

This report will be made public on 19 January 2026



Report Number: **OS/25/09**

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 27 January 2026
Responsible Officers: Ewan Green - Director of Strategy & Resources
Cabinet Member: Mike Blakemore - Cabinet Member for Community & Collaboration

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SPORT AND LEISURE

SUMMARY: This report provides an overview of the strategic approach being taken in relation to sport and leisure provision. The report presents an overview of the way in which a new sport and leisure strategy will be developed. The report also details proposed interventions from the Council in relation to swimming facilities, and S106 funding and land which is available from the Martello Lakes development for sport and leisure use.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To enable the Committee to consider the approach being taken to sport and leisure provision in order to inform future reports to Cabinet and Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report OS/25/09; and,
2. To consider the overall approach being taken in relation to sport and leisure and provide feedback for Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Sport and Leisure Strategy is an item on the Committee's Annual Workplan.

1.2 This report provides:

- an update on the process and timeline for a new Sport & Leisure Strategy
- details on strategic issues which require to be addressed now ahead of the new strategy:
 - lack of swimming provision in the District
 - use of land available at Martello Lakes for sport, leisure, community use
 - request for capital grant to enable the reopening of the swimming pool at Folkestone Sports Centre
 - future of Hythe Pool

1.3 The report consists of (1) a presentation covering the above and (2) a detailed report on the request from The Sports Trust for support to reopen the swimming pool at Folkestone Sports Centre.

1.4 Members are asked to consider the above and provide feedback to Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team.

2. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

2.1 Legal Officer's Comments (EG)

There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

2.2 Finance Officer's Comments (AM)

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (EG)

There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. Individual projects will be subject of an Equalities Impact Screening.

2.4 Climate Change Implications (EG)

There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

3. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Ewan Green, Director of Strategy & Resources
Telephone: 07783 659864
Email: ewan.green@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Presentation: Strategic Approach to Sport and Leisure

Appendix 2 - OSC Report: Proposed Capital Grant Agreement for
Folkestone Sports Centre

Appendix 2a - Grant Request from The Sports Trust

Sports & Leisure

Strategic Approach

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

27 January 2026

Overview

1. Strategic approach to Sport & Leisure
2. Sport & Leisure Strategy
3. Land at Martello Lakes
4. Folkestone Sports Centre
5. Hythe Pool

Strategic Approach to Sport & Leisure

- New Sport & Leisure Strategy to be developed to support next Local Plan, timescale to be determined by Government timetable for new plans.
- Ahead of a new strategy there are linked strategic issues which need to be addressed now:
 - Lack of swimming provision in the District
 - Future of Hythe Pool
 - Planned sport and leisure provision at Otterpool
 - Use of land available at Martello Lakes for sport, leisure, community use

