

Supporting Document

Proposed North Hykeham Community Hub Extension

Community Consultation 2025

Aim

The aim of this document is to inform the reader of the history and rationale behind the proposal to extend the existing North Hykeham Community Hub building located in Valerian Way. The document will outline the history of the existing building and cover the work that has been carried out to date relating to the project. The document will also present detail of the current proposal, plan and costing for review and comment.

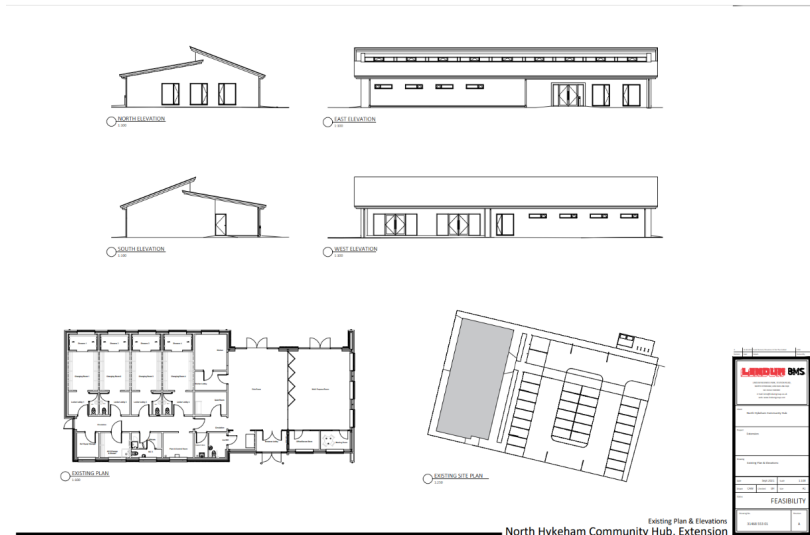
Background

Current build.

The “Community Hub” was built in 2018 as part of the overall development of Manor Farm housing estate and Chapel Fields playing area.



The funding and approval at the time was to provide a sports pavilion which would support football (or other sporting activities) on Chapel Fields. The original planning design refers to the building as a sports pavilion, which is the primary purpose of the building. Chapel Fields was earmarked to provide up to 3 football pitches, supporting various age groups, along with the appropriate changing facilities for both players and officials. This building was commissioned and opened in 2018. The plan of the original build is shown in the figure below.



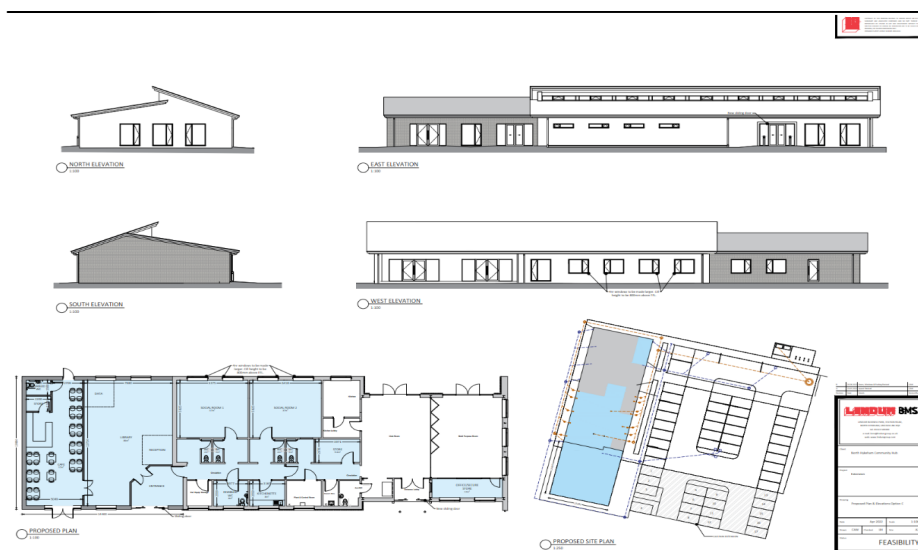
Since opening, the Pavillion has not been utilised for its intended purpose. There have been no football pitches marked out, and no teams have made use of the changing facilities.

By common usage and external signage, the building has become known as the Community Hub.

A pre-school group used the hall, along with the library, making some use of the facilities on a daily basis. In 2022 the pre-school group moved to alternate accommodation leaving the library as the primary users of the building.

