

<b>PLEASURE FAIR REGIONAL POOL DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>COUNCILLOR ALLEN, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, CULTURE AND RECREATION</b>
<b>September 2020</b>
<b>Deadline date: N/A</b>

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Councillor Steve Allen – Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation Steve Cox - Executive Director Place and Economy
Is this a Key Decision?	YES If yes has it been included on the Forward Plan: YES Unique Key decision Reference from Forward Plan: KEY/06JUL20/01
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S**

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

1. Endorse the outcomes of the analysis set out in this report and the accompanying annexes and support the case for replacing the existing Regional Pool facility.
2. Approve the selection of Pleasure Fair Meadows as the preferred location for a new Regional Pool leisure facility subject to a detailed business case being developed.
3. Instruct Council officers to develop a detailed business case, working with Peterborough Investment Partnership.

**1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation to consider, exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.3 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with paragraph (d) of their portfolio.
- 1.2 This report being submitted following an approach to the Council from the Peterborough Investment Partnership LLP (the PIP). In March 2020, the PIP commissioned an initial feasibility study on the option to develop a replacement facility for the Peterborough

Regional Pool on the site of the Pleasure Fair Meadows Car Park (PFM) which it owns. The PIP had previously investigated alternative uses at PFM, including residential development or a multi storey car park, but concluded that the site is better suited for a leisure related use given its location and characteristics.

- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to summarise the work undertaken to date which highlights the strategic need to replace the Regional Pool; looks at potential site options; identifies a preferred location, and seeks Cabinet approval to proceed to the development of a more detailed business case and financial viability assessment. A further report will bring together the strategic, commercial, financial, economic and management cases for a new facility in line with HM Treasury Green Book best practice guidance for major capital projects.

**2. TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	<b>N/A</b>
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**3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Peterborough’s Regional Pool is close to the end of its useful operational life. It is expected that it will need to be replaced or be subject to major renovation and refurbishment within the next 5 – 10 years, with the latest condition survey recommending £6m of work over the next decade and the bulk of that (about £4.5m) in the next two. The Regional Pool is an outdated facility with high operating costs and unsatisfactory changing area facilities; it lacks a sports hall, has a limited activity offer and is subject to increasingly high repair and maintenance costs. There is also insufficient capacity to accommodate the demand for water space that the city’s population needs; this is likely to become a more acute problem as the city continues to grow.

- 3.2 A 2017 study by Knight, Kavanagh and Page (funded by Sports England) concluded that Peterborough ideally requires 3 x 25m swimming pools to bring its ‘wet-side’ leisure provision to the level recommended for a city of 200,000 people. The current Regional Pool has a 25m x 6 lane main pool with 300 spectator seats, a 17m x 6m teaching pool, a 12.5m x 12.5 diving pool, a 90-workstation gym, 1 exercise studios and 1 spinning studio.

- 3.3 Annex 1 examines the strategic case for replacing the Regional Pool. It provides:
1. a description of the existing facility and an analysis of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)
  2. a discussion of the current use of the facility and factors affecting local demand
  3. An explanation of how the proposed facilities ‘fit’ the Council’s strategies for leisure and health and wellbeing, and
  4. some initial project objectives and success criteria.

- 3.4 Annex 1 provides a more detailed analysis of the strategic business case replacing the Regional Pool for but, in summary:
1. The existing Pool fails to meet the minimum standards Sports England advise for modern facilities. Its age and layout mean that the pool has high operating costs for both staffing and utilities and makes poor use of space for a facility of its size
  2. The Council’s twenty-year Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (developed in 2017 by Knight, Kavanagh and Page and supported by Sports England) highlighted a significant undersupply of public pool space in Peterborough and a shortage of sports hall facilities.

3. Any loss of the Regional Pool e.g. through a mechanical plant failure, would dramatically worsen the situation and would be likely to impact disproportionately on users such as the NHS (who use it for rehabilitation) and schools (who use the facility extensively as part of the curriculum requirement to teach swimming).
4. The Council has an Active Lifestyle and Sports Strategy that aims to increase the levels of activity undertaken in the city. It is well understood that regular physical activity improves health. However, the proportion of the city's population defined as 'active adults' is notably below the national average, and life expectancy in Peterborough is also below the national average. The Council is actively seeking to address these challenges and the development of new sports and leisure facilities can play an important role in encouraging more physical activity.
5. Any new facility should build on the Sports England base specification and address the limited range of activities available at the current Regional Pool site.

There is therefore a sound strategic case for replacing the Regional Pool.

3.5 In March 2020, the PIP commissioned an appraisal of leisure development opportunities for the Pleasure Fair Meadows Ca Park site in the context of its plans for the development of the site. Option appraisal work is undertaken for each site the PIP looks at and earlier appraisals had shown other development options – such as residential development or multi storey car park use – as suboptimal compared to leisure provision.

