

Update on Feasibility and Design Study for New Community Building – July 2024

Introduction: Over the past three months, the steering group has conducted several working party meetings to review potential options for the future of the facility. Recent consultations with Chaplin Farrant have led to the evaluation of various proposals, which have been discussed extensively by the group.

Reviewed Options: The steering group has considered the following options, each with its associated budget costs:

1. **Refurbishment of the Existing Building:** This option involves upgrading and improving the current facility to meet contemporary standards.
2. **Refurbishment of the Historic Render and Tile Building, Including a New Build:** This proposal includes renovating the historic elements of the building while adding new construction to modernize and expand the facility.
3. **A Completely New Build:** This option entails constructing an entirely new facility, which would involve demolishing the existing structure and starting from scratch.

Stakeholder Feedback: Feedback from various stakeholders who currently use the facility has been collected by the Clerk and shared with both the steering group and Chaplin Farrant. The following groups and organizations were consulted:

- Bowls Club
- Exchange 2
- Harleston Shed
- Harleston Information Plus (HIP)
- Harleston Town Youth Football Club
- Harleston Squash Club
- Harleston Tennis Club

It is worth noting that Harleston Town Football Club was invited to participate in the consultation but has not engaged with the offer.

Additional Proposal: Since the last steering group meeting, Chaplin Farrant has introduced a fourth option—a scaled-back design. This option has not yet been reviewed by the steering group.

Current Focus: The steering group is currently concentrating on exploring available funding options. The Clerk has reached out to the County Association to investigate potential loan opportunities under the “Public Works Funding” scheme.

Next Steps: The steering group will continue with the following actions:

1. Further evaluation of the proposed options.
2. Detailed assessment of funding possibilities and financial implications.
3. Additional consultation