2022 Proposal and Community Consultation.

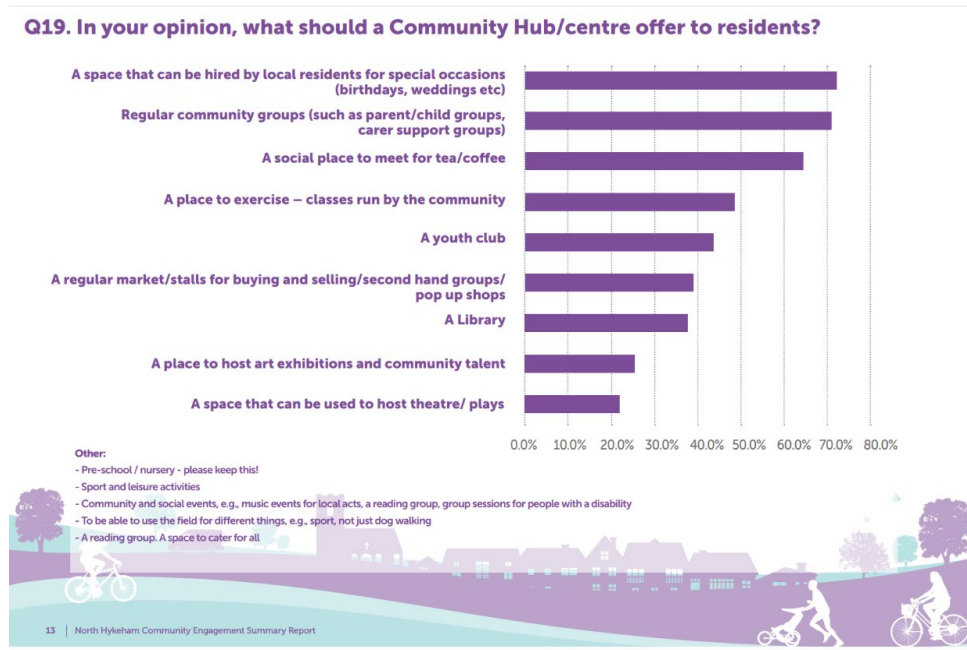
In early 2022 the town council began an investigation into making better use of the building, to better support the local community. This resulted in the production of a plan to modify the existing building, repurposing some of the changing facilities and extending the building to provide more useful space to house the library and provide 'rentable' space for community groups or activities. The proposed plan is shown in the figure below.



In late 2022 the town council undertook a community consultation activity, seeking the views of the local population and asking for priorities in respect to other facilities that could be offered around Chapel Fields. One of the questions asked in this community consultation exercise was “What should a Community Hub/centre offer to residents?” The responses to this question are shown in the figure below. The full consultation document can be found using this link:-

https://www.northhykehamtowncouncil.gov.uk/Community_Hub_Engagement_2022.aspx Download the ‘Community Engagement Survey 2022’ document.

Note: - The detail on the linked page refers to the submissions as at 2022. They do not reflect the current design. Reference is also made to inclusion of a ‘Pump Track’. There is insufficient space on the existing site for this feature



From the response above, a space for more community-based activities is a high priority, providing hireable space, supporting community groups and providing social space (tea/coffee).

These elements from the survey were included in the proposal effort, with dedicated social spaces, existing hall available for hire, space set aside for a café and the continuance of the library.

The cost of this proposal was estimated at £500k, an amount the council had already set aside.

With this design and the approval of the community, the council went forward with a planning application.

Unfortunately, the application was unsuccessful. One of the main reasons for the rejection was the modification to the existing building and the removal of changing facilities. A summary of the planning rejection notice is available using this link :- https://www.northhykehamtowncouncil.gov.uk/Community_Hub_Engagement_2022.aspx Download the ‘Refused Planning Application 2022’ document.

As stated previously, one of the original design purposes of the building was to provide changing rooms for sports teams using the fields. A significant funding grant was given based on this assertion. Sport England therefore objected to the reduction in the number of changing facilities.

The Council did seek advice on whether an appeal to this decision would be successful. The response was that a change of outcome would be highly unlikely.

Progress to Date

From receipt of the notification of rejection of the application, the council have carried on working to meet the aspirations of the community consultation results.

