

Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: New 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) at One Leisure St Ives Outdoor

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 20th January 2026

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Communities, Health & Leisure - Councillor Sally Howell

Report by: Gregg Holland, Head of Leisure, Health & Environment

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

One Leisure St Ives Outdoor (OLSIO) Centre is a flagship facility within Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) leisure portfolio. It offers an extensive range of outdoor and indoor sports amenities, including grass pitches (for cricket, football, and rugby), a full-size 3G artificial turf pitch (ATP), a sand-dressed ATP, an athletics track, tennis and netball courts, a functional training suite, and high-quality ancillary facilities.

The site serves several thousand users each year, drawing participants not only from St Ives and its surrounding areas but also from across the wider region. In addition to regular local use, OLSIO has a strong track record of hosting county and regional competitions, educational programmes, and recreational events, underlining its significance as a venue of both local and regional importance.

This report focuses on the opportunity that exists at OLSIO to add a second 3G ATP at the site and provides an update for Councillors on the progress that has been made so far working in partnership with the Football Foundation (FF), Huntingdonshire FA (HFA) and Surfacing Standards Limited (SSL). The work that has been undertaken so far allows HDC to determine an optimum solution that delivers against the project objectives:

- To address the identified shortfall in 3G ATP provision within the district, particularly in the St Ives area, identified through HDC's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS)
- Expand the availability of high-quality, floodlit outdoor training and match space as part of Huntingdonshire's wider sporting infrastructure supported by relevant strategic documents.

- Support the development of grassroots and competitive sport by working closely with National Governing Bodies (notably HFA), local clubs, and schools.
- Increase participation across a wide range of user groups, including women and girls, young people, disabled users, and underrepresented communities.
- Generate sustainable income to contribute to the long-term maintenance, replacement, and development of the facility.
- Future proofing local council assets for future generations
- Supporting the financial sustainability of One Leisure and the Council
- Supporting the Council's Corporate Plan and wider Strategic Priorities
- Improve the overall customer experience and attract new users and partners to OLSIO.

With the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders there is the opportunity to develop a modern, fit for purpose and fit for the future, 3G ATP at OLSIO. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to make improvements to the existing 3G ATP on site which further enhances the site ensuring it remains an important sporting hub for St Ives.

This report seeks to formally endorse the new proposed 3G ATP at OLSIO allowing further scheme development and a significant improvement to the facilities at the site. This will then allow for further scheme development and financial planning. This report also seeks formal approvals and delegations for Officer's to proceed as outlined within the recommendations below.

This proposal presents an opportunity to create an improved leisure, health and well-being offer for St Ives, and align with a variety of Council strategies, policies and ambitions; as well as those of other partner organisations.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

Project Development & Planning

- a) To approve the project of a new 3G ATP to be constructed at OLSIO.
- b) To note that, subject to the project securing all necessary consents (including full planning application approval); funding secured through the budget process; and project costs being within budget; the intention is for works to commence on-site in late 2026 with an anticipated opening in early 2027.
- c) To delegate to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in consultation with the Corporate Director (Place) & Corporate Director (Finance and Resources) to proceed with and secure any necessary consents to allow the development to move forward.

- d) To note that HDC has signed up to the FF Framework Alliance Contract (FFFAC) which covers services such as management consultancy, independent testing and the supply/installation of 3G ATP's with HDC becoming an "Additional Client".
- e) To delegate to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in consultation with the Corporate Director (Place) & Corporate Director (Finance and Resources) to proceed with the FFFAC in partnership with the FF to ensure successful completion of the project.

Funding

- f) To agree the proposed budget envelope of £1.4 million for the project and notes the composition of this total, which is made up of contributions from multiple funding sources such as £300k from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and £300k from HDC.
- g) To note and approve that the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment will lead on and complete negotiations with the FF with the intention to secure up to £800k of capital funding towards a new 3G ATP

