvements through the installation of solar panels. The principles of sustainability will continue to be reviewed for the refurbishment scheme at RIBA Stage 3 (Spatial Coordination) and RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design), in particular through the engineering technical design and design team building systems information stages (including specialist subcontractor designs), in order to further quantify environmental sustainability improvements.

Carbon emissions and energy use. The planned refurbishments will further enhance the environmental credentials and performance of the facility with modern fittings and design elements that reduce energy consumption where possible. The expansion to the fitness facilities floor area may add to energy usage, however the environmental impact has been reduced by designing this within the existing building rather than adding a new extension.

Use of natural resources. The service will seek to ensure, so far as possible, through the detailed design and procurement process that suppliers identify any use of sustainably sourced and recycled materials. The service will work with the consultant design team to ensure that specifications state that materials used in the construction process come from sustainable sources where relevant and possible.

7.6 Equalities Impact

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

An Equality Analysis has been undertaken and is included at **Appendix C**. This identified that there are several positive benefits to all key characteristics from the redevelopment and maintenance of a key Council leisure facility. A refurbished centre with a wider programme will offer more opportunities for people to be active and will provide affordable health and wellness facilities. There will be some adverse impact on users of the facility during the refurbishment works due to access restrictions, however this will be mitigated as far as possible through staging the delivery with and limiting closures as far as possible.

7.7 Impact on Families

The refurbishment and enhancements at Kempston Pool and Fitness will improve facilities used by families and will support the delivery of activities and programmes that are of benefit to families.

7.8 Community Safety and Resilience

There are no direct impacts on community safety and resilience arising from the recommendations of this report. Positive experiences and opportunities to participate in sport and leisure activity are widely shown to improve community cohesion and support in reducing antisocial behaviour.

7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing

The scheme supports the priority in the Council's Corporate Plan to maximise its sports and leisure facilities, to help residents lead healthy and fulfilling lives. High-quality, affordable and accessible leisure facilities and activity opportunities can positively impact health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity and participation in sport can reduce the risk of major illnesses, improve mental wellbeing, and help residents to manage their existing health conditions. The wider benefits can include reduced loneliness and isolation, increased social cohesion, and a reduced burden on social care and NHS services.

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

8.1 The following Councillors, Council units, Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience (including Leisure, Recreation and Culture)
Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Environment
Head of Leisure & Culture
Strategic Lead Leisure
Manager for Sports Development & Leisure
Finance
Legal
Manager for Assts & Development
Manager for Building Services & Facilities Management
Leisure Assets Working Group
Greenwich Leisure Limited

8.2 Comments were received from Finance regarding the additional revenue projection modelled in the strategic leisure review. This has been factored into the Risks section above.

9. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

9.1 Ward Councillors for Kempston were engaged through the consultation process and supported the scheme, echoing the views of users from the community and all who benefit from or could benefit from the use of the facility in terms of the improvements the refurbishment will deliver.

10. **CONTACTS AND REFERENCES**

Report Contact Officer:	Ashley Bartlett, Strategic Lead Leisure ashley.bartlett@bedford.gov.uk
Declarations of Interest by the Report Author:	None
File Reference:	Kempston Pool Refurbishment – Update and Business Case
Previous Relevant Minutes:	Executive: 20 November 2024 Executive: 9 July 2025
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix A – Capital Business Case Appendix B – Consultation Report Appendix C – Equality Analysis

BUSINESS CASE FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

All Capital Projects need to complete this business case template for Strategic Asset Group (SAG) to review. No work can commence until the projects receive Executive approval and subsequent sign-off by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance).

Project Title	Refurbishment of Kempston Pool & Fitness		
Directorate	Environment	Project Sponsor	Paul Pace
Project Manager	Ashley Bartlett	Service area	Leisure and Culture
Anticipated Start Date	April 2026 (construction start)	Anticipated End Date	July 2026
Estimated Capital Costs (and year of estimates)	£2.5 million Funding allocated in capital programme across 2025/2026 (£513,000) and 2026/2027 (£1,987,000).		
What is the expected life of the project? (or time before further capital expenditure is required)	25 years with routine maintenance in line with building lifecycle.		

Section A – Overview

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
What is the project?	<p>The capital business case is for the refurbishment of Kempston Pool & Fitness, approved as part of the Sport & Leisure Strategy and Sports Facility Strategic Review by Executive in November 2024, and forming an agreed part of the Capital Programme for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027.</p> <p>The refurbishment works are intended to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refurbishment of current entrance and reception area• Remodelling and refurbishing Changing Village facilities• Extended and refurbished fitness facilities• Focus on community health work with conversion of meeting rooms to health suite• Installation of sauna and steam room on pool side.
Where will the project take place?	Kempston Pool and Fitness, Hillgrounds Road, Kempston

What are the expected outcomes?	Improved and modernised facilities that ensure retention of existing customers and attract new users.
How will those outcomes be measured?	<p>Improved income generation from refurbished and extended fitness facilities, reducing the net operating costs of the facility.</p> <p>The current criteria (KPIs) for measurement and evaluation of the facility will be continued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of participation • Usage figures and income • Levels of customer satisfaction.

2. JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSAL

How will this scheme support the Council / Service priorities or compliance with legislation?	<p>The scheme supports the Council's Corporate Plan for 2024/2025 to 2027/2028 through the following priorities and objectives:</p> <p>Supporting Individuals and Families The venue offers a facility that provides opportunities for a wide range of users and groups within the Bedford Borough community. Users of all ages and abilities can participate in physical activity and benefit from the social and physical benefits of support.</p> <p>Stimulating Economic Growth in Bedford Borough Supports the objective to revitalise our town centres to make them vibrant hubs, through the provision of leisure facilities.</p> <p>Promoting Health and Wellbeing This priority includes the objective to maximise our sports and leisure facilities, to help residents lead healthy and fulfilling lives.</p> <p>The scheme directly supports the delivery of the Council's Sport & Leisure Strategy 2024-34 (see Sport and leisure strategies Bedford Borough Council) and forms part of the associated Sports Facility Strategic Review, which was approved by Executive in November 2024 (see Agenda for Executive on Wednesday, 20th November, 2024, 6.30 pm - Bedford Borough Council).</p>
How will this scheme contribute to revenue savings or additional revenue income?	<p>The scheme will enable the achievement of additional revenue income, with a net movement in running costs of £355,000 per annum. This will be achieved from increased fitness facility capacity and is as reported as part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review approved by Executive in November 2024 (see Agenda for Executive on Wednesday, 20th November, 2024, 6.30 pm - Bedford Borough Council).</p>

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS	
What alternative options have been considered and why have they been rejected in favour of this bid?	<p>Do nothing</p> <p>The facility would not be able to generate additional income, thereby not achieving the objectives of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review. The condition of the changing facilities in particular would deteriorate further, resulting in the loss of customers and increased maintenance costs.</p> <p>Budget reduction</p> <p>The original project cost identified in the Sports Facilities Strategic Review to achieve the scheme in full was £2.7m.</p> <p>The capital programme allocation was agreed at £2.5m and additional objectives were identified to refurbish the WC and viewing areas. Design options have been reviewed to achieve this, resulting in the removal of a planned extension to the building and its replacement with a new mezzanine. This achieves the revised budget requirement and additional items whilst also ensuring an increase to the size of the fitness suite.</p>
What is the effect of not doing this scheme if the funding does not become available?	Gradual decline in usage in particular due to the condition of the changing facilities and permanent loss of sauna and steam room. There will be no opportunity to grow fitness facility usage and the associated additional income, thereby not achieving the identified net movement in running costs.
4. RESOURCING AND DEPENDENCIES	
What are the internal staffing requirements for the project?	Overall project management from the Strategic Lead for Leisure. Governance provided through regular reporting to and monitoring by the Leisure Assets Working Group.
Will the project have an impact on internal service delivery?	The fitness facilities will be closed for a period of 16 weeks whilst refurbishment works are carried out (from April 2026). Access to swimming provision is intended to be maintained through the location of temporary changing facilities. This has been factored into figures presented below – resulting loss of income during first four months of the year and additional earned income during subsequent eight months of year to offset each other.
What are the staffing requirements from other Bedford Borough Council services?	<p>Input from Building Services and Asset Development with monitoring via Leisure Assets Working Group.</p> <p>Support from Procurement with direct award process under the UK Leisure Framework.</p> <p>Support from Finance with monitoring and forecasting capital programme spend.</p>

5. COMMERCIAL CASE	
Is a procurement exercise required for the proposal? If so, outline the steps taken at this stage to identify how the project will be delivered.	<p>Alliance Leisure are appointed under the UK Leisure Framework.</p> <p>The work completed to date and onward proposals have been and are to be developed using the UK Leisure Framework (UKLF) and its standard suite of documentation.</p> <p>The UKLF allows for the direct appointment of Alliance Leisure Services (ALS) as Development Partner for scoping, design, refurbishment, construction and the development of leisure centres, theatres, play facilities, recreation facilities, and sports facilities across the UK public sector.</p> <p>The Framework was procured in accordance with Public Contract Regulations by Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL), and after an extensive tendering and evaluation process, Alliance Leisure Services (ALS) were appointed as Development Partner on the latest version of the framework, commencing February 2022.</p>
What procurement milestones are required to deliver this project for the estimated start date?	<p>Completion of RIBA Stage 2 design report – complete</p> <p>Completion and approval of RIBA Stage 3 & 4 design report – complete by 15.9.25</p> <p>Issuing of contract – by February 2026</p> <p>Mobilisation – March 2026</p> <p>Commence works on site – April 2026</p>

Section B – Financial Case

FINANCIAL SUMMARY	
1. Invest to Save	
A definition is given in Appendix B	
Is this an 'Invest to Save' bid?	Yes
<i>If yes:</i>	
What is the annual revenue saving?	£355,000
What is the payback period? (years)	7 years on investment
Does this meet the requirement of a 6% rate of return?	Yes
2. Capital Costs	
On what basis have capital costs been estimated?	<p>The project brief is to modernise and enhance the community leisure facility.</p> <p>RIBA Stage 1 design utilised the feedback and engagement with the incumbent operators GLL, independent latent demand reports, a cross-party project advisory group, various</p>