PIP appointed specialist Sports and Leisure Consultants (SLC) and Paul Weston Architects to review the leisure facilities currently available in Peterborough and look at best practice from other parts of the UK to help develop the specification for a replacement facility for the Regional Pool. The consultants appraised two initial options:

- The first considered the 'essential' mix of facilities required to replace the Regional Pool with a better overall offer.
- The second reviewed the 'optimal' mix and included additional revenue generating facilities enhancing the overall 'offer' that residents would benefit from.

The options indicate the type of facilities that could be provided at Pleasure Fair Meadows and will be further developed as design and development work is taken forward to a final business case.

3.6 The 'essential' and 'optimal' options are summarised in **Table 1** below:

Existing Regional Swimming & Fitness Centre	New Facility – Essential Mix	New Facility – Optimal Mix
25m 6-lane main pool with 300 spectator seats	25m 8-lane main pool with 300 spectator seats	25m 8-lane main pool with moveable floor and 300 spectator seats
17m x 6m teaching pool	15m x 10m teaching pool	17m x 15m teaching pool with moveable floor
12.5m x 12.5m diving pool	Not included	Not included
None	Not included	350 sqm leisure water with flume, water features and toddler splash zone
Sauna and steam	Sauna and steam and relaxation area	Sauna and steam, relaxation area and treatment rooms
90 station gym	150 station gym	175 station gym

2 x exercise studios – 20 and 25-person capacity	2 x exercise studios (with moveable partition between) – both 40-person capacity	2 x exercise studios (with moveable partition between) both 40-person capacity 1 x smaller yoga/pilates studio - 20-person capacity
1 x spinning studio – 20-person capacity	1 x spinning studio – 20-person capacity	1 x spinning studio – 20-person capacity
		4-court sports hall
		Softplay
		Clip n Climb
	Café – 50 covers	Café – 75 covers

3.7 The essential option would require a facility with a c5,000 square metres gross internal floor area. The optimal mix would require c7,500 square metres. For both options it was assumed that the pool and leisure facility would be constructed above surface car parking at Pleasure Fair Meadows. The initial massing and design work suggest that this will be deliverable in practice. However, detailed design work on the final facilities mix will be needed to confirm the impact on surface car parking capacity.

3.8 Following the PIP’s approach to the Council about the Pleasure Fair Meadows site as a potential option a strategic review of other potentially suitable sites in and around the city centre area was undertaken. This is summarised in Annex 2 of this report. The sites considered were:

1. The existing Regional Pool site
2. Wellington Street Car Park
3. Pleasure Fair Meadows Car Park
4. Northminster
5. North Westgate
6. Mayor’s Walk
7. Maskew Avenue\*

The sites were chosen because they were known to be available now in the near future; are relatively close to the city centre; have, or will have, a significant nearby residential catchment, appear to have sufficient space for the required facilities, and fall within the scope of control or influence of the Council or one of its key partners. Since the review was undertaken the Maskew Avenue site has been marketed and the sale of the site is understood to be underway.

3.9 In assessing the suitability of sites, the following assessment criteria were examined:

1. **Proximity to the city centre:** how close to the city centre each site is.
2. **Ease of Access:** Whether there are strong pedestrian, cycle, and public transport links, and whether there is a significant residential demographic nearby.
3. **Availability:** over what timescale is the site available.
4. **Ease of control:** how closely is the Council able to influence the site’s development.
5. **Compatibility with planning policy:** whether this use explicitly supported, likely to be compatible, or unsupported in planning term.
6. **Site prominence:** the extent to which the site would enhance the city’s profile if chosen for a new leisure centre.

3.10 The table below provides an ‘at a glance’ RAG (red-amber-green) assessment of each site’s performance against the criteria above, based on the descriptive commentary in Annex 2.

Site	City Centre Proximity	Ease of Access	Availability	Ease of Control	Planning Policy	Site Prominence
Existing Regional Pool	●	●	●	●	●	●
Wellington Street Car Park	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pleasure Fair Meadows Car Park	●	●	●	●	●	●
Northminster	●	●	●	●	●	●
North Westgate	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mayor's Walk	●	●	●	●	●	●
Maskew Avenue	●	●	●	●	●	●

There is a degree of subjectivity in this analysis, but its aim is to provide a transparent selection process that is objectively justifiable. The analysis highlights that Pleasure Fair Meadows site meets most of the location criteria and appears the best available location. This view is shared by the specialist leisure consultants who have considered the site options.