Sport & Leisure Strategy - Overview

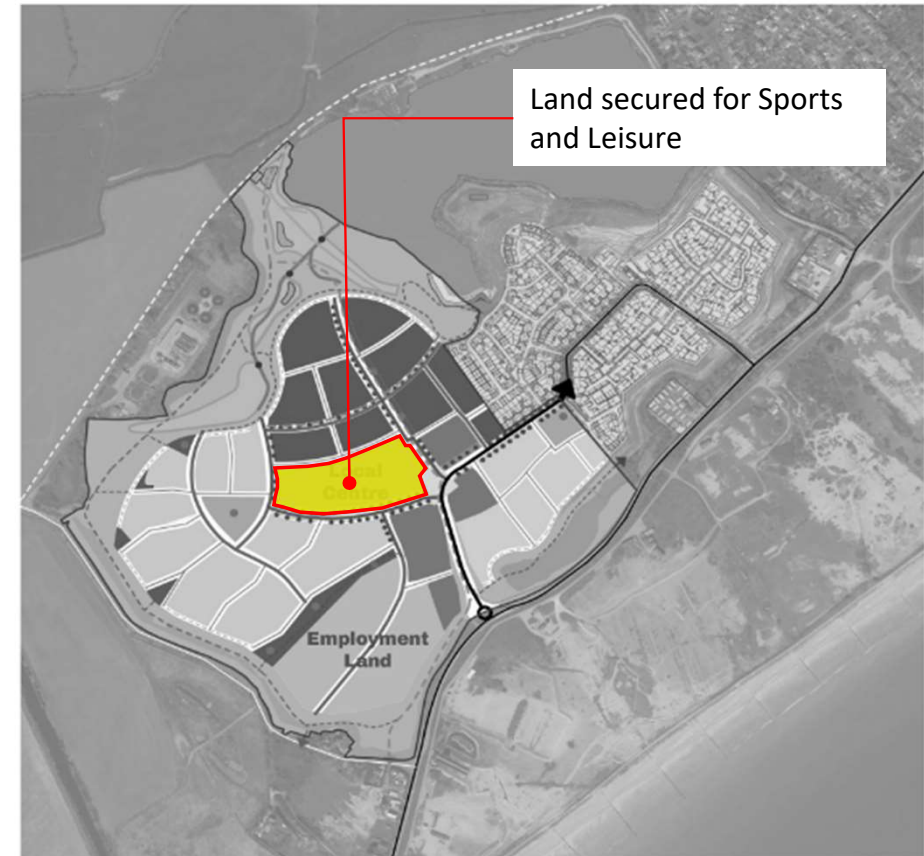
- As part of the evidence base work that will support the next Local Plan the Council will need to develop a Sport & Leisure Strategy that covers the period to 2045 to define the Districts future needs for sports and leisure provision, driven by increased population and any gaps in the existing facility network.
- The Council will appoint an experienced sports planning consultancy to provide independent advice on this matter.
- The preparation of the strategy will provide a robust base to enable the Council and other local providers to shape their future sports and leisure facilities offer; this may comprise direct provision and that undertaken by education, voluntary, community, private sectors and National Governing Bodies.
- In summary, a new strategy will:
 - Assess demand for facilities.
 - Identify actions & interventions.
 - Form part of the evidence base and strategic documents that will underpin the new Local Plan.
 - Guide FHDC (and successor unitary authority) decisions on future commitments to sports and leisure provision across the district.

Swimming Pool Demand Analysis - Overview

- Demand Analysis has been undertaken by specialist consultants to provide a basis for decision making on swimming pool provision and Council investment. This has identified:
 - A significant shortage in swimming pool provision in the District identified - investment in sustainable swimming pool development should be a key priority.
 - Shortfall in provision remains with both Hythe Pool and Folkestone Sports Centre open and fully operational.
 - Health & Fitness gym facilities should be delivered alongside new facilities to create an attractive offer that meets community needs.
 - A strong catchment is key to the success of facilities - Otterpool Park and sites closer to Folkestone and Hythe should be explored as the most viable and sustainable locations.
 - Due to location and site size, it is not recommended that the Council pursue a new swimming pool at Martello Lakes.

Land at Martello Lakes

- Outline permission was granted for 650 dwellings, of which 200 have reserved matters approval and are being built by Vistry Homes. A reserved matters application for 400 dwellings has recently been submitted by BDW.
- The s106 includes provision for the Council to be given a parcel of land for sport, leisure and community use. This is identified edged red with yellow infill on the plan.
- The Council must decide to take the land by **October 30 2026** and this will then require a Reserved Matters planning application to be submitted by **30 October 2027**.



Martello Lakes Framework Plan (approved 650 dwellings)

Land at Martello Lakes

- The reserved land at Martello Lakes site is not considered suitable to accommodate a new Leisure Centre facility due to the limited catchment (and corresponding population served) in comparison to the Otterpool Park site.
- Potential alternative sport & leisure uses for the reserved land at Martello Lakes are being considered by The Sports Consultancy as part of further assessment work. This will be subject to a future report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet ahead of a decision on the land being made. At that stage resources will be required to identified for any proposed development.
- In addition, the s106 includes a contribution for sport, leisure & community of circa **£5.5m** (including indexation). This was paid to the Council in December 2025.
- The s106 provides that the funding may be used for the improvement of sport, leisure & community facilities within the administrative boundary of FHDC with priority given to Hythe.