Legal agreements

- h) To delegate to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment to facilitate, and in consultation with the Corporate Director (Place) & Corporate Director (Finance and Resources) complete all relevant land and legal requirements to facilitate this project and enable its delivery.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors of the progress Officers have made on the project for a new proposed 3G ATP at OLSIO including final designs, progress of the project and overall capital costs.
- 1.2 To provide confidence to the Cabinet and wider Council that due diligence has been conducted on the final designs and costs with support of expert consultants.
- 1.3 To utilise the final capital costs outlined within this report to help inform budget setting and approval of the wider project delivery of the new proposed 3G ATP at OLSIO.
- 1.4 To provide an update on stakeholder engagement and progress to date across the project and to illustrate the broad support Officers have gained from partners for the proposed 3G ATP at OLSIO.
- 1.5 To gain full approval from Cabinet to allow this project to proceed.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 HDC's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) & Indoor Built Facilities Strategies (IBFS) for Huntingdonshire were commissioned in late 2022 and were then presented to [Overview & Scrutiny Committee \(Environment, Communities & Partnerships\) on 8th June 2023](#) and full approval from [Cabinet was gained on 20th June 2023](#).
- 2.2 The PPOSS identified that there was a shortfall of 3G ATP provision across the Huntingdonshire district of 4 3G ATPs in 2022. Specifically, the PPOSS identified a future shortfall of 1 within the St Ives Analysis area.

Analysis area	Future number of teams	Future requirement	Future number of available full size 3G pitches	Future shortfall
Huntingdon	98	3 (2.58)	1	2 **
North-east	41	1 (1.07)	1	-
North-west	53	1 (1.39)	1	-
St. Ives	101	3 (2.66)	2	1
St. Neots	107	3 (2.82)	2	1
West	14	0 (0.37)	0	-
Total	414	11	7	4

***At the time of the PPOSS being developed the Godmanchester Rovers 3G pitch was not developed. When the 3G ATP at Godmanchester is built this will be one in Huntingdon taking overall future shortfall to 3.*

- 2.3 This was supported by the FF and HFA who undertook an update to the Huntingdonshire Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) following the update of the PPOSS and IBFS. The LFFP confirmed that there was a shortfall of 3G ATP provision within St Ives and subsequently identified it as a priority project within its investment portfolio.

LOCATION

Location details:

FACILITIES

New 11v11 Floodlit 3G FTP (1)

OWNER

Not known

DELIVERABILITY SCORE

Very High (4/4)

NFFS OUTCOME SCORE

3.3/4

OVERALL SCORE

88% (10.6/12)

NOTES

A further 3G FTP project is required to meet required shortfalls across Huntingdonshire particularly in the St Ives and St Neots analysis areas where the PPS has identified existing demand not being met. Further exploration of suitable sites is required, however One Leisure St Ives provides a potential location for an additional 3G FTP due to the facility's layout and existing operations on site.

PROJECT FOCUS

Adult female; Adult male; BAME; Disability; IMD / lower social economic groups; Mini-soccer; Small-sided informal; Small-sided recreational; Small-sided teams and leagues; Youth female; Youth male

- 2.4 An Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure was undertaken in Autumn 2023 and subsequently adopted by the Council in March 2024.
- 2.5 The Independent Review included a proposed prioritisation of capital investment across the One Leisure estate in line with the Council's ambitions for One Leisure to grow participation and become financially sustainable.
- 2.6 As part of this independent review one of its key recommendations based upon the future shortfall of future 3G ATP provision across the district identified by the PPOSS and LLFP was that HDC and One Leisure should liaise with FF and other stakeholders to commission a feasibility study to develop a new 3G ATP at St Ives Outdoor as the preferred option.
- 2.7 Based upon the shortfall of 3G ATP provision across the district outlined within the PPOSS and LFFP the Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure confirmed that Investment Priority should be looked at for a new 3G ATP at OLSIO at a cost of £1.4m (indicative).
- 2.8 Following initial feasibility work undertaken by First Point Management, the Council approached the FF and HFA to begin discussions on a new 3G project at OLSIO.

3. RISKS & MITIGATION

- 3.1 An internal risk and mitigation plan was developed by officers during initial discussions with the FF. This is a live document that evolves alongside the project and is regularly updated to reflect emerging risks and mitigation strategies. The current version is available in appendix 1.
- 3.2 In parallel, the FF's project management framework provides robust support for risk management throughout the development. As the principal funder, the FF applies rigorous assurance processes at each stage of its Large-Scale Project pathway from feasibility to delivery and post-completion review. These include comprehensive due diligence, risk identification, milestone monitoring, and gateway approvals, all designed

to ensure projects are viable, deliverable, and sustainable. Their significant financial contribution brings an added layer of oversight and accountability. With the FF's support, a structured risk register will be maintained throughout the project lifecycle, with regular reviews at key milestones and escalation procedures in place where necessary

