

LEISURE CONTRACT OUTCOME AND INVESTMENT

To: Councillor Todd-Jones, Cabinet Member for Communities

Cabinet – 20th October 2026

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Wards affected: All

Director Approval: Director Sam Scharf confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	Cabinet is asked to: • note the award of the new leisure management contract to GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited), initially for 10 years from November 2026, with an option to extend for five years to October 2041, and the outcomes secured through the procurement; • confirm the delegations needed to deliver site-specific Section 106 capital projects and draw down the relevant allocations for investment in Council leisure facilities; • confirm the delegations needed to bring eligible new or existing sports facilities within the contract during its term; and • confirm the delegations needed to enter into Community Use Agreements with Trumpington Academy and any other academies joining the contract, to enable the Council and GLL to manage their sports facilities through the agency model, subject to the necessary approvals.

2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	This report sets out the outcome of the procurement for the Council's leisure facilities and the proposed inclusion of Trumpington Academy's sports facilities. It describes the planned investment, wider access and health programmes, carbon reduction measures and expected financial return. The detailed contract financials and commercially sensitive bid information are in a confidential appendix.
2.2	The confidential appendix contains commercially sensitive information from GLL's bid. It is proposed that the public be excluded for its consideration under paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The public interest test has been applied: the interest in protecting this information is considered to outweigh the interest in its disclosure.
3.	Background and procurement outcome
3.1	The current GLL (Better) contract, awarded in 2013, ends in October 2026. Following a national procurement, GLL has been awarded a new contract starting on 1 November 2026. It runs for 10 years, with an option for a further five years. The contract covers Abbey Leisure Complex, Cherry Hinton Village Centre, Jesus Green Lido, Kings Hedges Learner Pool, Parkside Pools and the Council's splashpads and paddling pools. It is designed to allow other eligible sports facilities to join. Trumpington Academy is expected to join through a separate Community Use Agreement, subject to the approvals set out in section 7.1. The procurement sought a stronger contribution to public health and reducing inequalities; investment in facilities and lower-carbon infrastructure; wider access through concessions and local programmes; and a contract with no Council subsidy. GLL's bid meets these aims and offers a financial return to the Council, with more than £8 million of proposed investment in Council leisure facilities when combined with available Section 106 contributions. Individual schemes will proceed through their required design, consultation and approval stages.
4.	What residents will gain
4.1	The new contract provides a platform to improve existing facilities while reaching more

	people beyond the leisure centres. Its principal benefits are: • updated pools, changing areas, gyms and activity spaces, with proposals at every principal site; • free resident cards, reduced prices for eligible users and targeted offers for families and young people; • more exercise referral, social prescribing, rehabilitation and neighbourhood activity, developed with health and community partners; • investment in solar generation, heat pumps and energy controls to cut emissions from the leisure estate; and • school and community access at Trumpington Academy, alongside new sporting opportunities, subject to the Academy agreement and relevant consents.
5.	Consultation and engagement
5.1	Engagement during the competitive procurement was necessarily focused on bidders and the Council's procurement and client teams. With the contract awarded, the Council and GLL will engage residents, users and Members on the design of major works, including proposed gym and studio changes at the pools and the options for Jesus Green Lido. The Lido proposals will be subject to further consultation. Members will also be engaged on the performance measures to be reported during the contract. Planning and other approvals will be sought where required for individual schemes.
6.	Outcomes and investment
6.1	A contract that returns income to the Council The new contract provides for guaranteed annual income to the Council, including during the first two years while investment is delivered. This moves the service from its historic deficit and recent break-even position to an income-generating contract. The confidential appendix sets out the profiled sums and the separate annual return to Trumpington Academy, subject to that site joining. Any decisions about the use of Council income and surplus are addressed in section 7.3.

More than £8 million of proposed investment in Council facilities

The Council has more than £2.2 million of sports and swimming Section 106 contributions available for eligible investment. The procurement required bidders to at least match this amount. GLL's proposed capital contribution, together with those Council contributions, would provide more than £8 million for the Council's leisure portfolio. Allocation and timing will need to comply with the relevant Section 106 agreements and project approvals.

- Abbey Leisure Complex: changing room refurbishment, new gym equipment, fitness studios and wellbeing space, with two proposed outdoor padel courts.
- Parkside Pools: changing rooms, gym equipment, a fitness studio and wellbeing space, and improvements to the pool hall and outdoor gym.
- Kings Hedges Learner Pool: a proposed community room to complement the recent provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Cherry Hinton Village Centre: toilets and changing rooms, and a proposed single-storey extension for a gym and wellbeing space supporting exercise referral and social prescribing.
- Jesus Green Lido: proposals for new changing, café, gym and studio spaces, improved outdoor areas and accessibility. The design will be developed through public consultation.
- Trumpington Sports Centre: separate investment in gym equipment, the 3G pitch surface and tennis courts, with up to four proposed padel courts subject to planning approval.

Keeping facilities in good condition

GLL has included maintenance, specialist servicing and lifecycle budgets, supported by asset monitoring and building management systems. The contract provides for planned replacements, including the 3G pitches, as well as day-to-day upkeep.