An architect was engaged to support the council through a pre-application assessment process. This process allows the applicant (council) to submit plans to the planning authority, in an informal sense, to gain direction on the likelihood of full approval.

A set of drawings were generated and submit for assessment. The drawings included the site layout showing the football pitches could be accommodated on the site, post building modification. From the Pre-application response, there was a requirement to demonstrate that up to 3 pitches could be accommodated on the site with a 3m perimeter around each pitch. In addition, the council included provision for a Multi-Use-Games-Area (MUGA). The inclusion of the MUGA demonstrates increased community use of the land over and above that solely for the provision of football. The plan shows that the football pitches, the MUGA and an extension could be accommodated on the existing site. The proposed changes to the existing building were scaled back to the point that the new build becomes an extension to the existing rather than a modification. This retains the existing sports changing facilities. The detail of these plans are shown in the figures below.





From the figures above, it can be seen that the increased size of the new build accommodates both a library space and a café space. The concept being that furniture will be included to have an integrated space for browsing or social gatherings. The existing 'pavilion' space being available for hire. The wooden floor in this hall would support exercise groups or social (parties) use.

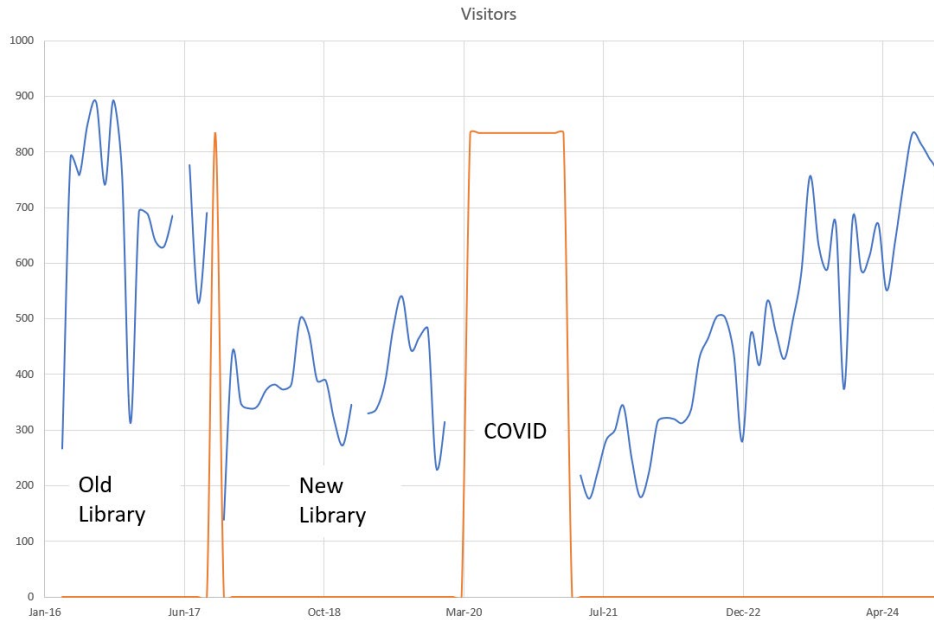
Entry to the new build would be via a new entrance, allowing separation of both buildings depending on use.

The new build includes additional toilet and kitchen facilities with wide access to accommodate all potential users. The Pre-App response strongly suggested that an application which retained the existing changing room capability and capacity, also showing that sports pitches could be accommodated on the site along with the proposed extension and MUGA, would be looked upon favourably.

Library

It is proposed that the library will be housed in the new build. The increase floor space will allow more room between racks and possibly the inclusion of more stock.

Over the past years the visitor numbers and membership of the library has continued to follow an increasing trend. Visitors, book reservations and new members are all showing year on year increases. The graphs below show the detail up to end Dec 24.



