Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	One Leisure Independent Review Update
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny - (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) – 5th February 2026 Cabinet – 10th February 2026
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Leisure & Health – Councillor Sally Howell
Report by:	One Leisure Business and Operations Manager - Leigh Allaker
Ward(s) affected:	All Ward(s)

Executive Summary:

The Council originally commissioned First Point Management & Consultancy Limited (First Point) in September 2023 to undertake an Independent Review of the One Leisure Long Term Operating Model and its in-house leisure function. The Independent Review included focussed on:

1. Short Term Operating Models (2-3 years)
2. Staff Review
3. Built Facilities & Playing Pitch Strategies
4. Medium (3-5 years)- & Long-Term Operating Models (5+ years)

The One Leisure Long Term Operating Model Independent Review was presented to and approved by Cabinet on 19th March 2024. As part of the Independent Review it stated:

"A transformed in-house option is the recommended approach for the short term; this should allow sufficient time to optimise the service before considering medium and long-term delivery options".

The Independent Review provided a number of recommendations that One Leisure and the Council should consider for implementation. These can be seen in the Independent Review on pages 50 – 51.

As part of the Cabinet report presented to and approved by Cabinet on 19th March 2024 it stipulated that the Head of Leisure, Health and Environment would provide Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet a 12-month update. This was completed on 10th and 15th July 2025 respectively.

Within this 12-month update report as outlined above it identified 7 further actions for One Leisure and the Council to consider and complete. These can be found in section 4.4 points a – h.

Therefore, this report aims only to update the Council and solely focus on the 7 actions identified following the most recent 12-month update report (July 2025) for approval and conclusion of these actions.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet/Committee is:

RECOMMENDED

1. To agree and approve that all outstanding actions from the 12-month update report (July 2025) have been concluded;

2. To acknowledge and accept the 7 new actions from within the Year 1 – Transformation Progress Report of Actions & Recommendations from the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure undertaken by First Point Management;

3. To accept and/and or approve the completion or on-going nature of the 7 actions identified within the Transformation Progress Report of Actions & Recommendations from the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure undertaken by First Point Management;

4. To approve the One Leisure Vision, Customer Charter, and the new structure of the One Leisure 3-year business plan;

5. To delegate authority to the Head of Leisure, Health and Environment in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Health, to undertake all necessary actions required to implement the aforementioned strategies; and embed the vision for One Leisure and its continuous improvement.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform and update Councillors that One Leisure and the Council have either completed, are in the process of completing, or have deferred some of the actions due to LGR.

1.2 To provide Councillor's an opportunity to review, consider and respond on One Leisure's and the Council's progress since the 12-month update (July 2025) of the One Leisure Independent Review recommendations.

1.3 To gain approval of the newly created One Leisure Vision, Customer Charter, and the new structure of One Leisure's 3-year business plan;

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Built & Playing Pitch Strategies 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 Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure was undertaken in late 2023 and subsequently adopted by the Council in April 2024.

2.3 The review focussed upon the following key areas:

1. Short Term Operating Models (2-3 years)
2. Staff Review
3. Built Facilities & Playing Pitch Strategies
4. Medium (3-5 years)- & Long-Term Operating Models (5+ years)

2.4 From the Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure it provided 22 recommendations that the Council and One Leisure needed to consider for implementation.

2.5 An external report was commissioned by the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in early 2025- and First-Point Management were requested to undertake a 12-month review of One Leisure's performance against the original independent review recommendations. A link to these recommendations can be seen in the Executive Summary.

2.6 The findings from the First Point Management report was presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in July 2025. A link to these recommendations can be seen in the Executive Summary.

2.7 Following this the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment and Business & Operation's Manager set about completing the identified actions from the updated First Point Management 12-month update report. These included:

a. Commission an independent review of:
   i. One Leisure's readiness for LGR

ii. High level state of the market review of leisure providers across Cambridgeshire
iii. Options, Risks & Recommendations for One Leisure

b. To complete all outstanding feasibility studies for One Leisure sites to RIBA Stage 1.
c. Gain full approval for Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub (RIBA Stage 2)
d. Secure partnership arrangement with NHS/ICB for Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub.
e. Finalise and gain approval for One Leisure Design Principles - Vision & Customer Charter.
f. Mobilisation & Re-Opening of Sawtry Leisure Centre.
g. Continue working with colleagues to develop de-carbonisation plans.

2.8 This report is designed to update Council on the progress, completion and/or deferment due to LGR on all of the actions identified within section 2.7 above.

