

## Report to Cabinet

**Subject:** Leisure Transformation Programme - Carlton Active RIBA 2

**Date:** 19 February 2026

**Author:** Leisure and Wellbeing Transformation Programme Manager

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a structured programme update on the Carlton Active Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Centre project following the Cabinet decision of 25 September 2025 that agreed a business plan for the new facility. This includes an update on the consideration of the inclusion of bowls provision following the petition debated by Council on the 12 November 2025.

The report presents the outputs of RIBA Stage 2 design work, including the emerging design proposals, indicative capital cost position and key programme, affordability, equality and environmental considerations.

The report seeks Cabinet direction on the proposed next steps for the project, namely progression into pre-construction through RIBA Stages 3 and 4, to be delivered via the UK Leisure Framework, subject to affordability, statutory requirements and budget approval. No decision is sought at this stage, on construction commencement or entry into irreversible contractual commitments however information is provided on prospective construction timetable and indicative final scheme costs.

### Key Decision

This report constitutes a key decision as defined in the council constitution. It will have a significant effect on two or more wards within the borough, impacting residents' access to leisure provision across multiple communities. In addition, the proposed expenditure on RIBA stages 3 and 4 is in excess of £500,000.

**Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

- 1. Cabinet notes and agrees the outputs of the RIBA Stage 2 design work for the Carlton Active Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Centre, including the emerging design proposals, business case position and indicative RIBA Stage 2 cost plan, recognising that these remain subject to further development and refinement and having regard to the evidence set out within the report in respect of indoor bowls provision.**
- 2. Subject to budget approval, Cabinet approves progression of the project into pre-construction, specifically RIBA Stage 3 (Spatial Coordination) and RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design), to be delivered through the UK Leisure Framework.**
- 3. Cabinet agrees the closure of the Richard Herrod Centre with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026, to enable the redevelopment of the site as the Carlton Active Centre, noting that the closure date aligns with the agreed programme for pre-construction and redevelopment.**
- 4. Cabinet agrees to withdraw from the Carlton Forum Leisure Centre joint use agreement and authorises the serving of notice by the Chief Executive, in the consultation with the Leader of the Council, at the appropriate time in accordance with the terms of the agreement, in order to enable an orderly transition of leisure provision in Carlton.**
- 5. Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in the consultation with the Leader of the Council, to seek all necessary approvals relating to final design and the progression of the scheme through the planning and statutory approvals process, including planning applications, building control and building regulations matters, where such decisions are required to facilitate the approved progression of the project.**

**1      Background**

- 1.1    As set out in the Cabinet report approved on 25 September 2025, the Carlton Active Centre is a key component of the Council's wider Leisure Transformation Programme which is a priority in the Gedling

Plan and future Legacy Plan. The programme was developed in response to the findings of the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) and the Strategic Review of Community Facilities considered by Cabinet in November 2023 and July 2024, which identified the Council's leisure portfolio as financially and operationally unsustainable without significant intervention.

- 1.2 On 17 July 2024, Cabinet agreed to progress feasibility work on a replacement for Carlton Forum Leisure Centre and the Richard Herrod Centre, comprising a new consolidated leisure and community facility on the Richard Herrod site, referred to as Carlton Active. The Richard Herrod Centre site is owned and maintained by Gedling Borough Council, providing the Council with full control over redevelopment of the site. Cabinet also approved resources to progress the project through to RIBA Stage 2, recognising the need for robust evidence on design, cost and deliverability before taking further decisions.
- 1.3 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) identifies a requirement for an additional £2.5m of efficiency savings over the next five years. Leisure currently requires one of the highest subsidies of any service area, with the leisure centres costing the Council over £1.3m per year, with facilities that are ageing, inefficient and increasingly expensive to maintain.
- 1.4 The Carlton Active programme is being progressed to address the significant and increasing risks associated with the continued operation of Carlton Forum Leisure Centre. Carlton Forum is an ageing asset with severe condition and infrastructure issues and is identified as a high-risk facility on the Council's corporate risk register, with a real risk of unplanned closure. Failure of the facility would have immediate and serious financial consequences for the Council, including loss of income, increased subsidy pressure, staff impacts and unplanned costs, as well as leaving Carlton without a local leisure facility. Beyond the financial impact, unplanned closure would adversely affect residents' health and wellbeing, reduce access to physical activity and preventative services, and present a significant reputational risk to the Council. The Carlton Active project therefore represents a necessary and proactive intervention to mitigate these risks through a planned, controlled transition to modern, sustainable leisure provision.
- 1.5 To support feasibility work on Carlton Active, the Council appointed Alliance Leisure as its Development Partner through the UK Leisure Framework, providing a compliant procurement route, sector expertise, and a delivery model from feasibility through to construction.

Max Associates were commissioned through the UK Leisure Framework to refresh the SOPM and develop the updated Leisure Strategy, to reflect post-Covid recovery, portfolio-wide needs, relevant national policy, and the Council's changing financial position, including testing whether consolidation of Carlton Forum and Richard Herrod into a single hub remained the right direction.