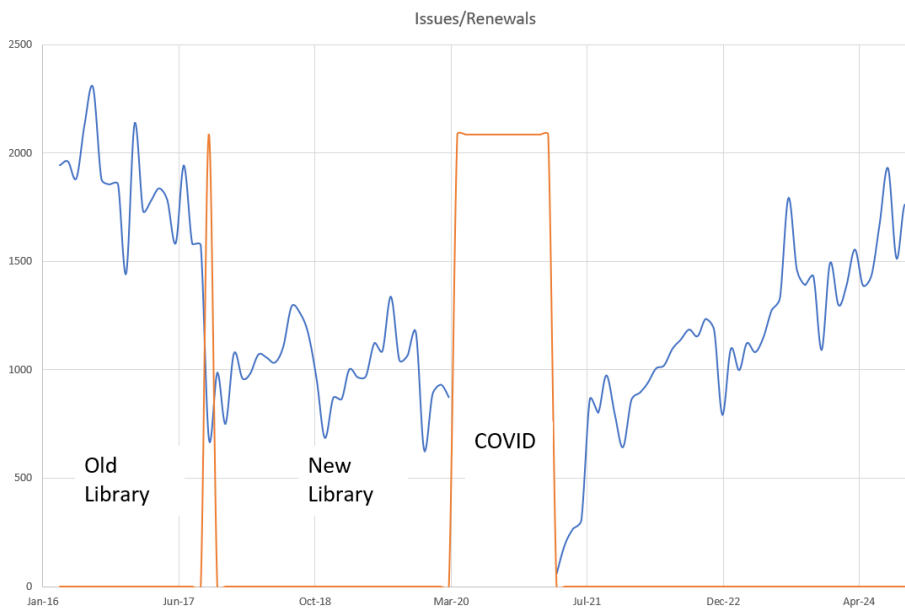
The Visitors graph reflects the month-by-month visitors into the library.

The period for which data is available covers a short time when the library was in middle street.

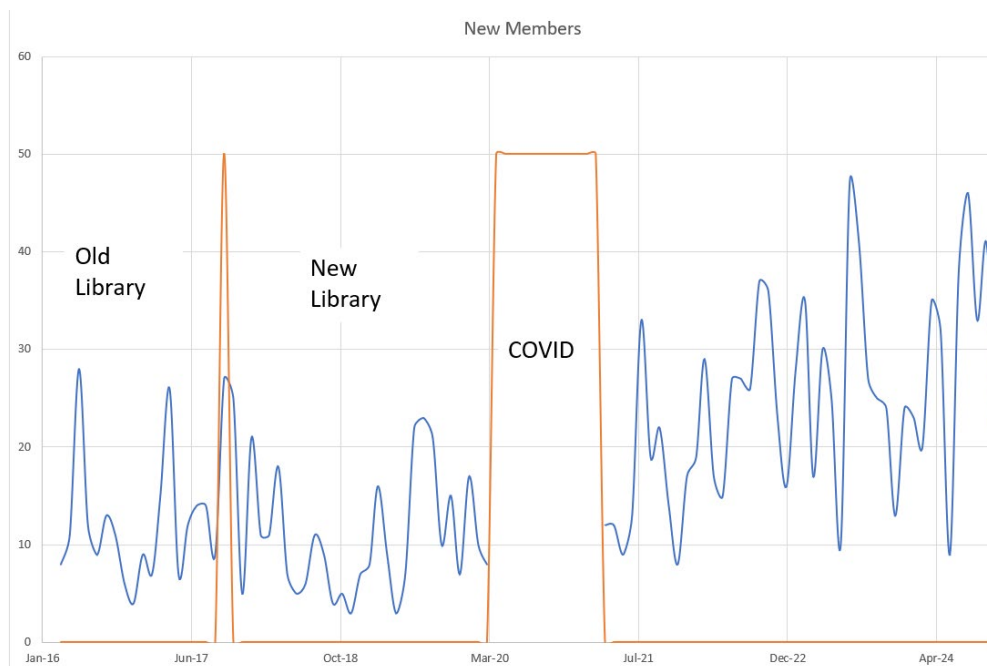
Numbers dropped during the transition to the new location.

Numbers obviously were impacted due to the Covid pandemic.

Since Covid, the graph shows a positive and continuing increase in the numbers of visitors who come into the building to access books, printing or the computers.



The Issues/Renewals graph again shows a positive increase in the number of book issues or renewals carried out by borrowers.



The New Members graph shows the number of new membership application to the library service being processed through the North Hykeham Community Hub. The annual new member count has increased year on year since 2022.

2022 - 289 new members

2023 - 322 new members

2024 – 336 new members

From the above, it is evident that there is more and more use being made of the library facility, even since the community consultation in 2022.

The council and volunteers have responded to elements of the feedback from the consultation with extended opening hours, additional children’s activities and provision of tea/coffee. These additional services have been received very well by those using the facility.

Location

It has been commented that the location of the current facility supports the residents of Manor Farm and the southwest end of the town. It is some distance from the old library building and even further from the civic offices at Fen Lane.

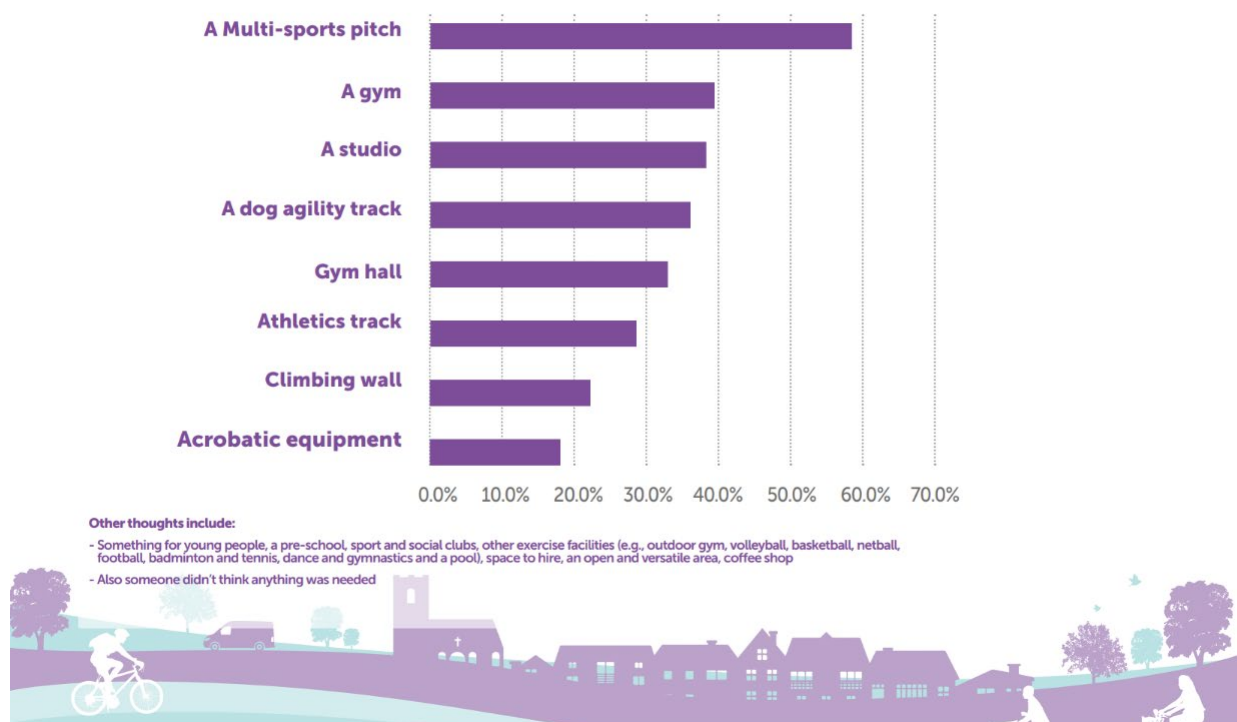
The Council are mindful of the impact that the proposed bypass will have on the development of North Hykeham. Much of the land between North and South Hykeham has been identified as potential residential space, with an expectation of a few thousand houses being built in the coming years.

The figure below is from the Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023 and shows the proposed areas for redevelopment within the proposed North Hykeham bypass. It can be seen that Chapel Fields is no longer at the edge of North Hykeham but would be situated in the middle of the new development and more central to the ever-increasing footprint of North Hykeham.

Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

In addition to the additional community indoor space, the 2022 community consultation identified that the provision of a multi-sports pitch was a priority request item from a list of options. In the proposed planning application, a set aside area has been identified for a MUGA. If given approval, the council will seek costs and financial support options for the building of the MUGA, but the initial focus being the extension of the Community Hub.

Q25. If you could pick just one from the list, which would you choose?



Summary

The town council are continuously reviewing the facilities provided to the residents of North Hykeham. This proposal provides

A space that can be used more appropriately as a Community Hub.

A meeting place that will support a variety of community activities.

A meeting place that will support provision of refreshments.

More appropriate accommodation to house the library and support increased community engagement (Children's play area, story times, computer access)

Consideration to the future growth in size and population of North Hykeham.