

Huntingdon Leisure Centre

Pre-Contract Cost Update and Review



April 2026

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared for Huntingdonshire District Council to provide commentary on capital costs for the Huntingdon Leisure Centre extension. Pricing has been received from the Main Contractor (Universal Civils and Build), and following negotiations, the figures in this report set out the cost basis recommended to enter into contract. All figures in this report exclude VAT.
- 1.2 The scope comprises an extension to the existing leisure centre housing a new 25m pool, separate learner pool and viewing area, associated changing rooms and fitness suite. The existing building is remodelled to include an improved café and reception area and two new studios to the ground floor. The scope excludes work to the existing sports hall and areas beyond the reception area as well as any work to the existing first floor. Externally, a new 3G football pitch will be added to the school site, and padel and pickleball courts added to the main site along with a new children's play area. The current swimming pool hall will be converted to a soft play and the pool changing rooms converted to changing rooms to serve the new 3G football pitch. Additional parking spaces will be added, and the bowls club car park improved.
- 1.3 Varsity Consulting Ltd is a RICS Chartered quantity surveying practice with extensive experience of leisure projects. Varsity is based in St Ives, Huntingdonshire.

2.0 Findings

- 2.1 To date £1,222,031 has been spent on design fees and surveys. The proposed sum for the construction stage works is £24,579,533 (the anticipated Contract Sum), therefore the total contractor cost is £25,801,564. There is also a £1,000,000 allowance for the 3G pitch that is being procured separately, as well as fees, contingency, fixtures, fittings and equipment taking the project cost total to £29,475,000.
- 2.2 We have undertaken a leisure centre comparison review to analyse the cost per square metre for similar projects based on Varsity's own database, re-basing the prices to reflect the construction dates for this project. This can be found in section 7 of this report. This analysis demonstrates good value for money when compared to other projects.
- 2.3 The construction industry is currently experiencing a significant spike in construction prices as a result of the situation in Iran. Whilst the effects of this have not yet been fully realised, there is significant nervousness in the market and suppliers are adding risk allowances to their prices at all levels of the supply chain to try to protect themselves from rises they cannot control. Universal has included a sensible level of pricing for this risk and the preference is certainly for this risk to be transferred to the Contractor rather than retained by the Council.
- 2.4 There are several provisional sums in the Contractor's price, for items where prices cannot currently be fixed. These will be adjusted in due course to reflect the actual costs, with the Council either benefitting from reductions, or meeting the costs of increases. This is normal in construction projects of this scale and nature. These are set out in section 4 of this report.
- 2.5 There are several opportunities to reduce the construction cost via value engineering, albeit these items will have an effect on functionality, quality or revenue. These are set out in section 6 of this report.

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3.0 Cost Summary

The below sets out the project cost based on Universal's price submission for the works.

Item	£
Pre-Construction Fees	£1,222,031
Construction Costs	£24,579,533
3G Football pitch	£1,000,000
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	£860,000
Project delivery fees	£937,901
Client contingency	£816,587
Framework access fee	£58,948
TOTAL £ (excl VAT)	£29,475,000

Costs have increased since RIBA Stage 2 due to additions to the racket facilities, additional parking spaces, tennis club enhancements, gates to the school for additional out of hours parking, bowls club parking works, enhancements to the soft play WC facilities, new cricket wickets, archaeological requirements, ecological requirements, market conditions, abnormal ground conditions, drainage attenuation requirements and other firming up of pricing and scope.

4.0 Provisional Sums

These figures include the following provisional sums

Item	£
Utilities Connections	£ 250,000.00
Asbestos Removal	£ 50,000.00
Access Control	£ 20,000.00
AV	£ 15,000.00
Blinds	£ 36,408.62
Sheet & CFA Piling	£ 392,380.00
Football Changing Foul Drainage works	£ 25,000.00
Service Trenching	£ 14,086.34
Reception Desks	£ 40,000.00
Turnstiles	£ 70,000.00
Play Park	£100,000
FF&E (soft play frame, gym and studio equipment, pool equipment, catering equipment, general furniture and signage)	£860,000
3G pitch	£1,000,000
Works to bowls club car park	£120,000

These will be adjusted in due course to reflect the actual costs, with the Council either benefitting from reductions, or meeting the costs of increases. It may be possible to firm up the provisional sum for piling prior to contract depending on timing of entering into contract.

5.0 Key Cost Risks

Some of the key cost risks that could potentially require drawdown of contingency are as follows:

- Exceeding provisional sums
- Asbestos removal costs in excess of allowances
- Issues with structures of existing buildings
- Archaeological requirements beyond initial trial trenching
- Unknown ecological requirements
- Discharge of planning conditions
- Client changes
- Services diversions

6.0 Contingency and Value Engineering

The project contingency is currently £816,587, equating to 3.16% of the construction cost. This is tight, albeit it is a design and build contract that passes significant levels of risk on to the Contractor, and the Contractor has taken on the ground risk, (one of the largest risks for a project of this type).

The scope is well considered, however there are some potential value engineering options to reduce the construction cost and increase the contingency. Easier items to achieve are set out below:

Item	Saving £
Omit pool cover. Omission of this results in a small increase to utilities consumption but benefits in terms of water cleanliness.	£66,000
Omit BMS from soft play, simple controls in lieu. This omits external control or monitoring of system but OK if site staff are trained.	£38,000
Omit acoustic baffles in fitness suite. This would be subject to acoustic review.	£48,000

Taking all of these savings would increase the project contingency to £968,587 (3.75% of construction cost). Further, less desirable value engineering options are as follows:

Item	Saving £
Alternative cubicle supplier. This would likely reduce the quality and lifespan of the installation.	£27,000
Omit learner pool moveable floor, fixed depth in lieu. This may reduce the revenue associated with the wet facilities by circa 10%.	£383,000
Reduce the secure line around the tennis club to individual facilities only. This would affect their ability to manage the site.	£41,000
Omit the raised access floor from the fitness suite. This would make future changes to data and power for equipment more complex and expensive.	£27,000

Taking all of these savings in addition to those in the table above would increase the project contingency to £1,446,587 (5.61% of construction cost).

The Council should review and confirm whether they wish to explore any of these items further.

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7.0 Benchmarking of Wet and Dry Leisure Centre Build Costs

Project	Start on Site Date	Construction Cost Total (Inflated to 1Q 27)	GIFA (m2)	Total Rate (£/m2)
Dover	Q2 2018	£ 25,950,920	5,000	5,190
Spelthorne	Q1 2019	£ 44,033,164	8,303	5,303
Huntingdon	Q2 2026	£ 25,801,564	4,663	5,533
The Wave	Q4 2016	£ 40,132,032	7,300	5,498
Mablethorpe	Q4 2022	£ 13,970,766	2,450	5,702
Caerphilly	2Q 2025	£ 30,999,009	5,423	5,716
Skelmersdale	Q4 2023	£ 22,395,823	3,812	5,875
Ormskirk	Q4 2023	£ 24,521,447	3,800	6,453
Tides	Q1 2023	£ 26,765,595	3,800	7,044
Britannia	Q3 2020	£ 62,064,523	8,663	7,164
Berkhampstead	Q4 2022	£ 42,525,600	5,500	7,732
Bedworth	Q3 2022	£ 38,195,418	4,635	8,241

Huntingdon cost includes pre-construction fees
Benchmarked to mid-point of construction



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