	<p>stakeholders and the Opportunity Analysis reports, to develop indicative design sketches to provide the best value solution to modernise Kempston Pool & Fitness to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbishment of current entrance and surrounding area, including reception • Main Pool Hall – unaltered • Remodelled and refurbished Changing Village • Increased fitness accommodation – extension to create increased gym and refurbishment • Focus on community health work with conversion of meeting rooms to a fully functioning health suite • Installation of sauna and steam rooms on pool side. <p>RIBA Stage 2 design development also utilised feedback from the Council and GLL to incorporate the following requested additions to the scope within budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing WC refurbishment • Viewing area opening up works • Shower wall damp rectification • Studio – enhance the community / multipurpose / studio provision and internal alterations to maximise studio / class spaces • Utilising health areas 1 and 2 as multipurpose fitness studio and meeting room space. <p>Following approval of the capital programme, the available budget was confirmed at £2.5 million (costs of the above estimated at £2.7 million), requiring the construction cost target to reduce to reflect this.</p> <p>The project design team have reviewed at RIBA Stage 2 in order to achieve this budget and the additional scope items without compromising the overall design concept. This removes the proposed extension while installing a mezzanine level above the existing gym to create the</p>
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	fitness facility expansion required to achieve the identified movement in net running costs (income generation improvement).
What are the risks relating to how these may compare with actual costs?	<p>Site analysis has been undertaken by the design team. Site surveys have been undertaken: topographical, arboriculture, acoustics, ecology, flood risk, ground investigations.</p> <p>Design concepts and options were developed in line with RIBA Stage 1 proposals. These were discussed with the Council team and GLL and developed into RIBA Stage 2 options for further development and cost certainty at RIBA Stages 3 and 4. This has included structural and civil engineering, mechanical and electrical engineering, FF&E solutions and a comprehensive Risk Register. CDM Principal Designer overview has been completed.</p> <p>Following approval of the capital programme, the available budget was confirmed at £2.5m, requiring the construction cost target to reduce to reflect this. The project design team have reviewed this at RIBA Stage 2 and amended the scheme to remove the proposed extension while creating a mezzanine level to provide adequate additional fitness facility space to achieve the identified movement in net running costs (income generation improvement).</p> <p>The revised scheme has been costed at £2.5m and is reflected in the anticipated gross costs of the project table below. This has assumed an October 2025 start in order to achieve an opening during peak time in January 2026. This is not possible due to the profiling of the capital programme (£513,000 in 2025/26 and £1,987,000 in 2026/27).</p> <p>A start date for construction works in April 2026 carries the risk of an additional estimated £250,000 cost based on the contractor's assessment of inflation, cost increases and supply chain risk. This is considered to be a worst-case estimate. A value engineering exercise will be undertaken at RIBA Stage 3 to reduce</p>

	the cost of the refurbishment works and ensure they remain within the available budget, to enable cost certainty prior to RIBA Stage 4 commencement.
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Anticipated Gross Costs of the Project

These will determine how the capital budget is allocated within the financial system

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29+ (Please Specify) £000	TOTAL £000
Land works						
Building works			2,122.6			2,122.6
Professional Fees	13	303.4				316.4
Vehicles						
Payroll Costs	15.2	11.3	34.5			61
Plant / Equipment / Furniture						
IT Hardware						
Software & Licences						
Capital Grant to 3 rd Parties						
Credit Arrangement (leases)						
TOTAL COST	28.2	314.7	2,157.1			2,500

3. Source of funding

List here the funding sources. Evidence should be attached where possible.

Specific Government Grant <i>Specify -</i>						
Developers Contribution **						
Lottery / Heritage						
Other sources (specify)						
EXTERNAL FUNDING						
Direct Revenue Financing						
Capital Receipts						
Borrowing *	28.2	314.7	2,157.1			2,500
INTERNAL FUNDING						
TOTAL FUNDING	28.2	314.7	2,157.1			2,500

* Borrowing is the balance of funding required to fund the project

** In the case of non-cash contributions (e.g. land donation), please gross up the figures in the funding table to show a cash equivalent figure (estimate) and provide a brief note in 'Other Comments'.

4. Revenue impact of the project

List here the incremental year-on-year impact on the revenue budget

TYPE OF EXPENDITURE	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28+ (Please Specify)	TOTAL £000
---------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	------------------------------	---------------

Staffing costs						
Other running costs				See Note		
Income / savings				See Note	-355*	-355*
Net impact (excl schools)				See Note	-355*	-355*
Net impact to schools						

Note: Improved income performance for part year in 2026/2027 (8 months) will be offset by reduction in revenue resulting from closure of fitness facilities for 16 weeks while refurbishment works are carried out.

*£355,000 per annum net movement in running costs (improved income performance from expanded and refurbished fitness facilities) approved as part of Sports Facilities Strategic Review in November 2024. Ongoing saving meaning invest to save payback period of 7 years.

5. Total Cost of the Project						
List here the total cost of project (total of boxes above)						
TYPE OF EXPENDITURE	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28+ (Please Specify) £000	TOTAL £000
Capital cost		28.2	314.7	2,157.1		2,500
Revenue cost / saving					-355	-355
Net impact (excl schools)		28.2	314.7	2,157.1	-355	2,145*

*Represents net cost up to 2027/28. Based on annual reduction in net running costs of £355k the invest to save payback period is 7 years.

6. Key Milestones (Dates)			
Feasibility Study:	Completed	Other 1 **:	
Business Case/ Appraisal:	November 2024	Other 2:	
Detailed Design *:	By 15.9.25	Other 3:	
Planning permission:	N/A	Other 4:	
Tenders Sent:	Direct award	Other 5:	
Contract Approved:	28.2.26	Other 6:	
Project Start:	1.4.26	Other 7:	
Project Complete:	31.7.26	Other 8:	
Final Retention Payment:	Tbc	Other 9:	

* If the scheme need to be passed through Design or Engineering Services before approval, enter the date design is to be submitted.

** Please add other key milestones where appropriate

7. Risks




List the likely risks of the scheme and an indication of the probability and impact of each risk.

Financial	Risk of increased costs due to capital programme profile across 2025/2026 and 2026/2027, as noted above. Worst-case scenario estimate identifies risk to costs of maximum £250,000. This will be value engineered out at RIBA Stage 3 to ensure delivery within the available budget. Risk to achieving £355k saving from additional income mitigated by alternative revenue scenario modelling completed as part of the Sports Facilities Strategic Review, which has informed the figure and incorporated latent demand analysis.
Delivery	Delivery delay into next financial year defers the ability to generate additional income until summer 2026, however this is recognised in the project costs breakdown.
Reputational / Other	The current sauna has been out of use for four months having reached the end of its operational life. This featured highly in user consultation responses as a key part of the service. The option to complete the sauna works in advance of the main refurbishment has been reviewed but is not cost effective. The Council will need to continue to work with GLL to ensure that customers are kept informed about project timescales and progress.

8. Policy-Led Evaluation

Please refer to the guidance notes in Appendix B and enter your self-assessment in the table below.

		RAG Rating	Self-Score	(Out of maximum)
A	Council Priorities		10	10
B	Statutory Requirements		0	10
C	On-going Revenue Impact		10	10
D	Funding for Capital Scheme		0	10
E	Net Cost		10	10
F	Asset Management Plan		5	5
G	Sustainability		2	5
H	Financial Risks		2	5
I	Other Risks		2	5
	TOTAL		41	70

 = Non-Compliance  = Part-Compliance  = Compliance

9. Other Comments

List any other supporting information not covered elsewhere on this form, including if an Equalities or Environmental Impact Assessment is required and/or has been undertaken.

An Equality Analysis has been undertaken. This identified that there are several positive benefits to all key characteristics from the redevelopment and maintenance of a key Council

leisure facility. The refurbished facility with a wider programme will offer more opportunities for people to be active and will provide affordable health and wellness facilities. There will be some adverse impact on all members and users of the facility during the development due to access restrictions however this will be mitigated as far as possible through staging the delivery with limited closures where possible.

Section C - Review record

A Finance BP should review before submission to SAG

Review record					
Project Manager					
Name	Ashley Bartlett	Reviewed	Yes	Date	22.7.25
Comments	Completed				
Finance					
Name	Rhiain Bevan	Reviewed	Yes	Date	29.7.25
Comments	Reviewed and comments made				
Head of Service					
Name	Tom Perrett	Reviewed	Yes	Date	22.7.25
Comments	Reviewed				
Service Director					
Name	Paul Pace	Reviewed	Choose an item.	Date	29.7.25
Comments	Reviewed, approved				

Kempston Pool & Fitness Redevelopment: Survey Analysis and Strategic Recommendations

1. Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the Kempston Pool & Fitness Redevelopment Project Survey 2025, supplemented by national and regional data, to inform Bedford Borough Council's decision regarding the proposed redevelopment of the facility.¹ The survey, conducted by Active-Insight, garnered 683 responses, offering valuable perspectives from both current users (51%) and non-users (49%) of the existing facility.¹

A key finding is the exceptionally strong community interest in the project, with 80% of all respondents indicating that a redevelopment would encourage them to either use the facility more or start using it.¹ This signals a clear public desire for significant improvements. Respondents overwhelmingly prioritised enhancements to the swimming pool and changing areas, with 90% agreeing the community would *benefit from such upgrades*.¹ Other desired improvements include the sauna/steam room, gym, and group exercise class facilities.¹

The primary barriers to increased exercise identified by the community are cost (23%), lack of time (19%), and access to facilities (17%).¹ These align with national trends, but the emphasis on "access to facilities" underscores the direct impact the redevelopment could have. Furthermore, 79% of respondents highlighted the importance of environmental upgrades, reflecting a strong community value for sustainability in local leisure provision.¹

The proposed redevelopment shows strong alignment with Bedford Borough's strategic priorities, particularly "Positive Experiences for Children and Young People" (rated very important by 66% of respondents) and "Connecting Health and Wellbeing" (59% very important).¹ The project offers a tangible opportunity to deliver on these community-endorsed goals.

Considering the significant community demand for change, the clearly identified facility shortcomings, the potential to address key local barriers to physical activity, and the alignment with strategic objectives, this report supports a positive decision to proceed with the redevelopment. The subsequent sections provide detailed analysis underpinning these conclusions and offer specific recommendations for the project's focus and implementation.

2. Current Landscape: Kempston Pool & Fitness and Community Profile

To effectively evaluate the potential redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness, it is essential to first understand the characteristics of the community surveyed and their current interactions with the facility. This section details the demographic profile of the survey respondents, compares this with broader population data, and examines current usage patterns and satisfaction levels at Kempston Pool & Fitness.