Folkestone Sports Centre / The Sports Trust (see Appendix 2)

- Folkestone Sports Centre closed in August 2024. Purchased by The Sports Trust (TST) in May 2025. The Sports Centre needs a major refurbishment.
- FHDC have historically grant funded Folkestone Sports Centre to support the provision of community swimming. Current grant agreement £150,000 p/a ends this year.
- TST approached the council about the continuation of grant funding as well as financial support to restore the swimming pool. FHDC unable to commit to long-term revenue support. Offered to consider making one-off capital grant.
- TST proposal in October for capital grant funding of £2,421,250 (November 2026 update) to refurbish the swimming pool, ancillary buildings (e.g. changing rooms), pool plant and roof (including solar panels.)

Folkestone Sports Centre / The Sports Trust (see Appendix 2)

- **Why fund?** Major shortfall in local swimming provision. Hythe Pool only available public swimming pool. Lost opportunities to learn to swim locally and the ongoing health benefits of regular swimming, negative impact on established community sports groups and residents.
- Draft Grant Agreement:
 - Capital grant only, no future revenue grant.
 - All payments made retrospectively when works are completed.
 - TST responsible for project overspends.
 - TST to apply council procurement rules for project.
 - Council access to site to verify works.
 - Clawback if the sports centre closes within a short period.
 - Provision of attendance figures and other performance data.
- Cabinet approval is required to enter into the grant agreement. Council approval is required for the budget allocation. It is proposed to part fund this from Martello Lakes s106.

Hythe Pool Upgrade

- Retaining Hythe Pool as a fully functioning swimming facility forms an important part of provision within the district. This will however require a significant upgrade to the current facility.
- Consultants appointed for a RIBA Stage 1 feasibility report. This report will provide designs and budget cost estimates for 3 options:

Option 1 - 'Like for like' refurbishment

Pool area and changing facilities to be refurbished like for like, with no remodel of the reception, changing or staff areas.

Option 2 - Value engineered option

This option will focus on the refurbishment of the pool area and plant as the priority. It will include limited remodelling of the existing building to improve the reception, staff and changing areas.

Option 3 - Full remodel of pool and changing area

This option is to explore a full refurbishment of the pool area and plant. The reception, changing and staff facilities will be remodelled to create a modern changing village layout with improved reception and staff areas. This option may include the demolition of the existing flat roof area and rebuild as a more cost-effective option.

Hythe Pool Upgrade

- Additional design work being undertaken by FHDC team to assess options to increase car parking provision to the rear of the building and potential revenue stream for non-pool users.
- Report commissioned on solar power, air and ground source heat pumps and EV charging options for the facility, including potential grant options.
- Funding for Hythe Pool forms part of the Council budget setting process 2026-27. £6M is included in the Capital Fund Programme, to be part funded from Martello Lakes s106.
- Report to OSC and then Cabinet in March 2026 seeking to confirm the preferred option and agree to deliver the project.
- Indicative delivery timeline: Pool closure and works started late 2026/early 2027 (must align with any planning requirements and reopening of Folkestone Sports Centre).