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

3.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

4. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION & COMPLETION

4.1 Following the identification of the actions as per section 2.7 above earlier in this report please see below for an update as to where the actions have either been completed or are ongoing:

Action	Status Update
Commission an independent review of: • One Leisure's readiness for LGR • High level state of the market review of leisure providers across Cambridgeshire • Options, Risks & Recommendations for One Leisure	• Commissioned November 2025 • To be completed by March 2026
To complete all outstanding feasibility studies for One Leisure sites to RIBA Stage 1	• Site walks completed 19th November 2026 • Feasibility study proposal for all sites received - January 2026 • Feasibility studies to be completed by March 2026
Gain full approval for Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub (RIBA Stage 2)	• RIBA Stage 2 approved in October 2026 by Cabinet

	• Full planning application to be approved - February 2026 • Full budget approval at Full Council – February 2026
Secure partnership arrangement with NHS/ICB for Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub	• Ongoing discussions • Legal Heads of Terms aimed for completion by March 2026
Continue working with colleagues to develop de-carbonisation plans	• A decarbonisation option is included as part of Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub – October 2025 • Wider review for other centres will be undertaken as part of feasibility proposal - Ongoing
Mobilisation & Re-Opening of Sawtry Leisure Centre	• MoU (One Leisure staff interim agreement) – November 2025 • License for Works – Completed - December 2025 • Re-opening of Swimming Pool – Spring 2026
Finalise and gain approval for One Leisure Design Principles - Vision & Customer Charter	• Initial Staff Engagement Session – March 2025 • External Consultant Support – March 2025 – December 2025 • Approvals sought via Cabinet – February 2026 • Launch Vision, Charter, Design Principles & Business Plan – April 2026

4.2 One of the key actions for completion was centred around the design principles, customer charter and overarching vision for One Leisure. This also included the key principles of what a new dedicated 3-year business plan for One Leisure should consist of. This is outlined within the “Design Principles Stakeholder Engagement Report” undertaken by First Point Management in May 2025 and can be seen in **Appendix 1.**

4.3 The report took a ‘bottom-up’ approach to the process that offered a range of opportunities and options to develop, shape, finalise and improve the service in the short, medium and the longer term. Developing a collaborate approach to service improvement opportunities will help place the service to be in a strong position in future years as the implementation and impact of Local Government Reform approaches.

4.4 From the actions identified in the 12-month update report (July 2025) on the Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model, the outstanding actions that this report sets out to conclude and update on was the need for One Leisure to develop a Service Vision and Customer Charter and identify a framework for the 3-year business plan.

4.5 Cementing the bottom-up approach to delivering on the Business Plan, Customer Charter and Vision, two Engagement sessions were held with a cross section of One Leisure operational staff, feeding into the Senior Management Team of One Leisure and representatives of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Senior Leadership Team and the Member Advisory Board. To note, the Member Advisory Board had originally been set up to provide insight and feedback to the capital projects being planned and delivered by One Leisure over 2025/2026, however the board is proving to provide greater value by enabling the service to present and update on changes to the service, not just capital investments into it.

4.6 The first session took place in March 2025 initially to workshop the detail, considerations and design principles for the Customer Charter and Vision for One Leisure; fundamental to this was to ensure the Customer Charter and Vision Statement were specific to One Leisure and did not override or go against the Council’s service values and commitments. The input from staff and agreed principles were to be captured and developed for an options approval and final draft of the Customer Charter and Vision that was presented back to the same group of One Leisure Staff in November 2025.

4.7 Following the final One Leisure staff engagement workshop; the One Leisure Customer Charter as seen in 4.8, Vision Statement as seen in 4.9 and the 3-year Business Plan Principles as seen in 4.10 were presented to the Member Advisory Board on 16th December 2025 for endorsement and the submitted through the political process for final approval.

4.8 The proposed One Leisure Customer Charter can be seen below:

We Will:

- Design our service offer around the customer.
- Provide accessible and affordable services.
- Understand and ‘live’ the Customer Journey.
- Make it simple and easy to access our services.
- Welcome customer feedback.
- Embrace the use of technology to enhance the customer experience.
- Have consistency of process and core standards across the service.

- Invest in our staff to ensure they have the tools and knowledge to deliver the service.
- Have a 'Can Do' and 'Fix It' culture.
- Not tolerate any form of discrimination

4.9 The proposed One Leisure Vision can be seen below:

'Deliver high quality and sustainable customer led, affordable services and facilities for the local community'

4.10 The proposed 3-year Business Plan Principles can be seen below:

- Executive Summary
- Transformation Journey
- Service Performance 2025/26
  - Key Achievements
- Financial Plan
  - Pricing Strategy
- People Plan & Structure
- Operational Plan
  - Facility Management
  - Service Investment & Growth
  - Programming
  - Customer Engagement Plan
- Performance Targets
- Risks & Opportunities

5. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 To fulfil the commitment made to Council that One Leisure would return and provide a final update on the additional 7 recommendations set out in 2.7 of this report and actions stemming from the 12-month update of the Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure.

5.2 To allow Councillors to review, comment, and feedback on the progress One Leisure have made on the additional 7 actions provided in the Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure 12 Month Update report, that have now either been completed, in the process of being completed or deferred due to LGR.

5.3 To acknowledge the actions outlined in Section 4.1 of this report have been incorporated into the service plans for One Leisure spanning 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

6. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Design Principles Stakeholder Engagement Report

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Built & Playing Pitch Strategies 2022 – 2043

Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure (First Point Management)
Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure (Cabinet Report & Approval)

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