2.1. Profile of Survey Respondents

The Kempston Pool & Fitness Redevelopment Project Survey, conducted online between April and May 2025, received 683 responses. The respondents were fairly evenly split between current users of the facility (51%) and non-users (49%).¹ The survey was promoted via multiple channels, including the centre's social media, targeting existing users and the wider community.¹ It is noted that surveys of this nature tend to attract responses from residents with strong opinions, particularly those already engaged in sports and leisure.¹

Key demographic characteristics of the survey respondents include ¹:

- **Age:** The largest age cohorts were 55-64 years (25%), 35-44 years (20%), and 25-34 years (16%).
- **Gender:** A significant majority of respondents were female (69%), with 27% identifying as male.
- **Disability:** 20% of respondents reported that their day-to-day activities are limited because of a health condition or disability. Among those with impairments (sample 133), physical impairments (ambulant and other) were most common, followed by conditions related to old age and mental health conditions.
- **Ethnicity:** The respondent base was predominantly White, with 78% identifying as White/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British and a further 8% as White Other.
- **Caring Responsibilities:** 27% of participants are responsible for the care of children, with the main age groups being 5-9 years old (32%) and 10-15 years old (35%). Of these children, 24% have a special educational need or disability.

Comparing these demographics to national physical activity participation profiles, such as Sport England's Active Lives Adult Survey (Nov 2023-24), reveals some differences. Nationally, 66.3% of men are classified as active (150+ minutes a week) compared to 61.4% of women. The Kempston survey's predominantly female response (69%) indicates an over-representation of females compared to national activity demographics. While the survey report acknowledges a self-selection bias towards those with strong opinions, this gender distribution may influence findings related to preferred activities or perceived barriers. The perspectives of male residents, who are underrepresented in this survey but form a significant part of the actual and potential user base, might differ, potentially requiring targeted consultation or ensuring diverse offerings in any redevelopment.

The representation of individuals with limiting health conditions or disabilities within the survey (20%) is a substantial group. Nationally, people with a disability or long-term health condition are significantly less likely to be active; the Active Lives Survey (Nov 2023-24) reports that 48.5% of adults with a long-term limiting illness or disability are active, compared to 68.9% of those without. More strikingly, 39.5% of disabled people are classified as inactive (less than 30 minutes of activity per week), compared to 20.2% of non-disabled people. The Bedford Borough 'Movement to Change' document also identifies individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions as a priority group due to higher inactivity rates (33% inactive locally).⁶ This highlights a critical user segment whose needs—including accessibility, specialised programming, and a welcoming environment—must be central to the redevelopment plans to address existing health inequalities.

Table 1: Profile of Kempston Survey Respondents vs. Bedford Borough & England Demographics

Demographic	Kempston Survey (2025)	Bedford Borough (Indicative)	England (Active Lives Nov 2023-24)
Sample Size	683	N/A	Approx. 180,000 annually (for Active Lives)
Gender (Female)	69% (p.10)	~50.5% (2021 Census)	61.4% active (population ~51% female)
Gender (Male)	27% (p.10)	~49.5% (2021 Census)	66.3% active (population ~49% male)
Age 45-54	25% (p.10)	~13% (2021 Census)	Active: ~63.3% (55-74 cohort)
Age 35-44	20% (p.10)	~13% (2021 Census)	Active: ~65.4% (35-54 cohort in Nov 23-24 data)
Disability (Limiting)	20% (p.11)	~17.1% (2021 Census, day-to-day activities limited a lot or a little)	48.5% active (with disability/LTHC) ⁴ , 39.5% inactive ⁵
Ethnicity (White British)	78% (p.12)	~72.5% (2021 Census)	N/A (National data shows disparities by ethnicity)

Note: Bedford Borough indicative data is sourced from general ONS 2021 Census figures for general population comparison and may not directly reflect physical activity participation demographics. National Active Lives data refers to adults aged 16+.

This table underscores the importance of interpreting survey findings within the context of its specific respondent base. While offering rich insights, particularly from engaged females and those with disabilities, broader community needs, especially from less represented groups, should also be considered in the final redevelopment strategy.

2.2. Current Facility Usage Patterns (Kempston Users)

Analysis of responses from the 347 current users of Kempston Pool & Fitness reveals distinct patterns:

- **Local Catchment:** The facility predominantly serves a local population, with 83% of users residing within 5km (3.1 miles) of the centre.
- **Frequency of Use:** A significant proportion of users (40%) visit infrequently. Specifically, 28% use the facility less than once per month, and 12% use it less than once per fortnight. In contrast, only 14% report using the facility more than three times a week, indicating that while there is a core of regular users, most are infrequent visitors.
- **Recent Engagement:** Despite the general pattern of infrequent overall use, when asked about their last instance of moderate exercise at the facility, 54% of users reported this occurred within the last week, and an additional 18% within the last month. This suggests that for those who do engage in exercise at Kempston Pool, a substantial number have done so recently. This apparent dichotomy—infrequent overall use by the majority versus high recent engagement among a segment—implies that while the facility plays a key role for a core group's regular activity, there is a larger pool of less committed users whose frequency could potentially be increased.
- **Travel Time:** The convenience of the facility for its local user base is evident, with 73% of users reaching it within 15 minutes. The largest single group (31%) has a travel time of 5-10 minutes.
- **Travel Mode:** A striking 81% of users travel to Kempston Pool & Fitness by car. Only 14% walk, and a minimal 2% use public transport. This high dependency on car travel has considerable implications for parking requirements, the facility's environmental footprint, and accessibility for individuals without private transport. This is particularly relevant given that 79% of all survey respondents indicated that environmental upgrades are important to them, suggesting a potential disconnect between values and current behaviour, or highlighting a lack of viable alternative travel options. The redevelopment should consider strategies to promote active travel and improve public transport accessibility, aligning with the "Active Environments" priority of the Bedford Borough Sport & Leisure Strategy¹ and national trends towards sustainable transport.⁷

2.3. Most Utilised Facilities and Current Satisfaction Levels (Kempston Users)

The survey provides clear data on which facilities current users primarily engage with and their satisfaction levels with these offerings:

- **Facility Usage (among users):**
 - Swimming pool: 61%
 - Gym: 17%
 - Fitness classes: 13%
 - Health suite: 8%
 - Health wise program: 2%

- **Satisfaction Levels (rated "Good" or "Very Good" by users of each facility):**
 - Health wise program: 68%
 - Fitness classes: 64%
 - Swimming pool: 60%
 - Gym: 34%
 - Health suite: 30%

A notable observation is the mismatch between the popularity of certain facilities and the satisfaction levels reported by their users. The swimming pool is by far the most frequently used facility, with 61% of users engaging with it. However, its satisfaction rating (60%) is lower than that of the less frequently used but highly-rated Health wise program (68% satisfaction, 2% usage) and fitness classes (64% satisfaction, 13% usage). This suggests that while the swimming pool is a core draw and meets a fundamental need, the current experience it offers may be lacking for a considerable number of its users. This is strongly corroborated by the finding that 90% of all respondents (users and non-users) believe the local community would benefit from improvements to the swimming pool and changing areas.

Conversely, specialised offerings like the Health wise program and fitness classes achieve high satisfaction ratings, indicating quality and effectiveness, but their lower usage figures suggest potential for greater reach, possibly through increased awareness, capacity, or broader appeal. The redevelopment strategy should aim to elevate the experience of core, popular facilities like the swimming pool to match their high usage, while also exploring how to leverage and potentially expand successful, highly-rated niche program memes to improve overall engagement and satisfaction.

Table 2: Kempston Pool & Fitness: Facility Usage vs. User Satisfaction (Users Only)

Facility	% of Users Using Facility	% Users Rating "Good" or "Very Good"
Swimming pool	61%	60%
Gym	17%	34%
Fitness classes	13%	64%
Health suite	8%	30%
Health wise programme	2%	68%

This table visually underscores the dynamic between usage and satisfaction, highlighting areas like the gym and health suite where both usage and satisfaction are relatively low, indicating significant room for improvement or rethinking.

3. Community Perspectives on Physical Activity and Redevelopment

Understanding the broader community's views on physical activity, the barriers they face, their motivations, and their specific interest in the Kempston Pool & Fitness redevelopment is crucial for shaping a successful project.

3.1. Perceived Opportunities and Environment for Activity in Bedford Borough

Respondents to the survey presented a divided view regarding the current state of physical activity provision in Bedford Borough:

- 53% believe there are **enough opportunities** to be active in the borough, while 47% do not.
- 57% feel the **environment in Bedford promotes opportunities** to be active, while 43% feel it does not.

This nearly even split indicates that while a slight majority perceive the current situation positively, a substantial minority feels that opportunities are lacking or that the environment is not conducive to being active. This perception gap presents a clear opportunity for Bedford Borough Council.

The redevelopment of a significant local facility like Kempston Pool & Fitness can serve as a visible and tangible commitment to enhancing local provision. Such a project has the potential to positively shift perceptions for a considerable portion of the community, particularly within the Kempston area, and contribute to the broader aims of strategies like the Bedford Borough 'Movement to Change' document, which seeks to tackle inequalities and create more active environments.⁶ National bodies like Sport England and the NHS also emphasise the importance of creating supportive environments to encourage physical activity.

3.2. Barriers to Increasing Exercise

The survey identified several key factors that prevent respondents from exercising more. These barriers are critical to address in any redevelopment strategy aimed at increasing participation.

- **Main Barriers Identified (All Respondents) :**
 - Cost: 23%
 - Lack of time: 19%
 - Access to facilities: 17%
 - Confidence: 7%
 - I feel like I'm active enough: 7%
 - No motivation: 6%

These findings are broadly consistent with nationally identified barriers to physical activity, where issues such as cost, time constraints, lack of confidence, and access to suitable facilities are commonly cited.⁹ For instance, a study on women in East

England coastal communities also highlighted family responsibilities (contributing to lack of time), low self-confidence, limited access to facilities, and cost as significant hurdles.¹¹

Similarly, the Central Bedfordshire Physical Activity Strategy identified "not enough time due to work" (37%) as the primary barrier, followed by cost for leisure centre use (12%) and personal motivation.

- **Open-Ended Feedback on What's Missing (All Respondents)** : Analysis of open responses regarding what is missing to enable the community to be more active provided further nuance:
 1. **Facility Improvements & Maintenance (23.4%)**: Comments frequently mentioned the need for clean, modern facilities, especially changing rooms and showers, upgraded equipment, and ensuring amenities like saunas and steam rooms are operational.
 2. **Cost & Affordability (19.7%)**: This reinforced the quantitative data, with calls for lower prices, affordable options, and better discount structures for families, seniors, and low-income residents.
 3. **Swimming Pool Access & Availability (17.3%)**: Concerns about the closure of other local pools (Trinity, Oasis) were raised, alongside requests for more swimming sessions, better time tabling, warmer water temperatures, and dedicated times for family and lane swimming.
 4. **More/Better Classes & Programming (15.8%)**: Demand for increased fitness class availability (especially aqua classes), larger studio spaces, more specialised classes for different groups, and classes at convenient times for working people.
 5. **Accessibility & Transportation (12.5%)**: The need for better public transport links, concerns about access for disabled users, and calls for facilities closer to growing communities were noted.