- 3.11 SLC has reviewed at a high level the analysis of available sites and is in agreement about the suitability of Pleasure Fair Meadows car park. The RAG rating criteria used to inform the analysis are appropriate in the context of a leisure centre development, and the ratings appear to be reasonably applied. The site is well located in terms of accessibility, proximity to the city centre and visibility to passing traffic. It has significant advantages over other sites in terms of its immediate availability and influence exerted by the Council.
- 3.12 The consultants have prepared indicative accommodation schedules and floor plans for both the 'essential' and 'optimal' mix options. In each case around 300 parking spaces have been allowed for plus two access lifts. In addition to estimating the likely construction costs, the consultants have modelled annual income and expenditure forecasts for each option. Their calculations have taken account of staffing, repairs and maintenance, water and utilities, equipment, cost of sales, cleaning, marketing, insurance, IT, admin/legal, irrecoverable VAT and depreciation, as well as contract and lifecycle costs.
- 3.13 In the case of both options, the income anticipated from swimming, health and fitness studios and other activities exceeds costs and generates an operating surplus. This is a positive starting point. However, further cost modelling work will be needed to allow the Council to make a considered investment decision on the preferred option. This further work will be undertaken subject to the approval of the recommendations in this report.
- 3.14 The 'optimal mix' option has been recommended by the consultants as the most sustainable, long term proposition for providing of a new Regional Pool and Leisure Centre, taking into account the city's projected future growth and the findings of previous research supported by bodies such as Sports England. The consultants' report did not examine the cost of financing the project, nor the commercial options for building and managing the facility. However, the PIP has proposed that, subject to Council approval of the final business case and concluding suitable contracts, it would be prepared take on the planning and development risk if an end value sale price (or long-term lease) arrangement could be agreed with the Council. This could also include an option for the Council to invest in the project as a partner within the PIP, for which it would receive a premium return, through its

share of PIP dividends. Members will be aware this approach has worked successfully for the Council on the Fletton Quays development.

### 3.15 Risk Appraisal:

The consultants' report sets out the financial risks of retaining the Regional Pool versus the essential and optimal mix options for a new facility at Pleasure Fair Meadows and analysed the costs of each option. It is acknowledged that there are risks other than financial ones that need to be taken into account when making a final decision on the best future option.

Given its age there is an increasing operational that the Regional Pool could be subject to a major mechanical or structural failure which would leave the city without a public pool at all or would require temporary closure and substantial investment in repairs. Such a scenario would carry significant reputational risks for the Council.

Building a new pool will clearly involve planning, development and construction risks. However, it is proposed that these would be borne by the PIP. This would enable the Council to plan with a good degree of certainty in relation to an agreed purchase price for the completed facility.

## 4. **CONSULTATION**

4.1 At this stage, there has been no public consultation about the feasibility study undertaken by the PIP. Subject to Cabinet approval to pursue the development of a detailed business case, there would be a need for more widespread consultation and engagement with key stakeholders including Sports England, Swim England and the City of Peterborough Swimming Club (COPS).

4.2 If the Council were subsequently to agree a commercial deal with the PIP, following the completion of a satisfactory business case, there would also be detailed public consultation with local residents, businesses and other local stakeholders in the course of pre-planning discussions and during the formal period of submission of a planning application by the PIP.

## 5. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

5.1 The anticipated outcome of the further work for which approval is sought will be the production of a detailed business case that will enable the Council to make an informed decision about the costs, benefits and risks of reaching a commercial agreement with the PIP on the construction of a new Regional Pool at Pleasure Fair Meadows. In developing the business case, officers will consider, in further detail, the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management cases for the location, construction, management and operation of a new Regional Pool exploring the options initially appraised by the consultants.

## 6. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 It is evident that, at some point in the next few years, the Council will need to address the issue of replacing or renovating the Regional Pool. In this context, the approach by the PIP is both timely and opportune. Work undertaken on the development of a detailed business case will be of considerable value in allowing the Council to make an informed decision.

## 7. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 The option of the Council directly re-providing the regional pool has been discounted at present as a result of pressures on the Council's revenue budget and capital programme. However, it is clear that a sustainable solution will need to be found for the Regional Pool

within the next 5-10 years. The opportunity to use Pleasure Fair as a suitable alternative site would be lost if it were to be taken forward by the PIP for other forms of development. It is therefore considered opportune to explore the PFM option at this point.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The work to be undertaken on the development of the business case will be funded by the PIP with a contribution from the Council through the Community Infrastructure levy budget. The work will be supported by the Council's Development Manager Sport and Leisure and overseen by the Interim Development Director, reporting to the CMT. The total cost of preparing the detailed business case is expected to be £35k. The PIP has agreed to contribute 50% of these costs with the balance funded through the CIL.

As note above the Council will retain an option to co-invest in the project with the PIP should it choose to do so.

### **Legal Implications**

- 8.2 There are no direct legal implications at this stage. The Council would retain the option to manage and new facility itself or to procure an external operator.

### **Equalities Implications**

- 8.3 If a new facility is built on Pleasure Fair Meadows it will be important that it is fully accessible and conforms with all relevant equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act. Equalities issues would be considered more fully in the course of developing the Business Case and planning application in due course.

### **Carbon Impact Assessment**

- 8.5 The proposal seeks approval for the completion of a full business case to test the viability of constructing a new regional pool facility at a site owned by the Peterborough Investment Partnership at Pleasure Fair Meadows. If project viability is established the goal for design and construction will be to produce a facility with significantly lower carbon impacts than the current regional pool. Therefore, the impact is neutral at this stage.