- 1.6 The updated Leisure Strategy confirmed the need to rationalise the leisure portfolio into fewer, higher-quality facilities, with investment focused on Carlton and Arnold as the Borough's two strategic hubs. In Carlton, this means replacing Carlton Forum and Richard Herrod with a single consolidated hub on the Richard Herrod site.
- 1.7 The September 2025 Cabinet report set out the evidence base confirming that Carlton has one of the strongest demand profiles in the Borough for modern leisure provision. The report included information on a comprehensive leisure transformation consultation and engagement programme between May and July 2025, involving residents, stakeholders, staff and national governing bodies. The programme comprised a borough-wide online survey with 1490 responses and 20+ targeted focus groups and stakeholder workshops. The Consultation and Engagement reports are set out within the background documents.
- 1.8 The consultation confirmed strong support for investment in a modern leisure facility in Carlton and identified clear priorities for future provision. These included expanded swimming facilities, a larger and more modern fitness offer, group exercise and rehabilitation space, family-focused provision, and welcoming community and social spaces. The engagement also highlighted the importance of inclusive design to support older residents, disabled users and those with health conditions.
- 1.9 Following the September 2025 Cabinet decision, a petition relating to indoor bowls provision was debated at Full Council on 12 November 2025 and referred to the Executive for determination. This matter is addressed in item 6 of this report.
- 1.10 To support progression of the Carlton Active project through RIBA Stages 2, the Council appointed its professional design, construction and advisory team through the UK Leisure Framework. The professional team appointed through the framework includes a wide range of expert consultants such as architects, construction consultants, programme management team and specialist leisure advisors, enabling the Council to access coordinated technical expertise appropriate to the current stage of the project. The scope of appointments has been aligned to the RIBA Plan of Work, ensuring

that work undertaken to date is proportionate, controlled and focused on informing Cabinet decision-making.

- 1.11 Following appointment via Alliance Leisure, the design team have been working closely with officers to develop the design proposals for the new facility, together with outline master-planning work for the whole site.
- 1.12 RIBA Stage 2 is intended to develop the strategic brief and outline facility mix established at RIBA 0-1 into coordinated concept design proposals. The purpose of this stage is to test feasibility, functionality, programme and affordability at a concept level, rather than to produce a final design or cost certainty although costs at this stage provides strong assurance that the project is being developed within an appropriate and realistic cost bracket, subject to further refinement through RIBA Stages 3 and 4.
- 1.13 The outputs of RIBA Stage 2 are intended to provide sufficient information to support informed decision-making on whether to progress the project into pre-construction at RIBA Stages 3 and 4. They do not constitute a final design or a commitment to construction, all of which would require further development, approvals and Cabinet decisions.

## **2. RIBA 2 - General Arrangement and External Design**

- 2.1 As part of the RIBA Stage 2 concept design process, a coordinated set of General Arrangement (GA) plans, site layout plans and illustrative elevations and external proposals have been prepared for the Carlton Active. These designs are contained within Appendix A and represent the current stage of design development undertaken to test feasibility, inform early planning discussions, and support Cabinet understanding of the emerging scheme.
- 2.11 The design work has been developed in response to the approved outline facility mix, the site constraints of the existing Richard Herrod Centre location, and the strategic objectives set out in the Leisure Strategy and RIBA Stage 0 brief. At this stage, the drawings are intended to demonstrate how the proposed leisure, health and community facilities can be accommodated on the site in a coherent and functional manner, rather than to present a finalised architectural solution.

## **2.2 Site Strategy and External Design**

- 2.21 The site strategy set out in Appendix A has been developed to make best use of the existing Richard Herrod Centre site, taking account,

environmental constraints and the need to maintain a positive and sensitive relationship with neighbouring residential areas.

- 2.22 A key early design decision has been the adoption of a simple and efficient building form, often described as a “shoebox” approach. This compact shape supports efficient construction, reduces unnecessary external envelope area, and helps control both capital and long-term operational costs.
- 2.23 The building has been positioned and shaped to create an active frontage to Foxhill Road. This ensures strong visual presence when viewed from surrounding roads, improves legibility and wayfinding, and reinforces the role of Carlton Active as a community-focused destination. At the same time, the massing and orientation of the building deliberately move activity and height away from neighbouring residential properties, helping to reduce potential impacts relating to overlooking, noise and right of light.
- 2.24 Sustainability considerations have informed the site and building strategy from the outset in order to ensure efficiency in the future operation of the site and having regard for the Council’s carbon management action plan. The compact building form supports Passivhaus principles. The orientation of the building has been designed to maximise opportunities for south-facing elevations, enabling passive solar gains for the pool hall. Early design work has also considered the potential location and integration of photovoltaic (PV) panels, informed by roof form and orientation. These principles will be developed further and tested in detail as the project progresses through RIBA Stages 3 and 4.
- 2.25 A central element of the site strategy is the creation of an external “active spine” across the wider site, rather than solely within the building itself. This active spine is conceived as a clear, legible movement route that connects Carlton Active with the adjacent grass pitches and the Carlton Football Centre, reinforcing functional and visual links between indoor and outdoor sports provision.
- 2.26 The site strategy also responds to car parking constraints associated with the site. Parking provision has been carefully considered to balance operational requirements, user convenience and site capacity, while avoiding over-dominance of hardstanding within the street scene. The layout seeks to locate parking in a manner that supports clear pedestrian routes, safe vehicle movement and efficient servicing, while allowing flexibility for future adjustments as travel patterns and usage evolve.