Lower emissions from the leisure estate

The bid includes further solar photovoltaic generation and air source heat pumps at Cherry Hinton Village Centre and Kings Hedges; combined solar photovoltaic and solar

	thermal equipment at Abbey; and energy controls and lighting improvements at Parkside. Water and energy efficiency measures will be incorporated into refurbishments. These measures are estimated to save several hundred tonnes of CO₂ a year across the portfolio. Costs and savings estimates are in the confidential appendix. More affordable and local activity Free resident cards, concessionary entry and membership prices, and targeted offers for priority wards, families and young people are intended to widen participation. The contract also provides for GP and health referral memberships, rehabilitation, social prescribing and activity in neighbourhood and open-space settings, alongside the Council's Active Lifestyles work. At Trumpington Academy, the aim is to extend opportunities for pupils, staff and residents outside school hours, at weekends and during holidays. A new physical activity inclusion fund will support local groups, clubs and individuals to take part or establish activities. Local employment and visible performance GLL is a social enterprise, a Real Living Wage employer and a Disability Confident employer. Its proposed social commitments include apprenticeships, volunteering and work placements, alongside continued support for local athletes through the GLL Sport Foundation. Contract measures will be monitored through regular reporting and dashboards. An annual report to Cabinet and councillors will combine performance data with user feedback and local case studies, alongside any statutory reporting requirements.
7.	Implications
7.1	Key risks
	VAT and the agency model Under the proposed agency model, GLL collects income as the Council's agent. The financial case assumes the associated VAT treatment and recovery. A change in

	HMRC guidance or its application could increase the contract's net cost. The Council will continue to take specialist advice and monitor this risk. Trumpington Academy agreement The Academy must enter into a Community Use Agreement with the Council before its facilities can join the contract. The proposed long-term arrangements also require the relevant Secretary of State approval. Completion of those steps may affect when the Academy site joins, and its proposed capital works remain subject to any required planning and other consents.
	Local government reorganisation
7.2	The contract has been structured so that eligible school, academy and other sports facilities can potentially join during its term, including facilities in neighbouring areas if future governance and contract requirements permit. This provides flexibility as local government reorganisation and planned growth develop; it does not predetermine decisions for any future authority. The emerging Local Plan identifies future need for swimming and sports facilities. The contract could provide an operating route for eligible new facilities, subject to separate decisions on their provision and funding. It also offers a route for closer work with public health teams on prevention and physical activity.
	Financial implications
7.3	The confidential appendix sets out the annual income profile, proposed Section 106 allocations and GLL contributions, and the costs and estimated savings of capital and decarbonisation works. The financial case uses the agency model described in section 7.1. Proposed approach to future income The use of future Council income and surplus generated through the leisure contract will be considered through the Council's budget-setting process, taking account of the Council's wider financial position and priorities. In the earlier years of the contract, income generated will support the Council's overall General Fund position. However, throughout the life of the contract, an appropriate

	proportion of the income and surplus generated will be reinvested in the Council's leisure facilities to support lifecycle repairs, renewal and capital investment, alongside and in addition to GLL's contractual maintenance obligations. As the level of surplus increases in future years, consideration will also be given to further investment in new or expanded leisure provision identified within the relevant infrastructure strategies and wider health and wellbeing priorities. Any such investment will be supported by an appropriate business case and considered through the Council's budget-setting and capital programme processes. Contract management capacity As academies or other sites join, the Council proposes a charge to contribute to the client team's contract management costs. Subject to the relevant agreements and income, this could initially support a dedicated part-time client officer, with scope to expand if more sites join. The intention is for the additional post to be cost neutral to the Council.
	Legal implications
7.4	External legal advisers Sharpe Pritchard have supported the national procurement and contract work. The exercise concluded with best and final offers. The appropriate leases or licences remain to be settled in light of the agency arrangements. A Community Use Agreement with Trumpington Academy is being developed with its legal advisers, Stone King, and remains subject to the approvals noted above.
	Equality and socioeconomic implications
7.5	Equality impact assessments will be completed as the individual capital schemes and health programmes are developed. They will address accessibility, including the proposed remodelling of changing facilities and provision of universal spaces. Concessions, referral routes and neighbourhood programmes are intended to improve access for people facing financial and health barriers. GLL's social commitments include local apprenticeship, volunteering and work placement opportunities. Delivery will be monitored through the contract.

	Climate and environmental implications
7.6	GLL's proposed measures to decarbonise the pools are expected to be installed over the 12 months from November 2026, subject to the necessary design and delivery work. The current estimate is a reduction of several hundred tonnes of CO₂ each year. They complement the separate district heat network project that could help decarbonise Parkside Pools in future. Detailed costs and savings are in the confidential appendix.
	Procurement implications
7.7	A national market engagement event in December 2025 was attended by six leisure operators. GLL and SLM Ltd submitted first-stage tenders by April 2026. Clarification meetings were held in April and May, followed by best and final offers on 30 June. Evaluation and bidder feedback took place in July. Award notices were issued on 12 August; the standstill period ended on 24 August. The new contract is due to commence on 1 November 2026. The evaluation involved the Council's client team, Trumpington Academy's business manager, Strategic Leisure and Sharpe Pritchard.
	Community safety implications
7.8	Neighbourhood activity, the physical activity inclusion fund and employment opportunities can support diversionary work with young people and referrals from community safety partners. The detailed programme will be developed with the relevant Council teams and local organisations.
8.	Background documents Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
8.1	Commercially sensitive tender returns
9.	Appendices
9.1	Confidential Appendix 1 & Appendix 2 Commercially sensitive financial information from GLL's contract tender
	For background papers or enquiries, contact Ian Ross, Recreation Development Manager, Ian.Ross@cambridge.gov.uk