

Leicester  
City Council

## **MEETING OF THE CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**DATE: THURSDAY, 22 JANUARY 2026**

**TIME: 5:30 pm**

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

### **Members of the Committee**

Councillor Zaman (Chair)

Councillor Halford (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Dr Barton, Cassidy, Chauhan, Dave, Haq and Waddington

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

### **Officer contacts:**

*Ed Brown (Governance Services) [Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk) and Julie Bryant (Governance Services) [Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk) or E-mail: [Governance@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Governance@leicester.gov.uk) Address: Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ*

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- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: Ed Brown or Julie Bryant, Governance Services on [Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk) or [Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk). Alternatively, email [governance@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:governance@leicester.gov.uk), or call in at City Hall.

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## **PUBLIC SESSION**

## **AGENDA**

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#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members will be asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** **Appendix A**

The minutes of the meetings of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

#### **4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

#### **5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

#### **6. PETITIONS**

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

#### **7. DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2026/27** **Appendix B**

The Director of Finance submits a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed Draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27.

**8. DRAFT THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME  
2026/27** **Appendix C**

The Director of Finance submits a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed Draft Three Year Capital Programme 2026/27.

**9. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES UPDATE (6-MONTHLY  
UPDATE)** **Appendix D**

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report providing an update on matters related to the council's Bereavement Services.

**10. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER TASK GROUP -  
SCOPING DOCUMENT** **Appendix E**

The Chair submits a report providing members of the Committee with a proposed scope for the task group on Community Asset Transfer, and the opportunity to comment on the scope for the review, suggest issues to include and consider joining the group.

**11. LEISURE CENTRE NEEDS ASSESSMENT** **Appendix F**

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report which sets out the primary and secondary research that will inform the next five-year plan and outlines how Active Leicester will continue to respond effectively to both commercial pressures and wider social challenges.

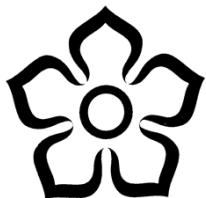
**12. DE MONTFORT HALL & HAYMARKET THEATRE** **Appendix G**

The Director of Tourism Culture and Economy submits a report updating on the operational and financial progress at De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket Theatre, which are being managed as an integrated service.

**13. WORK PROGRAMME** **Appendix H**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

**14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Zaman – Chair  
Councillor Halford – Vice-Chair

Councillor Dr Barton  
Councillor Chauhan  
Councillor Haq

Councillor Cassidy  
Councillor Dave  
Councillor Waddington

In Attendance:

Deputy City Mayor – Councillor Cutkelvin  
Assistant City Mayor – Councillor Dempster

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**157. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

There were no apologies for absence.

**158. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

**159. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on 11 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **160. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced that a meeting had taken place with regard to the task group on Community Asset Transfer, and a scoping document was in the process of being compiled.

The Chair further announced that a special meeting would take place on 27<sup>th</sup> November to discuss Libraries and Community Centres. Members would be briefed on this prior to the meeting.

## **161. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

## **162. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

## **163. WARD FUNDING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment submitted a report to provide an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2024 and March 2025. The report sought to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services joined the meeting to present the report.

Key points in addition to those in the report as attached with the agenda included:

- New ward funding guidelines had been published in November 2024.
- As part of the new guidelines, the three assessment dates for grants of over £500 had been removed in order to improve timescales for payments.
- It was stressed that elected members should have flexibility to make arrangements on ward limits with regard to the allocated funding on each grant.
- There would be more active reporting on the size and resources of applicants so that this could be taken into account when assessing bids.
- Of the successful applications, 222 of these were for bids of under £500 (52% of all applications). The Council welcomed smaller applications so that more things could happen in the ward.
- Activities were itemised, the most common category was developing and supporting communities.

- There had been 4,582 volunteers engaged in organising, coordinating, and delivering ward funded activities.
- £53,245 had been spent on Council delivered value added schemes, much of this was on environmental projects.
- Match funding was £524k, meaning that there was £1.39 leveraged for every £1 spent.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- Issues were raised around the fact that all wards received the same funding regardless of size. It was noted that this had been addressed by the task group in 2024 which had not recommended to change the proportion of funding according to ward size.
- With regard to queries raised about declared other sources of funding, it was noted that larger organisations who provided match funding for big events skewed the figures. Further information on this could be disseminated to members, including a list of where external funding was coming from, and what was being funded by it.
- A key part of the funding process was the evaluation process following delivery. Organisations must give evaluations of how the funding was used to be eligible for the next round of funding. This also enabled the Council to audit how money was used.
- A suggestion that video clips be produced of organisations showing how funding was used could be looked into.
- It was raised that it was important to recognise how vital ward funding was for people struggling and making a difference in people's lives. Particularly with regard to providing activities for children.

AGREED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

#### **164. FLY TIPPING UPDATE**

The Head of Standards and Development presented a report to update the commission on fly-tipping in Leicester, since the previous report of January 2025.

The following key points were noted, which were not included or highlighted on the slides:

- Fly-tipping rates remained stable across the wards when compared over recent years.
- Rates had peaked during COVID but had since reduced.

- More densely populated wards had the highest fly-tipping rates.
- Leicester compared relatively favourably when benchmarked against other Local Authorities.
- Leicester City had higher fly-tipping rates than the lower populated Leicestershire boroughs.
- Hazard tape surrounding an area of waste indicated an ongoing investigation.
- Ward Action Plans enabled partnership working and education.
- Targeted action had proved successful in the St Matthews area.
- Communications aimed to reflect the diversity within the city.

In response to questions and comments from the Commission, it was noted that:

- Members suggested that future communications could place an emphasis on promoting collective accountability.
- The Love Clean Streets reporting tool had been notably effective. It was noted that Ward Councillors should encourage residents to use the app directly, rather than submitting reports on their behalf.
- CCTV had a dual purpose, as a deterrent and to identify culprits. Logistical issues could present problems. Numbers of cameras in use would be provided to the Commission.
- Discussions would take place with Ward Councillors to identify local hotspots. Data was available and would be shared with the Commission.
- Members suggested that a collective approach, joining Ward Funding together, could be beneficial.
- Educational approaches were key to addressing the issues and influencing behavioural change, rather than relying on the installation of additional CCTV.
- Covert filming was in place and had identified business waste.
- The Commission emphasised the importance of maintaining regular communications, and it was agreed that the contact number for reporting waste should be publicised as a frequent reminder.
- Posters could be placed in areas identified as frequent fly tipping zones.
- A refreshed communication strategy could incorporate information on the costs incurred by the council.
- Fly-tipping was frequent on non-council owned sites, such as on the railways, this presented enforcement challenges.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into

account.

*Cllr Cassidy arrived during the consideration of this item.*

#### **165. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Burial Strategy would come to the Commission on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and could include information on fees and how to encourage people to use the council cremation facilities.

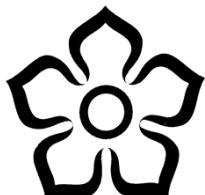
Responding to a query about longer wait-times for funerals, it was explained that this was due to a change in legislation on the medical examiner process and this was outside of the Council's control.

The work programme was noted.

#### **166. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 18:45





Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Zaman – Chair  
Councillor Halford – Vice Chair

Councillor Dr Barton  
Councillor Chauhan  
Councillor Haq

Councillor Cassidy  
Councillor Dave  
Councillor Waddington

In Attendance:

Assistant City Mayor – Councillor Dempster

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**167. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

**168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the proceedings.

Cllr Chauhan declared that he uses the library facilities.

**169. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Chair advised the Commission that questions would not normally be taken from the public at special meetings of the Commission, however, questions had been accepted on this occasion as they were relevant to the agenda being considered.

Members of the public then asked questions and responses were provided as follows:

Tony Patel thanked Councillor Dempster for her work across the wards and

asked:

*We propose that the Council establish User Community Groups at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, Rushey Mead Recreation Centre, and the two libraries. These partnerships would help identify income-generation opportunities for each centre and assess the evolving needs of the local communities and how best to meet them.*

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- This partnership model fitted well with the proposals.

Hasu Saujani asked:

*We ask that the Council does not revisit the CAT (Community Asset Transfer) issue regarding Rushey Mead and Belgrave community centres and libraries in the near future. Instead, we urge the Council to commit to working in partnership with users, residents, and the wider communities of Rushey Mead and Belgrave.*

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- There had been a long and in-depth consultation process.
- Decisions had been made to ensure sustainability.
- Decision making had been informed by the consultation, data and sustainability of buildings.

Hasu Saujani asked:

*Does the Council have its own proposals to improve the financial sustainability of sites that remain Council-run, not including any potential impact on staffing? For example, measures to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and increase usage of the centres and libraries? If so, please could this be outlined?*

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- This marked the beginning of the process.
- Partnership was required with the 'Friends of' groups to move forwards.

Hasu Saujani asked on behalf of Bharti Mistry:

*Aside from the CAT policy, has the Council considered any other models for operating neighbourhood services (community centres and libraries) across the city? And if so, what were they?*

The Head of Neighbourhood Services responded as follows:

- Alternative options considered were outlined in the Assessment and Recommendations report.
- The alternative options considered included shared services – for example library stock buying, the creation of a charitable body to run services, and withdrawal of council services from more facilities. However, each of these options had been discounted.
- The initial engagement showed that people wanted geographical spread even if this meant reduced staffed opening hours to retain more facilities.

Tony Patel asked on behalf of Bharti Mistry:

*Will the Council commit to reviewing the current arrangements and future direction for Belgrave and Rushey Mead? We seek assurance of strong frontline service delivery, improved outreach, and increased activity — particularly for diverse communities where English is not the first language, as well as for elderly residents, young people, disabled users, and those experiencing loneliness and isolation.*

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- The extensive consultation had resulted into the series of proposals.
- Annual reviews would be in place to review data.
- The emphasis was on working with the communities.

Tony Patel asked on behalf of Bharti Mistry:

*Can we clarify what plans are in place for development at Rushey Mead library, including potential use of the capital budget?*

The Head of Neighbourhood Services responded as follows:

- At this time there are no plans in place for the capital development of the library.
- Rushey Mead Library had received recent capital investment in 2019 which had addressed maintenance issues.

Tony Patel asked on behalf of Mala Shah:

*How much capital does LCC have (please provide breakdown of how much allocated and how much is in reserve)?*

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- No figure has as yet been agreed for the delivery of the recommendations for libraries and community centres.

Tony Patel asked on behalf of Mala Shah:

*Please would the council & the Assistant City Mayor for Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres accept a thank you for the decision relating to neighbourhood services particularly for those in Rushey Mead & Belgrave; With the new changes now being proposed, how much saving is the council looking to make at:*

- A. Rushey Mead library
- B. Rushey Mead recreation centre
- C. Belgrave library
- D. Belgrave neighbourhood centre

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- The recommendations would deliver an overall saving of £1.57 million for Neighbourhood Services as a whole. Budgets are set for the service as a whole.

Tony Patel asked on behalf of Mala Shah:

*If the council is looking to make savings at Rushey Mead Recreation Centre, Rushey Mead Library, Belgrave Library and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, please do provide a breakdown of where the current savings are coming from?*

The Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres responded as follows:

- The recommendations state that savings for Rushey Mead Recreation Centre and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre would be achieved through a 100% increase in income targets at these sites. Savings for retained libraries would be achieved through reduced staffing budgets as a result of reduced staffed opening hours.

The Chair advised that questions had been raised by Nizamuddin Patel who was not present at the meeting. The questions were as follows:

*Following the consultation, it is noted that in Netherhall either the Neighbourhood Centre or the Armadale Centre (pending a condition survey) will be considered for CAT.*

*Is there a reason why both buildings can't be considered for CAT?*

Officers would respond with the following by email as follows:

- During the consultation members of the community proposed the Armadale Centre is the preferred building for community activities as it is of more robust construction. Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre is of less

solid construction and is more exposed to vandalism, having been subject to vandalism and extensive damage in past years. The land on which the Armadale Centre is located is currently planned for affordable housing. There is a requirement for housing in the area and therefore should the Armadale Centre be retained for community use, then the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre plot would be required for housing.

Nizamuddin Patel:

*Can a timeframe be given as to how soon a condition survey can be completed and published of the Armadale Centre?*

Officers would respond with the following by email as follows:

- A condition survey of the Armadale Centre has been commissioned as a priority. It is anticipated the survey should be available within a matter of weeks.

## **170. ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT FOR LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY CENTRES**

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report providing an update on the findings of the recent public consultation (April 2025 – June 2025) and to provide commission members with an update on the future recommended delivery model for Libraries and Community Centres.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services introduced the item and gave an overview of the 3 attached reports. It was noted that:

- Recommendations had been developed over the previous two years with an assessment on service requirements.
- A high-profile public engagement had taken place over twelve weeks in 2023 with subsequent background work.
- Two reports were published in November 2024, and a consultation on proposals took place between April and June 25. Feedback received and an Assessment and Recommendations report were provided in the separate reports pack.

In response to member questions and discussion, it was noted that:

- Members expressed appreciation for the engagement work undertaken by officers.
- The proposed changes to opening hours were to take effect from September 2026, with savings delivered over a two-year period via a mixed delivery model. Any increase in charges would not be introduced until September of the following year, allowing residents time to prepare. Charges would be phased in over a two-year period.
- The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process could take approximately

12–18 months for those entering into it.

- Some buildings were considered unsuitable for Community Asset Transfer due to their poor condition and the cost of necessary upgrades. These buildings would need to be sold, with services relocated where appropriate prior to disposal. Work would ensue with the communities and Ward Councillors.
- Consideration of footfall and system transactions had informed the proposals for library opening times. Feedback from the consultation was used to amend the proposals for the final recommendations. Varied user needs were taken into account to support equity of access, with the aim of providing a well-distributed pattern of staffed hours.
- Arrangements would be made for existing community groups to continue accessing the facilities. Feedback from groups had been considered, and requests for staff presence on site for example for children's homework clubs or for community groups who are unable to self-access had been acknowledged.
- Officers confirmed that the consultation work was undertaken internally, without the use of external advisers or consultants.
- Inductions and training would be provided for users accessing the service during non-staffed hours.
- Members highlighted the benefits of libraries for schoolchildren completing homework. It was agreed that collaboration with schools could be advantageous. Regarding homework clubs, it was noted that while opportunities to engage with schools remained, current proposals adequately covered this provision.
- Members emphasised the need for clear information on opening times.
- Members stressed the importance of the community services for elderly people.
- Members noted the role of libraries and community centres in supporting individuals whose first language is not English. It was suggested that provision of international newspapers should be considered.
- Members suggested that once changes took effect, regular meetings with users should be held to gather feedback.

*Councillor Barton left during consideration of this item.*

The Chair proposed an amendment to the Assessment & Recommendations Report for Libraries and Community Centres as follows:

*The Culture and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Commission proposes that Section 1.18 of the Assessment & Recommendations Report for Libraries and Community Centres be amended to reflect the following. The Commission recognises the financial pressures facing the Council and the need to identify savings and notes that the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre (FNC) is a large and expensive building to operate. It also notes the Council's intention to dispose of the site.*

*The Commission proposes that the report clearly states that the Council will make every effort to dispose of the FNC to a suitable community organisation*

*for a nominal fee, so that all current services can continue to operate from the building. If this is not possible and the FNC must be sold on the open market, the report should confirm that the Council will secure suitable alternative accommodation within Fosse Ward for all services currently delivered from the FNC.*

*The Commission further proposes that the report states that all services will continue to operate from the FNC until alternative accommodation is identified, agreed, and ready for use.*

*In addition, the Commission requests that the report includes a clear expectation that if the FNC is sold, both the Council as seller and any future owner will ensure the site is properly secured and maintained, and does not become an eyesore, nuisance, or source of anti-social behaviour for local residents. There should also be a clear commitment that the site will be brought back into use and developed within an agreed and reasonable timeframe.*

*The Culture and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Commission asks that these amendments are incorporated into the final Assessment & Recommendations Report before it is submitted to the Executive for approval and sign-off.*

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Waddington.

A member vote took place, 5 were in favour and 2 against, and the recommendation was therefore carried.

AGREED:

- That the reports be noted.
- That the recommendation agreed by the commission be considered by the Assistant City Mayor and Executive before a decision is made.

There being no other items to discuss, the meeting concluded at 19:10.



# Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/27

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: Draft for 25 February 2026

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

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**City Mayor**

## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Catherine Taylor/Amy Oliver
- Author contact details: [amy.oliver@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:amy.oliver@leicester.gov.uk)
- Report version number: 1

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the City Mayor's strategy for balancing the budget for the next 3 years and to seek approval to the actual budget for 2026/27. The strategy is a continuation of the medium-term strategy established last year and includes the use of one-off money and reductions in annual service spending through savings and work to reduce the growth areas such as social care and homelessness. It is designed to ensure we remain financially sustainable for as long as possible, while we continue to seek ways to reduce the ongoing budget gap.
- 1.2. Whilst the strategy is forecast to provide sufficient reserves to balance the budget for at least the next three years, and is a significant improvement on previous forecasts, an ongoing budget gap continues. The Council continues to annually spend more than the income received and is using one-off monies to balance the budget. The City Mayor will continue to make these points to the Government.
- 1.3. The proposed budget for 2026/27 is described in this report, subject to any amendments the City Mayor may wish to recommend when he makes a firm proposal to the Council.

### **2. Summary**

- 2.1. As members will be aware, the financial outlook is difficult. Like many authorities, we have ongoing difficulties in being able to balance our budget. A number of authorities have previously applied to the Government for "exceptional financial support", and/or to issue a formal report under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. We are unaware if further authorities will be applying for EFS as part of this year's budget setting
- 2.2. We have so far been able to avoid reaching a financial crisis point, by the use of a "managed reserves strategy" and a multi-strand budget strategy approved last year. This is progressing, and the underlying financial position – while still difficult – has improved from last year's forecasts. As a result, this report proposes continuing the existing financial strategy and extending it to March 2029.
- 2.3. We are continuing with our £60m asset sales program, however we are not envisaging requiring a capitalisation direction over the three-year period of this financial strategy. Therefore, we will look to use this to fund some of the previously approved capital budget to relieve the borrowing pressures in the years the capital receipts are received.

- 2.4. Achieving our strategic vision for the Council is dependent on establishing a sustainable budget position, which enables decisions to be made that balance the resource implications against the financial constraints. This strategy does not make specific decisions about how any service will be delivered, but provides a framework within which those decisions will be made. In particular, it reinforces our commitment to providing high quality care services, and provides additional resources in this area. We are also looking to maintain our economic development to support the long term vision for the City and invest in areas that improve the city for the people that live here.
- 2.5. In addition, to this we are continuing to mitigate the pressures within temporary accommodation by investing in additional accommodation for these households. This strategy looks to provide the revenue support to continue with our positive approach to preventing homelessness, alongside significant capital investment included in the capital budget strategy.
- 2.6. Estimates of our available funding are particularly uncertain this year. The government is undertaking a substantial review of support to local authorities; at the time of writing, the outcome of a consultation has just been published, and we do not expect to have the finance settlement for 2026/27 until just before Christmas. As a result, this draft budget report is based on estimates that could change significantly. However, given the wider position of the public finances, it is very unlikely that any changes will eliminate the substantial gap between our annual spending and income.
- 2.7. Local government reorganisation (LGR) could deliver significant efficiency savings to support the Council's budget, depending on the option chosen by the Government. As these would not start to materialise until 2028/29 at the earliest, the impact has been disregarded for the purposes of this report.
- 2.8. The report proposes a council tax increase of just under 5%, which is the maximum we believe we will be allowed to set without a referendum.
- 2.9. The medium-term outlook is attached at Appendix 4 and shows the escalating scale of the financial pressures facing the council.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. At the meeting in February, the Council will be asked to:
  - a) approve the three year budget strategy described in this report;
  - b) approve the proposed budget and council tax for 2026/27, including the recommendations in the formal budget resolution, subject to any changes proposed by the City Mayor when he makes his final proposal to the Council;
  - c) approve the budget ceilings for each service, drafts of which will be at Appendix 1 to the final report;
  - d) approve the scheme of virement described in Appendix 2 to this report;

- e) note my view on the adequacy of reserves and the estimates used in preparing the budget;
- f) note the equality implications arising from the proposed tax increase, as described in paragraph 15 and Appendix 3;
- g) note the medium-term financial strategy and forecasts presented at Appendix 4, and the significant financial challenges ahead;
- h) note the earmarked reserves position that will be set out at Appendix 5 to the final report;
- i) note the policy on council tax premiums and discounts set out at Appendix 6;
- j) note the council tax support scheme has been reviewed by the Executive, and reported to OSC, during the year;
- k) approve the inflationary increase to Council Tax Support Scheme thresholds as shown at Appendix 7 and approve further inflationary increases in future years (to be calculated with reference to published CPI inflation for the September prior to the start of the year in question);
- l) approve the capital receipts flexibility policy that will be at Appendix 8.

#### **4. Background and Financial Strategy**

- 4.1. Between 2010 and 2020, a “decade of austerity” meant that services other than social care had to be reduced by 53% in real terms, limiting our scope to make further cuts. This was followed by the covid-19 pandemic which led to “stop gap” budgets whilst we dealt with the immediate emergency, and saw the budgets being supported by reserves.
- 4.2. This is alongside cost pressures shared by authorities across the country. These include pressures on the costs of children that are looked after and support for homeless households, as well as the long-standing pressures in adult social care and the hike in inflation. The budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were supported by a further £61m and £31m of reserves respectively.
- 4.3. Plans for a “fair funding” review of grant allocation have been repeatedly delayed. This has left us providing services to a population far in excess of our last needs assessment (population has grown faster than elsewhere in the country, so an equitable system ought to give us a greater share of the national pot). The review is now being introduced for the 2026/27 financial year, although full implementation will take several years.
- 4.4. In February 2025, the Council approved a multi-strand budget strategy aimed at balancing the budget for a minimum three years. This includes:

**Strand 1** - Releasing one-off monies to buy time, including the release of £90m from the capital reserve, and replacing this with borrowing to fund the capital programme;

**Strand 2** - Reductions in the capital programme to reduce the borrowing required, and therefore reduce the cost of this borrowing;

**Strand 3** – A programme of property sales aiming to secure an additional £60m of one-off monies. These receipts cannot be used to support the revenue budget without permission from the Secretary of State. It is now planned to use some of the capital receipts to support the capital programme and reduced the revenue cost of borrowing.

**Strand 4** – Steps to constrain growth in those statutory services that are under demand led pressure (i.e. adult and children's social care services, and homelessness).

**Strand 5** – Ongoing savings totalling £23m per year by 2027/28.

- 4.5. Progress against each of these strands is set out in the sections below, along with a limited number of areas of additional investment to assist in meeting corporate priorities.
- 4.6. Given the progress already made, and some improvements in factors outside our direct control, we now expect to have reserves available at the end of the forecast period (March 2029). However, these reserves are one-off funding and an underlying budget gap remains (although improved) which will need to be met in the longer term.

## 5. Strands 1-3: releasing one-off monies and reductions in the capital programme

- 5.1. Last year's forecasts included the release of £90m from the capital reserve, and £20m from other earmarked reserves. Since the budget was approved, a further £12m has been added to the budget reserve from subsequent reviews and additional one-off income.
- 5.2. Given the difficult financial outlook, earmarked reserves are kept under regular review, and amounts that are no longer required for their original purpose are released to the budget strategy reserve. This has now identified a further £0.5m that can be used to support the overall budget position.
- 5.3. The programme of property sales is continuing, and has achieved £21m in completed or legally contracted sales, with a further £55m of sales being progressed.
- 5.4. Originally, it was forecast that these receipts would be required to balance the budget after the 3-year strategy (which would require specific permission from the government). To do this, we would need to borrow money to fund the capital programme, which increases our revenue costs in the longer term. Given the improvement in reserves balances in the latest forecasts, options are now being explored to use some of these receipts to reduce our borrowing requirements.

- 5.5. Available one-off funding has also been reviewed to ensure future costs are provided for. As detailed in paragraph 9 below, it is proposed to set monies aside towards transitional costs associated with local government reorganisations, and the DSG cumulative deficit when the current statutory override ends.

## 6. **Strand 4: Constraining Growth in Service Demand**

- 6.1. For several years, one of the chief reasons for our budget gap is growth in the costs of statutory services, particularly social care (and, more recently, homelessness), which have outstripped growth in our income.

### **Adult Social Care**

- 6.2. The budget for **Adult Social Care** requires growth to take account of demographic and inflationary pressures. Demographic pressures can be the result of increased packages of support to those people already receiving care, or a change in the mix of people we provide care for, for example more working age people are diagnosed early with life-long health conditions such as mental health and dementia. Inflationary pressures arise from increases in National Living Wage (NLW) and general inflation.

- 6.3. Calculating future growth is a complex process taking into account current care packages and future projections. The growth required can be seen in the following table:

	<b>2026/27</b> £m	<b>2027/28</b> £m	<b>2028/29</b> £m
Underlying budget	179.1	179.1	179.1
Placement growth	14.8	29.8	45.1
Additional income	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)
Vacancy factor	(0.4)	(0.2)	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>191.5</b>	<b>206.7</b>	<b>222.2</b>

- 6.4. The department continues to reduce growth in the costs of care by reducing new entrants, preventative and early support, and by enhanced partnership working. Tracking of current package costs indicate that the department may have spent £24m more in 2025/26 (rising to £41m in 2026/27) if cost mitigation work had not taken place. This programme of work continues, and the future growth pressures identified above takes this into account. Despite this work, it is forecast that costs of care will increase by over £40m over the three years of this strategy.

- 6.5. The council has undertaken significant work to ensure that other local authority and health partners are contributing their fair share towards care costs. Through this work, adult social care have generated an additional £2.6m in 2025/26. Although we do not anticipate a sudden drop in future, this additional income is subject to the changes that

occur in care packages following reassessments or changes in a person's health conditions.

- 6.6. Adult Social Care was rated as 'Requires Improvement' by the CQC in July. They recognised that we have an effective care and support system, there is clear governance in place and that we are committed to staff development. However, as there were areas for improvement identified, we are implementing an action plan focussing on this.
- 6.7. Adult social care continues to struggle with recruiting and are undertaking significant work to reduce vacancies. However, we need to recognise that they are unlikely to be fully established in 2026/27, so have included a vacancy factor that will reduce over the three strategy period.

## **Education and Children's Services**

- 6.8. The budget for **Education and Children's Services** will require growth in future years. This is due to the increasing costs of providing children's social care, particularly where a small number of care packages incur a significant cost due to the specific needs of those children.
- 6.9. The growth required has been estimated as shown in the following table.

	<b>2026/27</b> £m	<b>2027/28</b> £m	<b>2028/29</b> £m
Underlying budget	120.1	120.1	120.1
Growth already in the strategy	1.0	2.1	0
Additional growth required	3.3	4.9	8.7
Vacancy factor	(1.0)	(0.5)	(0.2)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123.4</b>	<b>126.6</b>	<b>128.6</b>

- 6.10. There is a strategy in place to increase our in-house offer providing better quality accommodation, improved quality control, lower likelihood of placement breakdowns and better matching to the needs of young people. This is also anticipated to provide better cost efficiency than external placements. It costs on average £260,200 per annum across our internal provision compared to £302,667 externally in residential settings; costs are lower by about 14% in our internal homes, along with having better outcomes.
- 6.11. This cost differential will be greater as we plan to improve our capabilities for providing in-house support for children and young people with complex needs, particularly those at risk of deprivation of liberty orders (DOLs) or living in accommodation unregulated by Ofsted. This may also benefit children who are living in care out of the city in need of a local residential placement. The capital build costs will be funded jointly with the Department of Education (DFE) and these two new children's homes are expected to be operational in 2027.

- 6.12. We are part of a pilot Families First Partnership (FFP) programme where we are working with our safeguarding partners to transform and expand preventative support. The overall aim is to keep more families together by strengthening kinship support and ultimately gain a significant reduction in the numbers of looked after children. Several work strands are underway including family group decision making, improving the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and information sharing between partners. Through this work, the department has avoided costs of £1.3m in 2025/26 and this is expected to continue in future years.
- 6.13. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) cumulative deficit at the end of 2024/25 was £22.5m and is forecast to be £44.8m by the end of the current financial year 2025/26. The government has extended the statutory override to the end of 2027/28 whilst it considers reform to the funding for SEND and children's social care. The government have indicated that they will resolve (or centrally fund) DSG deficits occurring after April 2028, but it is not clear how deficits already accrued will be resolved; our cumulative deficit could be as high as £78m by the end of 2027/28. Therefore, it is planned to set aside the funding of the deficit to date from the budget reserve. This transfer will be made in the outturn monitoring report once the final deficit figure is known. Local authorities are not allowed to charge borrowing costs of the cumulative deficit to the DSG but have to pay it from the General Fund.

## General Fund Housing

- 6.14. The budget for **homelessness** has been under severe pressure due to increased numbers of households presenting as homeless, and growth of £11m, in addition to a £6m contingency, was included in the 2025/26 budget. Mitigating work, including £45m of investment in temporary housing, has avoided an estimated £59m of costs by 26/27. However, the number of cases continues to increase and (without further action) will put further pressure on future years' budgets.
- 6.15. The 2026/27 General Fund Capital Programme Report (also on your agenda) includes the addition of £50m for the direct acquisition of properties for use as temporary accommodation. The revenue implications of this investment are covered within that report. Alongside acquisitions, it is proposed that we grow the number of properties leased from private sector landlords by 110; the cost of leasing a property is significantly less than hotel stays, and is estimated to result in the avoidance of annual revenue costs. Given the increasing number of homelessness presentations, additional staff are required to ensure that the focus remains on prevention rather than alleviation of need, and funding for additional staff is included in this budget.
- 6.16. The overall revenue impact of the above is estimated as:

	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	28/29 £m
Additional growth required without further mitigations	5.9	12.0	12.0
Net revenue impact of property acquisitions	(2.2)	(6.2)	(6.2)

Net impact of additional leased properties	(1.7)	(3.9)	(3.9)
Additional staffing cost	1.8	1.8	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>

- 6.17. In recent years, nationally the cost of Housing Benefit linked to supported housing has continued to rise and this is the same for us. Unlike the majority of Housing Benefit, these elements are not fully funded through government subsidy, and we have limited ability to influence either the level of rents charged or the claims themselves. The forthcoming changes to licensing and rent setting under the Supported Housing Act should improve our ability to manage these cases, but this will take time to have a material impact. To reflect the ongoing pressure, growth of £1.5m per year has been included in the proposed budget.

## 7. Strand 5 – Savings Programme

- 7.1. The budget strategy approved last year required achievement of savings totalling £23m by 2027/28. Progress against these savings targets has been regularly monitored and reported in the quarterly budget monitoring reports. By period 6 in 2025/26, over 60% of the £23m total had already been achieved:

	Target (full year) £m	Achieved to date £m
Estates & Building Services	2.8	1.0
Housing	1.0	0.9
Neighbourhoods & Environmental Services	7.2	2.1
Planning, Development and Transportation	4.0	4.0
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment	2.3	2.3
Children's Services	1.0	1.0
Corporate Services	2.0	0.9
Financial Services	1.1	0.4
Adult Social Care	1.2	1.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>13.7</b>

- 7.2. More details on these savings can be found in the regular quarterly monitoring reports. Work is ongoing to realise the balance of the savings total.

## 8. Additional Investment

- 8.1. Given the underlying financial pressures, the scope for additional investment is limited. However, growth has been built into the budget for some priority areas:
- 8.2. During the redevelopment of the central market there is a shortfall of income as a consequence of a reduction in the number of traders and a lower fee being charged.

£450k is being made available in 2026/27 to cover this shortfall in income until the new market becomes operational.

- 8.3. This budget includes funding for a permanent team, building on the pilot work already underway, to better manage public spaces across the city. At a cost of £0.3m per year, the hybrid team will work 7 days a week to tackle anti-social behaviour and environmental enforcement, working alongside the existing City Warden, Public Health and Housing teams.
- 8.4. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a government grant to invest in communities, businesses, people and skills, which runs until March 2026. This funding has been supporting some Council services such as festival, inward investment and business/retail support team. Without the addition of the £1m to the budget this would lead to this work not continuing.
- 8.5. Ash dieback is a disease which ultimately leads to the death of ash trees, of which there are 19,000 across the City. The disease increases the chance of branches becoming brittle and falling. Whilst this risk has been appropriately managed, existing budgets have become strained and a dedicated team is needed to deal with this going forward. £0.3m is being made available for a team to monitor sites and prioritise trees for removal.

## **9. Budget Strategy Reserve**

- 9.1. When the 2025/26 budget was set, the budget strategy reserve was forecast to be £163.6m at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, reducing to £25m by March 2028. There have been improvements to the forecasts, offset by the need to set aside amounts to meet the historic DSG deficit as described in 6.13 above. Updated forecasts show that we are now expecting a balance of £27.2m by March 2029:

	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>	<b>2027/28 £m</b>	<b>2028/29 £m</b>
<b>At the beginning of the year</b>	<b>193.8</b>	<b>129.9</b>	<b>101.7</b>	<b>71.2</b>
Add: Forecast rates pool surplus	7.5			
<i>Reserve restatements:</i>				
From earmarked reserves		0.5		
Set aside for DSG deficit	(44.8)			
Set aside for LGR transitional costs		(14.0)		
Minus budget gap	(26.6)	(14.7)	(30.5)	(44.0)
<b>At the end of the year</b>	<b>129.9</b>	<b>101.7</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>27.2</b>

## **10. Construction of the 2026/27 budget**

- 10.1. By law, the Council's role in budget setting is to determine
  - a) The level of council tax;
  - b) The limits on the amount the City Mayor is entitled to spend on any service ("budget ceilings") - proposed budget ceilings are shown at Appendix 1;
- 10.2. In line with Finance Procedure Rules, the Council must also approve the scheme of virement that controls subsequent changes to these ceilings. The proposed scheme is shown at Appendix 2.
- 10.3. The budget is based on a proposed Band D tax for 2026/27 of £2,121.87, an increase of just under 5% compared to 2025/26. This is the maximum which will be permitted without a referendum.
- 10.4. The tax levied by the City Council constitutes only part of the tax Leicester citizens have to pay (albeit the major part – 84% in 2025/26). Separate taxes are raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Fire Authority. These are added to the Council's tax, to constitute the total tax charged.
- 10.5. The actual amounts people will be paying, however, depend upon the valuation band their property is in and their entitlement to any discounts, exemptions or benefit. Almost 80% of properties in the city are in band A or band B, so the tax will be lower than the Band D figure quoted above. The Council also has schemes for mitigating hardship.
- 10.6. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Fire Authority will set their precepts in February 2026. The formal resolution will set out the precepts issued for 2026/27, together with the total tax payable in the city.

## **11. 2026/27 Budget Overview**

- 11.1. The table below summarises the proposed budget for 2026/27 (projections for a full three-year period are included in the medium-term strategy at Appendix 4):

	<b>2026/27</b>
	<b>£m</b>
<b>Net service budget</b>	<b>456.8</b>
Provision for pay inflation	6.0
Corporate budgets (including capital finance)	12.4
Housing Benefits	1.5
General contingency for risk	1.0
<b>Expenditure total</b>	<b>477.7</b>
<b>Income:</b>	
Council tax	179.3
Collection Fund surplus	0.8

Settlement Funding Assessment	275.5
Extended Producer Responsibility for Waste	7.4
<b>Income total</b>	<b>463.0</b>
<b>Remaining budget gap (to be met from reserves)</b>	<b>14.7</b>

## **12. Departmental Budget Ceilings**

- 12.1. Budget ceilings have been prepared for each service, calculated as follows:
- a) The starting point is last year's budget, subject to any changes made since then which are permitted by the constitution (e.g. virement);
  - b) An allowance is made for non-pay inflation on a restricted number of budgets. Our general rule is that no allowance is made, and departments are expected to manage with the same cash sum that they had in the previous year. Exceptions are made for the budgets for independent sector adult social care (2%) and foster care (2%) but as these areas of service are receiving growth funding, an inflation allowance is merely academic (we pay from one pot rather than another). Budgets for the waste PFI contract have been increased by RPI, in line with contract terms.
  - c) Unavoidable growth has been built into the budget. This has been mitigated by action that has already been taken to control costs in demand-led areas, as detailed in paragraph 6 above. Budgets have also been increased for the investment described at section 8.
  - d) Savings requirements for 2026/27, as set out in last year's budget strategy, have been deducted from service budgets, along with additional savings that have been approved subsequently to the strategy being set.
  - e) Budget ceilings have been reduced to reflect the reduction in employers' pension contributions from April 2026. The pension fund is managed by the County Council and its performance is reviewed by independent actuaries every 3 years. The actuaries examine investment performance in particular, and seek to ensure that all councils in the scheme make future contributions that are sufficient to pay all pensions when they become due. Our contributions are paid as a percentage of payroll costs, and previous reviews have usually led to an increase. As a consequence of the most recent review, we will be paying around £9m per year less than we are now. Members are asked to note that this does not reflect any reduction in the Council's overall liabilities: ultimately, we have to pay sufficient contributions to the County Council to ensure that all future pension costs are paid. Note that employees also pay a percentage of their earnings to the fund – these amounts are fixed by law.

- 12.2. The proposed budget ceilings are set out in Appendix 1.

- 12.3. In recent years, the pay award for local government staff has not been agreed until part way through the financial year. A central provision is held to fund the 2026/27 pay award, forecast at 3% and will be added to budget ceilings once agreed.
- 12.4. A substantial review of government funding is under way (see paragraph 14 below). It is likely that this will lead to some current grant funding streams being rolled into general funding, which will require amendments to the budget ceilings. (These are largely presentational changes to government funding that will not, in themselves, affect the amount we have available to spend).
- 12.5. The role of the Council is to determine the financial envelopes within which services are delivered. Delivering the services within budget is a function of the City Mayor.

### **13. Corporately held Budgets and Provisions**

- 13.1. In addition to the services' budget ceilings, some budgets are held corporately. These are described below.
- 13.2. As discussed above, a provision has been set aside for **pay awards**, which are not (in recent years) agreed until some time into the financial year. The provision is based on an assumed 3% pay award each year
- 13.3. The budget for **capital financing** represents the cost of interest and debt repayment on capital spending, less interest received on balances held by the council. Decisions to borrow money to fund capital expenditure have led to an increase in the budget, although this increase will reduce where capital receipts are used to fund expenditure in lieu of borrowing. The budget also reflects the scale of the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit, impacts the level of interest received and must be met from the general fund.
- 13.4. **Miscellaneous central budgets** include external audit fees, pension costs of some former staff, levy payments to the Environment Agency, bank charges, general insurance costs, money set aside to assist council taxpayers suffering hardship and other sums it is not appropriate to include in service budgets. Miscellaneous central budgets are partially offset by the effect of recharges from the general fund into other statutory accounts of the Council.
- 13.5. The **housing benefits** budget funds the difference between benefits payments and the amount of subsidy received from central government. This gap has been increasing in recent years, particularly around supported housing (see para. 6.17 above).
- 13.6. A corporate contingency budget of £1m has been set aside, which will only be allocated if necessary. Following a number of years of having limited requirement to use the corporate contingencies the budgets have been reduced. However, it should be noted if we do have any unexpected pressures in 2026/27 the budget strategy

reserve is available to be used. This would however reduce the one-off funding available for the future year budget strategies.

## **14. Resources**

- 14.1. The majority of the council's core funding comes from business rates; government grant funding; and council tax. Service-specific sources of funding, such as fees & charges and specific grants, are credited to the relevant budget ceilings, and are part of departmental budgets.
- 14.2. A major review of government funding is in progress, which will update funding allocations for the first time since 2013. At the time of writing, we do not have the outcome of this review and this draft budget is necessarily based on estimates, informed by modelling work commissioned from external advisors. The provisional settlement, which will give us figures for the major funding streams, is expected shortly before Christmas.

### Business rates and core grant funding

- 14.3. Local government retains 50% of business rates collected locally, with the balance being paid to central government. In recognition of the fact that different authorities' ability to raise rates do not correspond to needs, there are additional elements of the business rates retention scheme: a top-up to local business rates, paid to authorities with lower taxbases, and Revenue Support Grant (RSG).
- 14.4. The government's planned reforms from April 2026 include several overlapping strands:
  - Fully equalising for differences in council tax bases across the country. We should gain from this as our tax base is relatively low;
  - Revised and updated formulae that measure each area's "need to spend" on different service areas. It appears from the information we have to date, that we will lose funding from some of these changes;
  - Rebasing business rates income to redistribute growth achieved since 2013; and to reflect the rates revaluation that will be implemented from April;
  - Transitional arrangements to phase in the effect on individual authorities.

- 14.5. The split of funding between different funding streams (business rates, top-up and RSG payments) is not yet known. For this draft budget, the total "settlement funding assessment" (SFA) is shown as a proxy for the totality of government grant and the proportion of business rates that are kept by the City Council. Overall, our current assessment is that the Council should benefit from these changes, but not as significantly as we might have anticipated.

### Council tax

- 14.6. Council tax income is estimated at £179m in 2026/27, based on an assumed tax increase of just below 5% (the maximum we believe will be allowed to set without a

referendum). The 5% limit will include a “social care levy” of 2%, designed to help social care authorities mitigate the growing costs of social care. Since our tax base is relatively low for the size of population, the levy raises just £3.5m per year.

- 14.7. The estimated council tax base has grown by 2.3% since last year’s budget was set. The final council tax base is calculated on data from the end of November, and will be included in the final budget report to Council in February.
- 14.8. While the major elements of Council Tax banding and discounts are determined nationally, some discounts and premiums, as well as the Council Tax Support Scheme for those on low incomes, are determined locally. Appendix 6 sets out these discounts and premiums.

#### Other corporate income

- 14.9. The majority of grant funding is treated as income to the relevant service departments and is not shown separately in the table at paragraph 11. Other grants which existed in previous years are expected to be rolled into the general settlement, and are not shown separately.
- 14.10. From 2025/26, a new (unringfenced) funding stream relating to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in respect of waste packaging has been received, for which our provisional allocation for 2026/27 is £7.4m. We have only limited information about likely levels of income in later years, which will depend on producers’ responses to the new levy. Regardless of the position, we expect waste costs to increase by up to £3m per year when there is a new contract in May 2028.

#### Collection Fund surplus / deficit

- 14.11. Collection fund surpluses arise when more tax is collected than assumed in previous budgets. Deficits arise when the converse is true.
- 14.12. The Council has an estimated **council tax collection fund surplus** of £2.4m, after allowing for shares to be paid by the police and fire authorities. The reasons for this include a reduction in bad debt provision, following significant work to improve collection rates; and a continuing fall in the cost of the council tax support scheme (CTSS).
- 14.13. The Council has an estimated **business rates collection fund deficit** of £1.5m.

### **15. Budget and Equalities (Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer)**

- 15.1. The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for its residents; both through its policies aimed at reducing inequality of outcomes, and through its practices aimed at ensuring fair treatment for all and the provision of appropriate and culturally sensitive services that meet local people’s needs.

- 15.2. In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must “have due regard”, when making decisions, to the need to meet the following aims of our Public Sector Equality Duty :-
- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
  - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 15.3. Protected groups under the public sector equality duty are characterised by age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 15.4. When making decisions, the Council (or decision maker, such as the City Mayor) must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.
- 15.5. A number of risks to the budget are addressed within this report (section 16 below). If these risks are not mitigated effectively, there could be a disproportionate impact on people with particular protected characteristics and therefore ongoing consideration of the risks and any potential disproportionate equalities impacts, as well as mitigations to address disproportionate impacts for those with particular protected characteristics, is required.

## **16. Risk Assessment and Estimates**

- 16.1. Best practice requires me to identify any risks associated with the budget, and Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires me to report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of estimates.
- 16.2. Assessing the robustness of estimates requires a judgement to be made, which is now hard given the volatility of some elements of the budget. The most significant individual risks are described below.
- 16.3. Like most (probably all) upper tier authorities, we run the risk of further demand and cost increase in adults' social care and children's placements, despite mitigating work that is continuing.
- 16.4. Like many housing authorities, we run the risk of further cost pressures from homelessness. However, the Council has a significant programme of investment in temporary accommodation to mitigate this risk.

- 16.5. In addition to the above, we have a cumulative overspend of £22.5m on the schools' "high needs" block, which we have not had to write off against general fund reserves due to a special dispensation given by the Government, and available until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028; by which time it could be as high as £78m. It remains unclear how this national issue will be resolved; a planned White Paper has been delayed to next year which is expected to propose ways to reduce the ongoing costs deficit, but the historic deficit will still need to be met.
- 16.6. We are also exposed to any further inflationary cost pressures, which may result from world events.
- 16.7. Significant progress has been made on achieving the savings target, however failure to deliver the savings would have significant impact on the strategy.
- 16.8. A key part of our strategy is the use of one-off monies to balance the budget gap. This has a multiplicative effect of any risks which crystallise into annual cost pressures. For instance, an additional £5m per year of unavoidable cost will, all other things being equal, use £15m of reserves by the end of 2028/29.
- 16.9. The proposed budget contains a reduced level of corporate contingency (£1m per year) compared to previous years. As our budget is supported by reserves, this is largely presentational – a lower call on reserves is initially budgeted for each year, but with a greater chance that pressures will exceed the available contingency and further use of reserves will have to be made. If the call on reserves is required this will reduce the future one-off monies available in future budgets.
- 16.10. However, there is a clear plan: that shows the improvements that have been made in our financial strategy and the budget gap is closing, we continue to work on a programme to further reduce it. This involves the continuation of the cost mitigation work in areas of service under pressure, transformation of services and the potential to reduce borrowing by using capital receipts to fund the capital programme.
- 16.11. Subject to the above comments, I believe the estimates made in preparing the budget are sufficiently robust to allow the budget for 2026/27 to be approved.
- 16.12. In addition, we have a substantial level of reserves available to support the budget strategy. This means that, in the short term, reserves can be used in substitution for any savings which cannot be made, or for unexpected cost pressures; and there is limited risk of being unable to balance the budget in 2026/27. I regard our level of reserves as adequate.
- 16.13. As a last resort, a £15m General Fund emergency balance is held. I do not expect to have to call on this balance in the time period set out in this strategy.

## **17. Financial, Legal and Other Implications**

### **17.1. Financial Implications**

This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.

## **17.2. Legal Implications (Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards)**

- 17.2.1. The budget preparations have been in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules – Council's Constitution – Part 4C. The decision with regard to the setting of the Council's budget is a function under the constitution which is the responsibility of the full Council.
- 17.2.2. At the budget-setting stage, Council is estimating, not determining, what will happen as a means to the end of setting the budget and therefore the council tax. Setting a budget is not the same as deciding what expenditure will be incurred. The Local Government Finance Act, 1992, requires an authority, through the full Council, to calculate the aggregate of various estimated amounts, in order to find the shortfall to which its council tax base has to be applied. The Council can allocate greater or fewer funds than are requested by the Mayor in his proposed budget.
- 17.2.3. As well as detailing the recommended council tax increase for 2026/27, the report also complies with the following statutory requirements:-
  - (a) Robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations;
  - (b) Adequacy of reserves;
  - (c) The requirement to set a balanced budget.
- 17.2.4. Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, places upon local authorities a duty to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers before setting a budget. There are no specific statutory requirements to consult residents.
- 17.2.5. The discharge of the 'function' of setting a budget triggers the duty in s.149 of the Equality Act, 2010, for the Council to have "due regard" to its public sector equality duties. These are set out in paragraph 15. There are considered to be no specific proposals within this year's budget that could result in new changes of provision that could affect different groups of people sharing protected characteristics. Where savings are anticipated, equality assessments will be prepared as necessary. Directors and the City Mayor have freedom to vary or abort proposals under the scheme of virement where there are unacceptable equality consequences. As a consequence, there are no service-specific 'impact assessments' that accompany the budget. There is no requirement in law to undertake equality impact assessments as the only means to discharge the s.149 duty to have "due regard". The discharge of the duty is not achieved by pointing to one document looking at a snapshot in time, and the report evidences that the Council treats the duty as a live and enduring one. Indeed, case law is clear that undertaking an EIA on an 'envelope-setting' budget is of limited value, and that it is at the point in time when policies are developed which reconfigure services to live within the budgetary constraint when impact is best assessed. However, an analysis of equality impacts

has been prepared in respect of the proposed increase in council tax, and this is set out in Appendix 3.

17.2.6. Judicial review is the mechanism by which the lawfulness of Council budget-setting exercises are most likely to be challenged. There is no sensible way to provide an assurance that a process of budget setting has been undertaken in a manner which is immune from challenge. Nevertheless the approach taken with regard to due process and equality impacts is regarded by the City Barrister to be robust in law.

17.2.7. Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 states that the Council must “make” a Council Tax Reduction scheme for each financial year, and if it wishes to change it, it must “revise” or “replace” it. The deadline for making, revising or replacing a Scheme is 11<sup>th</sup> March. There are no proposals to change the CTSS so recommendation 3.1(j) reflects the decision to keep the existing Scheme, subject to inflationary changes to thresholds for support.

### **17.3. Climate Change Implications**

17.3.1 The climate emergency remains one of the key long-term challenges facing the council and the city, creating increasing real-world consequences, including financial costs, as we have seen from recent flooding incidents.

17.3.2 In broad terms, the financial pressures facing the council, and the strategy proposed for addressing them, are likely to have the following implications for addressing the climate emergency:

- Reductions in service delivery and sale of council buildings may result in reductions in the council’s own carbon footprint i.e. the emissions caused by our own use of buildings and travel. These savings may not always be reflected in those of the wider city if reductions in council activity are offset by increases in community or business activity. For example, where council facilities need to be closed and sold/transferred, their use by community groups or businesses will still generate emissions.
- The constraints on both revenue and capital are likely to reduce opportunities for the council to invest in projects to reduce carbon emissions and to make the city more resilient to the changing climate, except where a compelling ‘spend-to-save’ business case can be made or external grant funding can be secured.

17.3.3 Efforts should continue to develop financial and environmental ‘win-win’ climate projects, such as those which can cut council energy/fuel bills and carbon emissions. Likewise, any opportunities to secure external funding for climate work should be sought.

17.3.4 More specific climate emergency implications will continue to be provided for individual decisions regarding projects and service/policy changes relating to implementing the budget strategy.

## Budget Ceilings

*[to follow]*

DRAFT

### **Scheme of Virement**

1. This appendix explains the scheme of virement which will apply to the budget, if it is approved by the Council.

#### **Budget Ceilings**

2. Directors are authorised to vire sums within budget ceilings without limit, providing such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy.
3. Directors are authorised to vire money between any two budget ceilings within their departmental budgets, provided such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased or reduced during the course of a year is £500,000. This money can be vired on a one-off or permanent basis.
4. Directors are responsible, in consultation with the appropriate Deputy/Assistant Mayor if necessary, for determining whether a proposed virement would give rise to a change of Council policy.
5. Movement of money between budget ceilings is not virement to the extent that it reflects changes in management responsibility for the delivery of services.
6. The City Mayor is authorised to increase or reduce any budget ceiling. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased during the course of a year is £5m. Increases or reductions can be carried out on a one-off or permanent basis.
7. The Director of Finance may vire money between budget ceilings where such movements represent changes in accounting policy, or other changes which do not affect the amounts available for service provision. The Director of Finance may vire money between budget ceilings to reflect where the savings (currently shown as summary figures in Appendix One) actually fall.
8. Nothing above requires the City Mayor or any director to spend up to the budget ceiling for any service. At the end of the year, underspends on any budget ceiling shall be applied:
  - (a) Firstly, to offset any overspends in the same department;
  - (b) Secondly, to the corporate reserve for future budget pressures.

#### **Corporate Budgets**

9. The following authorities are granted in respect of corporate budgets:
  - (a) the Director of Finance may incur costs for which there is provision in miscellaneous corporate budgets, except that any policy decision requires the approval of the City Mayor;
  - (b) the Director of Finance may allocate the provision for pay awards and other inflation;

### Earmarked Reserves

10. Earmarked reserves may be created or dissolved by the City Mayor. In creating a reserve, the purpose of the reserve must be clear.
11. Directors may add sums to an earmarked reserve from a budget ceiling, if the purposes of the reserve are within the scope of the service budget, and with the agreement of the Director of Finance. This cannot take place at year end (see para. 8 above).
12. Directors may spend earmarked reserves on the purpose for which they have been created.
13. When an earmarked reserve is dissolved, the City Mayor shall determine the use of any remaining balance.
14. The City Mayor may transfer any sum between earmarked reserves.

### Other

15. The City Mayor may amend the flexible use of capital receipts policy, and submit revised policies to the Secretary of State.

## Equality Impact Assessment

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool:

<b>Title of proposal</b>	Council tax increase for 2026/27
<b>Name of division/service</b>	Corporate
<b>Name of lead officer completing this assessment</b>	Catherine Taylor, Financial Strategy Manager
<b>Date EIA assessment commenced</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2025
<b>Date EIA assessment completed (prior to decision being taken as the EIA may still be reviewed following a decision to monitor any changes)</b>	
<b>Decision maker</b>	Council
<b>Date decision taken</b>	25 February 2026

<b>EIA sign off on completion:</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Lead officer</b>	Catherine Taylor	21 November 2025
<b>Equalities officer (has been consulted)</b>	Surinder Singh	21 November 2025
<b>Divisional director</b>	Amy Oliver	4 December 2025

## Please ensure the following:

- a) That the document is **understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents** and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete and based in evidence.
- b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.
- d) That the equality impact assessment is started at an early stage in the decision-making process, so that it can be used to inform the consultation, engagement and the decision. It should not be a tick-box exercise. Equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process. It can be used to assess several different options.
- e) Decision makers must be aware of their duty to pay 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (see below) and 'due regard' must be paid before and at the time a decision is taken. Please see the Brown Principles on the equality intranet pages, for information on how to undertake a lawful decision-making process, from an equalities perspective. Please append the draft EIA and the final EIA to papers for decision makers (including leadership team meetings, lead member briefings, scrutiny meetings and executive meetings) and draw out the key points for their consideration. The Equalities Team provide equalities comments on reports.

## 1. Setting the context

Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will the needs of those who are currently using the service continue to be met?

### Purpose

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget each year. There remains a difficult balance between funding services for those most in need, maintaining support for most vulnerable and the investment required to ensure the effective delivery of services. Council Tax is a vital funding stream for the Council to fund essential services. This appendix presents the draft equalities impact of a proposed 4.99% council tax increase. This includes a precept of 2% for Adult Social Care, as permitted by the Government without requiring a referendum.

## **Alternative options**

The realistic alternative to a 5% council tax increase would be a lower (or no) increase. A reduced tax increase would represent a permanent diminution of our income unless we hold a council tax referendum in a future year. In my view, such a referendum is unlikely to support a higher tax rise. It would also require more cuts to services in later years (on top of the substantial cost savings already required by the budget strategy).

The budget situation is already extremely difficult, and it seems inevitable that further cuts will have severe effects on front-line services. It is not possible to say precisely where these future cuts would fall; however, certain protected groups (e.g. older people; families with children; and people with disabilities) could face disproportionate impacts from reductions to services.

## **Mitigating actions**

The Council has a range of mitigating actions for residents. These include: funding through the new Crisis & Resilience Fund, which replaces the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments from April 2026, direct support through Council Tax Discretionary Relief (which increased by 50% from £500,000 to £750,000 from April 2025 for two years) and Community Support Grant awards; the council's work with voluntary and community sector organisations to provide food to local people where it is required – through the network of food banks in the city; through schemes which support people getting into work (and include cost reducing initiatives that address high transport costs such as providing recycled bicycles); and through support to social welfare advice services.

## 2. Equality implications/obligations

Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.

### a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- How does the proposal/service aim to remove barriers or disproportionate impacts for anyone with a particular protected characteristics compared with someone who does not share the same protected characteristics?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

The Council Tax decision, as part of the overall budget strategy, aims to balance the funding of services for those in need, maintaining support for most vulnerable and the investment required to ensure the effective delivery of services. It does not, in itself, make specific decisions about the delivery of those services; which will be the subject of separate decisions with their own equality assessments, where appropriate.

### b. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- Does the proposal/service advance equality of opportunity for people?
- Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

By securing funding, the proposal aims to advance equality of opportunity by maintaining services that support independence and quality of life for these key protected groups, thereby reducing inequalities they face.

### c. Foster good relations between different groups

- Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives?
- How does it achieve this aim?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

Securing a sustainable budget for local services contributes to community stability and social cohesion. Effective, well-funded services that support vulnerable residents can help indirectly in fostering good relations.

### 3. Who is affected?

Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include people who currently use the service and those who could benefit from, but do not currently access the service. Where possible include data to support this.

#### Who is affected by the proposal?

As at October 2025, there were 133,220 properties liable for Council Tax in the city (excluding those registered as exempt, such as student households).

Under the CTSS scheme, “vulnerable” households with low income are eligible for up to 100% support, limited to the amount payable on a band C property. Other low income households are eligible for up to 80% support, limited to the amount payable on a Band B property. Households deemed vulnerable are defined in the scheme which uses proxies to identify disability and/or caring responsibilities.

Council tax support for pensioner households follows different rules. Low-income pensioners are eligible for up to 100% relief on the total amount payable.

#### How are they affected?

The table below sets out the financial impact of the proposed council tax increase on different properties, before any discounts or reliefs are applied. It shows the weekly increase in each band, and the minimum weekly increase for those in receipt of a reduction under the CTSS for working-age households who are not classed as vulnerable. [Under the scheme introduced last year, households classified as vulnerable can access up to 100% CTSS support]

Band	No. of Properties	Weekly increase (£)	Minimum Weekly Increase under CTSS (£)
A-	411	1.08	0.22
A	77,960	1.29	0.26
B	26,994	1.51	0.30
C	15,571	1.72	0.52

D	6,667	1.94	0.73
E	3,432	2.37	1.16
F	1,530	2.80	1.59
G	613	3.23	2.02
H	42	3.88	2.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,220</b>		

In most cases, the change in council tax (around £1.51 per week for a band B property with no discounts; and just 30p per week if eligible for the maximum 80% reduction for non-vulnerable households under the CTSS) is a small proportion of disposable income, and a small contributor to any squeeze on household budgets. A council tax increase would be applicable to all properties - the increase would not target any one protected group, rather it would be an increase that is applied across the board. However, it is recognised that this may have a more significant impact among households with a low disposable income.

Households at all levels of income have seen their real-terms income decline in recent years due to cost-of-living increases, and wages that have failed to keep up with inflation; although inflation has fallen more recently. These pressures are not limited to any protected group; however, there is evidence that low-income families spend a greater proportion of their income on food and fuel (where price rises have been highest), and are therefore more affected by price increases.

A 3.8% uplift to most working-age benefits, in line with CPI inflation, will come into effect from April 2026, while the State Pension and pension-age benefits will increase by 4.8%. The Local Housing Allowance rates for 2026/27 have not yet been announced. [NB council and housing association tenants are not affected by this as their rent support is calculated differently and their full rent can be compensated from benefits].

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#### 4. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

- What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used?
- Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you
- Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this? E.g. proxy data, national trends, equality monitoring etc.

Information on the properties subject to Council Tax is obtained from the Council's own systems. We do not hold detailed information on council taxpayers' protected characteristics; national and local economic data has been used to help assess the likely impact on different groups.

## 5. Consultation

Have you undertaken consultation about the proposal with people who use the service or people affected, people who may potentially use the service and other stakeholders? What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

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Draft budget will be published in early December in advance of the final decision in February

## 6. Potential Equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on people who use the service and those who could potentially use the service and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts. This could include indirect impacts, as well as direct impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant groups that may be affected, along with the likely impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

### Protected characteristics

#### **Impact of proposal:**

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. Why is this protected characteristic relevant to the proposal? How does the protected characteristic determine/shape the potential impact of the proposal? This may also include **positive impacts** which support the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

#### **Risk of disproportionate negative impact:**

How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be disproportionately negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

#### **Mitigating actions:**

For disproportionate negative impacts on protected characteristic/s, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove the impact? You may also wish to include actions which support the positive aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. All actions identified here should also be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.

## **a) Age**

Indicate which age group/s is/ are most affected, either specify general age group (children, young people, working aged people or older people) or specific age bands.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on age?**

Older people (pension age and older) are least affected by a potential increase in council tax and can access more generous (up to 100%) council tax relief. However, in the current financial climate, a lower council tax increase would require even greater cuts to services in due course. While it is not possible to say where these cuts would fall exactly, there are potential negative impacts for this group as older people are the primary service users of Adult Social Care.

While employment rates remain high, earnings have not kept up with inflation in recent years so working families are likely to already be facing pressures on households' budgets. Younger people, and particularly children, were more likely to be in poverty before the current cost-of-living crisis and this is likely to have continued.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on age?**

Working age households and families with children – incomes squeezed through reducing real-terms wages.

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### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Lower-income households will have access to the Council Tax Support Scheme, providing up to 100% support for "vulnerable" households and up to 80% for other low income households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.

## **b) Disability**

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. If specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form – physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness, or health condition.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on disability?**

Disabled people are more likely to be in poverty. Many disabled people will be classed as vulnerable in the proposed new CTSS scheme and will therefore be protected from the impact of a council tax increase.