## 2.3 Elevations and External Appearance

2.31 The elevations and external design for Carlton Active, as presented within the RIBA 2 report have been developed with a strong emphasis on local identity, heritage and context, alongside functional and sustainability considerations appropriate to a modern leisure and community facility.

2.32 The architectural approach draws inspiration from Gedling Borough's brick-making and industrial heritage, reflecting the material language and character of prominent local buildings such as the Home Brewery, the Pappleworth Pumping Station and the Carlton Brewery Building. This influence is expressed through the extensive use of brickwork, with a blended palette of red and brown tones that creates depth, texture and visual richness while allowing the building to sit comfortably within its surroundings.

2.33 The elevation and material concept adopts an asymmetrical composition, introducing variation across the facade. This is balanced with references to more traditional forms, including the use of arched windows and glazed openings.

2.34 Glazing plays an important role in the elevation strategy, particularly at the heart of the building where more active and social uses are located. The use of larger glazed areas helps to create a strong visual connection between the internal spaces and adjacent green areas, reinforcing the welcoming and inclusive nature of the facility. This approach also supports Passivhaus principles and solar gain.

2.35 The roof form has been carefully considered in response to both functional and environmental requirements. A pitched roof over the pool hall has been introduced to improve the quality of natural light entering the space, reduce the perceived scale of the building when viewed from nearby residential areas, and support improved space heating efficiency within the pool environment.

2.36 In addition to meeting functional and operational requirements, the RIBA Stage 2 design seeks to establish Carlton Active as a landmark and focal point for leisure, health and community activity in Carlton whilst ensuring efficiency in design and future running costs. The proposals emphasise a clear and legible entrance, strong frontage to the public realm and a building identity that reflects the importance of the site as a strategic hub within the Borough..

## **2.4 General Arrangement plans**

2.41 The General Arrangement (GA) plans for Carlton Active set out in Appendix A demonstrate how the facility mix approved by Cabinet in September has been delivered within a compact and efficient building of approximately 4,424 square metres. The scale and layout have been developed to meet identified demand while maintaining operational efficiency and controlling capital and long-term energy costs.

2.42 The internal arrangement reflects the priorities identified through the Leisure Strategy and consultation and supports the delivery of a leisure, health and community hub rather than a single-purpose leisure centre. Reception, café and community spaces are located at the heart of the building and designed to be flexible and multi-use, supporting social interaction, community activity and secondary spend. The café in particular plays a key role in extending dwell time, encouraging repeat visits and attracting new and less traditional users into the leisure service.

2.43 The layout has been designed to support multi-generational use, with facilities that appeal across the life course. Family-focused provision such as soft play is located to encourage early engagement with the centre, while health-led spaces such as the assisted exercise (Innerva) suite supporting older adults, people with disabilities and those undergoing rehabilitation. This “cradle-to-grave” approach helps embed lifelong participation in physical activity and supports progression into wider leisure use over time.

2.44 Accessibility and inclusive design have been integral to the development of the Carlton Active proposals from the outset. The RIBA Stage 2 design has been informed by best practice, consultation feedback and the Council’s duties under the Equality Act, with the aim of creating a facility that is welcoming and usable for residents of all ages and abilities. Accessibility is embedded throughout the GA plans, with the majority of public-facing facilities located at ground floor level and arranged around clear, step-free circulation routes. The layout supports use by families, older people and disabled users, while maintaining appropriate separation between higher-intensity activities and quieter or supported spaces.

2.45 Thermal zoning has informed the internal layout, grouping spaces with higher heat and humidity loads, such as the pool hall, separately from cooler, drier areas. This approach improves the energy efficiency of the building, enables more targeted environmental control and supports

reduced energy consumption over the life of the facility, consistent with Passivhaus-informed principles.

2.46 As the project progresses into RIBA Stages 3 and 4, further work will be undertaken to refine the design in parallel with detailed cost planning and the development of the Full Business Case. Progression into RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will enable greater cost certainty through detailed design development, early contractor engagement and testing of buildability, programme and inflation risk. This work is essential to inform the Full Business Case and any future decision on construction.

2.47 The Council is exercising active control over the affordability of the scheme, with further work underway to confirm the borrowing requirement and the level of borrowing that can be sustainably supported. The design will be deliberately refined to ensure that the scheme is delivered within the Council's affordability parameters, while continuing to meet the strategic objectives and outcomes already agreed by Cabinet. This approach ensures that affordability, design and deliverability remain fully aligned as the project progresses.

## **2.5 Surveys, Technical Groundwork and De-risking**

2.51 The RIBA Stage 2 design has been informed by a range of site-specific technical information, including surveys of the existing buildings and wider site, early investigation of ground conditions and utilities, and initial technical input from design team. This information has helped to shape the proposed building footprint, layout and external works, and has reduced reliance on assumptions at concept stage. This approach supports the inclusion of proportionate and informed risk and contingency allowances within the current cost estimates, rather than reacting to unforeseen issues at later stages. The outputs from this survey and technical work are set out in Appendix A.

2.52 Further detailed surveys and technical investigations will be undertaken as part of RIBA Stages 3 and 4, including additional ground investigations, detailed building services coordination and further testing of buildability and construction methodology with the contractor. This continued de-risking work will be essential to support the development of the Full Business Case, provide greater cost certainty and inform any future decision on construction.

## **3. Key high-level risks identified at RIBA Stage 2**

3.1 The RIBA Stage 2 Risk Analysis (set out in Appendix A) identifies a small number of risks currently assessed as red, reflecting areas of uncertainty that are typical at concept design stage. These relate primarily to cost and contingency adequacy, construction cost inflation,

statutory utilities and infrastructure, ground conditions and programme risks.

3.2 In addition, the Principal Contractor has developed a comprehensive project risk register, identifying over 30 individual risks across design, cost, programme and delivery. The highest-level risks (top 10) are summarised within the RIBA Stage 2 report, with appropriate mitigation measures identified. Progression into RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will enable further de-risking through detailed design development, additional surveys and early contractor engagement.

#### **4. RIBA Stages 3 and 4**

4.1 The next phase of work for the Carlton Active project is progression into RIBA Stages 3 and 4, in line with the scope of services set out in the Alliance Leisure pre-construction proposal. These stages will focus on developing the RIBA Stage 2 concept design into a coordinated, buildable and cost-certain scheme to support the development of a Full Business Case.

4.2 RIBA Stage 3 (Developed Design) will include further development and coordination of the architectural, structural and building services designs, ensuring that all elements of the facility mix are fully integrated within the building envelope. This stage will involve refinement of layouts, confirmation of technical strategies, and coordination of specialist leisure equipment.

4.3 As part of RIBA Stage 3, the cost plan will be reviewed and updated to reflect the developed design, survey findings and prevailing market conditions. Value testing and further interrogation of contingency and inflation allowances will be undertaken to improve cost certainty and address the key affordability risks identified at RIBA Stage 2.

4.4 RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design) will focus on preparing the project for potential construction, subject to future approval. This will include detailed technical design, specification development, coordination of statutory requirements and preparation of construction information. Early contractor involvement through the UK Leisure Framework will support testing of buildability, construction methodology and programme, helping to reduce delivery and programme risk.

4.5 Throughout RIBA Stages 3 and 4, Gedling Borough Councils design team will continue to provide integrated project management, cost management and design coordination services, ensuring alignment between design development, cost control and programme planning. Alongside the design and technical work, the Council will continue to refine the business case and confirm whether the scheme can be

delivered within an affordable and sustainable funding envelope, including consideration of funding sources and the level of borrowing that may be required.

4.6 Key outcomes from RIBA Stages 3 and 4, including cost certainty and affordability conclusions, will be reported back to Cabinet for consideration. Progression to RIBA Stages 3 and 4 does not commit the Council to construction. Any decision to proceed beyond pre-construction will be subject to further Cabinet approval once the Full Business Case has been completed and affordability, funding and delivery arrangements have been confirmed.

## 5 Carlton Active Programme Timeline

5.1 Below in Table A is an indicative timeline for delivery of the Carlton Active project. This programme reflects the current understanding at the end of RIBA Stage 2 and will be refined as the project progresses through RIBA Stages 3 and 4, when greater certainty will be established in relation to construction sequencing, enabling works and overall delivery timescales.

5.2 **Table A - Indicative Timetable**

Milestone	Date
RIBA Stage 2 completes	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Cabinet Approval	19 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
RIBA Stage 3 commences	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026
RIBA Stage 3 completes	June 2026
Planning period	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 – August 2026
RIBA Stage 4 commences	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2026
Indicative Proposed enabling works (incl. demolition) commences	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2026 (TBC)
Contractor proposals submitted / RIBA 4 completes	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2026
Internal governance and approvals	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2026 – 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2026
Main contract execution	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2026
Contractor mobilisation	4 weeks
Start on site	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2026

## 5.3 Richard Herrod Centre Closure

5.4 The redevelopment of the Richard Herrod site to deliver the Carlton Active Centre requires the closure of the existing Richard Herrod Centre to enable progression into pre-construction and, subject to future approvals, redevelopment of the site.

5.5 The existing Richard Herrod Centre occupies the footprint of the proposed Carlton Active development and cannot remain operational alongside delivery of the new facility. Closure of the building is therefore a practical requirement to allow site possession, completion of further surveys and technical investigations, contractor access and progression through RIBA Stages 3 and 4.