## **9. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED**

- 9.1 This report is submitted to Councillor Allen as Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation, as Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments, and Councillor Holdich, Leader of the Council & Deputy Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, sit on the Peterborough Investment Partnership Board.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 10.1 Feasibility Study - Paul Weston Associates and Sports and Leisure Consultancy (SLC).

## **11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1 Annex 1: The Strategic Case (Consultants' report)  
Annex 2: Summary of potential site and re-provision Options

## Annex 1: The Strategic Case

This section provides needs analysis, policy and strategic context for the re-provision of city centre leisure facilities to replace the Regional Pool.

### Business as Usual: The Current Context

This section details key characteristics about current provision at the regional pool facility. It will discuss the extent to which the existing facility adequately meets its current user needs as well as the wider needs identified above. In doing so, it is sensible to start with some basis characteristics of the existing facility, namely that:

1. The Regional Pool was built in 1976, with its last major refurbishment in 2011
2. Its current offer comprises three main 'wet' facilities and some gym offer, specifically:
  - a. A six-lane 25 metre pool
  - b. A 13m x 12.5m diving pool
  - c. A 16m x 8m teaching/learner pool
  - d. A 90-station fitness suite.
3. There are no café facilities or sports hall at this site and, overall, the facility is tired, the changing rooms are rated as below average by Knight, Kavanagh and Page and Sports England, and the façade is dated
4. It is operated under the existing culture and leisure contract with Vivacity, which sees the Council responsible for maintenance and utilities. These have been increasing costs as the facility has aged.
5. The 2016 condition survey noted that it was assumed to be at the end of design life as a facility of this type and age; the latest (2020) survey identified £6m of maintenance work needed, and even with this the facility is not likely to have a useful life as a leisure centre beyond ten or so years.

A SWOT analysis of the Regional Pool is provided below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-used, popular pool facilities</li> <li>• Successful Swimming Club</li> <li>• Good Swim Academy membership levels</li> <li>• Athletics track present on-site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pool facilities are at capacity</li> <li>• Poor location and visibility</li> <li>• Dated and uninviting facility (1976)</li> <li>• Limited activities and facility mix</li> <li>• Very limited food and beverage offer</li> <li>• Inefficient energy management &amp; significant annual utility costs</li> <li>• Poor Carbon Footprint</li> <li>• Customer journey and facility layout</li> <li>• Changing rooms and lack of showers</li> <li>• High pool staffing levels due to pool layout</li> <li>• Reputation of being a tired old local authority facility with no investment</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population growth of Peterborough</li> <li>• Management operator</li> <li>• Increased footfall and membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition (Local)</li> <li>• Competition (Private)</li> <li>• New independent facilities</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Wellbeing – Public Health remits</li> <li>• Funding to support 3G pitch on top of facility through Football Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current facility will require major refurbishments in the medium term if not replaced</li> <li>• Loss of members and income due to condition of facility</li> </ul>
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The Regional Pool is the only public pool open all day every day for residents to use as pay and go users. If this facility was to fail and close without a replacement ready many thousands of users would be without somewhere to train, socialise and improve their wellbeing. Sport England commissioned a report in 2017 in partnership with the Council and this clearly highlights that for a city the size of Peterborough there should be three public 25m pools for residents to use, especially with the significant growth over the coming years that is forecast. It is noteworthy that when the report was commissioned, the city's population was about 190,000, is today about 205,000, and is forecast to be 230,000 within the next ten years.

Currently over 25 primary schools use the facility during term times to meet key stage 2 requirements that all students before leaving primary school can confidently swim 25 metres. Along with this there are over 1,000 students taking part in the learn to swim programme on a weekly basis. This is a rolling programme from when they are four years of age to teach children water safety and confidence, and there are then options to develop into club coaching, junior life saving or general confidence sessions.

Along with the schools, the City of Peterborough Swimming Club use the facility as their main training facility. They currently hire over 20 hours of pool space per week and would have no immediate alternative venue to hire locally. The club has 126 members and is one of the smallest in the country: they are currently ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the England non-affiliated, Cambridgeshire's premier competitive swimming club. COPs are a partnership between Peterborough City Council, Vivacity and the City of Peterborough Swimming Club. The aim is to compete at the highest levels in the sport and within their squads they have International swimmers and National medallists. They also compete at County and Regional levels and travel widely to attend various open meets throughout the year.

The existing facility is used by many user groups that might struggle to find alternative facilities if the existing Regional Pool was to close without a replacement:

- NHS – Rehabilitation classes for a variety of conditions are provided, including cardiac and pulmonary conditions, cancer, and stroke, as well as treating obesity, and falls prevention work
- Army Reserves – Active personal can use the facilities to support their fitness and wellbeing to help with the voluntary work they undertake.
- Disability groups – The centre has many groups and individuals that have needs, these range from visual impairment and sight impaired groups to individuals that need careers or 1-1 training with trained professionals.
- Schools and Colleges – Both use the facilities through the year for specific training in the pool or the gym/studios.
- Fire Brigade – Dogsthorpe, Stanground and Yaxley brigades use the plant room spaces monthly to support their training development especially with new recruits. Once a year they also use the facility for mass evacuation training sessions.
- Holiday Club Activity – During school holidays the facility offers child care for children aged between 8yrs and 15yrs whilst schools are closed. This is a popular and required service that would be lost if the facility closed with no replacement on offer.

The current facility as outlined by Sport England is tired and needs investment. The customer journey is suboptimal, with a relatively uninviting car park and walk to the centre, the reception is not centrally located and the changing rooms on the first floor are dated and with few showers. The activity offer itself is limited; leisure and facilities have moved on significantly in the past 10 years and customer expectations for breadth of activities (especially family-friendly) and quality of those are higher, but (due to the design layout) the facility cannot easily be reconfigured to offer activities such as splash pools, slides, clip 'n' climb, competitive socialising or virtual activities.

Given the Council's commitment to tackling climate change, including its declaration of a climate emergency, it also cannot be ignored that the Regional Pool (primarily due to its age and design) is not very energy efficient. It uses annually about 3,400,000kWh of energy and generates total emissions of about 700 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Any modern facility, as is the case with most new buildings, will be much more efficient.

## Leisure Needs Assessments for Peterborough

### Facility Requirements

The Council developed an Indoor Built Facilities Strategy with Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) consultants in 2017. The 20-year strategy is based on an assessment of need for sports and leisure facilities to serve the current and future population of Peterborough. It considers the existing and planned supply of facilities across the city and balances this with the current provision and future demand for facilities in order to identify shortfalls or surpluses of provision.

In summary, swimming pools are popular in Peterborough, but the city has a relatively poor supply of water space in comparison to the national average and the overall quality of pools in the area is a concern, especially with a view to provision in the longer term. Publicly accessible pools are at a capacity, limiting their ability to meet existing and future demand for swimming activities. The Facility Planning Model (FPM) indicates a current undersupply equivalent to 9 x 25m lanes and this is projected to increase to 14 x 25m lanes by 2036.

Sports Halls are also undersupplied by a size equivalent to four badminton courts size and this shortage is projected to increase to 13 courts equivalent size by 2036. Many sports including badminton, basketball, handball, indoor cricket and wheeled sports all require space so that they can retain their existing participants and increase participation.

Health and Fitness provision, such as gym space, is generally at a good level across the city and there was no modelled shortfall in the current supply. However, the fitness market is continuing to grow and the Indoor Built Facility Strategy suggests that additional future provision should be considered. This builds upon and reflects the conclusions identified in the Assessment Report (January 2017) and Sport England's recently released five-year strategy 'Towards an Active Nation' which will target the 28% of people who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week and focus on less active groups. These are typically women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The Council's strategy (and the accompanying action plan) provides a clear, coherent way forward for the management and delivery of leisure and sports facilities in Peterborough. The primary focus is to enable residents to gain access to leisure facilities to support sport and physical activity programmes that lead to increases in regular participation, taking account of the projected changes in age profile of the population in Peterborough up until 2037.

## Demand Patterns

The Regional Pool is, as noted previously, the main public swimming facility in the city. Its water space faces substantial capacity issues at peak demand times. Both the FPM and KKP's assessment report indicate a current shortfall of the equivalent of at least nine lanes of 25m swimming pool space (or the equivalent thereof) as well as a shortfall of four sports courts (the equivalent of one sports hall). Swimming pool demand is also expected to grow by an additional five lanes up until 2036 according to Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator. Sports hall demand is modelled to grow by nine additional badminton courts by 2036.

Anticipated population growth and an increase in the number and proportion of older people is thought by Sport England likely to lead to increased demand for facilities and in particular during day time hours. This will exacerbate the current under-supply of swimming provision and impact upon the level of unmet demand for sports halls (primarily due to their present limited availability during the day because of their location on education sites).

These factors seem to lead to two clear conclusions:

1. Even taking into account the current leisure provision at the Regional Pool, there is already a significant shortfall of pool space and other facilities (like sports hall space) in Peterborough, a shortfall that will only worsen as the city grows as projected.
2. The loss of the Regional Pool would dramatically worsen this provision, with significant consequences on key user groups and commensurate negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

## Local and National Strategy

Two of the Council's seven strategic priorities relate to the provision of quality leisure space, where the achievement of the former is supported by the latter. These are to "keep all our communities safe, cohesive and healthy" and to "achieve the best health and wellbeing for the city".

The Council has developed an Active Lifestyle and Sports Strategy (which is attached as an appendix to this report). Amongst other goals, the strategy aims to improve physical activity levels across the city by 38,000 people by 2023, currently 28.6% of city population do no activity, this is worse than the regional (23.5%) and national average (25.7%). Active Adults, who are those that complete 150 minutes of activity each week, make up 61% of the population in the city, which is again below the national average of 66%.

Obesity and overweight statistics for the city show that Peterborough has 62.9% of the population compared to the national average of 61.3%. It is likely that such factors contribute to the fact that life expectancy is also below the national average, with Peterborough statistics for females being 82.2yrs and males being 78.6yrs, compared to national average of female 83.1yrs and male 79.5yrs. Undertaking physical activity has clear and well-understood health impacts: Public Health England<sup>1</sup> state that physical activity (where this is completing at least 150 minutes of activity a week) will reduce risks of type 2 diabetes by 40%, cardiovascular disease by 35%, dementia by 30%, depression by 30% and cancer by 20%-30%.

Setting aside the physical health consequences to residents themselves and their families, these have an economic impact too. Public Health England estimate that the high inactivity percentage in the area burdens the health services within Cambridgeshire to the value of £12.25m per year. According to Sport England<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health Outcomes Framework 2016-2017

<sup>2</sup> "The Economic Value of Sport - Local Model" (2016),

the Economic Value added directly by sport for Cambridgeshire is £66.7m with the wider health benefits being £63.4m.

## Objectives and Definitions of Success for a New Centre

### Standards of Provision

The current levels of provision – even allowing for the gaps identified in what the Regional Pool does provide – are below the requirements for the city. It is therefore appropriate that replacement facilities extend what is currently offered against a minimum standard, where ideally that standard is nationally defined.

Sport England have produced an outline ideal leisure facility design mix. This paper was completed in 2015 and is based on affordable public facilities. Sport England suggests for a basic leisure facility would contain as a minimum:

- Sports Hall – 4 courts, storage and dry changing
- Swimming Pool – 4 lanes x 25m, with wet changing, school changing and a teaching pool if possible
- Health and Fitness – 100 stations, 2 studios, and associated changing rooms

Given Peterborough's shortage of pool space, it is suggested that an 8-lane pool be provided in any new facility, alongside all of the above. In addition, a broadening of the offer to increase the footfall and revenue the centre generates is considered positive, and therefore additional supplementary facilities are considered necessary, including a café.

### Customer Satisfaction

It is expected, indeed required, that the customer experience and level of satisfaction with any new facility must significantly exceed that of the existing Regional Pool. There are a number of anecdotal insights into the existing centre that have a likely negative impact on the customer experience. These include:

- Limited food and beverage choices on offer (via vending machines only)
- Limited use of digital opportunities and access, which customers increasingly expect and take for granted in modern facilities
- Dated and comparatively poor changing areas with very limited showers (only 3 in each changing room)
- Poor ventilation throughout
- The pool viewing gallery dated and has steps steep to get to seating
- The car park and walk to the facility are relatively poorly lit and not inviting

That the facility remains as well-used and popular as it is currently is likely more a testament to the lack of alternative provision than it is to the general levels of satisfaction with what is provided.

To assess improvement, if provision of a new facility proceeds it is suggested that:

- a) A baseline customer satisfaction study be conducted of users of all types at the existing facility that can be re-run in the new one once open
- b) In the first year of operation of a new facility, a customer satisfaction survey is undertaken to assess the new facility against the existing
- c) That customer satisfaction and feedback be part of the operating agenda of the new facility and be publicly available going forward

### Reputational

Given the identified shortfall in health and wellbeing facilities in Peterborough, reputational damage to the Council – and indeed the city itself – seems likely if the existing facility is not replaced. There is also a likely opportunity for enhancing reputation by the provision of a new facility that better and demonstrably meets the needs of the area. This will be assessed by several metrics:

- 1) Whether new provision meets minimum Sport England standards for facility range
- 2) Whether visitor numbers increase by 20% compared to the existing facility
- 3) Whether the new facility meets modern standards for environmental standards, contributing positively to the Council's climate emergency agenda

#### Commercial and Financial

The current facility is a cost to the Council. Even ignoring the maintenance liability and long-term limits to the building's asset life, there is over £150k per annum of utility costs that the Council pays for. In the current financial climate, the extent of the loss and liability the facility has must be considered. Specifically:

- 1) The new facility must budget for lifecycle costs and replacements based on industry metrics so that a suitable reserve is built for replacement
- 2) The new facility needs to ideally return either an annual surplus to the Council, be cost neutral (taking into account lifecycle costs), or at worst significantly reduce the current annual liability to which the Council is currently exposed

## Appendix 2: Site and Re-provision Options

### Business as Usual versus Re-provision

In any business case, it is always appropriate to consider what the implications would be to carrying on with the current position rather than something different. In considering a business as usual option in this situation, it is important to examine two distinct factors:

1. The extent to which the current facility adequately meets the needs of the populace
2. The implications of its current condition and the extent to which it can continue in its role

There has been discussion previously in this document about the needs of the city for leisure provision, and commentary on how the Regional Pool is inadequate to the task of meeting these needs. As a summary recap, it can be said that the existing facility underprovides traditional pool space (which is in substantial demand and widely undersupplied in the city in any event), offers no family-friendly 'wet space' that is increasingly popular, has poor changing facilities, offers limited additional activities beyond gym-space, and has nothing in terms of a food and beverage offer to speak of. It seems clear that the current facility does not adequately meet the current, growing and changing needs of the city's populace.

Even if the Regional Pool did meet those needs, however, the second 'business as usual' factor above would be challenging: its age and current condition means that it

- a) Has a limited existing life expectancy without major refurbishment
- b) Even with major refurbishment, the nature of the building means it would be difficult if not impossible to address the gap in the scope and scale of activities offered
- c) Is inefficient, and the Council spends a significant sum of utility costs annually

The Regional Pool is now well-over 40 years' old. It has delivered sterling service to the city and its surrounding areas during that time, but it is clear that it is no longer meeting those needs adequately, and nor is it capable of doing so. Change is necessary.

### Site Assessment

A series of sites have been chosen for consideration for re-provision. They have been chosen because they are known to be available now or will be in a reasonable period, are relatively close to the city centre, have or will have a significant nearby residential catchment, are likely to have sufficient space for appropriate facilities, and are within the scope of control or influence of the Council or one of its key partners.

### Assessment Dimensions

In assessing the suitability of sites, the following assessment criteria have been developed:

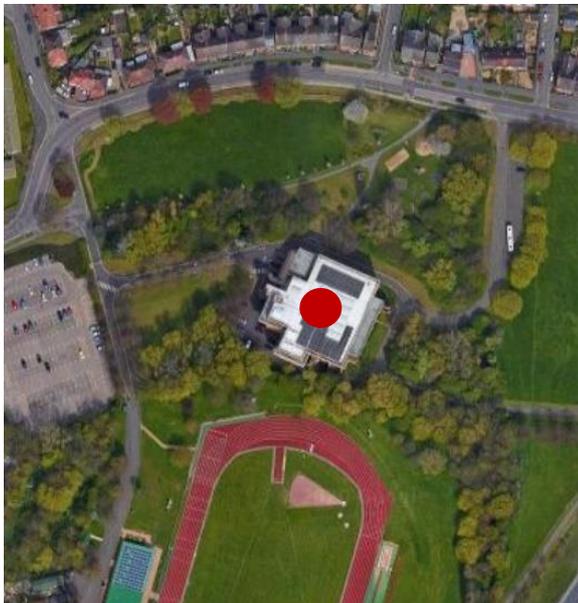
- 1) **Proximity to the city centre:** how close to the city centre the site is
- 2) **Ease of Access:** Whether there are strong pedestrian, cycle, and public transport links, and whether there is a significant residential demographic nearby
- 3) **Availability:** over what timescale is the site available
- 4) **Ease of control:** how closely is the Council able to influence the site's development
- 5) **Compatibility with planning policy:** whether this use is explicitly supported, likely to be compatible, or unsupported in planning terms
- 6) **Site prominence:** the extent to which the site would support enhancing the city's profile if chosen for a new leisure centre

## Site Descriptions and Comparison

The following sites have been shortlisted for consideration. Their key characteristics are detailed below.

### *Existing Regional Pool Site*

This is the current site located on Bishop's Road. Although reasonably close to the city centre, it feels relatively isolated from it. Pedestrian access from and to the main city centre is good, though the lack of active uses along much of the route makes it somewhat uninviting. It has a good level of parking availability



currently, with its own car park and the nearby Wirrina and Bishops Road car parks supporting it. Access by car is therefore good, and it has nearby bus stops. This site is owned and controlled by the Council, and therefore would technically be available, but it is also in the area allocated by the Council for the Peterborough University development, and re-provision of this facility on this site is likely to act as at least a minimal constraint on how that is taken forward. This is likely to be a significant barrier to redevelopment here. As the site is currently used for a leisure centre, whilst there is no specific allocation to support this use in the Local Plan it is expected that a suitably designed scheme would find little difficulty in obtaining planning consent. The site does not have great prominence, either in relation to the city centre or any other development in the current area. That could change

if as the university and wider uses on the embankment come forward, but it is unlikely to do so in the immediate future.

### *Wellington Street Car Park*



This edge-of-centre site is located near to a major arterial transport route into the city centre (with direct links to the A1139 Frank Perkins Parkway), and therefore benefits from excellent access by car. Public transport is somewhat less good, though there are nearby bus stops within a few minutes' walk, but the site is no worse to reach by foot than the existing Regional Pool site on Bishops Road. The site is owned by the Council, and well-used as a car park. It is earmarked for redevelopment in the adopted Local Plan, and the allocation allows for leisure uses. Its prominence as a site in its own right is good, but would be a relatively isolated development in the context of regenerating the main city centre and enhancing the overall sense of place; other sites are superior in this

regard.

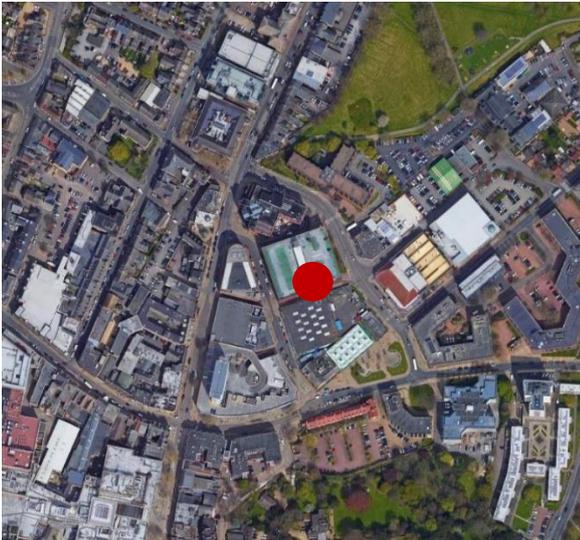
### *Pleasure Fair Meadows Car Park*



This site is located to the south of the city centre, near to the modern Fletton Quays and Vista developments. Transport access is good, with major bus connections within walking distance and a key-route bus stop immediately opposite the site. It is owned by the Peterborough Investment Partnership, which is 50% owned and controlled by the Council, and is allocated for development in the Local Plan. Its availability and ease of control is therefore very good. Its proximity to the city centre is slightly better, if not significantly so, than the existing Regional Pool's Bishop's Road site. The site is compelling in terms of prominence: its development would further strengthen the significant regeneration of

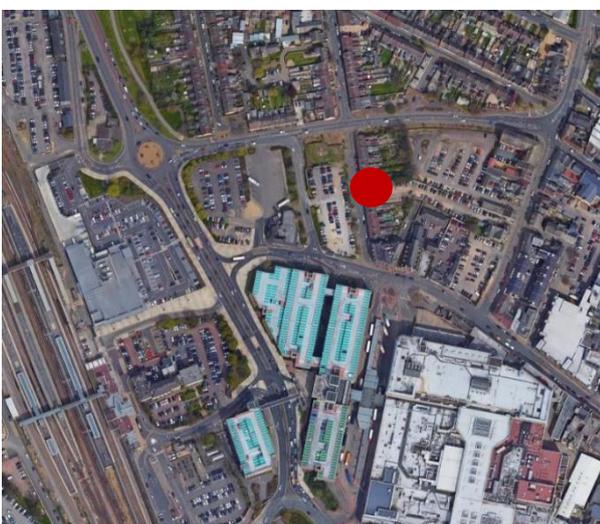
the South Bank area, and it would be highly visible from the East Coast Main Line; this visibility of the site and the regeneration of the surrounding areas represents an excellent opportunity to highlight Peterborough's continued growth and success to a large audience of national train travellers.

### *Northminster*



This is a city-centre site that is in the process of being transferred from the Council to the Peterborough Investment Partnership, which will bring a regeneration scheme forward similarly to how it approached Fletton Quays. The site is not immediately, therefore, available, but would be in relatively short-order. Accessibility is fair, with good walking connections to the city centre and access to the main bus station and nearby stops. The prominence of the site is relatively poor compared to others, and whilst the inclusion of a major leisure facility would be good for the wider scheme's development, it would take a significant amount of land on a site with a number of design constraints. In planning policy terms, a centre here is likely to be supported.

### *North Westgate*



This is a key city centre regeneration site, prominently located within easy walk to the railway station and the bus station. Its car connectivity is equally good, with Bourges Boulevard leading to it. It is allocated for a major mixed-use scheme, and a leisure facility is compatible with its planning allocation. Land ownership has, however, been a complex issue as there are diverse ownerships and the Council is looking to support a key landowner in the area with its CPO powers to bring a scheme forward over time. The site is unlikely to be available in even the medium term, therefore, and the Council controls only very small elements of it currently.

These represent significant constraints on using this area for this use at present.

*Mayor's Walk*



Located to the west of the city centre, this site is owned by Network Rail. It has potential to become available through a series of rationalisations related to the redevelopment of the station area, though this is unlikely to be in the short to medium term. Availability and control represent a challenge to this site's suitability for leisure re-provision. An edge of centre site, pedestrian access is adequate from the city centre, and it is a benefit that it is relatively close to the railway and bus stations.

*Maskew Avenue*



Located about a mile north of the city centre, the site has good vehicular connections thanks to the nearby dual carriageway. It is more isolated than the other site options, although there are pedestrian and cycle routes that connect to the city centre through a series of underpasses, and there is a relatively nearby bus stop. The site is currently for sale, but is understood to have a number of interested parties. The site is allocated for B-class uses in planning terms, and therefore use as a leisure centre is not immediately supported by the adopted local plan.

Site Comparison Summary and Selection

The table below takes a green, amber and red approach to rating each of the criteria discussed above for ease of comparison across sites.

Site	City Centre Proximity	Ease of Access	Availability	Ease of Control	Planning Policy	Site Prominence
<b>Existing Regional Pool</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Wellington Street Car Park</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●

<b>Pleasure Fair Meadows Car Park</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Northminster</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>North Westgate</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Mayor's Walk</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Maskew Avenue</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●

Based on the criteria, the preferred location is Pleasure Fair Meadows Car Park. Its mix of availability, access and ease of control in particular set it apart from other sites. Northminster and Wellington Street are the next-best as alternatives.