Overview of Member Considerations / Decisions in 2026

- January Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider strategic approach to leisure
- February Council Budget Approval
- March Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider options for Hythe Pool
- March Cabinet decision on grant to Folkestone Sports Centre
- March Cabinet decision to progress Hythe Pool project
- June / July Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider options for land at Martello Lakes
- June / July Cabinet decision on land at Martello Lakes
- June / July Projects included in Corporate Plan Action Plan

Appendix 2

This Report will be made public on 19 January 2026



Report Number: **OS/25/13**

To: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 27 January 2026
Status: Key Decision
Responsible Officer: Andrew Rush, Chief Officer Regulatory & Community Services
Cabinet Member: Cllr M Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Community & Collaboration

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CAPITAL GRANT AGREEMENT FOR FOLKESTONE SPORTS CENTRE

SUMMARY: This report details the proposed capital grant to be provided to The Sports Trust to support a programme of works to enable the re-opening of the swimming facilities at Folkestone Sports Centre. The proposed capital grant is in total £2,421,250.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report OS/25/13; and,
2. To provide feedback on the proposed grant agreement for Folkestone Sports Centre

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Folkestone Sports Centre Trust went into administration in August 2024, and the swimming pool and sports centre closed. The closure of the sports centre means that Hythe Pool is the only available public swimming baths in the district. At the time of its closure the council provided an annual revenue grant of £150,000 to the Folkestone Sports Centre Trust. The agreement was for three years ending in March 2026.
- 1.2 In May 2025, the sports centre was purchased by The Sports Trust, who run the Three Hills sports centre and grounds. The Sports Trust contacted the council to see if the current revenue grant agreement could be transferred to them and enquired about the availability of additional financial support for a project to refurbish the sports centre. Members had indicated a keenness to financially support the re-opening of the sports centre.
- 1.3 In August 2025, The Sports Trust sent a funding proposal to the council, which was for 'shortfall' capital funding of £1.544m of the overall refurbishment project and a 4-year revenue grant of £200k per annum. This proposal was rejected as it did not specifically fund the re-opening of the swimming pool and created an uncertain position with regards to compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. The council was also unable to commit to the ongoing revenue grant commitment and preferred any support to be funded from capital reserves or via s106 agreements.
- 1.4 The Sports Trust sent a second proposal in October 2025 (Appendix 1). This proposal focused on the capital works needed to re-open the swimming pool, including renovation of ancillary areas like reception and the changing rooms, the addition of solar panels, and repairs to the flat roof. The total capital funding proposal was for £2,421,250 which was equivalent to the capital + revenue commitment in the August proposal.
- 1.5 In discussions with the Trust, no definite financial commitments have been made, and it has been emphasised that it will ultimately be a decision for Council in the setting of the Capital Programme Budget for 26/27 and Cabinet in approving the Grant Agreement.

2. DRAFT GRANT AGREEMENT

- 2.1 A draft agreement has been prepared with Legal Services. The main parts of the agreement are described below.

Overview

- 2.2 The Sports Trust have asked for funding totalling £2,421,250. This funding would be drawn down as the works are completed over a period of six months. As the grant agreement will only cover the required works to the swimming pool and ancillary buildings, it will be necessary for The Sports Trust to look for other income streams including land sales to continue any remaining works to the premises and to re-open other facilities such as the gym.

- 2.3 The grant agreement is for capital funded projects only and offered on the basis that no further revenue grants will be provided. This has been agreed and will be included as a term in the agreement. The proposal includes power efficiency measures like solar panels to reduce ongoing operating costs.
- 2.4 The Sports Trust have provided a Project Programme, which schedules delivery of the project by the end of July 2026. This will be in advance of any potential projected closure date for Hythe Pool for refurbishment in the autumn should this be approved by members. However, the condition of the sports centre and complexity of modernising an aging pool means that there is a high risk of slippage in that programme.
- 2.5 The Sports Trust would welcome the opportunity to provide a general briefing to councillors about their plans for Folkestone Sports Centre

Financial Controls

- 2.6 It is recognised that this will be a major funding commitment and there needs to be financial risk controls built into the agreement.

The financial controls include:

- All payments are made retrospectively when works are completed. Cost information will be provided on an 'open book' basis.
 - Funding is only agreed to the limit of each stage or individual project. The Sports Trust will be responsible for any cost overruns.
 - The Sports Trust will apply council equivalent procurement thresholds to their tendering e.g. up to £100k three quotes and above £100k publicly advertised tenders.
 - The agreement will include clawback clauses including re-payment of grant, should any clauses be broken (i.e. the swimming pool is closed) or the Sports Trust withdraws from the project.
 - Council officers (or council appointed specialists) will be able to attend the site to verify that works have been completed.
- 2.7 The Sports Trust will also monitor and provide ongoing data on community use of the swimming pool including numbers for each swimming lessons cohort, club activity and swimming club use.