5.6 The Gedling Indoor Bowls Club lease concludes on 30 April. On this basis, the Richard Herrod Centre is proposed to close on 1st May 2026, to enable site decommissioning and preparation for redevelopment.

5.7 Following closure, an initial site decommissioning period is anticipated between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June, to allow for making safe, disconnection of services, surveys and preparatory works. Handover of the site to contractors is currently anticipated in May, subject to confirmation of programme, statutory requirements and completion of pre-construction activities.

5.8 These dates are indicative and will be refined as the project progresses through RIBA Stages 3 and 4.

5.9 The need for closure of the Richard Herrod Centre was identified and consulted on at RIBA Stage 0 as part of the Council's Leisure Transformation consultation and engagement programme; this consultation is set out in the Background Papers and provide a clear evidence base demonstrating that closure of the existing Richard Herrod Centre was consulted on.

## **6. Indoor Bowls Petition and RIBA Stage 2 Recommendation**

6.1 A petition relating to the inclusion of an indoor bowls facility within the proposed Carlton Active development was considered by Full Council on 12 November and was subsequently referred to the Executive for consideration as part of the ongoing development of the project.

6.2 The petition called on Gedling Borough Council to:

1. Reinstate, retain and protect indoor bowling as part of its facility mix within the proposed redevelopment of the Richard Herrod Centre
2. Recognise that by working with the Directors of Gedling Indoor Bowls Centre Limited and the English Indoor Bowls Association a financially viable and sustainable model with the inclusion of indoor bowls can be achieved
3. Pro-actively recognise and promote the proven mental and physical wellbeing benefits of indoor bowling

6.3 The future of indoor bowls provision was originally considered as part of the RIBA Stage 0 feasibility and option appraisal. The RIBA Stage 0 assessment concluded that a six-rink indoor bowls facility was not taken forward as part of the agreed facility mix for Carlton Active, due to the impact on overall affordability and financial sustainability. This position informed the scope of work progressed into RIBA Stage 2.

6.4 As part of the RIBA Stage 2 feasibility and concept design work, the inclusion of indoor bowls provision was revisited and formally assessed by the design team, informed by, site constraints and updated cost analysis. This assessment considered a 3, 4 and 6-rink indoor bowls facility as potential options.

6.5 The RIBA Stage 2 report as set out in Appendix A concludes that, the inclusion of an indoor bowls rink within the Carlton Active scheme would introduce significant affordability, design and deliverability risks. The specialist building requirements associated with indoor bowls, including large clear spans, increased building height and environmental controls, would materially increase capital costs and require a larger building footprint than can be accommodated on the site without compromising other core facilities.

6.6 The assessment further concludes that incorporation of a bowls hall would necessitate the reduction or removal of other essential elements of the leisure centre, such as swimming or fitness provision, which consultation evidence shows are the highest-demand facilities and central to the financial sustainability of the scheme.

6.7 On this basis, and consistent with the conclusions reached at RIBA Stage 0, the RIBA Stage 2 recommendation is that indoor bowls provision should not be included within the Carlton Active development, as it is not considered a financially viable and

sustainable model.

- 6.8 Following the September 2025 Cabinet decision, the Council has continued to engage constructively with Gedling Indoor Bowls Club in line with the agreed approach. This has included ongoing dialogue and the completion of feasibility work to explore alternative site options for indoor bowls provision. The Council recognises the significant role that indoor bowls has played within the Borough, both in terms of sporting heritage and the health and wellbeing benefits it provides. This ongoing work reflects the Council's commitment to supporting the bowls community, while balancing the wider strategic, financial and deliverability considerations associated with the Carlton Active project.
- 6.9 In addition, the Council continues to engage with England Indoor Bowls Association to discuss support for indoor bowls locally.
- 6.10 Cabinet is asked to note the petition and the outcome of the RIBA Stage 2 assessments, which together provide the strategic, technical and financial justification for the non-inclusion of indoor bowls within the Carlton Active scheme.

## **7. Carlton Forum Joint Use Agreement**

- 7.1 Carlton Forum Leisure Centre operates under a joint use agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council and Redhill Academy Trust, which includes defined notice periods and procedural requirements for withdrawal. In order to enable the delivery of the Carlton Active Centre and support an orderly transition of leisure provision in Carlton, it is necessary for the Council to withdraw from this agreement.
- 7.2 The proposed withdrawal has been considered as part of the wider Leisure Transformation Programme and was tested through a recent joint use consultation. Approximately 68% of respondents who identified as Carlton Forum users supported withdrawal to enable development of the new Carlton Active Centre, recognising that replacement provision would be delivered through a modern, purpose-built facility.
- 7.3 Progression of the project into RIBA Stages 3 and 4 represents the appropriate point to align legal and programme arrangements. Cabinet is therefore asked to agree to withdraw from the joint use agreement at the appropriate time, initiating the required two-year notice period in accordance with its terms. This would not result in immediate closure but would provide certainty and sufficient lead-in time to manage the

transition in a planned and coordinated manner, subject to future approvals.

## **8. Financial Implications**

### **8.1 Carlton Active Capital cost position**

8.11 The current RIBA Stage 2 cost plan, as set out below indicates an overall project cost of approximately £29.9 million (excluding VAT) for the delivery of the Carlton Active Centre. This figure includes construction costs, professional fees, contingency and inflation allowances, external works and enabling, demolition and the costs associated with progressing the project through RIBA Stages 3 and 4 (Pre- Construction) in line with the Alliance Leisure fee proposal.

### **8.12 Indicative Capital Cost Breakdown (RIBA Stage 2)**

- Construction cost (including preliminaries, construction contingency and inflation based at 6%): c. £26.8m
- Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment (FFE): c. £0.79m
- Professional fees & project management: c. £0.99m
- Client contingency (5%): c. £1.34m
- Leisure Framework access fee: c. £0.04m

8.13 A client-held contingency allowance has been included at 5% within the cost plan to reflect the current level of design development and the risks identified through early technical work and site investigations. At RIBA Stage 2, not all design elements, ground conditions or construction methodologies are fully defined, and contingency is therefore required to manage known and unknown risks.

8.14 The contingency allowance is not an assumed spend; rather, it provides flexibility to manage risk as further information becomes available. As the project progresses through RIBA Stages 3 and 4, it is expected that risks will be either mitigated or retired and the level of contingency refined accordingly.

8.15 The cost plan includes an inflation allowance based on 6% to reflect forecast construction cost inflation over the anticipated programme period. This allowance is based on industry-standard inflation indices and aligns with the indicative programme for the project.

8.16 Programme and project management costs are included within the overall capital cost to reflect the resources required to deliver a complex, multi-disciplinary capital project of this scale. These costs include client-side programme management, design team coordination, technical assurance, cost management, and governance activities required to manage risk, quality and value for money.

8.17 Inclusion of these costs at this stage ensures that the project is adequately resourced to progress through pre-construction, planning and delivery in a controlled and compliant manner.

## **8.2 Approach to Cost Certainty**

8.21 The cost breakdown presented reflects the appropriate level of detail for RIBA Stage 2. The current indicative cost is set to be within 10% of the final construction cost.

8.22 A more detailed and robust cost plan will be presented to Cabinet as part of the Full Business Case at RIBA 4, alongside confirmed funding sources and affordability, prior to any decision on progression to construction.

## **8.3 RIBA Stages 3 and 4 (Pre-Construction) Costs**

8.31 In accordance with the Alliance Leisure fee proposal, the forecast cost of progressing the project through RIBA Stages 3 and 4 is £1,689,004.58, as set out in Appendix A. This cost includes professional fees, contractor pre-construction services, planning application preparation and submission, technical design development, and further surveys and investigations required to de-risk the scheme.

8.32 The costs associated with RIBA Stages 3 and 4 are fully included within the overall project cost and do not represent additional or separate funding requirements beyond the total capital cost currently being modelled.

8.33 Progression to RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will enable the Council to develop a Full Business Case, confirm affordability and funding arrangements, and report back to Cabinet before any decision is taken on entering a construction contract.

## **8.4 Affordability and timing of design refinement**

8.41 At the end of RIBA Stage 2, the Council has sufficient design definition to understand the likely cost envelope of the scheme, while still retaining flexibility to make proportionate adjustments before entering more detailed technical design. Current analysis indicates that savings

of approximately £1.5- £2.0 million may be required to ensure the scheme remains fully aligned with the Council's affordability parameters.

8.42 Cabinet is asked to note that progression into RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will include further design refinement to align the scheme with the Council's affordability parameters. This work will be undertaken in line with industry best practice within the RIBA Plan of Work and will include proportionate engagement and consultation on the evolving design in RIBA 3. The outcomes of this work, including any changes to design, cost or programme, will be incorporated into the full Business Case and reported back to Cabinet prior to any decision on progression to construction.

#### **8.5 Indicative Capital Funding and Borrowing Requirement**

8.51 The delivery of Carlton Active is currently based on a funding package that will h, combine I the Councils own resources with prudential borrowing.

8.52 In broad terms, the scheme is assumed to be funded on an approximate 50:50 basis, with around half of the capital requirement met from Gedling's internal resources and the remainder financed through Prudential Borrowing. The final funding package will be proposed to Cabinet at a later stage once we know cost certainty, have a full business case and detailed financial model that identifies how much net income will be available to support the revenue costs of borrowing.

8.53 Any Prudential Borrowing required will need to be approved by Full Council in line with Financial Regulations..

8.54 The precise composition of internal funding sources, the scale of borrowing required, and the associated revenue implications will be subject to further refinement as the project progresses through RIBA Stages 3 and 4. These matters will be tested in detail as part of the Full Business Case, including confirmation of affordability, funding strategy and compliance with the Council's financial framework.

8.55 No commitment to borrowing or construction expenditure is made at this stage. A further report will be brought to Cabinet at the conclusion of RIBA Stage 4, setting out the final funding and affordability position for decision before any progression to construction.

#### **8.6 Revenue Affordability - Business Case Scenario Modelling**

8.61 To assess affordability prior to a full financial model and business case, officers have used business cases developed firstly by Max Associates at RIBA stage 0 and secondly from an evaluation of income which is currently being undertaken with Big Wave Growth, as part of the leisure service's business growth programme.

8.62 These income projections represent a worst-case and best-case scenarios of net income generation by the new facility. The worse - case scenario suggests a shortfall in required income to support borrowing for the current estimated costs of the scheme. The best case comfortably covers the borrowing required.

8.63 To ensure prudence and support affordability the project team are looking to make adjustments to the scheme in the region of £1.5m - £2.0m as set out in section 8.41.

8.64 Once a full business case is available a comprehensive financial model will be developed which includes sensitivity analysis on income levels, this will give more certainty to the affordability of the project. However, the high-level financial modelling that has been carried out currently suggests that the scheme is affordable.

8.65 Considering the costs reduction from the adjustments the team are currently working through, forecasts of net income in addition to some of the savings generated from the closure of the current facility (the new leisure centre will be built on), indicate sufficient levels of income to cover the revenue costs of borrowing required to build the centre.

8.66 The Capital Budget report which will be presented to Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026, and to Full Council on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026, requests approval for a budget of £2.12m to cover RIBA stages 3 and 4 and the demolition costs of the current facility on site. The report proposes that these costs are funded by a contribution from earmarked reserves and the strategic element of Community Infrastructure Levy that has been earmarked for Leisure provision.

8.67 Should the scheme not go ahead any pre-construction costs incurred will be aborted costs to the Council.

8.68 Further refinement of income and expenditure assumptions will be undertaken during RIBA Stages 3 and 4, and the outcomes of this work will be incorporated into the Full Business Case and financial modelling, which will be presented to Cabinet for approval before any commitment is made to construction.

8.69 Further refinement of income and expenditure assumptions will be undertaken during RIBA Stages 3 and 4, and the outcomes of this work

will be incorporated into the Full Business Case, which will be reported back to Cabinet before any commitment is made to construction.

## **9. Proposal**

9.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- notes and agrees the outputs of the RIBA Stage 2 design work for the Carlton Active Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Centre, including the emerging design proposals, business case position and indicative RIBA Stage 2 cost plan, recognising that these remain subject to further development and refinement and having regard to the evidence set out within the report in respect of indoor bowls provision.
- subject to budget approval, approves progression of the project into pre-construction, specifically RIBA Stage 3 (Spatial Coordination) and RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design), to be delivered through the UK Leisure Framework.
- agrees the closure of the Richard Herrod Centre with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026, to enable the redevelopment of the site as the Carlton Active Centre, noting that the closure date aligns with the agreed programme for pre-construction and redevelopment.
- agrees to withdraw from the Carlton Forum Leisure Centre joint use agreement and authorises the serving of notice by the Chief Executive, in the consultation with the Leader of the Council, at the appropriate time in accordance with the terms of the agreement, in order to enable an orderly transition of leisure provision in Carlton.
- agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in the consultation with the Leader of the Council, to seek all necessary approvals relating to final design and the progression of the scheme through the planning and statutory approvals process, including planning applications, building control and building regulations matters, where such decisions are required to facilitate the approved progression of the project.

## **10 Alternative Options**

10.1 An option is for the Council to do nothing. However, the operational leisure assets are currently at end of life and cost the Council circa £1.3m to operate. Given the current finances of the Council, as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, this level of subsidy cannot be sustained. This leaves two options for the Council, which has a duty to

deliver its core statutory services, either investment in the discretionary leisure service through new facilities or potential closure.

10.2 The council could progress to undertake a further RIBA Stage 3 re-design exercise, focused on reviewing the current concept and identifying opportunities to reduce the overall capital cost of the scheme. This would be informed by the value engineering options identified within the RIBA Stage 2 report and would seek to align the capital cost more closely with the lower-bound affordability scenario identified through the Max Associates business case. This option would allow Members to explore whether adjustments to floor space could reduce the headline capital cost at an earlier stage.

However, Cabinet should note that:

- undertaking a further re-design would incur additional professional fees and extend the programme
- any reductions in capital cost achieved through re-design may have a corresponding impact on income generation, which would need to be carefully tested
- regardless of this approach, progression through RIBA Stages 3 and 4 would still be required to achieve cost certainty, undertake detailed surveys, progress planning and develop a Full Business Case at RIBA 4.

## **12. Legal Implications**

12.1 The project is being procured through the UK Leisure Framework, which provides a compliant route under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Alliance Leisure has been appointed as the Council's Development Partner under this framework, ensuring that procurement requirements are met and specialist expertise is available to the Council.

12.2 The Council has a duty of Best Value under the Local Government Act 1999, requiring it to ensure that services are delivered effectively and efficiently. The business case shows that Carlton Active will significantly reduce ongoing subsidy, provide modern facilities that meet current and future need, and therefore represents compliance with this duty.

12.3 The proposed development site at the Richard Herrod Centre is in the freehold ownership of Gedling Borough Council, providing certainty over deliverability.

12.4 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and will be kept under review as the project progresses. This can be found at Appendix B. Cabinet is asked to note that equalities implications have been considered in developing the RIBA 2 plans.

12.5 As a major capital scheme, the Carlton Active project will need to comply with the UK Subsidy Control regime in relation to borrowing and external funding.

12.6 The closure of the Richard Herrod Centre has legal implications in relation to property, employment and service delivery. These matters will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and Council policies, including any statutory consultation requirements, and will be aligned with the agreed programme for redevelopment.

12.7 Progression into RIBA Stages 3 and 4 will involve preparation and submission of a planning application and engagement with statutory consultees. Any planning permission granted may be subject to conditions and legal agreements, which could have implications for programme, cost and delivery.

12.8 As leisure provision transitions from existing facilities to the new Carlton Active Centre, there may be employment implications and considerations. These will be managed in accordance with employment law and the Council's HR policies, with specialist advice obtained where required.

12.9 As the project progresses into detailed design and pre-construction, duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 will apply. These duties will be discharged through the appointed professional team and contractor arrangements.

### **13 Equalities Implications**

13.1 National research from Sport England shows there are some clear inequalities in opportunities, accessibility and experiences of physical activity, leisure and sport most of which are long-term inequalities seen for many years.

13.2 Tackling inequalities is at the very heart of this Leisure review, the Council's ethos is that every person should have an equal chance to benefit from living an active life. Gedling Borough Council's Leisure Strategy will focus on the areas that will make the greatest difference. This includes ensuring people and communities have improved access to opportunities to be active in environments that are inclusive, safe

and accessible, as well as being able to enjoy experiences with confidence, motivation and the capability to take part.

- 13.3 The strategies seek to have a positive impact on certain protected characteristics based on the data and consultation analysis undertaken. In particular it seeks to address health inequalities, and this will support the opportunity for protected characteristic groups to benefit from opportunities to get active.
- 13.4 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at Appendix B highlights a potential adverse impact on older adults and disabled users due to the loss of the indoor bowls facility currently based at the Richard Herrod Centre. Bowls is recognised nationally as an inclusive, low-impact sport. Mitigation is being pursued through ongoing feasibility work, consultation and engagement. This includes exploring relocation opportunities for the Gedling Indoor Bowls Club, and expanding alternative inclusive provision within Carlton Active such as the assisted exercise suite, accessible programming and community spaces, as well as building on the existing special characteristic provision for targeted population groups currently offered at Carlton Forum Leisure Centre. This provision is documented in the EIA.
- 13.5 The EIA will remain a live document and will be reviewed at each RIBA stage to ensure equality impacts are addressed throughout the design and delivery of the project.

## **14 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 The Carlton Active project will make a significant contribution to the Council's environmental objectives by replacing two ageing, inefficient facilities with a single modern, energy-efficient building. Both Carlton Forum and Richard Herrod are ageing buildings, with the former over 50 years old, and have high energy consumption, poor thermal efficiency and rising maintenance costs. Their replacement will reduce carbon emissions and support the Council's net zero ambitions.
- 14.2 The project will be designed in line with Sport England's Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Framework and the Council's Carbon Management Plan, with sustainability embedded at each RIBA stage.
- 14.3 The capital cost plan includes an allowance for carbon reduction measures, but final scope and specification will be developed through RIBA Stages 1–2. Cabinet should note that design choices made at these stages will determine the level of carbon reduction achievable and may carry capital cost implications.

14.4 Early consideration has been given to low-carbon design principles, including enhanced building fabric performance, high levels of insulation and air tightness, and the future integration of renewable technologies, such as roof-mounted photovoltaic panels. The design also seeks to reduce reliance on fossil fuels by supporting low-carbon heating solutions

## **15 Appendices**

- 15.1 Appendix A - RIBA 2 report
- 15.2 Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment
- 15.3 Appendix C - Climate Impact Assessment

## **16 Background Papers**

- 16.1 Leisure Strategy 2025
- 16.2 Carlton Active Business Plan
- 16.3 Gedling Borough Council Engagement Report
- 16.4 Gedling Borough Council Focus Group Report
- 16.5 Opportunity Analysis
- 16.6 Strategic Outcomes Planning Model
- 16.7 General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26
- 16.8 Carbon Management Strategy
- 16.9 Bowls Club Petition
- 16.10 September 2025 – Cabinet Leisure Transformation Report

## **17 Reasons for Recommendations**

**17.1 The recommendations are made to:**

- enable the Carlton Active project to progress in a controlled and compliant manner through RIBA Stages 3 and 4, improving cost certainty, affordability and deliverability.
- ensure that financial and governance controls are maintained, including Full Council approval of pre-construction budget only, with no commitment to construction at this stage.
- facilitate the practical redevelopment of the Richard Herrod site and an orderly transition of leisure provision in Carlton
- retain Member oversight of any future decision to proceed to construction through the requirement for a further report and Full Business Case

### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by: Tina Adams**

**Date: 11/02/26**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by: Francesca**

**Whyley**

**Date: 11/02/26**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**

