



Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Marianne Hesketh, Director of Communities	Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder and Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	31 October 2024

Leisure Centre Improvement Works

Key decision: yes

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To request approval for various building improvement works at Poulton, Fleetwood and Thornton Leisure Centres to be funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Leisure Management Reserve and to be added to the capital programme for 2024/25.

2. Council priorities

2.1 We will improve our leisure facilities ensuring they meet the needs of our residents and visitors.

2.2 We will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

2.3 We will explore innovative approaches to reduce carbon emissions from council operations and support our communities and businesses to do the same.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That approval is given for a new pool cover at Poulton Leisure Centre (costing £15,390) funded by the Leisure Management Reserve and for this to be added to the capital programme for 2024/25. The Resources Portfolio Holder to allow this under exemptions to contract procedures, contained within the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules on the grounds that: "the goods, works or services are of a specialised

nature carried out by only one or a limited number of firms with no reasonably satisfactory alternatives available.”

- 3.2** That approval is given for the re-purposing of the fitness suite area at Fleetwood Leisure Centre to become an exercise studio at a cost of £35,819 to be funded by UKSPF and for this to be added to the capital programme for 2024/25.
- 3.3** That approval is given for a new sports hall and storage area floor to be fitted at Thornton Leisure Centre at a cost of £75,396 to be funded by the Leisure Management Reserve and for this to be added to the capital programme for 2024/25.

4. Background

- 4.1** In 2023, the council applied to Sport England for funding to commission an energy efficiency study of our leisure centres. This study was completed by leisure consultants, KKP. The report gave a series of recommendations, including the installation of new pool covers at our swimming pool sites. A previous portfolio holder report in February 2023, gave approval for new pool covers to be installed at the two Fleetwood swimming pools and at Garstang swimming pool to help reduce the gas consumption and improve energy efficiency at both of those sites. These pool covers are working really well and it is now recommended that we also get a pool cover for Poulton. The return on investment is expected to be realised within two years.
- 4.2** The sports hall at Thornton Leisure Centre has been in place since the leisure centre opened over fifty years ago. The sports hall is extremely well used and is fully booked most of the week and all weekend. The floor has had various repairs over the years but now needs a full replacement as the screed underneath the floor has failed. The sports hall generated over £68,000 of income in 2023/24 and there were over 30,000 visits to the various activities and sports that took place within it. These activities included exercise classes, netball, disability sport, badminton, short tennis, pickleball and gymnastics, with over 300 children taking part in gymnastics alone. The sports hall is hired by three high schools and nine local groups such Together We Can Do, Northern Taekwondo, Blackpool Boccia, Wyre Netball, Fleetwood Town Community Trust and Eclipse Taekwondo. Many users join Thornton Leisure Centre on a membership to play racquet sports on a regular basis.
- 4.3** The fitness suite at Fleetwood Leisure Centre is currently split between two areas of the site, the sports hall and the fitness suite area adjacent to the swimming pool. This is not ideal for customers as they have to walk from one area to another to be able to complete their workouts. Exercise classes currently take place in the sports hall which is not conducive to many of the popular less energetic or low impact programs such as Pilates. Feedback from customers tells us that this area is too public for exercise classes and people walking past to access the gym area is off putting. The fitness suite and exercise classes are a really popular part of

the leisure centre's offer so it is vital that customers feel confident and able to exercise in designated areas that meet their needs. There were 17,065 visits to Fleetwood Leisure Centre between April and September 2024 for dry activities (these include gym and exercise classes). This number is far lower than we would expect for the site. Garstang Leisure Centre over the same period had 23,610 visits and Poulton Leisure Centre 23,741. Improving the offer, retaining current members and attracting new members is crucial and the proposed improvements will help us to do this.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** It is recommended that a pool cover is purchased for the swimming pool at Poulton Leisure Centre as the pool is currently without a cover. This will help us reduce gas consumption, improve energy efficiency at the site and will also reduce humidity in the pool area, which has also been identified as an issue in the energy efficiency study. Provision of a pool cover should see a return on the investment over the next two years. The cost of this is £15,390. There is one main provider of swimming pool covers, Forge Leisure. They successfully installed our other pool covers. We propose to directly appoint Forge Leisure for this item and the cost is £15,390.
- 5.2** The sports hall floor at Thornton Leisure centre needs replacing, it is over fifty years old and has deteriorated significantly. Without a full replacement we are in danger of the area being closed. The surface is already failing with only four out of the currently five marked badminton courts being available for use. This results in netball groups having less play space and results in a reduced booking rate for the space. Exercise classes are having to work around the courts where the flooring has failed and the centre cannot currently use the sports hall for football bookings as it is too uneven. The activity boccia are having to use temporary tape markings and it means they cannot use the space for tournaments and events. There is a risk that if the floor is not replaced then further deterioration will take place and ultimately this will result in further unusable space and therefore further reductions in the activities available and a further impact on income.
- 5.3** There is also some removal and replacement of flooring required in the storage areas in the sports hall as they contain asbestos and are starting to break up. This creates a health and safety risk and so the work needs to be completed alongside the replacement of the sports hall floor.
- 5.4** We have worked hard to identify the best solution for the sports hall floor and recommend that a product called Polyflor sports flooring is used. This flooring will enable us to have a really high quality, durable floor that will last for many years to come and has been successfully used at many sports and leisure facilities across the UK.
- 5.5** The council invited contractors to bid to provide and install the Polyflor sports flooring and the replacement for the storage area flooring needed through the ProContract procurement portal. Three bids were received through the portal and evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation panel recommendation is to award the contract to Bank Flooring Solutions as they provided the most economically advantageous tender. The other two bids were at a significantly higher cost so a 20% contingency has been added owing to this difference in price and to ensure that all elements have been accounted for.

- 5.6** It is recommended that a new exercise/dance studio is created at Fleetwood Leisure Centre and to enable this to happen, the existing gym equipment will be moved into the sports hall, freeing up the existing fitness space adjacent to the pool. This would enable a physical activity programme to be developed which better serves the local community. It will support and boost the centre's membership and adult activity income streams by creating a stronger group exercise regime whilst also enhancing the gym goers experience. The council invited contractors to bid for the improvement works needed through the ProContract procurement portal. Four bids were received through the portal and evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria. The evaluation panel recommendation is to award the contract to Ellis and York as they provided the most economically advantageous tender.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** The option not to install a pool cover on the swimming pool at Poulton has been considered but this has been rejected as we want to meet carbon reduction targets and the cost of installation has a relatively short return on investment and is considered sensible to fund.
- 6.2** The sports hall floor at Thornton Leisure Centre could remain as is but without the investment this would affect attendances, would affect income at our best performing site and could result in reduced reputational standing if we were not to keep the facilities in the condition site users expect.
- 6.3** The current split set up could remain at Fleetwood Leisure Centre and we could decide not to move the gym and invest in an exercise studio but this would not help us to retain existing members and attract new ones. By not doing this option, it could negatively affect the income line and therefore the subsidy at the site.

7. Delegated functions

- 7.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Leisure, Health and Communities Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution): "To consider matters relating to sport and recreation, including sports facilities" and the executive functions delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder "To consider arrangements for a strategic approach for the Council's procurement of goods and services" and "To consider the management, repair, maintenance and use of the Council's land and buildings".

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	<p>The pool cover at Poulton Leisure Centre will cost £15,390, the replacement of the sports hall floor and the storage area floor at Thornton Leisure Centre will cost £75,396 and the fitness suite conversion into an exercise studio at Fleetwood Leisure Centre will cost £35,819.</p> <p>The total cost of all the works is £126,605. The fitness suite will be funded by UKSPF so this leaves a balance of £90,786 to be funded from the Leisure Management Reserve.</p>
Legal	The procurement complies with the Council's Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules on Contract Procedures.
Climate Change	The pool covers will reduce energy consumption and energy bills. Returns on investment should be realised within two years.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with an x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	✓
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	Date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

None