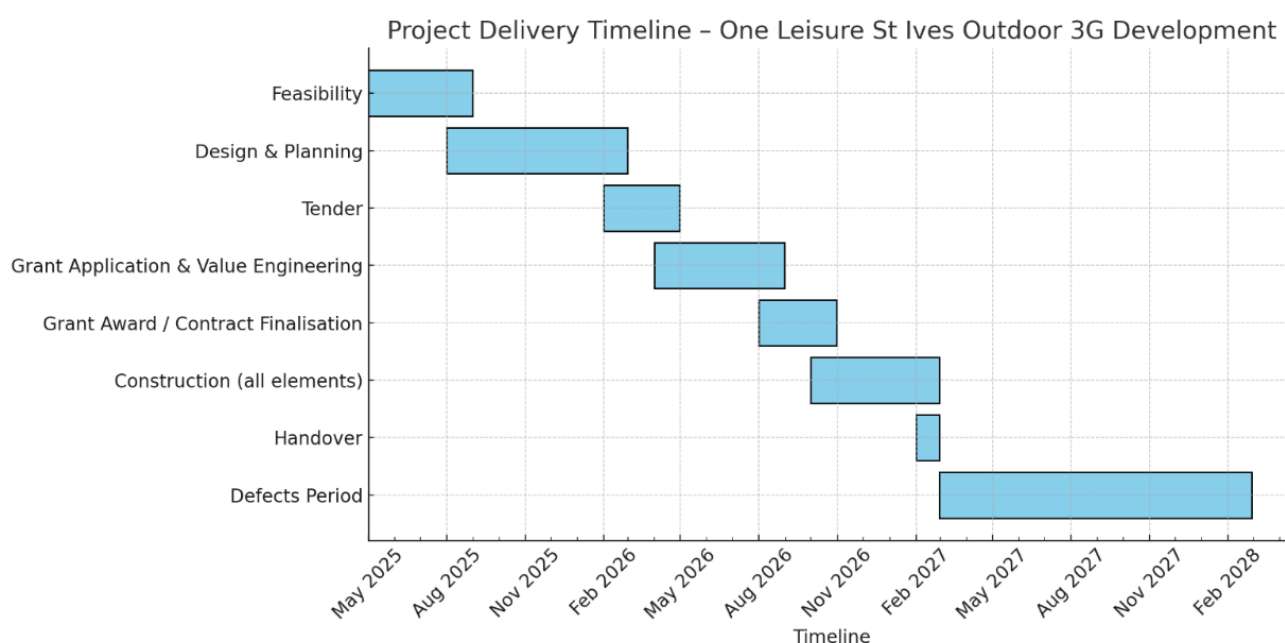
- 3.3 All risks will be reviewed monthly during the development phase, and bi-monthly once construction begins. A live risk register will be maintained and shared with the project team, ensuring oversight and prompt mitigation action when needed.

4. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The full project, comprising the construction of a new full-size floodlit 3G ATP, environmental and specification upgrades to the existing 3G ATP, and the installation of two non-turf cricket pitches (NTPs) is currently at the Design & Planning Stage (as of January 2026.).

- 4.2 Project delivery is structured around key milestones aligned with the FF Framework, local planning requirements, and HDC internal governance. All elements of the project will be delivered concurrently to maximise cost efficiency, minimise disruption, and ensure timely completion.

- 4.3 Below is the following timeline outlines the anticipated stages of delivery



5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The work undertaken on the proposed 3G ATP at OLSIO strongly supports the council's corporate plan and its key priorities which are:

1. Improving the quality of life for local people
2. Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations

3. Delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations

5.2 The proposed development of the 3G ATP can contribute and support the delivery of the Councils strategic priorities and Corporate Plan in the following ways:

- a. Meeting the recommendations set out in HDC's PPOSS for the district by supporting the shortfall of 3G ATP provision in the St Ives area on future population projections.
- b. Supporting the evidence provided by LLFP by the FF as part of their football facility review.
- c. Creating these new spaces will benefit and improve the quality of life of residents and it will provide a greater access to state-of-the-art facilities, a larger space to exercise in, and in doing so will deliver health and wellbeing facilities that will be fit for future generations and a better Huntingdonshire for residents.
- d. It will support and enhance priority three within the Corporate Plan as it will deliver good quality, high value for money services which will continue to run in line with our membership architecture, which is based upon choice, affordability, value for money and importantly access to our facilities so that local residents do not have a barrier to participation.
- e. The new 3G ATP will improve happiness and wellbeing by increasing access to regular sport and physical activity, supporting better health and stronger social connection.
- f. The project will help maximise physical activity across the district by adding year-round pitch capacity and enabling more sessions for clubs, schools and community groups.
- g. The project will support a prevention-led approach by providing more local opportunities to be active, which helps reduce longer-term health inequalities and demand on other services.
- h. The additional pitch will strengthen One Leisure's ability to grow participation and impact, aligning with the Corporate Plan's focus on One Leisure usage and Active Lifestyles outcomes.
- i. The additional 3G ATP will support sustainable growth and inclusive place-making by ensuring communities have access to high-quality sports infrastructure as St Ives and surrounding areas develop.
- j. The project will improve value for money by increasing capacity at a key multi-sport hub, enabling more efficient programming and reducing displacement to more distant sites.
- k. The project will demonstrate the Council's enabling role by bringing together external investment and local partners to deliver shared outcomes for residents.

5.3 Likely use of the new 3G ATP will stem from across St Ives Spatial Planning Area (SPA) which covers St Ives, Hemingford Grey, Houghton & Wyton, Fenstanton and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth. Within this wider area, the main housing growth is concentrated on a small number of large strategic sites and urban extensions which together account for almost all the proposed growth and they are:

- Wyton Airfield is proposed as a major new community, with around 4,491 new homes planned.
 - Giffords Park, to the east of the B1040 near Needingworth on the edge of St Ives, is proposed to accommodate approximately 1,750 new homes, together with a care home and a local centre.
 - The site known as St Ives 1, located on land north of Houghton Road, is expected to deliver about 350 new homes.
 - Needingworth 2, on land to the east of Bluntisham Road (northern part), is proposed for around 1,128 new homes.
 - Needingworth 1, on land north of Bluntisham Road, is proposed for about 150 new homes, comprising approximately 90 market homes and 60 affordable homes.
- 5.4 Adding these strategic and edge-of-town sites together gives just under 8,000 dwellings associated with the St Ives SPA. This sits within the wider district-wide requirement of 29,251 homes (2021–2046), of which 15,447 are to be delivered through new allocations in the Preferred Options draft.
- 5.5 Because the Local Plan Update is still at Preferred Options consultation stage (5 November–17 December 2025), all these figures remain draft and may change before submission, but they are the best current indication of proposed housing growth for the St Ives Spatial Planning Area.
- 5.6 Following the approval of the final proposals they will consider the future growth of St Ives and its wider area so the new facility will support existing and new residents become and remain physically active, provide high quality facilities for future generations and will deliver multiple benefits and outcomes for the community of Huntingdon and wider District.

6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Stakeholder Engagement:

- 6.1 The proposal for a second full-size floodlit 3G ATP at OLSIO is underpinned by strong community engagement, strategic support, and grassroots demand. The process has involved consultation with local clubs, community leaders, and strategic partners, and will continue through a phased and inclusive programme of engagement as the project develops.
- 6.2 Initial engagement took place with key strategic partners such as HFA and Sport England (SE). HFA has highlighted that capacity constraints at OLSIO prevent them from meeting current and future demand and have provided letters of endorsement along with the FF (see appendix 2). Pre-application advice from SE confirmed (see appendix 3) the proposal would not be opposed provided replacement cricket facilities (two Non-Turf

Pitches) are delivered, a condition which is already incorporated into the project plan.