While cost and time are pervasive national challenges that are complex to resolve fully at a local facility level, the strong emphasis in the Kempston survey on "Access to facilities" (17%), coupled with the dominant theme of "Facility Improvements & Maintenance" (23.4%) and "Swimming Pool Access & Availability" (17.3%) in open comments, points to a critical area where the Council *can* make a direct and significant impact through the proposed redevelopment. The quality, range, and accessibility of the physical infrastructure are clearly perceived as major local determinants of participation.

The prominence of "Cost" as a barrier (23% quantitatively and 19.7% in open comments) warrants careful consideration. National guidance from Sport England and the Local Government Association (LGA) acknowledges that leisure operators often work with slim margins. Consequently, any significant price increases associated with a redeveloped facility, perhaps to recoup capital costs or cover higher operational expenses, could inadvertently reduce accessibility for the very community it aims to serve, particularly those on lower incomes or those who already find cost a prohibitive factor. Therefore, the financial planning for the redeveloped Kempston Pool & Fitness must embed affordability as a core principle, potentially exploring tiered memberships, robust concessionary schemes, and pay-as-you-go options to ensure inclusivity.

Table 3: Main Barriers to Exercise – Kempston Survey vs. Bedfordshire & National Data

Barrier Category	Kempston Survey (2025) (% citing)	Central Bedfordshire (2020-25 Strategy - key mentions)	National (Commonly Cited - Sport England/NHS)
Cost	23%	Significant for leisure centre use (12%)	Major barrier
Lack of Time	19%	Primary barrier (37% work, 13% home, 8% childcare)	Major barrier
Access to Facilities	17%	Implied through desire for improved facilities	Common barrier
Confidence	7%	Not explicitly high, but personal motivation key (81%)	Significant psychological barrier
Health Conditions/Fitness	3% (Not fit enough)	Adults with limiting illness half as likely to be active	Major barrier for those with LTHC/disabilities
Lack of Motivation	6%	Personal motivation/goals key barrier (81%)	Common barrier

This comparative table illustrates that while Kempston residents face common barriers, the local emphasis on "access to facilities" as a direct, numerically significant barrier, alongside the qualitative demand for better facilities, strengthens the case for investment in the physical infrastructure of Kempston Pool.

3.3. Motivations for Exercise

Understanding why people choose to exercise can help tailor the offerings and marketing of a redeveloped facility. The primary motivations cited by Kempston survey respondents are predominantly intrinsic and health-focused:

- Maintain/Improve health: 16%
- Improve fitness: 15%
- Manage my weight: 12%
- Improve mental wellbeing: 11%
- Increase flexibility: 10%

These motivations align closely with national public health messaging, which emphasises the broad physical and mental health benefits of regular activity. They also resonate with the evolving role of public leisure facilities towards becoming "active wellbeing" hubs, as envisioned by Sport England⁷, focusing on holistic health rather than just sport or fitness in isolation.

3.4. Interest in Redevelopment

A crucial indicator for the project's viability is the level of community interest in a redeveloped Kempston Pool & Fitness. The survey reveals a very positive response :

- **80% of all respondents (both current users and non-users) stated that a redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness would encourage them to either use the facilities or use them more.**

This high figure represents a strong expression of latent demand and community support for the project. It suggests that a significant number of residents perceive the current facility as inadequate or unappealing, but would be willing to engage (or re-engage) if improvements were made.

However, this substantial interest is likely conditional. The positive response is almost certainly predicated on the assumption that a redeveloped facility would effectively address the identified barriers (particularly around cost, facility quality, and accessibility) and incorporate the desired improvements (especially for the pool and changing rooms).

If the final redevelopment falls short of these community expectations—for example, if it is perceived as too expensive, or if key facilities remain unsatisfactory—the actual conversion of this 80% expression of interest into increased footfall and membership could be substantially diminished. The mandate is for an *improved and accessible* facility that meets articulated community needs.

4. Desired Facility Enhancements and Strategic Alignment

The success of the Kempston Pool & Fitness redevelopment hinges on its ability to meet the specific needs and desires of the community while aligning with broader strategic goals for sport, leisure, and environmental sustainability. This section details the facility improvements prioritised by respondents and examines how these fit within local and national strategic frameworks.

4.1. Specific Facility Improvements Demanded

The survey employed both scaled questions and open-ended feedback to identify which facility improvements are most desired by the community.

- **Scaled Question Responses (Percentage who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" the local community would benefit) :**
 - Swimming pool and changing areas: 90%
 - Sauna or steam room: 67%
 - Gym: 60%
 - Group exercise class (facilities/provision): 57%

The 90% agreement regarding the need for improvements to the swimming pool and changing areas is an exceptionally strong finding. This level of consensus underscores a critical and widely perceived deficiency in the current facility, making this the undeniable top priority for any capital investment. This is not merely a preference but reflects a deeply felt need within the community.

The significant support for an improved sauna or steam room (67%) indicates a desire for enhanced "wet-side" and wellness amenities beyond basic swimming. This suggests that users are looking for a more comprehensive leisure experience, aligning with the trend of leisure centres evolving into broader wellbeing hubs. Addressing this demand could attract users seeking a more holistic offering.

- **Open-Ended Feedback (Themes from "What do you feel is missing?" and "Further comments") :**
 - **Facility Improvements & Maintenance (23.4% of "what's missing" comments):** Echoing the scaled questions, respondents emphasised the need for cleaner, more modern facilities, particularly changing rooms and showers. Upgraded equipment and ensuring all amenities are in good working order were also key.
 - **Swimming Pool Access & Availability (17.3% of "what's missing" comments):** This theme reinforced the quantitative priority for the pool, with specific requests for more public swimming sessions, improved and more transparent time tabling, concerns about the closure of other local pools (Trinity, Oasis) increasing pressure on Kempston, desire for warmer water temperatures, and dedicated times for family swimming and undisturbed lane swimming.

- **Specific Mentions:** Comments in the "further comments" section reiterated desires for improved saunas, steam rooms, and significantly better changing areas.
-

Table 4: Community Agreement on Benefit of Specific Facility Improvements at Kempston Pool & Fitness

Potential Improvement Area	% "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" Community Would Benefit
Swimming pool and changing areas	90%
Sauna or steam room	67%
Gym	60%
Group exercise class (provision)	57%

This table clearly illustrates the hierarchy of desired improvements based on community consensus, providing a data-driven guide for prioritising elements within the redevelopment plan.

4.2. Importance of Environmental Upgrades

A significant majority of survey respondents—79%—indicated that environmental upgrades are important to them in the context of local leisure facilities. This strong community sentiment aligns directly with national strategic imperatives and best practises for public leisure provision.

The Local Government Association (LGA) highlights that older, energy-inefficient leisure facilities can be responsible for a substantial portion (10-40%) of a council's direct carbon emissions. Sport England's "Future of public leisure" report identifies "low carbon provision" as a foundational element and "environmental sustainability" as one of seven key themes for the sector's future.⁷ Furthermore, industry examples demonstrate a clear trend towards constructing new leisure centres to high environmental standards like BREEAM or Passivhaus, and retrofitting existing facilities to significantly reduce carbon emissions and operational costs.¹⁶

The strong community support (79%) for environmental considerations at Kempston Pool & Fitness creates a powerful synergy. Investing in green technologies and sustainable design for the redeveloped facility will not only meet clearly articulated community expectations but also align with national best practise, contribute to Bedford Borough Council's own environmental targets, and potentially yield long-term operational efficiencies. This represents an area where community desire and strategic policy are in complete accord.

4.3. Alignment with Bedford Borough's Sport & Leisure Strategy Priorities

The survey asked respondents to rate the importance of five identified priorities for the draft Sport & Leisure Strategy in Bedford. The results show clear areas of focus for the community :

- **Community Importance Ratings (Rated "Very Important" - 5/5):**
 1. Positive Experiences for Children and Young People: 66%
 2. Connecting Health and Wellbeing: 59%
 3. Enhancing and Sustaining Bedford's Sport and Physical Activity Sector: 53%
 4. Active Environments: 50%
 5. Connected Communities: 33%

Open-ended comments related to these priorities provided further depth. For "Positive Experiences for Children and Young People," key themes included affordability, concerns about the closure of other facilities impacting availability (e.g., Oasis, Trinity pools), the belief in lifelong benefits from early activity, the need for inclusive programming, and the critical importance of swimming as a life skill. Regarding "Connecting Health and Wellbeing," affordability was again a major theme, alongside calls for better integration with healthcare services (e.g., GP referrals), more specialised programmes for specific health conditions, recognition of the preventative benefits for the NHS, and inclusive programming for all ages and abilities.

For "Connected Communities," while rated lower overall, open comments stressed that affordability and high-quality, inclusive facilities are primary enablers of natural community connection, rather than specific social engineering programmes.

The redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness offers a direct and tangible means to advance the two highest-rated strategic priorities. An improved swimming pool is fundamental for delivering "Positive Experiences for Children and Young People," particularly for learn-to-swim programmes and family activities—a point strongly emphasised in open comments.¹ Similarly, the facility can become a cornerstone for "Connecting Health and Wellbeing" by expanding successful initiatives like the Health wise program (which already boasts 68% user satisfaction), offering spaces for rehabilitation and specialised exercise classes, and potentially facilitating GP referral schemes, as suggested by respondents.

A crucial cross-cutting theme emerging from the open comments on *all five* strategic priorities was the issue of **affordability**. Respondents consistently identified cost as a primary barrier or enabler to achieving these broader strategic aims. This underscores that the pricing strategy for a redeveloped Kempston facility will be paramount not only for individual access but also for the successful realization of the Council's wider sport and leisure objectives for the community.

Table 5: Community Importance Ratings for Bedford's Draft Sport & Leisure Strategy Priorities

Draft Sport & Leisure Strategy Priority	% Respondents Rating "Very Important (5/5)"
Positive Experiences for Children and Young People	66%
Connecting Health and Wellbeing	59%
Enhancing and Sustaining Bedford's Sport and Physical Activity Sector	53%
Active Environments	50%
Connected Communities	33%

This table confirms that investment in the Kempston facility, if aligned with these highly-rated priorities (especially those concerning youth and health), will resonate strongly with community values and contribute to the Council's overarching strategic vision for Bedford Borough.

5. National and Regional Context: Trends and Benchmarks

To provide a comprehensive assessment, the findings from the Kempston survey must be contextualised within broader national and regional trends in physical activity, leisure facility usage, and strategic development.

5.1. Physical Activity Participation Levels

Comparing local activity levels with national and regional benchmarks helps to understand Bedford's current standing and identify opportunities.

- **National (England - Active Lives Adult Survey, Nov 2023-24) :**
 - **Active** (achieving 150+ minutes of moderate intensity equivalent activity per week): 63.7% of adults (30.0 million).
 - **Fairly Active** (30-149 minutes per week): 11.2% of adults (5.3 million).
 - **Inactive** (less than 30 minutes per week): 25.1% of adults (11.8 million).
 - **Gender Differences:** Men (66.3% active) are more likely to be active than women (61.4% active).
 - **Age Trends:** Activity levels generally decrease with age, with the most significant drop occurring from age 75+ (43% active). However, there has been notable growth in activity levels for older adults, particularly those aged 55-74 (63.3% active in 2023-24, up from 57% in 2015-16) and those aged 75+ (42.8% active, up from 33.4%).⁴ Activity levels for younger adults (16-34) have stabilised post-pandemic but remain lower than in 2015-16.
 - **Disability:** A significant activity gap persists. 48.5% of adults with a long-term limiting illness or disability are active, compared to 68.9% of those without.⁴ Activity Alliance analysis of the same data shows 39.5% of disabled people are inactive, compared to 20.2% of non-disabled people.
- **Bedford Borough (Sport England Active Lives, data published Nov 2024)**
 - A total of 59.1% of adults in Bedford Borough meet the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. This represents a 13.7%% decrease compared to previous local data.
- **Kempston Survey Respondents (Self-Reported Activity Levels) :**
 - Active: 30%
 - Fairly Active: 59%
 - Inactive: 12%

Bedford Borough's overall adult physical activity rate of 72.8% is notably higher than the England average of 63.7%, indicating a relatively active local population. The self-reported activity levels from the Kempston survey respondents (30% active + 59% fairly active = 89% at least fairly active) appear even higher. However, it's important to consider the definitions used.

The Active Lives survey uses strict adherence to Chief Medical Officers' guidelines¹⁴, while the Kempston survey's "active/fairly active/inactive" categories are based on respondents' self-perception, which may differ. The 12% "inactive" rate in the Kempston survey is considerably lower than the implied true inactive rate for Bedford Borough (approximately 40.9%, if 59.1% are active) and England's 25.1%. This discrepancy likely reflects the self-selection bias acknowledged in the survey report, where individuals with a pre-existing interest or engagement in leisure are more likely to respond. Consequently, while the survey provides valuable insights from this engaged segment, the redevelopment strategy must also aim to reach and motivate the less active portions of the broader Kempston and Bedford Borough population.

The national trend of increasing activity among older adults presents an opportunity. With significant representation from the 35-54 age groups in the Kempston survey, the redeveloped facility can play a crucial role in helping these individuals maintain activity as they age, and in specifically catering to the growing cohort of active older adults with appropriate programming and facilities.

Table 6: Physical Activity Levels – Kempston Survey Respondents vs. Bedford Borough vs. England

Category	Kempston Survey (Self-Reported)	Bedford Borough (Active Lives Data)	England (Active Lives Data Nov 2023-24)
% Active	30%	59.1% (150+ mins)	63.7% (150+ mins)
% Fairly Active	59%	N/A (Combined with Inactive implied as 13.6%)	11.2% (30-149 mins)
% Inactive	12%	Implied ~27.3% (<150 mins)	25.1% (<30 mins)

Note: Definitions of "Active", "Fairly Active", and "Inactive" may vary slightly between surveys. Bedford Borough and England data adhere to CMO guidelines.

This table highlights Bedford Borough's strong performance in physical activity compared to the national average. It also underscores that the Kempston survey sample is likely more active than the general population, reinforcing the need for the redevelopment to appeal broadly.

5.2. Participation in Key Activities (Swimming, Gym/Fitness)

- **National Swimming Trends:** According to Sport England's Active Lives data (Nov 2023-24), 4.2 million adults participated in swimming, showing a recovery from pandemic lows but still below the 4.9 million recorded in 2015-16. Earlier Sport England research (based on May 2018-19 data) indicated that 4.7 million people swam twice or more a month, making it one of the most popular physical activities. Despite an overall decline since the Active Lives survey began, swimming remains a staple activity.
- **National Gym/Fitness Trends:** Fitness activities (including gym use and classes) are experiencing significant growth nationally. Participation rose to 14.2 million adults in 2023-24, an increase from 13.2 million in 2016-17.

- **Kempston Facility Usage:** At Kempston Pool & Fitness, the swimming pool is the most used facility by current users (61%), followed by the gym (17%) and fitness classes (13%).

The high usage of the swimming pool at Kempston (61%) aligns with swimming's enduring national popularity, even amidst challenges to participation numbers. The strong community demand for improving the pool (90% support) suggests an opportunity to capitalize on this existing interest and potentially attract swimmers who may have been displaced by other local pool closures (a concern raised in open comments).

Similarly, the significant, albeit lower, usage of the gym and fitness classes at Kempston taps into the robust national growth trend for these types of activities. Enhancing these offerings, as desired by a majority of respondents, could further boost participation.

5.3. Future of Public Leisure & Benefits of Redevelopment

The proposed redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness occurs within a dynamic national context for public leisure services.

- **National Trends and Strategic Direction:**
 - Sport England's "Future of public leisure" report advocates for a transition from traditional leisure services to "active wellbeing" hubs. This involves closer integration with health and social care, social prescribing, co-location of services, and a focus on preventative activity.⁷ This vision is echoed by ukactive, which emphasises the role of leisure facilities in supporting recovery from poor health and managing mental health issues.
 - The sector faces significant challenges, including ageing infrastructure (Sport England estimates 60% of swimming pools and 63% of main sports halls are past their expected lifespans or overdue refurbishment), rising energy costs, chemical shortages, and staff retention issues.
 - Environmental sustainability and the development of low-carbon solutions are critical. The LGA notes that inefficient leisure facilities contribute significantly to council carbon emissions.⁸ There's a strong push for sustainable new builds (e.g., Passivhaus standards) and retrofitting existing sites.
 - Despite challenges, public leisure facilities are increasingly important. Sport England's "Moving Communities Impact Report" (August 2024) shows increased participation and visits, particularly from economically disadvantaged groups. These facilities generated a social value of £890 million in 2023/24.
- **Benefits of Redevelopment:**
 - Investment in leisure facilities yields substantial community benefits, including improved physical and mental health, stronger community cohesion, economic value, and support for statutory services like school swimming (72% of primary schools rely on public pools).
 - Conversely, the Health Impact Assessment for potential leisure centre closures in Gateshead highlighted significant negative impacts,

including reduced physical activity, poorer mental health, exacerbated health inequalities, and loss of community hubs, thereby underscoring the benefits of retaining and investing in such facilities.

- **Local and Regional Context:**

- Neighbouring authorities in Central Bedfordshire have been actively investing in new and redeveloped leisure facilities, such as those in Flitwick (a £14.9m project noted as an exemplar by Sport England), Dunstable (a £21m redevelopment ²⁶), and a planned £25m facility in Houghton Regis. These projects often aim for financial sustainability, a wide range of modern facilities, and broad community appeal.
- Recent developments in Wixams, Bedfordshire (May 2025), demonstrate the importance of community feedback in shaping leisure facility plans, where resident input led to changes in proposed facility types (e.g., preference for a skate park only, relocation of a 3G pitch)

The redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness aligns well with this national evolution of public leisure. It presents an opportunity to create a modern, sustainable facility focused on "active wellbeing," integrating with local health agendas and serving diverse community needs, as advocated by Sport England and other national bodies. The experiences of nearby redevelopments in Central Bedfordshire, particularly regarding facility mix, financial planning (Flitwick aimed for financial sustainability and exceeded usage targets), and the active incorporation of resident feedback as seen in Wixams, offer valuable local precedents and lessons for Bedford Borough Council.

6. Analysis and Synthesis: Key Considerations for Kempston Redevelopment

Drawing together the findings from the Kempston Pool & Fitness Redevelopment Project Survey and the broader national and regional context, several key considerations emerge that should inform the Council's decision-making process.

6.1. Strength of Demand and Opportunity

The survey data reveals a compelling case for redevelopment based on strong community demand. The headline figure of 80% of all respondents (including both current users and non-users) stating that a redeveloped facility would encourage them to use it more or start using it, signifies a substantial untapped potential and a clear mandate for change.¹ This high level of interest suggests that the current facility is not meeting the community's aspirations or needs. The even split of respondents between current users (51%) and non-users (49%)¹ further indicates that a well-executed redevelopment has the dual potential to significantly enhance the experience for the existing user base while also attracting a large, new cohort from the local community. This is not a situation where a facility is underused due to a general lack of interest in physical activity; rather, the interest appears to be present, but the current facility itself may be a limiting factor.

6.2. Addressing Key Barriers through Redevelopment

The redevelopment project is well-positioned to directly address several of the primary barriers to exercise identified by the Kempston community:

- **Cost:** Cited by 23% as a barrier and a prominent theme in open comments (19.7%)¹, cost is a critical factor. The financial model for the new facility must prioritize affordability. This involves exploring flexible membership options, targeted concessions for groups such as families, seniors, low-income individuals, and those with disabilities, and accessible pay-as-you-go schemes. It is vital to avoid pricing structures that could exclude the very residents the facility aims to serve, a concern highlighted by national bodies.
- **Lack of Time:** This barrier, identified by 19% of respondents, can be mitigated through thoughtful programming. This includes offering sessions at various times (early mornings, evenings, weekends), providing time-efficient class formats (e.g., High-Intensity Interval Training), and developing family-friendly solutions such as crèche facilities or concurrent children's activities that allow parents to exercise.
- **Access to Facilities:** This was cited by 17% as a direct barrier, and the desire for "Facility Improvements & Maintenance" was the top theme in open comments (23.4%), with "Accessibility & Transportation" also featuring (12.5%). The physical redevelopment itself—delivering an improved swimming pool, gym, and changing rooms as prioritized by the community—directly tackles the core of this barrier. Crucially, enhanced physical accessibility for disabled users (20% of survey respondents have a limiting condition, and this group faces significant national activity disparities) must be a non-negotiable

element. Furthermore, the high reliance on car travel (81% of users) necessitates a strategy to promote active travel and explore improvements to public transport links.

6.3. Meeting Expressed Needs for Facility Improvements

The community has provided clear direction on which facility aspects require the most urgent attention:

- The overwhelming demand for comprehensive upgrades to the **swimming pool and changing areas** (90% support) must be the central focus of capital investment. This is not just a minor preference, but a critical need identified by the vast majority.
- There is also significant interest in enhancing the wellness offer, with 67% supporting improvements to **sauna or steam room facilities** and 60% wanting an improved **gym**.¹ The current gym has a low satisfaction rating of only 34% among its users.
- While current satisfaction with **fitness classes** is relatively high (64%), 57% of respondents still see a community benefit in improving group exercise class provision. This could involve creating larger, more flexible studio spaces or diversifying the class timetable to meet a wider range of needs and preferences.

6.4. Leveraging High Interest in Environmental Upgrades

The 79% of respondents who deem environmental upgrades important¹ provide a strong mandate for embedding sustainability into the project. This aligns seamlessly with national leisure strategies promoting low-carbon facilities⁷ and offers practical benefits such as potential long-term operational cost savings and a positive community image. Sustainable design principles and green technologies should be integral to both the construction and future operation of the redeveloped facility.

6.5. Aligning with Community Strategic Priorities

The redevelopment can serve as a powerful vehicle for achieving Bedford Borough's broader strategic aims, as rated by the community:

- A primary focus should be on delivering "Positive Experiences for Children and Young People" (66% rated very important). This translates to providing excellent learn-to-swim programmes in an upgraded pool, family-friendly sessions and changing facilities, and potentially dedicated youth-focused fitness activities.
- The project must also strengthen "Connecting Health and Wellbeing" (59% rated very important). This can be achieved by building on the success of high-satisfaction programmes like Health wise (68% satisfaction), exploring partnerships for GP referral schemes, and offering a diverse range of wellness activities that cater to both physical and mental health.
- The relatively lower rating for "Connected Communities" (33%), coupled with open comments suggesting that high-quality, accessible, and affordable facilities naturally foster community connections, implies that getting the core offer right is the most effective way to achieve this.

6.6. Positioning Kempston within Bedford's Broader Leisure Offer

The finding that 36% of survey respondents do not use any other Bedford Borough Council leisure sites is noteworthy. This suggests that Kempston Pool & Fitness either serves a distinct and loyal local population or that there is an opportunity to better integrate and promote the Council's overall leisure network. A significantly improved Kempston facility could act as a gateway, attracting new users who might then be encouraged to explore other leisure opportunities across the Borough.

The confluence of factors—high local demand for a redeveloped Kempston facility, specific and widely acknowledged shortcomings of the current infrastructure (particularly the pool and changing rooms), the project's potential to directly address key local barriers to activity (such as access to quality facilities), and its established role in serving a predominantly local population (83% of users live within 5km)—provides a robust justification for prioritizing this specific redevelopment.

The data points towards a dual strategy for the redevelopment: a significant investment in the core, high-demand areas (swimming pool, changing rooms, gym) to satisfy the majority of users and attract new ones, coupled with the nurturing and potential expansion of high-satisfaction niche programmes (like Health wise) that cater to specific health needs and align with broader wellbeing priorities. This approach addresses both the breadth and depth of community requirements.

7. Recommendations

Based on the detailed analysis of the Kempston Pool & Fitness Redevelopment Project Survey 2025 and the supporting national and regional contextual data, the following recommendations are put forward for consideration by Bedford Borough Council:

7.1. Overall Recommendation on Proceeding

- Given the strong community support, with 80% of survey respondents indicating that a redevelopment would encourage them to use the facility more or start using it; the clear identification of significant shortcomings in the current facility, particularly the swimming pool and changing areas; the project's alignment with key community strategic priorities such as health and youth engagement; and its potential to directly address locally identified barriers to physical activity, **it is recommended that Bedford Borough Council proceed with the redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness.** The evidence suggests a clear mandate and a significant opportunity to enhance community wellbeing and leisure provision. This aligns with the overall recommendations from the survey report itself, which advocate for a redevelopment focused on community needs, addressing barriers, and improving satisfaction.

7.2. Specific Recommendations for Redevelopment Focus

- Prioritise Core Aquatic and Changing Facilities:** Allocate the most significant portion of the redevelopment budget to a comprehensive upgrade and modernization of the **swimming pool and associated changing areas**. This is the highest community priority, with 90% of respondents agreeing on the benefit of such improvements, and the pool is the most frequently used facility currently.
- Enhance Gym and Wellness Provision:** Invest in creating a modern, well-equipped **gymnasium**, as 60% of respondents support its improvement, and current user satisfaction is low (34%). Critically evaluate the inclusion and quality of **sauna and steam room facilities**, given the 67% support for their improvement, to develop a more comprehensive "wet-side" and wellness experience.
- Improve Fitness Class Spaces and Programming:** While current satisfaction with fitness classes is relatively high (64%), address the 57% of respondents who believe the community would benefit from improvements in group exercise class provision. This could involve creating larger, more flexible, or better-equipped studio spaces and diversifying the class timetable.
- Integrate Environmental Sustainability Throughout:** Ensure that all aspects of the redevelopment—from design and material selection to construction methods and future operational systems—incorporate eco-friendly solutions and energy-efficient technologies. This reflects the high importance (79%) placed on environmental upgrades by the community and aligns with national best practice and the need for long-term operational sustainability.

7.3. Strategies to Engage Non-Users and Address Participation Barriers

- **Affordability and Accessibility:** Develop a **transparent and flexible pricing strategy** that includes various membership options, pay-as-you-go access, and meaningful concessions for families, older adults, students, low-income individuals, and those with disabilities. This is crucial to address cost as a primary barrier. Ensure the new facility not only meets but **exceeds statutory physical accessibility requirements**, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for the 20% of survey respondents with limiting health conditions or disabilities and aligning with national goals to reduce activity inequalities for disabled people.⁵
- **Targeted Programming and Marketing:** Design and implement marketing campaigns that specifically target non-users (49% of survey respondents) and highlight how the redeveloped facility addresses their needs and motivations (health, fitness, mental wellbeing 1). Develop diverse programming that appeals to a wide range of ages, abilities, and interests.
- **Address Time Constraints:** Offer a varied class schedule with options during early mornings, evenings, and weekends. Introduce time-efficient exercise options (e.g., shorter, high-intensity classes). Explore the feasibility of **family-friendly solutions**, such as a crèche or supervised children's activities running parallel to adult fitness sessions, to mitigate childcare as a barrier.
- **Build Confidence and Familiarity:** Implement confidence-building programmes, introductory sessions, and facility tours for individuals new to exercise or specific activities. This will help address the 7% of respondents who cite lack of confidence as a barrier to participation.

7.4. Incorporating Community Feedback into Design and Operational Model

- **Youth and Health Focus in Design and Programming:** Ensure that the design of the redeveloped facility and its subsequent programming actively deliver on the community's highly-rated strategic priorities of "Positive Experiences for Children and Young People" and "Connecting Health and Wellbeing". This includes providing excellent learn-to-swim facilities, dedicated family swim times and changing areas, spaces suitable for youth fitness, and environments conducive to health and wellness programmes (e.g., expanding on the success of the Health wise model).
- **Establish Mechanisms for Ongoing Community Dialogue:** Beyond this initial survey, establish channels for continued community input during the detailed design phase and into the operational life of the new facility. Learning from local examples like the responsiveness to community feedback in Wixams can ensure the facility remains aligned with evolving local needs.
- **Develop a Sustainable Travel Plan:** Create and promote a comprehensive travel plan for the new facility aimed at encouraging alternatives to private car use (currently the mode of travel for 81% of users). This should include secure and sheltered cycle storage, clear pedestrian routes, and advocacy for improved public transport links to the site.

By adopting these recommendations, Bedford Borough Council can ensure that the redevelopment of Kempston Pool & Fitness not only delivers a high-quality, modern leisure facility but also maximizes its potential to increase physical activity, improve community health and wellbeing, and address key local needs and strategic priorities in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Equality Analysis Report
(V.11.2023)**Part 1**

Title of activity / budget proposal title and number: Kempton Pool Refurbishment	Committee meeting (decision maker) and date: Mayor – July 2025
Service area: Environment – Public Realm, Highways and Waste Management – Leisure & Culture	Is this activity: <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Change <input type="checkbox"/> Review <i>Refer to section 2 of the Equality Assessment Guidance (EAG)</i>
Lead Officer Name and Title: Tom Perrett – Head of Leisure & Culture	Other Officer name(s) and title(s) supporting in carrying out the Equality Analysis, undertaking any review or actions: Ashley Bartlett – Strategic Leisure projects manager Robert Lindsay – Sports Development Officer Richard Tapley – Manager Sports Development & Leisure
Approved by: (Director) Paul Pace – Service Director for Public Realm, Highways and Waste Management	Date of approval: 29 July 2025

Policy/Procedure/Functions details

Please refer to the Equality Analysis Guidance (EAG)

Kempston Pool and Fitness offers a range of facilities including a 25m swimming pool, gym and fitness class. The Centre is one of eight Council leisure sites that are currently managed by GLL as part of the leisure management agreement with the council that commenced in February 2024.

Built in 1991, Kempston Pool has a 25m pool with a pool ramp that runs from the poolside to the pool floor allowing wheelchair users to enter the pool independently. In 2016, the pool underwent a £1.3 million renovation with the addition of the exercise studio and gym.

In 2024, Bedford Borough Council secured a £242,800 funding boost for Kempston Pool as part of the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund, which provided a support package for public swimming pools. The grant enabled the council to install Solar Panels to help the centre's environmental sustainability.

The facility was part of the recent Sports Strategic Facilities Review (alongside the wider leisure estate). Consultants appointed by the Council reviewed possible upgrade/improvement options for the centre, alongside full condition surveys and latent demand reports.

In 2025, consultants (TA6 and Active Insight) completed a full public consultation on the proposed centre upgrades and responses were collected from facility users and non-users.

This report proposes that Bedford Borough Council proceeds with a number of the recommended upgrades to Kempston Pool and Fitness that formed part of the public consultation:

These are:

- Refurbishment of the current internal entrance area and surrounding area, including the reception area.
- A remodelled and refurbished changing village.
- Extended space to accommodate an increased gym and refurbishment.
- A new focus on community health work with the use of meeting rooms as consultation areas.
- Installation of a sauna and steam room on pool side (moving them from the previous location near to the gym).

Who is/will be impacted by the activity's aims and outcome?

All members of the community who use the facility and also those who have the opportunity to access the facility will be impacted as the upgrades aim to improve the facility for all.

The wider aims and outcomes are to improve the health of all residents of the Borough through providing, well used and high-quality leisure facilities that offer opportunities for all members of the community to be physical activity.

1. The activity relates to one or more of the three aims of the Council's Equality Duty. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</i>• <i>Advance equality of opportunity</i>• <i>Foster good relations</i>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The activity sets out proposals for significant changes to services, policies etc. and / or significantly affects how services are delivered or presents a high risk to the Council's reputation	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The activity could / does affect one or more of the protected characteristics or other relevant groups <i>(Please refer to the EAG, Section 1 for further information)</i>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The activity could / does affect protected characteristics or other relevant groups differently	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. The activity relates to an area where there are known inequalities.	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. One or more protected characteristics or other relevant group could be disadvantaged, adversely affected or are at risk of discrimination as a result of the activity.	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. The activity can affect relations between certain protected characteristics and other relevant groups?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If you have ticked YES to one or more of the above questions, then you need to complete an equality analysis. Please continue to complete Part 2 of the form				

Part 2

Evidence, data, information and consultation

<p>What evidence have you used to analyse the effects on equality?</p>	<p>Bedford Borough Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2027</p> <p>The evidence and data represented in this strategy has supported the development of the recently approved Sport and Leisure Strategy. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy explains: “In summary, the health of people in Bedford Borough is not as good as it could be. This is because there are large numbers of people in the Borough that belong to groups or communities that experience health inequalities, and because some of the inequalities in health experienced by these groups and communities are particularly large. These health inequalities have grown over a long time, and to address we need to strengthen the building blocks of health.</p> <p>Further information about health inequalities in Bedford Borough can be found in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It is regularly updated and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: https://bmkjsna.org/bedford/jsna/.”</p> <p>Borough Council Physical Activity Vision (2023)</p> <p>The Vision, formally adopted by the Council in 2023, draws upon local and national evidence indicating that cost represents a primary barrier to participation in sport and physical activity.</p>
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	<p>The consultation process undertaken for the Vision identified several key strategic themes to address the need for increased participation among priority groups within the Borough. The resulting action plan includes the need for provision of low-cost access to leisure opportunities, ensuring leisure centre affordability, enhanced support for older residents, and targeted assistance for individuals with disabilities. The Leisure centre offer must be sustainable and that also can mean focussing on the local needs.</p> <p>Bedford Borough Council Sport and Leisure Strategy 2024-2034</p> <p>The recently approved (July 2025) Sport and Leisure Strategy 2024-2034 builds on the Council's Physical activity vision and challenges the best way forward to support people with their health and wellbeing through physical activity and sport. There are three final themes Active and Thriving Communities, Improving Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion, and Sustainable Places and a Stronger Sector.</p> <p>Sport England Report</p> <p>In January 2024 "The rising cost of living and its impact on Sport and Physical activity" report by Sport England, noted that: "Specifically, consideration should be given to whether increases in the cost of living are reducing opportunities for people to be active and the extent to which people continue to make changes to their sport and physical activity behaviours."</p> <p>This report, commissioned by Sport England, consolidates collective insights and learning. It aims to assist individual organisations in their decision-making and policy creation processes. People from the most deprived areas and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to say their levels of physical activity have been negatively affected by cost-of-living increases</p> <p>Sport England Social Value report October 2024</p> <p>Highlights the social value of sport and the impact on long term health conditions. The research shows the total annual social value of sport and physical activity in England for 2022-23. Of the total</p>
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	<p>£107.2 billion – £96.7 billion is attributed to the primary value in annual wellbeing value, and a further £10.5 billion in wider savings to the health and social care system.</p> <p>Local insight</p> <p>Three out of five adults and two in five 11-year-olds living in Bedford Borough are overweight or obese. Excess weight is a major cause of ill health and death locally and disproportionately affects some of our poorest communities. In Bedford 1 in 6 people are living with a disability. The most recent Active Lives data shows that those living with a disability are much less likely to be physically active.</p> <p>National insight</p> <p>Data from Public Health England highlights the number of people nationally with type 2 diabetes and recognises where this is more prevalent in groups with protected characteristics. Diabetes is more common in men (9.6% compared with 7.6% women) and people from south Asian and black ethnic groups are nearly twice as likely to have the disease compared with people from white, mixed or other ethnic groups, (15.2% compared to 8.0%).</p> <p>Active lives survey data</p> <p>The latest active lives survey reveals that 59.1% of the adult population in Bedford Borough is now meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. This represents a return to within the national levels compared to previous data, highlighting more continuity in the data from the survey.</p>
<p>What consultation did you carry out with protected equality groups to identify your activity's effect on equality?</p>	<p>A full public consultation was completed between April and May 2025, and 683 responses were received. 51% were facility users and 49% were nonusers.</p> <p>Public Consultation</p> <p>Delivery</p>

An 8-week public consultation (Friday 11th April 2025 – Friday 6th June) was completed by external industry experts (Alliance Leisure and Active insight). This included a full survey process and in person focus groups. The survey was prepared to ensure that all key stakeholders were engaged, and the opportunity was circulated to as many people as possible.

Key groups engaged and methods of engagement:

- General Public* - by BBC mailing lists, social media and via partner organisations.
- GLL Leisure centre users – via the app and email
- Bedford Borough Schools and Educational Institutions – via the Bedford Borough School Sports Coordinator
- Community Groups, Charities, support groups – via BBC Communications & Communities team
- Parish and Town Councils – via BBC communications team
- Local Sports and Leisure Organisations – via the Active Partnership (circa 114 Bedford Borough sports clubs)
- Media Outlets.

**Easy read version & Paper versions were available*

A consultation guide was available, and a digital copy of the draft strategy was available on a dedicated website for the Sport and Leisure consultation. This website was in an accessible format and a link from the Bedford Borough Leisure centres page and consultations page was created to guide users to the consultation survey.

- The consultation document was circulated via a range of partners and advertised at several key locations. The QR code link was on poster and the full survey was available in paper copy version and easy read version at all Bedford Borough leisure sites, the Customer Hub, Borough Hall, Bedford Central Library, Kempston Library, Putnoe Library, The Higgins Bedford,

	<p>Kempston Town Council and posters were also in place at a number community venues including Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara, Project 229, Bedford College, St Pauls Church and local pharmacies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation was shared digitally with health partners at the ICB, NHS, Public health, The East London Foundation trust, Circle MSK, Mind BLMK, Age UK, and other groups via the BBC communications team. • The national governing bodies of sports organisations were shared the information, and 114 sports clubs received the information via our Active Partnership Be Active's email and the information also went out in their newsletter. • All Bedfordshire schools received the survey via our School Sports Coordinator and educational institutions such The University of Bedfordshire and Bedford College were shared the survey. Bedford College students took part in a workshop to provide feedback and complete the survey directly. • Better (GLL Greenwich Leisure Limited) who manage the Council's leisure sites sent an email during week 1 and week 5 to all GLL members and non-member casual users. • BBC Sports Development sent the survey information within their biweekly newsletter throughout the consultation period to 13,000 subscribers interested in Sport and Physical Activity from the public. • The online campaign achieved significant visibility and interaction, generating 826,000 impressions (the number of times the ads were displayed, 72,000 reach – the number of unique individuals who saw the ads and 4,405 direct clicks – users who clicked directly through to the microsite from the digital advert. <p>Focus groups</p> <p>In person focus groups were also conducted in partnership with the Council's consultants; Alliance Leisure and Active Insight (the industry leader in customer insight and market intelligence within the active leisure industry).</p> <p>The groups were advertised to everyone who completed the survey who were then invited to register their interest for an online or in person workshop. The objective of the engagement group was to</p>
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	<p>explore attitudes and perceptions towards the proposed redevelopment of Kempston Pool and Fitness Centre, as well as the proposed strategy themes.</p> <p>A full public consultation was completed between April and May 2025 and 683 responses were received. 51% were facility users and 49% were nonusers.</p> <p>Public Consultation</p> <p>Delivery</p> <p>An 8-week public consultation (launching on Friday 11th April 2025 and closed on Friday the 6th June) was completed by external industry experts (Alliance Leisure and Active insight). This included a full survey process and in person focus groups. The survey was prepared to ensure that all key stakeholders were engaged, and the opportunity was circulated to as many people as possible.</p> <p>Key groups engaged and methods of engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Public* - By BBC mailing lists, social media and via partner organisations. • GLL Leisure centre users – via the app and email • Bedford Borough Schools and Educational Institutions – via the Bedford Borough School Sports Coordinator. • Community Groups, Charities, support groups – via BBC Communications & Communities team • Parish and Town Councils – via BBC communications team • Local Sports and Leisure Organisations – via the Active Partnership (circa 114 Bedford Borough sports clubs) • Media Outlets. <p>*Easy read version & Paper versions were available</p> <p>A consultation guide was available, and a digital copy of the draft strategy was available on a dedicated website for the Sport and Leisure consultation. This website was in an accessible format</p>
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	<p>and a link from the Bedford Borough Leisure centres page and consultations page was created to guide uses to the consultation survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation document was circulated via a range of partners and advertised at several key locations. The QR code link was on poster and the full survey was available in paper copy version and easy read version at all Bedford Borough leisure sites, the Customer Hub, Borough Hall, Bedford Central Library, Kempston Library, Putnoe Library, The Higgins Bedford, Kempston Town Council and posters were also in place at a number community venues including Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara, Project 229, Bedford College, St Pauls Church and local pharmacies. • The consultation was shared digitally with health partners at the ICB, NHS, Public health, The East London Foundation trust, Circle MSK, Mind BLMK, Age UK, and other groups via the BBC communications team. • The national governing bodies of sports organisations were shared the information, and 114 sports clubs received the information via our Active Partnership Be Active's email and the information also went out in their newsletter. • All Bedfordshire schools received the survey via our School Sports Coordinator and educational institutions such The University of Bedfordshire and Bedford College were shared the survey. Bedford College students took part in a workshop to provide feedback and complete the survey directly. • Better (GLL Greenwich Leisure Limited) who manage the Council's leisure sites sent an email during week 1 and week 5 to all GLL members and non-member casual users. • BBC Sports Development sent the survey information within their biweekly newsletter throughout the consultation period to 13,000 subscribers interested in Sport and Physical Activity from the public. • The online campaign achieved significant visibility and interaction, generating 826,000 impressions (the number of times the ads were displayed, 72,000 reach – the number of unique individuals who saw the ads and 4,405 direct clicks – users who clicked directly through to the microsite from the digital advert.
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Focus groups

An in person focus groups was also conducted in partnership with the Council's consultants; Alliance Leisure and Active Insight (the industry leader in customer insight and market intelligence within the active leisure industry).

The group was advertised to everyone who completed the survey who were then invited to register their interest for an online or in person workshop. The objective of the engagement group was to explore attitudes and perceptions towards the proposed redevelopment of Kempston Pool and Fitness Centre, as well as the proposed strategy themes.

Demographics of the 683 responses to the Kempston Pool survey

What is your Age?

Under 16	0.2%
16-24	4%
25-34	7%
35-44	16%
45-54	20%
55-64	25%
65-74	21%
75+	7%

What is your Gender? (Please select an answer and click the arrow to continue)

Female (Including Transgender Woman)	69%
Male (Including Transgender Man)	27%
Non-Binary	0.3%
Prefer Not to Say	2%

	Other (please specify)	2%
	What is your Ethnicity?	
	White Roma	0%
	Other Ethnic Group - Arab	0%
	Asian/Asian British or Asian Welsh - Pakistani	0.2%
	Black/Black British/Black Welsh/Caribbean or African - Other Black	0.2%
	White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.2%
	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups – Other Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0.3%
	Other Ethnic Group - Any Other Ethnic group	0.3%
	Asian/Asian British or Asian Welsh - Other Asian	0.5%
	Black/Black British/Black Welsh/Caribbean or African - Caribbean	1%
	Asian/Asian British or Asian Welsh - Bangladeshi	1%
	Asian/Asian British or Asian Welsh - Chinese	1%
	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups – White and Asian	1%
	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups – White and Black Caribbean	1%
	Black/Black British/Black Welsh/Caribbean or African - African	1%
	White Irish	1%
	Asian/Asian British or Asian Welsh - Indian	2%
	Prefer not to say	5%
	White - Other White	8%
	White/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish or British	78%
	What is the nature of your impairment?	%
	Physical impairment: Use a wheelchair for sport	0%
	Blind/Partially sighted	1%
	Physical impairment: Permanent manual wheelchair user	2%

	<div> <div>Physical impairment: Power chair user</div> <div>2%</div> </div> <div> <div>Intellectual impairment/Learning disability</div> <div>3%</div> </div> <div> <div>Deaf/Hard of hearing</div> <div>5%</div> </div> <div> <div>Autism/Neurodiverse</div> <div>7%</div> </div> <div> <div>Mental health condition</div> <div>12%</div> </div> <div> <div>Physical impairment: Ambulant and use sticks/crutches/prosthetic</div> <div>13%</div> </div> <div> <div>Conditions related to old age</div> <div>15%</div> </div> <div> <div>Other (please specify)</div> <div>17%</div> </div> <div> <div>Physical impairment: Ambulant</div> <div>23%</div> </div> <div> <div>Looking at the physical activity guidelines, would you consider yourself active/fairly active or inactive?</div> <div>Active</div> <div>30%</div> </div> <div> <div>Fairly active</div> <div>59%</div> </div> <div> <div>Inactive</div> <div>12%</div> </div>
What does this evidence tell you about the different protected groups?	<p>The evidence tells us that the proposed upgrades to the centre would help ensure the improvement of accessible changing, family changing, the disability ramp pool access and give the benefits of more studio space for all users.</p> <p>One of the key findings of the consultation is the exceptionally strong community interest in the project, with 80% of all respondents indicating that a redevelopment would encourage them to either use the facility more or start using it. Respondents prioritised enhancements to the swimming pool and changing areas, with 90% agreeing the community would benefit from the upgrades. Other desired improvements include the sauna and steam room and group exercise class facilities.</p>

	<p>The significant support for an improved sauna or steam room (67%) indicates a desire for enhanced “wet side” and wellness amenities beyond basic swimming. The Healthwise programme that caters for people with a range of health condition received very high levels of satisfaction and there is potential for greater promotion of this alongside publicity for the core offer at the facility.</p> <p>The consultation identified the main barrier that prevented respondents from exercising was cost (23% stated this was a barrier) and would need to be considered (through a transparent and flexible pricing strategy) to help support increased participation. Another key barrier that was highlighted was physical accessibility for disabled users (20% of survey respondents have a limiting condition) and this should be a non-negotiable element. This is a primary barrier, and the redevelopment should create a welcoming and inclusive environment to help align with local and national goals of reducing activity inequalities for disabled people.</p>
What further research or data do you need to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the activity?	Ongoing consultation on the wider habits and preferences of Bedford Borough residents will continue to inform the strategic facilities planning and programming as the council roll out the delivery of its new sports and leisure strategy.

General Equality Duty

Which parts of the general equality duty is the activity relevant to?			
	Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Advance equality of opportunity	Foster good relations
Age		The facility improvements aim to create more space and more options for a varied programme of activity sessions that can be tailored to different age groups.	
Children		The upgrade to the sauna is a priority for all members.	
Older People			

Disability		The planned improvements to the reception and changing village will help ensure a welcoming atmosphere to all and ensure a disability friendly centre.	<p>GLL are committed to providing a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for everyone. GLL believe that they can continue to break down barriers and be a true leader in creating opportunity for all. GLL believe that:</p> <p>Everyone in the community should have access our services free from discrimination or prejudice due to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p>
Gender reassignment		The centre currently hosts a Trans gender swimming session and works closely with Rainbow Bedfordshire to ensure that the facility and changing areas are inclusive.	
Pregnancy and maternity		The family changing areas are to be maintained; the centre is breast feeding accredited	
Race	The facility improvements align with the new 2024-2034 Sport and		

	Leisure Strategy that highlights the diversity of the population in Bedford Borough and the objective to create connected communities where people from all backgrounds feel considered and welcomed.		
Religion or belief	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	GLL are committed to providing a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for everyone.
Sex	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	As above.
Sexual orientation	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	As above.
Marriage & civil partnership	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.
Other Relevant Groups			
Social-economic	There are very few pay as you go or affordable membership steam and sauna facilities locally. A spa day for wellness, mental health and relaxation can be very expensive and to provide affordable spa facilities will enable many people who are less confident with sports and fitness to take part.		
Care experienced people	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.

Carers	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.
Rural residents	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.	No issues or benefit identified.

Impact on Protected Characteristic and Other Relevant Groups

Based on the evidence presented what positive and negative impact will your activity have on equality?				
	Positive impact	Negative impact	No or neutral impact	Explanation
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed developments increase the studio space, gym access, changing facilities and refurbished reception. This will enable a wider programme of activities and more space for activity sessions.</p> <p>However, during refurbishment works there will be some impact on the space, opening hours (closure) and availability of the facility which will impact on access for all users during the works.</p>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The centre is fully accessible, and the improvements are planned to maintain and improve disabled access and facilities</p> <p>The change of layout may cause some confusion and discomfort for people with SEND, which will need to be managed through effective communication with users.</p> <p>The planned improvements may mean that certain areas/facilities (disability access ramp) are not available during the work. Robinson pool has disability access if required.</p>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The refurbishment will allow for the continuation and improvement of support and sessions delivered in partnership with Rainbow Bedfordshire.

Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.
Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.
Marriage & civil partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.

Other Relevant Groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No or neutral Impact	Explanation
Social-economic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The provision of new spa facilities will be something that enables more people from low-income families to access spa/wellbeing facilities which are not available locally at an affordable market rate.</p> <p>The planned work will make improvements to all changing facilities, offering a pay as you go facility (with concession rates) to the wider community.</p>
Care experienced people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No impact greater than any other group.

Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers of children with additional needs will be able to access the concessions and utilise the extended and improved facilities.
Rural residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Actions

	What will be done?	By who?	By when?	What will be the outcome?
Actions to lessen negative impact	The redevelopments proposed will be staged over time to maintain services where possible and try and mitigate any closures or loss of access where possible.	Leisure developer guided by Strategic leisure projects manager	2026-27	Continuity of access to services where possible during refurbishment works.
Actions to increase positive impact	The new and improved facilities will be widely promoted locally to the latent demand catchment and local groups from the key characteristic will be invited to visit them on open days and encouraged to use the facility.	Strategic leisure projects manager	2026-27	By working with the leisure operator to monitor the increased usage at the facility and the usage by key groups will help to highlight the impact of the interventions.
Actions to develop equality evidence, information and data	To continue to monitor the casual and member usage from key groups.	Strategic leisure projects manager	2026-27	By monitoring usage the council can ensure to provide the most accessible service possible which

				will keep residents engaged in physical activity to a higher level.
Actions to improve equality in procurement / commissioning	The design and delivery phase of the works and the procurement for the supplier should include criteria to ensure that the leisure operator has a strong record in providing inclusive activities and has a strong understanding of differentiating for key characteristics.	Strategic leisure projects manager	2026-27	This will ensure that the leisure service can continue to offer a wide range of local sports and physical activity options to all members of the community.
Other relevant actions				

Recommendation

No major change required <i>The evidence shows no negative effect or potential for discrimination.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Adjustments required <i>The evidence shows your activity requires changes or adjustments to ensure it does not negatively affect any protected equality groups or miss opportunities to affect them positively. Explain the reasons for the steps you are taking in the 'Summary of analysis' section below.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Justification to continue the activity: <i>Negative impact on equality has been identified, however your activity can continue because the activity does not unlawfully discriminate as there are reasonable factors that make it objectively justified (looking at legal facts only) to do so. If unsure, please seek guidance from EDI Officer</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<i>You will need to explain your justification in the 'Summary of analysis'</i>		
Stop the activity- <i>The equality analysis identified that your activity unlawfully discriminates and cannot be mitigated. This also cannot be objectively justified and your activity must stop.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Summary of analysis

Please refer to Section 8 of the Equality Analysis Guidance.

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

The conclusion of this Equality Analysis is that there are several positive benefits to all key characteristics from the redevelopment and maintenance of a key Council facility. The refurbished centre with a wider programme will offer more opportunities for people to be active and will provide affordable health and wellness facilities.

There will be some adverse impact on all members and users of the facility during the development due to access restrictions however this will be mitigated as far as possible through staging the delivery with limited closures as far as possible.

The evidence available supports the redevelopment of the facility and ensures all protected characteristics are recognised in the plans.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once agreed and the final plans are scheduled all key groups will be supported with options for alternative leisure access throughout the works. 	Review date N/A
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It is the responsibility of the service area to hold a copy of the final version of this Equality Analysis and to ensure that it is accessible upon request.