3. SUBSIDY CONTROL ACT 2022

- 3.1 The Subsidy Control Act was introduced at the start of 2023. Public authorities must consider on a case-by-case basis whether any financial assistance provided by them could fall within the definition of a subsidy. For these purposes a subsidy is any financial assistance which:
- Is provided from public resources by a public authority.
 - Confers an economic advantage not available on market terms.
 - Is specific to one or more enterprises.

- Could affect competition or investment in the UK or trade/investment internationally.

3.2 We have assessed that the new grant agreement would meet the general definition of a subsidy. It will therefore need to comply with the Subsidy Control Act principles i.e. address market failure.

Main points in support of compliance:

- The grant agreement focuses on the provision of community swimming rather than other general leisure activities like gym provision which could be supplied by commercial providers.
- Demand analysis completed to support the Leisure Strategy identifies a shortfall in community swimming provision within the district even with Folkestone Sports Centre back in operation.
- The capital grant is proportionate to achieving its objective, and the exclusion of an ongoing revenue grant means there is no ongoing market distorting impact.

3.3 Even if the grant does not meet the definition or thresholds of a qualifying 'subsidy' under the Act there may be merit in a voluntary referral to the Competition & Markets Authority for listing on the UK Subsidy Database as this can limit any potential challenge.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 The capital funding estimated for the grant at £2,421,250 will be included in the General Fund Capital Programme 26/27 for approval as part of the annual council budget for 26/27.

4.2 Subject to budget approval and terms being agreed with The Sports Trust, the intention is to report the grant agreement to Cabinet on 25 March 2026.

4.3 The terms of the final agreement will be assessed against the criteria of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and a decision made to refer for inclusion on the CMA database.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

5.1 A summary of the perceived risks follows

Perceived Risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Mitigation
Quotes for works are incorrect, and the works cannot be completed	Medium	Low	With the agreement of the Council additional funding streams could be put in place to cover the difference in costs.
The Sports Trust could take the grant funding and disappear	High	Low	Payment will be retrospective on receipt of invoices from the third-party contractors which will be verified by competent officers.
The Sports Trust do not use the correct procurement process	High	Low	Clause within the Grant Agreement stating that the Sports Trust must adhere to all applicable procurement rules.
Funding used on ineligible expenditure	Low	Low	Clause in the Grant Agreement clarifying what eligible and ineligible expenditure consists of as well as an open book arrangement in place and a clawback clause.
Failure of the Sports Trust to keep the swimming facilities open long term	Low	Low	Clawback clause in place to reclaim x amount of the grant should the swimming facilities close with in 5 years of opening.
Failure of the Sports Trust to allow community use	Low	Low	Clause in the grant agreement stating that the Sports Trust must not limit the availability of the facilities unless written permission from the Council has been sought.
Reputational damage to the	Medium	Low	Retrospective payments in place,

<p>Council should there be an overspend</p>			<p>so draw down can be monitored against the expected expenditure detailed in the Cash Flow Forecast.</p>
<p>Fraud</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Open book arrangement will be in place for the duration of the grant agreement and for a further 5 years following this.</p>
<p>Failure by the Sports Trust to complete the works to the rest of the building</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>It is stated in the grant agreement that the Sports Trust should not expect further funding after this capital grant and must ensure other income streams are in place for any additional works.</p>

6. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

4.4 **Legal (OS)** – Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 grants Local Government Authorities a general Power of competence.

(1) A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do.

(2) Subsection (1) applies to things that an individual may do.

Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 grants local authorities the power to do anything that is conducive to the discharge of their functions, without prejudice to any other powers.

The Council is empowered to carry out this transaction under the powers outlined above.

4.5 **Finance (JS)** – There is sufficient flexibility within the GF capital programme to accommodate the grant funding. Initial proposals are for £1.5m of funding to come from s106 financing (Martello Lakes), with the remainder from capital receipts. However, this is still subject to the annual budget setting process for 2026/27 where the precise funding arrangements for this

scheme will be finalised, particularly with other leisure schemes also coming forward.

- 4.6 **Diversity & Equalities (AR)** - The project to re-open the pool will be a positive in terms of equalities. An EIA is not required.
- 4.7 **Climate Change (JWi)** – The pool refurbishment project incorporates sustainability measures; installation of solar panels will both reduce costs and lower carbon emissions. Modernisation of the swimming pool will also improve energy efficiency through upgraded heating and filtration systems. These measures align with the Council’s climate change Action Plan. It is recommended to also look into opportunities for further enhancements, such as improved insulation when replacing the roof and LED lighting. Indirectly, reopening the sports centre locally may reduce travel-related emissions by limiting the need for residents to use facilities outside the district.)

7. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Andrew Rush
Chief Officer Regulatory & Community Services
Telephone: 07791 956341
Email: andrew.rush@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Appendix 2a – Funding Proposal from the Sports Trust (October 2025)



Folkestone Sports Centre: reopening the swimming pool for the whole community

An application to Folkestone & Hythe District Council: detailed information

Introduction

This document comprises further detailed information following the provision of a two-page summary to Folkestone and Hythe District Council in April 2025. It describes the evidence, planning and assumptions underpinning our request for support from FHDC, which will be essential to enabling the swimming pool at Folkestone Sports Centre to reopen to the public and, in time, become a self-sustaining facility for the benefit of all. In turn, supporting the revival of Folkestone Sports Centre will aid FHDC in the achievement of its Corporate Plan priorities for the district, specifically to *improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and increase our resilience to climate change*.

The Sports Trust

The Sports Trust is a charity that has worked closely with Folkestone and Hythe District Council since its inception in 2013 as a positive force to break down the barriers to participation in physical activity by people in Folkestone and Hythe of all ages, interests and levels of mobility. We are immensely grateful for the continuing support we have received from FHDC over many years, which has enabled us to expand our offer to the local community as well as helping to provide much-needed financial stability. The three existing sites which we operate (Three Hills Sports Park, the F51 skatepark and Folkestone Sea Sports) are hugely popular with local people of all ages, enabling them to easily find an activity that suits them, bringing major health and wellbeing benefits to the Folkestone and Hythe community.

With The Sports Trust also attracting support from funders including the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation and Swire Charitable Trust (alongside more typical sports funders including Sport England), we represent a highly cost-effective way in which FHDC can invest in sport and healthy recreation locally, achieving a 'multiplier effect' in benefit for every pound spent.

In the last year The Sports Trust has created more than **300,000** sports experiences in Folkestone and Hythe:

- Through our **Schools Programme** we work with **50 primary schools, 15 secondary schools and 3 Special Education Needs Schools (SEN)**, and offer a venue for home schooled children, creating **62,000** engagements with local children a year. Our staff work with schools and teachers to encourage children of all abilities to enjoy physical activity through a timetable of coaching and competitions, creating positive experiences of sport to support the physical and mental health of young people, setting them up for active lifestyles as adults.
- Our **Hero Holiday Camps** provide **6,000** free places for children from low-income families over six weeks of the year during the summer, Christmas and Easter holidays. Children spend time learning new skills across our three venues and enjoy making and eating healthy and nutritious food. We found that: 88% of the children made new friends; 76% gained confidence and 46% had reduced anxiety and mental health.
- **Little Athletes** offers weekly sports and physical opportunities for young children, with **2,000** attendances annually by parents, carers and children, encouraging social engagement between children, parents and carers. Our fun sessions provide activities that are enjoyable and accessible and help children to develop motor skills as well as providing parents with a place access guidance from services that specialise in supporting young families. Our recently launched **Littlest Athletes** focuses on supporting babies aged up to one year and their parents and carers.
- **Active 50** offers a welcoming and inclusive weekly programme of activities for older people including: walks; low-impact cricket and football; pickleball; yoga; pilates; keep fit classes; low impact circuits; and Zumba. It helps people to feel better - physically, mentally and socially. Every week **200** people participate.
- F51 hosts monthly **Women's, Girls' and Non-Binary sessions**, attended by **40** people each month, in collaboration with Poser Skate Project, a grassroots organisation which is passionate about diversifying skateboarding. Climbing is also very popular at these sessions.
- Supporting **local sports clubs** has been a core strand of the Sports Trust's work since its foundation. Each year we work with **47** sports clubs which provide invaluable experiences for participants, volunteers and wider communities to discover their sporting passions, the benefits of which reach far beyond club doors, as they make positive impacts on physical health, mental wellbeing, social development, community cohesion and much more. The Sports Trust offers dynamic support to sports clubs, helping them to become sustainable and achieve



their own objectives. From support with funding applications to facilitating workshops that upskill their workforce, we provide clubs with guidance and help to drive participation and raise awareness of their sport. We host half of these clubs within our facilities.

Folkestone Sports Centre

Until July 2024, Folkestone Sports Centre (FSC), a well-established community facility encompassing a swimming pool, fitness studios, squash courts, tennis courts, golf course, ski slope and skywalk, was run by the Folkestone Sports Centre Trust. Sadly, at this point the Trust went into administration, leading to the closure of the site and great consternation among the community, particularly over the loss of the swimming pool. Following a tender process established to identify a future for the site, The Sports Trust has now taken ownership of FSC – a significant milestone in the journey towards bringing FSC back into use for the whole community. As we outlined in April 2025 however, significant renovation works are required before the centre can be reopened, encompassing long-term investments which would have been required had FSC remained open, tackling a backlog of repairs and maintenance that have built up since the centre closed, and implementing improvements to the building’s energy efficiency. The latter investment will reduce the building’s operating costs as well as contributing to local ambitions for tackling the climate crisis.

Capital investment required to reopen the swimming pool

Professional advice commissioned by The Sports Trust from B&M construction consultants and FMG sports consultancy has identified capital works required to enable the reopening of the swimming pool, changing areas and reception alongside essential repairs to the roof and the installation of a solar rig at an estimated cost of £2,421,250. The table below lists the works required ahead of reopening.