- 6.3 At the grassroots level, HFA facilitated direct engagement with local clubs through structured surveys and questionnaires in late 2024 and again in June 2025. Responses were received from eight clubs including St Ives Rangers, Needingworth Colts, Bluntisham Blasters, Warboys Colts, St Ives Town FC, and Fenstanton Youth. These clubs represent a broad cross-section of the community, with teams spanning under-7s through to adults, and with strong provision for girls, disability football, and recreational players.
- 6.4 Further broader engagement has taken place via a public consultation portal which HDC has hosted via commonplace ([Community Forum - New Proposed 3G Artificial Turf Pitch At One Leisure St Ives Outdoor Centre - Commonplace](#)) and a Microsoft form via One Leisure members. Over 209 responses were received, and the aim of the engagement was to understand current demand, who is (and is not) able to access facilities, what types of activities, times, and pricing work best, and any concerns or ideas residents had so that future investment meets local needs.
- 6.5 The consultation results were clear: demand for additional 3G capacity in St Ives is strong. Of 209 respondents, 73% rated extra provision as Very or Quite Important, and 62% said they would use a new pitch at One Leisure St Ives Outdoor. Clubs echoed this sentiment with seven of eight confirmed they would use a second pitch, with the remaining club undecided but acknowledging current booking challenges. All clubs described the process of securing 3G space locally as “difficult” or “very difficult,” citing frequent match cancellations on grass, fragmented training across multiple venues, and turning away new players.
- 6.6 Respondents highlighted significant benefits from a new pitch: more opportunities for young people (79%), improved health and wellbeing (64%), safer surfaces (56%), and greater inclusion for women and girls (54%). Recommended actions include guaranteeing community access slots, transparent booking policies, school holiday utilisation plans, and flexible pricing. Programming should balance club football with casual play and targeted sessions for women, girls, and older adults—aligning with the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, which found 59 of 93 teams in the St Ives area lack adequate facilities.
- 6.7 An overview of the consultation conducted for this project can be found in appendix 4.
- 6.8 The engagement process has strengthened the project design and activation plan in three keyways. First, it ensures capacity and flexibility by accommodating full-size matches alongside small-sided formats such as 9v9, 7v7, and the FA’s upcoming 3v3, meeting varied demand. Second, it embeds inclusivity by shaping delivery plans that expand opportunities for women and girls, disability football, and recreational play, aligning with FA programmes like Wildcats and Squad Girls. Third, it adopts a community-

first approach, prioritising local teams in programming and maintaining affordable pricing to maximise grassroots access

6.9 To showcase the engagement work undertaken with stakeholders the table below summarises the current HDC position:

Stakeholder	Dates of Meetings
Football Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 15 January 2025 Wednesday 31 March 2025 Monday 12 June 2025
Huntingdonshire FA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 15 January 2025 Friday 1 August 2025 Wednesday 17 September 2025 Tuesday 28 October 2025 Thursday 6 November 2025
St Ives Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 30 September 2025
Buckden FC/All inclusive FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 2 October 2025
Huntingdonshire School Sports Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 8 October 2025
St Ives Town FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 9 October 2025
Warboys Colts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 15 October 2025
Hemingford FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 23 October 2025
St Ives Rugby Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 18 November 2025
Thera Trust (ICAN Group St Ives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 3 December 2025

6.10 The key principles discussed with each stakeholder can be summarised as follows:

Organisation	Key Principles
Huntingdonshire FA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participation growth and pathway impact b. Inclusive football leadership c. Workforce development d. Facility utilisation and coordination e. Quality, welfare and safeguarding culture <p>HFA add development leadership and credibility, connect partners (clubs, leagues, schools and disability provision), and help shape activation, coaching/workforce development and coordinated programming to maximise participation impact.</p>
St Ives Rangers, Buckden FC, Allinclusiv FC, Huntingdonshire School Sports Partnership, St Ives Town FC, Warboys Colts, Hemingford FC, St Ives Rugby Club, Thera Trust (ICAN Group St Ives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evidence-led demand and commitment b. Programme growth and pathway development c. Inclusion and affordability d. Operational practicality

	<p>e. Partnership approach</p> <p>Clubs provide clear evidence of demand and growth, commit to regular block bookings as anchor users, and help co-design and deliver inclusive programmes (women & girls, disability and wider community use).</p>
Football Foundation	<p>a. Clear community outcomes b. Inclusivity by design and programmes c. Sustainable operations and value for money d. Quality and standards e. Partnership and good governance</p> <p>FF enable delivery through the principal capital funding route and strengthen the project through their requirements for clear outcomes, quality standards, and a sustainable long-term operating model.</p>