However, in the current financial climate, a lower council tax increase would require even greater cuts to services in due course. While it is not possible to say where these cuts would fall exactly, there are potential negative impacts for this group as disabled people are more likely to be service users of Adult Social Care.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on disability?**

Further erode quality of life being experienced by disabled people.

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

The CTSS scheme has been designed to give additional support (up to 100%) to vulnerable households. It also allows support at the level of the band C tax, rather than band B as applies to non-vulnerable households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on better managing budgets.

Ensure all information and advice relating to the CTSS scheme, discretionary funds, and support services is available and provided in a range of accessible formats.

### **c) Gender reassignment**

Indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected. A trans person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected.

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on gender reassignment?**

No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic.

#### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on gender reassignment?**

N/A

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

N/A

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### **d) Marriage and civil partnership**

Please note that under the Public Sector Equality Duty this protected characteristic applies to the first general duty of the Act, eliminating unlawful discrimination, only. The focus within this is eliminating discrimination against people that are married or in a civil partnership with regard specifically to employment.

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on marriage and civil partnership?**

No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic

#### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on marriage and civil partnership?**

N/A

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

N/A

## e) Pregnancy and maternity

Does the proposal treat someone unfairly because they're pregnant, breastfeeding or because they've recently given birth.

### What is the impact of the proposal on pregnancy and maternity?

Someone who is pregnant or recently given birth often have lower incomes during the period immediately before and after childbirth, when they may be receiving statutory maternity pay or no pay at all.

### What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on pregnancy and maternity?

Household may have a lower income during this period and be disproportionately impacted by the increase in Council Tax.

### What are the mitigating actions?

Lower-income households will have access to the Council Tax Support Scheme, providing up to 100% support for "vulnerable" households and up to 80% for other low income households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.

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## f) Race

Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example Black Britons, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

### What is the impact of the proposal on race?

Those with white backgrounds are disproportionately on low incomes (indices of multiple deprivation) and in receipt of social security benefits. Some ethnic minority people are also low income and on benefits.

### What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on race?

Household income being further squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income.

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Lower-income households will have access to the Council Tax Support Scheme, providing up to 100% support for “vulnerable” households and up to 80% for other low income households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.

Where required, interpretation and translation services will be provided to remove barriers in accessing support/advice.

### **g) Religion or belief**

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. This must be a belief and not just an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available and;

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- be about a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour
  - attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance, and
  - be worthy of respect in a democratic society, not incompatible with human dignity and not in conflict with fundamental rights of others. For example, Holocaust denial, or the belief in racial superiority are not protected.

Are your services sensitive to different religious requirements e.g., times a customer may want to access a service, religious days and festivals and dietary requirements

### **What is the impact of the proposal on religion or belief?**

No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on religion or belief?**

N/A

**What are the mitigating actions?**

N/A

**h) Sex**

Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females.

**What is the impact of the proposal on sex?**

Disproportionate impact on women who tend to manage household budgets and are responsible for childcare costs. Women are disproportionately lone parents, who are more likely to experience poverty.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sex?**

Incomes squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income. Increased risk for women as they are more likely to be lone parents.

OG

**What are the mitigating actions?**

If in receipt of Universal Credit or tax credits, a significant proportion of childcare costs are met by these sources.

Lower-income households will have access to the Council Tax Support Scheme, providing up to 100% support for "vulnerable" households and up to 80% for other low income households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.

**i) Sexual orientation**

Indicate if there is a potential impact on people based on their sexual orientation. The Act protects heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual people.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on sexual orientation?**

Gay men and Lesbian women are disproportionately more likely to be in poverty than heterosexual people and trans people even more likely to be in poverty and unemployed. This would mean they are more likely to be on benefits.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sexual orientation?**

Household income being lowered wages and reducing levels of benefit income.

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Lower-income households will be have access to the Council Tax Support Scheme, providing up to 100% support for “vulnerable” households and up to 80% for other low income households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.

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## **7. Summary of protected characteristics**

### **a. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?**

Some protected groups are more likely to be in poverty or have low disposable income, and therefore a council tax increase may have a more significant impact.

### **b. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal?**

For some groups no disproportionate impact has been identified. Individuals in these groups will still be able to access CTSS and discretionary support based on their specific circumstances.

## 8. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to 'have due regard' to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.

When Leicester City Council exercises a relevant function, within the fields of healthcare, education, and housing services it must have due regard to the aims set out below:

**a. The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces**

These include danger; geographical mobility; separation; Service law and rights; unfamiliarity with civilian life; hours of work; and stress.

**b. The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces**

A disadvantage is when the level of access a member of the Armed Forces Community has to goods and services, or the support they receive, is comparatively lower than that of someone in a similar position who is not a member of the Armed Forces Community, and this difference arises from one (or more) of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.

**c. The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces**

Special provision is the taking of actions that go beyond the support provided to reduce or remove disadvantage. Special provision may be justified by the effects of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, especially for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental).

Does the service/issue under consideration fall within the scope of a function covered by the Duty (healthcare, education, housing)? Which aims of the Duty are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes. Are members of the Armed Forces specifically disadvantaged or further disadvantaged by the proposal/service? Identify any mitigations including where appropriate possible special provision.

No specific impacts have been identified on members, or former members, of the Armed Forces.

Individuals facing a significant impact will have access to a range of mitigating measures as above.

## 9. Other groups

### Other groups

#### **Impact of proposal:**

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we may consider to be vulnerable, for example people who misuse substances, care leavers, people living in poverty, care experienced young people, carers, those who are digitally excluded. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet their needs/address inequalities they face?

#### **Risk of disproportionate negative impact:**

How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?



#### **Mitigating actions:**

For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA. You may also wish to use this section to identify opportunities for positive impacts.

#### **a. Care Experienced People**

This is someone who was looked after by children's services for a period of 13 weeks after the age of 14', but without any limit on age, recognising older people may still be impacted from care experience into later life.

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on Care Experienced People?**

No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic. Indeed, many pay no council tax at all as a result of a specific discount and will therefore not be affected by the increase.

#### **What is the risk of negative impact on Care Experienced People?**

N/A

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Qualifying care experienced people up to the age of 25 can apply for a 100% discount on their council tax.

### **b. Children in poverty**

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on children in poverty?**

Even a relatively small increase in the amount payable may

#### **What is the risk of negative impact on children in poverty?**

A relatively small increase in the amount payable may have a more significant impact among households with a low disposable income.

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Lower-income households will have access to the Council Tax Support Scheme, providing up to 100% support for "vulnerable" households and up to 80% for other low income households.

In addition, households will have access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.

### **c. Other (describe)**

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on any other groups?**

N/A

#### **What is the risk of negative impact on any other groups?**

N/A

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

N/A

## 10. Other sources of potential negative impacts

Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include:

- other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users;
- Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents;
- external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.

Government policy on welfare benefits (including annual uprating) will also have an impact, although it is not yet possible to predict what this will be.



## 11. Human rights implications

Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered and addressed (please see the list at the end of the template), if so, please outline the implications and how they will be addressed below:

N/A

## 12. Monitoring impact

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

If you want to undertake equality monitoring, please refer to our [equality monitoring guidance and templates](#).

Click or tap here to enter text.

### 13. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Ensure residents are aware of available financial help.	Clearly signpost support available about the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) and Discretionary Relief funds.	Cory Laywood, Head of Revenues & Benefits and Transactional Finance	ongoing

## **Human rights articles:**

### **Part 1: The convention rights and freedoms**

- Article 2:** Right to Life
- Article 3:** Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- Article 4:** Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour
- Article 5:** Right to liberty and security
- Article 6:** Right to a fair trial
- Article 7:** No punishment without law
- Article 8:** Right to respect for private and family life
- Article 9:** Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10:** Right to freedom of expression
- Article 11:** Right to freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12:** Right to marry
- Article 14:** Right not to be discriminated against

### **Part 2: First protocol**

- Article 1:** Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment
- Article 2:** Right to education
- Article 3:** Right to free elections

**MEDIUM TERM PROJECTIONS****1. Summary Forecasts**

The table below shows our central forecasts of the position for the next three years, based on the information we have at the time of writing. As funding allocations for future years have not yet been announced, and are the subject of a significant national review, this is necessarily based on some broad assumptions.

We will receive our local settlement for 2026/27 in December; the projections will be updated for the 2026/27 budget report to Council in February. We are expecting this to be a multi-year settlement which will give us some clarity on funding for **The forecasts are volatile**, and the key risks are described at paragraph 2 below. In particular, because we are relying on one off money to balance the budget, a change in annual spending requirement will have a multiplicative effect (e.g. an increase in spending of £5m per year from 2026/27 will lose us £15m from reserves by the end of 2028/29, all other things being equal).

	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Net service budget</b>	456.8	481.7	506.2
Provision for pay inflation	6.0	12.0	18.0
Corporate budgets (including capital finance)	12.4	13.7	15.6
Housing Benefits	1.5	1.5	1.5
Costs of new waste contract			2.5
General contingency for risk	1.0	1.0	1.0
Planning Total		2.0	4.0
<b>Expenditure total</b>	<b>477.7</b>	<b>511.9</b>	<b>548.9</b>
<b>Income:</b>			
Council tax	179.3	189.4	200.0
Collection Fund surplus	0.8		
Settlement Funding Assessment	275.5	286.0	299.6
Extended Producer Responsibility for Waste	7.4	6.0	5.2
<b>Income total</b>	<b>463.0</b>	<b>481.3</b>	<b>504.8</b>
<b>Recurring budget gap</b>	(14.7)	(30.5)	(44.0)

Based on these forecasts, our budget strategy reserves position is expected to be:

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
<b>At the beginning of the year</b>	<b>193.8</b>	<b>129.9</b>	<b>101.7</b>	<b>71.2</b>
Add: Forecast rates pool surplus	7.5			
<i>Reserve restatements:</i>				
From earmarked reserves		0.5		
Set aside for DSG deficit	(44.8)			
Set aside for LGR transitional costs		(14.0)		
Minus budget gap	(26.6)	(14.7)	(30.5)	(44.0)
<b>At the end of the year</b>	<b>129.9</b>	<b>101.7</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>27.2</b>

## 2. Assumptions and Risks

The assumptions in the forecast, and the inherent risks, are explained below.

<b><u>Spending</u></b>	<b>Assumptions – central scenario</b>	<b>Risks</b>
Pay costs	We assume a pay award averaging 3% each year	Inflation has fallen since its peak of 11.1% in 2022, although it has increased in recent month and remains above the 2% target. It stood at 3.8% in the year to September 2025.
Non-pay inflation	It is assumed that departments will be able to continue absorbing this. The exceptions are independent sector care package costs, fostering allowances, and the waste management contract; an allowance is built in for these increases.	
Adult social care costs	Demographic pressures and increasing need lead to cost pressures which are reflected in the forecasts. The effect of the mitigation measures is also reflected in the forecasts.	Adult Social Care remains the biggest area of Council expenditure, and is demand led. Small variations have a significant impact on the Council's overall budget.
Costs relating to looked after children	Mitigation work is able to reduce the annual cost increase to 6.5% (lower than the trend in recent years)	Further increase in demand and associated costs. Projections can be volatile as there are a small number of very high-cost placements.
Support to homeless families	Growth in the budget assumes the successful implementation of cost control measures, including a £50m investment in properties for use as temporary accommodation.	Further increase in the number of households presenting as homeless requiring the use of expensive hotel accommodation
Housing Benefit costs	The proposed budget includes £1.5m per year to meet the net subsidy loss on supported housing elements of Housing Benefit.	Will require powers expected under the Supported Housing Act to deliver savings against current trends.
Waste contract	The current contract for waste collection expires in 2028. The tender process for a new contract is underway; it is expected that the new contract will involve an increase in costs from 2028/29 onwards.	Difficult to predict costs of new contract at this stage.
Other service cost pressures	A £1m contingency budget has been built into the forecasts to provide some cushion against uncertainty. Aside from this, it is assumed that departments are able to find savings to manage cost pressures within their own areas.	Costs assume the delivery of proposed savings for which delivery plans will be vital. Some are subject to consultation, which may result in a different decision to that currently proposed.

	A planning provision of £2m has been included for 2027/28 rising to £4m by 2028/29.	
Departmental savings	The budget strategy assumes savings totalling £23m by 2027/28, of which £14m has been achieved to date.	Risk that savings are not achieved or are delayed, leading to a greater call on reserves to balance the budget.  Costs assume the delivery of proposed savings for which delivery plans will be vital. Some are subject to consultation, which may result in a different decision to that currently proposed.
DSG deficit	The cumulative deficit on DSG is forecast to reach up to £78m by April 2028, when the current “override” ends. Forecasts in this report do not include this deficit.	It is not clear how this national issue will be resolved, and whether local authorities will have to meet some or all of their costs from general resources.

<b><u>Income</u></b>	<b>Assumptions – central scenario</b>	<b>Risks</b>
Council Tax	<p>Band D Council Tax will increase by 5.0% per year in line with expected referendum limits.</p> <p>Council taxbase (the number of properties that pay tax) will increase by 500 Band D properties per year.</p>	<p>Further economic downturn leading to increased costs of council tax support to residents on a low income.</p> <p>The government may make changes to the council tax banding system or to discounts and exemptions,</p>
Business rates	<p>The net impact of the current revaluation and rates reset will be neutral, i.e. any gain or loss in rates income is balanced by government support.</p> <p>No significant movements in the underlying baseline for business rates.</p> <p>Government changes to business rates (e.g. new reliefs) will continue to be met by additional government grant, in line with recent years.</p>	Significant empty properties and / or business liquidations reduce our collectable rates.
Government grant	<p>The results of the Fair Funding review will not be announced until the local government finance settlement in December. Up to date figures will be included in the budget report to Council in February.</p> <p>For this draft report, forecasts are informed by modelling work commissioned from external consultants.</p>	<p>Key elements of the review are still subject to government decisions and data updates. Our available resources will inevitably change from these forecasts, and this could be substantial.</p> <p>In future years, the overall quantum of funding for local government may change as a result of the wider fiscal and economic position.</p>
Extended Producer Responsibility funding	The provisional allocation for 2026/27 (£7.4m) is included in the draft budget. It is assumed that income from the scheme falls thereafter as producers take steps to reduce their charges payable.	Income in future years is highly uncertain, and partly depends on the response from producers to the new charges.

**Earmarked Reserves**

(to follow)

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**Council Tax Premiums - Empty Property and Second Homes**

1. This appendix sets out our policy on charging council tax premiums on empty properties.
2. In general, our policy is to use premiums to help bring empty properties back into use, as owners take steps to avoid the extra charges. There is a shortage of housing in Leicester. We want to see as many empty homes as possible made available for occupation. The changes will also raise additional revenue for the Council (to the extent that properties remain empty).

**Substantially Unfurnished Empty Properties (referred to as long term empty properties)**

3. Since 2013, councils have had considerable discretion over the levels of tax payable on unfurnished empty properties (Local Government Finance Act, 1992 and associated regulations). Our policy seeks to use this discretion to support our empty homes policy by charging the maximum permitted premiums for these homes, subject to any applicable exemptions
4. Assuming the recommendations in this report are approved, our policy for charging council tax on substantially unfurnished empty properties from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 will be:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Tax charge as a percentage of the standard tax (inclusive of premium)</b>
Empty for less than one year	100%
Empty for at least one year	200%
Empty for at least five years	300%
Empty for at least ten years	400%

**Substantially Furnished Empty Properties (referred to as second homes)**

5. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 permits authorities to charge a council tax premium of up to 100% on substantially furnished homes, only occupied periodically, and which are no one's main residence, often referred to as second homes.
6. Our policy for charging council tax on substantially furnished empty properties from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 is:

Description	Tax charge as a percentage of the standard tax (inclusive of premium)
Empty (substantially furnished)	200%

### Exemptions to premiums

7. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the Government has introduced the following mandatory exemptions to premiums, in addition to those already in place for unoccupied properties under the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992. A local policy has been published on our website to give further guidance on how each premium exemption will be applied in practice.

Classes of Dwellings	Applies to	Exemption
Class E	Already applies to long term empty homes but extended to second homes from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025	Dwelling which is or would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in job-related armed forces accommodation.
Class F	Already applies to long term empty homes but extended to second homes from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025	Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
Class G	Long term empty homes and second homes	Dwellings being actively marketed for <b>sale</b> (12 months' limit)
Class H	Long term empty homes and second homes	Dwellings being actively marketed for <b>let</b> (12 months' limit)
Class I	Long term empty homes and second homes	Unoccupied dwellings which fell within exempt Class F and where probate has recently been granted (12 months from grant of probate/letters of administration)
Class J	Second homes only	Job related dwellings
Class K	Second homes only	Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings
Class L	Second homes only	Seasonal homes where year-round, permanent occupation is prohibited, specified for use as holiday accommodation or planning condition preventing occupancy for more than 28 days continuously
Class M	Long term empty homes	Empty dwellings requiring or undergoing major repairs or structural alterations (12 months limit)

**Council Tax Support Scheme**

1. The Council is required to maintain a Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) in respect of dwellings occupied by persons we consider to be in financial need. A new scheme was approved by Full Council in January 2025.
2. No substantive changes to the scheme are proposed for 2026/27. The only revision proposed is to uprate thresholds by 3.8% in line with the majority of welfare benefits (and the CPI measure of inflation from September 2025) (and used to uprate the majority of benefit rates from April 2026). The previous scheme maintained between 2013 and 2024 was also uprated annually on the same basis. The new bands including this uprating will be as shown:

		Vulnerable					Other				
Band	Discount	Single Person	Couple with no children	Couple or Lone Parent with one child/ young person	Couple or Lone Parent with two children/ young persons	Couple or Lone Parent with three or more children/ young persons	Single Person	Couple with no children	Couple or Lone Parent with one child/ young person	Couple or Lone Parent with two children/ young persons	Couple or Lone Parent with three or more children/ young persons
<b>Weekly Net Income</b>											
<b>1</b>	100%	£0 to £155.70	£0 to £155.70	£0 to £155.70	£0 to £207.60	£0 to £259.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>2</b>	75%	£155.71 to £233.55	£155.71 to £233.55	£155.71 to £311.40	£207.61 to £363.30	£259.51 to £415.20	£0 to £155.70	£0 to £155.70	£0 to £155.70	£0 to £207.60	£0 to £259.50
<b>3</b>	50%	£233.56 to £311.40	£233.56 to £311.40	£311.41 to £389.25	£363.30 to £415.20	£415.21 to £467.10	£155.71 to £233.55	£155.71 to £233.55	£155.71 to £311.40	£207.61 to £363.30	£259.51 to £415.20
<b>4</b>	25%	£311.41 to £389.25	£311.41 to £389.25	£389.26 to £467.10	£415.21 to £519	£467.11 to £570.90	£233.56 to £311.40	£233.56 to £311.40	£311.41 to £389.25	£363.30 to £415.21	£415.21 to £467.10
<b>5</b>	0%	£389.26+	£389.26+	£467.11+	£519.01+	£570.91+	£311.41 +	£311.41 +	£389.26 +	£415.21 +	£467.11 +

3. The alternative would be to freeze the bandings at their 2025/26 cash levels. This would lead to some households receiving lower levels of support or dropping out of the scheme entirely.

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **Flexible Use of Capital Receipts policy**

(to follow)

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# **Draft Three Year Capital Programme 2026/27**

Decision to be taken by: Council

Decision to be taken on: 25 February 2026

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

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## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Claire Gavagan
- Author contact details: claire.gavagan@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to ask the Council to approve a capital programme for 2026/27.
- 1.2 Capital expenditure is incurred on works of lasting benefit and is principally paid for by grant, tenants' rents, and the proceeds of asset sales (capital receipts). Money can also be borrowed for capital purposes.
- 1.3 For the past five years, the Council has set a one-year capital programme due to uncertainty over future resources. We have now moved to a three-year capital programme, providing greater visibility of planned investment and supporting improved medium-term financial planning.
- 1.4 In addition to the three-year programme any schemes approved and in the current programme will continue into 2026/27 where needed.
- 1.5 The funding of the 2025/26 capital programme changed to be aligned with our overall revenue and capital financial strategy. This meant we moved away from funding the capital programme through the capital fund and capital receipts but to using borrowing where grant was not available. This approach remains in place for the 2026/27 and the revenue budget will reflect the consequences of the decisions taken in this report
- 1.6 However, due to the positive work that has been undertaken on the revenue budget, we currently do not need the £60m capital receipts to balance the budget over the next three years. We will look to use some of the capital receipts to alleviate the need to borrow in turn reducing the revenue pressures placed from the increase in borrowing.
- 1.7 The report seeks approval to the "General Fund" element of the capital programme, at a cost of £129.8m, over the next three years. In addition to this, the HRA capital programme (which is elsewhere on your agenda) includes works estimated at £11.66m.

- 1.8 The table below summarises the proposed spending for capital schemes starting in 2026/27, as described in this report:

<u>Proposed Programme</u>	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	28/29 £m	Later Years £m	Total £m
<u>Schemes – Summarised by Theme</u>					
Grant Funded Schemes	20.66	13.18	13.17	-	47.01
Own buildings	4.75	6.89	3.26	-	14.90
Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions	50.00	-	-	-	50.00
Routine Works	3.63	4.39	5.28	-	13.29
Corporate Estate	1.10	-	-	-	1.10
Other Schemes and Feasibilities	1.38	0.74	1.05	-	3.17
Policy Provisions	-	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.35
<b>Total New Schemes</b>	<b>81.51</b>	<b>25.31</b>	<b>22.87</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>129.81</b>
 <u>Funding</u>					
Unringfenced Resources				<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
Capital Receipts			2.83		
Borrowing			79.97		
Government Grants			41.43		
Total Unringfenced Resources				124.23	
Monies ringfenced to Schemes				5.58	
<b>Total Resources</b>				<b>129.81</b>	

- 1.9 The table below presents the total spend on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account schemes:

	<u>£m</u>
General Fund	129.81
Housing Revenue Account (1 year programme only)	11.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>141.47</b>

- 1.10 The Council's total capital expenditure now forecast for 2026/27 and beyond is expected to be around £534.99m, including the HRA and schemes approved prior to 2026/27.

- 1.11 The capital programme is split into two parts:

- a) Schemes which are "**immediate starts**", being schemes which directors have authority to commence once the council has approved the programme. These are fully described in this report;

- b) Schemes which are “**policy provisions**”, where the purpose of the funding is described but money will not be released until specific spending proposals have been approved by the Executive.

1.12 Immediate starts have been split into three categories:

- a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes will be monitored with reference to physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);
- b) **Work Programmes** – these consist of minor works or similar schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year;
- c) **Provisions** – these are sums of money set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.

## 2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 At the meeting in February, the Council will be asked to:

- (a) Approve the capital programme, including the prudential borrowing for schemes as described in this report and summarised at Appendices 2 to 7, subject to any amendments proposed by the City Mayor;
- (b) For those schemes designated immediate starts, delegate authority to the lead director to commit expenditure, subject to the normal requirements of contract procedure rules, rules concerning land acquisition and finance procedure rules;
- (c) Delegate authority to the City Mayor to determine a plan of spending for each policy provision, and to commit expenditure up to the maximum available;
- (d) For the purposes of finance procedure rules:
  - Determine that service resources shall consist of service revenue contributions; HRA revenue contributions; and government grants/third party contributions ringfenced for specific purposes.
  - Designate the operational estate & children’s capital maintenance programme, highways maintenance programme and transport improvement programme as

programme areas, within which the director can reallocate resources to meet operational requirements.

- (e) Delegate to the City Mayor:
- Authority to increase any scheme in the programme, or add a new scheme to the programme, subject to a maximum of £10m corporate resources in each instance and to borrow whilst remaining within the prudential limits for debt which are proposed in the treasury management strategy (elsewhere on your agenda);
  - Authority to reduce or delete any capital scheme, subject to a maximum reduction of £10m; and
  - Authority to transfer any “policy provision” to the “immediate starts” category.
- (g) Delegate to directors, in consultation with the relevant deputy/assistant mayor, authority to incur expenditure up to a maximum of £250k per scheme in respect of policy provisions on design and other professional fees and preparatory studies, but not any other type of expenditure.
- (h) Approve the capital strategy at Appendix 8.

### **3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement**

N/A

### **4. Background and options with supporting evidence**

#### Key Policy Issues for the New Programme

- 4.1 The cost of Prudential Borrowing has been calculated for each scheme, and the total is included within the revenue budget report for 2026/27, and the Prudential Indicators included in the Treasury Report 2026/27 found elsewhere on the agenda.
- 4.2 The programme supports the Council’s commitment to tackling the climate emergency, most obviously but not exclusively within the Transport Improvement Works, Operational Estate and Children’s capital maintenance programmes.

## Resources

- 4.3 Resources available to the programme consist primarily of Government grant, borrowing and capital receipts (the HRA programme is also supported by tenants' rent monies). Most grant is unringfenced, and the Council can spend it on any purpose it sees fit.
- 4.4 Appendix 1 presents the resources required to fund the proposed programme, which total some £129.81m. The key unringfenced funding sources are detailed below.
  - a) £2.83m of general capital receipts. The delivery of receipts from Ashton Green disposals to fund the work to sell/develop by the end of 2025/26.
  - b) £41.43m of unringfenced grant funding. Some of these figures are estimated in the absence of actual allocations from the Government.
  - c) £79.97m of borrowing, with an annual revenue cost.
- 4.5 For some schemes the amount of unringfenced resources required is less than the gross cost of the scheme. This is because resources are ringfenced directly to individual schemes. Ringfenced resources are shown throughout Appendix 2 and consist of government grant and contributions to support the delivery of specific schemes.
- 4.6 Only funding required to finance the schemes in this capital programme is included.
- 4.7 Finance Procedure Rules enable directors to make limited changes to the programme after it has been approved. For these purposes, the Council has split resources into corporate and service resources.
- 4.8 Directors have authority to add schemes to the programme, provided they are funded by service resources, up to an amount of £250,000. This provides flexibility for small schemes to be added to the programme without a report to the Executive, but only where service resources are identified. (Borrowing is treated as a corporate resource requiring a higher level of approval).

## Proposed Programme

- 4.9 The whole programme is summarised at Appendix 2. Responsibility for the majority of projects rests with the Strategic Director of City Development and Neighbourhoods.
- 4.10 £47.01m is provided for grant funded schemes. These schemes are funded either from unringfenced grant (where we have discretion) and ringfenced resources.

- a) £12.99m has been provided to continue the **Schools Capital Maintenance Programme** across three financial years. This is in addition to the £6m previously approved within the 2025/26 capital programme for delivery in 2026/27. The programme will include routine maintenance and spending and is prioritised to reflect asset condition and risk. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 5. Detailed schemes will be developed following consultation with schools.
- b) £16.09m is provided as part of the continued **Highways Capital Maintenance Programme** across three financial years. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition, risk and local neighbourhood priorities. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 4.
- c) £12.35m is provided in 2026/27 to continue the rolling programme of works constituting the **LTG – Local Transport Schemes Programme**. This scheme will focus on maintaining and improving local transport infrastructure through the Department for Transport's Local Transport Grant, providing investment in the design, construction, and maintenance of local transport networks. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 6.
- d) £5.58m has been provided for **Disabled Facilities Grants**, across three financial years to private sector householders which is funded by government grant. This is an annual programme which has existed for many years. These grants provide funding to eligible disabled people for adaption work to their homes and help them maintain their independence.

4.11 £14.89m is provided for the Council's own buildings.

- a) £13.11m has been provided to support the annual **Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme** of works to properties that the Council occupies for its own use. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition and risk. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 3 but may vary to meet emerging operational requirements.
- b) £0.15m has been provided for **LCB Maintenance**. The scheme focuses on essential maintenance works at the LCB Depot to ensure the building remains fit for purpose. This includes priority repairs, general maintenance, and upgrades necessary to meet current compliance standards.
- c) £0.50m has been provided for **IT Investment**, ensuring we have technology to support our councillors and teams, this will include ensuring our committee and Council rooms Town Hall and City

Hall to support councillors and ensure the public have access to democracy.

- d) £0.35m has been provided for the **Demolition of Rally House**. This is to facilitate the demolition of Rally House and the creation of a fenced, hardstanding area for vehicle parking, providing potential short-term parking income until the site is brought forward for future development.
  - e) £0.25m has been provided for the **Parks & Open Spaces Depot Transformation** scheme. This focuses on upgrading depot facilities at Gilroes Cemetery and Beaumont Park to enhance staff welfare facilities, storage, environmental compliance, and site security.
  - f) £0.10m has been allocated to support the ongoing **Depot Transformation** Project, enabling the relocation of the Park Services Environmental Ranger team from Riverside Depot to Knighton Park Depot.
  - g) £0.45m has been provided for **Public Toilet Refurbishment**. This is a rolling renovation programme for public toilet blocks across parks, highways, and cemeteries. Works will replace fixtures and improve facilities to maintain hygiene and appearance.
- 4.12 £50.00m has been provided for **Temporary Accommodation (TA) Acquisitions** for the purchase of 90 self-contained accommodation units for singles and 160 family accommodation units. Through this increase in the number of Council-owned TA units, we can better ensure that homeless households are housed in suitable accommodation, minimising the use of hotel stays. This builds on the £45m approved by Council in March 2024, and will directly result in annual cost avoidance of over £6m per year. Appendix 7 provides further details of the context to these proposals and the impact.
- 4.13 £13.29m is provided for Routine Works.
- a) £0.10m is provided for **Foster Care Capital Contribution** Scheme to support foster carers with alterations to their property to allow fostered children to remain living with their carers or to increase the capacity to look after more children.
  - b) £0.23m is provided for the **Historic Building Grant Fund** to provide match funding to city residents and organisations to support the repair of historic buildings and the reinstatement of lost original historic features.
  - c) £1.20m is provided for **Local Environmental Works** which will focus on local neighbourhood issues including residential

parking, local safety concerns, pedestrian routes, cycleways and community lighting to be delivered after consultation with ward members.

- d) £0.90m is towards the **Flood Strategy** to support the local flood risk management strategy and action plan, and the delivery of our statutory role to manage and reduce flood risk in collaboration with the Environment Agency & Severn Trent Water.
- e) £0.08m is included as part of the continued programme to refresh **Festival Decorations**.
- f) £0.43m is provided for **Heritage Interpretation Panels**. This scheme will focus on expanding the city's heritage interpretation by installing additional panels, highlighting Leicester's historic places and people. It will also enhance online content and collaboration with Visit Leicester and Place Marketing to boost public engagement and tourism.
- g) £0.45m is provided for **Grounds Maintenance Machinery** to replace ageing machinery with up to date, energy efficient models to provide continued maintenance of our parks and open spaces.
- h) £0.19m is provided for the **Environmental Crime / Parks & Open Spaces CCTV Enforcement Action Project** to purchase mobile CCTV cameras to tackle fly-tipping and street scene offences across the city.
- i) £0.36m is provided for **Replacement Tree Planting** on a rolling tree replacement programme across parks and highways, delivering environmental, biodiversity, health, aesthetic, and economic benefits.
- j) £0.65m has been provided for the **3G Pitch Replacements** Scheme to replace aging 3G synthetic pitches to reduce safety risks, protect user wellbeing, maintain FA compliance, and ensure surfaces remain fit for purpose.
- k) £8.71m has been made available for the annual **Fleet Replacement Programme**. Wherever possible, ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) will be sought to support the Council's climate emergency response.

- 4.14 £1.10m has been provided for the **Corporate Estate** to support the council's property portfolio. Including wall, steps & roof repairs, replacement windows. The council has a statutory responsibility to ensure business property is safe for our tenants and anybody else using the buildings. This will also ensure income is maintained for the revenue budget.

4.15 £0.35m is provided for Policy Provisions:

- a) £0.35m is provided for the **Voices of Leicester** Project, as potential match funding to support an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The application looks to support creating new social history and natural world galleries, improve building infrastructure, and develop inclusive learning and engagement spaces. To assist with celebrating Leicester's communities and stories.

4.16 £3.17m is provided for Other Schemes & Feasibilities:

- a) £2.83m for infrastructure works to enable **Capital Asset Sales**, in particular Ashton Green.
- h) £0.34m is provided for **Feasibility Studies**. This will enable studies to be done, typically for potential developments not included elsewhere in the programme or which might attract grant support. The breakdown for this is shown at Appendix 2e but may vary to meet emerging operational requirements.

#### Proposed Programme – Policy Provisions

4.17 Policy provisions are sums of money which are included in the programme for a stated purpose, but for which a further report to the Executive (and decision notice) is required before they can be spent. Schemes are usually treated as policy provisions because the Executive needs to see more detailed spending plans before full approval can be given.

4.18 Executive reports seeking approval to spend policy provisions must state whether schemes, once approved, will constitute projects, work programmes or provisions; and, in the case of projects, identify project outcomes and physical milestones against which progress can be monitored.

4.19 Where a scheme has the status of a policy provision, it is shown as such in the appendix.

#### Capital Strategy

4.20 Local authorities are required to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach for capital expenditure and financing at high level.

4.21 The proposed capital strategy is set out at Appendix 8.

## **5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications**

## 5.1 Financial implications

This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.

Signed: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Dated: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025

## 5.2 Legal implications

In accordance with the constitution, the capital programme is a matter that requires approval of full Council. The subsequent letting of contracts, acquisition and/or disposal of land, etc., all remain matters that are executive functions and therefore there will be the need to ensure such next steps have the correct authority in place prior to proceeding. Legal Services will provide specific advice in relation to individual schemes and client officers should take early legal advice.

Signed: Kevin Carter, Head of Law

Dated: 18 November 2025

## 5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions they have to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

People from across all protected characteristics will benefit from the improved public good arising from the proposed capital programme. However, as the proposals are developed and implemented, consideration should continue to be given to the equality impacts of the schemes in question, and how it can help the Council to meet the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The main purpose of this report is to ask the Council to approve a capital programme for 2026/27, the capital programme includes schemes which improve the city's infrastructure and contribute to overall improvement of quality of life for people across all protected characteristics. By doing so, the capital programme promotes the PSED aim of: fostering good relations between different groups of people by ensuring that no area is disadvantaged compared to other areas as many services rely on such infrastructure to continue to operate.

Some of the schemes focus on meeting specific areas of need for a protected characteristic: disabled adaptations within homes (disability), home repair grants which are most likely to be accessed by elderly, disabled people or households with children who are living in poverty (age and disability).

Other schemes target much larger groups of people who have a range of protected characteristics reflective of the diverse population within the city. Some schemes are place specific and address environmental issues that also benefit diverse groups of people. The delivery of the capital programme contributes to the Council fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Where there are any improvement works to buildings or public spaces, considerations around accessibility (across a range of protected characteristics) must influence design and decision making. This will ensure that people are not excluded (directly or indirectly) from accessing a building, public space or service, on the basis of a protected characteristic.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 18 November 2025

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency and ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions for the council and the city, the council has a key role to play in addressing carbon emissions relating to the delivery of its services. This includes through its delivery of capital projects, as projects involving buildings and infrastructure often present significant opportunities for achieving carbon savings or climate adaptations and are an area where the council has a high level of control.

It is important that the climate implications and opportunities of all projects and work programmes are considered on a project-by-project basis, both during the development phase and when decisions are made.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2246

Dated: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025

#### 5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Policy	Yes	The capital programme is part of the Council's overall budget and policy framework and makes a substantial contribution to the delivery of Council policy.
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	A number of schemes will benefit elderly people and those on low income.

#### 6. Background information and other papers:

**7. Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 Capital Resources.
- Appendix 2a Grant Funded Schemes
- Appendix 2b Own Buildings
- Appendix 2c Routine Works
- Appendix 2d Temporary Accommodation
- Appendix 2e Corporate Estate
- Appendix 2f Other & Feasibilities Schemes
- Appendix 2g Policy Provisions
- Appendix 3 Operational Estate Maintenance Capital Programme
- Appendix 4 Highways Maintenance Capital Programme
- Appendix 5 Children's Capital Improvement Programme
- Appendix 6 Local Transport Schemes
- Appendix 7 Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions
- Appendix 8 Capital Strategy 2026/27

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

**9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?**

No – it is a proposal to Council.

## Appendix 1

### Capital Resources

	26/27 {£000}	27/28 {£000}	28/29 {£000}	Later Years {£000}	Total {£000}
<b>Capital Receipts</b>					
General Capital Receipts	1,209	574	1,051	0	<b>2,835</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>1,051</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,835</b>
<b>Unringfenced Capital Grant</b>					
School Capital Maintenance	1,084	5,957	5,944	0	<b>12,985</b>
Local Transport Grant	12,349	0	0	0	<b>12,349</b>
Highways Maintenance	5,364	5,364	5,364	0	<b>16,092</b>
<b>Total Unringfenced Grant</b>	<b>18,797</b>	<b>11,321</b>	<b>11,308</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41,426</b>
Prudential Borrowing	59,644	11,558	8,652	116	79,970
<b>TOTAL UNRINGFENCED RESOURCES</b>	<b>79,650</b>	<b>23,453</b>	<b>21,012</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>124,231</b>
<b>Ringfenced resources</b>					
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,861	1,861	1,861	0	<b>5,583</b>
<b>TOTAL RINGFENCED RESOURCES</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,583</b>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>81,511</b>	<b>25,314</b>	<b>22,873</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>129,814</b>

**Appendix 2a**

**Grant Funded Schemes**

	<b>Division</b>	<b>Scheme Type</b>	<b>26/27</b>	<b>27/28</b>	<b>28/29</b>	<b>Later Years</b>	<b>Total Approval</b>
			{£000}	{£000}	{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<b><u>Grant Funded Schemes</u></b>							
School Capital Maintenance	CDN (ECS)	WP	1,084	5,957	5,944	-	12,985
Highway Capital Maintenance	CDN (PDT)	WP	5,364	5,364	5,364	-	16,092
Local Transport Grant	CDN (PDT)	PJ	12,349	-	-	-	12,349
Disabled Facilities Grants*	CDN (HGF)	WP	1,861	1,861	1,861	-	5,583
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>20,658</b>	<b>13,182</b>	<b>13,169</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,009</b>

Key to Scheme Types: PJ = Project; WP = Work Programme

\*This scheme is funded through a ringfenced grant.

## Appendix 2b

### Own Buildings

	<b>Division</b>	<b>Scheme Type</b>	<b>26/27</b>	<b>27/28</b>	<b>28/29</b>	<b>Later Years</b>	<b>Total Approval</b>
			{£000}	{£000}	{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<b>Own Buildings</b>							
LCB Maintenance	CDN (TCI)	PJ	150	-	-	-	150
Property and Operational Estate	CDN (EBS)	WP	3,472	6,515	3,110	-	13,097
IT Investment	CDN (EBS)	WP	500	-	-	-	500
Rally House Demolition	CDN (EBS)	PJ	210	140	-	-	350
Parks & Open Spaces Depot Transformation	CDN (NES)	PJ	165	80	-	-	245
Depot Transformation	CDN (NES)	PJ	100	-	-	-	100
Public Toilet Refurbishment	CDN (NES)	PJ	150	150	150	-	450
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4,747</b>	<b>6,885</b>	<b>3,260</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,892</b>

*Key to Scheme Types: PJ = Project; WP = Work Programme*

**Appendix 2c**

**Routine Works**

Division	Scheme Type	26/27	27/28	28/29	Later Years	Total Approval
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><u>Routine Works</u></b>						
Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme	ECS	WP	100	-	-	100
Historic Building Grant Fund	CDN (PDT)	WP	75	75	75	225
Local Environmental Works	CDN (PDT)	WP	400	400	400	1,200
Flood Strategy	CDN (PDT)	WP	300	300	300	900
Festival Decorations	CDN (PDT)	WP	25	25	25	75
Heritage Interpretation Panels	CDN (TCI)	WP	210	220	-	430
Grounds Maintenance Machinery	CDN (NES)	WP	150	150	150	450
Environmental Crime / Parks & Open Spaces CCTV Enforcement Action	CDN (NES)	WP	185	-	-	185
Replacement Tree Planting	CDN (NES)	WP	200	80	80	360
3G Pitch Replacement – FIS Carpets	CDN (NES)	PJ	250	400	-	650
Vehicle Fleet Replacement Programme	CDN (HGF)	WP	1,732	2,735	4,246	8,713
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>3,627</b>	<b>4,385</b>	<b>5,276</b>	<b>- 13,288</b>

Key to Scheme Types: PJ = Project; WP = Work Programme

**Appendix 2d****Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions**

Division	Scheme Type	26/27 {£000}	27/28 {£000}	28/29 {£000}	Later Years {£000}	Total Approval {£000}
<b><u>Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions</u></b>						
Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions		50,000	-	-	-	50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>50,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>50,000</b>

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Key to Scheme Types: PJ = Project; WP = Work Programme

**Appendix 2e**

**Corporate Estate**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Scheme Type</b>	<b>26/27</b>	<b>27/28</b>	<b>28/29</b>	<b>Later Years</b>	<b>Total Approval</b>
		{£000}	{£000}	{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<b><u>Corporate Estate</u></b>						
Corporate Estate	CDN (EBS)	WP	1,100	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,100</b>

Key to Scheme Types: PJ = Project; WP = Work Programme

## Appendix 2f

### Feasibilities and Other Schemes

	Division	Scheme Type	26/27	27/28	28/29	Later Years	Total Approval
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Feasibilities and Contingencies</b>							
Infrastructure works to enable Capital Asset Sales	CDN (PDT)	PJ	1,209	574	1,051	-	2,835
PDT Feasibility	CDN (PDT)	WP	70	170	-	-	240
Curve Automation System Feasibility	CDN (TCI)	WP	50	-	-	-	50
Housing Public Space Infrastructure Regeneration (CCTV) Feasibility	CDN (NES)	WP	50	-	-	-	50
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,379</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1,051</b>	-	<b>3,175</b>

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Key to Scheme Types: PJ = Project; WP = Work Programme

**Appendix 2g**

**Policy Provisions**

Division	Scheme Type	26/27	27/28	28/29	Later Years	Total Approval {£000}
		{£000}	{£000}	{£000}		
<b>Policy Provisions</b>						
Voices of Leicester (Match Funding)	CDN (TCI)	PP	-	118	116	116
<b>TOTAL</b>			-	<b>118</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>116</b>
<hr/>						
<b>GRAND TOTAL – ALL SCHEMES</b>		<b>81,511</b>	<b>25,314</b>	<b>22,873</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>129,814</b>
<hr/>						

Property and Operational Estate Maintenance Capital Programme

<b>Description</b>	<b>26/27 Amount £000's</b>	<b>27/28 Amount £000's</b>	<b>28/29 Amount £000's</b>	<b>Total Amount £000's</b>
<b>Building Works</b> - Maintenance at the Councils operational buildings to ensure they meet the needs of our residents and employees. Key works will include refurbishment of buildings, including ensuring appropriate utilisation to enable maximisation of our assets, pathway replacements at park, refurbishment of public areas and works at heritage sites.	1,983	2,541	830	<b>5,354</b>
<b>Compliance Works</b> - Generally consisting of surveys to gain condition data across the estate and works arising from the various risk assessments that are undertaken.	568	503	815	<b>1,886</b>
<b>Mechanical Works</b> - Ventilation systems, pool filtration & dosing systems, building management systems and heating controls, including essential works at York House.	839	3,417	1,360	<b>5,616</b>
<b>Emergency Provision</b> – Provision for emergency reactive works that could be required across the Council's estate.	82	54	105	<b>241</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>6,515</b>	<b>3,110</b>	<b>13,097</b>

**Appendix 4**

**Highways Maintenance Capital Programme**

<b>Description</b>	<b>26/27 Amount £000's</b>	<b>27/28 Amount £000's</b>	<b>28/29 Amount £000's</b>	<b>Total Amount £000's</b>
<b>Main Roads (Principal Roads &amp; Classified Non-Principal Roads)</b> – 2026 schemes include Victoria Road East, Hinckley Road, Glenfrith Way	625	625	625	1,875
<b>Unclassified Neighbourhood Roads, Large Area Patching &amp; Pothole Repairs – Target large carriageway defect repairs to provide longer term repairs in readiness for surface dressing. Includes lining, joint sealing, concrete bay repairs and road hump replacements.</b> 2026 schemes include: Barkbythorpe Road – Humberstone Lane - Boundary Walnut Street Longfellow Road Vicarage Lane Eastfield Road Floyd Close Westernhay Road Southernhay Road Morley Road Dumbleton Avenue Rowley Fields Avenue <b>Includes lining, joint sealing, concrete bay repairs and road hump replacements</b>	1,750	1,750	1,750	5,250

Description	26/27 Amount £000's	27/28 Amount £000's	28/29 Amount £000's	Total Amount £000's
<b>Footway Relays and Reconstructions – Focus on neighbourhood street scene corridor improvements in district centres.</b> 2026 schemes included Melton Road uneven footway improvements and local footway maintenance.	750	750	750	<b>2,250</b>
<b>Strategic Bridge Deck Maintenance &amp; Replacement.</b> 2026 schemes include feasibility studies and structural surveys to assess St. Margaret's Way half joint replacement and Burleys Way flyover maintenance.	50	250	250	<b>550</b>
<b>Bridge Improvement &amp; Maintenance Works including various parapet replacements, structural maintenance works and technical assessment review.</b> 2026 schemes include Shady Lane, Ocean Rd, Dakyn Rd, Southgate Underpass.	689	250	250	<b>1,189</b>
<b>Traffic Signal Installations Renewals and Lighting Column Replacements</b> – Signalling upgrades, lamp column replacements, illuminated bollard and sign replacement.	240	400	400	<b>1,040</b>
<b>Highway Drainage</b> – Flood mitigation schemes and drainage improvement projects.	260	339	339	<b>938</b>
<b>DfT Whole Government Accounting Lifecycle Asset Management Development Project</b> – Strategic asset management development, condition surveys, data analysis, lifecycle planning and reporting in support of DfT Challenge Funding bidding linked to asset management performance.	1,000	1,000	1,000	<b>3,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,364</b>	<b>5,364</b>	<b>5,364</b>	<b>16,092</b>

Children's Capital Improvement Programme

Description	26/27 Amount £000's	27/28 Amount £000's	28/29 Amount £000's	Total Amount £000's
<b>Building Works</b> - Typical works include roof replacements, sports hall floor replacements, playground resurfacing and window replacements.	478	3,830	3,143	7,451
<b>Compliance Works</b> - This work stream will mainly be used to ensure the playing fields and pavilions used by schools are fully compliant with current regulations and to conduct health and safety works.	434	783	1,251	2,468
<b>Mechanical Works</b> - schemes being undertaken within the programme typically consist of re-piping heating systems and end of life ventilation replacements.	172	981	1,181	2,334
<b>Individual Access Needs Works</b> - This is a provision to allow works to be carried out to enable children with additional needs to access mainstream school.	-	121	123	244
<b>Emergency Provision</b> - This is provision within the programme to allow for emergency unforeseen works to be carried out.	-	242	246	488
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,084</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>5,944</b>	<b>12,985</b>

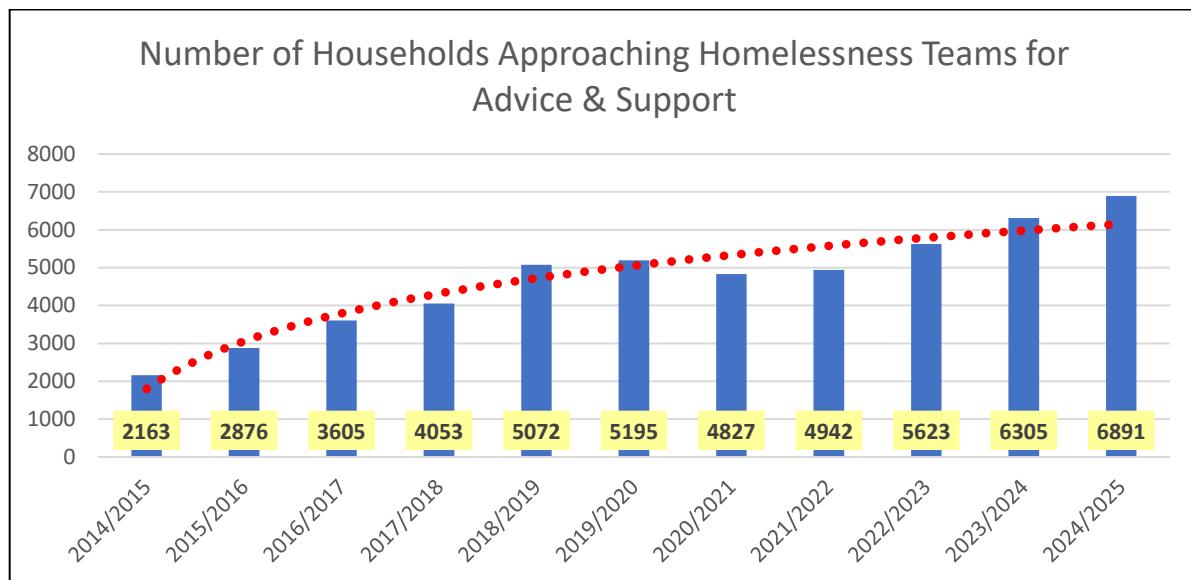
**Local Transport Schemes**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>26-27 Amount £000</b>
City Centre	Granby Street Phase 3 Delivery	1,100
City Connectivity	LCWIP Phase 1 Design Work	300
City Connectivity	LCWIP Phase 0 Delivery	1,400
City Connectivity	Stokeswood Park Culvert Repairs	2,200
City Connectivity	Rally Park Phase 3a Delivery	800
City Connectivity	Saffron Lane Phase 3/4 Design	300
City Connectivity	Service support (inc. data collection, modelling)	350
Future City	PROW Programme	434
Future City	Greengate Lane Design/Build	1,200
Future City	Highway Asset Replacement Programme	800
Healthier Neighbourhoods	Ped crossing programme (phase 3 design)	350
Healthier Neighbourhoods	Ped crossing programme (phase 2 delivery)	350
Healthier Neighbourhoods	Local Works Contribution	400
Healthier Neighbourhoods	School Streets Programme	165
Healthier Neighbourhoods	AQAP Delivery	850
Local Safety	20s Programme block allocation	750
Local Safety	Local Safety Scheme Block Allocation	600
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12,349</b>

The Local Transport Scheme grant is a one-off grant, so the programme of works is only for a single financial year.

**Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions**

Like many other local authorities, Leicester has been experiencing significant pressures in the cost of meeting the needs of homeless households through the provision of temporary accommodation. Since 2014/15 the number of approaches has risen by 219% as can be seen in the table below:



The council works positively to support households in preventing homelessness with circa 60% prevented from ever becoming Homeless, with Leicester performing better than the national average. This is supported by the table below that shows the percentage of prevention duty cases that came to an end within Quarter with the outcome being "Secured accommodation for 6+ months":

	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
<b>Leicester</b>	62%	63%	62%	59%
<b>National Ave.</b>	52%	52%	54%	51%

However, the Council is unable to prevent all cases and needs to support households who have often found themselves homeless often due to no fault of their own.

The Council in March 2024 approved the addition of £45m to the capital programme to acquire properties to hold as temporary accommodation, providing 253 units. Alongside a package of different measures this has successfully achieved financial cost avoidance for the Council of £4m in 24/25, rising to £16m in 25/26 and forecast to be £39m in 26/27.

This positive intervention leads to a stronger homelessness pathway, that is more resilient to the ongoing pressures and improves the conditions for those going through homelessness, especially because of the additional self-contained temporary accommodation.

As of October 2025, we had a total of 1,100 households residing in temporary accommodation. A total of 653 of those households were families and a further 447 single households remain in temporary accommodation.

Even with the positive interventions for singles and families, due to the ongoing strong demand for Homelessness services and accommodation it is expected that numbers will continue to exceed LCC owned and commissioned temporary accommodation with 392 families in expensive temporary accommodation and 81 singles in expensive temporary accommodation as at March 2026. These figures are expected to grow to 452 families and 261 singles in expensive temporary accommodation by March 2027

The proposed capital budget provides an additional £50m for acquiring temporary accommodation during 2026/27. This is anticipated to provide 90 units for singles and 160 units for families, which will be held in the Councils General Fund and managed through a third-party provider.

In addition to this, we are increasing our staffing in this area to assist with our prevention work. Overall, the combination of the £50m investment in temporary accommodation and the additional staff to support the prevention work is forecast to achieve cost avoidance of £3.8m in 2026/27, rising to £6.4m in 27/28. The revenue implications costs of this investment including borrowing costs are included in the General Fund Revenue Budget.

**Capital Strategy 2026/27**

Appendix to be added for final report



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# Bereavement Services Update

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 22/01/2026

Lead director: Sean Atterbury, Director of Neighbourhood  
& Environmental Services

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Alan Brown (Bereavement Services Manager)
- Author contact details: alan.brown@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 2.0

### 1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on matters related to the council's Bereavement Services, including;

- Demand for burials and cremations
- Planned improvement works at Gilroes Cemetery
- Future burial space
- Gilroes Crematorium
- Law Commission review of Burial, Cremation and New Funerary Methods legislation

### 2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:

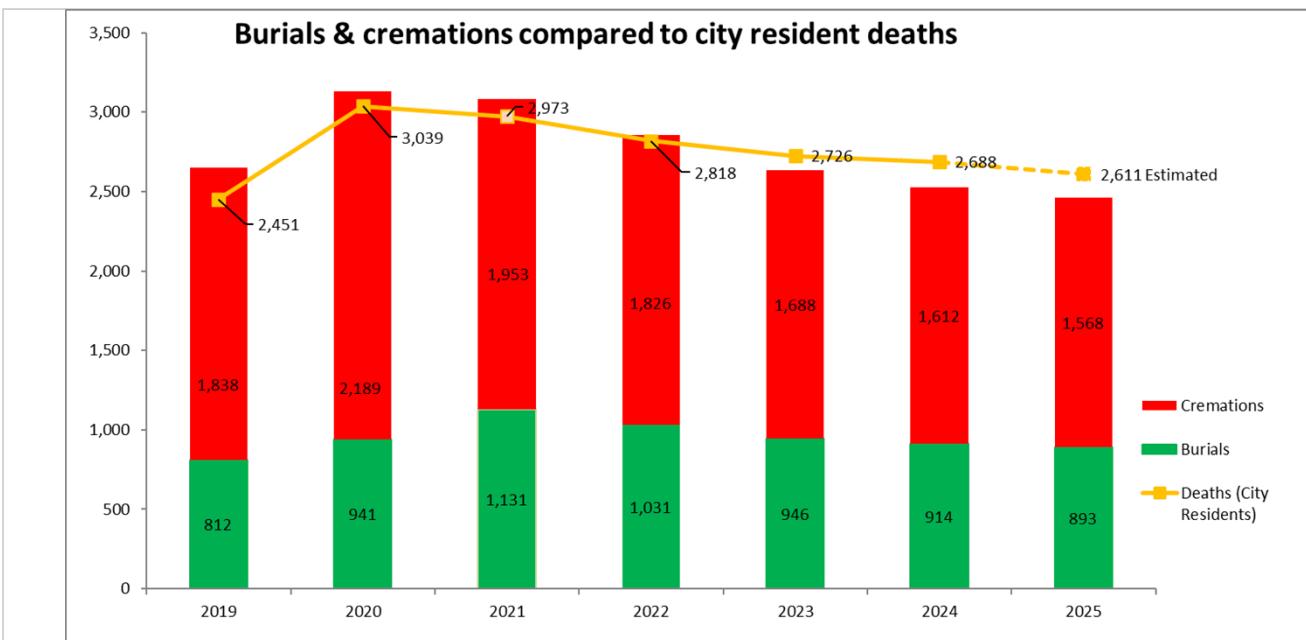
2.1 Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission are invited to:

- note the contents of the report for information
- comment on the report and ongoing work of Bereavement Services

### 3. Detailed report

#### *Background*

1. The council owns four cemeteries (Belgrave, Gilroes, Saffron Hill & Welford Road) and one crematorium (Gilroes). The council is also responsible for the maintenance and memorial safety of twelve closed churchyards in the city.
2. Providing cemeteries and crematoria are discretionary powers granted to local authorities and there is no statutory duty on the council to operate either.
3. In 2025 the council conducted 893 burials and 1,568 cremations.
4. The number of burials and cremations conducted by the council have both reduced in the last five years, following a peak in deaths during the Covid pandemic.
5. The reduction in cremation numbers is also partially attributed to the increase in private sector provision, and changing funeral preferences, leading to a rapid increase in direct cremations (a cremation without a funeral service) and the growth of national cremation providers.



### *Gilroes Cemetery improvements*

6. Planning permission (20242077) has been granted to carry out alterations to landscaping and drainage in parts of Gilroes Cemetery. The general site plan is attached as Appendix 1.
7. Improvements to cemetery drainage will be undertaken to enhance drainage capacity. This follows on from previous capital works in 2023 which successfully mitigated waterlogging and flooding issues in parts of the cemetery.
8. Works will also include the construction of a new roadway to improve internal traffic circulation for funerals and cemetery visitors, 19 new parking bays to stop parking on grass and across graves, landscaping enhancements with the planting of 26 new trees, new native hedgerow and enhancements to grasslands to be sown with a mix of native wildflowers and grasses.
9. LCC Estates & Buildings capital projects team completed a competitive tendering procurement exercise (PAN3266) for the improvement works, with the contract awarded to Ground Control Ltd an experienced contractor who have delivered a wide range of sensitive, landscape-led schemes in operational cemeteries and crematoria.
10. Works onsite will commence in early March 2026 with completion mid-July 2026. Tree planting will be completed in Autumn/Winter 2026.
11. The management of funerals, traffic and cemetery visitors will be managed carefully throughout the construction period to ensure minimal disruption to funeral services and visitors.

### *Future burial space*

12. The council has approximately 2,700 new graves available at Gilroes and Saffron Hill Cemeteries with an average requirement for up to 500 new graves a year. This is equivalent to 5-5½ years of new burial space meaning the current cemeteries will

reach capacity around 2030/31, subject to any potential changes in legislation that may arise from a Law Commission review to increase cemetery sustainability.

13. The Law Commission (see paragraphs 32-35) may recommend granting discretionary powers to all local authorities to reuse graves. This could potentially provide thousands of additional graves and extend the burial capacity of all cemeteries, including the provision of more than 2,000 'new' graves at Welford Road Cemetery.
14. There are currently no new graves available at Belgrave or Welford Road Cemeteries, although a small number of burials take place each year in existing graves where space permits. It should be noted that around half of all burials each year take place in an existing grave alongside other burials. These burials continue for many years after a cemetery reaches capacity to provide new graves.
15. Burial is the only permitted funeral option for Muslims. The Muslim Burial Council of Leicestershire (MBCOL) have commissioned cemetery consultants to carry out a cemetery feasibility and site search to identify potential sites to establish a new Muslim cemetery within 5 miles of Leicester. The council and MBCOL will continue to share information and work together with regards future burial needs.
16. Due to limited land holdings, and tight geographical boundaries, there is a lack of suitable land available in the city for a new cemetery. City council owned land outside the city boundary has been appraised as unsuitable for future cemetery use.
17. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may see the council's boundary expand which could offer alternative opportunities for future burial space. A desktop review based on the council's current LGR proposal has identified other existing council cemeteries and private burial grounds within an extended city boundary. Should this go ahead, further work will be needed with the relevant burial authorities to identify their current burial space availability, annual burial rates, whether they have already identified any land for future burial use and cemetery management practices, to develop a single strategic burial space strategy.
18. We await the decision on LGR due in 2026 for consideration of any implications arising from the Government's decision. It is recommended that a future report on the impact of LGR on bereavement services be drafted once the position becomes clearer.

#### *Gilroes Crematorium*

19. The Deputy City Mayor and council officers met with members of the Hindu, Jain & Sikh Crematorium Network (HJSCN) in October 2025 to discuss potential improvements to Gilroes Crematorium to support funeral services from the respective communities. A follow up meeting is scheduled for February 2026.
20. HJSCN have requested the provision of a dedicated puja facility to give bereaved families the ability to hold open coffin prayer rituals before the main funeral service.
21. Families already have access to the crematorium chapels to hold pre-cremation puja services by booking extended chapel time, however the HJSCN would prefer a dedicated facility or a more intimate space for smaller gatherings. While there are space constraints that prevent a dedicated puja room at Gilroes Crematorium, we are exploring the possibility of adapting the chapel side rooms to accommodate this

practice alongside the current provision in the main chapels. This will require completion of some building surveys and capital investment which are currently being costed.

22. Further consultation with other crematorium users and funeral directors will take place before any changes are implemented as the rooms are used by all funeral services at the crematorium.
23. There is alternative local private sector provision for Hindu, Jain and Sikh cremation services at Great Glen Crematorium where this is a purpose-built Puja Hall.

#### *Crematorium emissions*

24. DEFRA have issued new technical guidance for crematoria which is designed to further reduce the environmental impact of cremations. The revised guidelines have introduced a new requirement to monitor and control emissions of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), mainly Nitric Oxide (NO) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), which are released during combustion processes.
25. Gilroes Crematorium must be compliant with the new emissions level by December 2029. To ensure compliance by the deadline, NOx emissions will be monitored during annual emissions tests in 2026 & 2027 (independently verified) to set the baseline levels and inform the type of NOx abatement required. Capital investment for abatement installation in 2028/29 will be required.
26. The costs to retrospectively fit NOx abatement to the cremators at Gilroes Crematorium is estimated at £100,000 for a simple dosing solution, plus an ongoing cost of £3 to £4 per cremation for the supply of reagent.

#### *Gilroes Cemetery & Crematorium marketing*

27. Bereavement Services will be enhancing the marketing of Gilroes Crematorium during 2026 to ensure bereaved families are fully aware of the services available.
28. Fees and charges for cremations, and burials, are benchmarked annually to ensure the council's pricing structure remains competitive with comparable providers.
29. A new council website is in development and expected to go-live in early 2026 and this will feature information about bereavement services and Gilroes to promote the facilities and services on offer.
30. The council's communications and marketing team have designed a new poster and leaflets to promote Gilroes. These are to be distributed to local funeral directors, Registration offices and local hospital and hospice bereavement teams to display at suitable locations for bereaved families.
31. An open day will take place in the summer of 2026 to further promote Gilroes Cemetery and Crematorium and showcase the completion of the improvement works in the cemetery. The Open Day will also give members of the public the opportunity to take a tour of the crematorium and learn more about bereavement services.

## *Law Commission review of burial, cremation and new funerary methods legislation*

32. Scrutiny members have previously requested updates on the progress of the Law Commission review. The Law Commission is seeking to reform the law of burial and cremation in England and Wales which is piecemeal, complex and outdated.
33. The first phase of the Law Commission's review involved a public consultation (October 2024 - January 2025) and looked at legislation related to burials and cremations. This phase of consultation considered extending discretionary powers to all local authorities to extinguish old burial rights and permit the reuse of graves by deepening graves to allow further burials. The powers are already available in limited form to London Local Authorities, a small number of private cemeteries and a single town council (Bishops Stortford). The Law Commission have indicated that the report and recommendations from this consultation will be published in early 2026, however legislation changes are linked to the completion of Phase 3 Rights & Obligations so are not expected until 2028.
34. The second phase of the Law Commission's review also involved a public consultation (June 2025 – September 2025) and looked at new funerary methods, including alkaline hydrolysis and human composting, and the need for a regulatory framework for these and other emerging funerary methods. The Law Commission have indicated that the report and a draft legislative Bill will be published in Spring 2026.
35. The third phase of the Law Commission's review will begin in early 2026 (TBC) and finish in 2027. This will look at legal rights and obligations relating to funerary methods, funerals and remains.

## **4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

Any proposals for future cemetery capacity will need consideration as and when they are brought forward, reflecting the long-term financial commitment which comes with such sites. Options for the NOx abatement work will need developing and any capital requirement arising as a result will be considered within future capital budget setting.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 14th January 2026

### **4.2 Legal Implications**

Various improvement works are being undertaken and to be further undertaken by Bereavement Services primarily in relation to ease of access rights, increases in capacity, facilities and aesthetics of the surroundings for these important services to the various communities in the Leicester area. This covers the competitive tendering exercise to seek the improvements and obtain value for money for the Council in accordance with the new Procurement Act 2023. Any contract award(s) must also comply with internal Contract Procedure Rules and require notice publication by the Council's Procurement team.

Ongoing consultations including the various phases of the Law Commission Review recommendations, advisory notes and subsequent law changes will require compliance and implementation. This may require further adaptations or enhancements to meet changes imposed and/or arising out of Local Government Reorganisation including expansion of boundaries as identified above.

Signed: S Lowry-Smith      Steven Lowry-Smith - Contracts & Procurement Solicitor  
Dated: 14 January 2026

#### **4.3 Equalities Implications**

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. This report provides an update on matters related to the council's Bereavement Services. This duty is particularly relevant to Bereavement Services, where provision must meet the diverse needs of Leicester's multi-faith and multicultural population. The Council is proactively managing pressures on bereavement services through targeted collaboration and infrastructure improvements. While the projected exhaustion of local burial space by 2030/31 poses a challenge for the Muslim community—for whom burial is a religious necessity—the Council is working closely with the Muslim Burial Council of Leicestershire to investigate land expansion and secure future provision. Engagement with the Hindu, Jain, and Sikh communities is facilitating the development of "puja" facilities and open-coffin ritual spaces, ensuring that these cultural requirements are met with dignity and respect. The planned improvements at Gilroes Cemetery should provide benefits for elderly visitors and those with mobility-related disabilities.

The proposed service updates and the strategic response to the Law Commission review aim to create a more sustainable and inclusive service. The potential Law Commission recommendation to allow the reuse of old graves may be sensitive for certain religious or non-religious groups. If granted these powers, the Council must collaborate with local communities to ensure that grave reuse policies respect different religious views.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148  
Dated: 9 January 2026

#### **4.4 Climate Emergency Implications**

It should be noted that positive steps are being taken to manage and to some extent mitigate the carbon impact of cremations and burials.

Service delivery by the council and partners generally contributes to the council's carbon footprint so any potential impacts could be considered within delivery of related projects, such as encouraging the use of sustainable travel options, using buildings and materials efficiently and adopting updated practices that could help reduce the carbon emissions associated with bereavement services.

Gilroes crematorium is in the top 10% of the Council's operational estate for gas and electricity consumption and it is important that, as new laws are introduced and new methods of burial and cremation are considered, the associated energy consumption and environmental impact of these is assessed on a case-by-case basis to optimise the use of energy, and mitigate environmental pollution.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, ext 372246  
Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026

#### **4.5 Other Implications**

**None**

Signed:

Dated:

#### **5. Background information and other papers:**

N/A

#### **6. Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1: Gilroes Cemetery improvement plan



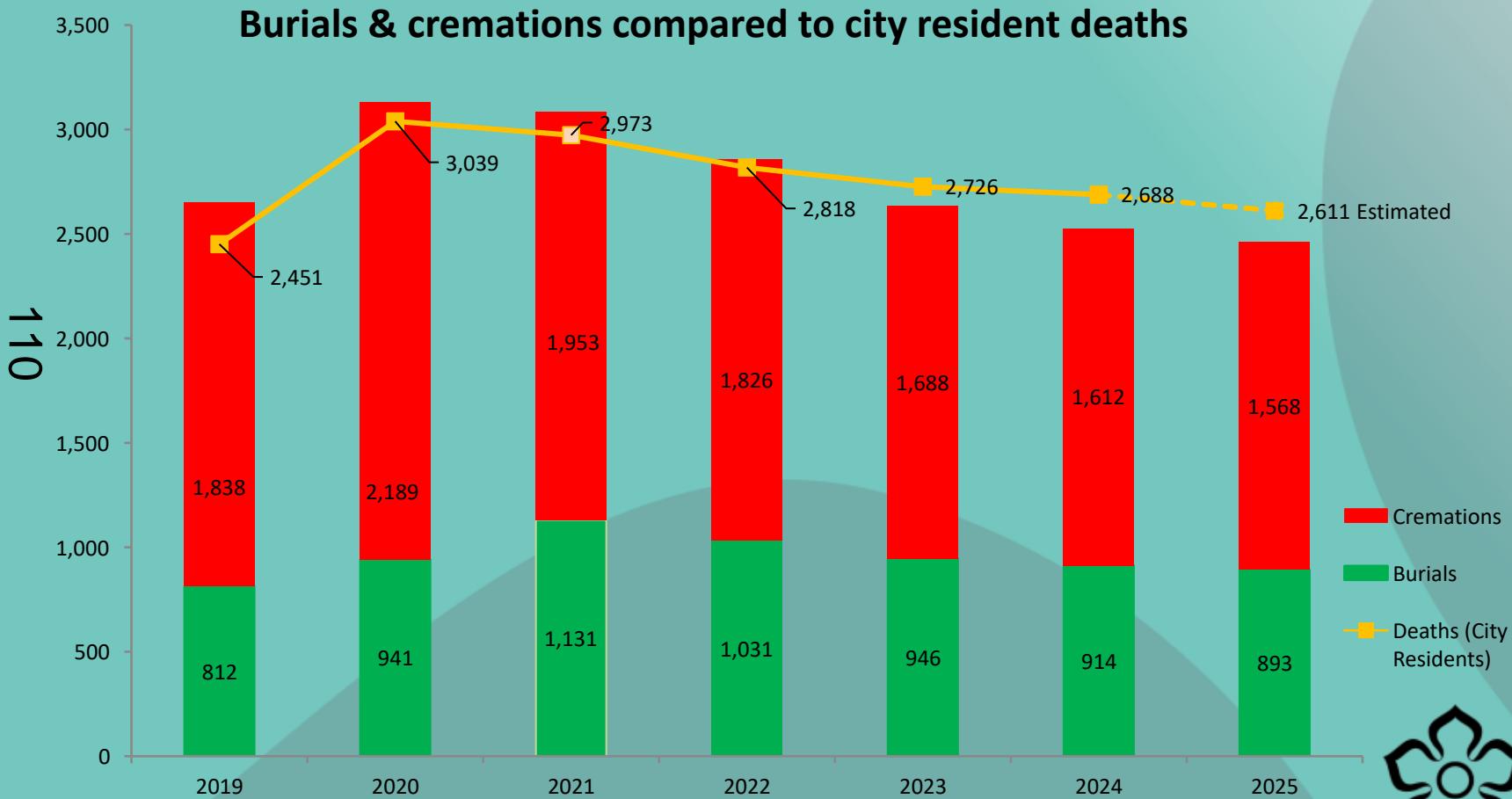


# Bereavement Services

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee

January 2026

# Demand for burials & cremations



# Gilroes Cemetery improvements

- Improvement works include:
  - New internal road layout
  - Additional hearse and car parking provision (19 spaces)
  - Upgraded drainage infrastructure
  - Enhanced biodiversity landscaping
- Ground Control Ltd awarded contract
- Works onsite March 2026 to mid-July 2026
- Tree planting – Autumn/Winter 2026



# Future burial space

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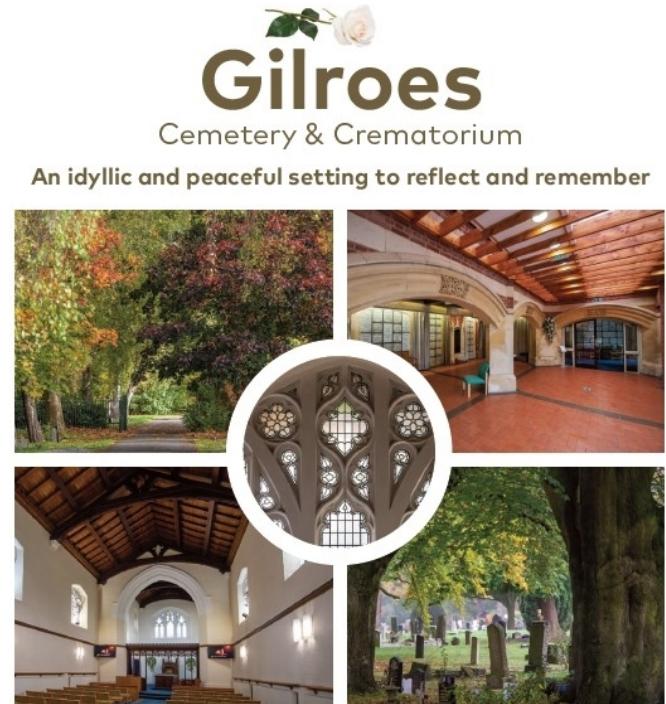
- 2,700 new graves available
- Burial rate up to 500 new graves every year
- New graves available until 2030/31
- Ongoing dialogue with faith communities
  - MBCOL cemetery feasibility
  - Jewish community
- New cemetery search on hold
  - Local Government Reorganisation
  - Law Commission Review



Gilroes Crematorium

# Gilroes marketing & promotion

- Aim to promote Gilroes as the crematorium of choice for bereaved families in Leicester
- New council website early 2026
- New promotional materials
- Open Day summer 2026
- Benchmarked pricing



## Personal and dignified funeral services

- Burials
- Cremations
- Direct cremations
- Puja services
- Digital music, tributes & webcasting
- Scattering of ashes
- Bespoke memorials
- Memorial gardens
- Two peaceful chapels
- Tranquil heritage landscape

Ask your funeral director about the full range of services available at Gilroes Crematorium, or contact us:



0116 454 1016  
[leicester.gov.uk/gilroes](http://leicester.gov.uk/gilroes)  
[cemeteries@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:cemeteries@leicester.gov.uk)

# Bereavement Services fee benchmarking

<b>Burial fees</b>	
Authority	New Adult Lawn Grave & Burial
Manchester	2,283
Derby	2,385
Bradford	2,638
<b>Leicester</b>	<b>2,660</b>
Nottingham	2,674
Peterborough	2,863
Milton Keynes	2,945
Bristol	3,005
Stoke	3,060
Sheffield	3,095
Leeds	3,290
Wolverhampton	3,350
Norwich	3,395
Birmingham	3,700
Sandwell	3,762
Gardens of Peace (Private Muslim cemeteries)	3,900
Solihull	3,945
Walsall	4,369
Coventry	4,445
<b>Average</b>	<b>3,251</b>

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<b>Cremation Fees</b>				
	Attended Service	Off-Peak Attended	(Direct) Unattended Cremation	Saturday adult
<b>Gilroes Crematorium</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>1,680</b>
Countesthorpe	1,105-1,200	930	495	1,690
Great Glen	1,225-1,325	895	545	1,525
Loughborough	1,250	850	475	1,250

# Law Commission review of burial & cremation legislation

- The Law Commission is seeking to reform the law of burial and cremation in England and Wales which is piecemeal, complex and outdated.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Phase: Burials & Cremation legislation
  - Public consultation took place October 2024 – January 2025
  - Different types of burial ground / Reuse of graves / Entitlement to ashes/ Ownership of medical implants
  - Report and recommendations due early 2026.
  - Links to 3<sup>rd</sup> phase so legislation changes not expected until 2028 earliest
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase: New funerary methods
  - Public consultation took place June 2025 – September 2025
  - Alkaline Hydrolysis & human composting
  - Report and draft Bill to be published Spring 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase: Rights & Obligations legislation
  - Public consultation early 2026 (TBC)
  - Who has right to make decisions and are deceased's wishes legally binding?
  - Report and draft Bill 2027
  - Will include recommendations from 1<sup>st</sup> Phase

# Questions?

Scrutiny

## Leicester City Council Scrutiny Review

Community Asset Transfer

A review of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny  
Commission

2026

## **Background to scrutiny reviews**

Determining the right topics for scrutiny reviews is the first step in making sure scrutiny provides benefits to the Council and the community.

This scoping template will assist in planning the review by defining the purpose, methodology and resources needed. It should be completed by the Member proposing the review, in liaison with the lead Director and the Governance Services Manager. Governance Support Officers can provide support and assistance with this.

In order to be effective, every scrutiny review must be properly project managed to ensure it achieves its aims and delivers measurable outcomes. To achieve this, it is essential that the scope of the review is well defined at the outset. This way the review is less likely to get side-tracked or become overambitious in what it hopes to tackle. The Commission's objectives should, therefore, be as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound) as possible.

The scoping document is also a good tool for communicating what the review is about, who is involved and how it will be undertaken to all partners and interested stakeholders.

The form also includes a section on public and media interest in the review which should be completed in conjunction with the Council's Communications Team. This will allow the Commission to be properly prepared for any media interest and to plan the release of any press statements.

Scrutiny reviews will be supported by a Governance Support Officer.

## **Evaluation**

Reviewing changes that have been made as a result of a scrutiny review is the most common way of assessing the effectiveness. Any scrutiny review should consider whether an on-going monitoring role for the Commission is appropriate in relation to the topic under review.

<b>To be completed by the Member proposing the review. (Filled out by Senior Governance Officer on behalf of the Chair).</b>		
<b>1.</b>	<b>Title of the proposed scrutiny review</b>	Community Asset Transfer
<b>2.</b>	<b>Proposed by</b>	Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
<b>3.</b>	<b>Rationale</b> Why do you want to undertake this review?	<p>On 18 September, the Council approved an updated Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, amended in light of changes to legislation, Council objectives, the Community Services &amp; Library Needs Assessment, policy and practice since adoption of a CAT Policy in 2008 as last updated in 2022.</p> <p>Prior to this, at the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission on 11 September 2025, the Commission considered a report on the updated CAT Policy. At this meeting a task group was requested by members to consider the implications of the policy updates and proposals.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Purpose and aims of the review</b> What question(s) do you want to answer and what do you want to achieve? (Outcomes?)	<p>The task group aims to address questions around the processes of CAT and its effect on the community and community groups.</p> <p>The overarching aim is to look at potential implications of the new policy and to assess whether any improvements could be made.</p> <p>It aims to analyse the processes and the process map that the Council uses and how the Heads of Terms have been used in past CATs and look at the reasonings behind how and why certain approaches, models and processes were taken in certain CATs.</p> <p>Ultimately, the group aims to produce recommendations on how the updated CAT policy and the processes within it can be best implemented.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Links with corporate aims / priorities</b> How does the review link to corporate aims and priorities?	With certain Council assets potentially being made available for CAT, it is fitting that the policy be reviewed to ensure it is suitable and of value to the community.

6.	<p><b>Scope</b>  Set out what is included in the scope of the review and what is not. For example which services it does and does not cover.</p>	<p>The scope will cover the work of both Neighbourhood Services and Estates.</p> <p>It will consider the model Heads of Terms on property lease and the processes that are undertaken in a CAT.</p> <p>It will look at how groups are chosen for a CAT, including their business plans and whether existing occupants of a building are given higher scores.</p> <p>It will also consider both the previous policy and assessment criteria as well as the updated guidelines as an evolution on how the new guidelines improve on the previous ones, particularly in terms of providing more guidance for those interested in applying for a CAT through the new guidebook.</p> <p>It will also look at the engagement that Councillors have in the CAT process and to what extent Ward Councillors and Scrutiny members can be involved.</p> <p>The group can look at how groups are monitored post-transfer to ensure they fulfil the conditions of the transfer.</p> <p>It will also look at the disposal processes that the Council follows, including whether a CAT can be applied for if an asset is being disposed through the market.</p>
7.	<p><b>Methodology</b>  Describe the methods you will use to undertake the review.</p> <p>How will you undertake the review, what evidence will need to be gathered from members, officers and key stakeholders, including partners and external organisations and experts?</p>	<p>The group will consider the previous policy and the updated policy.</p> <p>Members will share their experiences of engagement with CATs and the community groups that have undertaken them. The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment, The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Service Manager - Asset Strategy will provide data and information regarding the previous and updated policies and guidance, and examples of previous CATs.</p> <p>Governance Services can aim to provide benchmarking information on the CAT policies from other local authorities. Stakeholders (as below) will be approached to provide evidence potentially through joining meetings, providing written representations, or though submitting questionnaires.</p>
	<p><b>Witnesses</b>  Set out who you want to gather evidence from and how you will plan to do this.</p>	<p>Stakeholders that could be approached include community groups that have undertaken successful CATs to assess their experience.</p>
8.	<p><b>Timescales</b>  How long is the review expected to take to complete?</p>	<p>The task group will take place over the first half of 2026.</p>

9.	<b>Resources / staffing requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance Support Officers will facilitate the review.</li> <li>• The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment, The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Service Manager - Asset Strategy will provide data and information.</li> </ul>
10.	<b>Review recommendations and findings</b>  To whom will the recommendations be addressed? E.g. Executive / External Partner?	Recommendations will be directed to the Executive for consideration and implementation.
11.	<b>Likely publicity arising from the review</b> - Is this topic likely to be of high interest to the media? Please explain.	The future of Libraries and Community centres and Adventure Playgrounds have been discussed in local media. If they are considered with regard to CAT, it may generate media interest.
12.	<b>Publicising the review and its findings and recommendations</b>  How will these be published / advertised?	The final report will be published on the local authority's website as part of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission papers and shared with the Council's Executive.
13.	<b>How will this review add value to policy development or service improvement?</b>	The review is aimed at scrutinising the updated CAT policy in comparison with the previous policy, and noting potential improvements in the policy with any recommendations hoping to add value to that process.
<b>Comments from the relevant Director</b>		
14.	<b>Observations and comments on the proposed review</b>	<p>The purpose of this review is to test the processes of the Community Asset Transfer policy that was introduced in 2025 by using existing case examples. It aims to provide insight into the ease of use by community groups to bid to run a council facility.</p> <p>The scope must be carefully contained to ensure that clear recommendations are made as an outcome.</p>
	<b>Name</b>	Sean Atterbury
	<b>Role</b>	Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment
	<b>Date</b>	12/3/26
<b>To be completed by the Governance Services Manager</b>		

15.	<b>Will the proposed scrutiny review / timescales negatively impact on other work within the Scrutiny Team?</b>	I am comfortable that Governance Services can support this review and that we have enough resource to facilitate it. The timeframe is tight so consideration should be given to allow for the completion of the final report.
	<b>Name</b>	Kalvaran Sandhu, Governance Services Manager
	<b>Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2026

DRAFT

## CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

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### **LEISURE CENTRES NEEDS ASSESSMENT** **SECONDARY AND PRIMARY RESEARCH**

22 January 2026  
FROM ANDREW BEDDOW  
Lead director: Sean Atterbury

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## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Andrew Beddow, Neil Cowdrey
- Author contact details: Andrew.beddow@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: FV.

<b>1</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1.1	The Council's Sports Service (Active Leicester) is one of a small number of Council services that operates on a discretionary basis and must therefore remain commercially competitive within a challenging and evolving market. The service currently operates in a competitive leisure environment and has demonstrated sustained success in the quality, value, and outcomes it delivers for residents. This success has been achieved through a structured five-year planning cycle. This report sets out the primary and secondary research that will inform the next five-year plan and outlines how Active Leicester will continue to respond effectively to both commercial pressures and wider social challenges
1.2	Over the past decade, the Council's Sports Services have been guided by successive five-year plans that have focused on transformation, operational improvement, and increasing financial sustainability. These plans have provided a structured framework to modernise services, improve efficiency, and strengthen cost recovery, ensuring the long-term viability of the Council's leisure centre provision.
1.3	The first five-year plan focused on establishing a more efficient operating model. Key priorities included a comprehensive review of staffing and leisure management, developing high performing service culture, the rationalisation of opening hours, the modernisation of historically outdated fees and charges, and the introduction of improved direct debit and payment systems. Collectively, these changes laid the foundations for a more commercially robust and customer-focused service.
1.4	Between 2020 and 2025, the service has built on this foundation and delivered significant efficiencies and income growth through targeted, high return-on-investment capital investment, particularly in health and fitness facilities. This period also saw the creation and embedding of the Active Leicester brand, alongside a strong focus on driving participation and sales in core growth areas such as health and fitness memberships and the Learn to Swim programme.
1.5	As a result of these initiatives, gross income has increased from £3.5 million to £8.7 million, Learn to Swim participation has grown from approximately 4,000 to 9,000 children, fitness membership has increased from around 4,500 to 12,000 members, and, for the first time, leisure centre usage has exceeded two million visits per year.
1.6	To inform the development of the next five-year plan, a comprehensive Leisure Centre Needs Assessment (LCNA) has been undertaken. This assessment is underpinned by both secondary data analysis and primary research and provides

	<p>a robust evidence base to understand current and future demand, participation trends, and facility requirements across the city.</p> <p>1.7 Once the proposed five-year plan has been developed this will be subject to open consultation before any final decisions are made. A further report will therefore be presented to Scrutiny to seek feedback and input as part of the consultation process, ensuring that elected members and stakeholders have an opportunity to input before any final decisions are made.</p>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b></p>	<p><b>Secondary Research Summary</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> The secondary research of the LCNA presents a comprehensive analysis of the leisure facilities, covering areas such as facility performance, catchment, benchmarking analysis, usage patterns, user demographics, operational subsidies, maintenance and asset condition and market value assessment.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b></p>	<p><b>Leisure Centres and Catchment Analysis</b></p> <p>Sports Services (Active Leicester) currently operates seven leisure centres, which are well-distributed across the city. The network offers strong city-wide accessibility; however, analysis shows that there is overlap in catchment areas—particularly in the western part of the city—leading to duplication in provision. An overview of each leisure centre catchments is shown below.</p> <div> </div> <div> <p><b>Pink</b> – Leicester Leys  <b>Green</b> - Cossington  <b>Brown</b> – Spence St  <b>Purple</b> – Evington  <b>Black</b> – Aylestone  <b>Red</b> – Braunstone  <b>Blue</b> – New Parks</p> </div> <div> <p><i>Map that shows Leisure Centre catchments</i></p> </div>
<p><b>2.3</b></p>	<p>Over recent years the level of subsidy to the service has been reducing. This has been achieved through the capital investment in the health and fitness facilities coupled with improved programming of swimming lessons and pool usage. Active Leicester facilities play a critical dual role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing affordable and inclusive access to physical activity and sport</li> <li>• Contributing significantly to physical and mental health, wellbeing, and social cohesion, particularly in Leicester's most deprived communities.</li> </ul>

2.4	<p><b>FBR and viability of provision</b></p> <p>Over the next three years the service needs to significant FBR 3 budget savings and therefore this raises questions about the long-term sustainability and efficiency of the current model. The balance of provision across the city requires further examination to ensure resources are allocated where they deliver the most value. The LCNA has identified that some facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have lower utilisation levels</li> <li>• Incur higher operating costs</li> <li>• Deliver lower value for money compared to others.</li> <li>• Duplicate catchments</li> </ul> <p>The table below illustrates the 24/25 actual annual subsidy allocated to each leisure centre, highlighting the financial support required to maintain service delivery and operational sustainability across the network.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Leisure Facility</th><th>24/25 actual subsidy</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Aylestone</td><td>£362k</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cossington</td><td>£418k</td></tr> <tr> <td>Evington</td><td>£34k</td></tr> <tr> <td>Leicester Leys</td><td>£217k</td></tr> <tr> <td>New Parks</td><td>£432k</td></tr> <tr> <td>Spence Street</td><td>£343k</td></tr> <tr> <td>Saffron Athletics Track</td><td>£114k</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Leisure Facility	24/25 actual subsidy	Aylestone	£362k	Cossington	£418k	Evington	£34k	Leicester Leys	£217k	New Parks	£432k	Spence Street	£343k	Saffron Athletics Track	£114k
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2.5	<p>The LCNA research can be used as the evidence base to inform future plans, including investment, however any such decisions would need to be underpinned by robust community impact analysis, equality considerations, and public engagement.</p> <p>The leisure estate includes facilities with an average age of over 40 years. Although some centres have received refurbishments, the age and physical condition of the buildings remain a significant concern. Temporary or partial centre closure has taken place over the last three years including Braunstone, Aylestone, Cossington. Despite this, performance over the past five years has shown substantial growth in both usage and financial return.</p>																
2.6	<p><b>Income growth</b></p> <p>Over a sustained period of time Active Leicester has increased its gross income by 77% over a six-year period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £4.7m (2018/19)</li> <li>• £7.4m (2023/24)</li> <li>• £8.3m (2024/25)</li> </ul>																

	<p>This growth has been driven by targeted investment in health and fitness facilities, an expanding Learn to Swim programme, and consistent improvements and modernisation of the service. As part of FBR targets the service has been earmarked to achieve a further £2 million additional income over the next three years.</p>
2.7	<p><b>Customer Experience and Demographics</b></p> <p>A recent customer satisfaction survey rated the centres at 3.4 out of 5, indicating a good level of service. This is the first such survey, limiting trend analysis. Customer feedback aligns broadly across centres and services. User-profiles reveal that the centres are highly inclusive, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong engagement across all age ranges</li> <li>• Over 50% of users identifying as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME), reflecting the city's diverse population</li> </ul>
2.8	<p><b>Strategic Financial Performance</b></p> <p><i>Learn to Swim Programme</i></p> <p>Leicester operates one of the largest Learn to Swim programmes in the East Midlands, currently serving over 8,000 children weekly. The ambition is to grow this to 10,000 children, and this is dependent upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained demand generation</li> <li>• Recruitment and retention of swimming instructors</li> <li>• Enhanced marketing and digitalisation</li> </ul> <p><i>Fitness Growth</i></p> <p>Health and fitness membership has risen from 3,500 to nearly 12,000 members, largely due to capital investments in gym refurbishments. Centres such as Braunstone and Evington outperform others, highlighting the distinctiveness of local markets and catchments. Latent demand studies on health and fitness show that there is latent demand for fitness growth in the northwest area of the city impacting on Leicester Leys in particular.</p> <p><i>Future income target</i></p> <p>Over the next three years, as part of wider corporate budget savings, the service is expected to deliver substantial financial savings, including generating an additional £2 million in income. This would increase the service's gross income to over £10 million. Achieving this target may require further investment to ensure a strong return on investment (ROI), continued progress in developing a modern website, maintaining uninterrupted access to facilities, ongoing improvements in marketing and service standards, and a careful balance between commercial and social objectives.</p>
2.9	<b>Facility Condition and Sustainability</b>

	<p>Leisure centre condition surveys, undertaken in March 2023, indicates the following planned maintenance works required to bring centres back to a reasonable standard during the following periods.</p> <p>Within 2 years £14.2m, 3-10 years additional £11.6m, and 11-25 years a further £24.5m.</p> <p>The ageing leisure estate continues to exert pressure on maintenance budgets. Estates and Building Services expenditure on maintenance and servicing has increased by 50% over the last four years, a trend that is expected to continue.</p> <p>Despite the challenges associated with an ageing leisure estate, most of the leisure centres have achieved increases in usage and overall performance, with the exception of New Parks Leisure Centre. Leicester Leys Leisure Centre, in particular, benefits from a distinctive and well-established offer which has continued to drive growth, despite receiving limited recent investment.</p> <p>This sustained performance highlights the potential to further adapt and optimise the centre to possibly play an enhanced strategic role in meeting the future leisure and wellbeing needs of the city and its role within the balance and distribution of the council's leisure centre network.</p> <p>Key challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing utility cost budget pressures (approximately £600k pa)</li> <li>• Carbon efficiency of older buildings</li> <li>• Modernisation needs, especially pool plant systems.</li> </ul> <p>In response, the service is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking energy efficiency audits</li> <li>• Collaborating on clean and green initiatives</li> <li>• Working with EBS on a phased sustainability programme</li> </ul>
2.10	<p><b>Comparative and Market Analysis</b></p> <p>A market assessment by a leisure procurement specialist (as part of the LCNA) has identified potential cost efficiencies through alternative management models, such as outsourcing.</p> <p>Benchmarking against national performance metrics suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leicester performs strongly on participation and inclusion.</li> <li>• However, the city is below average in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Fitness income per station</li> <li>◦ Subsidy per visit</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>This reflects Leicester's price-sensitive population, with 40% of residents living in the most deprived 20% of areas nationally. Balancing affordability with financial sustainability will remain a key challenge.</p> <p>The LCNA's value-for-money rankings highlight disparities across centres, reinforcing the need to review the network's efficiency. (see cost per visitor in</p>

2024/2025 KPI SUMMARY	NEW PARKS	BRAUNSTONE	AYLESTONE	LEICESTER LEYS	COSSINGTON	SPENCE STREET	EVINGTON
Annual Leisure Centre Visits	64,616	465,420	191,400	197,376	163,671	165,588	245,616
Income	£432k	£2,078m	£1,180m	£1.425m	£772k	£874k	£1.398m
Leisure Centre Subsidy	£432k	£263k	£362k	£217k	£418k	£343k	£34k
Total members	830	4844	3055	2743	2211	2332	3766
Cost Per visit	£6.68	£0.56	£1.89	£1.09	£2.55	£2.07	£0.13

2.11	<p><b>Public Health, Place-Based Working and integrated service delivery</b></p> <p>The Active Leicester service has a close partnership with Public Health, providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-week programmes and 18-month concessionary access for Livewell clients</li> <li>• Collaboration on place-based strategies to increase physical activity across target communities.</li> </ul> <p>The Active Wellbeing Hub pilot has now launched. Its evaluation will inform potential rollout models within the wider place-based approach supported by Sport England.</p>
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2.12	<p>Future ROI investment in the Active Leicester portfolio should be considered not only in terms of improving physical infrastructure and financial sustainability, but also through a broader lens of integrated service delivery, community wellbeing, and strategic co-location. There is growing opportunity to align capital and operational investment working corporately within neighbourhoods and with Public Health in relation to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding place-based working in communities facing the greatest health inequalities</li> <li>• Enhancing integrated and co located services by linking leisure, health, libraries, and other public services.</li> <li>• Scaling the Active Wellbeing Hub pilot, using the evaluation to inform wider rollout models</li> </ul> <p>This approach reflects a shift from viewing leisure centres purely as sport and fitness venues, toward their evolution in co-delivering outcomes around physical activity, mental health, learning, and active wellbeing.</p> <p>Specifically, there is scope to:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore joint investment with libraries, particularly in areas where co-location or integration of services could enhance value for money and improve footfall across services.</li> <li>When ready, use the findings from the Active Wellbeing Hub pilot to shape the development of satellite wellbeing offers at existing leisure centres.</li> </ul>																																
2.13	<p><b>Benchmarking and supply and demand</b></p> <p>Leicester performs strongly on participation and inclusion. However, the city is below average in terms of fitness income per station and subsidy per visit. This reflects the price-sensitive population, with 40% of residents living in the most deprived 20% of areas nationally. Balancing affordability with financial sustainability will remain a key challenge.</p> <p>As part of the LCNA and indoor facility assessment was undertaken to understand the supply of indoor facilities provided by the council and how this compares to other unitary authorities in regard to swimming pool provision.</p> <p><b>Swimming Pools assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong overall coverage, with around 50% of residents within a 20-minute walk of a pool.</li> <li>Some overlap in catchments, especially between Braunstone and New Parks and west side of the city.</li> <li>Leicester has more, but smaller pools, than comparable cities, improving access but reducing operational efficiency.</li> </ul> <p>As part of the needs assessment, we have compared the amount of water space and number of swimming pools provided by Leicester City Council against other city unitary authorities. Leicester compares favourably in terms of the number pools the council provides, particularly when you take in to account the size of the city population. The comparison table is provided below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>City</th> <th>No. of Council Swimming Pools</th> <th>Total m2 Pool Space by LA</th> <th>Population</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Leicester</td> <td>7</td> <td>2982 sqm</td> <td>368,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nottingham</td> <td>6</td> <td>3,207 sqm</td> <td>331,297</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coventry</td> <td>6</td> <td>2,656 sqm</td> <td>345,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derby</td> <td>1</td> <td>1610 sqm</td> <td>261,136</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bradford</td> <td>5</td> <td>1,880 sqm</td> <td>534,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leeds</td> <td>13</td> <td>5,574 sqm</td> <td>792,525</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bristol</td> <td>6</td> <td>3,367 sqm</td> <td>467,009</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>By providing more smaller swimming pools we improve distribution and access, however on the downside we operate more buildings that in turn means we are less efficient in providing our pools because our water spaces are stretched across more buildings that need to be staffed, maintained and sustained going forward. The small sized pools however do mean our swimming pools are conducive to learn to swim with reduced width pools that are conducive to swim teaching.</p> <p>Analysis of usage and performance metrics shows that, overall, leisure centres have experienced growth in usage and improvements in operational performance, reflecting a generally well-balanced distribution of provision across the City. However, spatial and catchment analysis indicates a degree of overlapping</p>	City	No. of Council Swimming Pools	Total m2 Pool Space by LA	Population	Leicester	7	2982 sqm	368,000	Nottingham	6	3,207 sqm	331,297	Coventry	6	2,656 sqm	345,300	Derby	1	1610 sqm	261,136	Bradford	5	1,880 sqm	534,300	Leeds	13	5,574 sqm	792,525	Bristol	6	3,367 sqm	467,009
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	provision in the west area of the city, which has resulted in overlapping catchments and duplication of council provision. While neighbouring centres such as Braunstone and Leicester Leys have continued to grow, this concentration of facilities has constrained demand at New Parks Leisure Centre, which has not experienced comparable growth in usage or performance.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Primary Research Summary</b>

3.1	<p>As part of the wider LCNA, Active Leicester undertook a programme of primary research through a resident engagement survey conducted between 28th March and 11th May 2025. This work complements the secondary research already undertaken and provides key insight into residents' current and future use of the city's leisure facilities.</p> <p>The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from both users and non-users of Leicester's leisure centres, helping the council to make informed, evidence-based decisions on the future delivery and investment in its facilities amid ongoing financial pressures.</p> <p>A total of 1,636 residents engaged with the survey, which was made available online and in paper form across leisure centres and libraries. This report presents a summary of the key quantitative findings. Additionally, over 800 qualitative comments were received; the qualitative comments are summarised within the report.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Key Findings</b></p> <p><b>Respondent Profile</b></p> <p>The survey captured a broad demographic cross-section of Leicester's residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest age group: 36–45 years (20.5%), followed by 46–55 years (19.1%)</li> <li>• 55% of respondents identified as female; 39% as male; 6% identified as 'other' or preferred not to say.</li> <li>• 54% identified as White British; 25% were of Asian or Black heritage.</li> <li>• 14% reported living with a disability.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><b>Geographic Reach</b></p> <p>Respondents represented a good geographic spread across the city. Mapping of postcode data confirmed no significant clustering or bias towards any single area or leisure centre.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Usage Patterns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76% of respondents stated they currently use a leisure facility at least once per week.</li> <li>• 89% indicated they plan to use a facility within the next 6 months.</li> <li>• Only 11% do not plan to use a council leisure centre in that time frame.</li> <li>• These results suggest the majority of respondents are existing or engaged users.</li> </ul>

3.5	<p><u>Facility Preference and Travel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many users travel outside their immediate area to use a preferred centre, with <b>33%</b> willing to travel more than 2 miles.</li> <li>43% reported living within 1 mile of their preferred centre.</li> <li>Braunstone and Leicester Leys centres were most frequently cited as residents' secondary choice.</li> <li>Notably, Braunstone draws a significant number of users from New Parks Ward, overlapping with New Parks Leisure Centre's catchment.</li> </ul>
3.6	<p><u>Satisfaction and Motivation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53% of users were either very satisfied or satisfied with the current leisure facilities.</li> <li>Only 16% reported dissatisfaction</li> <li>The most common reason for usage was "to keep fit" (cited by 1,275 respondents), followed by mental and physical wellbeing</li> </ul>
3.7	<p><u>Activity Preferences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gym usage and swimming (leisure, lessons, and lane swimming) were the most valued activities.</li> <li>Further data on activity preferences is illustrated in the accompanying charts</li> </ul>
3.8	<p><u>Non-User Insights</u></p> <p>Of the 1,636 total respondents, 174 stated they do not currently use an Active Leicester facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary Barrier: Cost — 62 respondents cited affordability as the main reason for non-use.</li> <li>Other barriers included lack of interest or specific personal circumstances.</li> <li>When asked what would encourage usage, the most common response was reduced membership fees or introductory offers, reinforcing that affordability remains a key consideration for engaging non-users</li> </ul>
3.9	<p>The findings from this resident engagement survey, alongside the secondary research in the full Leisure Centre Needs Assessment, will help inform the council's decisions on the future shape, location, and investment strategy for leisure provision across the city.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Summary of qualitative comments provided by residents</b></p> <p>Resident feedback highlights a broadly positive perception of the borough's leisure provision, particularly in relation to the quality of leisure facilities and the role centres play in supporting health, wellbeing, and community activity. Respondents consistently value well-equipped gyms, good-quality swimming facilities, and a wide range of supervised activities and classes.</p>
	<p>Staff are frequently described as friendly, supportive, and professional, with particular praise for swimming teachers and instructors. Several facilities are seen</p>

	as well-used community hubs, supporting clubs, organised sport, and informal participation, with strong local loyalty and a sense of community benefit.																																																						
3.12	Alongside these positives, residents also identify several recurring issues that impact the overall user experience. A common theme with specific centre related to the condition and cleanliness of changing areas, toilets, and showers, with some facilities perceived as dated and in need of refurbishment.																																																						
3.13	Residents did highlight the availability of lane swimming, and scheduling pressures between lessons and public use. Capacity constraints are noted in some gyms and changing areas, alongside requests for extended opening hours, improved equipment, and better maintenance. While these issues do not detract from the overall value placed on the service, they highlight opportunities to improve across the leisure centre provision.																																																						
3.14	<p><b>Non-User General Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback suggests during busy periods users have indicated that it is Lack of gym equipment relative to demand.</li> <li>Reduced gym classes post-COVID.</li> <li>Need to expand evening exercise classes and adult-only swim times.</li> <li>Certain centres need to improve Changing rooms and shower facilities</li> <li>Gym schedules and offerings don't fit working people's hours.</li> <li>Many prefer private gyms with early opening and late opening times.</li> </ul>																																																						
3.15	<p><b>Leisure Centre Resident satisfaction level</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Leisure Centre</th> <th>Very satisfied %</th> <th>Satisfied %</th> <th>Neutral %</th> <th>Dissatisfied %</th> <th>Very dissatisfied%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Aylestone</b></td> <td>17%</td> <td>44%</td> <td>23%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Braunstone</b></td> <td>14%</td> <td>46%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>12%</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Cossington</b></td> <td>18%</td> <td>33%</td> <td>14%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Evington</b></td> <td>10%</td> <td>36%</td> <td>24%</td> <td>18%</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Leicester Leys</b></td> <td>27%</td> <td>36%</td> <td>18%</td> <td>13%</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>New Parks</b></td> <td>18%</td> <td>42%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Spence</b></td> <td>15%</td> <td>34%</td> <td>21%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Saffron</b></td> <td></td> <td>80%</td> <td>20%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Leisure Centre	Very satisfied %	Satisfied %	Neutral %	Dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied%	<b>Aylestone</b>	17%	44%	23%	10%	4%	<b>Braunstone</b>	14%	46%	22%	12%	4%	<b>Cossington</b>	18%	33%	14%	11%	11%	<b>Evington</b>	10%	36%	24%	18%	9%	<b>Leicester Leys</b>	27%	36%	18%	13%	4%	<b>New Parks</b>	18%	42%	22%	11%	4%	<b>Spence</b>	15%	34%	21%	20%	6%	<b>Saffron</b>		80%	20%		
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4.	<p><b>Strategic Challenges and Opportunities</b></p> <p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising maintenance and utility costs and age and condition of our leisure centres including maintenance backlog.</li> <li>Backlog maintenance and pressure on corporate capital maintenance programme</li> <li>As part of the FBR savings the service aims to increase income and generate additional growth and therefore there is a need to avoid service disruption through temporary or partial closure.</li> <li>Catchment analysis shows significant overlap and duplication of leisure centre catchment between New Parks and Braunstone</li> </ul>																																																						

- Inconsistent value for money assessment for specific centres
- Need to assess the potential ceiling limit on fees and charges
- Impact of 'Pools for Schools' on School Swimming Programme
- Reliance on sustained customer demand cannot be guaranteed
- Condition and suitability of ageing buildings.
- On going challenge to balance achieving commercial income whilst retaining affordability and promoting inclusion and access.
- Limited external funding opportunities to secure investment places increased focus on service borrowing.
- Increased potential for health and fitness competition from the private sector creates competition and detrimental impact on income, growth and future ROI business case improvements.

## Opportunities

- Latent demand for fitness growth remains within the Northwest of the city
- Potential for growth and co-location and integrated services in the Northwest involving Leicester Leys.
- Develop further Active Wellbeing pilot and approach including co location and integrated services with Library and neighbourhood services.
- Link with Sport England Place Expansion over the next five years.
- Further scope to learn to swim and fitness membership in key areas of the city.
- Further scope to expand Learn to Swim including developing the learn to swim pathway and programme into 0-3 years as part of a new foundation programme linked to Leicester Leys Leisure water Fun Pool.
- Create the next five-year plan to take forward Active Leicester to mitigate against future challenges and maximise future opportunities.
- Track development as a venue for outdoor exercise and connection to the Active Leicester fitness offer and overall active wellbeing.
- Potential to leverage energy efficiency and sustainability programmes that may in turn reduce rising utility costs
- Further improvement in online access to service via Active Leicester Website to improve customer access to Active Leicester products, programmes and initiatives.

## 5. Moving Forward – Next five Years

- 5.1 The 5 year plan will oversee the development of Active Leicester Centres and will build upon the strengths of the current approach by establishing a cohesive and strategically positioned network of leisure centres across the city. These centres should deliver a core offer that encompasses leisure, active wellbeing, fitness, and concession-based services, ensuring equitable access and a consistent standard of provision citywide.
- 5.2 A key element of this evolution will be the piloting of centres as Active Wellbeing Hubs, underpinned by a clear move towards service integration and co-location where there is a strong business case and demonstrable community benefit. This model will create the foundations for a more efficient, collaborative, and financially sustainable network that meets the diverse needs of Leicester's residents.

5.3	Active Leicester has successfully navigated the balance between commercial viability and social responsibility, and this dual focus must remain central to its strategy. Moving forward, the network must continue to operate within the constraints of limited corporate resources and address the existing maintenance backlog, while working towards a more sustainable and resilient operating model.
5.4	The plan over the next five years, will need to mitigate operational risks, optimise resources, and progress towards a viable and strategically aligned network of leisure centres.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
6.1	<p>The Culture &amp; Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission (CNSC) are invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contents and findings of the report and appendices</li> <li>• Comment on the report and appendices</li> <li>• Note that consultation will take place on the draft 5-year leisure centre plan that will guide how Active Leicester will meet the future challenges and continue to develop and sustain the council's leisure centre provision.</li> </ul>
6.2	As part of any future consultation process the CNSC will receive a report from Officers on the proposed plan and an opportunity to feedback their comments as part of the consultation process.
6.3	The feedback from CNSC will be provided as part of the consultation process and will be considered before any final decisions are to be taken on the council's leisure centre plan.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications</b>
7.1	<p><b>Financial Implications</b></p> <p>Active Leicester's income has grown strongly in recent years, rising from £4.7m in 2018/19 to £8.3m in 2024/25, and is expected to reach £8.85m this year and over £10m next year. Even with this improvement, the service still needs a subsidy of around £1.7m, and the Council overall needs to make further savings. The recommendations in this report are designed to help reduce this subsidy and support the division's wider savings requirement of £9.19m.</p> <p>Bringing the number of centres down to six will reduce costs linked to staffing, maintenance and utilities, while still making sure residents can access good-quality facilities.</p> <p>Any future investment in centres will require a detailed capital bid so the Council understands the borrowing, timescales and financial impact of the proposals. In addition, the planned energy-efficiency improvements across the estate should save money in the long run but will require upfront funding.</p> <p>Income should continue to grow through improvements to swimming, gym memberships and better digital customer services. However, these rely on customer demand remaining strong and on the service being able to recruit and retain the right staff.</p>

	<p>Jade Draper, Principal Accountant 25.11.25</p>
7.2	<p><b>Legal Implications</b></p> <p>The consultation process to be undertaken should be meaningful, fair and proportionate to the potential impact of the proposal. It must comply with the “Gunning principles”: (i) it must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage; (ii) sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response; (iii) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and (iv) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in making the decision.</p> <p>The first principle does not preclude consultations taking place on preferred options or on a decision in principle as long as the decision-maker’s mind remains open to change.</p> <p>The result of the consultation should be analysed, prior to any final decision being made, to ensure that any decision making is lawful, follows a fair process and is reasonable.</p> <p>Kevin Carter Head of Law - Commercial, Property &amp; Planning 14 January 2026</p> <p>From an employment perspective, no employment implications arise at this stage. The report is intended to provide an update in respect of the primary and secondary research undertaken regarding the Leisure Centre Needs Assessment and to assist the Council with its next five-year plan.</p> <p>The report has identified a potential overlap of services. At this present time, it remains unclear what the future arrangements will look like. As such, there is currently insufficient information to determine the employment implications.</p> <p>It is recommended that further legal advice is sought as the proposals develop.</p> <p>The report has referred to further recruitment (see 2.8), and accordingly, relevant advice should be sought from HR in respect of this.</p> <p><i>Suraiya Ziaullah Senior Solicitor – Education and Employment 0116 454 1487 14 January 2026</i></p>
7.3	<p><b>Equality Implications</b></p> <p>Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and</p>

	<p>victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.</p> <p>Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p> <p>This report sets out a strategic approach to the future management and development of the Council's leisure facilities. One of its core principles is the commitment to social value and health impact – protecting access for residents, especially in areas of deprivation, and continuing to reduce health inequalities. Given that 50% of current users identify as BAME and 40% of the city's population resides in highly deprived areas, the LCNA identifies that leisure provision is a primary vehicle for tackling health inequalities in Leicester.</p> <p>Leisure centres act as vital social hubs, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and abilities who might not otherwise interact. Shared activities foster a sense of belonging and community spirit, which helps break down social barriers and reduce isolation.</p> <p>An EIA has been developed and will be updated alongside the future consultation process.</p> <p><i>Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148</i></p> <p>14/01/26</p>
7.4	<p><b>Climate Emergency implications</b></p> <p>Taking a more focused approach in improving and maintaining energy efficiency measures is likely to have a positive impact in reducing carbon emissions from the operation of the leisure centres.</p> <p>When consolidating services there is often a risk that this will increase emissions associated with customer travel, however there is a significant overlap of service coverage which should mitigate this risk. Where a service offering is increased which encourages and enables sustainable behaviours such as increased levels of physical activity and healthy eating may have further co-benefits for tackling the climate emergency.</p> <p>The most significant potential impact will come from implementing the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Plan across the remaining operational facilities. Ensuring that the leisure centres involved have high-performing insulation, energy efficient heating, low energy lighting and low carbon/renewable energy systems along with effective building management systems would generate significant emissions reductions through the reduction of energy demand.</p> <p>Carbon emissions from further commissioning and delivery of services should be managed on a project-by-project basis, as relevant and appropriate to the service.</p> <p><i>Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer Ext 372246</i></p> <p>14/01/26</p>

8.	<p><b>Background information and other papers:</b></p> <p><b>Summary of appendices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leisure Centre Needs Assessment Secondary Research Appendix 1</li><li>• Primary Research Appendix 2</li></ul>
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# Leisure Facilities Customer Survey

## Primary Research

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# Report Overview

- 1.1 A full review of the Leisure Centre Engagement survey has been completed including analysis of free-form feedback that was received. Free-form text responses are answers given by respondents in their own words.
- 1.2 1,636 respondents completed the survey. The service's data analyst has reviewed the full set of data. The data has been processed through descriptive methods, for example, charts and maps to create an overview of respondent activity at the time of survey completion. The full set of data has been structured by a respondent's most used site. This builds a picture of site-specific behaviour, in turn supporting site-specific decision-making.
- 1.3 The survey results included both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was analysed using frequency analysis and statistics.

The qualitative data was analysed using frequency analysis, sentiment analysis and thematic analysis. Frequency analysis counts the number of times an item, word or activity occurs to determine patterns in the data. Sentiment analysis scrutinises natural language to provide insight into respondents' attitudes and opinions. Thematic analysis draws out themes from the content of respondent feedback.

- 1.4 Rule-based sentiment analysis has been used to validate the data analyst's own sentiment analysis. The computer-based method assigns positive and negative scores to words using a pre-defined dictionary. The frequency of positively or negatively scoring words determines the overall emotional tone (positive, negative, or neutral) of the text.

The validation was performed on the largest set of qualitative data, i.e., responses to 'How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level'. This process has undergone multiple iterations and checks to ensure a high level of confidence. The validation produced an 80% close match on the sentiment analysis performed by the service's data analyst.

- 1.5 Comments on the satisfaction level have been summarised into sentences. The application of statistical methods to responses containing the most frequently occurring words generated the summary. Summary sentences have been produced for each site. These provide an overview of the content, style and tone of the responses.

- 1.6 The report is split into two sections. The first section is categorised by facility and sets out the key findings about that site's customer behaviour, preferences and opinions. Each facility breakdown contains:

- A list of the site assets
- Respondent travel preferences and centre usage information
- Reasons why respondents use the leisure centre
- Respondent satisfaction levels
- Analysis of respondent feedback

The second section summarises responses by non-customers.

1.7 All data received has been loaded into a dashboard so that further information or analysis can be extracted (the dashboard is accessible by request):

<https://vsrv-powerbi02.lcc.local/Reports/powerbi/Sports%20Services/Gym%20survey%202025>

# Leisure Centre Responses

## Aylestone Leisure Centre

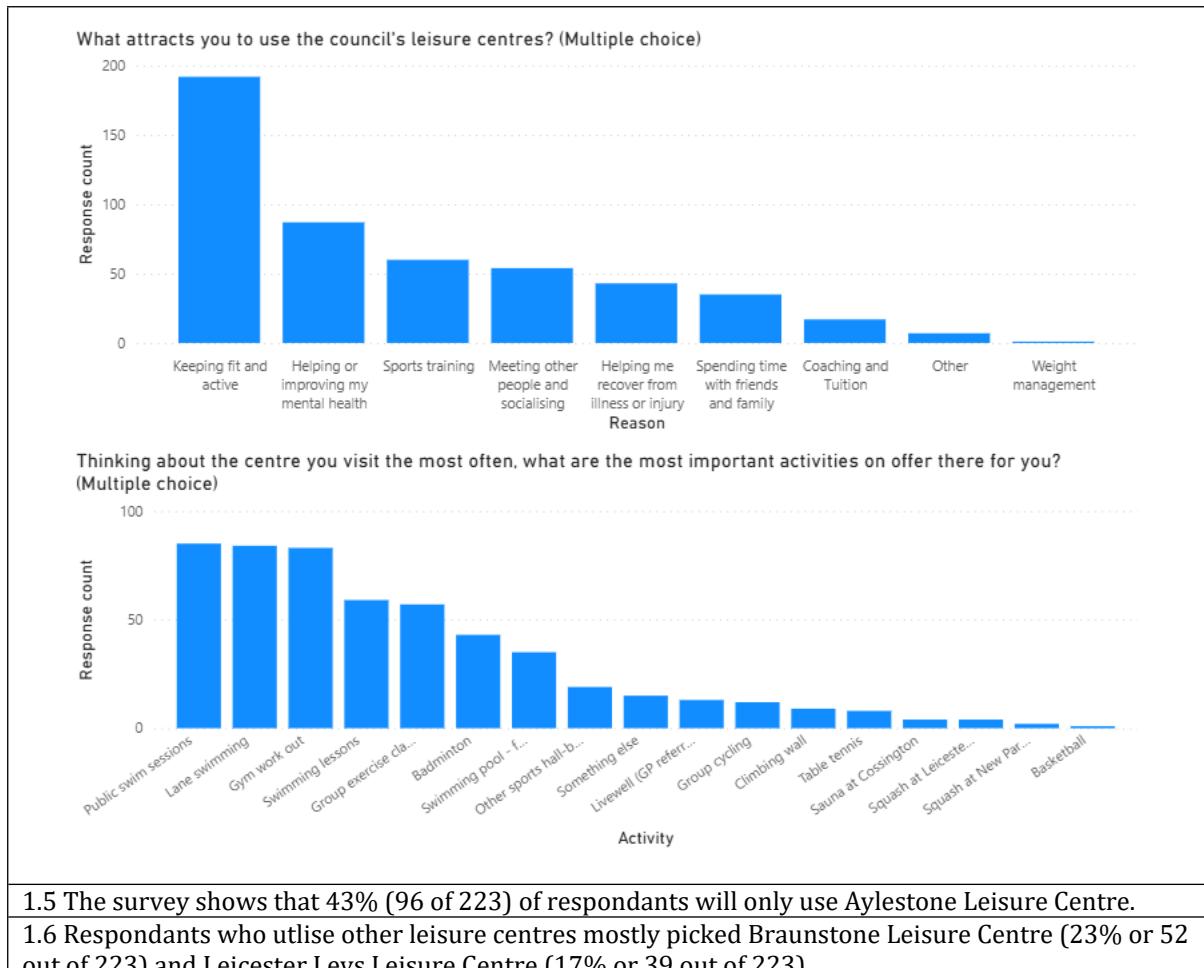
Built in 1988	
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### Assets

<b>2 No Swim pools</b> <b>25m x 9m and</b> <b>18m x 5m</b> <b>392 sqm Pool Space provided</b>	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	<b>Sports Hall</b>	6No Badminton courts Basketball. Netball. Pickle ball. Roller skating. Indoor bowls.
<b>Gym</b>	70 stations Refurbished 2020	<b>Studio</b>	Refurbished 2023 Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga
<b>Spin room</b>	15No Static cycles Spin classes	<b>Aylestone Library</b>	Part manned

### Travel and Usage

1.1 60% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre. (131 out of 223 responses)
1.2 83% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (185 out of 223)
1.3 Responses for Aylestone Leisure Centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in is swimming and attending the gym or exercise class.
1.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:



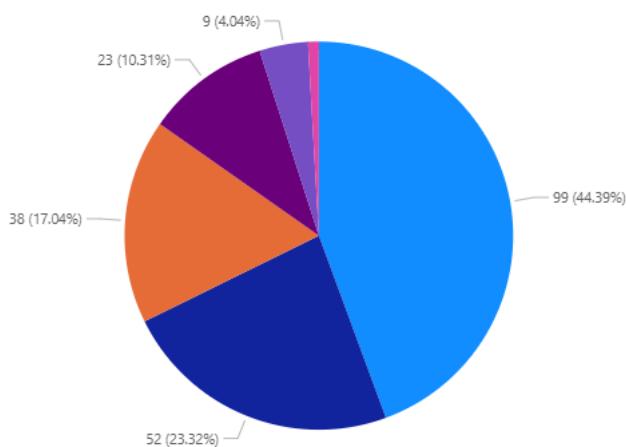
## Satisfaction Levels

1.7 Of the 223 responses for Aylestone 61% identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 14% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

1.8:

How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres?

How satisfied are you with the c... ● Satisfied ● Neutral ● Very satisfied ● Dissatisfied ● Very dissatisfied ● Not Answered

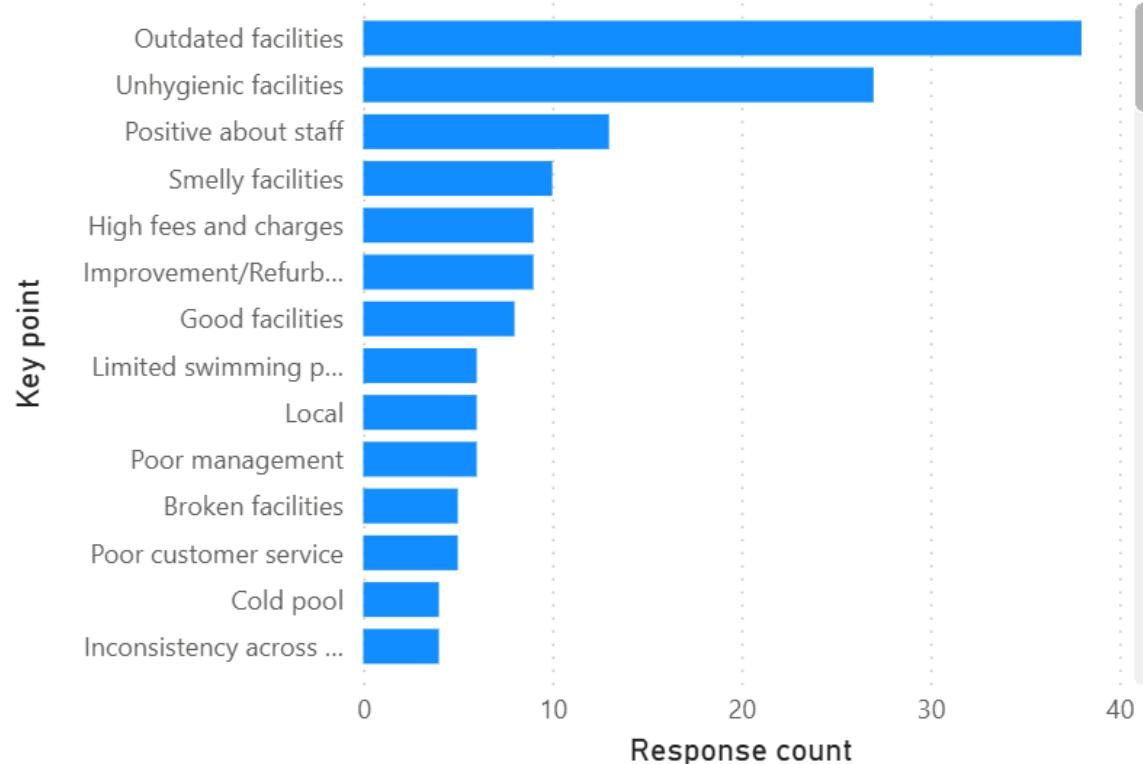


## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

1.9 A review of the free-form text responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

Thematic analysis of the responses received show that the most common feedback was the facility was outdated and in need of refurbishment, followed by cleanliness issues predominantly within the changing rooms and pool hall.

### Count of key points raised by respondents



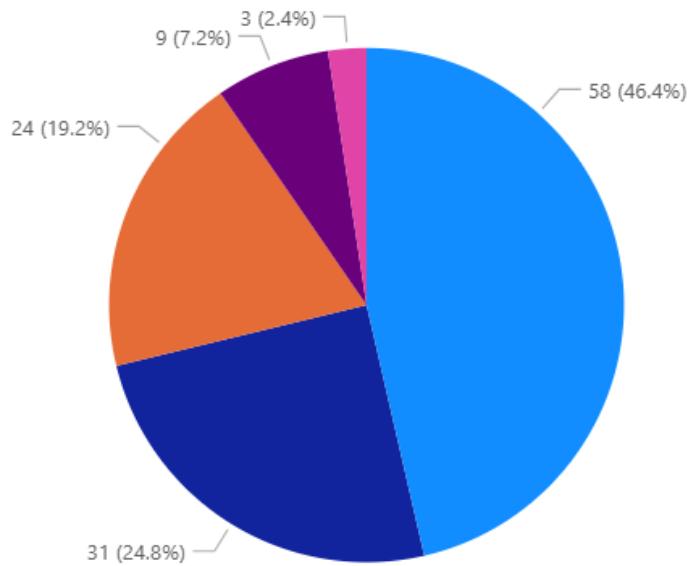
1.10 The summary sentences generated from Aylestone Leisure Centre responses are:

- Changing rooms need updating
  - The gym is excellent ☺ I'd love to use the swimming pool too but seeing people walking by the pool with their outdoors shoes really puts me off
  - Lots of new signs whilst changing rooms and pool area are in need of refurb [sic] and repair
  - Aylestone- Urine stench in the pool and even worse in changing rooms, pools r dirty, rubbish on the bottom, I often stepped on sth [sic] sharpish in the water
  - Aylestone Leisure Centre changing room facilities for the pool need upgrading
  - Pools need to be open as many hours as possible to allow for swimming lessons, lane swimming, public swimming etc
  - We use Aylestone leisure centre the most, the changing rooms at the poolside really need refurbishment
  - The Changing rooms and toilets are very run down and tied [sic], they need updating! Facilities in poor state of repair
  - I actually use New Parks Leisure every week too and also the swimming pool at Braunstone as it is very good for lane swimming
  - There are people doing backstroke and playing around in the fast lane, the changing rooms are dirty and there's usually hair stuck to the showers too
- Changing rooms have a strong smell of urine, never smell clean, never look clean and never seen them be clean

1.11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

**Sentiment** ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive ● Very negative ● Very positive



Aylestone Leisure Centre received 125 comments. Of these, 46.4% (58 out of 125) contained negative sentiment, followed by 24.8% (31 out of 125) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with a negative sentiment most frequently contained themes on 'outdated facilities', 'unhygienic facilities' and 'high fees and charges'.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on 'outdated facilities', 'unhygienic facilities' and 'improvement/refurbishment required'. The centre changing rooms, showers and toilets were the focus of these comments.

## Braunstone Leisure Centre



Built 2005

### Assets

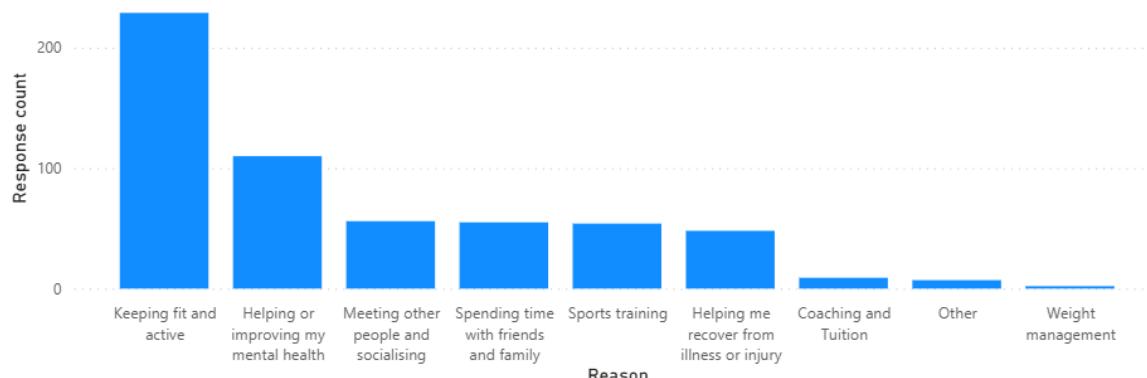
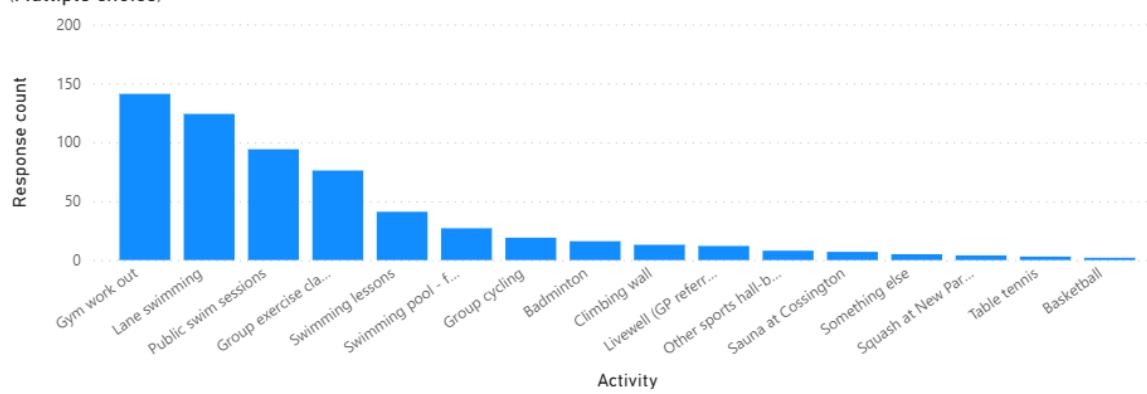
<b>2 No Swim pools</b> <b>25m x 17m and</b> <b>18m x 8m</b> <b>637 sqm Pool space</b>	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties 300 spectator seating	<b>Sports Hall</b>	6No Badminton courts. Basketball Netball. Pickle ball. Gymnastics. 5-a side football. Korfball. Roller skating. Wheels for all (Junior). Trampoline. Group Exercise.
<b>Gym</b>	90 stations - refurbished 2022	<b>Spin room</b>	Spin room. 20 No Static cycles refurbished 2022

### Travel and Usage

2.1 49% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre (124 out of 254 responses), with 51% saying they are prepared to travel more than a mile.

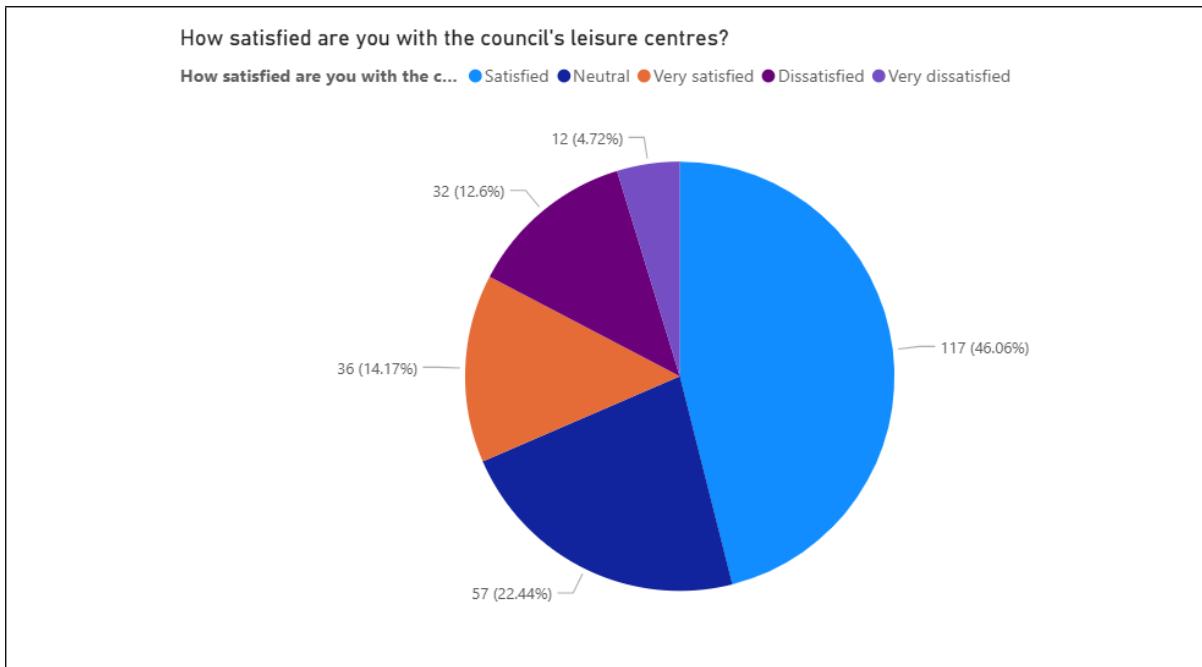
2.2 87% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (221 out of 254)

2.3 Responses for Braunstone Leisure Centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in is gym sessions, swimming and group exercise classes.

**2.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:****What attracts you to use the council's leisure centres? (Multiple choice)****Thinking about the centre you visit the most often, what are the most important activities on offer there for you? (Multiple choice)****2.5 The survey shows that 44% (111 of 254) of respondents will only use Braunstone Leisure Centre.****2.6 Respondants who utlise other leisure centres mostly picked Leicester Leys Leisure Centre (28% or 70 out of 254) and New Parks Leisure Centre (27% or 60 out of 223)**

## Satisfaction Levels

**2.7 Of the 254 responses for Braunstone 60% identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 17% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.**

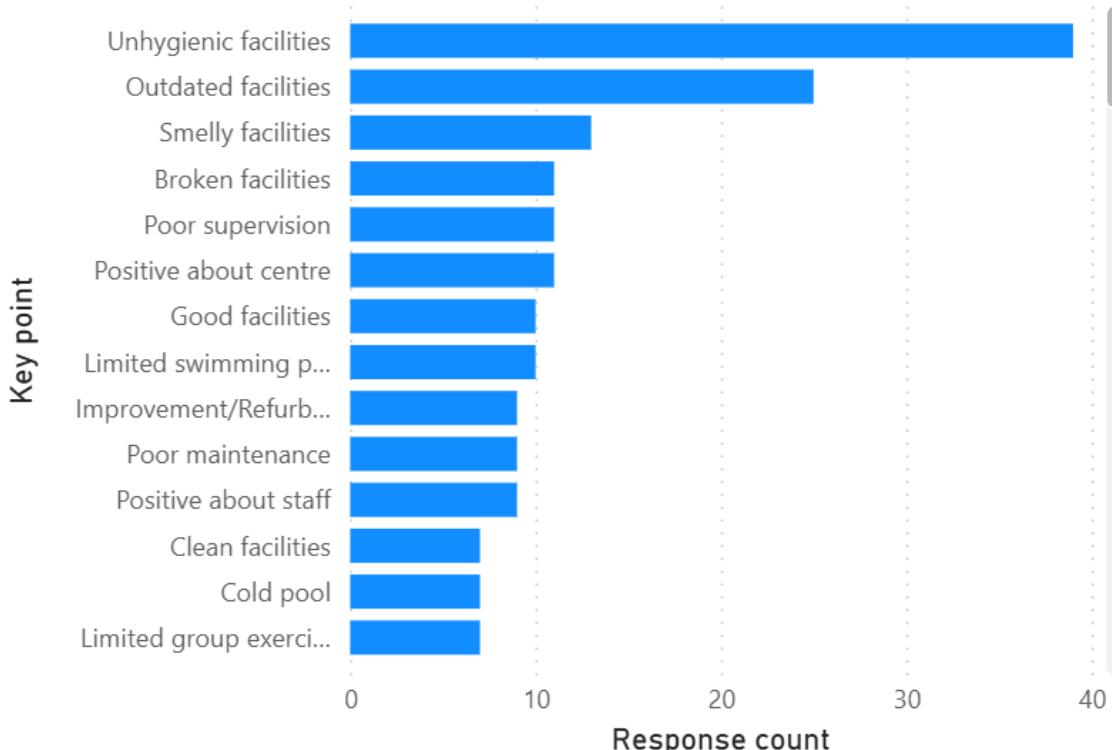


## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

2.9 A review of the free-form responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? - Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

Thematic analysis of the responses received show that the most common feedback was the facility was facility cleanliness and the need for refurbishment:

### Count of key points raised by respondents



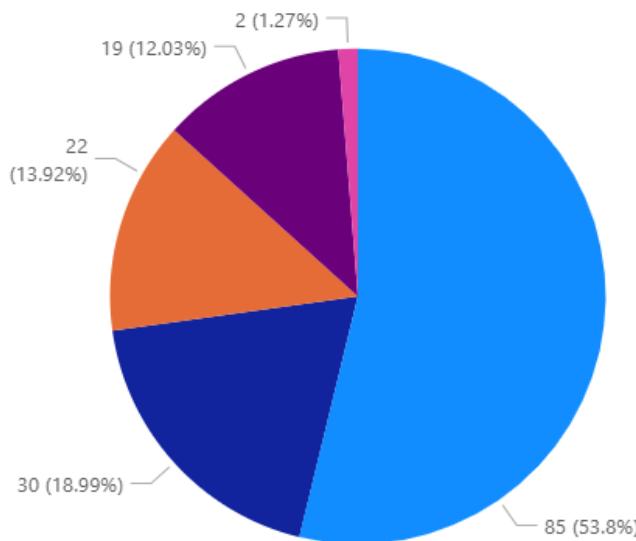
2.10 The summary sentences generated from Braunstone Leisure Centre responses are:

- But the maintenance isn't great, pool is often shut, changing rooms smell bad... Never have on family swim till after 7pm on school days Great staff and clean
- Some things are brilliant - friendly staff, great pools, cafe (when it's open), great swimming teachers for my child's swimming lessons
- It is a very good place for swimming (haven't used the gym yet but hope to soon) however i wish the swimming changing rooms were completely separate [sic]
- Whilst the swimming pool is lovely and clean, the changingvrooms [sic], toilets and showers need a good deep clean
- Braunstone leisure centre gym is always very very packed, too many people and only open 9am-9pm, makes it hard to go and enjoy the gym
- But the maintenance isn't great, pool is often shut, changing rooms smell bad...
- Although I really value the facility, I do not think the cleanliness of the changing rooms the swimming pool itself at Braunstone is very good
- The swimming pool and changing areas are always clean and easy to use
- The log in for gym membership and the log in for children's swimming lessons via Home Portal cancel each other out and constantly having to reset password
- Not enough showers when children have finished swim lessons, parents often put towels in so others can't use them
- This means on the days he isn't working, gym members are made to be responsible for tidying up after other gym members
- Very pleasant and welcoming staff, just a shame the swimming lockers are in such a bad state, most don't work

2.11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form text responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive ● Very negative ● Very positive



Braunstone Leisure Centre received 158 comments. Of these, a 53.8% majority (85 out of 158) contained negative sentiment, followed by 18.9% (30 out of 158) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with a dissatisfied sentiment most frequently contained themes on unhygienic facilities, outdated facilities, and limited swimming pool timetable.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on clean facilities, positivity about centre and broken facilities. These comments contain both positive and negative opinions and have been assigned a sentiment analysis of neutral to account for this.

## Cossington Street Sports Centre

<p>Swimming Pool built 1897</p> <p>Sports Hall built 1976</p>	
---	--

### Assets

<b>Swim pool pools 30m x 14.5m 435 sqm pool space</b>	<p>Learn 2 Swim</p> <p>Open swim sessions</p> <p>Individual lessons</p> <p>Parties</p>	<b>Gym</b>	70 stations - refurbished 2021
		<b>Studio</b>	Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga

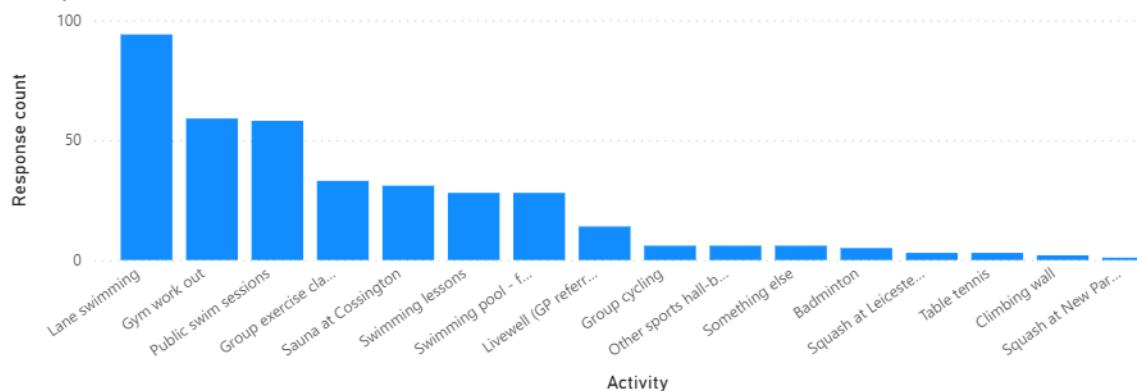
### Travel and Usage

3.1 60% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre. (93 out of 155 responses)
3.2 95% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (147 out of 155 responses)
3.3 Responses for Cossington Street Sports Centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in is swimming and attending the gym or exercise class.
3.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:

What attracts you to use the council's leisure centres? (Multiple choice)



Thinking about the centre you visit the most often, what are the most important activities on offer there for you? (Multiple choice)



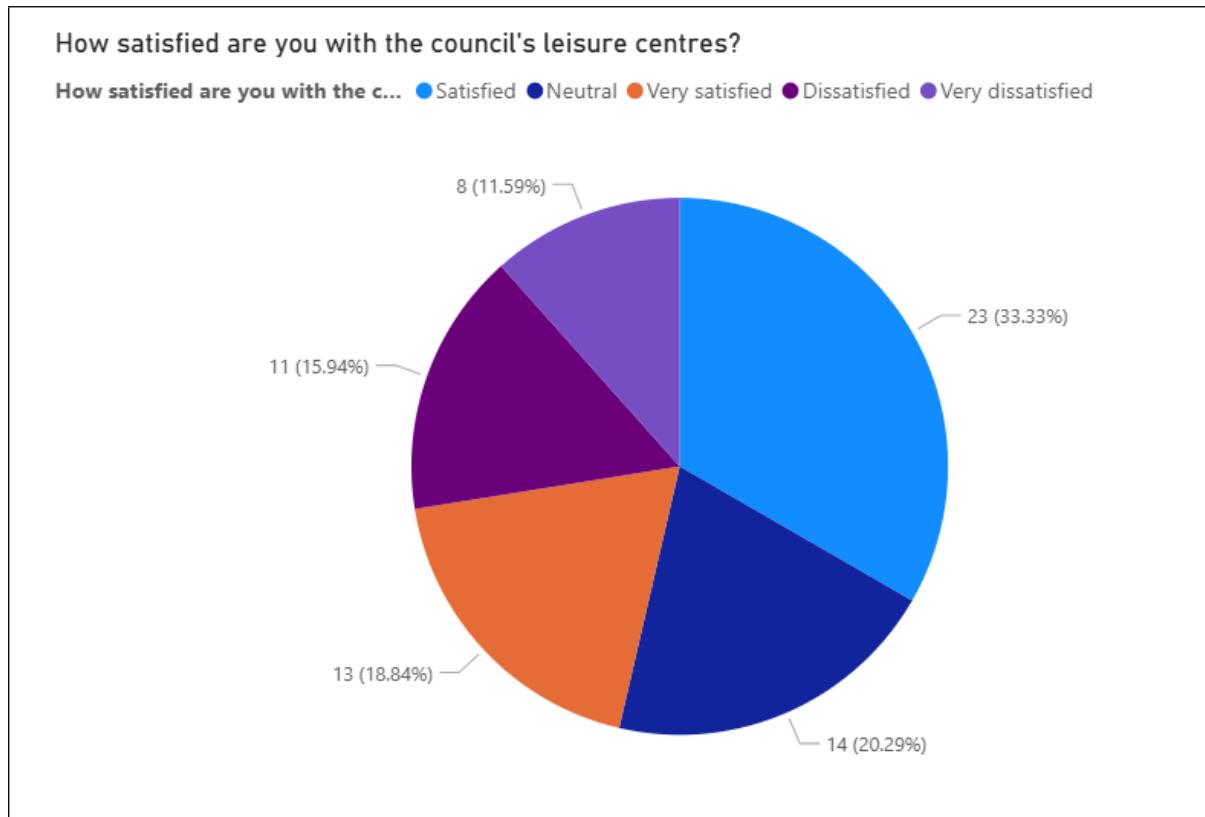
3.5 The survey shows that 34% (53 of 155) of respondents will only use Cossington Street Sports Centre.

3.6 Respondants who utlise other leisure centres mostly picked Leicester Leys Leisure Centre (21% or 32 out of 155) and Braunstone Leisure Centre (17% or 26 out of 155)

## Satisfaction Levels

3.7 Of the 155 responses for Cossington 70% of identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 13% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

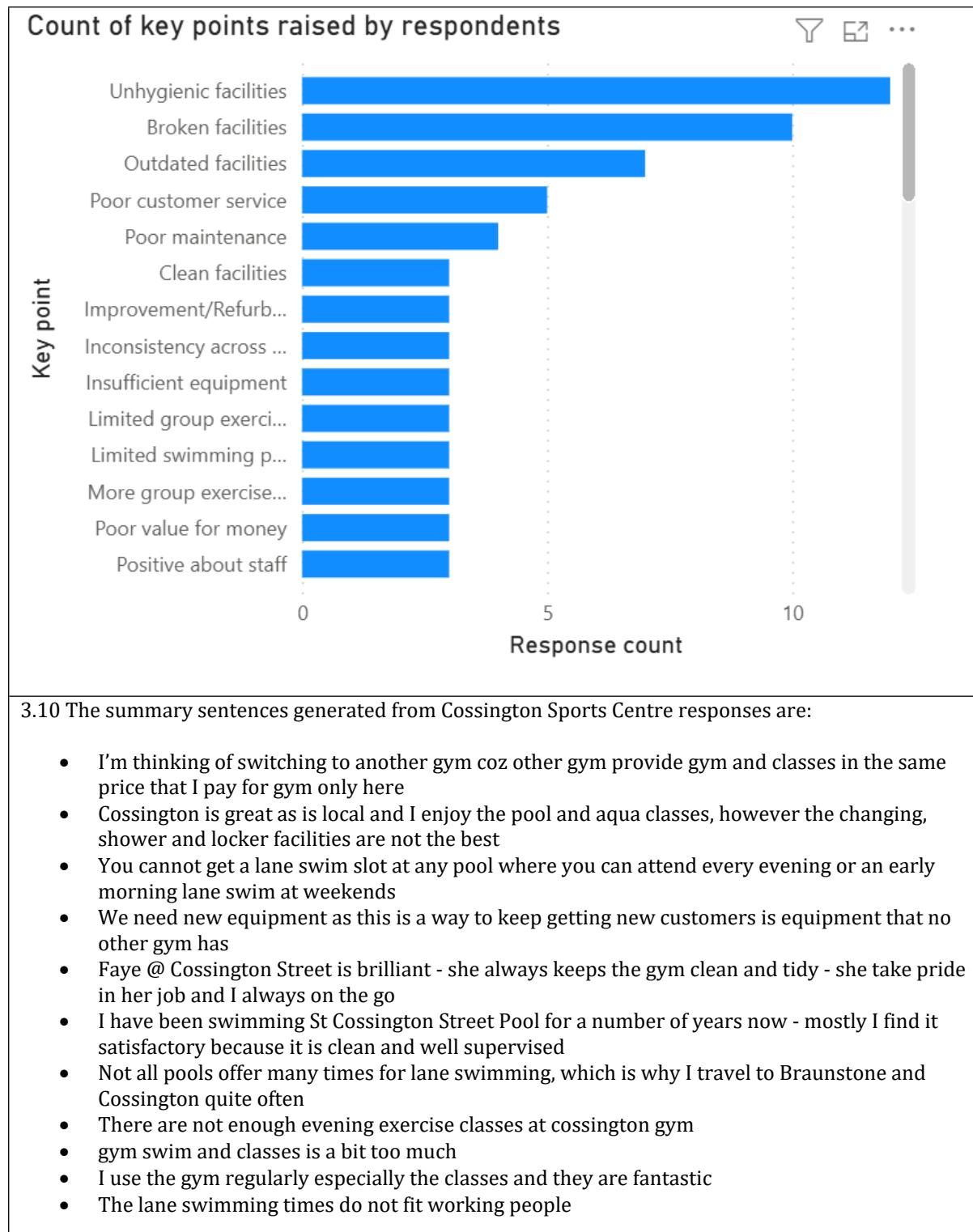
3.8



## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

3.9 A review of the free-form responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

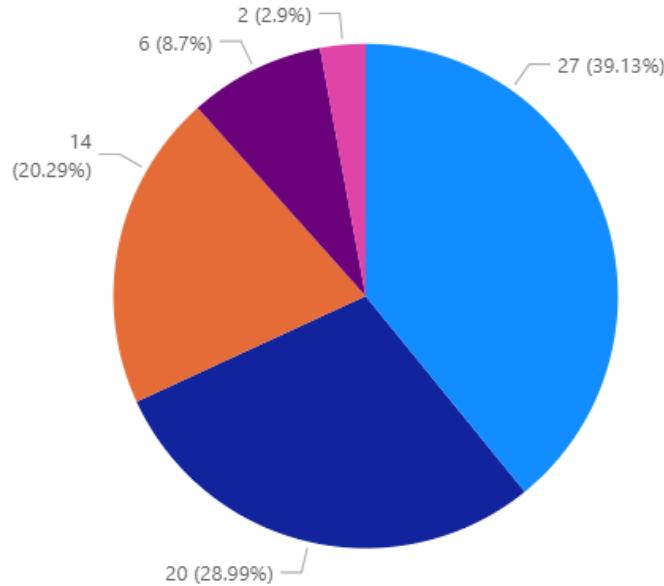
Thematic analysis of the responses received show that the most common feedback was about facility cleanliness issues, followed by issues of broken facilities and outdated facilities.



3.11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form text responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive ● Very negative ● Very positive



Cossington Street Sport Centre received 69 comments. Of these, 39.13% (27 out of 69) contained negative sentiment, followed by 28.99% (20 out of 69) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with negative sentiments most frequently contained themes on unhygienic facilities, outdated facilities, and poor customer service.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on inconsistency across leisure centres. This was followed by comments on clean facilities and that facilities require improvement/refurbishment. These comments contain both positive and negative attitudes and have been assigned a sentiment analysis of neutral to account for this.

## Evington Leisure Centre

Swimming Pool built 1973  
Sports Hall & Gym built 2007  
Gym & Spin room extended 2021

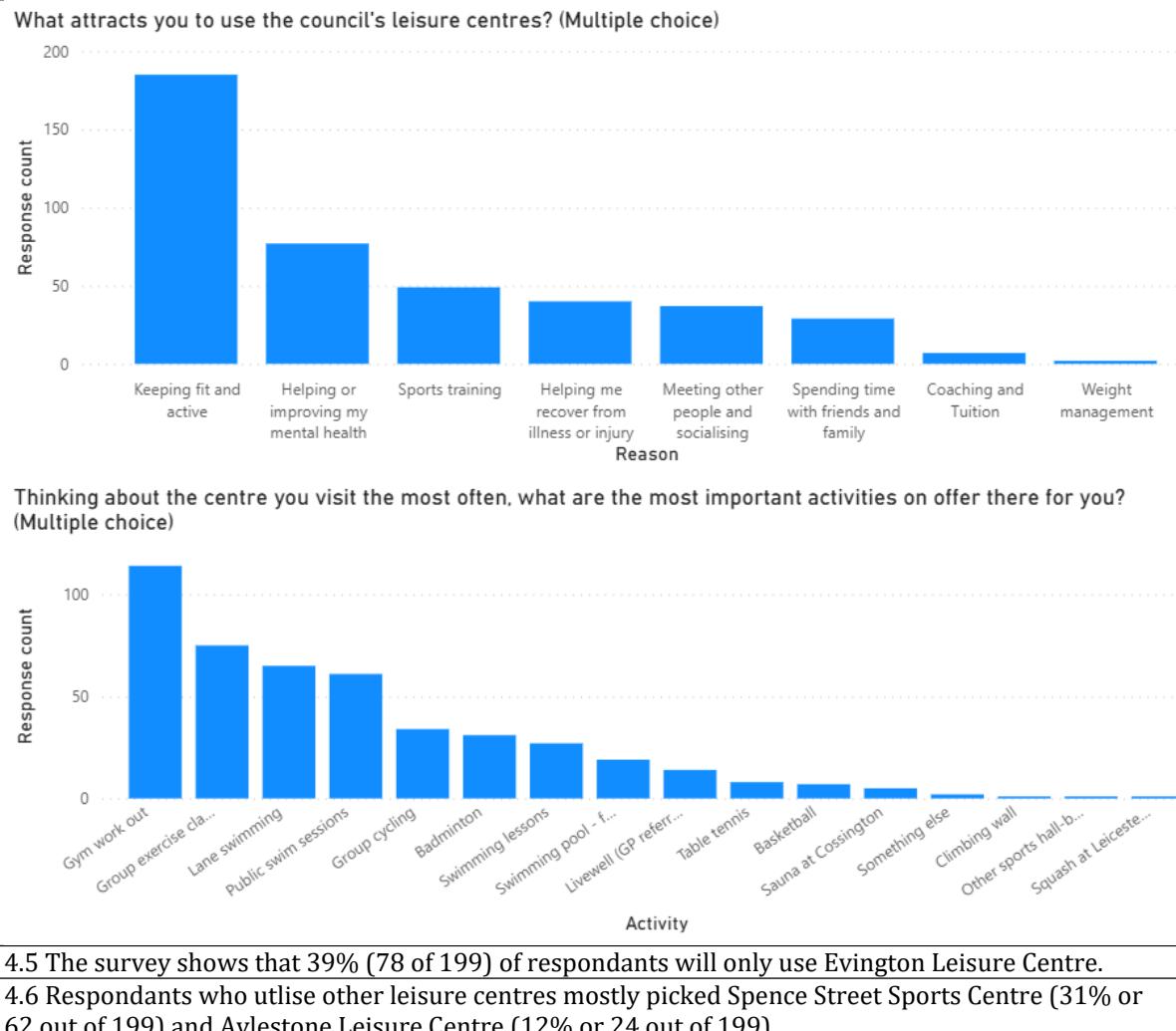


### Assets

<b>2 No Swim pools 25m x 9m and 18m x 5m 315 sqm pool space</b>	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	<b>Sports Hall</b>	4No Badminton courts Basketball. Netball Indoor football. Cricket nets. City of Leicester School exclusive use during term time.
<b>Gym</b>	75 stations – refurbished 2021	<b>Studio</b>	Refurbished 2021 Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga
<b>Spin room</b>	15No Static cycles		

### Travel and Usage

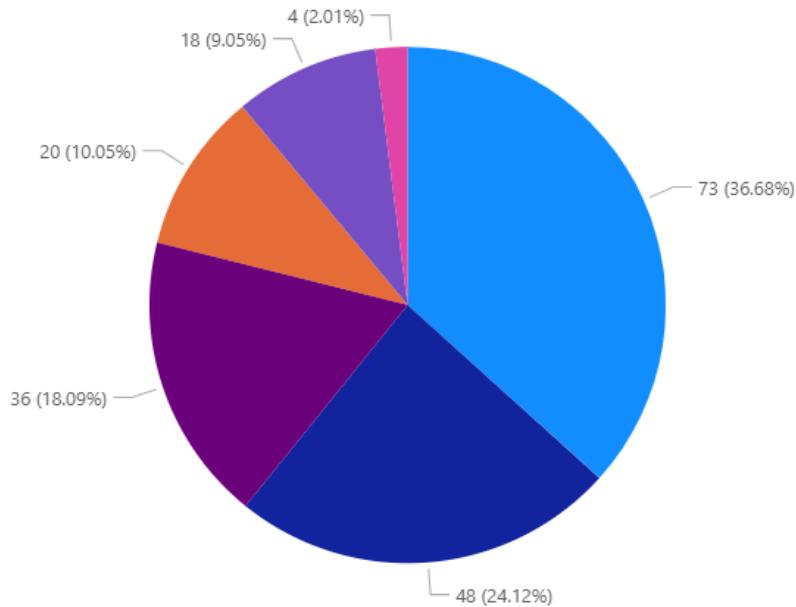
4.1 41% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre. (81 out of 199 responses)
4.2 84% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (167 out of 199 responses)
4.3 Responses for Evington Leisure centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in is swimming and attending the gym or exercise class.
4.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:



## Satisfaction Levels

4.7 Of the 199 responses for Evington 47% of identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 27% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

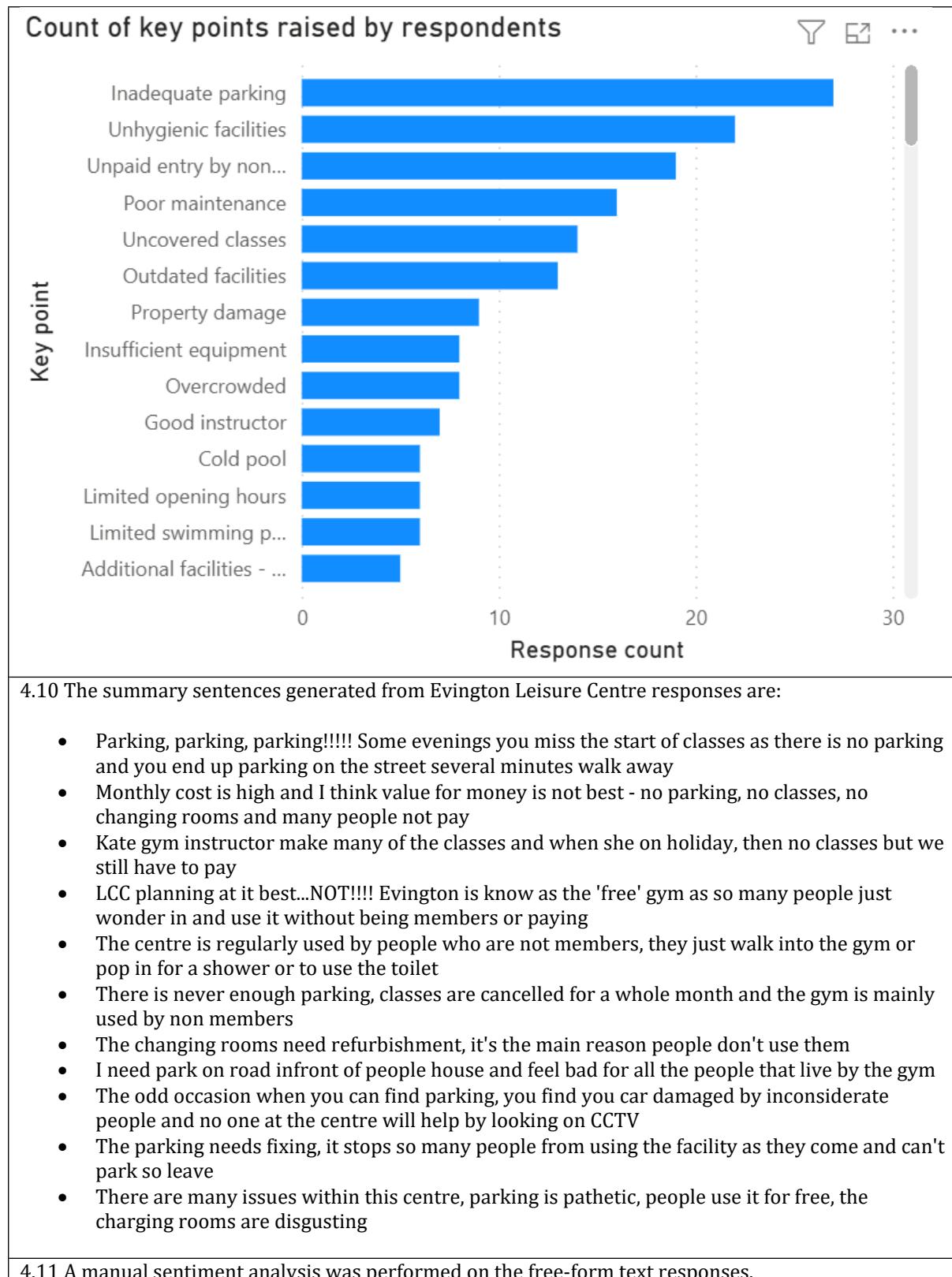
4.8:

**How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres?****How satisfied are you with the c...** ● Satisfied ● Neutral ● Dissatisfied ● Very satisfied ● Very dissatisfied ● Not Answered

## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

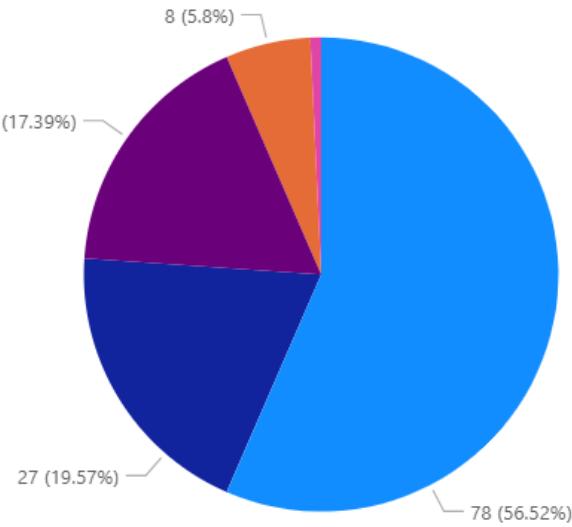
4.9 A review of the free-form text responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

Thematic analysis of the responses received show that the most common feedback was inadequate parking at the site followed by cleanliness issues.



**Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments**

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Very negative ● Positive ● Very positive



Evington Leisure Centre received 138 comments. Of these, over half of all comments, 56.52% (78 out of 138) contained negative sentiment, followed by 19.57% (27 out of 138) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with a negative sentiment most frequently contained themes on unhygienic facilities. This is followed by comments on poor maintenance and inadequate parking at the site.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on having a sauna as an additional facility, limited opening hours (in particular, customers looking for the gym to be open earlier or later), and having an additional subscription for group exercise classes only.

## Leicester Leys Leisure Centre

Built 1985



### Assets

<b>Leisure pool, 30mx13m. Beach access, wave machine. Activity, toddler, and dimple pools. 546 sqm pool space</b>	Leisure water area. Parties. Fun slides	<b>Sports Hall</b>	3No Badminton courts Part gym use Gymnastics. Circuit training Parties
<b>Gym</b>	100 stations – using part sports hall and separate small rooms.	<b>Studio</b>	Space for 16 users Fitness classes. Yoga. Table tennis
<b>Climbing wall</b>	15m high tower. Sport climbing Bouldering Block – training	<b>Squash</b>	2No courts

### Travel and Usage

5.1 35% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre (127 out of 361 responses), 50% of respondents said they would travel over 2 miles (180 out of 361).

5.2 84% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (303 out of 361)

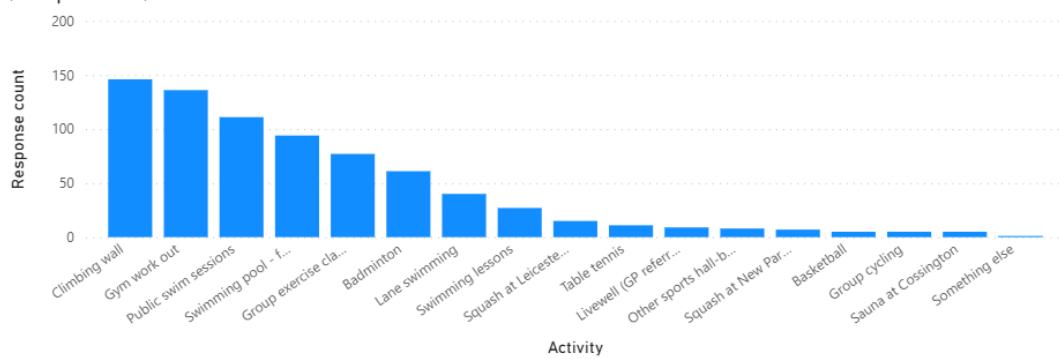
5.3 Responses for Leicester Leys Leisure Centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in are climbing, attending the gym and swimming.

5.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:

What attracts you to use the council's leisure centres? (Multiple choice)



Thinking about the centre you visit the most often, what are the most important activities on offer there for you? (Multiple choice)



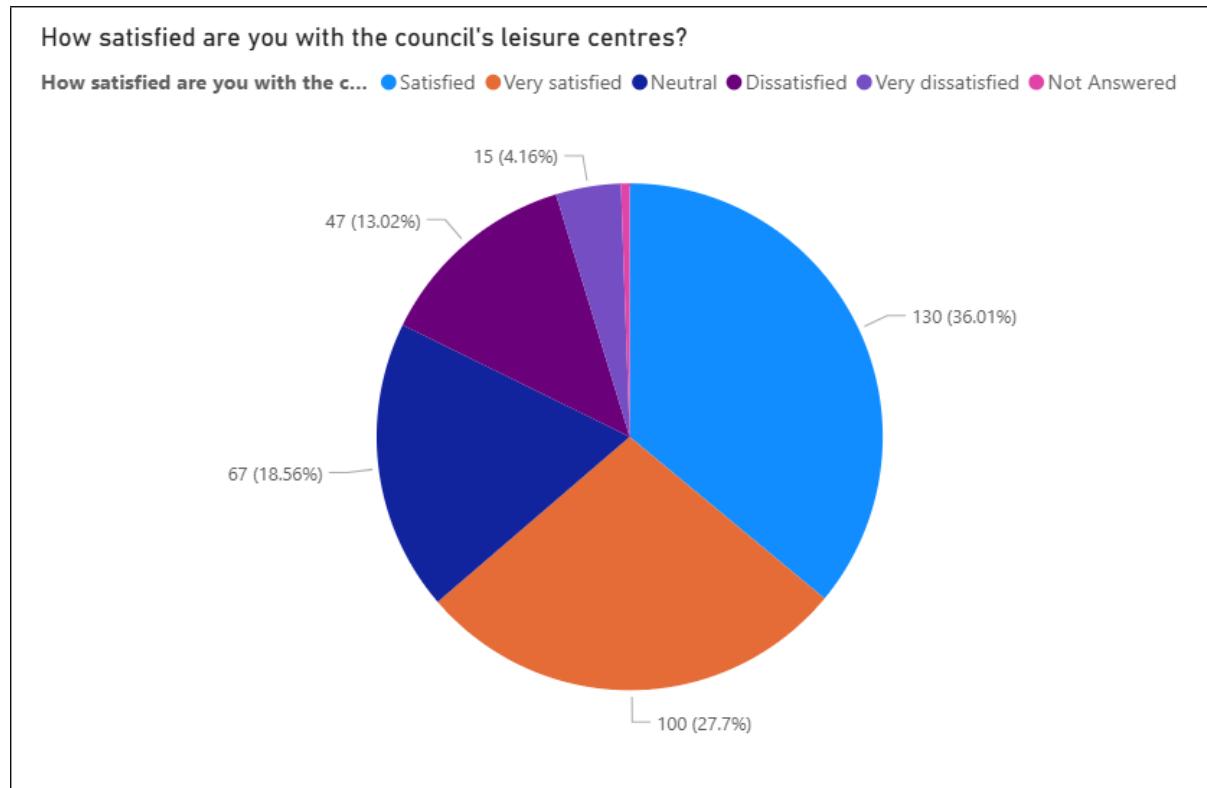
5.5 The survey shows that 50% (179 of 361) of respondents will only use Leicester Leys Leisure Centre.

5.6 Respondants who utlise other leisure centres mostly picked Braunstone Leisure Centre (23% or 100 out of 361) and New Parks Leisure Centre (12% or 44 out of 361)

## Satisfaction Levels

5.7 Of the 361 responses for Leicester Leys 64% of identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 17% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

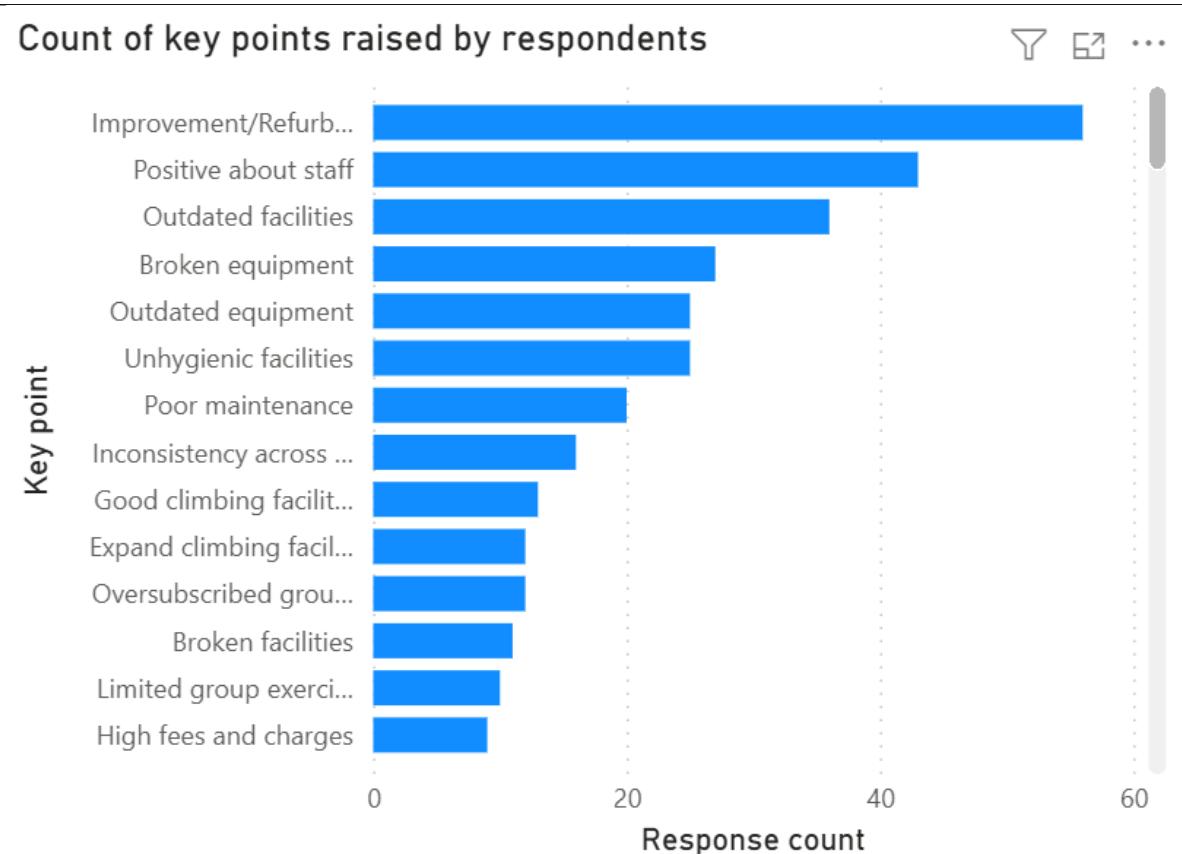
5.8:



## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

5.9 A review of the free-form text responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

Thematic analysis of the responses received show that the most common feedback was the facility needs improvements/refurbishment followed by being positive about staff.



5.10 Application of statistical methods to responses containing the most frequently occurring words generated a set of summary comments. The summary sentences for Leicester Leys Leisure Centre are:

- Climbing centre should be open on Sundays! Great value but my local gym Leicester Leys needs investment in new equipment, Braunstone is further but has great equipment
- There isn't much gym equipment at the Leicester leys leisure centre and there isn't a lot of room, the swimming pool slides are always closed
- The climbing wall is great however more tower space and bouldering wall areas would attract more families! The gym equipment was moved into the main hall during COVID
- The equipment is old and sometimes people use gym equipment i want to use and being used by the people while i am there
- The Climbing Wall of Beaumont Leys Leicester Leisure Centre is the only climbing wall in Leicester
- The climbing wall at Leicester Leys is a one of its kind in the county and the climbing courses are really good
- Leicester Leys is in disrepair the flumes haven't worked for years the pool floor has tiles missing the gym equipment is old or cast offs from other centres
- Great climbing courses available, really friendly and knowledgeable staff and great facilities
- Most of the cities I also go to for climbing (Warwick, Nottingham, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol) have larger, modern climbing walls and some have several climbing walls
- The climbing wall is a vital part of learning to climbing for me and my friends and the staff there are very helpful
- The swimming pool is great Shame flumes cannot be used and the gym could do with upgrades The staff are great, and the value for money is good
- However, in the gym when equipment breaks, it's sometimes broken for quite a while Need referb The climbing wall is a great facility
- Thanks to everyone who is making Tower special ! The climbing wall staff are extremely helpful and go above and beyond t help you

5.11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the text responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive ● Very negative ● Very positive

28

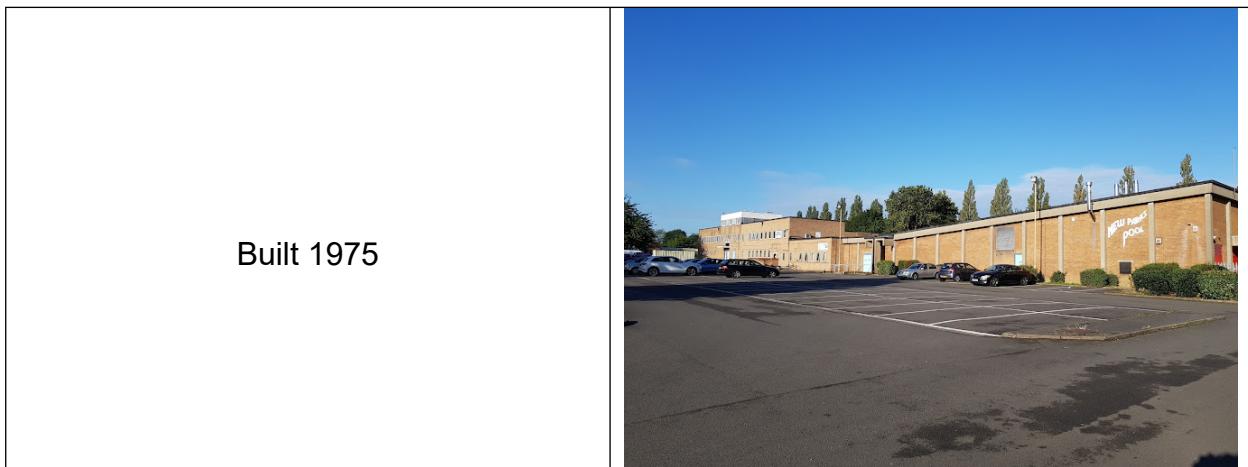
168

Leicester Leys Leisure Centre received 223 comments. Of these 38.57% (86 out of 223) contained negative sentiment, followed by 25.56% (57 out of 223) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with a negative sentiment most frequently contained comments on improvement/refurbishment being required to the facility. This is followed by comments on unhygienic facilities and broken equipment.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on improvement/refurbishment to the facility being required. This was followed by positive comments about the site staff and comments on outdated facilities.

## New Parks Leisure Centre



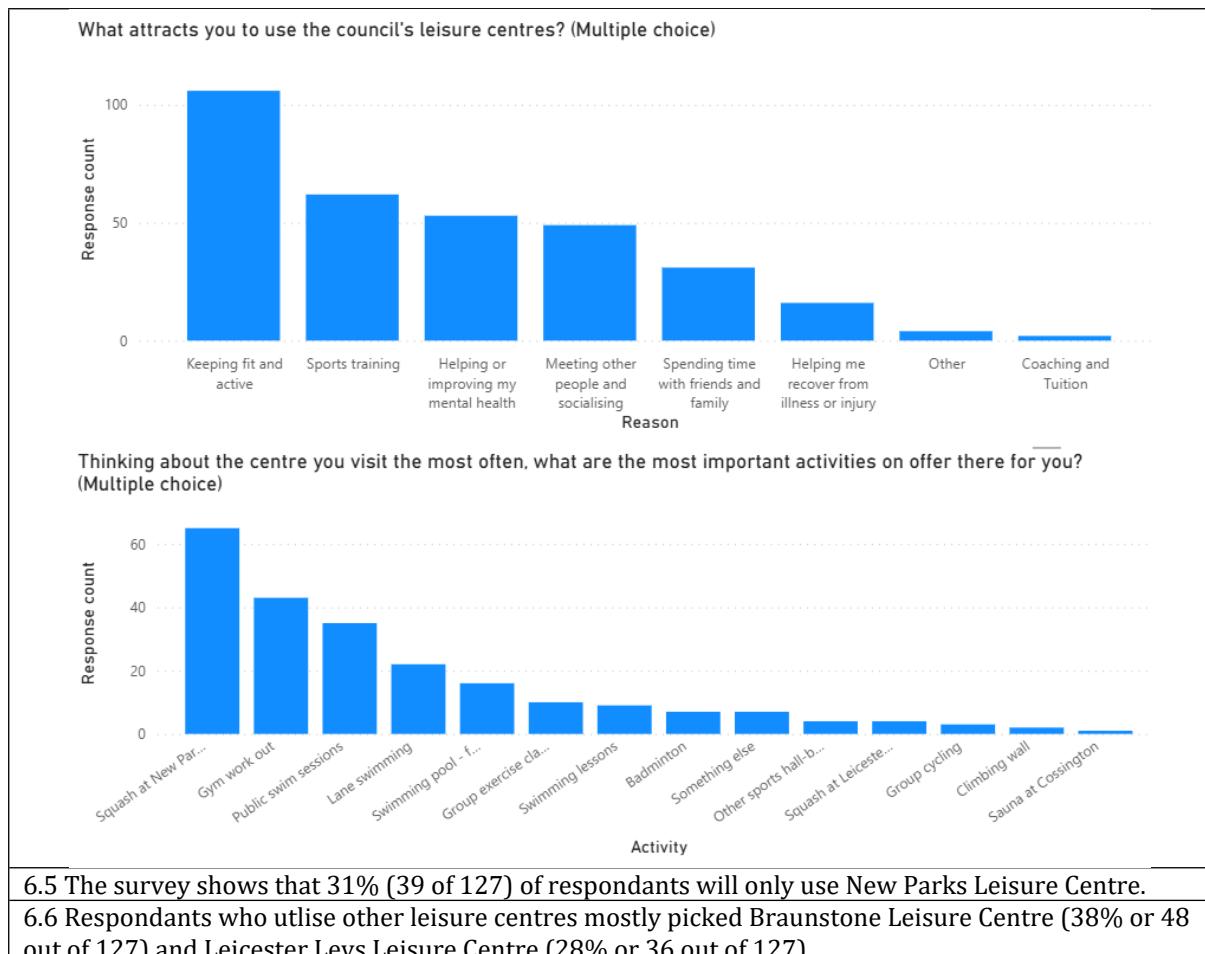
Built 1975

### Assets

<b>Swim pools</b> <b>25m x 10m</b> <b>18m x 5m.</b> <b>340 sqm pool space</b>	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	<b>Gym</b>	20 stations
<b>Squash</b>	5No courts	<b>Function/ activity room</b>	

### Travel and Usage

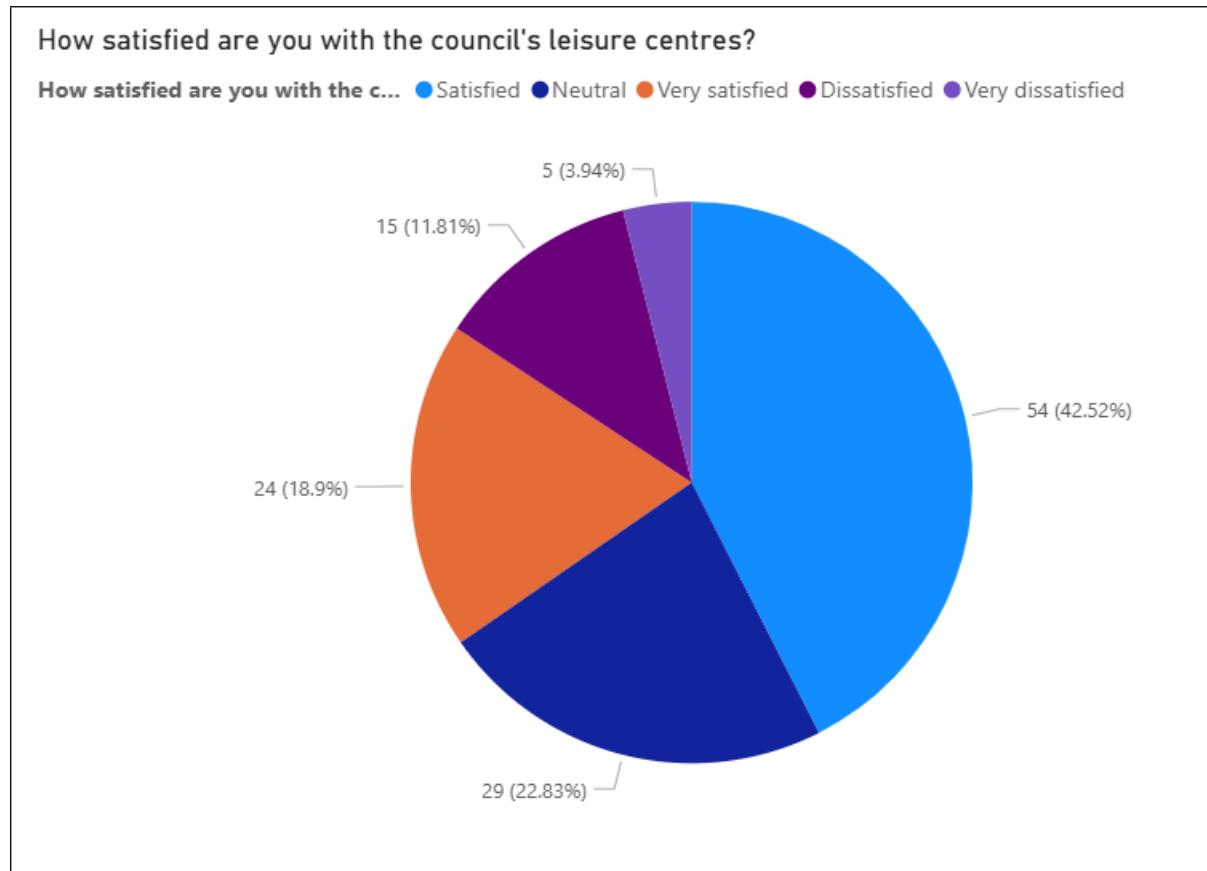
6.1 36% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre. (46 out of 127 responses)
6.2 76% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (97 out of 127 responses)
6.3 Responses for New Parks Leisure Centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in are squash, attending the gym and swimming.
6.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:



## Satisfaction Levels

6.7 Of the 127 responses for New Parks 61% of identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 16% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

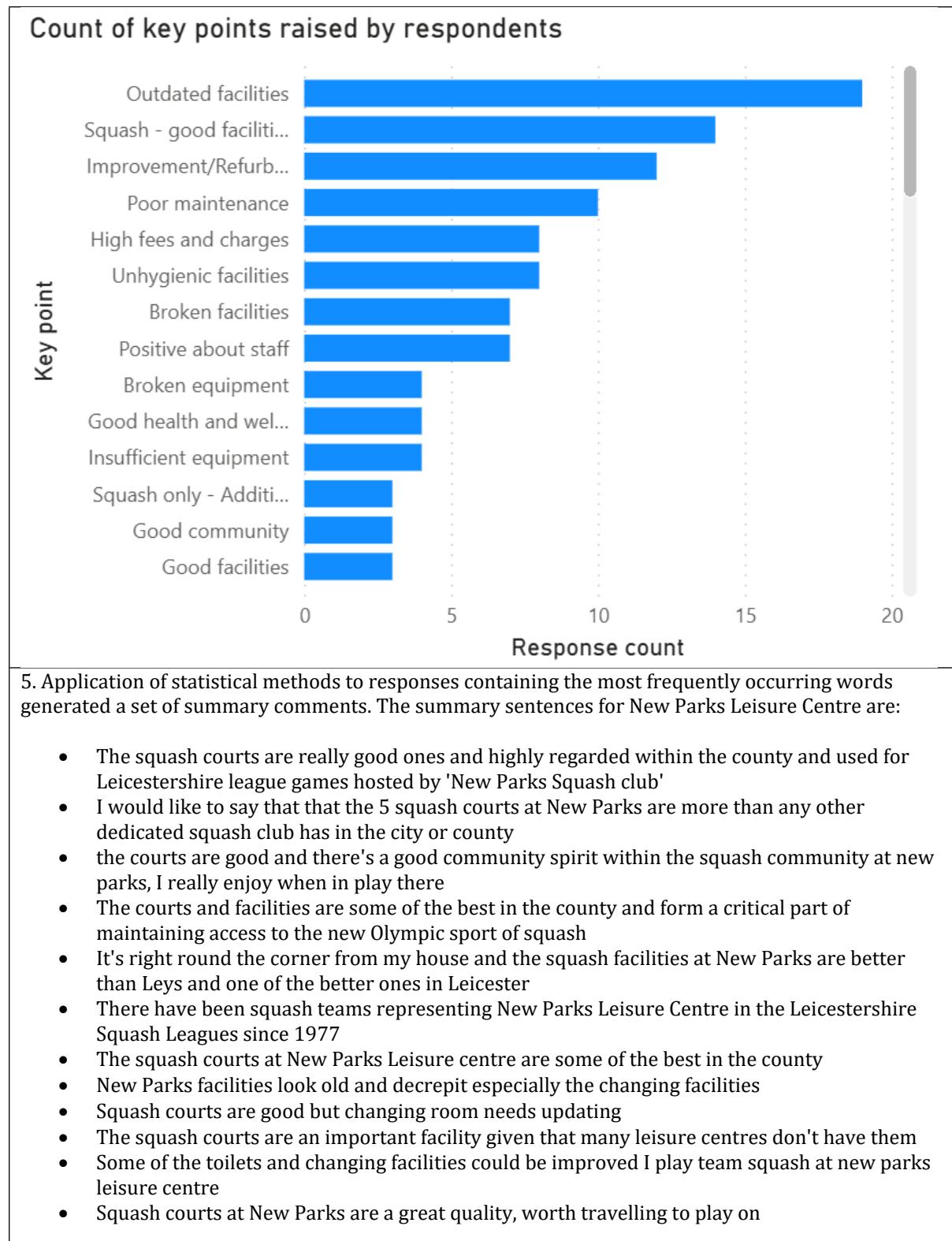
6.8:



## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

6.9 A review of the free-form text responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

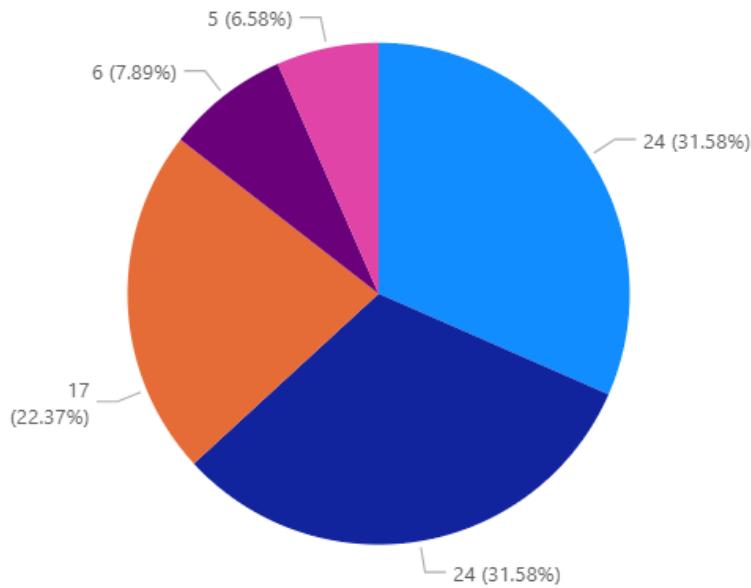
Thematic analysis of the responses received show that the most common feedback was the facility was outdated followed by praise for the squash facilities.



5.11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive ● Very negative ● Very positive



New Parks Leisure Centre received 76 open text comments. Of these 31.58% (24 out of 76) contained negative sentiment, followed by 31.58% (24 out of 76) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with a negative sentiment most frequently contained content on outdated facilities. The second most frequently occurring comment is about high fees and charges, then poor maintenance.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on how improvement/refurbishment is required at the site. This was followed by comments on outdated facilities and praise for staff.

## Spence Street Sports Centre

Swimming Pool built 1980

Sports Hall built 1986

Sports Hall upgraded to  
Gym and studio 2022



### Assets

<b>2 No Swim pools 25m x 10m and 18m x 5m 340 sqm water space</b>	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	<b>Detached gym</b>  <b>Studio</b>	70 stations - refurbished 2022  Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga
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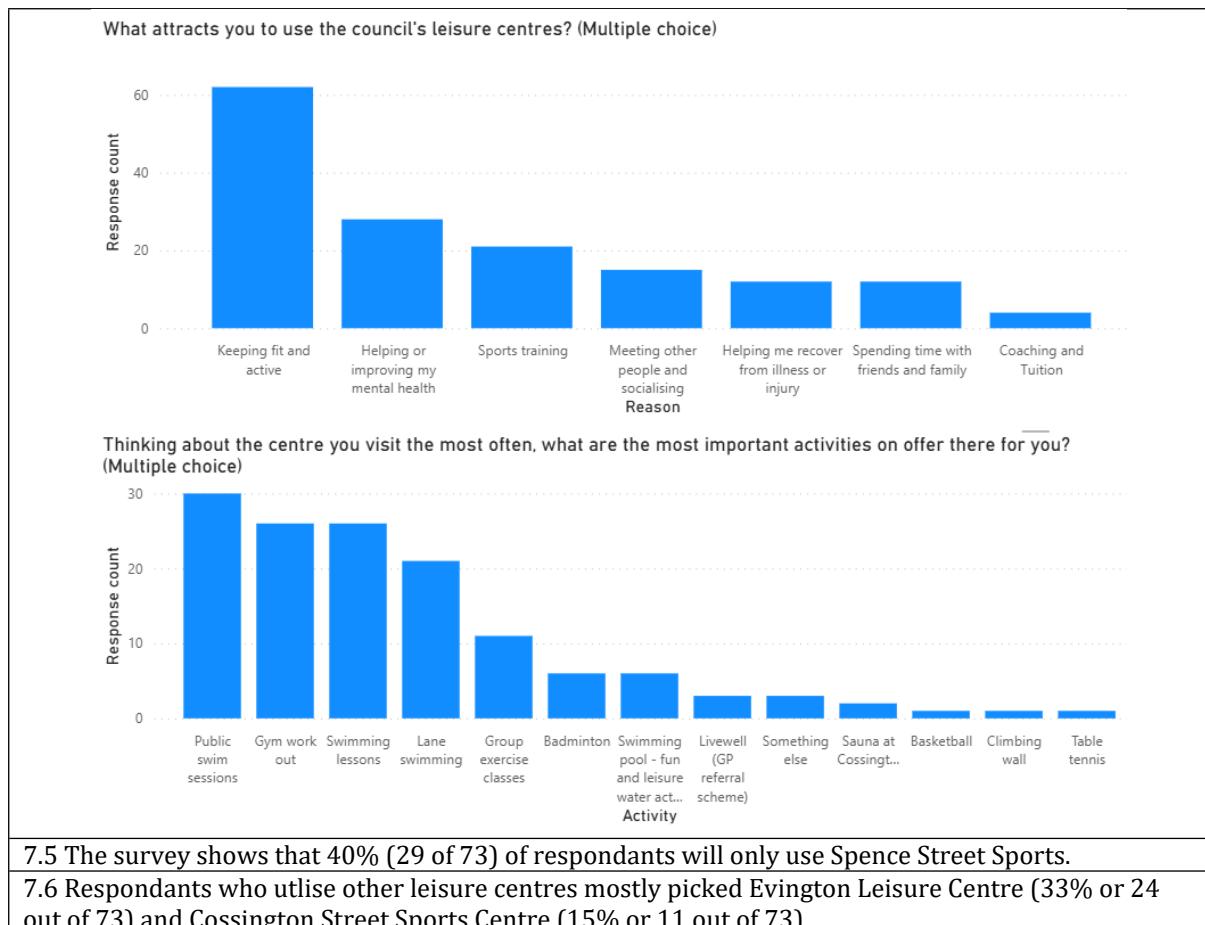
### Travel and Usage

7.1 48% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre. (35 out of 73 responses)

7.2 61% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (61 out of 73 responses)

7.3 Responses for Spence Street Sports Centre show that the most popular activities that respondents participate in is swimming and attending the gym or swimming lessons.

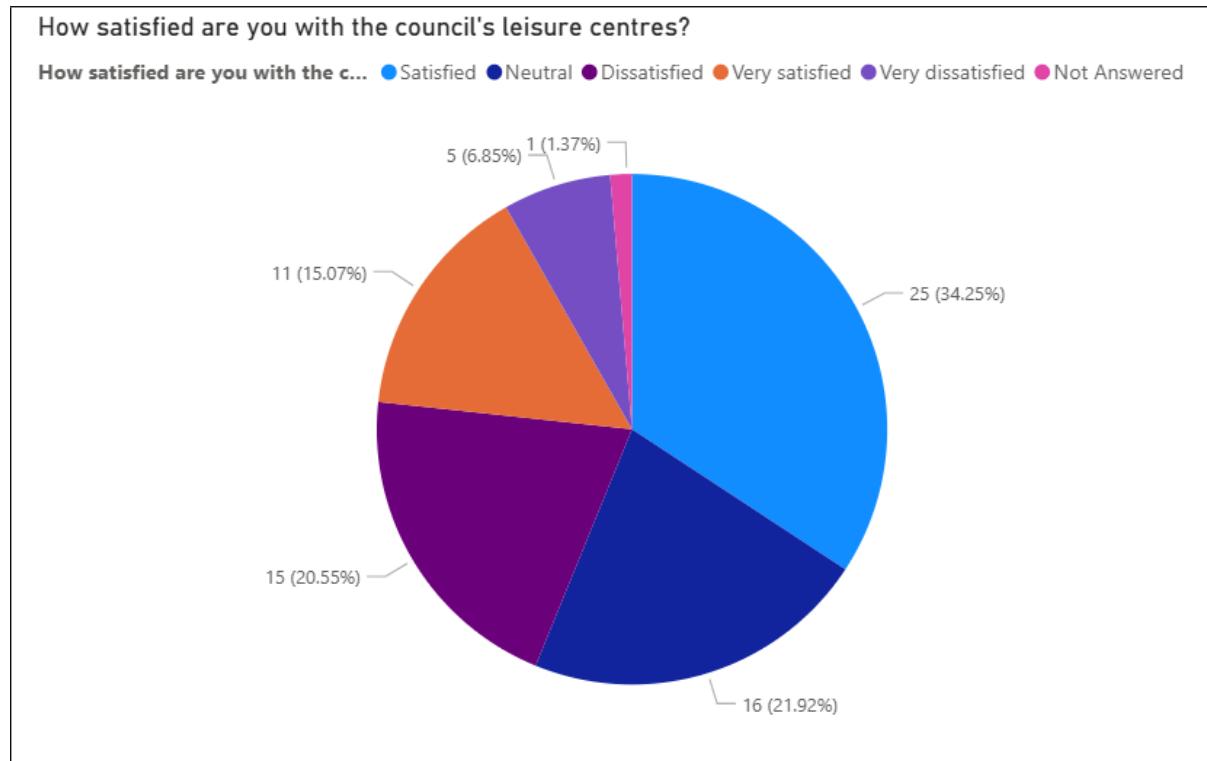
7.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre:



## Satisfaction Levels

7.7 Of the 73 responses for Spence Street 49% identified they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the centre. 27% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

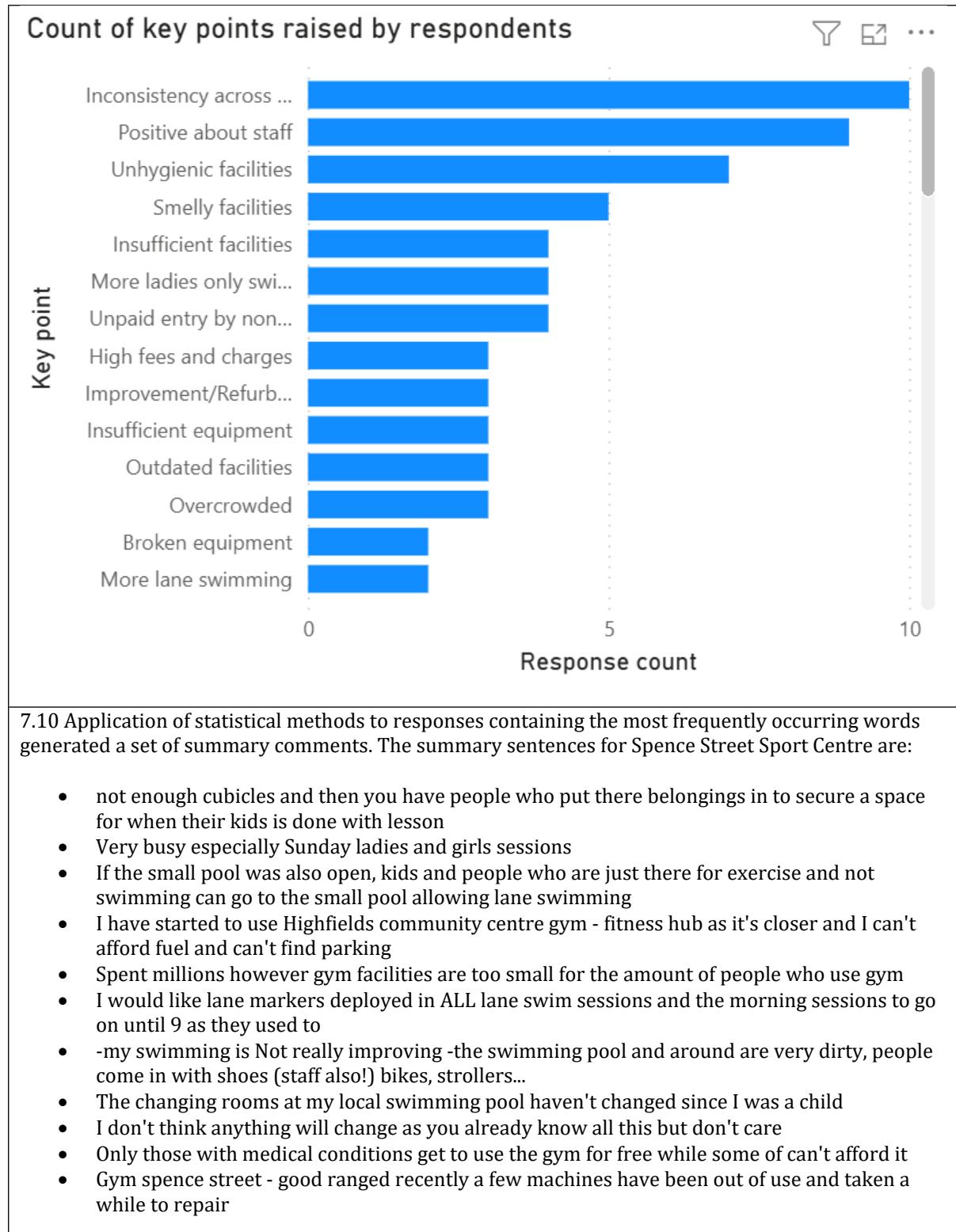
7.8:



## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

7.9 A review of the free-form text responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

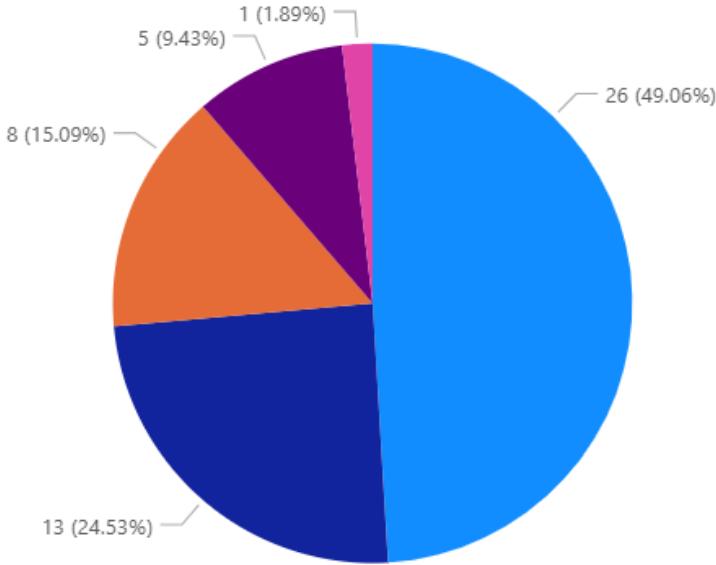
Thematic analysis of the responses received show the most common feedback was that there is inconsistency across centres followed by positivity for staff.



7.11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form text responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive ● Very negative ● Very positive

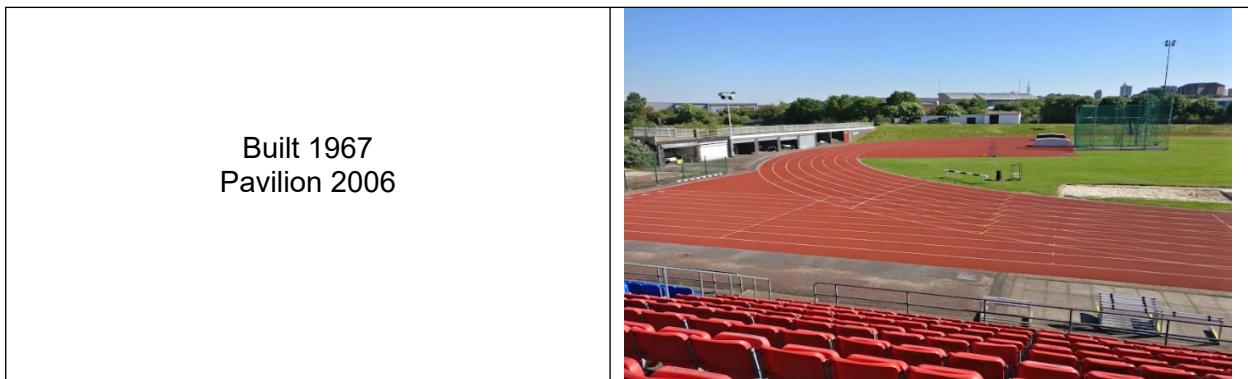


Spence Street Sport Centre received 53 comments. Of these 49.06% (26 out of 53) contained negative sentiment, followed by 24.53% (13 out of 53) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

Comments with a negative sentiment most frequently contained content on 'insufficient facilities', 'smelly facilities' and 'high fees and charges'.

Comments with a neutral sentiment most frequently contained content on 'inconsistency across centres', followed by comments on 'positive about staff' and 'broken equipment' respectively.

## Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium



### Assets

<b>8 lane running track.</b> <b>In-field sports</b>	Athletics club usage. Athletics events, field sports and training use.	<b>Pavilion</b>	Competitor changing. Meeting room. Toilets.
--	---	-----------------	---

### Travel and Usage

8.1 40% of respondents said they travel less than a mile to access the centre. (2 out of 5 responses)																
8.2 80% of respondents indicated that they plan to use the centre regularly (at least once a week) in the next 6 months. (4 out of 5 responses)																
8.3 Responses for Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium that the most popular activity that respondents participate in group hire sessions.																
8.4 Key responses for understanding the use and attractiveness of the leisure centre: What attracts you to use the council's leisure centres? (Multiple choice)																
<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Reason</th><th>Response count</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Keeping fit and active</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Spending time with friends and family</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Sports training</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Meeting other people and socialising</td><td>1</td></tr></tbody></table>	Reason	Response count	Keeping fit and active	4	Spending time with friends and family	2	Sports training	2	Meeting other people and socialising	1						
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<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Activity</th><th>Response count</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Other sports hall-based activity (e.g., events, group hire, clubs)</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Gym work out</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Lane swimming</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Something else</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Group cycling</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Group exercise classes</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Swimming lessons</td><td>1</td></tr></tbody></table>	Activity	Response count	Other sports hall-based activity (e.g., events, group hire, clubs)	3	Gym work out	2	Lane swimming	2	Something else	2	Group cycling	1	Group exercise classes	1	Swimming lessons	1
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8.5 The survey shows that 60% (3 of 5) of respondents will only use Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium.																
8.6 Respondents who utilise other leisure centres mostly picked Aylestone Leisure Centre (60% or 3 out of 5).																

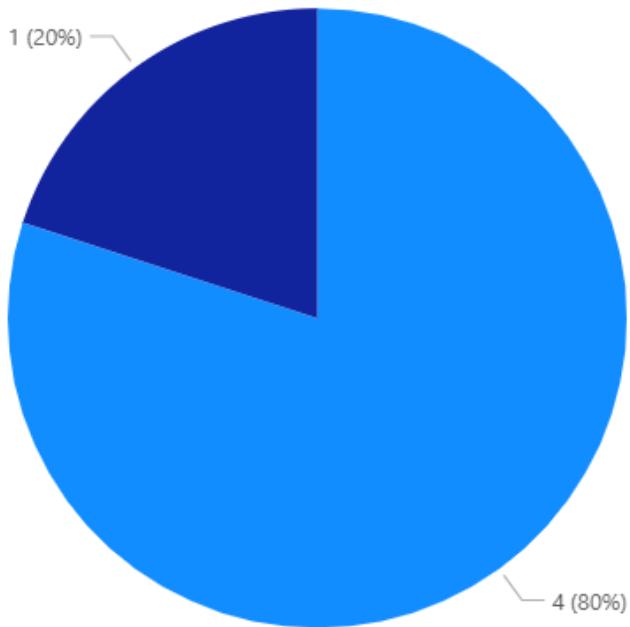
## Satisfaction Levels

8.7 Of the 5 responses for Saffron Lane 80% of identified they were either satisfied with the centre. 0% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facility. The remaining responses were neutral or did not answer.

8.8:

**How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres?**

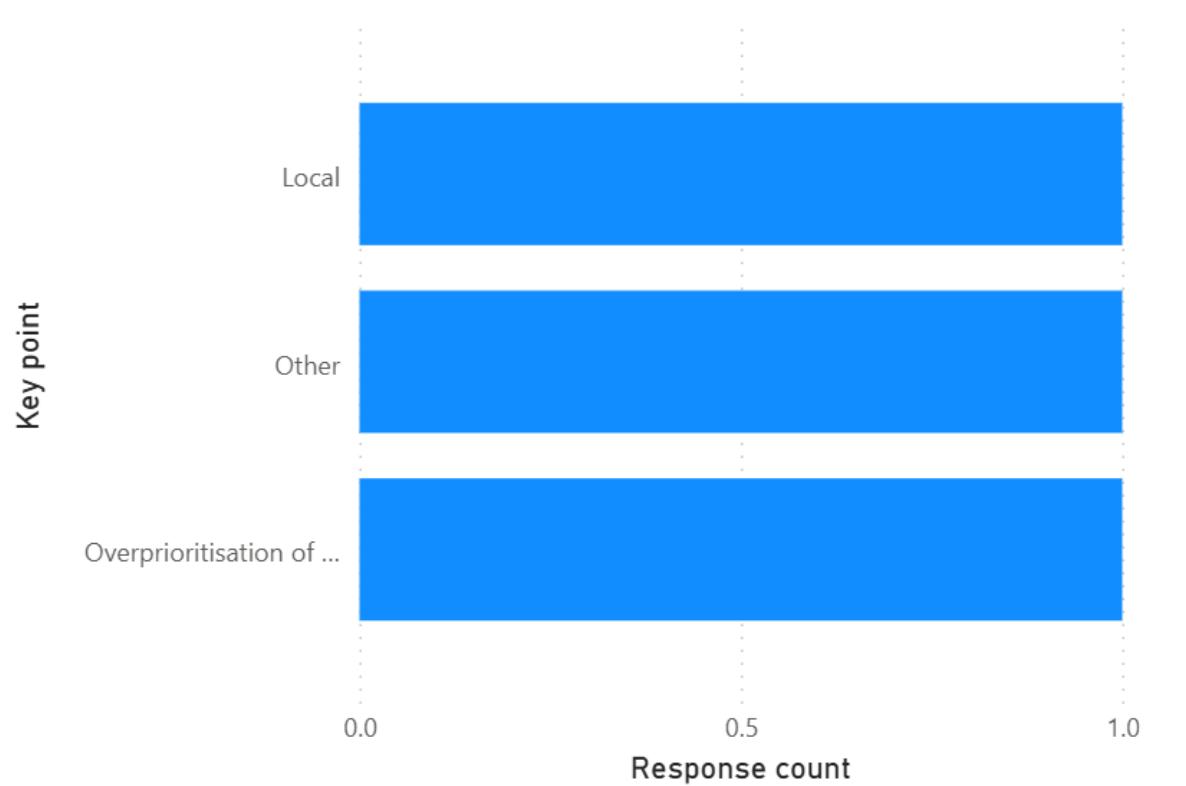
**How satisfied are you with the c...** ● Satisfied ● Neutral



## Feedback and Sentiment Analysis

8.9 A review of the free-form text responses provided to the question "How satisfied are you with the council's leisure centres? – Comment on satisfaction level" was carried out.

Thematic analysis of the responses received show the most common feedback was that the centre is local.

**Count of key points raised by respondents**

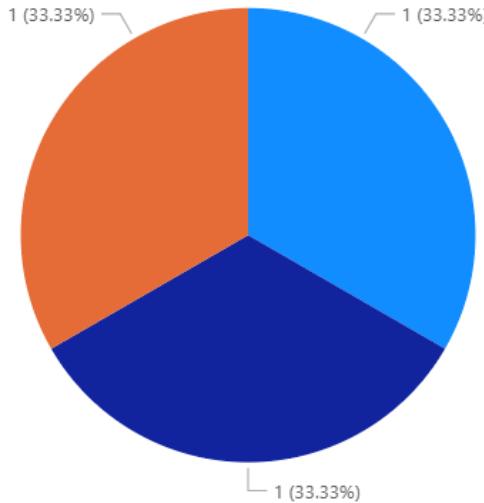
8.10 Application of statistical methods to responses containing the most frequently occurring words generated a set of summary comments. The summary sentences for Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium are:

- The track is well used with several active clubs with kids and adolescent members from a broad range of demographics in the local area
- I would like to go swimming more often but during the day the pool is used for schools and in the afternoon / early evening for swimming lessons
- The track serves one of the largest deprived population areas within walking distance of such a facility nationally
- I would like the leisure centre to offer exercise classes at the weekends
- Saffron Lane is a fantastic facility that is seeing much needed investment in it's facilities
- It should be a jewel in the crown, not an inconvenience

8. 11 A manual sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form text responses.

#### Sentiment analysis of satisfaction comments

Sentiment ● Negative ● Neutral ● Positive



Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium received 3 comments. Of these 33.33% (1 out of 3) contained negative sentiment, followed by 33.33% (1 out of 3) of comments containing a neutral sentiment.

The comment with a negative sentiment contained content on the over prioritisation of swim lessons.

The comment with neutral sentiment contained themes unrelated to Active Leicester leisure centres.

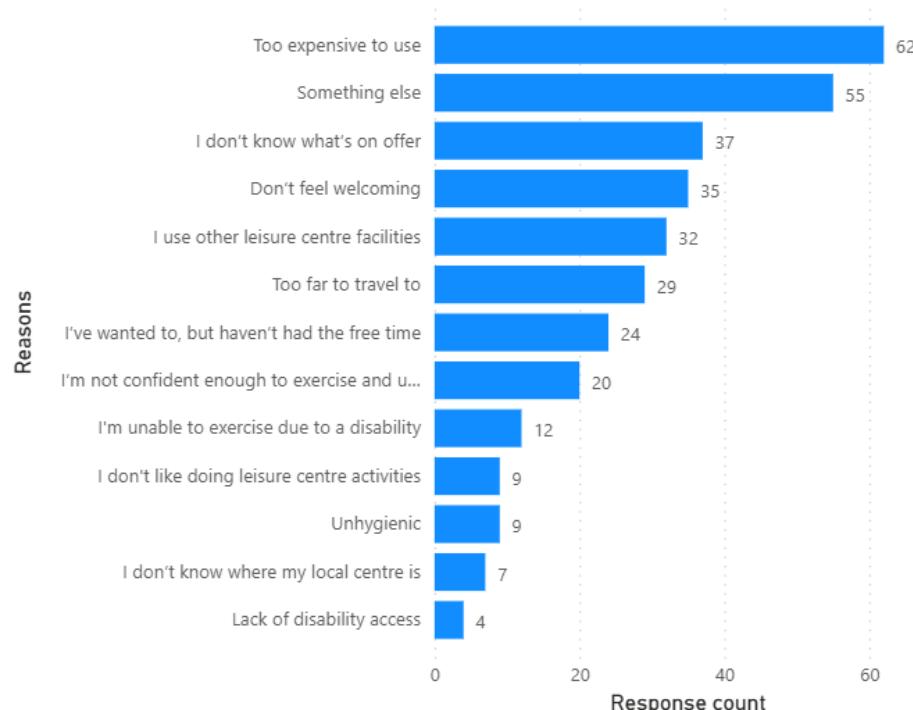
# Non-Customer Responses

## Reasons for not attending leisure centres

2.1 Respondents were asked 'What are the reasons why you don't use the council's leisure centres?'

It was answered by 164 respondents. These respondents identified that are not planning to visit a leisure centre in the next six months.

What are the reasons why you don't use the council's leisure centres? (Multiple choice)



The most popular response is that it is 'too expensive to use', followed by 'Something else'. The third most popular response was 'I don't know what's on offer'.

2.2 92 respondents provided free-form text to explain other reasons they have for not using a leisure centre. Application of statistical methods to responses containing the most frequently occurring words generated a set of summary comments.

The summary sentences for why people are not attending leisure centres are:

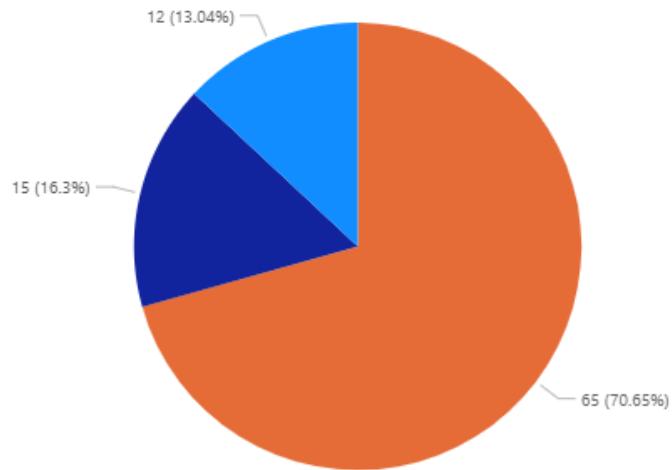
- Not enough equipment for the amount of people using the gym at one time
- I regularly used the gym pre-covid however post covid, Braunstone vasty [sic] reduced both gym classes
- Full of kids and you can't get on the equipment Limited evening classes and swimming pool availability I was a member at Aylesyone [sic] Leisure
- We needed a swimming pool and leisure centre in the City Centre where bus users from around the city could access it
- My local leisure centre does not offer any exercise classes (pilates, box fit, yoga etc) or aqua aerobic in the evening after 5
- Braustone [sic] gym won't let me use flippers to swim in
- The Leicester city gym closest to me doesn't offer enough classes, particularly after work
- Most people work and would like to have access to classes and personal trainers at the leisure centres

- Working people can't train when the program is designed for nonworking people on the benefits system or retired people all of who can get a reduced membership
- Didn't go back but would like to sue as it's on my doorstep! Not enough adult only swim times to fit around work pattern
- I used to be a member of Nuffield before it got expensive because I couldn't bare [sic] using the council changing rooms and showers
- I need to exercise before work and I now pay to go to a gym that opens at 6am
- We can [sic] 3 times that first week to use the facilities and it was awful! there is just not enough space for the amount of people
- There are other gyms that are closer to me, bit more expensive but they have updated equipment and good space in the gym
- Exercise classes targeted towards my age group are during the day when i'm at work They're in a poor state especially shower/locker/toilet facilities

### 2.3 A rule-based sentiment analysis was performed on the free-form responses

Sentiment analysis of free text responses to 'What are the reasons why you do not use the leisure centres?'

Sentiment ● Very Negative ● Neutral ● Negative



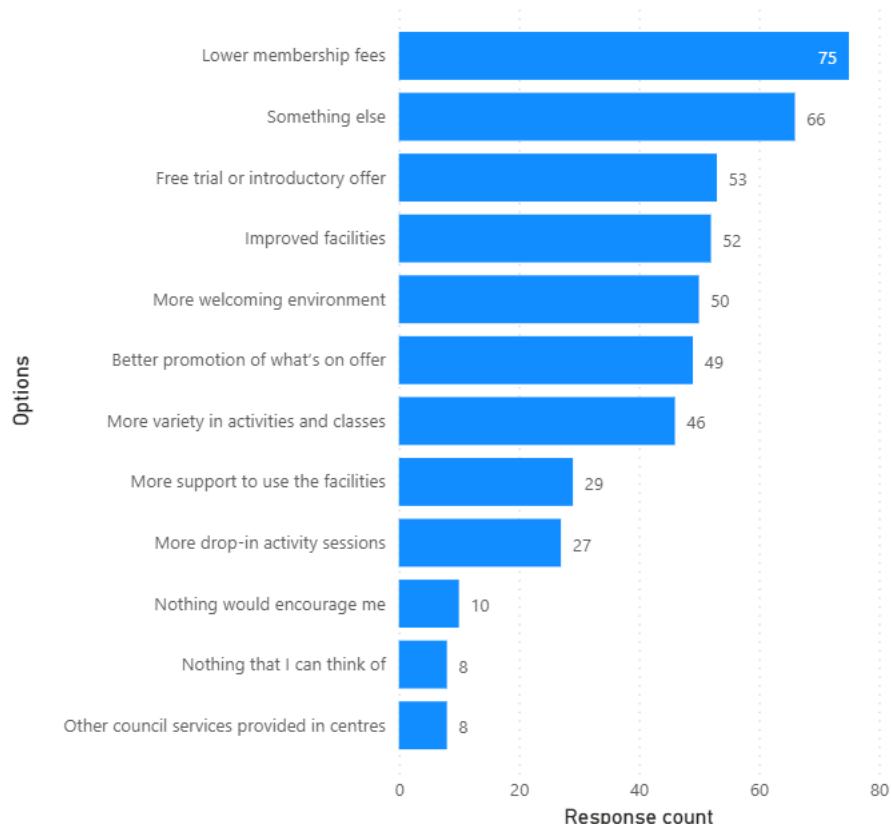
Of the 92 free-form responses, 70.65% (65 out of 92) were identified as having 'very negative' opinion of the leisure centres, 16.3% (15 out of 92) contain neutral sentiment and 13.04% (12 out of 92) contain negative sentiment. No positive responses were recorded in the sentiment analysis.

## Encouraging leisure centre usage

### 3.1 Respondents were asked 'What would encourage you to use the leisure centres in the future?'

It was answered by 175 respondents. These respondents identified that are not planning to visit a leisure centre in the next six months.

What would encourage you to use the leisure centres in the future? (Multiple choice)



The most popular response was that lower membership fees would encourage non-customers to use the leisure centres in the future. The second most popular response was 'Something else' and thirdly, a free trial or introductory offer.

### 3.2 66 respondents provided free-form text to describe other reasons that would encourage them to use a leisure centre.

Application of statistical methods to the responses containing the most frequently occurring words generated a set of summary comments. The summary sentences for what would encourage people to use the leisure centre more in the future are:

- An earlier opening time and a later closing time, especially for the gym Just improve Beaumont leisure centre somewhat
- Something close to Birstall I think it's a shame that no City Council leisure centre is open in the city centre
- It's all leisure time or activities reading swimming computers gym ect [sic] why do we need several buildings
- But in the past 5 years used to use DMU's QE leisure centre as it was close to work, not expensive and very clean
- I used to live in West Knighton and used Aylestone Leisure Centre before, especially when my son was little

- Spend a little money on that rather than braunstones one Specific sessions for older peopl [sic] much lower fees Sessions at a time that work for me
- Change the method of treating the water in swimming pools More accessible opening times for working people to get in to train
- Understand people's disabilities taking medication Need better access to swim taken up by schools an then swim classes [sic]
- I use leisure centres for swimming
- Being able to wear flippers in swimming pool more spin and pumpmax classes
- Why does no one use their brains to combine what they can and save the money to provide a better service for all
- I found lack of cleanliness an issue in council leisure centres
- One of the most significant factors affecting the quality of service we provide to customers is the caliber [sic] of staff we recruit
- Open at 6am or earlier A local leisure centre for hamilton/netherhall None
- Staff need to be more enthusiastic towards 'customers' council sold off sports centers [sic] put libraries in and not maintaining a clean level

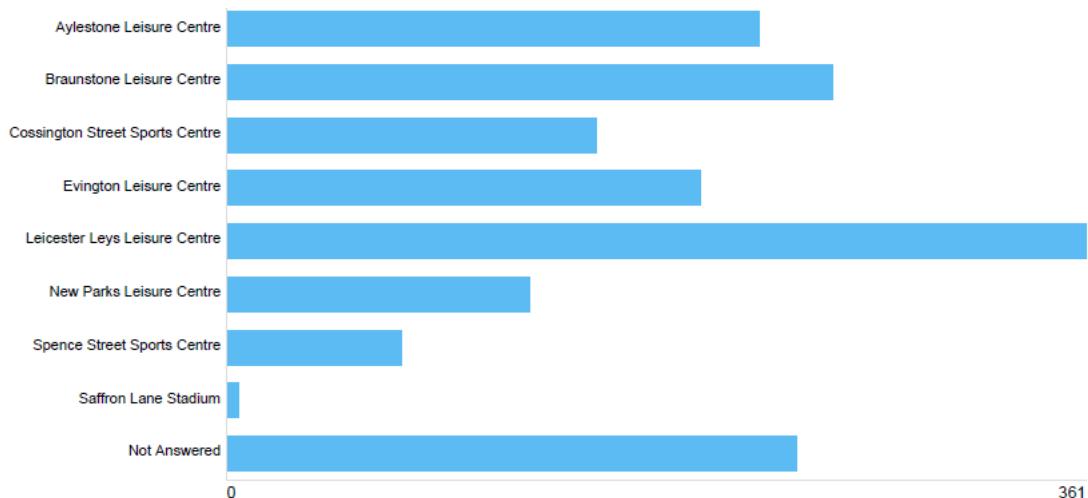
# Overall Survey Findings

## Respondent Profile

- 4.1 The survey received 1,636 responses. Respondents represented a broad range of age groups. The largest single group aged 36 - 45 years, accounting for 20.54% (336 individuals). This was closely followed by the 46 - 55 years age group at 19.13% (313 individuals). Together, respondents aged 26 to 65+ formed most responses.
- 4.2 The survey respondents were predominantly Female, with 55%. Followed by 39% of males. The remaining 6% were made of people who preferred not to stipulate or identified as 'other'.
- 4.3 54% of respondents declared themselves as White British, and 25% of Asian or Black heritage.
- 4.4 14% declared themselves as living with a disability.
- 4.5 In our analysis of responses, officers mapped respondent postcode data. The diagram in the appendix 2 illustrates that there is a good spread of respondents from across the city. Respondents are not skewed to any side of the city or particular centre.

## Active Leicester Leisure centre – respondent preference

- 4.6 From the 1,636 responses 1,237 (76%) of people plan on using a facility, at least once a week, growing to 89% of people likely to use a facility within the next 6 months. Just 11% of respondents do not plan on using a council leisure centre within the next 6 months.
- 4.7 Therefore, the number of people who took time to complete the survey were from people who already use the council's leisure centres on a regular basis.
- 4.8 The graph below illustrates the leisure centres which residents indicated that they are most likely to use.



- 4.9 As a follow up question the survey asked respondents to tell us which council leisure centres they would also use on an occasional basis or as an alternative to their preferred leisure centre. The table below shows how respondents use occasionally other council leisure centre as an alternative centre.

Alternative/Occasional Leisure Centre	Total	%
Aylestone Leisure Centre	174	10.64%
Braunstone Leisure Centre	288	17.6%
Cossington Sports Centre	136	8.31%
Evington Leisure Centre	133	8.13%
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	279	17.05%
New Parks Leisure Centre	159	9.72%
Spence Street Sports Centre	133	8.13%
Saffron Lane	30	1.83%
I won't use any other leisure centre or facility	475	29.03%
Didn't answer	292	17.85%

## Active Leicester - User Analysis

- 4.10 Residents were asked how far they travel to get to their preferred leisure centre. Approximately 43% of respondents said that they are within 1 mile (20-minute walk).

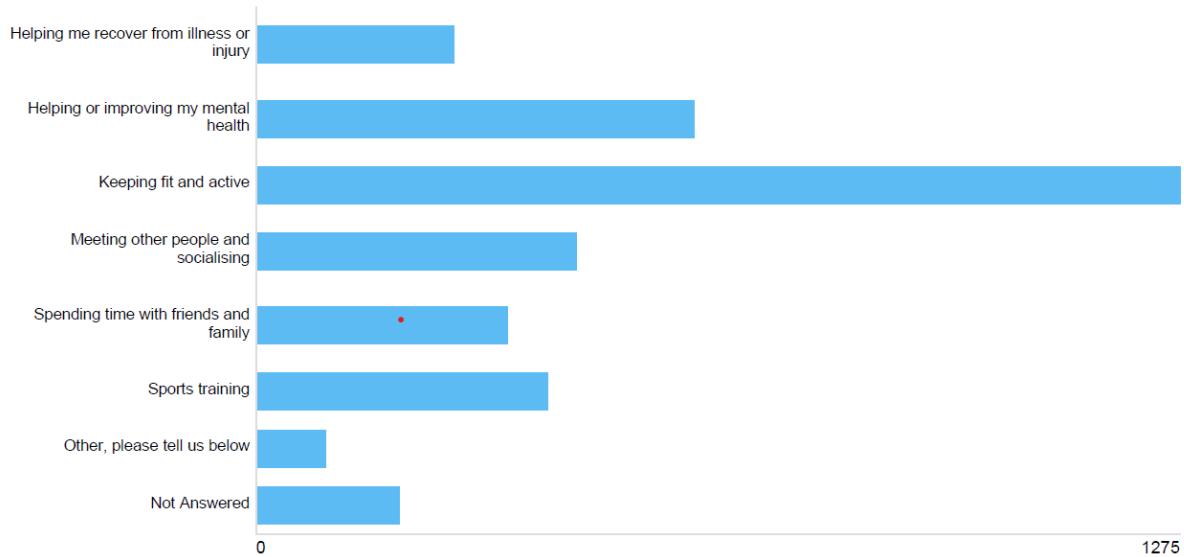
The results however indicated that about 33% of people are prepared to travel more than 2 miles to access the leisure centre of their choice.

Prepared to travel to leisure centre	Total	%
Only local to me (short drive, or up to 5 minute walk)	201	12.29%
Within ½ a mile (up to 10 minute walk)	208	12.71%
Up to 1 mile (up to 20 minute walk)	290	17.73%
Above a mile (20-30 minute walk)	221	13.51%
Above 2 miles (30+ minute walk)	538	32.89%
Not answered	178	10.88%

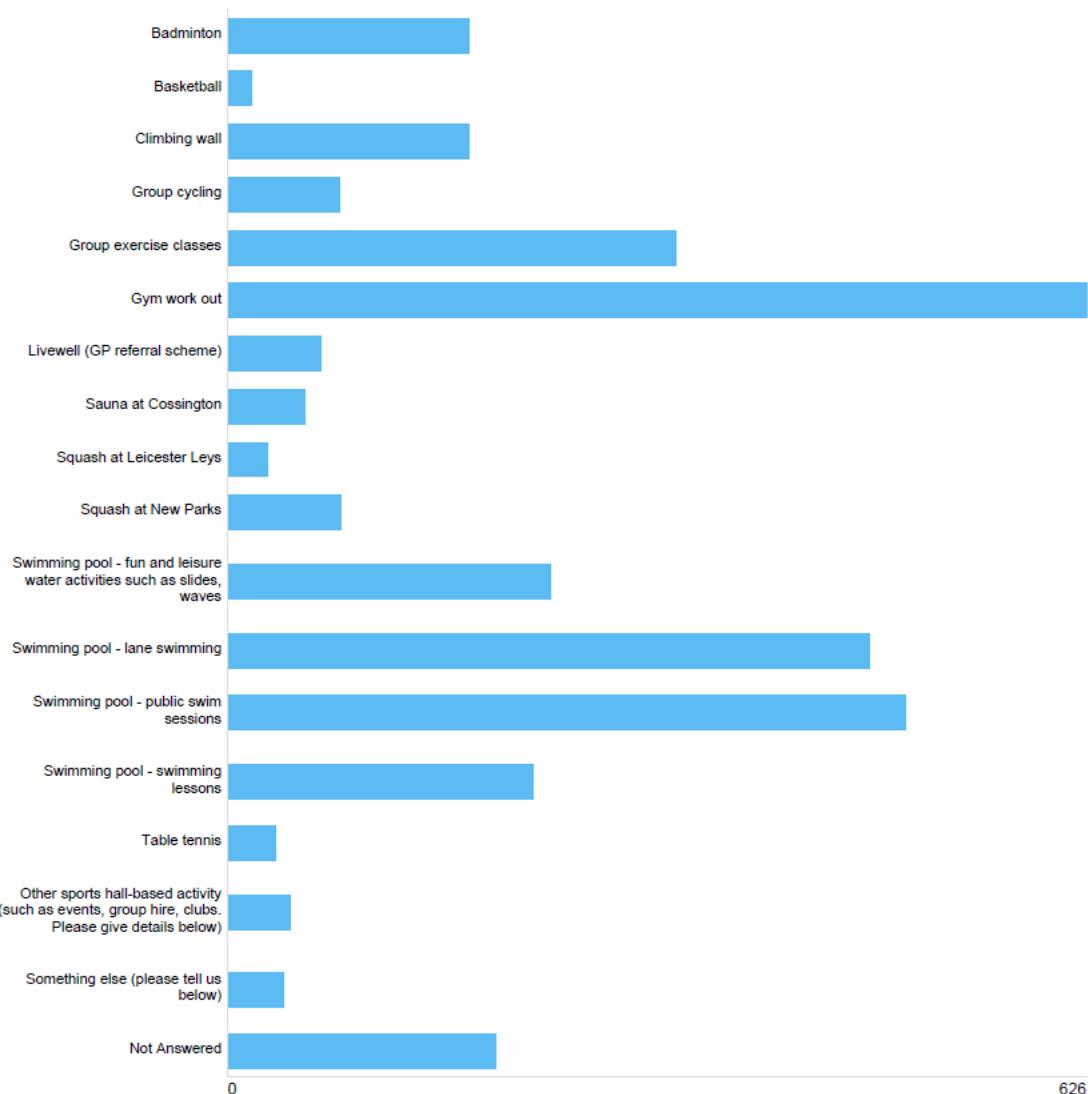
4.11 Responses indicated that 53% of users are either very satisfied or satisfied with the facilities, with only 16% of users identifying their dissatisfaction.

Resident Satisfaction with Council Leisure Centres	Total	%
Very satisfied	282	17.24%
Satisfied	586	35.82%
Neutral	315	19.25%
Dissatisfied	194	11.86%
Very dissatisfied	75	4.58%
Not Answered	184	11.25%

4.12 The main reason given for people using the council's leisure centres is to 'keep fit', 1275 people said this was important to them, but people also cited that using a centre for physical or mental wellbeing were also important reasons why residents use leisure centres.

**Reasons to use leisure centres**

4.13 The most popular activities that respondents valued were using the gym and swimming pool for leisure, lessons or lane swimming. The graph on the following page illustrates the variety of responses received.

**Important activities**

## Non-Active Leicester user – respondent analysis

4.14 There were 174 respondents who claim that they do not use an Active Leicester facility. The analyse in this section explores their reasons.

4.15 Of the 174 respondents, 62 identified the main reason for not using the facilities was that it is too expensive. 53 people stated it was something else and added commentary, some of which is illustrated in the table below:

Reason	Count	Percentage
--------	-------	------------

They are too expensive to use	62	3.79%
Something else (please tell us below)	53	3.24%
I don't know what's on offer	37	2.26%
They don't feel welcoming	35	2.14%
I use other leisure centre facilities (private or county council)	32	1.96%
They are too far to travel to	28	1.71%
I've wanted to, but haven't had the free time	24	1.47%
I'm not confident enough to exercise and use them	20	1.22%
I'm unable to exercise due to a disability	12	0.73%
I don't like doing leisure centre activities	9	0.55%
I don't know where my local centre is	7	0.43%

- 4.16 Non-users were also asked what would encourage them to use a Leisure Centre in the future. The most popular response to this was reduced membership fees or an introductory offer, illustrating that cost is a barrier for non-users of a facility.

Option	Total	percen t
Better promotion of what's on offer	49	3.00%
Free trial or introductory offer	53	3.24%
Improved facilities	62	3.18%
Lower membership fees	74	4.52%
More drop-in activity sessions	27	1.65%
More support to use the facilities	29	1.77%
More variety in activities and classes	45	2.75%
More welcoming environment	50	3.06%
Other council services provided in centres	8	0.49%
Nothing that I can think of	8	0.49%
Nothing would encourage me	10	0.61%

## Qualitative responses

- 4.17 The survey also invited people to add comments and further detail to the multiple-choice questions. In total 883 people provided a written response. Analysis of this is underway and will be provided as part of the full detailed survey report.





# Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment

(Secondary Research)

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of Report

Following the Sports Services Review conducted in 2016 the service significantly transformed the overall performance, culture, and quality of the service. The journey of improvement follows the implementation of the review recommendations, which has created a very positive picture. Active Leicester (Sports Services) has grown its income from £4.5 million in 2017/18 to £8.3 million in 24/25. Expenditure control has been managed despite increasing costs associated with staff and running costs.

Like many local authorities Leicester City Council are facing a challenging financial situation and therefore it is vital that we ensure that the service we provide meets the needs of the city, as part of an affordable level of accessible leisure centre provision.

Leicester City Council manages 7 leisure centres across the city, plus 1 athletics track. Customers can access swimming pools, health and fitness facilities and a range of sports from badminton, squash, group exercise and many more. A full breakdown of the facilities offered by each centre is shown in the table on page 22.

Over the last 5 years the service has transformed its overall performance, as part of a phased approach. Phase 1 involved a range of significant changes including root and branch management and staff restructure. It also included a revision of opening hours for leisure centres, a modernisation of the services approach to fees, charges and membership, and focused capital investment on health and fitness expansion at Cossington Street, Evington and Aylestone leisure centres.

Phase 2 involved further modernisation of fees and charges along with further investment in health and fitness at Braunstone and Spence Street Leisure Centres. The service has improved performance significantly over this period particularly in the core business areas of health and fitness and learn to swim.

A further phase of ROI Business Case leisure centre capital investment has been considered within the context of the report. Alongside this, the service is continuing to reduce council liabilities by moving towards lease hold for sports club's tenants.

To summarise, this needs assessment report has been undertaken to take stock of the progress achieved and the next phase of improvement, with a focus on how the service responds to the financial challenges faced by the council and the need to adapt and change to meet the existing and future leisure needs of Leicester.

### Secondary Research Overview

This report provides a strategic assessment of how each leisure centre serves the distinct catchments and localities as part of a network of leisure facilities distributed across the city. A broad range of data and information has been gathered and examined to underpin the assessment of necessity, cost effectiveness, value for money and leisure impact. This will ensure that the council has been able to conduct a robust leisure centre assessment so that it is able to evaluate the implications of any suggested changes to leisure centre provision in response to the difficult budget decisions that need to be undertaken by the council.

As part of the national context the needs assessment also includes a light touch market assessment that evaluates the service against the national sector and alternative management arrangements. The reason for including an initial market assessment within the report is to ensure it suitably provides evidence on alternative leisure management options as part of the overall LCNA study.

The review also considers the role of the council beyond its responsibilities for managing and operating leisure centres and how it works in partnership to enable communities to become and remain active by enabling opportunity rather than direct provision.

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## Section 1.

### Review Principles, Methodology and Executive Summary

## Underlying leisure centre review principles

It is incredibly important as we carefully plan what services are retained, so that they can optimise and sustain services, going forward. Therefore, as we assess options and recommendations during the review, the following underlying principles will be adopted:

- Active Leicester will look to retain an effective spread and distribution of leisure facilities that provides reasonable access and ensures equitable coverage across Leicester to deliver the service vision and aims. **(Effective, inclusive and affordable network and distribution of facilities)**
- Active Leicester will establish what we believe to be an essential level of diverse leisure provision at the heart of communities that can be justified and sustained and that is complimentary to alternative provision provided by other sectors across the city. **(Providing a minimum level of provision that can still serve the city and takes in to account the availability of alternative facilities)**
- Active Leicester recognises the importance of evaluating and understanding the impact and effectiveness of each facility in terms of cost, value, impact, and outcomes so that we are able to clarify a hierarchy in terms of the contribution of our centres. **(Value for money and future viability)**
- Active Leicester will assess the ability to absorb any loss of facilities and services across the remaining network of facilities or by alternative providers in the city or county. **(Ability to absorb or minimise loss)**

## Methodology

The review has been undertaken by accessing data and evidence from various sources including.

- The service operates a new case management system (Plus 2) that collects data on all customers and users of the service. The recently procured Gladstone system ensures we have key details on customers who use any of the council indoor and outdoor sports facilities. This data has been used to identify who are customers are, where they come from, their background and profile, what activity they undertake etc.
- Financial data has been obtained that tracks the performance of our centres over the last five years.
- We have completed a customer survey that has provided us valuable insight from our existing customers on their experience and views on the service that we provide.
- Additional expertise has been utilised to support the assessment and has helped us understand the supply and demand for facilities in the city, the contribution of non-council facilities within and outside of the city, independent assessment and benchmarking and centre options.
- Desk top research has been undertaken to evaluate the national and regional context for sport and leisure within the public sector.
- Population health data has been obtained via the public health team.
- Relevant strategies and Plans have been referenced as part of the overall assessment including strategies and plans for Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing, Economic Regeneration and Planning.
- Estates and Building Services have supported the report by completing a condition survey programme of all the leisure centres and the athletics track and providing historical maintenance costs and data for all the facilities included in the study.

- Sport England guidance has been used to assess travel times and catchments and the national context for sport and physical activity.
- Primary research has been undertaken on the council's leisure centres. A resident survey has been distributed and evaluated to ascertain city resident's views and perceptions on the council's sport and leisure facilities. The primary research will be presented alongside the LCNA secondary research.

## Executive Summary

The Active Leicester Facilities perform an important dual role in providing affordable access to leisure, exercise and sport activities and programmes and also an important social and health and wellbeing role in supporting physical and mental health and social cohesion.

The 7 Active Leicester Facilities are well distributed across the city, although there are overlapping catchments, overall they provide excellent city wide coverage. The average age of the council facilities is over 40 years, although several have received refurbishments over this period. The age and condition does raise some concerns, however the performance of the leisure centres over the last five years has accelerated in terms of growth, usage and income generation. Over the last 5 years the centres have increased gross income from £4.7 million to £7.4 million in 23/24 and £8.3 million in 24/25.

In the most recent leisure centre survey customer satisfaction was rated at 3.4 out of 5 and the overall feedback on other aspects of the services was similar in terms of scoring and feedback. Customer feedback therefore suggests that we are providing a good service. There have been no previous customer surveys so that we are not able to identify historical customer satisfaction levels and trends and patterns over the last five years.

The profile of customers and users of the centres shows that the facilities do attract and provide across across all age ranges. The ethnicity profile of leisure centre users does indicate that the centres usage profile is diverse with over 50% from a BAME background.

Compared to similar cities, Leicester offers above-average swimming pool provision among local authorities. The city operates seven swimming pools, while other authorities may have fewer facilities, though their individual pools are often larger. Overall, Leicester's leisure facilities are well-distributed throughout the city, ensuring good catchment coverage. However, there is a notable overlap in catchment areas, and duplication of leisure centre provision particularly in the western part of the city.

The age and condition of the facilities is a concern. Estates and Building Services spend on leisure centre maintenance and servicing has increased by 50% over the last four years and it is inevitable this will only increase going forward given the issues around age and condition of some of the leisure facilities. Energy management within old buildings will be important going forward alongside the challenge of improving the carbon performance.

Targeted capital investment in health and fitness expansion and enhancement has delivered significant growth in fitness members from 3500 to a present fitness membership base of just under 12,000 members. The study identifies possible further opportunities for smart Return On Investment projects that could see an uptick in usage and revenue. Funding fitness equipment replacement to remain competitive and protect and grow fitness income will be a challenge from 2029 onwards when the fitness kit funded as part of the leisure centre capital programme will need to be updated and modernised.

The centres collectively provide one of the biggest learn to swim programmes across the East Midlands with 8000 children every week learning to swim as part of council's Learn to Swim Programme. Plans to increase this to 10,000 over the next two years will be dependent on

generating the demand, retaining and recruiting swim teachers and improved marketing. There is further capacity to increase growth on learn to swim if these issues can be managed.

Braunstone and Evington Leisure Centres are outliers in terms of health and fitness performance. Both centres out perform the other centres in terms of fitness membership and indicates that each leisure centre provides and caters for a distinct catchment and market. Access and affordability is different for each of the Active Leicester Centres. The LCNA provides a detail breakdown and comparison of how each leisure centre performs in terms of usage, profile, financial performance and provides an overall value for money ranking and assessment.

Leisure Centre operating costs continue to place significant pressure on resources, with utility costs remaining persistently high. As a result, the council will need to absorb these on going increases corporately. However, work is ongoing to reduce these costs through detailed energy assessment audits and the service is working closely with colleagues in Environment on a range of clean and green initiatives, as well as working with EBS on a phased modernisation programme for pool plant systems, aimed at improving energy efficiency and long term sustainability.

Saffron Lane Athletics Track is the only track in the city and despite its demise over the last 10 years is recognised by England Athletics as strategically important. The track formed part of a campus of facilities that included the velodrome and gym facilities. The athletics club structure and membership has been in decline, however there has been positive development discussions with both clubs. Active Leicester have recently put in place more efficient way of operation and have been pro active in promoting the use of the facility for other sports groups, events and activities.

The LCNA study includes a market assessment undertaken by a leisure procurement specialist. The assessment show that there are significant cost savings to be achieved by outsourcing leisure management. The service improvements achieved over the five years would be attractive to the external leisure trust market.

As part of a benchmarking exercise the in house facilities managed by Leicester perform against leisure industry performance in areas such as fitness members and swimming. We are below the national average in terms of fitness income per station and subsidy per visit which could indicate that other leisure operators are able to charge more per customer than Leicester. Leicester is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> most deprived area with 40% of the population living in the most deprived 20% areas nationally. Price sensitivity is therefore an important factor in Leicester, given the economic population profile of Leicester.

The relationship with Public Health is two fold, firstly in supporting Livewell clients over the 12 week assessment period and providing 18 month concessionary access to leisure centre membership. And secondly, we work together in promoting partnership working with other stakeholders in developing a city wide approach to getting the city active and most recently in developing place based working in key areas of the city.

The piloting of the Active Wellbeing Hub has commenced and will be evaluated and the experience will be used to inform how this can be rolled out against the back drop of place based working with Sport England and the future financial challenges going forward.

## Section 2.

# Leicester Context

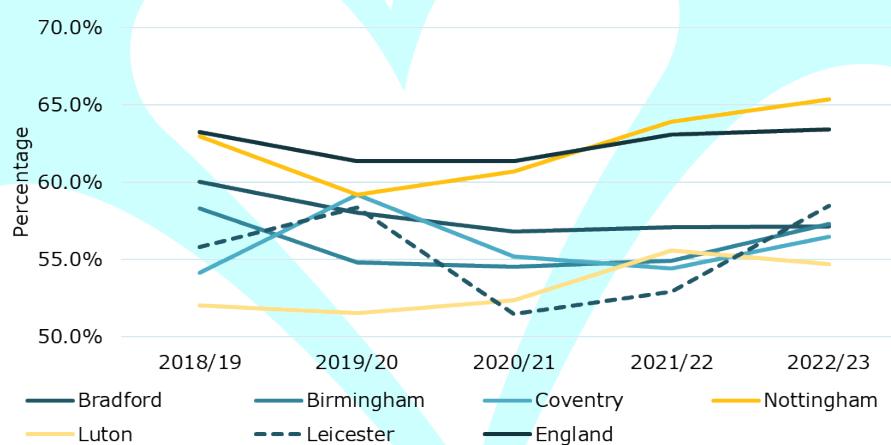
## Leicester Population

According to figures from the 2021 census, 368,000 people call Leicester their home, an increase of 11% since last census. Leicester is the most densely populated local authority area in the East Midlands. Leicester also has a younger than average population than England, and the joint lowest median age in the East Midlands.

## Physical activity levels

Regular physical activity provides a range of physical and mental health benefits, these include reducing the risk of disease, managing existing conditions, and developing and maintaining physical and mental function. Physical activity that improves health includes multiple types of activity cardiovascular, muscle and bone strengthening and balance training. Active Leicester strives to create a healthier, happier, more prosperous population through physical activity and sport.

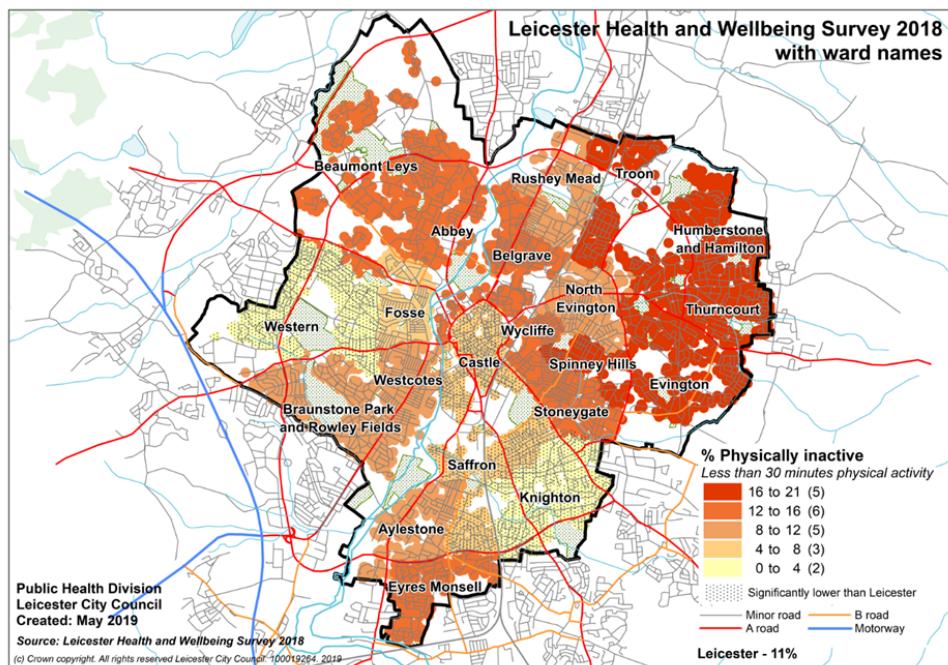
Physical activity habits in Leicester have been steadily growing since baseline data was taken in 2018. The graph below illustrates the number of active people in Leicester compared to comparator cities. It shows the percentage of the population who undertake 150 minutes or more of moderate exercise per week, which is the recommended national guidelines for remaining healthy.



The graph illustrates that Leicester was adversely affected by the pandemic but appears to be recovering at a quicker pace than other cities. However, the city is still well behind the national average for activity.

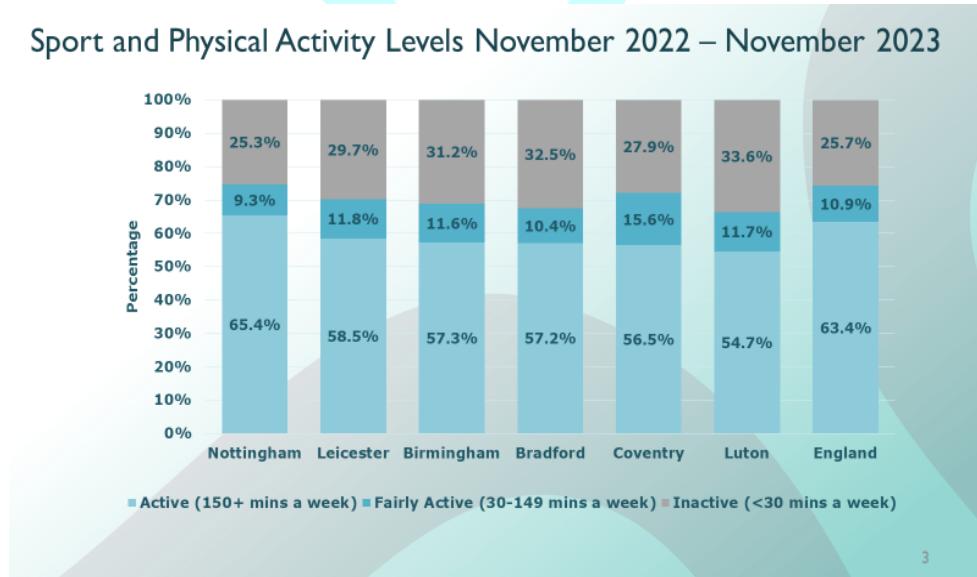
Nationally, nearly 3 in 10 adults do not meet the national recommended guidelines on physical activity. The minimum recommendations of doing 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day or 150 minutes per week. Whilst the city is seeing more active people in recent years, it also has higher than average levels of inactivity. Inactivity is defined as adults doing less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per week, essentially leading sedentary lives. Sustained inactivity increases the risk of the population having a poorer quality and shorter length of life.

The map below presents the levels of inactivity across Leicester by ward, as per the Adults Health and Wellbeing survey of 2018. The map below highlights that people in the East of the city are more likely to be physically inactive than those in the South and West.



It is a similar picture for children and young people (CYP) in Leicester, with 35% of the city's CYP being inactive, which is equivalent to approximately 23,500 children, which highlights the scale of inactivity in the city.

However, the recent national survey by Sport England called 'Active Lives' taken between November 2022 and November 2023, has seen an improvement in Leicester's overall activity levels for adults. With a swing from inactive to active by 5.6% since the last survey in 2021. The latest results are shown in the table below. However, please note that the data is to be viewed with a level of caution, as the sample size is small, less than 500 residents.



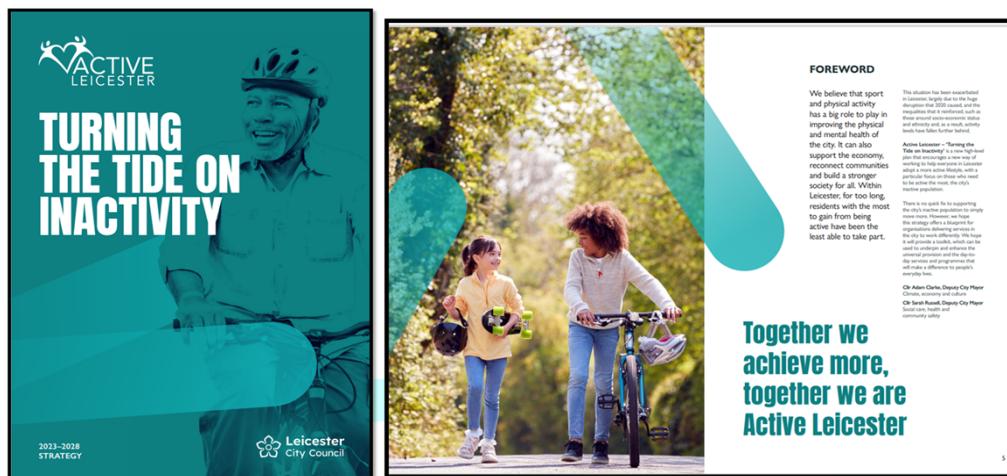
To summarise, Leicester has suffered more than most cities with high levels of inactivity in the city. The impact of the pandemic was significant for the city. Whilst the city is recovering,

30% of the population are leading sedentary lives, which if sustained will cause challenges for residents as they age, particularly in the East of the city.

### [City Physical Activity Strategy 2023 - 2028](#)

In July 2023, the city launched its new five-year physical activity strategy, entitled 'Turning the Tide on Inactivity.' The strategy was produced following a long consultation process with partners and stakeholders.

*Active Leicester Strategy 'Turning the Tide on Inactivity' launched July 2023*



The five-year strategy vision is to reduce inactivity levels over the next five years and has 5 aims to the strategy.

1. Active Start – Increasing physical activity for inactive children and young people.
2. Active People – Increasing physical activity for inactive adults.
3. Active Places – Development of place based approaches to enable people to be active, in their own communities.
4. Active Systems – Strengthen the systems necessary to implement effective and coordinated action to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.
5. Active messaging – Improve long term behaviour change through improved communication.

#### [Adult 16 plus target](#)

The strategy aims to achieve a 1% reduction each year over the next five years in the 16 plus population who are inactive. This will reduce inactivity levels from 34% to 29% over the next five years and will require us to get 10,000 more adults moving regularly for at least 30 minutes a week.

#### [Children and Young People Target](#)

The strategy aims to achieve a 1% annual reduction over the next five years for children aged between 5 – 16 years. This will reduce inactivity levels from 34.5% to 29.5% over the next five years.

## Section 3.

# National Context & Public Sector Leisure Provision

## Potted history of national leisure provision from 1970's to present day.

In the 1970's and 1980's Local Authorities invested heavily in assets which involved building traditional sports centres of various different sizes and scale. It was seen as an amenity to provide as part of a range of leisure and cultural facilities at the time.

In the 1980's and 1990's, local authorities began to see more joint use dual use leisure provision, whereby school sports facilities were developed so that during education time they were used by the school for PE and by the local authority on evening and weekends for customers.

In the 1990's the government introduced Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), and this created a contractor and client leisure management relationship with specific management contracts in place with specifications on how they were to be managed. The creation of many public leisure trusts that still form part of the leisure trust sector were created on the back of CCT.

The creation of the national lottery in the mid 1990's and the Sports Lottery provide an opportunity for further sports facility development across councils. The opportunity to obtain lottery capital alongside available council capital resulted in a number of leisure centres being developed across the country. The attraction of sports lottery capital arguably meant that facilities were created that didn't have the strongest strategic rationale.

The wave of new sport and leisure provision in the 1970's and 1980's created a huge stock of sport and leisure facilities across the country that needed to be maintained but also needed to change to meet the changing needs of the time. Many of the sports facilities built during 70's and 80's was aimed at traditional sports user groups and customers and were not designed to cater for the changing needs of residents and customers.

Many local authorities took the opportunity to refresh, rationalise and modernise their leisure centre provision that addressed the age and now tired stock and also the changing needs of customers.

Many local authorities are still having to deal with and manage old leisure facility stock with the added challenge of increasing utility costs and the need to look at decarbonisation across their respective corporate estates.

43% of local authorities have opted to contract the management of the council leisure centre assets with leisure trusts. The trend is that this will increase over the next five years. 83% of councils have a leisure management contract in place. Many leisure trusts that have local authority leisure contracts are highlighting that they did struggle to keep these facilities open and are looking for additional help and support from the client local authority. The need to address historical lifecycle and maintenance issues mixed with spiralling utility costs intensified the challenge to maintain public leisure centre provision during the COVID pandemic period.

Leisure centres are feeling the pinch of rising costs as they have high energy demands. Unlike other services that can reduce power consumption to some extent, leisure centres struggle to strike a balance between keeping customers comfortable and managing expenses. This situation is squeezing operational budgets, forcing them to consider tough decisions like raising prices, reducing hours and even closures.

The government did provide short term recovery funding support to help public leisure trusts to help with utility costs, however from the £50 million that was available by government there was £127 million that was requested by the public leisure trust sector. The over subscription provides an indication of the pressure being faced by the public leisure and trust sector.

### The future thinking around leisure centre model and provision

The public leisure sector plays a critical role in the delivery of sport and leisure across England and provides vital community assets, such as swimming pools, sports halls, fitness facilities and outdoor sports facilities that are part of the fabric of towns and cities.

Before the COVID 19 pandemic there were 2,727 public sector leisure centres in the UK. 83% of these leisure centres were run by external leisure operators on behalf of the 267 local authorities that own them. 72% of all swimming lesson took place in a public leisure facility, school swimming and swimming club usage is predominantly based in public leisure facilities.

The Local Government Association reported in 2023 Briefing Paper 'Securing the Future of Public Sport and Leisure Services' that 1 in 4 councils are considering closing some leisure facilities in 2022/23.

According to the 'APSE State of the Market 2023 – UK Sport and Leisure' report, when asked 'Who manages leisure now and who do you expect to manage it in 12 months' time?

57% of local authorities state 'In House' now, with 43% being outsourced. The response for 12 months' time, sees a reduction in inhouse to 46% and an increase to 54% outsourced.

### Sport and leisure and pivot to wellbeing

Put simply, the pivot to active wellbeing is the transformation of leisure services towards a more integrated health, social care and wellbeing offer. In practice, this requires meaningful community engagement to co-design services; re-imagining leisure facilities into community hubs for wellbeing; maximizing the use of green and blue spaces; and seeking every opportunity to build movement into the everyday lives of residents.

### Working with Public Health

The Public Health Grant that is ring fenced to the council funds 75% of the service subsidy. A Service Level Agreement has been established to underpin the outcomes to be achieved by the service in fulfilling public health outcomes.

Active Leicester works closely with Public Health on the strategic development of physical activity and jointly lead the process to engage with partners and stakeholders to produce the five-year physical activity strategy 2023 – 2028.

Public Health manage the Integrated Lifestyle Service, known as Live Well Leicester. Active Leicester support Live Well clients and staff in a number of ways:

- Live Well Clients have for the twelve-week programme free access to the leisure centres facilities to support their personalised lifestyle programme.
- Live Well Clients are provided subsidised access for a further 21 months, giving a full two-years of support beyond the initial twelve-week programme.
- Live Well staff are hosted at several leisure centres.

- Clients that are not suitable for Live Well are signposted to the most suitable leisure centre programmes and a referral process is being set up for those not eligible.

The table below shows the number of clients that have Livewell membership as part of the Livewell Scheme over the last twelve months.

July 24	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 25	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July
1796	1782	1670	1642	1675	1677	1603	1695	1761	1832	1763	2026	1897

### Addressing Health Inequalities

There are significant health inequalities in relation to smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, and diet according to age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Those living in the most disadvantaged areas have significantly higher levels of smoking and obesity, are more likely to be inactive and have poorer diets.

Poor health resulting from lifestyle choices impacts not only on length of life but also length of healthy life. This translates into costs not only for the NHS but also ultimately for the Local Authority. Many of the poor health related outcomes experienced by Leicester residents, because of unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, are preventable.

Therefore, the recent and any future investment into council leisure centres will enhance and improve local opportunities, in key areas of the city, for people to access: local, modern, welcoming, and supportive facilities, and services, aimed at helping people to become active and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

### Place based working

Working initially with Sport England, Active Together, Public Health, Sports Services, Neighbourhoods and Transport are currently developing a place-based approach that will look to implement a population health approach using the strategy to target areas of the city. The potential to 'link and lock' the local leisure centre into local health care prevention system working with local partners will be developed and explored as part of this place based and system-based approach working with Sport England over the next five years.

### Piloting Leisure Centres as venue for active wellbeing Hubs

In conjunction with Public Health, a pilot programme is being developed and implemented that looks at how we can utilise leisure centres to increasingly target people who are inactive and sedentary with an increased role in health prevention. As a result, Active Leicester would like to explore the concept of its leisure centre's becoming health and wellbeing hubs, where moving more, being moderately active is the norm, and where behaviour change is supported.

Active Leicester is looking to break the mould of a traditional leisure operation, which can be seen to market the products to the motivated community, where the customer service is transactional and where there is limited partnership working to reach out to the sections of the community that really need the benefit of being active.

Therefore, Aylestone Leisure Centre has recently commenced an Active Wellbeing hub approach, where we will test and learn our approach to addressing inactivity and supporting people to become active and promoting physical and mental health.

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## Section 4.

### Leisure Centre Asset Review.

## Active Leicester Leisure Centres – current context

The council leisure centres play an important role in Leicester, serving local hubs for activity, sport, health promotion and exercise. The diverse range of facilities and programs provided by the council allows Active Leicester to cater to the activity and leisure needs of individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

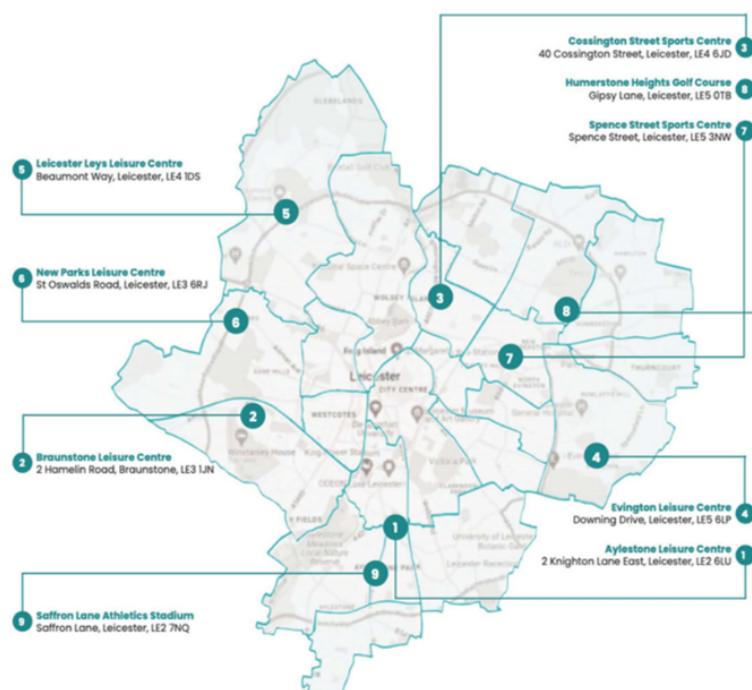
The Council leisure centres serve as community spaces strategically situated across the city, where people can come together to pursue common interests and activities. Whether it's training as a talented swimmer, attending the gym, learning a new skill, or attending fitness classes. Active Leicester Centres play a vital role in supporting the development of children and young people. Active Leicester centres also provide opportunities for people to socialise and share experiences, thereby strengthening the connections people have within their local community.

Active Leicester centres offer accessible and affordable opportunities for physical activity, which is essential for maintaining good health and tackling issues such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Through activities such as swimming, gym, fitness classes and sports hall lead activities, leisure centres encourage regular local opportunity to exercise and help teams and individuals and family members develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Active Leicester endeavours to provide facilities that ensures everyone, regardless of socio-economic background, can participate in physical activity and enjoy its benefits. This is particularly important to Leicester which has significant areas of the city that are socially deprived and access to alternative provision may be limited or too expensive for many residents.

The 7 Leisure Centres provided by Active Leicester provide a good distribution of facilities across the city, however the analysis of the areas from which customers are attracted to the leisure centres does show overlapping catchments. The map below shows the distribution of location of centres and the athletics track. The leisure centre catchments are covered in the supply and demand for leisure centre provision and within each of the leisure centre profiles included in appendices.

*Map shows location of leisure centres and Saffron Lane*



As part of the review process, it is important that we make decisions with a firm grasp on the service vision and aims, so that we still retain a focus on achieving these outcomes albeit with less resources:

### Service Vision

***'To work corporately in an integrated way to support Leicester residents become active and remain active by providing good value, accessible and affordable leisure facilities and services that will contribute to improved physical and mental health.'***

- To be sustainable by taking a balanced approach to accessibility, affordability, and commerciality in operating the Council's leisure facilities and services whilst delivering an excellent customer service.
- To contribute to reducing health inequalities by working in a holistic way with public health, partners, and local stakeholders.
- To increase activity levels and reduce the proportion of the Leicester population that are physically inactive.
- To act as an enabler to increase access and improve opportunity for people to become and remain active.

### Detail of leisure centre assets – by activity.

The Council's sports and leisure facilities are one part of a range of levers to increase physical activity across the city. The new Physical Activity and Sports Strategy outlines the importance of active travel, parks and open spaces and city design and planning to get more people active as well as the contribution that schools, sports clubs, and other activities such as parkrun play locally.

However, the city council's sports and leisure facilities provide crucial 'bricks and mortar' infrastructure for sports and physical activity (swimming pools, sports halls, fitness classes and gyms), alongside a growing private market particularly for gyms.

*Table of leisure facilities managed by LCC.*

Leisure Centre	Swimming Pool	Fitness Suite	Sports Hall	Other
Aylestone	4 Lane, 25m main pool. 18m x 5m teaching pool. (315m <sup>2</sup> )	70 Station gym, group exercise studio and spin studio	6 x court sports hall.	Full size 3G floodlit pitch. Meeting rooms. Sport and Leisure Hub
Braunstone	Main pool 8 lane x 17m, moveable floor,  4 lane teaching pool 25m x 8.5m (637m <sup>2</sup> )	90 station gym, spin studio	6 x court sports hall. (400 spectator seating)	Changing village, 300 seat spectator pool
Cossington	6 Lane 30m x 14.5m Pool. (435m <sup>2</sup> )	50 station fitness gym, group, exercise studio, women only gym area. Cricket net.		Sauna Facilities. Pool side changing.
Evington	4 Lane 25m x 9m main pool, 18m x 5, teaching pool. (315m <sup>2</sup> )	75 station gym, group exercise studio and Spin studio	4 x court sports hall	
Leicester Leys	Leisure Pool 30m x 13m beach entry.	80 stations include part sports hall. Fitness studio.	6 x court hall, currently 3 badminton court hall/shared with fitness.	Climbing tower (15m) Top rope and lead facility and Bouldering area.

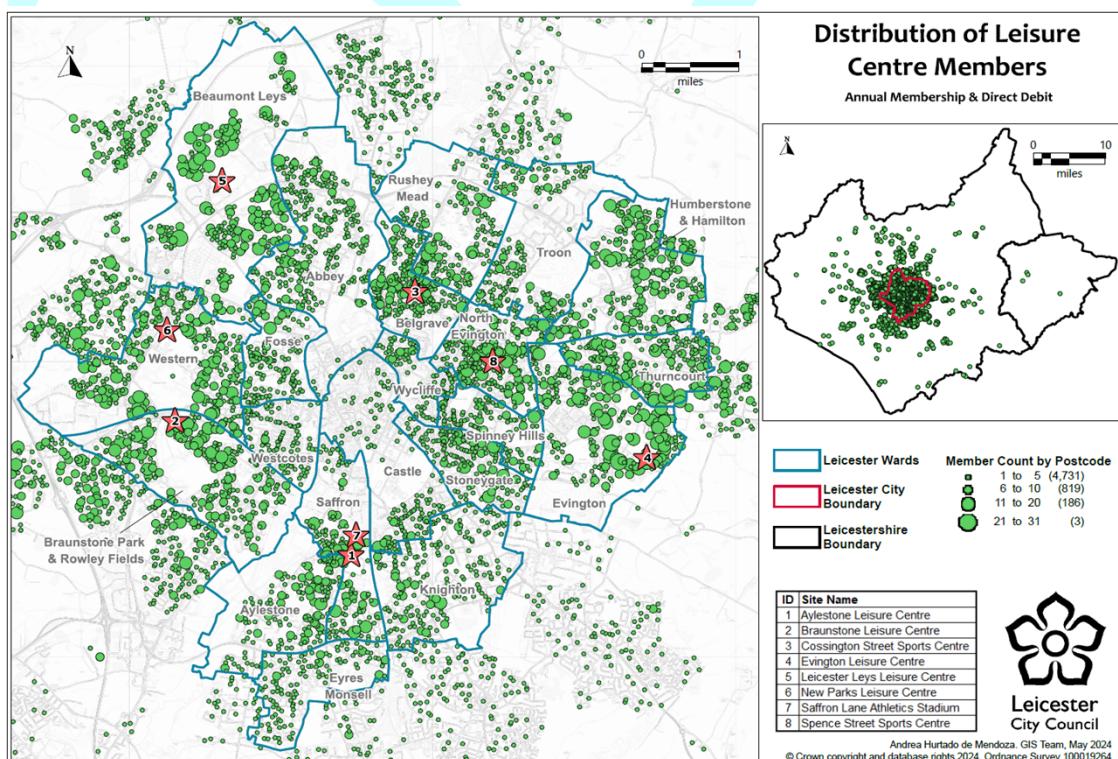
	Activity Pool with water features and slides. Toddler Pool. (546m <sup>2</sup> )			2 squash courts
New Parks	4 lane 25m x 4 lane main pool, teaching pool 18m x 5m. (340m <sup>2</sup> )	20 station gym plus function area. Group exercise area.		5 squash courts with spectator gantry and function room.
Spence Street	4 lane x 25m x10m main pool, teaching pool 18m x 5m. (340m <sup>2</sup> )	70 station gym and group exercise studio		
<b>Total m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2,928m<sup>2</sup></b> <b>Pool space</b>	<b>455 fitness stations</b>	<b>22 badminton courts/4 sports halls</b>	

### Leisure Centre catchment information

While our leisure centre catchments extend beyond Leicester's city boundaries, the below map shows the council leisure centres that serve the needs of the city. Equally, for the purpose of this assessment, we have also considered the impact of leisure centres that are situated outside of the city boundary and their catchment will naturally draw from residents living in the city.

We have completed an analysis of usage data pertaining to each leisure centre and Saffron Lane athletics track. The service captures data from customers when they sign in to undertake an activity to purchase fitness or activity membership. We have used the data to build up a clear picture of each centre's catchment and customer profile.

As a paid for service and a service of choice, the service generated over £8.3 million income in 24/25. Retention of customers is as important as generating new customers to provide growth in our customer base, increase participation, extend access, and drive down subsidy through increased revenue streams. The map below shows the customer heat maps of all our leisure centres across the city.



## LCC Management and staffing structure of Active Leicester, and Leisure Centres

Following the Sports Services Review in 2016, Sports Services was placed within the Public Health Directorate and subsequently moved to Political Governance and Communications Directorate before it was recently moved in February 2024 to Neighbourhoods and Environmental Directorate as part of the community facilities and services offered and provided by the council along with libraries, community centres and parks and open spaces.

Following the service review a range of service wide changes and improvements have been undertaken to modernise key areas including senior management, leisure centre management and staffing, outdoor recreation, sales and marketing, fees and charges, service culture and standards.

Active Leicester management and support team are based at Aylestone Leisure Centre. The service is overseen by 4 senior managers that report into the Head of Service. The four senior managers cover the core business areas of the service are outlined in the table below.

Leisure Facilities Development Manager	Oversees all leisure centres, Saffron Lane and 3G facilities.
Service Manager – Sport and Active Recreation	Sports Development, aquatics, fitness, golf, outdoor recreation.
Business Development Manager	Sales, marketing, performance, support systems.
Senior Sports Project Manager	Capital projects, s106, indoor and outdoor capital funding, planning contributions.

The council leisure centres directly employ 175 full time equivalents which is approximately over 370 employees. The table below shows the breakdown of employees as of April 2024.

Facility	Head Count	FTE
Aylestone Leisure Centre	55	25.84
Braunstone Leisure Centre	70	33.8
Cossington Street Sports Centre	43	18.66
Evington Leisure Centre	49	23.02
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	60	24.79
New Parks Leisure Centre	28	13.16
Spence Street Sports Centre	49	20.46
Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium	3	1.62
Total	357	161.35

	Head Count	FTE
Business Development and Support	6	6
Sport and Active Recreation	7	6.6
Total	13	12.6

The service has a current turnover at 27% which is high in comparison to the corporate average turnover of 10.9%. The high turnover in sport and leisure is reflective of the sector with a significant number of young people being employed in positions as a steppingstone to moving on to other jobs and positions and people who are teaching and coaching as a second job or whilst they are studying full time.

### Leisure Centre performance

Over the past five years Sports Services has delivered improvements and efficiencies through a combination of service transformation involving planned and systematic efficiency drives, capital investment, income growth and modern approaches to expenditure control. Outlined below is some of the improvements in growth for key service areas, over the last eight years:

Table illustrating growth in KPI's from 2016 - 2024.

	2016/17	2023/24	2024/25
All Income	£4.76m	£7.4 m	£8.3m
Direct Debit Income per month	£107k	£445k	£481k
Learn 2 Swim members	4,809	8,073	8,024
Health and Fitness members	3,500	11,834	11,729

The £3.5 million increase in income is largely due to several growth areas in Learn to Swim and Health and Fitness membership. The impact of further modernisation of the fees and charges has also had a positive impact on the gross income position of leisure centres this year. In June 2025 the council approved over the next two years 25/26 and 26/27 to increase leisure fees and charges by approximately 10% over the next two years plus inflation as part of a planned approach to increasing income as part of the service FBR efficiency and savings targets.

### Membership growth

The chart below demonstrates the recent trends in the use of the Active Leicester Leisure Centres. The five-year period from 2018 to March 2023 shows the usage trends for health and fitness and learn to swim membership prior to the pandemic, the impact of lockdown and restrictions and the levels of recovery following the pandemic.

*Chart shows service wide fitness and learn to swim membership growth over last 6 years.*

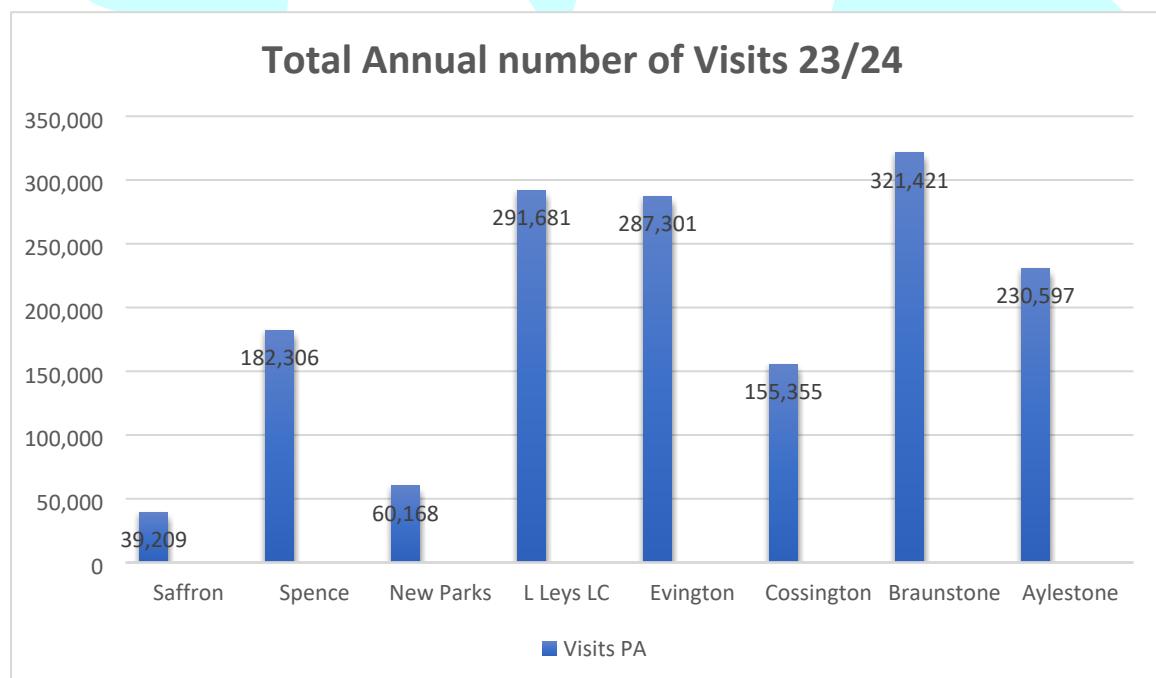
## Fitness & learn to swim DD/members



The chart above shows how the service has increased the number of children on the learn to swim programme over the last seven years and is now one of the largest learn to swim schemes across the region. The investment in expanding and enhancing health and fitness facilities in 5 of the 7 leisure centres has doubled fitness membership, generating an additional c.£1.5 million gross income.

### Annual visits – by centre

The chart below shows the breakdown of annual visits across each sport and leisure facility.



NB: Due to the impact of the cyber incident affecting the automated access systems in each of the leisure centre the data show the number of visits from Feb 23 to March 24

Improved website and marketing will be used to drive further the growth in learn to swim over the next two years and the focus for health and fitness will be to sustain current fitness membership whilst increasing the yield per member. Also, to note that historical data on visitor numbers is not reliable which is largely due to the lack of controlled access systems. The upgrading of health and fitness facilities as part of the phased leisure centre capital

programme has allowed centres to install fast track entry systems which allow each centre to automatically monitor visitor numbers.

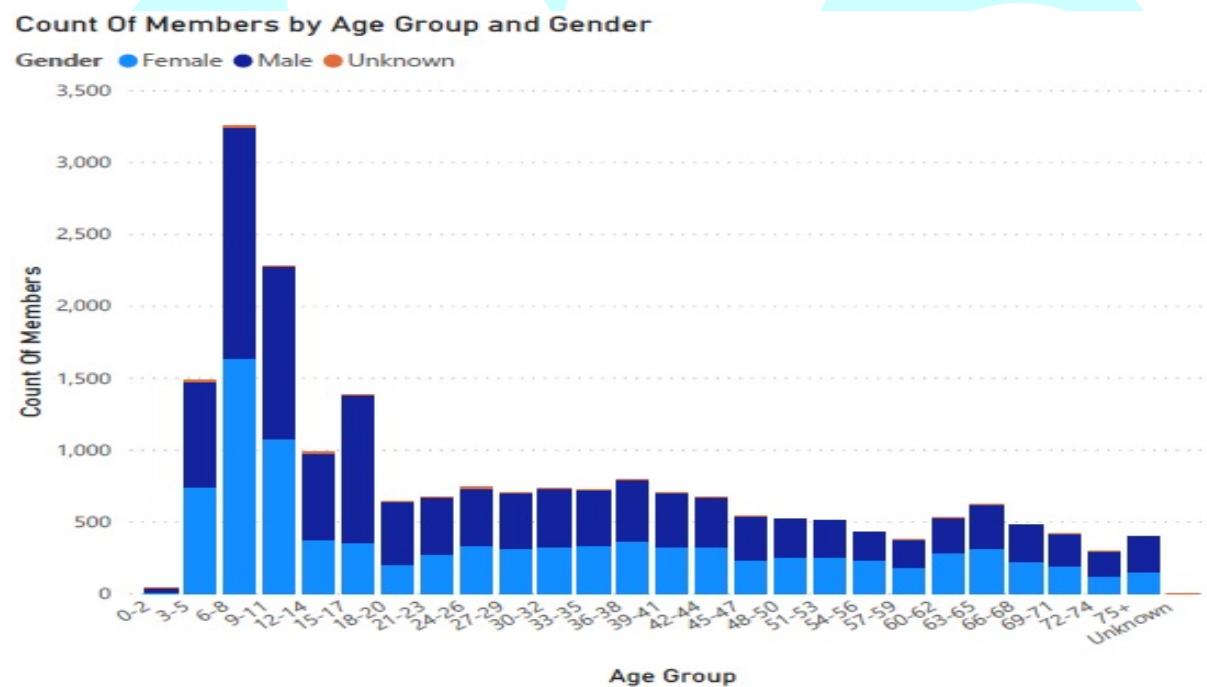
#### Breakdown of usage and subsidy by centre.

The table below shows the annual visits, income and expenditure, and centre subsidy for each leisure centre (For 2023/24).

	NPLC	BLC	ALC	LLC	CSSC	SSSC	ELC	SLAS	Total
Visits	60,168	321,421	230,597	291,681	163,671	182,306	287,301	39,209	<b>1.56m</b>
Fitness members	439	3371	1626	1748	1146	970	2339	n/a	<b>11,639</b>
Learn to Swim	491	1361	1341	898	1089	1258	1436	n/a	<b>7874</b>
actual subsidy	£531k	£564k	£441k	£114k	£414k	£287k	£97k	£114k	<b>£2.5m</b>
Budget Subsidy	£449k	£783k	£602k	£347k	£510k	£384k	£334k	£124k	<b>£3.5m</b>

#### Age profile of Leisure Centre Customers

The age profile of Active Leicester customers is shown in the graph below.

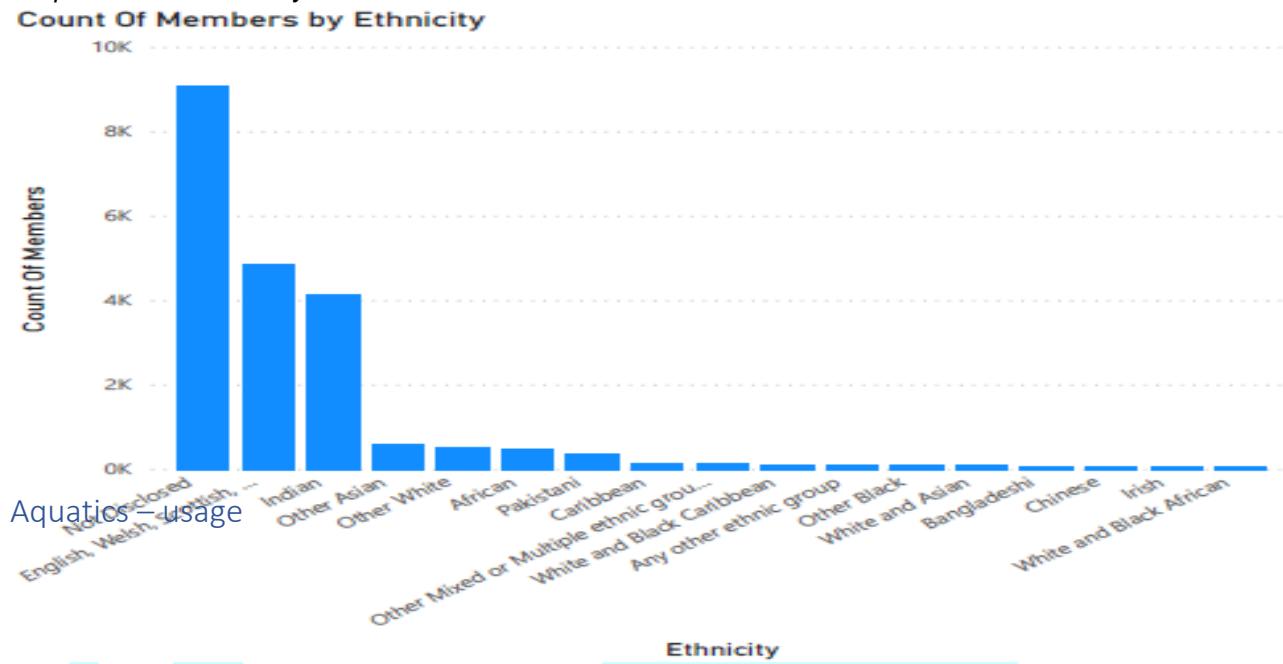


The graph above shows that usage profile, by age of customers is broad, covering all age ranges. The number of children learning to swim as part of the Swim Leicester, Learn to Swim Scheme, is reflected in the high numbers of children.

#### Usage – by ethnic background

The graph below illustrates the uses by ethnicity, where disclosed, with people from an ethnic background being the highest users of services.

Graph show the Ethnicity breakdown of leisure centre customers 23/24



Councils typically provide leisure centres due to market failure, especially swimming pools. This failure is manifested mostly in the insufficient supply to meet the demand and breadth of various aquatics disciplines e.g., learn to swim, competitive club and performance swimming, galas etc.

The Council is by far the main provider of pool space for swimming lessons with over 8,700 children per week on the Council's Learn to Swim programme. In addition, Active Leicester has developed a comprehensive School Swimming Programme that provides children within education to learn how to swim as part of the school curriculum. The School Swimming Programme provides over 70% of the school swimming programme and c.£500k pa in income. The number of schools that use each of the leisure centres is broken down below.

Centre	No. of Schools bookings 24/25
New Parks	9
Braunstone	33
Evington	20
Spence Street	14
Aylestone	15
Cossington Street	12
Leicester Leys	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>

The commercial/education sector have a very limited swimming offer and therefore if the Council didn't provide its swimming facilities, programmes, and services this would not be picked up by the commercial or education sectors. 'Pools for Schools' is a national programme that offers temporary heated pools to local schools to deliver school swimming at the school. The programme has had a detrimental impact on schools within the city with approximately 8 schools no longer enrolling the school with Active Leicester. This amounts to approximately a loss of £98k per annum. The continued impact of pools for schools will need to be monitored and whether this will continue to have a negative impact on the school swimming programming provided by the council and Active Leicester.

## Value for money

The table below shows the relative value for money of each leisure centre based on the average cost per visit.

Facility	Cost Per visit 23/24
Aylestone Leisure Centre	£1.91
Braunstone Leisure Centre	£1.75
Cossington Sports Centre	£2.66
Evington Leisure Centre	£0.32
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	£0.39
New Parks Leisure Centre	£8.81
Spence Street Sports Centre	£1.57
Saffron Lane Athletics Track	£2.90

The table below shows the Leisure Centre Usage and Performance rankings over the last twelve months, including the number of live members and the % of city residents.

Rank	Centre	Visits	Live Members	% Leicester Residents
1.	Evington	287,301	3,807	78%
2.	Braunstone	321,421	4,948	54%
3.	Aylestone	230,597	2,905	81%
4.	Leicester Leys	291,681	2,756	70%
5.	Spence Street	182,306	2,367	95%
6.	Cossington	163,671	2,427	85%
7.	New Parks	60,168	775	69%
8	Saffron	39,209	N/A	

The table below shows several value metrics for each leisure centre. (23/24)

	NPLC	BLC	ALC	LLC	CSSC	SSSC	ELC
Recorded customer visits 23/24	60,168	321,421	230,597	291,681	163,671	182,306	287,301
23/24 subsidy	£531k	£564k	£441k	£114k	£414k	£287k	£97k
Reactive maintenance last 4 years	£185k	£449k	£361k	£662k	£428k	£409k	£518k
Cost Per visit	£8.81	£1.75	£1.91	£0.39	£2.66	£1.57	£0.32

The chart below shows the breakdown of the staff and running costs and gross income generated by each leisure facility.

## LEISURE FACILITIES STAFF, RUNNING COST AND INCOME 23/24



Subsidy per visit -by centre.

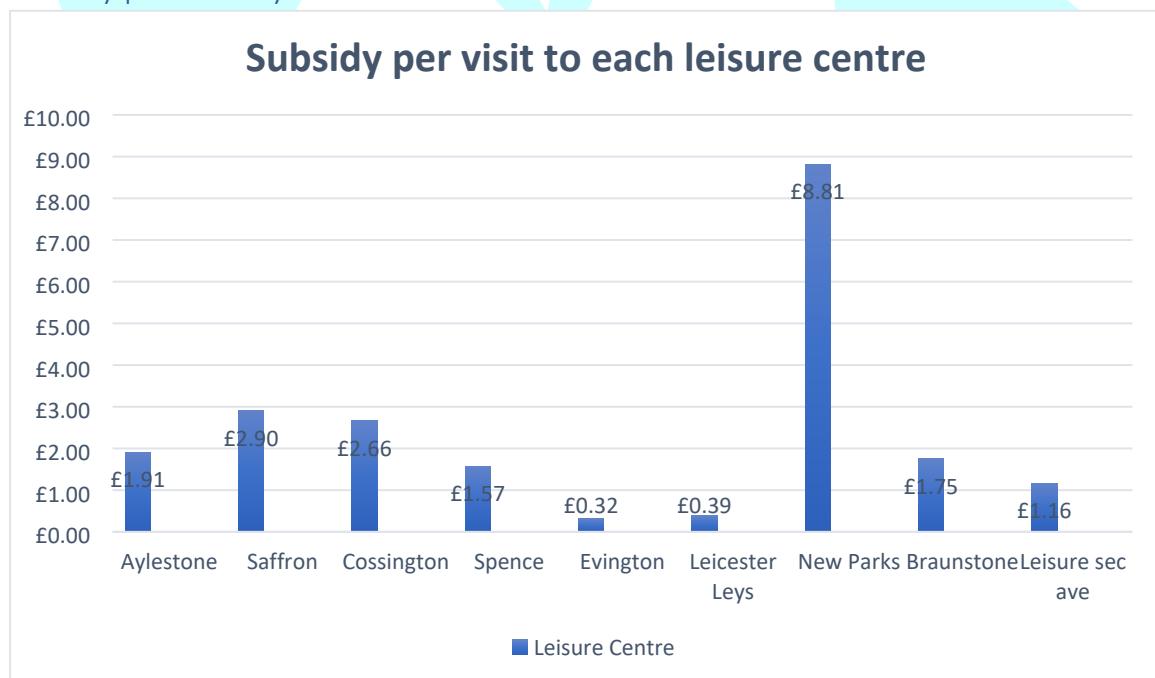


Chart above show cost per visitor and this compares to the average leisure sector per visitor.

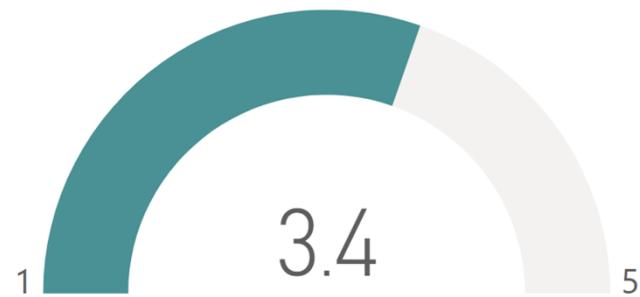
The highest subsidy is New Parks at £8.81 per visit. The cost per visit for Evington and Leicester Leys is significantly below the other centres and the leisure sector average. This is largely attributable to the increase in income achieved by both centres with modest staffing structures.

## Customer feedback on Leisure Centres

As part of the Leisure Centre Needs Assessment a customer survey has been undertaken to obtain feedback on the service and individual centres. The main findings from the customer survey are outlined below:

Summary of Results:

### Overall Customer Satisfaction Rating



The overall customer satisfaction rating is an average from the following questions measuring the satisfaction levels of customers who were asked to rate between 1 to 5:

- The Active Leicester Customer Experience
- The Quality of the Active Leicester Facilities
- The Friendliness and Helpfulness of Staff
- The Standard of the Equipment
- The Cleanliness of the Facilities
- The Quality and Variety of Activities

The tables below illustrate the satisfaction levels by centre and theme question.

What Active Leicester Locations Do You Visit?	Count Of Responses	Overall Customer Satisfaction Rating	Percentage Of Promoters
Aylestone Leisure Centre	163	3.4	20%
Braunstone Leisure Centre	250	3.5	17%
Cossington Street Sports Centre	88	3.4	19%
Evington Leisure Centre	164	3.5	19%
Humberstone Heights Golf Course	23	3.0	26%
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	212	3.4	21%
New Parks Leisure Centre	68	3.4	18%
Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium	5	2.9	
Spence Street Sports Centre	95	3.7	23%

### The Friendliness And Helpfulness Of Staff

Location	Satisfaction Rating (1-5)
Aylestone Leisure Centre	3.9
Braunstone Leisure Centre	4.1
Cossington Street Sports Centre	3.8
Evington Leisure Centre	3.9
Humberstone Heights Golf Course	3.6
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	3.9
New Parks Leisure Centre	4.0
Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium	3.8
Spence Street Sports Centre	3.9

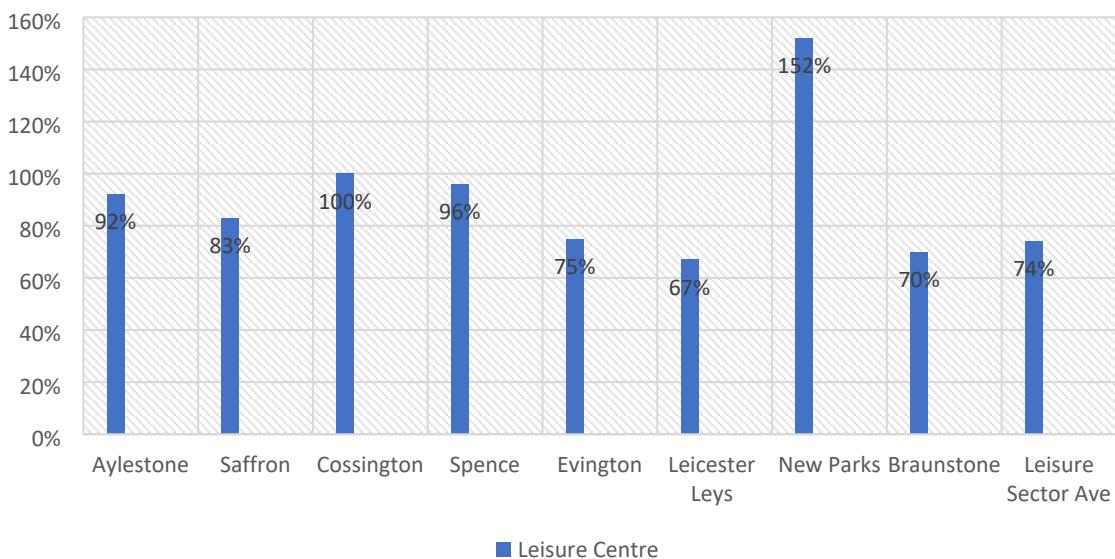
### The Cleanliness Of The Facilities

Location	Satisfaction Rating (1-5)
Aylestone Leisure Centre	3.0
Braunstone Leisure Centre	3.1
Cossington Street Sports Centre	3.3
Evington Leisure Centre	3.1
Humberstone Heights Golf Course	3.0
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	3.1
New Parks Leisure Centre	2.9
Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium	2.4
Spence Street Sports Centre	3.4

### Benchmarking analysis.

Below charts show how each leisure centre performs against one another along with a comparison on how this performs against the leisure sector nationally. *Chart shows below staff cost as a % of leisure centre income and how this compares to the leisure sector national average.*

#### Staff cost as a % of leisure centre income



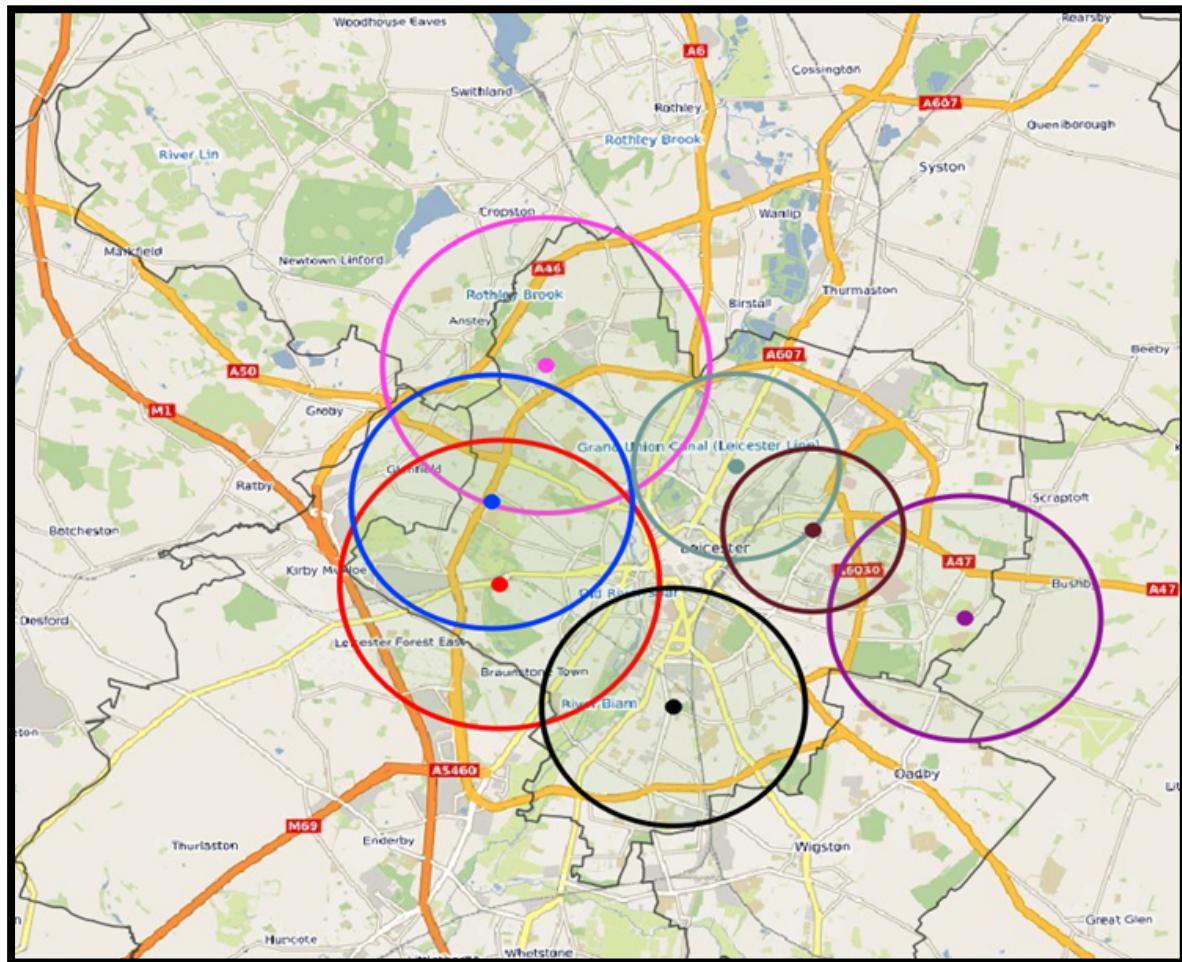
In house leisure centre management and staff cost will be in comparison to external leisure management trusts will be higher. This is attributable to several factors involving staff being paid slightly higher by in house leisure operations, staff enhancements for weekend working, sickness entitlements and pension arrangements are better provided for by inhouse leisure operations than leisure trusts.

### Leisure Centre Catchments

The drive time catchment area of 20 minutes actual drive time or 1 mile walk is the accepted (based on Sport England research) catchment area for swimming and fitness participation.

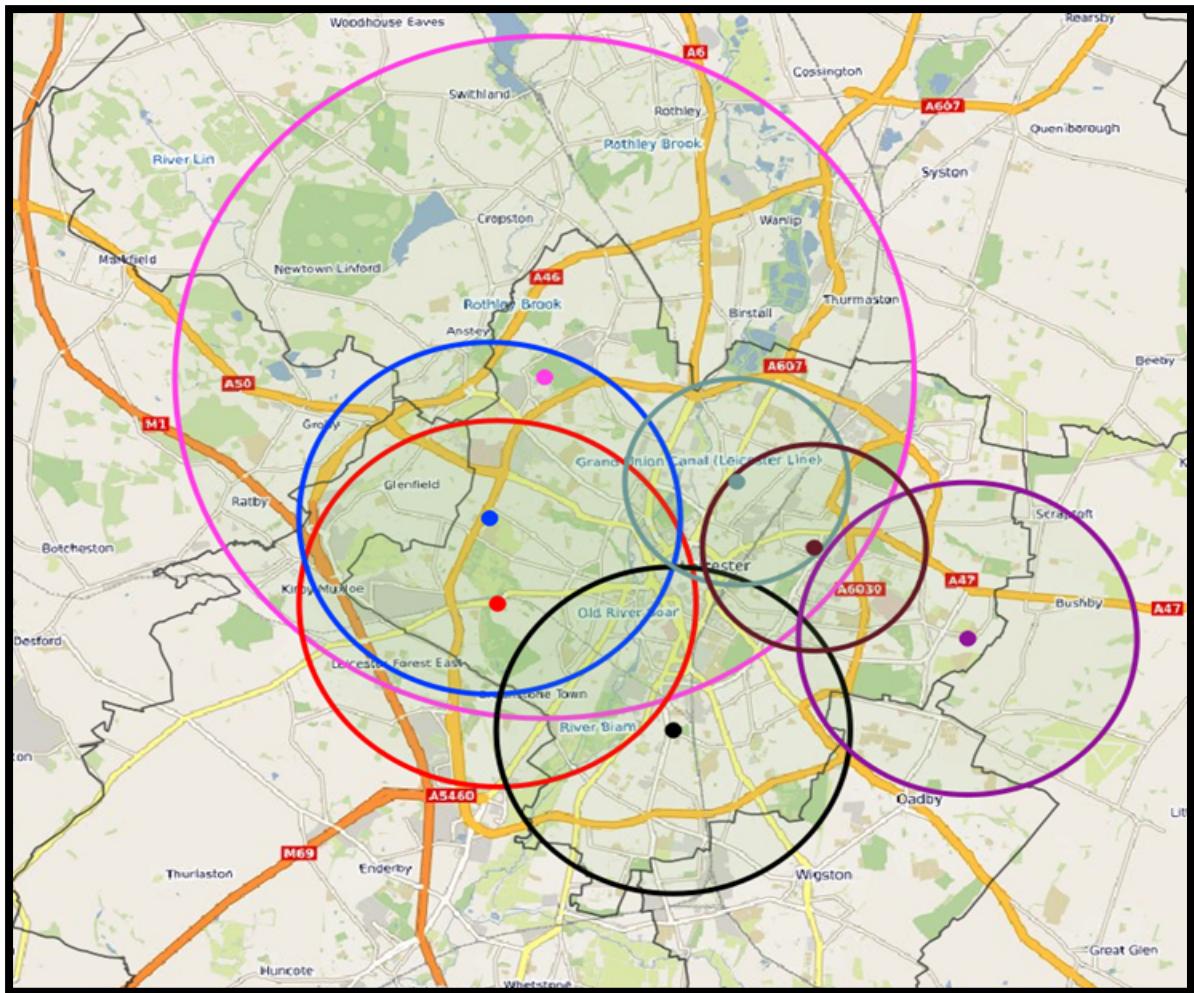
The service has tracked the customer data on leisure centre members and casual customers to identify the average distance customers travel to each of the leisure centres. The average distance a leisure centre member travels to a leisure centre is 1.23 miles. In contrast the casual pay as you go customer catchments is larger with customers travelling from further afield.

Map shows average distance travelled by **direct debit/annual members** of each leisure centre.



The map below shows the average distance travelled by pay as you go leisure centre customers. The average distance is higher with pay as you go customers travelling on average 1.78 miles to visit a leisure centre. The leisure water provided by Leicester Leys attracts customers from further afield than the other leisure centres. The analysis also shows overlapping leisure centre customer catchments particularly in the west of the city between Braunstone and New Parks leisure centres. (Red and Blue circles)

*Map below show average distance travelled by **casual/pay as you go** customers of LCC Leisure Centres*



Pay as you go, or casual customers travel further than members of the leisure centres. Most notably that catchment of Leicester Leys shows how this attracts residents from large areas of the city.

## Section 5.

# Sports Facility Supply and Demand Analysis and Strategic Needs Assessment.

## Supply and Demand analysis – guiding principles.

The Council has previously undertaken a Sports Facility and Demand Assessment to assess the existing and future demand for indoor facilities. All local authorities are encouraged by Sport England to undertake this type of study to provide the evidence base to assist with existing and future leisure facility planning.

The assessment looks at the serving catchment of a facility in terms of the recognised drive time and walk times and considers the location of facilities outside of the Leicester City boundary. The sports facility demand assessment highlighted the following.

- The location and catchment area of the pools provides good geographical coverage within and outside of the city.
- In terms of the walking catchment of 20 minutes/1 mile, residents in around 50% of the city are within the walking catchment area of at least one pool. Overall, there is very good distribution and location of pools providing very good levels of accessibility.
- There is duplication of catchment with leisure centres most noticeably is Braunstone and New Parks Leisure Centres.

## Swimming Pools Needs Assessment

Sports Services have previously undertaken an assessment of the supply, demand, and access to swimming pools. The study showed that the demand for swimming pools exceeds supply. This is based on the Sport England facility calculator that applies recommended levels of provision based on the size of the population. Sport England recommend that 12m<sup>2</sup> of swimming pool water should be provided per 1000 population. This means that the current demand for swimming pools space based on 2021 Leicester population figure is estimated as per the 2021 census is 368,000.

**368,000 divided by 1,000 population x 12m<sup>2</sup> = 4,416 m<sup>2</sup>. Pool Water**

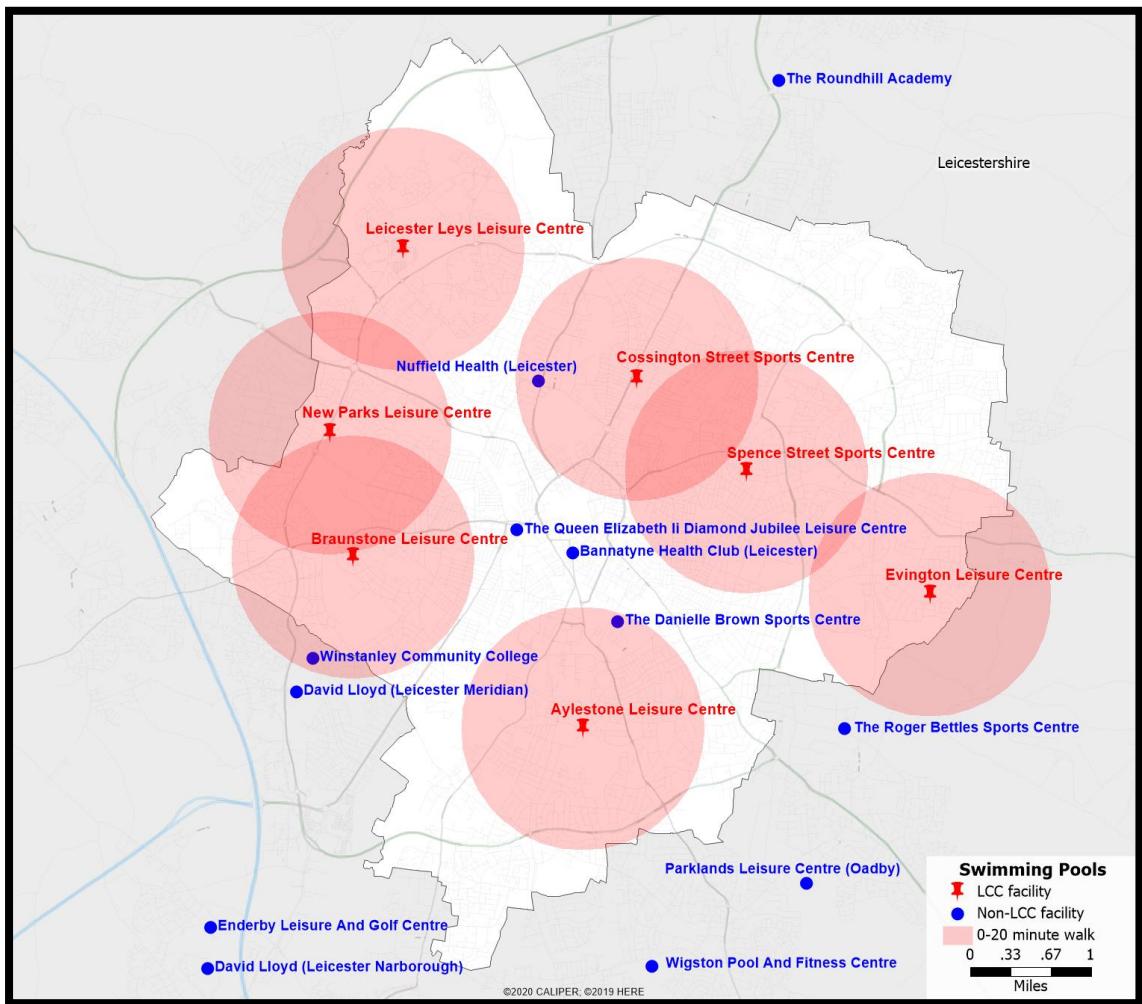
The location and catchment area of the pools provides good geographical coverage. So much so that based on the 20-minute drive time catchment area of the city, residents in all areas of the city have access to between 10 – 15 swimming pools, including pools in neighbouring authorities where the catchment area extends into Leicester.

The table below provides information of all swimming pools provided by public, private and education sectors within Leicester. In total this provides a combined total of **4,127 m<sup>2</sup> of water** space in the city.

Table of all swimming pool facilities in Leicester – all types.

Site Name	Facility Sub Type	Area	Length	Lanes	Width	Access Type	Ownership	Built	Refurb
ABBEY SPORTS AND LEISURE CLUB (LEICESTER)	Main	135	15	0	9	Membership	Commercial	1997	n/a
AYLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE	Main	225	25	4	9	Community	Local Authority	1988	2009
AYLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE	Main	90	18	0	5	Community	Local Authority	1988	2009
BANNATYNE HEALTH CLUB (LEICESTER)	Main	176	22	2	8	Membership	Commercial	1998	2010
BRAUNSTONE LEISURE CENTRE	Main	450	25	8	18	Community	Local Authority	2004	n/a
BRAUNSTONE LEISURE CENTRE	Main	188	25	4	7.5	Community	Local Authority	2004	n/a
COSSINGTON STREET SPORTS CENTRE	Main	435	30	6	14.5	Community	Local Authority	1879	2020
EVINGTON LEISURE CENTRE	Main	225	25	4	9	Community	Local Authority	1975	2005
EVINGTON LEISURE CENTRE	Main	90	18	0	5	Community	Local Authority	1975	2005
LEICESTER LEYS LEISURE CENTRE	Leisure Pool	390	30	0	13	Community	Local Authority	1985	2019
LEICESTER LEYS LEISURE CENTRE	Learner	36	9	0	4	Community	Local Authority	1985	2008
LEICESTER LEYS LEISURE CENTRE	Learner	20	10	0	2	Community	Local Authority	1985	2008
LEICESTER LEYS LEISURE CENTRE	Learner	25	5	0	5	Community	Local Authority	1985	2008
NETHER HALL SCHOOL	Teaching	28	7	0	4	Private Use	Education	2010	n/a
NEW PARKS LEISURE CENTRE	Main	250	25	4	10	Community	Local Authority	1975	2014
NEW PARKS LEISURE CENTRE	Learner	90	18	3	5	Community	Local Authority	1975	2014
NORTHFIELD HOUSE PRIMARY ACADEMY	Teaching	40	10	0	4	Sports Club / Hire	Education	1968	2010
NUFFIELD HEALTH (LEICESTER)	Main	225	25	3	9	Membership	Commercial	2002	n/a
SPENCE STREET SPORTS CENTRE	Main	250	25	4	10	Community	Local Authority	1982	n/a
SPENCE STREET SPORTS CENTRE	Learner	90	18	0	5	Community	Local Authority	1982	n/a
SPIRIT HEALTH CLUB (LEICESTER)	Training	72	12	0	6	Membership	Commercial	1971	2014
THE DANIELLE BROWN SPORTS CENTRE	Main	200	20	4	10	Membership	Education	1999	n/a
THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE LEISURE CENTRE	Main	325	25	6	13	Community	Education	2012	n/a
WEST GATE SCHOOL	Teaching	72	12	0	6	Community	Education	2014	n/a

Map below shows all swimming pool provision in and around Leicester within a 20-minute walk time.



In terms of the walking catchment of 20 minutes/1 mile, the Sports Facility Assessment highlighted that 50% of residents in the land area of the city are within the walking catchment area of at least one pool and health and fitness facilities. So overall across the city there is very good distribution and location of pools and fitness providing very good levels of accessibility.

As part of the needs assessment, we have compared the amount of water space and number of swimming pools provided by Leicester City Council against other city unitary authorities. We have compared what water space they provide against the population of the authority area. The comparison table is provided below.

City	No. of Council Swimming Pools	Total m <sup>2</sup> Pool Space by LA	Population
Leicester	7	2982 sqm	368,000
Nottingham	6	3,207 sqm	331,297
Coventry	6	2,656 sqm	345,300
Derby	1	1610 sqm	261,136
Bradford	5	1,880 sqm	534,300
Leeds	13	5,574 sqm	792,525

Bristol	6	3,367 sqm	467,009
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*Table shows comparison between city LA's swimming pool water space compared to Leicester and also how each city compares to recommended population swimming pool space.*

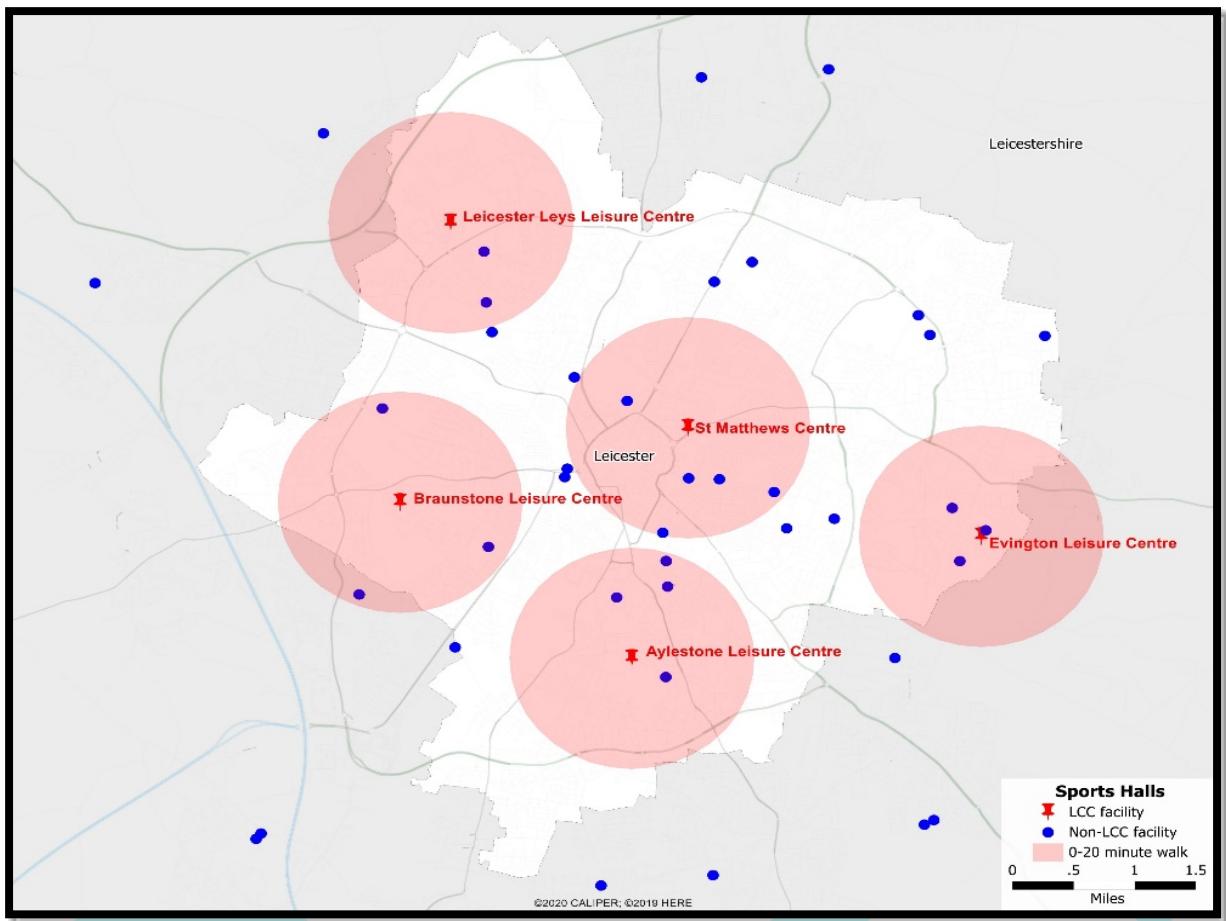
In comparison to other cities, Leicester provides more swimming pools than Bradford and Bristol, yet they serve a bigger population. The table does also indicate that other cities provide larger pools at each leisure centre. Several of our leisure centres are only 4 lanes wide (New Parks, Evington, Spence and Aylestone) rather than 6 to 8 lane swimming pools that is common across the country.

By providing smaller swimming pools we improve distribution and access, however on the downside we operate more buildings that in turn means we are less efficient in providing our pools because our water spaces are stretched across more buildings that need to be staffed, maintained and sustained going forward. The small sized pools however do mean our swimming pools are conducive to learn to swim with reduced width pools that are conducive to swim teaching.

The chart below shows the quantity of swimming pool space provided by each local authority and how this breaks down in terms of per person based on the respective city population.

#### [Sports Halls Assessment](#)

Based on the significant increase in sports hall supply over the last 10 years particularly on education sites. Therefore, overall, there has been a significant increase in supply in recent years, but needs will also grow as the population increases. Therefore, any proposed reduction of proposed reduction of courts across sites would not have a significant impact.

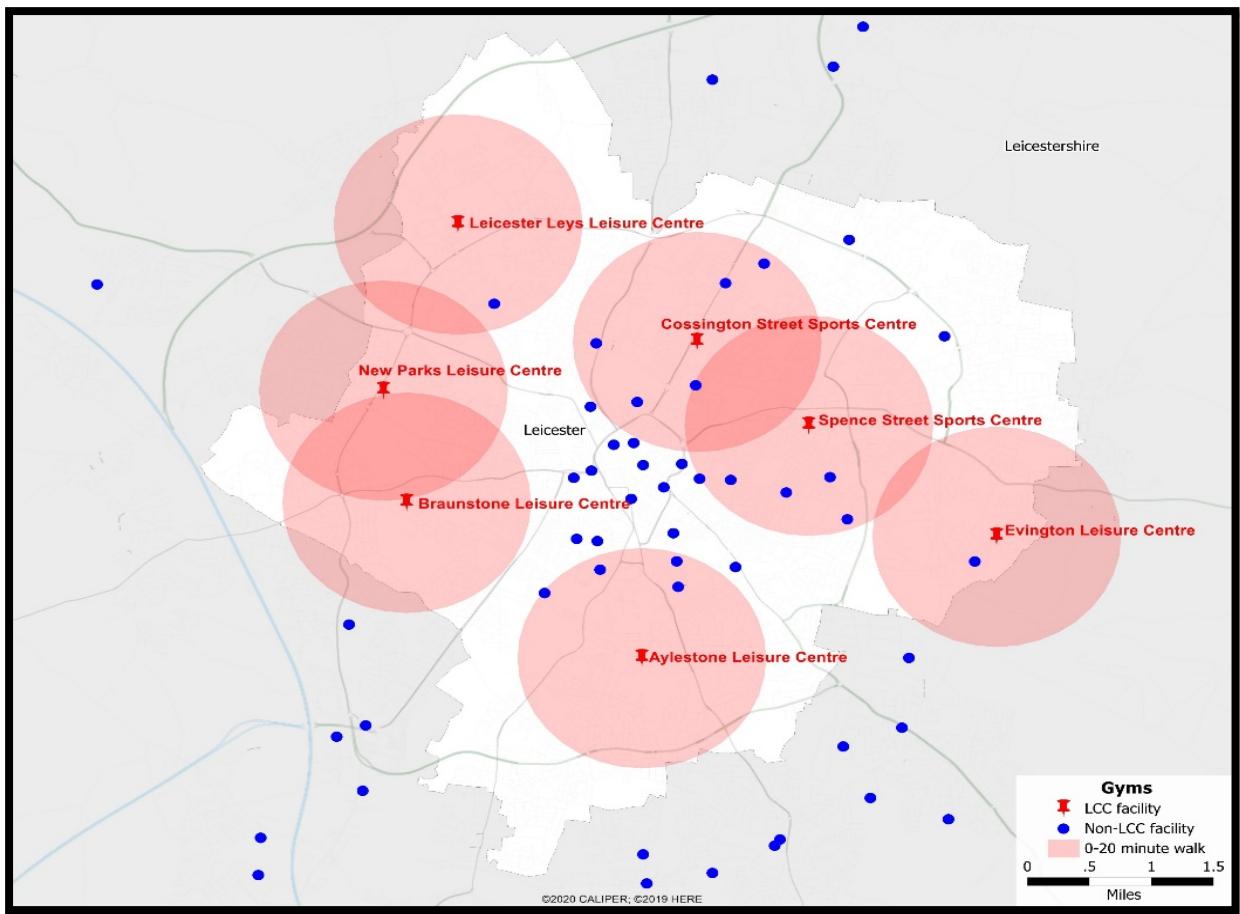


Map above shows distribution of sports hall provision across Leicester.

#### Health and Fitness Provision

Sports Services has already capitalised on much of the latent demand within the catchment areas for its existing sites, with an average of 49% over latent demand. Need to consider that there will be a limit to further increases.

Future population growth of c.45,000/50,000 would lead to potentially an additional 7,000 – 7,500 members across numerous providers in Leicester to the northwest of Leicester which would have an impact on Leicester Leys. The position and location of the fitness facilities is complimentary to other private sector providers as seen in the map below.

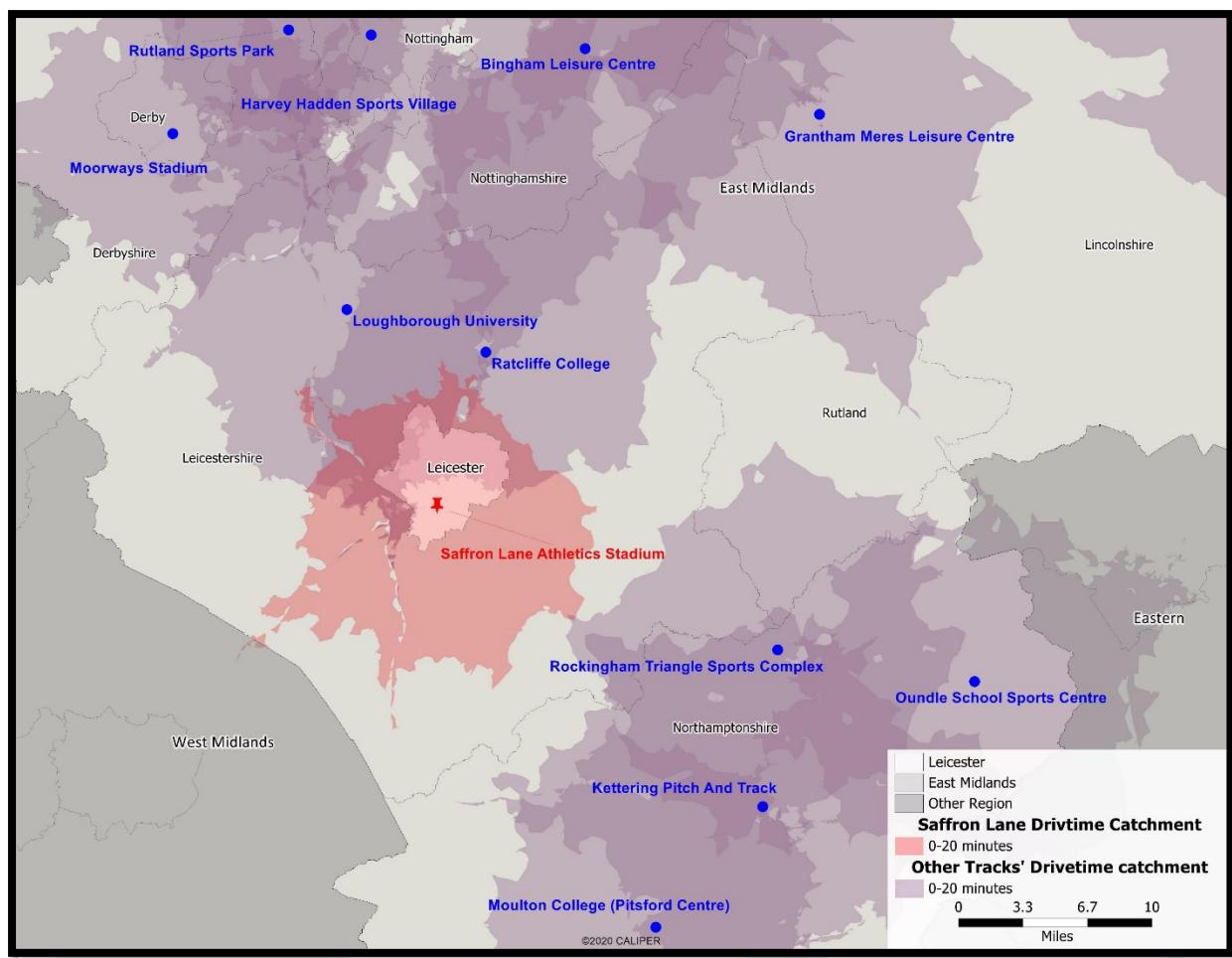


Map above shows distribution of health and fitness gyms and LCC fitness gyms.

#### Athletics Tracks

Loughborough University and Saffron Lane are the two accredited athletics tracks in Leicestershire. England Athletics have indicated that the track is strategically significant to the county and region. The map below shows the regional distribution of synthetic athletics tracks across the region.

The service is exploring ways in which to increase the use of Saffron both as a facility that supports athletics and as a venue that creates a safe supportive environment for walking and jogging and general physical activity. Recent improvements funded through s106 funding has allowed the track to achieve track mark status and further opportunities will be explored to link use of Saffron as part of the Active Leicester fitness offer with fast track entry systems.



Map above shows location of synthetic athletics tracks across East Midlands

England Athletics comment that Saffron Lane has a huge population and member catchment and is a key strategic competition venue in the East Midlands. The track condition should last at least a further 4-5 years. See map below showing the distribution and location of synthetic athletics track across the region. Recent s106 improvements has resulted in the track achieving Track Mark status. Fast track entry systems will be introduced that will allow enhanced usage for fitness customer and to promote the venue as a suitable venue for safe jogging, running and health walking.

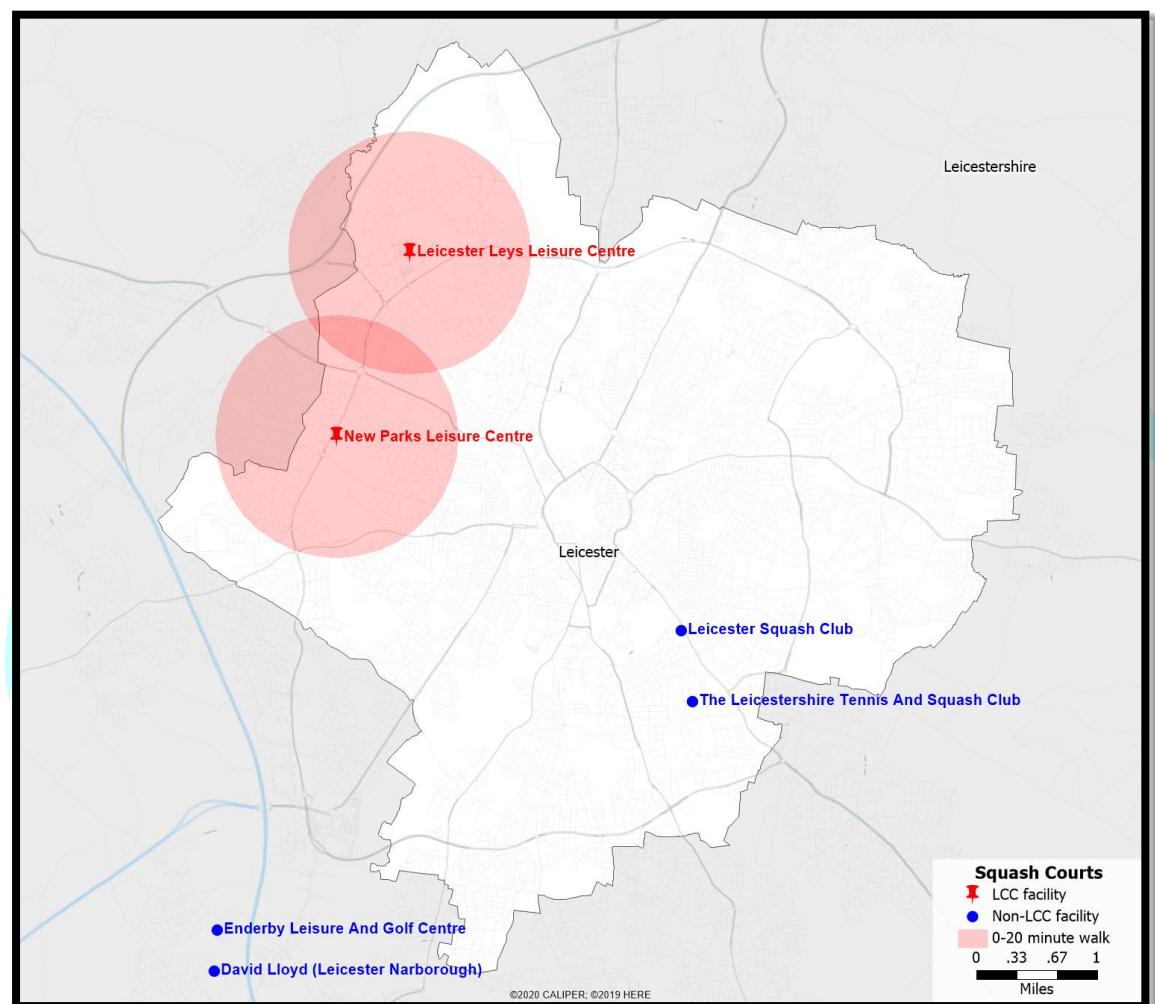
England Athletics has provided a list of athletics tracks that have been transferred to community clubs /organisations. All the tracks are synthetic and have current accreditation with England Athletics.

Track Name	Region	Track mark status
BERRY HILL PARK ATHLETIC TRACK	EAST MIDLANDS	Accredited (with restrictions)
BLACKBRIDGE ATHLETICS TRACK	SOUTHWEST	Accredited
COUNTY GROUND TRACK – SWINDON	SOUTHWEST	Accredited
KEEPMOAT STADIUM	YORKSHIRE	Accredited
LEIGH SPORTS VILLAGE	NORTHWEST	Accredited
LEWES COMMUNITY ATHLETICS TRACK	SOUTHEAST	Accredited
LONGFORD PARK ATHLETICS STADIUM	NORTHWEST	Accredited
MARKET STREET ATHLETICS TRACK	NORTHWEST	Accredited

NORTHWOOD STADIUM	WEST MIDLANDS	Accredited
STANTONBURY STADIUM	SOUTHEAST	Accredited
TAMWORTH ATHLETICS TRACK	WEST MIDLANDS	Accredited
THE PINGLES STADIUM	WEST MIDLANDS	Accredited

## Squash

The map below shows the squash provision provided at New Parks Leisure Centre and Leicester Leys Leisure Centre, and squash provision provided by other private and public facilities within and just outside of the city. Squash England have indicated that the ideal squash configuration of a minimum of 2 courts and ideally 3 court configurations.



Map above show squash provision across the city including LCC squash sites.

# Section 6.

## Condition Surveys

## Condition of Leisure Centres

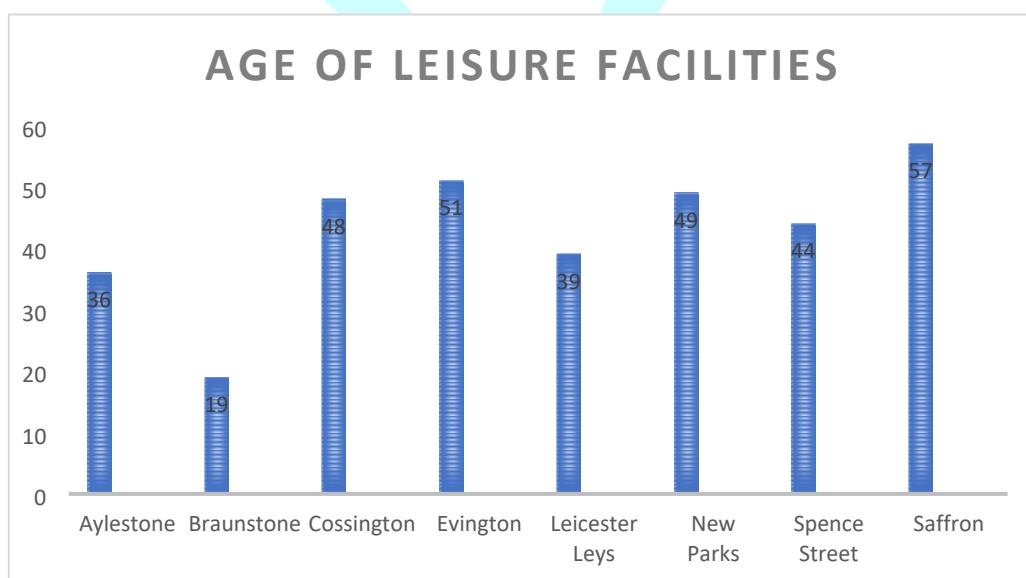
As part of the leisure centre needs assessment a condition survey programme was undertaken in conjunction with Estates and Building Services. The programme was undertaken by NIFES, a specialist Engineering and Property Surveying Consultancy. The average age Surveys were undertaken of the 7 centres and Saffron Lane Stadium,

KNIFES consultancy based on standard criteria of condition/timescale identified the following at 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2023 price base (excluding VAT) of the council's leisure facilities included in the needs assessment is 42 years old.

*Table below shows the age, and priority costs of work prioritised over the short to medium term:*

Leisure Centre	Age	Priority 1. within 2 Years	Priority 2 3 – 10 Years
Aylestone	36	£2,806,466	£1,300,614
Braunstone	19	£604,537	£4,998,818
Cossington	48	£1,208,109	£700,614
Evington	51	£2,144,476	£564,927
Leicester Leys	39	£2,003,729	£1,827,246
New Parks	49	£2,788,951	£973,944
Spence	44	£1,713,181	£731,405
Saffron Lane	51	£526,287	£711,049

It is important to note that the condition surveys identified all aspects of the building in terms of upgrading, replacement, or refurbishment, regardless of whether it still performs and provides an acceptable and conducive leisure experience for customers. The average age of the council's leisure facilities is 42 years and therefore inevitably with buildings that are over 40 years of age, there will be aspects that may fail or break down and this will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.



*Chart above shows age of each of the LCC leisure centres and Saffron Lane*

In the current financial climate with budget pressure on capital and building maintenance have adopted a maintain to fail approach, and reacting to building maintenance issues as they arise.

### Maintenance of Leisure Centres

The condition surveys undertaken in 2023 identified and considerable number of major components that are beyond its design life. Most are still performing reasonably but could breakdown/fail at any time with potential centre closure.

In considering the medium to long term use of leisure centres the following options should be considered.

Major failures of critical plantroom installations e.g., boilers, pumps, filters, main electric switch gear, fire evacuation, water quality etc. could have a significant effect on income and the retention of members.

EBS have spent approximately £3.5m on centres (over the last 4 years) from landlord maintenance budgets.

Leisure centres are generally open 7 days/week and up to 12 hours/day, therefore, have extensive use. Boilers run for 24 hours/day to maintain pool water temperatures to national standards which if left to cool overnight would cause significant additional time and energy costs to reheat. Complete failure could potentially close all or part of a leisure centre with subsequent loss of income.

In addition, the gradual decline of front facing rooms and finishings will reduce the quality of service to customers with further loss of income.

Stemming from reducing government financial settlements it is anticipated there may be a need to start this process to further reduce expenditure. This process would continue to repair and maintain major building elements and services. However, breakdowns are inevitable, similar to car exhausts, clutches etc. which could fail tomorrow or at any future date.

EBS maintenance budgets will be needed to maintain the service to customers or close part/all of the facility. Some elements are essential for the Health and Safety of customers, carers, staff etc which in 2023/24 accommodated more than 1,500,000 customers and visitors.

Over the past 4 years the expenditure on reactive/planned maintenance, capital maintenance and servicing are outlined below on each of the eight facilities.

Leisure Centre	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Aylestone	79,600	77,000	140,600	98,056	395,256
Braunstone	104,700	181,700	81,100	201,626	569,126
Cossington	66,200	130,900	172,000	119,704	488,804
Evington	105,300	78,600	250,400	67,713	502,013
Leicester Leys	344,100	157,100	72,600	94,047	667,847
New Parks	30,000	38,300	48,400	35,290	151,990
Spence Street	46,800	71,800	254,600	76,878	450,078
Saffron	36,000	58,200	30,400	195,435	320,035
<b>Totals</b>	<b>812,700</b>	<b>794,600</b>	<b>1,050,100</b>	<b>888,749</b>	<b>3,545,149</b>

Table above shows the maintenance spend per centre over the last 4 years.

## Actual maintenance spend on leisure centres 2021 - 2023

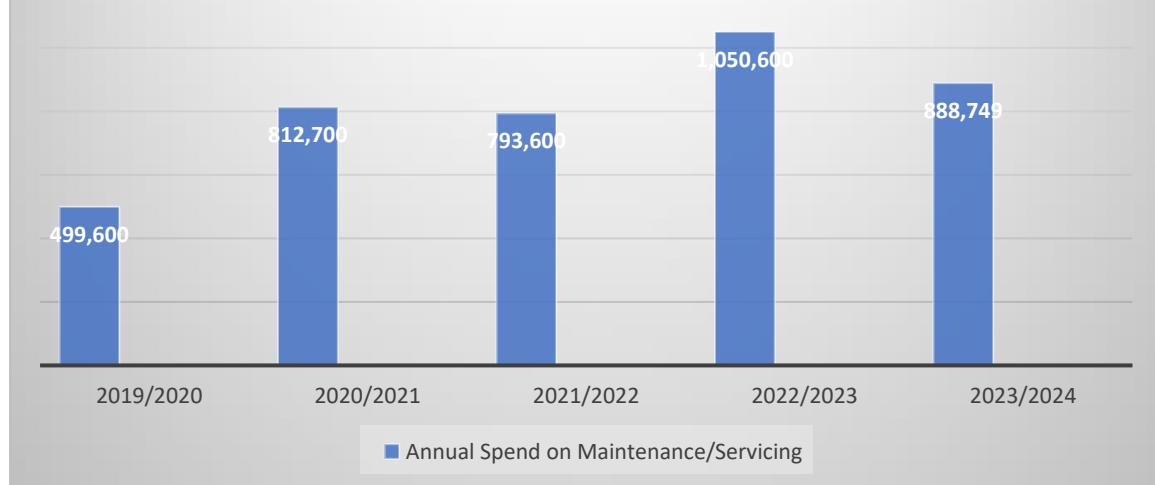


Chart above shows total maintenance spend on leisure centres over the last four years.

## Section 7.

# Capital Return on Investment Schemes

## Capital Return on Investment Schemes in Leisure Centres

The Council has funded capital schemes that would provide a return on investment. In June 2021 the council completed £2.8 million of capital phase 1 improvements to Cossington Street (CSSC), Aylestone LC's (ALC) and Evington LC (ELC) to extend and improve the health and fitness facilities.

The £2.8m was secured through prudential borrowing based on a 'Return on Investment' (ROI) business case to generate increased health and fitness membership and in turn generate increased net revenue for each of the three leisure centres. All 3 leisure centres outperformed the growth targets and have significantly surpassed the projected revenue targets for each scheme.

The overall performance of Phase 1 schemes against the original business case is summarised in the table below.

*Table below shows membership and Direct Debit update before and after capital investment Phase 1.*

Phase 1	THEN		NOW	
	Pre-Capital-Investment fitness members	DD fitness Monthly income April 2020	Peak Membership Achieved	DD fitness Monthly income April 2024
Aylestone	952	£20,677	1837	£33,805
Cossington	380	£5,991	1097	£22,928
Evington	791	£20,825	2706	£47,696
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,123</b>	<b>£47,493</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>£104,429</b>

Following the success of Phase 1 and the increase in both fitness members and gross income, approval was provided for a further £1.8 million investment to expand the fitness facilities at Braunstone and replace old fitness equipment and to convert the industrial unit at Spence Street that catered for sports hall and fitness activities into a modern health and fitness facility. Details of the improvement are in the table below.

*Table below shows membership and Direct Debit update before and after capital investment Phase 2.*

Phase 2	THEN		NOW	
	Fitness Membership Pre-Capital Investment	DD fitness Monthly income April 2022	Peak Membership achieved	DD fitness Monthly income April 2024
Braunstone	2929	£55,477	3833	£72,510
Spence	433	£10,021	1097	£19,376
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,362</b>	<b>£65,498</b>	<b>4,930</b>	<b>£91,886</b>

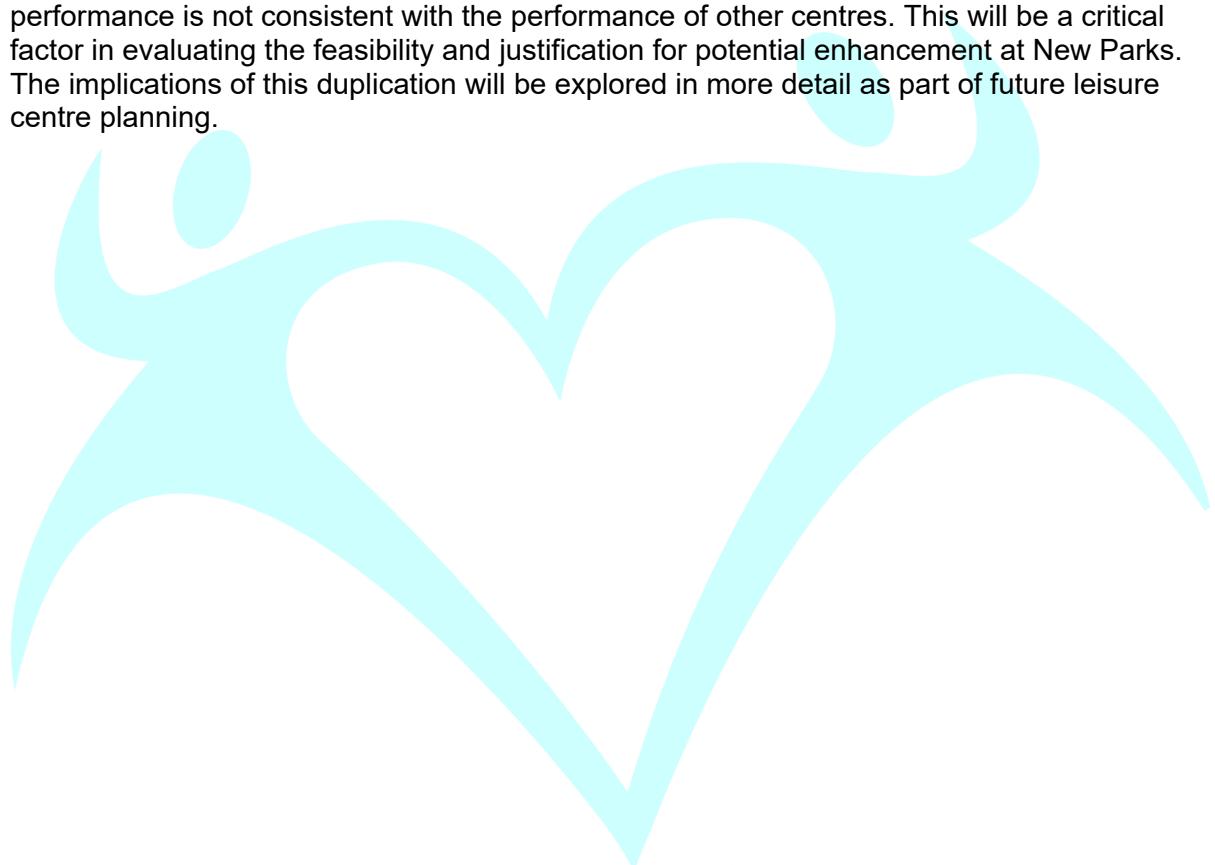
## Future Return on Investment options

Following the successful delivery of Phases 1 and 2 of the Leisure Centre Capital Programme, further exploration will be required to provide the initial evaluation of whether there is a strong business case for the expansion and enhancement of facilities at Leicester Leys and/or New Parks Leisure Centre.

This initial assessment will offer a high-level overview of the potential to improve these facilities. Any analysis and development of the business case will be addressed separately.

In the case of Leicester Leys, the centre serves a substantial catchment area which is expected to grow further due to planned housing developments. In addition, its unique service offering provides positive opportunities for enhancement, which merit further consideration in the business case development. The importance of leisure/fun water is increasingly become an essential part of the Active Leicester offer, both as a foundation entry level for babies and very young children as part of the learn to swim pathway but also as a venue that is attractive to low confident swimmers and people that have mobility issues due to the beach entry offer of the pool.

For New Parks, the needs assessment has identified a significant overlap and duplication of catchment areas with both Braunstone and Leicester Leys Leisure Centres. New Parks performance is not consistent with the performance of other centres. This will be a critical factor in evaluating the feasibility and justification for potential enhancement at New Parks. The implications of this duplication will be explored in more detail as part of future leisure centre planning.



## Section 8.

# Carbon Reduction.

## Carbon performance

Over the course of the last three years the leisure centres have undertaken the following capital work to improve carbon performance and reduce energy costs.

- Installation of Air Source Heat pumps (ASHP) at 3 facilities (Spence Street Sports Centre, Evington Leisure Centre, Cossington Street Sports Centre).
- Installation of 8 solar PV panels at Aylestone Leisure Centre.
- EBS are working through a programme to replace all lights within the facilities to LED.
- Installation of 90 Solar panels at Evington Leisure centre after a successful Sport England bid of £180k. This will reduce energy costs and the centres carbon footprint.
- Replacement of Saffron Lane Stadium floodlights with LED. This will save around 40% of the current consumption.

Further works planned.

- Aylestone Leisure Centre and Leicester Leys have identified a number of schemes that have been submitted through Clean Green funding.
- Energy Assessment Audit to be undertaken at Braunstone Leisure Centre

Table illustrating carbon usage and rankings.

Active Places Site ID	Site name	Post code	Management Type	Facility Type	GIFA	Year	Month	Rating Band	Total Annual Fuel Usage (kwh)	Carbon Emissions (kg CO2e)	Emissions Rank	Emissions Decile
1009528	BRAUNSTONE LEISURE CENTRE	LE3 1JN	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	5,821	2021	December	D	3,504,242	666,118	1,343	10
1004058	LEICESTER LEYS LEISURE CENTRE	LE4 1DS	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	4,859	2021	December	B	1,734,663	329,485	957	7
1004019	AYLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE	LE2 6LU	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	4,662	2021	December	C	1,440,558	276,772	842	6
1004036	EVINGTON LEISURE CENTRE	LE5 6LP	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	2,659	2021	December	C	1,372,044	257,741	799	6
1004030	COSSINGTON STREET SPORTS CENTRE	LE4 6JD	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	1,672	2021	December	C	1,344,288	255,487	795	6
1004084	SPENCE STREET SPORTS CENTRE	LE3 3NW	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	1,421	2021	December	B	929,334	176,269	604	5
1005942	ST MARGARET'S PASTURE SPORTS CENTRE	LE1 3EA	Local Authority (in house)	Dry only	336	2016	March	G	205,632	41,535	153	2
1004070	NEW PARKS LEISURE CENTRE	LE3 6RJ	Local Authority (in house)	Wet & Dry	2,622	2022	March	B	605,682	29,970	87	1
6020082	NORTHFIELD HOUSE PRIMARY ACADEMY	LE4 9DL	Local Authority (in house)	Wet only	297	2015	September	A	83,754	15,912	19	1
Total					24,349				11,220,197	2,049,289	5,599	

## Clean and Green schemes

As part of the corporate budget process and to identify ways in which to reduce the cost of the service the following table shows the FBR savings agreed and proposals that could be considered as part of a menu of options to reduce cost.

## Section 9.

### The Future for Active Leicester Leisure Centres.

## Market Assessment

An external assessment has been undertaken by external consultants who are specialists in supporting local authorities outsource their leisure management and procure an external leisure management operator to run and operate council leisure facilities. The leisure consultants have significant experience and insight into the public sector procurement market and have provided a financial impact assessment based on the current performance, usage, and condition of all the council facilities.

The table below summarises the potential financial impact to outsource the leisure management of the council leisure facilities including Saffron Lane athletics Track and the potential scope for significant annual revenue savings against the current 'In House' management.

	In House Active Leicester	Outsourced leisure management
Operating subsidy based on 22/23 Performance	£2,016,740 Subsidy	£840,956
NNDR Costs	£708,000	£70,800
Operator Central Costs	£0	£318,574
Operator Profit	£0	£342,172
Total Net Operating Cost	£2,704,740	£1,572,503
Revenue Improvement		£1,152,237

The high-level financial review of the outsourcing option suggests that a traditional leisure management contract, would result in an estimated revenue improvement of c.£1,152,000 per annum, compared to the in-house operation. This is based on managing the status quo and keeping all leisure facilities open.

The market assessment has been undertaken on 22/23 budget performance.

The inhouse Active Leicester has been the preferred way forward. Given the significant improvement over the last 10 years there is no further work required to evaluate this any further at this moment in time given the progress and confidence that that has been generated over this period and going forward.

## The Future

The Leisure Needs Assessment provides a comprehensive analysis of the council's leisure facilities in terms of how they have performed and the pattern of performance, who is using them, where they come from, how we compare, the condition of our facilities, how much they cost etc.

This section endeavours to project the future based on the current direction of travel if we continue as we are, that takes in to account the potential for further growth and developments. The future analysis will also consider the future limitations, risks, and issues and to provide some forecasted thinking on what this may mean going forward. Please find outlined the overall performance of the leisure centres over the last 6 years.

Overall Performance Leisure Facilities Performance	18/19 (£000's)	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Income £	5,193	5,657	276	2,724	6,038	7,497
Pay roll £	4,872	5,174	3,659	4,502	5,400	6,258
Running costs	1,905	2,239	1,514	1,732	2,434	3,805
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>1,715</b>	<b>4,927</b>	<b>2,447</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>2,559</b>

The table above shows that gross income has increased by £2.3 million over the six-year period. Although, the service has restructured all areas of leisure centre management over this period to ensure the operation is efficient, the inflationary increases, along with deploying more teachers and coaches, the casual to contract for all coaches and instructors and job evaluation on certain posts has pushed up the payroll costs of the service. The payroll forecast for the next five years will look different and would only anticipate uniform inflationary increases over the next five years and beyond.

The increase in running costs has had a significant impact on leisure centre costs over the last two years. Running costs increased by over £500k in 21/22 and by £1.3 million in 23/24. Utility costs do seem to be reducing going forward, however it remains the highest on-going risk to the service.

EBS have had to increase their spending on leisure centre over the last four years. The age of the leisure centres inevitably means that they will be susceptible to building failure. The increase in maintenance cost over the four years period increased by 50%. We would anticipate that the costs for maintaining and servicing leisure centres will need to be sustained if we are to avoid service disruption.

The expectation is that maintenance budgets going forward will be squeezed and reduced as part of the corporate budget pressures. The review provides the evidence base to understand the implications and impact of options to reconfigure leisure provision.

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Leisure facilities Maintenance/servicing spend	£449k	£812k	£793k	£1,05m	£888k

#### Growth and Income potential

Despite the income growth and membership increases over the last five years, the service does have plans to increase the number of children learning to swim (L2S) from 8000 per week to 10,000 over the next two years. The further increase of 2000 L2S heads is projected to increase net income by circa £500k.

The service aims to increase learn to swim numbers up to 10,000 heads over the next two to three years. This will increase gross income by circa £600k. Teachers and marketing costs will need to be taken in to account to create the net income from the growth in L2S and this forms part of the future FBR savings.

Health and Fitness growth has peaked at a number of leisure centres in particular at Braunstone and Evington Leisure centres. The aim going forward will be to increase the yield per member to continue to increase income at both these sites and a combination of

increasing the membership base at the other centres whilst also increasing the customer yield. The new website with modern app and platform tools will create increased online customer access to our membership schemes, programmes, and products. The increased marketing will be critical to increase the growth, protect and increase our price yield.

The table below attempts to provide a projective narrative on the next five years on the key lines of Income, Payroll, Running costs and service subsidy. The projections are based on maintaining the status quo over the next five years.

Inc/exp lines	Current 24/25	Comments on the future projections 2024 - 2029
Income	£8.3m	Income will continue to increase particularly in Learn to Swim over the next two years. This is expected to reach the maximum capacity for Learn to Swim (10,000) over the next three years by 2028/29. The impact of the fitness improvements has peaked at 12,000 members. Leisure Centre ROI projects to enhance leisure water and convert sports hall have the potential to increase net income by £393k. However, the capital scheme will require prudential borrowing to fund all aspects of the capital and equipment and will have an impact on the net income achieved. Fitness Equipment replacement from 29/30 and whether funding is available or not will either have a positive or negative impact on membership.
Pay roll	£6.8m	Leisure centre staff structures have been reviewed for efficiency therefore payroll costs are expected to increase with inflation. Increase in deploying more swimming teachers to meet growth targets will be required £150k plus inflation.
Running costs	£3.8m	Utility costs remain high, and the current budget is insufficient to accommodate these increases. Last year, this resulted in an additional budget pressure of £600k. Over the past 4 years, EBS maintenance costs for leisure centres have risen by 50%. Due to the age and condition of centres makes this difficult to predict the increase in maintenance costs over the next five years.
Subsidy	£2.3m	As part of future FBR savings the combination of raising fees and charges, Leisure Centre Return on Investment projects, continued growth in Learn to Swim will continue to have a positive impact on growing income over the next three years. The recent procurement of the new leisure management booking system will improve the customer journey and access to the service. Procuring a modern stand along Active Leicester website will be business critical over the short term. Utility costs continue to remain high creating an annual budget pressure of c£600k. The age and condition of the facilities continues to be risk to the service, temporary or partial closure has increasingly become an issue for the service over the last 3 years. along with falling utility costs will drive down the overall service subsidy over the next five years. It is expected to plateau in years 4 and 5 as the income potential has peaked and the maintenance costs begin to creep up and whether we are in a position to fund fitness kit replacement to ensure we remain competitive.

# Section 10.

## Appendices

### Pestle Analysis and Leisure Centre Profiles

## PESTLE analysis

A PESTLE analysis examines various external factors that can impact on Sport and Leisure and leisure facilities.

### Political Factors:

- Government Funding: Public leisure centres rely on local government funding to operate and maintain facilities, reductions in national funding to local authorities creates pressure on non-statutory services such as sport and leisure.
- Significant savings required by all services as part of FBR process.
- Public leisure facilities need to comply with regulations related to health and safety,
- Council committed and value the importance of access and promoting wellbeing and therefore ensuring fees and charges and policies retain and maintain access.
- Option to generate savings through externalise and deliver savings through alternative governance may not be politically acceptable.

### Economic Factors:

- Cost of living crisis has not had a significant impact on the overall performance of the leisure centres at present but continues to be a risk going forward.
- Cost of gas and electricity continues to be the highest risk to leisure centres last year costs created a £1.3 million budget pressure on the council.
- At present the location and offer provided by LCC has not been impacted upon by increased competition particularly in the area of health and fitness.
- Emerging approach regarding importance of wellbeing within leisure centres – the challenges remain on how this affects financial performance.
- Aging populations increases demand for leisure activities tailored to older adults, while changing lifestyles and preferences towards non leisure centre-based activities can be a genuine alternative.
- Leicester has significant health inequalities in large areas of the city. Leisure centres are well placed in localities to contribute to health improvements as part of placed based working. Community Engagement: Leisure centres often serve as hubs for social interaction and community events, contributing to social cohesion and well-being.

### Technological Factors:

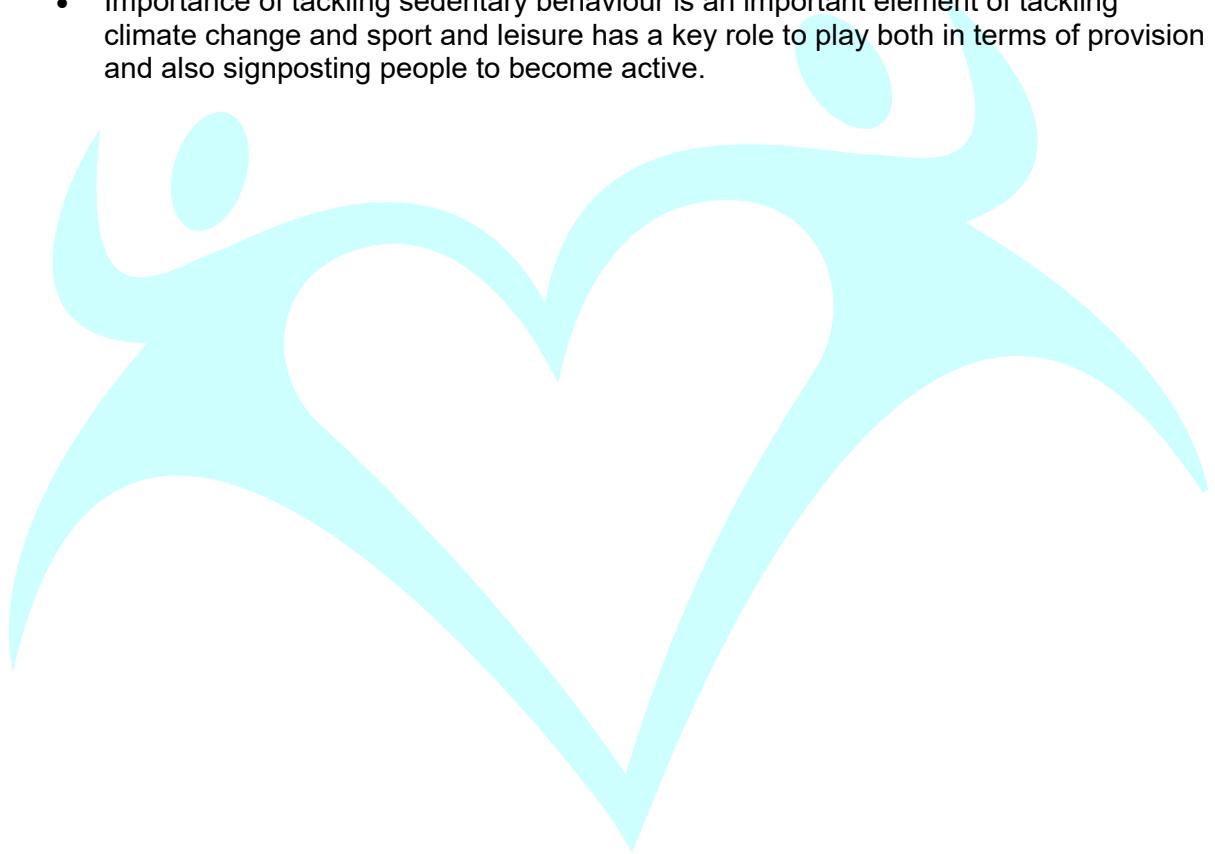
- Delay in procuring new website will put back the launch until next year – the new website will improve digital access to leisure centre programmes, activities, and events and will help combat the significant increase in charges and income to be achieved over the next three years.
- Attractiveness of fitness apps and online support programmes increasingly acts as a genuine alternative to leisure centres.
- Importance of keeping leisure centres equipment modern and up to date to retain customers requires sinking funds to replace fitness equipment every 7-9 years. LCC may have the funding to replace equipment which may lead to reduced memberships and drop in revenues.
- New Customer Management system for sport and leisure will provide greater data Analytics: so that we can better understand customer preferences, optimize facility usage, and tailor marketing strategies.

### Legal Factors:

- All but one of LCC Leisure Centre are over 40 years old and therefore do sometimes have challenges in being maintained to adhere to Health and Safety Regulations and can be costly to maintain.
- Compliance with health and safety standards is essential to ensure the well-being of customers and staff and avoid legal liabilities.
- In house operation works closely with HR and trade Unions to ensure compliance with employment legislation regarding working conditions, terms, and conditions and renumeration.

Environmental Factors:

- Investment in PVC panels, air source heat pumps have reduced the carbon uptake of centres, however further schemes will need to be developed to improve further carbon performance of centres.
- Importance of tackling sedentary behaviour is an important element of tackling climate change and sport and leisure has a key role to play both in terms of provision and also signposting people to become active.



## Leisure centre Profiles

Aylestone Leisure Centre  Built 1988	
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### ASSETS

2 No Swim pools 25m x 9m and 18m x 5m 392 sqm Pool Space provided	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	Sports Hall	6No Badminton courts Basketball. Netball. Pickle ball. Roller skating. Indoor bowls.
Gym	70 stations Refurbished 2020	Studio	Refurbished 2023 Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga
Spin room	15No Static cycles Spin classes	Aylestone Library	Part manned

### SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

Members Mar 2019 = 2,599 Feb 2024 = 2,967  Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 230,597 81% City customers	Direct debit income  2018/19 = £42,000/month 2023/24 = £64,000/month	23/24 £'000s Running costs £1,545 Income <u>£1,104</u> Net cost £ 441  Cost/visit £1.91
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### CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Phase 1 - alter/refurbish gym	Phase 2 - upgrade studio and reception	Totals spent £1.3m.
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### CONDITION SURVEY DATA - 2023

It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.

0-2 years	Calorifier, AHU and ventilation, sand filters, main circulation pumps and pipework are all aged and due for replacement.	£460,000
3-10 years	LV switchboard, local distribution boards, wiring and emergency lighting system are all due for upgrade.	£750,000
11-25 years	Other items	£1,59m £1,30m £3.80m

Recent problems. 2023. Main pool - crack in shallow end. Restricted swim for 3 months.	
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## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Recent Investment in Health and Fitness and reception has increased membership numbers.
- £1.2 million investment in PV panels will reduce operating costs associated with Utilities
- Recent toilet upgrade
- Co location of library
- Piloting of Active Wellbeing

### Weaknesses

- Age of centre
- Pool plant
- Inefficient dated layout of centre

### Opportunities

- Further growth potential in H&F and Swimming lesson Membership.
- Active Wellbeing Hub – pilot commenced.

### Threats

- Old Facility, Pool plant and equipment

## Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Aylestone	11,940	571	4.80%
Saffron	13,883	503	3.60%
Knighton	16,819	485	2.90%
Eyres Monsell	12,004	271	2.30%

## MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Comparison with Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by MSOA.

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Aylestone North & Saffron Fields	7,246	491	6.93%	22.70%
West Knighton	9,233	364	3.94%	23.70%
Aylestone South	8,345	309	3.70%	25.90%
Saffron Lane	8,278	276	3.33%	35.90%
Knighton	7,322	161	2.20%	16.70%

<b>Financial Performance (£'000's)</b>					
<b>Overall Financial Performance</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Payroll	900	627	797	921	1020
Running Costs	313	245	285	337	525
<b>Total</b>	<b>1213</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>1082</b>	<b>1258</b>	<b>1545</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	-899	-39	-661	-978	-1104
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>441</b>

<b>Service Performance KPI's</b>					
<b>KPI</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
H&F Live Members	1296	828	1596	1765	1626
Swim Lesson Heads	1499	894	1564	1505	1341
<b>Total</b>	<b>2795</b>	<b>1722</b>	<b>3160</b>	<b>3270</b>	<b>2967</b>

### Catchment analysis

#### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

	<b>Average Distances (Miles)</b>		<b>Average Walking Distances (Minutes)</b>	
	<b>Casual Users</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Casual Users</b>	<b>Members</b>
Aylestone Leisure Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

#### Average travelling distances by membership types

	<b>Average Distances (Miles)</b>		<b>Average Walking Distances (Minutes)</b>	
	<b>Health and Fitness Members</b>	<b>Swim Leicester Members</b>	<b>Health and Fitness Members</b>	<b>Swim Leicester Members</b>
Aylestone Leisure Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

**Customer Profile** (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage).

The following tables summarise live contact postcode data within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023.

"Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

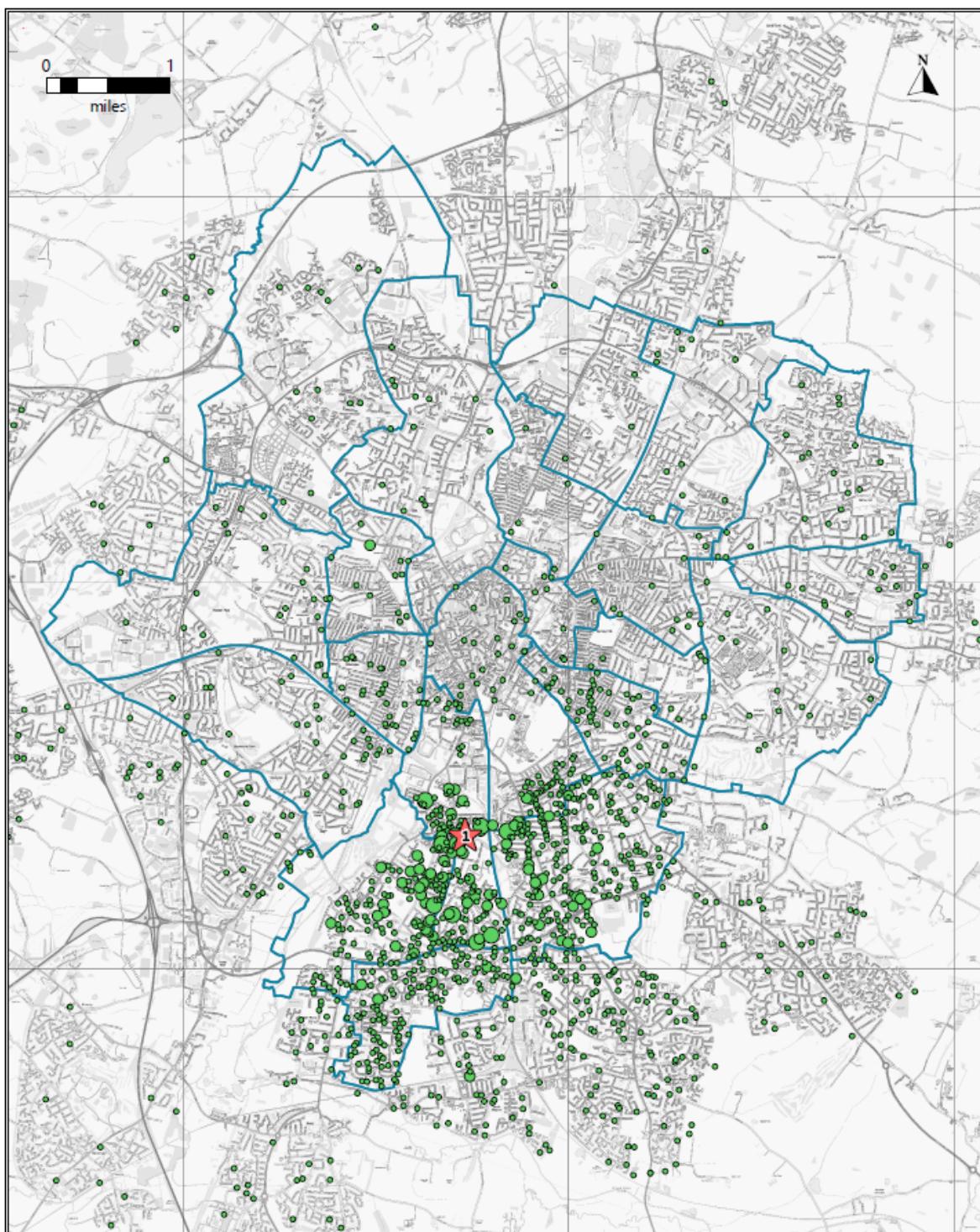
Site Name	Members by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Aylestone Leisure Centre	1,418	1,537	12	2,967

Site Name	Casual Users by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Aylestone Leisure Centre	2,595	2,817	137	5,549

Site Name	Members by Category	
	Health and Fitness	Swim Leicester
Aylestone Leisure Centre	1,626	1,341

Site Name	Members by Local Authority		
	Leicester City	County/ Rutland	Total LLR
Aylestone Leisure Centre	2,425 (81.7%)	542	2,967

Aylestone Leisure Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre

Member Count by Postcode

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 31

Leisure Centre

Leicester Wards



**Distribution of Leisure Centre Members**

Annual Membership & Direct Debit

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Andrea Hurtado de Mendoza, GIS Team, May 2024

Braunstone Leisure Centre  Built 2005	
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## ASSETS

2 No Swim pools 25m x 17m and 18m x 8m 637 sqm Pool space	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties 300 spectator seating	Sports Hall	6No Badminton courts. Basketball Netball. Pickle ball. Gymnastics. 5-a side football. Korfball. Roller skating. Wheels for all (Junior). Trampoline. Group Exercise.
Gym	90 stations - refurbished 2022	Spin room	Spin room. 20 No Static cycles refurbished 2022

## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

Members Mar 2019 = 4,423 Feb 2024 = 4,732  Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 321,421 54% City customers	Direct debit  Income 2018/19 = £65,000/month 2023/24 = £94,000/month	23/24 £'000s Running costs £2,385 Income £1,821 Net cost £ 564  Cost/visit £1.75
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## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Phase 2 Internal gym extension of gym	Totals spent £572k
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## CONDITION SURVEY DATA - 2023

It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.		
0-2 years	The majority of mechanical and electrical systems are in reasonable condition. However, some boiler controls, pumps and condenser units need to be replaced.	£75,000
3-10 years	Other items	£578,000 £5m £5.1m
11-25 years	Recent problems. 2023. Main pool – failure of hydraulic mechanism closed the main pool for 5 months.	

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Newest Facility with a Strong Health and Fitness and Swimming lesson membership</li> <li>- Competition Pool that attracts Swimming Gala's and elite swimming.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High utility consumption increasing running costs.</li> <li>- Limited Studio space.</li> </ul>
Opportunities

- Further growth in Swimming lessons.
- Active wellbeing roll out

#### Threats

- 

#### BLC- Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	21,022	954	4.50%
Western	21,086	825	3.90%
Fosse	14,373	188	1.30%

#### BLC - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Dane Hills & Western Park	7,562	470	6.22%	22.00%
Braunstone Park East	8,448	457	5.41%	31.20%
Braunstone Park West	7,385	365	4.94%	34.40%
Kirby Frith	8,818	313	3.55%	32.80%

#### Financial Performance (£'000's)

Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	1102	793	1040	1144	1275
Running Costs	654	452	504	636	1110
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>1756</b>	<b>1245</b>	<b>1544</b>	<b>1780</b>	<b>2385</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1435</b>	<b>-119</b>	<b>-1063</b>	<b>-1489</b>	<b>-1821</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>1126</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>564</b>

#### Service Performance KPI's

KPI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
H&F Live Members	3149	2094	2884	3706	3371
Swim Lesson Heads	1315	891	1410	1581	1361

<b>Total</b>	<b>4464</b>	<b>2985</b>	<b>4294</b>	<b>5287</b>	<b>4732</b>
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### Catchment analysis

#### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
Braunstone Leisure Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

#### Average travelling distances by membership types

	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members
Braunstone Leisure Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

**Customer Profile** (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage. The tables summarise live contact postcode data within LLR over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023."Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

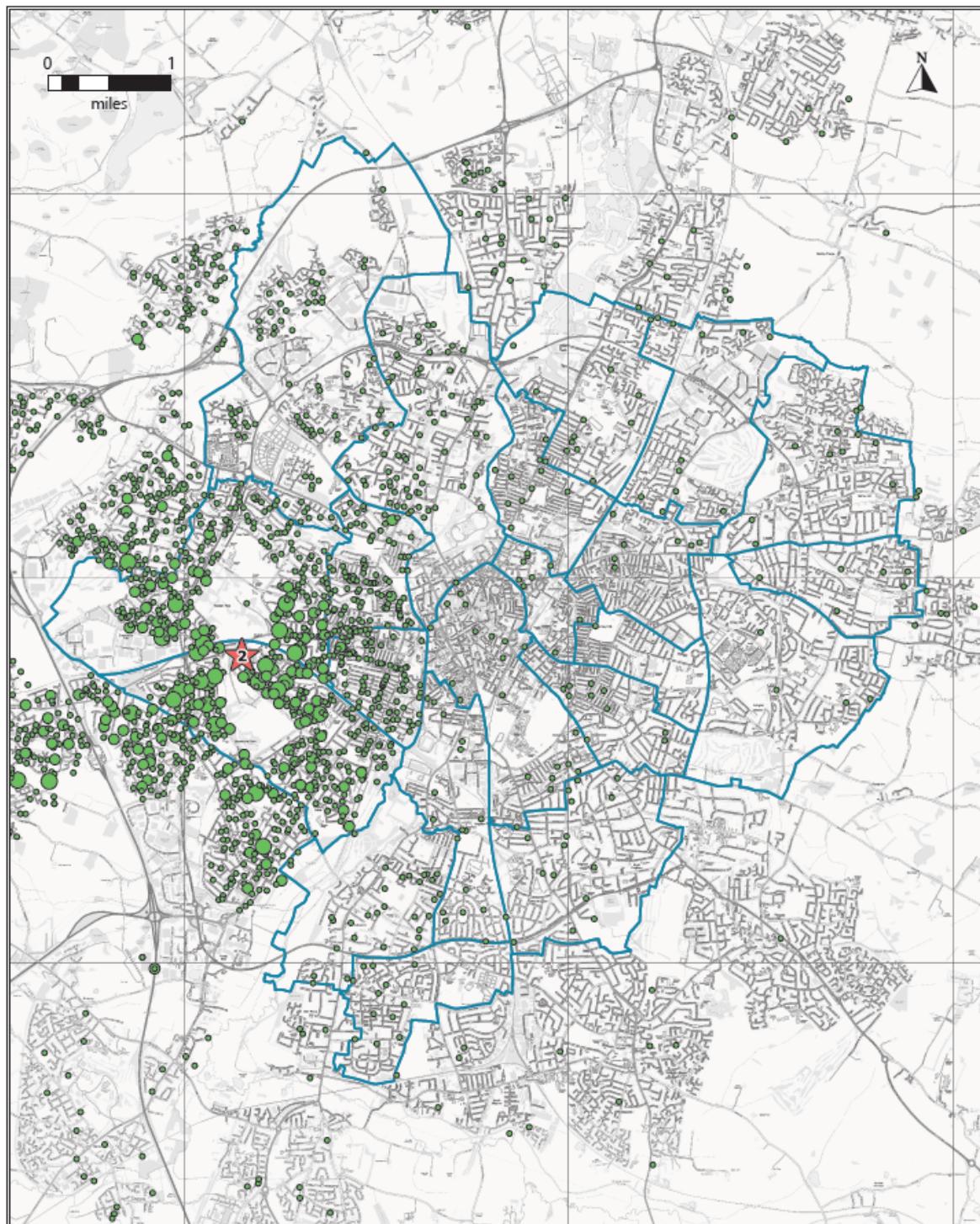
	Members by Gender			
	Site Name	Female	Male	Unknown
Braunstone Leisure Centre	2,296	2,421	15	4,732

	Casual Users by Gender			
	Site Name	Female	Male	Unknown
Braunstone Leisure Centre	3,502	3,305	146	6,953

	Members by Category		
	Site Name	Health and Fitness	Swim Leicester
Braunstone Leisure Centre		3,371	1,361

	Members by Local Authority			
	Site Name	Leicester City	County/ Rutland	Total LLR
Braunstone Leisure Centre		2,550 (54%)	2,182	4,732

Braunstone Leisure Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre

Member Count by Postcode

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 31

Leisure Centre

Leicester Wards



Leicester  
City Council

## Distribution of Leisure Centre Members

Annual Membership &  
Direct Debit

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Andrea Hurtado de Mendoza, GIS Team, May 2024

<p>Cossington Street Sports Centre</p> <p>Swimming Pool built 1897. Sports Hall built 1976.</p>	
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## ASSETS

<p>Swim pool pools 30m x 14.5m 435 sqm pool space</p>	<p>Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties</p>	<p>Gym Studio</p>	<p>70 stations - refurbished 2021 Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga</p>
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## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

<p>Members Mar 2019 = 592 Feb 2024 = 2,235</p> <p>Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 155,355 85% city customers</p>	<p>Direct debit Income 2018/19 = £13,000/month 2023/24 = £47,000/month</p>	<p>23/24 £'000s Running costs £1,177 Income £ 764 Net cost £ 414</p> <p>Cost/visit £2.66</p>
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## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Phase 1 – Upgrade gym and studio	Totals spent £995k
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## CONDITION SURVEY DATA - 2023

<p>It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.</p>
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<p>0-2 years</p> <p>3-10 years</p> <p>11-25 years</p>	<p>Original pool plant equipment included heating, ventilation, sand filters and main circulation pumps require replacement. Wiring to power and lighting. Drainage repairs. Fire escape repair</p>	<p>£201,000</p> <p>£700,000</p> <p>£2.40m</p>
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## SWOT ANALYSIS

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good local catchment.</li> <li>- In an area of deprivation and high levels off in Activity</li> <li>- Ladies only Gym offering</li> </ul>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listed building.</li> <li>- Lack of Parking</li> <li>- Split buildings</li> </ul>

Opportunities
- Further growth in fitness and learn to swim
- Active Wellbeing model and place expansion
Threats
- Age of building

### CSSC- Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Belgrave	20,569	700	3.40%
Rushey Mead	17,380	470	2.70%
Troon	14,794	200	1.40%

### CSSC - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Belgrave Northwest	10,316	380	3.68%	39.80%
Belgrave South	11,224	366	3.19%	37.80%
Belgrave Northeast	9,000	265	2.89%	38.80%
Rushey Mead South	8,222	145	1.76%	35.70%

Financial Performance (£'000's)					
Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	493	333	506	637	764
Running Costs	187	150	131	281	413
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>1177</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-409</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-356</b>	<b>-620</b>	<b>-764</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>414</b>
Service Performance KPI's					
KPI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
H&F Live Members	517	326	1126	1277	1146
Swim Lesson Heads	716	217	776	1149	1089
<b>Total</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1902</b>	<b>2426</b>	<b>2235</b>

## Catchment analysis

### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
Cossington Street Sports Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

### Average travelling distances by membership types

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members
Cossington Street Sports Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

### Customer Profile (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage,

The following tables summarise live contact postcode data within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023.

"Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

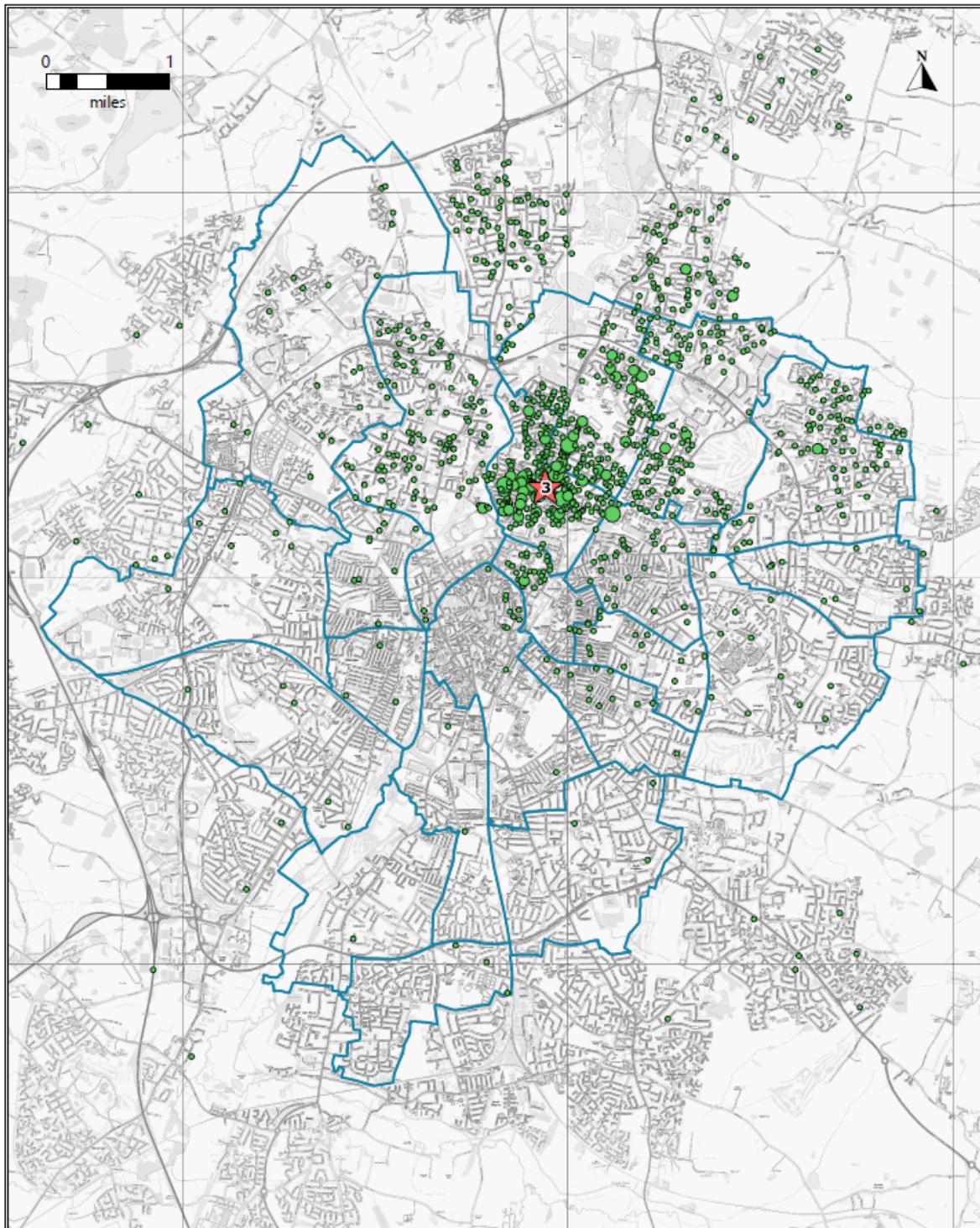
Site Name	Members by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Cossington Street Sports Centre	942	1,292	1	2,235

Site Name	Casual Users by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Cossington Street Sports Centre	1,571	1,969	14	3,554

Site Name	Health and Fitness	Swim Leicester
Cossington Street Sports Centre	1,146	1,089

Site Name	Members by Local Authority		
	Leicester City	County/ Rutland	Total LLR
Cossington Street Sports Centre	1,921 (85%)	314	2,235

## Cossington Street Sports Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre



Leicester  
City Council

### Distribution of Leisure Centre Members

Annual Membership & Direct Debit

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<p>Evington Leisure Centre</p> <p>Swimming Pool built 1973.</p> <p>Sports Hall &amp; Gym built 2007.</p> <p>Gym &amp; Spin room extended 2021.</p>	
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## ASSETS

2 No Swim pools 25m x 9m and 18m x 5m 315 sqm pool space	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	Sports Hall	4No Badminton courts Basketball. Netball Indoor football. Cricket nets. City of Leicester School exclusive use during term time.
Gym	75 stations – refurbished 2021	Studio	Refurbished 2021 Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga
Spin room	15No Static cycles		

## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

Members Mar 2019 = 1,631 Feb 2024 = 3,770	Direct debit income 2018/19 = £33,000/month 2023/24 = £81,000/month	23/24 £'000s Running costs £1,545 Income <u>£1,286</u> Net cost £ 94 Cost/visit £0.32
Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 287,301 78% city customers		

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Phase 1 – Extend/refurbish gym/studio/spin room		Total spent £1.5m.
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## CONDITION SURVEY DATA - 2023

It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.

0-2 years	AHU's, roof extract terminals, poolside ventilation, sand filters, pipework need replacing. Mains power, sub mains alarms and wiring upgrade. Swimming pool roof needs replacing. Lighting and power wiring Toilets and drainage Pool ceiling  Other items	£435,000 £208,000 £427,000 £179,000 £72,000 £75,000  £825,000 £560,000 £3.5m
3-10 years 11-25 years		

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large Health and Fitness membership base, over-achieving on its expectations.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited in its ability to expand</li> </ul>
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further growth in Swimming lessons.</li> </ul>
Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pool plant</li> </ul>

## ELC - Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Evington	17,256	1,097	6.40%
Thurncourt	12,062	581	4.80%
Humberstone & Hamilton	21,142	582	2.80%

## ELC - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Evington	8,718	842	9.66%	32.80%
Thurnby Lodge	11,797	510	4.32%	36.70%
Colchester Road	8,512	352	4.14%	34.00%
North Evington & Rowlatts Hill	11,178	287	2.57%	37.10%
Humberstone & Hamilton South	8,474	190	2.24%	29.20%

## Financial Performance (£'000's)

Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	725	521	708	871	969
Running Costs	216	140	181	319	411

<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>1380</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-759</b>	<b>-28</b>	<b>-649</b>	<b>-1062</b>	<b>-1286</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Service Performance KPI's</b>					
<b>KPI</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
H&F Live Members	1385	726	2431	2453	2339
Swim Lesson Heads	969	502	1005	1428	1436
<b>Total</b>	<b>2354</b>	<b>1228</b>	<b>3436</b>	<b>3881</b>	<b>3775</b>

### Catchment analysis

#### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
Evington Leisure Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

#### Average travelling distances by membership types

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members
Evington Leisure Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

#### Customer Profile (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage,

The following tables summarise live contact postcode data within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023.

"Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

Site Name	Members by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Evington Leisure Centre	1,736	2,032	2	3,770

Casual Users by Gender	

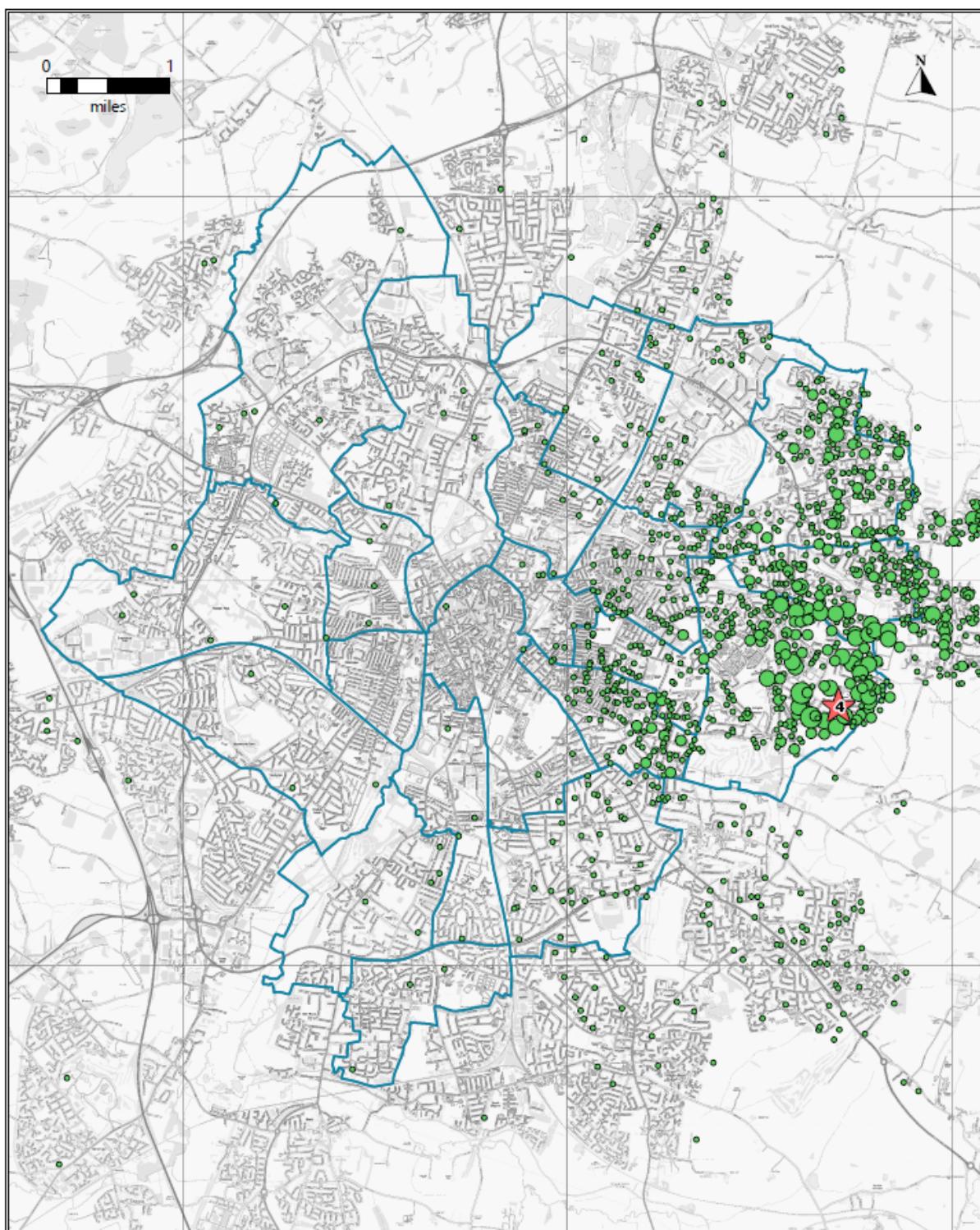
Site Name	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Evington Leisure Centre	2,847	2,632	41	5,520

Site Name	Health and Fitness	Swim Leicester
Evington Leisure Centre	2,339	1,436

	Members by Local Authority		
Site Name	Leicester City	County/ Rutland	Total LLR
Evington Leisure Centre	2,941 (78%)	829	3,770



Evington Leisure Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre



Leicester  
City Council

**Distribution of  
Leisure Centre  
Members**

Annual Membership &  
Direct Debit

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Andrea Hurtado de Mendoza. GIS Team, May 2024

<p>Leicester Leys Leisure Centre</p> <p>Built 1985</p>	
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## ASSETS

Leisure pool, 30mx13m. Beach access, wave machine. Activity, toddler, and dimple pools. 546 sqm pool space	Leisure water area. Parties. Fun slides	Sports Hall	3No Badminton courts Part gym use Gymnastics. Circuit training Parties
Gym	100 stations – using part sports hall and separate small rooms.	Studio	Space for 16 users Fitness classes. Yoga. Table tennis
Climbing wall	15m high tower. Sport climbing Bouldering Block - training	Squash	2No courts

## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

Members Mar 2019 = 1,296 Feb 2024 = 2,623	Direct debit Income 2018/19 = £29,000/month 2023/24 = £54,000/month	23/24 £'000s Running costs £1,461 Income £1,347 Net cost £ 114
Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 291,681 70% city customers		Cost/visit £0.39

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Wet side changing rooms	Partial upgrade 2022	Totals spent £120k
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## CONDITION SURVEY DATA

It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.

0-2 years	Original pool plant equipment (1975) included heating, sand filters and main circulation pumps.	£350,000 £630,000
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3-10 years	Original LV switchboard, local distribution boards, wiring, emergency and general lighting system, fire alarms are all due for upgrade.	£310,000
11-25 years	Roof and rooflights in need of replacing. Large areas of ceilings need replacing. Areas of drainage are ineffective. Large areas of flooring need replacing Other areas	£100,000 £65,000 £270,000 £775,000 £970,000 £2.10m
Recent problems.	2019. 2 No External flumes closed due to Health& Safety reasons. 2023. Major failure of wave machinery, out of action for 4 months – loss of income.	

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Only 'Leisure Water' facility in the area.
- Easily accessible location with good parking.
- Extensive catchment
- Large facility with a good range of activities, including Climbing wall.

### Weaknesses

- Some flumes and features have been decommissioned, affecting income and appeal of the centre.
- Limited and restricted reception
- Limited fitness offer

### Opportunities

- Develop the current dated health and fitness offering.
- Population growth in the area due to housing developments at Ashton Green and Anstey sites will increase demand on the centre.
- Increasingly essential need for Leisure Fun water as part of strategic offer

### Threats

- Pool plant is old and currently prone to breakdown, impacting income, customer satisfaction and reputation.

## LLLC - Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Beaumont Leys	18,807	888	4.70%
Abbey	22,107	462	2.10%
Fosse	14,373	85	0.60%

## LLLC - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+)

inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Beaumont Park	6,892	397	5.76%	28.10%
Bradgate Heights & Beaumont Leys	11,026	501	4.54%	29.50%
Stocking Farm & Mowmacre	11,779	282	2.39%	35.60%

Financial Performance (£'000's)					
Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	812	595	710	820	915
Running Costs	375	204	300	397	546
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>1187</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>1217</b>	<b>1461</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1108</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>-613</b>	<b>-1087</b>	<b>-1347</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>114</b>
Service Performance KPI's					
KPI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
H&F Live Members	1265	705	1106	1426	1748
Swim Lesson Heads	575	369	625	873	898
<b>Total</b>	<b>1840</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>1731</b>	<b>2299</b>	<b>2646</b>

### Catchment analysis

#### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

#### Average travelling distances by membership types

	Average Distances (Miles)	Average Walking Distances (Minutes)

Site Name	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

**Customer Profile** (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage,

The following tables summarise live contact postcode data within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023.

"Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

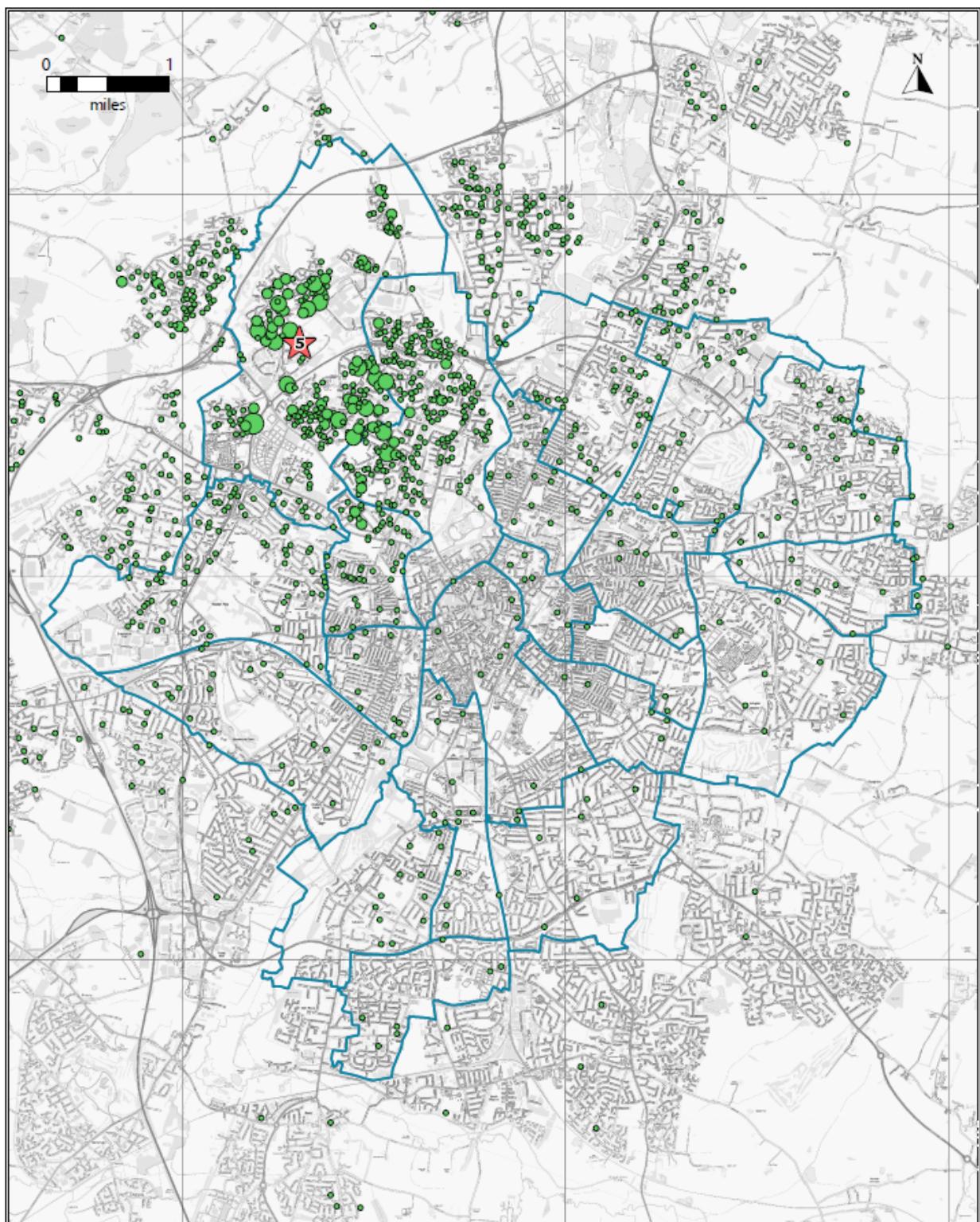
Site Name	Members by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	1,247	1,383	16	2,646

Site Name	Casual Users by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	2,391	2,923	148	5,462

Site Name	Health and Fitness	Swim Leicester
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	1,725	898

Site Name	Members by Local Authority		
	Leicester City	County/ Rutland	Total LLR
Leicester Leys Leisure Centre	1,841 (70%)	782	2,623

## Leicester Leys Leisure Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre

### Member Count by Postcode

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 31

★ Leisure Centre

Leicester Wards



### Distribution of Leisure Centre Members

Annual Membership & Direct Debit

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Andrea Hurtado de Mendoza, GIS Team, May 2024



New Parks Leisure Centre

Built 1975

## ASSETS

Swim pools. 25m x 10m. 18m x 5m. 340 sqm pool space	Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties	Gym	20 stations
Squash	5No courts	Function/ activity room	

## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

Members Mar 2019 = 762 Feb 2024 = 929	Direct debit Income 2018/19 = £19,000/month 2023/24 = £20,000/month	23/24 £'000s Running costs £849k Income £319k Net cost £530k
Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 60,168 68% city customers		Cost/visit £8.81

## CONDITION SURVEY DATA

It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.

0-2 years	Roof replacement. Replace ceilings.  The majority of mechanical and electrical systems are aged and are beyond the intended design life. Original pool plant equipment included heating, ventilation, sand filters and main circulation pumps require replacement.  Replace switchboard, distribution bards, emergency lighting.  Floor repairs.  Window and door replacements.	£310,000 £100,000  £350,000  £630,000 £270,000 £52,000 £65,000 £646,000
3-10 years	Drainage repairs.	£700,000
11-25 years	Other items	£2.40m

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Car Parking provision
- Dance studio/squash

Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited dry offer</li> <li>- Usage and growth inconsistent with other centres.</li> <li>- Highest subsidy/ high subsidy per visitor</li> </ul>
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate complimentary business case given overlap and duplication issues</li> </ul>
Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pool Plant condition</li> <li>- Duplication with west side council facilities limits scope/potential and possible need.</li> <li>- Continued impact of Pools for Schools</li> </ul>

### NPLC - Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Western	21,086	374	1.80%
Beaumont Leys	18,807	84	0.40%

### NPLC - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
New Parks & Stokeswood	8,615	185	2.15%	34.30%
Kirby Frith	8,818	153	1.74%	32.80%
Dane Hills & Western Park	7,562	63	0.83%	22.00%

### Financial Performance (£'000's)

Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	519	338	217	372	486
Running Costs	207	132	129	203	364
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>849</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-479</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-79</b>	<b>-199</b>	<b>-319</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>530</b>

### Service Performance KPI's

KPI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
H&F Live Members	682	269	330	455	439
Swim Lesson Heads	693	447	0	122	491
<b>Total</b>	<b>1375</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>929</b>

### Catchment analysis

#### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
New Parks Leisure Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

#### Average travelling distances by membership types

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members
New Parks Leisure Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

#### Customer Profile (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage,

The following tables summarise live contact postcode data within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023.

"Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

Site Name	Members by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
New Parks Leisure Centre	463	462	4	929

Site Name	Casual Users by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
New Parks Leisure Centre	658	617	51	1,326

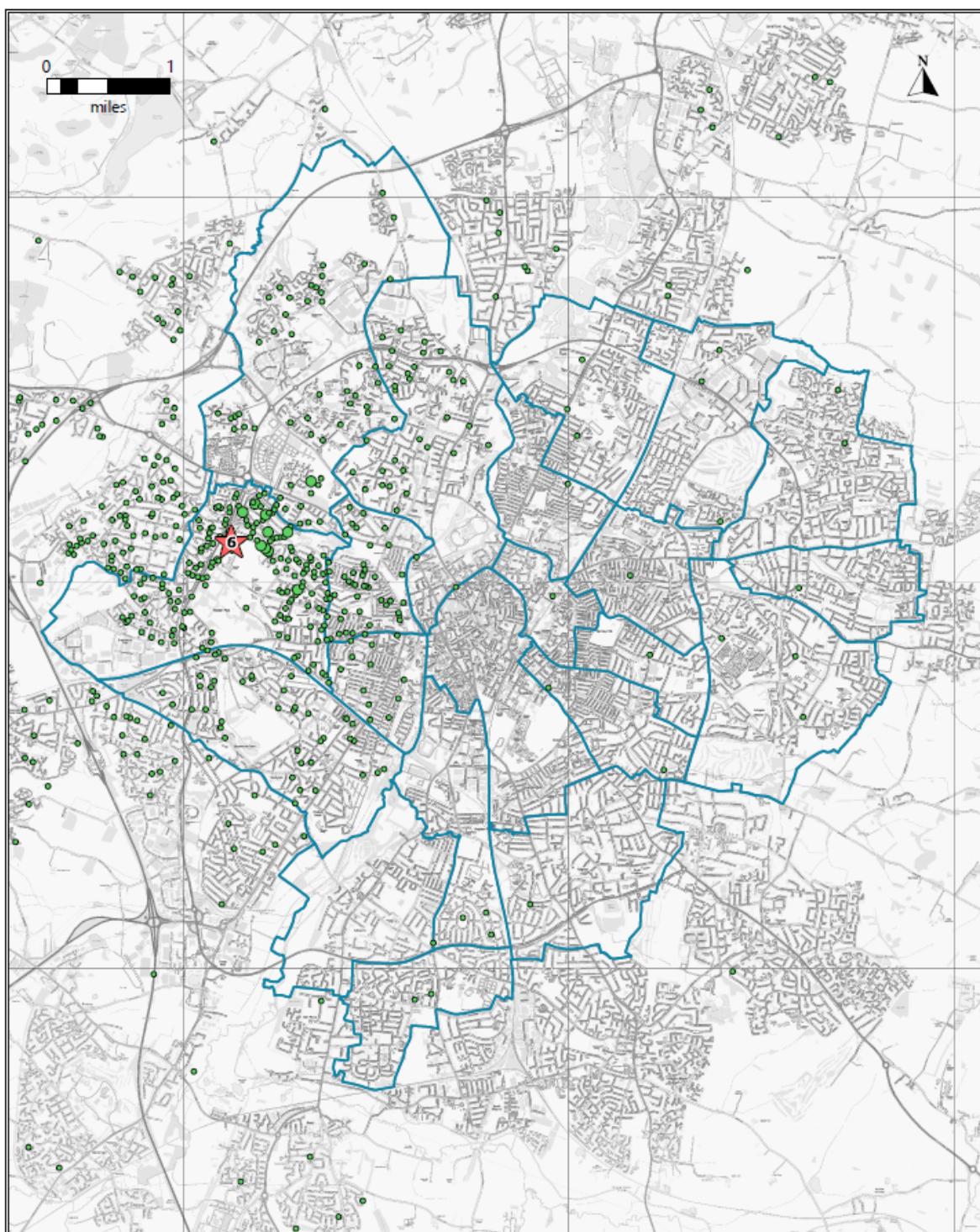
Site Name	Health and Fitness	Swim Leicester

New Parks Leisure Centre	439	491
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	<b>Members by Local Authority</b>		
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Leicester City</b>	<b>County/ Rutland</b>	<b>Total LLR</b>
New Parks Leisure Centre	640 (68%)	289	929



New Parks Leisure Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre

Member Count by Postcode

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 31

Leisure Centre

Leicester Wards



**Distribution of Leisure Centre Members**  
Annual Membership & Direct Debit

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Andrea Hurtado de Mendoza. GIS Team, May 2024

<p>Spence Street Sports Centre</p> <p>Swimming Pool built 1980. Sports Hall built 1986. Sports Hall upgraded to Gym and studio 2022.</p>		
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## ASSETS

<p>2 No Swim pools 25m x 10m and 18m x 5m 340 sqm water space</p>	<p>Learn 2 Swim Open swim sessions Individual lessons Parties</p>	<p>Detached gym Studio</p>	<p>70 stations - refurbished 2022 Space for 25 users Fitness classes. Yoga</p>
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## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

<p>Members Mar 2019 = 818 Feb 2024 = 2,226</p> <p>Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 182,306 95% city customers</p>	<p>Direct debit income 2018/19 = £22,000/month 2023/24 = £49,000/month</p>	<p>23/24 £'000s Running costs £1,092 Income £ 805 Net cost £ 287</p> <p>Cost/visit £1.57</p>
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## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

<p>Phase 2 - Upgrade/refurbish gym.</p>		<p>Totals spent £817K</p>
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## CONDITION SURVEY DATA - 2023

<p>It is apparent that the majority of boilers, filters, ventilation systems, electrical distribution, fire alarms, wiring and fittings have exceeded its design life. The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.</p>		
<p>0-2 years</p>	<p>The majority of mechanical and electrical systems are aged and are beyond the intended design life. Heating, AHU, sand filters and main circulation pumps are all aged and due for replacement. LV switchboard, local distribution boards, wiring and emergency lighting system. Pool roof and ceiling replacement Flooring, doors, and drainage Other items</p>	<p>£330,000 £349,000 £247,000 £348,000 £426,000 £1.3m £800,000</p>
<p>3 - 10 years</p>		
<p>11-25 years</p>		

## SWOT ANALYSIS

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Strong local catchment Modern fitness and studio offer</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>Limited parking Separate pool and gym buildings</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Installation of Air Source heat pumps to reduce carbon emission Further fitness growth linked to place expansion and active wellbeing</p>

Threats	- Pool plant condition
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### SSSC - Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
North Evington	23,928	776	3.40%
Humberstone & Hamilton	21,142	314	1.50%
Spinney Hills	13,034	188	1.40%
Evington	17,256	184	1.10%

### SSSC - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Spinney Hill Road	15,837	438	2.77%	39.70%
North Evington & Rowlatts Hill	11,178	272	2.48%	37.10%
Crown Hills	10,610	220	2.07%	40.00%
Northfields & Merrydale	9,981	203	2.03%	38.70%

Financial Performance (£'000's)					
Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	534	411	461	585	779
Running Costs	199	141	126	166	312
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>1092</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-506</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-329</b>	<b>-554</b>	<b>-805</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>287</b>

Service Performance KPI's					
KPI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
H&F Live Members	695	411	523	990	970
Swim Lesson Heads	935	518	913	1247	1258
<b>Total</b>	<b>1630</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>1436</b>	<b>2237</b>	<b>2228</b>

## Catchment analysis

### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
Spence Street Sports Centre	1.82	1.37	40	30

### Average travelling distances by membership types

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members	Health and Fitness Members	Swim Leicester Members
Spence Street Sports Centre	1.36	1.38	30	30

### Customer Profile (% breakdown of customers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Market penetration, city, and county usage,

The following tables summarise live contact postcode data within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) over the last year. Data refreshed: 11/05/2023.

"Members" current direct debit/annual members, and "Casual Users" without membership.

Site Name	Members by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Spence Street Sports Centre	980	1,258	88	2,326

Site Name	Casual Users by Gender			
	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Spence Street Sports Centre	1,864	1,477	63	3,404

Site Name	Health and Fitness		Swim Leicester
Spence Street Sports Centre	970		1,258

Site Name	Members by Local Authority		
	Leicester City	County/ Rutland	Total LLR

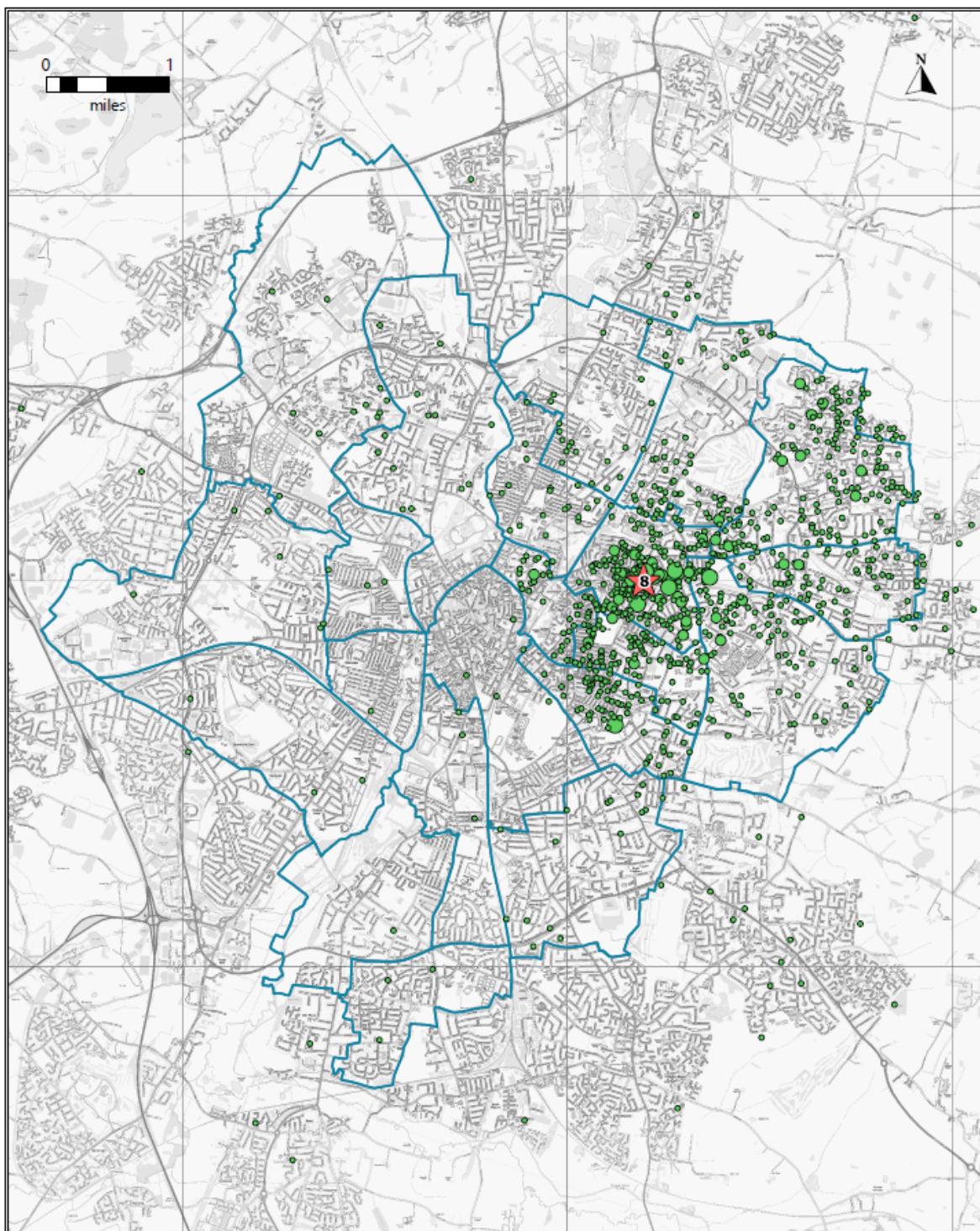
Spence Street Sports Centre

2,121 (95%)

105

2,226

Spence Street Sports Centre Members Map



ID	Site Name
1	Aylestone Leisure Centre
2	Braunstone Leisure Centre
3	Cossington Street Sports Centre
4	Evington Leisure Centre
5	Leicester Leys Leisure Centre
6	New Parks Leisure Centre
7	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium
8	Spence Street Sports Centre

Member Count by Postcode

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 31

★ Leisure Centre

Leicester Wards



**Distribution of Leisure Centre Members**

Annual Membership & Direct Debit

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Andrea Hurtado de Mendoza, GIS Team, May 2024

<p>Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium</p> <p>Built 1967. Pavilion 2006</p>	
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## ASSETS

8 lane running track. In-field sports	Athletics club usage. Athletics events, field sports and training use.	Pavilion	Competitor changing. Meeting room. Toilets.
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## SERVICE INFORMATION – USAGE

Members Mar 2019 = 2 Feb 2024 = 16  Customer visits March 23 to Feb 24 = 39,209	Direct debit income  2018/19 = £5,000/month 2023/24 = £7,000/month	23/24 £'000s Running costs £173 Income £ 60 Net cost £114  Cost/visit £2.90
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## CONDITION SURVEY DATA – 2023

The following elements are those at most risk in the next 0-2 years.

0-2 years	Repaint grandstand structural steelwork. Other items	£20,000 £506,000
3-10 years		£711,000
11-25 years		£1.03m
Recent problems		

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	1 of only 2 tracks in Leicestershire. Regional annual school events Recent investment and improvement Recent Track Mark status
Weaknesses	Stand-alone facility Poor design layout - Pavilion location creates unauthorised access, missed income opportunities and vandalism.
Opportunities	Promote venue as a venue for outdoor exercise Connect track to active Leicester fitness offer Could attract more events and hire income
Threats	High disproportionate NNDR costs – being reviewed National participation levels in athletics.

## SLAS - Ward Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City Wards

Ward Name	Population Of Ward	Total Members	Ward Penetration (%)
Humberstone & Hamilton	21,142	3	0.00%
Knighton	16,819	2	0.00%
Aylestone	11,940	1	0.00%

## SLAS - MSOA Inactivity (%) and Penetration (%) For DD or Annual Members - Leicester City MSOAs

Inactivity Levels using Sport England Data (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.). This is % of adults (16+) inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week in the past month, excluding gardening) by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).

MSOA Name	MSOA Population	Total Members	MSOA Penetration (%)	MSOA Inactivity (%)
Colchester Road	8,512	2	0.02%	34.00%
Knighton	7,322	1	0.01%	16.70%
Aylestone South	8,345	1	0.01%	25.90%

### Financial Performance (£'000's)

Overall Financial Performance	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Payroll	89	41	63	50	50
Running Costs	88	80	76	95	124
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-37</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-60</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>114</b>

### Service Performance KPI's

KPI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	23/24
H&F Live Members				27	16
Swim Lesson Heads				0	0
<b>Total</b>				<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>

## Catchment analysis

### Average travelling distances for casual users and members (all membership types)

Site Name	Average Distances (Miles)		Average Walking Distances (Minutes)	
	Casual Users	Members	Casual Users	Members
Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium	3.38	2.80	74	62





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# **De Montfort Hall & Haymarket Theatre**

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 22/01/2026

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Lead director/officer: Peter Chandler, Director of Tourism  
Culture and Economy

## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Antony Flint
- Author contact details: [antony.flint@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:antony.flint@leicester.gov.uk)
- Report version number: 1

### **1. Summary**

This report updates on the operational and financial progress at De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket Theatre, which are being managed as an integrated service.

A significant milestone has now been achieved, as it now costs the Council less to operate De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket Theatre as a joint service than it would be to mothball them. This also enables the delivery of a high quality cultural and teaching/learning offer for the city.

### **2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:**

- 2.1 To note and comment on the report.

### **3. Operational Updates:**

#### **De Montfort Hall**

- 3.1 With a maximum audience capacity of 2200, De Montfort Hall is Leicester's largest arts venue. It is located on the outskirts of the city centre adjacent to Victoria Park and has been a popular destination for generations of Leicester people. It was built in 1913 by the City of Leicester Corporation, has remained a council owned and operated venue ever since, and has always provided the city with a broad range of music, comedy and celebrity-based performances, just as it does today.
- 3.2 During the 2024/25 financial year, De Montfort Hall recorded ticket sales of 228,821, representing an increase of 42,151 tickets sold compared to 2023/24. The venue achieved a turnover of £6.5 million, an improvement of £1.2m over the previous year. Due to the reduced availability of original music artists in the UK post covid, programming has strategically shifted towards filling the roster with more readily available tribute acts. This change has led to an increase in performance numbers, rising from 174 in 2023/24 to 241 in 2024/25, and contributed to the improved ticket sales.
- 3.3 Catering operations have also continued to perform strongly, driven by improved contractual terms, higher attendance and the increased frequency of events, with income rising to just under £1m in 2024 against £835k in 2023.
- 3.4 Analysis of 2024/25 audience data indicates that 27% of De Montfort Hall audiences live within Leicester City Council city postcodes (LE1 to LE5), 50% are from the wider Leicestershire LE postcode region, and 23% originate from other areas of the UK, overseas or unknown locations.

- 3.5 Of the 50% that come from the wider Leicestershire LE county postcodes, just under half come from the LE6 to LE8 urban area immediately surrounding the city boundary, such as Oadby, Wigston, Syston, etc. This suggests that just over half of the total De Montfort Hall audience (51.3%) for the year came from the Leicester urban area.

### **Haymarket Theatre**

- 3.6 Leicester Haymarket Theatre is a 1970s building in the brutalist concrete design of the time. It is located on Belgrave Gate in the heart of the city. For many years it was home to Leicester Theatre Trust and a well-regarded producing theatre, until their move to Curve in 2007 when the Haymarket Theatre building closed.
- 3.7 The Council retained a long-term tenancy agreement on the building, and this remained empty for over a decade until 2018. The Council then refurbished the building and procured an external operator to manage it. This operator ceased trading in 2020 and the building was once again closed, and reverted back into council control.
- 3.8 The council has subsequently purchased the Haymarket Shopping Centre, including the Haymarket Theatre, in 2021. After extensive external engagement with theatre operators, promoters and potential users, the theatre reopened as a centre for teaching, learning and young people, principally within arts education and associated stage performances.
- 3.9 Some limited further investment to convert the former workshop and office areas into teaching spaces allowed two important strategic partnerships to be established to deliver this vision, with large numbers of young people now regularly benefitting from the new provision:
- Addict Dance Academy are one of the UK's leading colleges for professional dance training. Established in 2012, they have expanded quickly in the city and entered into a ten-year license agreement at the Haymarket Theatre in 2024. The license is for daytime/weekday use of the premises, teaching up to 650 young people a week, from all over the country, at diploma, foundation degree and undergraduate level in musical theatre and dance subjects.
  - Leicestershire Music (formally the Leicestershire Schools Music Service) are a music education organisation, established in 1948, and have a strong track record of delivering music tuition, training, advice, and performance and ensemble opportunities throughout Leicester and Leicestershire. They have also agreed a licence on a 10-year basis to provide instrument tuition to up to 200 young people on Saturday mornings and Monday evenings.
- 3.10 Both of these agreements exclude the use of the auditorium, stage, and dressing room facilities at weekends to ensure availability for additional dance and stage school hires. Engagement is planned to attract further users, particularly stage and dance schools.

## **Service Integration & Combined Financial Performance**

- 3.11 The Haymarket Theatre has now moved from the Estates and Building Services division into the Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment division, and this has provided an opportunity to fully integrate the cultural offer at De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket Theatre strategically, operationally and financially.
- 3.12 The Haymarket Theatre and De Montfort Hall are now fully integrated from both a management, operational and revenue budget perspective, and they now operate within their combined budget allocation. This integration increases service efficiency and provides economies of scale.
- 3.13 The service delivered an outturn of £605k against a combined allocated budget of £803k in 2024/25. This has been possible largely through significant management and staff effort focussing on a more commercial approach at De Montfort Hall over the last decade aimed at reducing costs and increasing income.
- 3.14 The performance of De Montfort Hall has proved particularly successful with the net cost of the operation falling from over £1.3m in real terms in 2014/15 to £247k in 2024/25, which in itself is a dramatic improvement.
- 3.15 The Haymarket Theatre has also seen significant financial improvement. This is despite several one-off costs that have arisen during the initial reopening period. Due to the age and nature of the building, there has been a need to invest in improvements at the site to bring services up to standard.
- 3.16 The management team is focused on continuing to grow usage of the Haymarket Theatre. Licence fee income has steadily increased as new facilities become available, and indeed the improved revenue performance only includes income for a partial year in 2024/25 for some spaces. Full annual incomes from both Addict and Leicestershire Music are now reflected in the current year. This is expected to drive continued growth in user numbers during 2026 onwards, which is anticipated to improve revenue and further reduce the net cost of the joint operation.
- 3.17 It has long been an objective for De Montfort Hall to operate at a budget-neutral level relative to the financial implications of mothballing the building (i.e. that it costs the same or less to operate the service as it does to not operate it).
- 3.18 Assessments earlier this year conducted with colleagues in Finance and Estates and Building Services estimate the cost of mothballing De Montfort Hall at £242k per year, and the Haymarket Theatre at £368k per year, (£610k combined).
- 3.19 The mothball costs include all statutory costs during closure such as business rates, as well as ongoing costs such as storage, utilities and basic maintenance as well as a level of contingency. It excludes any potential staff redundancy and other one-off closure costs – which are estimated as having a cost of up to £1m in addition.
- 3.20 The joint cost of operating both sites in 2024/25 was £605k, therefore operating below the £610k cost of mothballing the venues. This marks a significant milestone in demonstrating the efficiency and sustainability of De Montfort Hall and the integrated service model with the Haymarket Theatre.

3.21 This means that the budget-neutral aim has been achieved – i.e. in revenue terms it has cost LCC less to operate De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket Theatre in 2024/25 than it would have done to close them.

#### **4. Ongoing renewal**

- 4.1. Performance venues require ongoing capital investment to maintain technical performance standards. To address the ongoing need for investment in technical equipment (especially at De Montfort Hall) and the limited availability of additional capital funding for the foreseeable future, a £1 venue levy has been added within the cost of each ticket sold at De Montfort Hall.
- 4.2. This is a standard industry practice nationally, and the initiative is expected to generate a fund of approximately £200,000 per year to support this expenditure, without significantly impacting ticket sales volumes. This will help to address the need for ongoing annual investment in the buildings enabling them to stay operational and technically proficient. This will help to maintain delivery of a high quality cultural and teaching/ learning offer.

### **5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications**

#### 5.1 Financial implications

As a summary of the performance of the two venues, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The financial performance is reflected in the figures within the main body of the report.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

#### 5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Signed: Kevin Carter, Head of Law - Commercial, Property & Planning

Dated: 21 October 2025

#### 5.3 Equalities implications

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report as it provides an update on De Montfort Hall and Haymarket Theatre. However, the Council must continue to ensure both venues are accessible to all customers and staff. Additionally, all communications and publicity should be provided in accessible formats, including both digital and non-digital methods.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 16 October 2025

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

City centre buildings are a major source of carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and its aim to achieve carbon neutrality,

addressing these emissions is a vital part of the council's work, particularly within the council's own buildings.

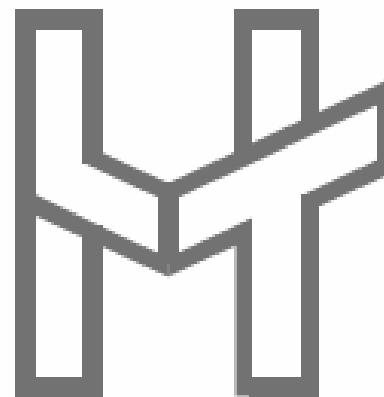
Events can generate carbon emissions where they lead to additional travel by staff, members of the public or staff of partner organisations using private cars, taxis/private hire vehicles or buses. There are also building emissions (heat and power) associated with the use of venues for events and services. Impacts could be managed by encouraging the use of sustainable travel options and using buildings and materials efficiently. If further maintenance and/or development works are carried out, these projects should individually assess opportunities to further reduce carbon emissions, in line with council policies.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 17 October 2025

## 5.5 Other implications

None



Leicester  
Haymarket  
Theatre

• DE MONTFORT •  
HALL LEICESTER

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• DE MONTFORT •  
HALL LEICESTER

298





Leicester  
Haymarket  
Theatre

addict  
dance academy

300



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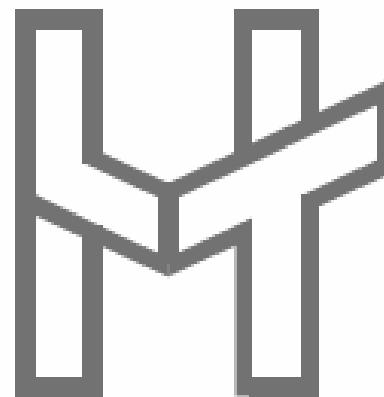
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LEICESTERSHIRE  
**MUSIC**



Leicester  
Haymarket  
Theatre

# Key Report Stats

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50% of DMH users from Leicester urban area



DMH cost to council reduced by over £1m

306



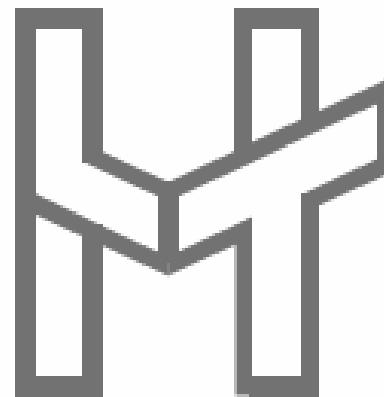
Economies of scale mean that both venues now operate within budget



Operating at a budget neutral level



Reserve generated to fund renewal costs at DMH without relying on capital



Leicester  
Haymarket  
Theatre



**Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission**  
**Work Programme 2025 – 2026**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Recommendations / Actions</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>19 June 2025</b>	<b>Overview of Culture and Neighbourhoods</b>  <b>Business case for the KRIII café.</b>  <b>Public Space protection Orders</b>  <b>Waste Engagement Findings</b>	Site visit to Biffa to be arranged  To avoid a backlog of casework arising, officers to respond to members queries within 5 days.  Report to come back to the Commission in 12 Months following the opening of the new café to see if expectations have been met in terms of customer numbers and cost/benefit.  Report to come back to the Commission on the plan going forward.  Informal session to be convened around early August for Commission to discuss options with the Commission so they can inform the way forward.	To be arranged later in the year.  Ongoing.  Added to workplan TBA  Added to workplan TBA  Arranged for 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>11 September 2025</b>	<b>Heritage Places Funding, National Lottery Heritage Fund – Verbal Update</b>  <b>Re-drafted Community Asset Transfer Policy</b>	To note stories that need to be heard more, including about the historical diversity of Leicester in terms of the people living here and how Leicester became so diverse, as well as understanding Commonwealth contributions to the World Wars.  Task Group to be set up	Funding for this is limited and the type of themes which are progressed will depend upon the type of grant applications which we receive.  Scoping document for task group to come to Commission in January.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
3 November 2025	<p><b>Fly Tipping</b></p> <p><b>Ward Funding Annual Report</b></p>	<p>Details of Love Clean Streets to be shared with members to they can disseminate to constituents.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to putting stickers/posters up where fly tips have taken place, indicating what the consequence was to the fly tipper.</p> <p>Figures on costs of fly tipping to council taxpayers to be produced to deter fly tipping</p> <p>Information to be provided on reasoning as to why certain areas have more funding from other sources than others do.</p> <p>Information to be shared with Councillors on where other sources of funding are coming from, including a list of where external funding is coming from and what is being funded through it.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to having video clips on the Council website from people giving feedback on how ward funding has been used.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
22 January 2026	<p><b>Budget</b></p> <p><b>Bereavement Services Update (6-monthly update)</b></p> <p><b>Sports Needs Assessment</b></p> <p><b>De Montfort Hall/ Haymarket Theatre</b></p> <p><b>Community Asset Transfer Task Group - Scoping Document</b></p>	<p>To include information on the search for places, the work plan for Gilroes Cemetery. Also to include Cremation facilities.</p> <p>To also include information on fees and how to encourage people to use the council cremation facilities.</p> <p>Will consist of primary and secondary research in relation to active Leicester Leisure Centre Offer. Scope includes public opinion, membership and usage numbers and engagement in activity.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
<b>5 March 2026</b>	<b>Museum Update</b> <b>Museum Engagement Schemes – Outcome on findings and conclusions.</b> <b>Festivals and Events Review update</b>	To include visitor figures over the school holiday period. To include considerations for an open weekend.	
<b>16 April 2026</b>	<b>NLHF Museum and Art Gallery Project</b>		

### Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Place Expansion Programme		
Selective Licensing		

Trees and Woodlands – Involvement with Schools and Education and Grassland Strategy	To include seed and produce exchange and to include areas for recreation and sports.	
PSPO – Plan going forward.		
Engagement of Community Organisations	Report on how community organisations could be engaged to help the Council run services as requested at the meeting of 29 January. – To go to first meeting of new municipal year.	
Growing spaces strategy		
Heritage Places Funding - National Lottery Heritage Fund – Update on next stage.	To include findings of Audience Agency. If Stage 1 is successful.	
KRIII Visitor Centre – Performance since new Café.	Analysing the cost/benefit of moving the Café. To include changes in visitor numbers since café moved and comparisons between old and new café. To come in February 2027..	
Update on HASBO and CRASBU	To be brought back in 12 months from 2024 report.	
Heritage panels, inviting members suggestions for new panels		
CCTV Overview	Moved from November	