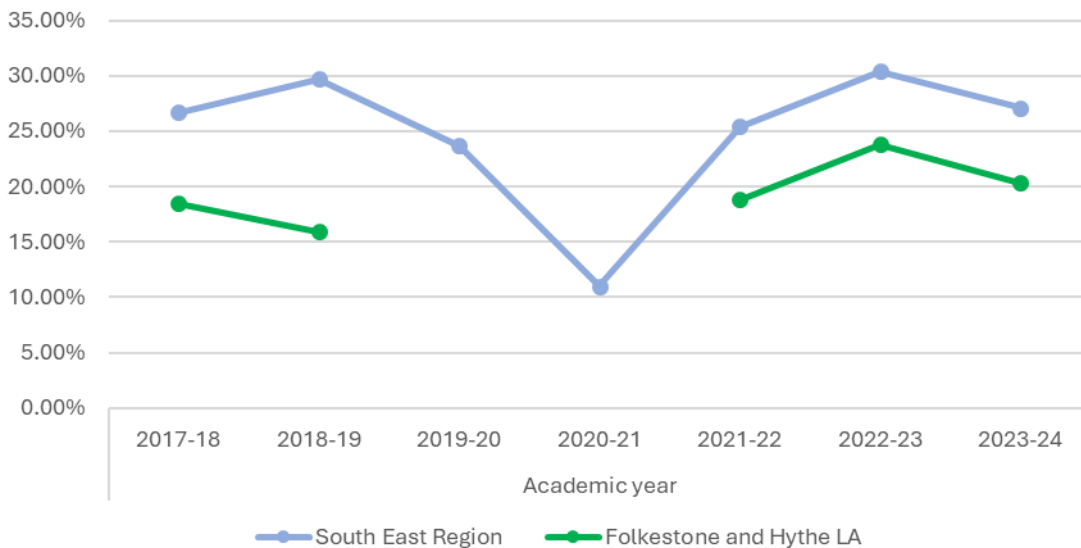
Item	Summary of required work	Cost
Reception area	New floor, wall & ceiling finishes, new turnstiles, new cooling, office, duty office, foyer toilet	£208,500.00
Swimming Pools	Grating, clear down walls, paint, lights, pool covers, aqua safety equipment	£162,250.00
Pool viewing gallery and café	Renovation of pool viewing gallery	£50,000.00
Changing rooms	Full refit to modern standards	£207,900.00
Mechanical, electrical and plumbing services	Connection to new solar PV system, pool plant & ventilation, vent pump, security and fire alarms, CCTV improvements, lift recommissions	£212,000.00
Other areas	External and internal signage and wayfinding, redecoration	£62,600.00
Structural works to existing building		£135,000.00
Repair works to flat roof (20 year guarantee)		£400,000.00
Adhesive solar panel system	180kW panels, inverters, 100kW battery storage system	£450,000.00
Main contractor's preliminaries and overheads		£533,000.00
Total (Exc VAT)		£2,421,250.00

We regard it as particularly important to reopen the swimming pools, a priority we understand is shared with FHDC. Swim England recently published analysis showing that across the country 500 swimming pools have closed since 2010, equivalent to 34,859 square metres of water space, and that 42% of closures had taken place since 2020¹. At the same time research has demonstrated the benefits of swimming to both mental and physical wellbeing, in turn reducing pressure on NHS services². We also know from Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey that participation in swimming by children and young people in Folkestone and Hythe has been consistently lower than across the South East as a whole, even before the closure of FSC:

¹ <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/new-data-shows-pool-closures-increasing/>

² <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/new-study-says-swimming-benefits-mental-health/>

Swimming activities: participation in the last week
(children and young people)



Data source: Sport England Active Lives Survey of Children and Young People

Other capital investment items detailed above encompass the essential (relating to health and safety, and structural repairs) as well as those which have been identified in our business plan as necessary to reduce the running costs and environmental impact of the energy-hungry swimming pool – the 180kW solar array and 100kW battery storage system, which will provide a substantial proportion of the pool’s energy requirements.

Request to Folkestone and Hythe District Council

It is imperative that having been able to purchase the facility we now secure the necessary funds to carry out the repairs and improvements so that work can begin as soon as possible and the community can once again benefit from the healthy opportunities that FSC can provide.

Residents were shocked and upset when the FSC, a much loved community asset, closed last year, resulting in a 9,000-strong petition to save the facility. If we are unable to achieve our ambition to reopen it, there will be a significant detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the local community, with people living in a coastal town left with nowhere to learn to swim.



We are immeasurably grateful to FHDC for their co-operation so far on this project, supporting as it does our shared aim to save a much needed and greatly loved resource from permanent loss, while also helping to alleviate the local housing shortage. We hope that the Councillors will appreciate the benefit to local people of providing a substantial financial investment in our endeavour which will be pivotal to its success. We would like to invite the Council to consider a **£2,421,250** investment to ensure the swimming pool can be fully renovated and reopened to the public. Should the Council be minded to provide this much-needed support, we would like to request the release of the funds by December 2025 which will enable the pool to reopen by July 2026 without the need for alternative financing which would cause delay and increased costs. Such a commitment from FHDC will bring immense benefit to the local community, enabling us to continue and expand our mission to ensure that everyone locally has access to healthy, affordable and life-enhancing physical activities.