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The proposed 3G ATP development is subject to several legal considerations relating to land ownership, lease arrangements, and statutory approvals. These are outlined below.
- 7.2 The land on which the proposed 3G ATP will be constructed is currently owned by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). CCC has formally granted permission to HDC to build the 3G ATP on this site.
- 7.3 There is a Headlease between St Ivo Academy and CCC. A Sublease exists between St Ivo Academy and HDC. Both leases were issued on 10 August 2016, granting HDC rights over the site for the intended development.
- 7.4 The current challenge is neither the Headlease nor the Sublease is currently registered with the Land Registry. This lack of registration creates legal uncertainty regarding enforceability and third-party interests.
- 7.5 The FF, as a key funding body, cannot place a legal restriction on HDC's sublease to safeguard its financial investment until registration is complete.
- 7.6 HDC is actively working with St Ivo Academy, CCC, and the FF to initiate and complete the lease registration process. Legal teams are engaged to ensure compliance with Land Registry requirements and to expedite the process.

- 7.7 St Ivo Academy must obtain Department for Education (DfE) approval for the change of use from natural grass pitches to a synthetic 3G ATP. This application is currently in progress and is a prerequisite for project commencement.

8. PLANNING

- 8.1 In February 2025, HDC sought pre-application planning advice from SE to support the development of the proposed second full-size floodlit 3G ATP at OLSIO. As part of this process, SE undertook consultation with key sports bodies, including the FF, HFA and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), to ensure the emerging proposal appropriately considered the needs of all sports on the wider site.
- 8.2 During the pre-application stage, the ECB raised concern regarding the potential loss of an unused cricket wicket within the footprint of the proposed pitch, noting their interest in protecting future cricket provision at the site. In response, and to address this concern through appropriate mitigation, the ECB recommended the installation of two non-turf cricket pitches on the current cricket wicket to the north of the proposed 3G ATP location. The mitigation works are estimated at £20,000.
- 8.3 The FF has confirmed that it is content for this mitigation to be incorporated within the overall project scope and cost plan, ensuring the proposal responds positively to the consultation feedback and supports the continued multi-sport offer at OLSIO.
- 8.4 Since receiving pre-application feedback, the project team and consultants have worked up the design and supporting information through 2025, with ongoing engagement with HDC planning colleagues to ensure a smooth and well-informed route to submission. A planning application was subsequently submitted in December 2025 (planning reference – 25/02378/HDC), reflecting the outcomes of the pre-application process and the agreed approach to mitigation and stakeholder requirements. An expected outcome of the planning application is due in March 2026.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The estimated total cost for delivering a new full-size, floodlit 3G ATP at OLSIO Centre is circa £1.333 million. With a 5% contingency allowance, the total projected cost is circa £1.4 million. This estimate is based on recent comparable local projects and national cost benchmarks, and includes all necessary elements for a high-quality, sustainable facility.
- 9.2 Costs have been aligned with the FF Framework, to which HDC is signed up as a client. This provides the Council with technical and procurement support, enabling the appointment of a contractor through the FF's approved tender process.
- 9.3 The largest single contribution is expected to come from the FF, with a grant application for £800,000 submitted in December 2025 with an answer due in March 2026. This funding is subject to compliance with the

FF conditions, including the registration of leases and DfE approval for the change of use. The grant will be allocated following successful completion of the procurement process through the FF's AGP Framework.

- 9.4 One Leisure has notionally committed a contribution of £300,000, which is scheduled for a decision in February 2026 as part of the normal budget setting process. This investment reflects the strategic importance of the facility in supporting leisure and community sports provision across the district.
- 9.5 A CIL funding request for £300,000 was approved in October 2025, demonstrating alignment with local infrastructure priorities and reinforcing the commitment to delivering enhanced sports facilities for community benefit.
- 9.6 The financial model for the new facility is robust and future focused. The pitch is forecast to generate annual income of circa £60,000, in line with the current 3G ATP on site. A ringfenced £27,000 per annum will be allocated to a sinking fund, in line with FF requirements, to support pitch replacement after 10–12 years. Day-to-day maintenance is projected to cost circa £5,000 per annum, with the remaining £28,000 contributing to HDC One Leisure's operational budget to support the wider management and delivery of services at the site.

10. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The building of the 3G ATP at OLSIO would provide a valuable and accessible community asset that can enhance both social and health benefits to the community now and in the future for Huntingdonshire residents. Accessibility is a key factor, with specifically locality and affordability important considerations of public leisure provision as public leisure provision can help reduce health inequalities experienced by low-income individuals and families.
- 10.2 The Council is a partner authority of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Service (ICS) and has worked in partnership with them to offer residents evidence-based interventions for those with mild to moderate frailty and those at risk of cardiovascular disease. The building of the 3G ATP at OLSIO can play a key role in delivering these types of health interventions and other social prescribing initiatives and is accessible for people with mobility difficulties or disabilities.
- 10.3 SE, the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), Community Leisure UK (CLUK), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) all champion the need for public leisure facilities as a critical component of the community infrastructure supporting health and wellbeing, community cohesion, tackling inequalities, and creating a positive and active environment for local people.
- 10.4 By providing a reliable, high-quality surface in all seasons, the project would enable more consistent participation in sport and exercise, supporting a prevention-focused approach to improving population health

and wellbeing. Key health and wellbeing implications are summarised below:

- Increased physical activity and improved fitness
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Healthier outcomes for children and young people
- Tackling inactivity and inequalities through inclusive access.
- Year-round reliability supports consistency of activity
- Wider community wellbeing and social value.
- Strategic alignment with Council priorities

10.5 This opportunity will also allow the One Leisure Active Lifestyles Team an opportunity to utilise the new 3G ATP to develop and enhance their programming and increase their membership base to allow residents a wider service offering and access to a 'Best in Class leisure provision.

10.6 Overall, the utilisation of this new facility will benefit the residents and provide facilities that will allow access to help improve their quality of life, create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations and offer good quality value for money services.

11. ENVIROMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The scheme has been developed in line with the Council's commitment to apply a "green lens" to decision-making, reducing carbon emissions where practicable and securing measurable environmental improvements alongside investment in community sport.

11.2 The project includes upgrading the existing 3G ATP floodlights to a modern, energy-efficient LED system, reducing electricity demand compared with the current installation. The lighting design will also reduce light spill, which is a key mitigation measure to limit disturbance to bats and other nocturnal wildlife. The ecological reporting also confirms that a modern mitigated floodlight scheme is proposed as part of the overall mitigation package.

11.3 To reduce environmental risks associated with infill migration, the scheme will incorporate infill containment boards around the pitch perimeter. This will help prevent rubber crumb leaving the playing surface, reduce the need for frequent infill top-ups, and lower the risk of material entering surrounding land or drainage routes.

11.4 Lighting controls for the floodlights (including aiming, timers and switching regimes) will be implemented to avoid unnecessary use and minimise impacts on wildlife and neighbouring areas.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 12.1 The proposal addresses a documented shortfall of full-size 3G artificial turf pitch provision in the district, particularly in and around St Ives, and responds to evidenced peak-time capacity constraints.
- 12.2 The proposal directly delivers the priorities of the Council's PPOSS by increasing all-weather football capacity, addressing identified shortfalls in provision, and supporting additional secured community use.
- 12.3 The proposal aligns with and helps implement the Local Football Facility Plan by providing the recommended investment in additional 3G capacity, enabling more training and match activity, supporting club development pathways, and meeting current and future demand for football facilities.
- 12.4 The proposal is supported by local clubs and stakeholders, who have identified unmet demand, constraints on existing provision, and a desire to secure regular block bookings and partnership
- 12.5 The project supports the wider commercial sustainability of One Leisure by increasing all-weather capacity, improving utilisation, and enabling broader access to high-quality facilities for residents.
- 12.6 The proposal future-proofs an important Council asset and helps ensure the Outdoor Centre remains fit for purpose as a multi-sport hub serving current and future generations.
- 12.7 The additional 3G capacity will enable more consistent delivery of community sport and physical activity, reducing cancellations and displacement onto less suitable surfaces, and helping to protect existing grass pitch quality.
- 12.8 The proposal strengthens inclusive access by creating additional capacity for women and girls' football, disability and pan-disability provision, and recreational formats (e.g., walking and wellbeing football), including at off-peak times.
- 12.9 The project supports wider health and wellbeing outcomes by enabling more people to be physically active more often, aligning with the Corporate Plan priority to improve quality of life and maximise physical activity across partners.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Project Risk Assessment.

Appendix 2 – Letters of support from Huntingdonshire FA and Football Foundation.

Appendix 3 – Sport England Pre Application Planning Advice.

Appendix 4 – 3G ATP Consultation Dashboard Overview.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Robbie Bratchell – Strategic Sports Development Officer
Tel No: 01480 388654
Email: Robbie.Bratchell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk