

To: TCMG	Title: TCMG Social Value Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub – Briefing Note
From: Head of Leisure, Health & Environment	Date: April 2026

Project Overview

Huntingdon Leisure Centre (HLC) is a flagship facility within Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) leisure portfolio. It offers an extensive range of outdoor and indoor sports amenities, including a 4-lane swimming pool, 2 x 7v7 3G artificial turf pitch, sports hall, gym, and studios, a functional training suite, and high-quality ancillary facilities.

The site serves 423,187 users each year, drawing participants not only from Huntingdon and its surrounding areas but also from across the wider region. In addition to regular local use, HLC has a strong record of hosting county and regional competitions, educational programmes, and recreational events, underlining its significance as a venue of both local and regional importance.

- **A new 8-lane swimming pool:**
 - Changing from 4 lanes (existing) to 8 lanes which will allow greater flexibility in programming and increase physical activity opportunities for children and young people, older adults, and other key stakeholders. This supports the approved Built Facility Strategy which identified a shortfall of lane provision equivalent to 12 lanes of a 25m swimming pool across the district.
- **A new dedicated learner pool:**
 - This will allow One Leisure to offer better infrastructure and allow more children to learn a key life skill which can be supported by the RLSS who stated that *"the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) which shows that **the number of child drowning deaths in England has doubled over the last four years.**"*
- **New 120 station gym:**
 - It will enable the council to offer state of the art equipment which will be fit for future generations. It will also allow wider benefits such as increased physical activity opportunities, end to end support for Active Lifestyles and NHS programmes and wider financial sustainability.
- **New co-located health and well-being hub:**
 - This project proposes to deliver a dedicated 800 sqm. Health and wellbeing space situated in the existing dry side facility.
 - It has broad support from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB)
 - It will also allow Active Lifestyles to work closely with the NHS and Neighbourhood teams to support wider partner working and programme development

- **New full-sized 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP):**
 - It would allow the Academy free access to a state-of-the-art Football pitch which it currently does not have and will thus in turn provide students the ability to use this new space Monday – Friday between 9am – 4pm. One Leisure will use it sporadically between these times but will have exclusive use from 4pm on weekdays and solely at weekends.
 - It also allows and creates the ability to ensure that the school can focus on physical activity and have an all-weather space they can use in inclement weather as their grass pitches may be out of use so sessions can continue.
- **Padel and Pickleball Courts**
 - In partnership with Huntingdon Tennis Club (HTC). HDC will fund and build three new padel courts and one pickleball court (to repurpose existing tennis court).
 - Attached to this will be a community use agreement where 38 hours a week will be dedicated to public access.
 - This is an additional benefit to the local community that is not currently provided.
 - Consultation with the public evidenced that the facilities would be well used and will in turn encourage increases in physical activity and more choice for residents thinking of accessing new activities.
- **Super Soft Play**
 - The existing pool is to be refurbished to u8s super soft play venue.
 - This will provide parents a unique opportunity to utilise a facility of this type in and around Huntingdon not only for obvious commercial purposes, but that it allows children and young people the opportunity to be physically active, parents more choice as there isn't anything similar to this in the local area and it provides the Council the ability to generate new jobs for local people and with this new training and developmental opportunities.

The wider priorities delivered by this scheme will include:

- Support identified housing and economic growth supporting growth in participation.
 - HDC is progressing an emerging Local Plan to 2046, with significant housing growth proposed across the district. The Local Plan continues to structure development around Spatial Planning Areas (SPAs), with the Huntingdon SPA identified as a key focus for growth. This includes Huntingdon itself and surrounding settlements.
 - The Preferred Options Local Plan consultation indicates that, if delivered in full, the emerging strategy would provide over 15,000 new homes by 2046, with the largest sites continuing to build beyond the plan period. This scale of development will significantly increase demand for accessible sport and physical activity opportunities, particularly those that are flexible, sociable, and suitable for a wide age range.

- Support the development of grassroots and competitive sport by working closely with National Governing Bodies (notably Huntingdonshire FA, Lawn Tennis Association, Pickleball England, local clubs, and schools)
- Increase participation across a wide range of user groups, including women and girls, young people, disabled users, and underrepresented communities.
- This project addresses a critical infrastructure deficit formally identified in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) and IBFS and other strategic documents such as:
 - [Football Foundation \(FF\) Local Football Facility Plan \(LFFP, 2024\)](#)
 - Swim England Latency Demand for One Leisure
 - Swim England Aquatic Review 2025

Benefits of the Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub

The Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub would deliver wide-ranging benefits for residents, sports clubs, partner organisations, and public services at local, district and county level. The project would increase access to sport, physical activity, and health-related facilities, whilst also supporting community participation, club development and wider health and wellbeing outcomes.

Stakeholder beneficiaries

- Huntingdon town residents (26,648 residents)
- Huntingdonshire district residents (186,070 residents)
- Cambridgeshire county residents (699,573 residents)
- Huntingdon Football Club (86 teams)
- St Peter's School (1,366 pupils)
- Huntingdon Piranhas Swimming Club (130 members)
- Huntingdon and District Cricket Club (4 teams)
- Huntingdon Tennis Club (301 members)
- Huntingdon Bowls Club (40 members)
- NHS/ICB, through improved health and wellbeing outcomes for residents across Cambridgeshire (699,573 residents)

The total capital cost of the project is £30.5 million. **Based on the Huntingdonshire population, this equates to an indicative cost of £161 per resident**, excluding the additional value generated through sports club usage, wider community participation and longer-term health and social benefits.

Total number of immediate beneficiaries from the Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub

- 1,365 players associated with 91 teams
- 1,366 pupils
- 2,050 existing One Leisure members
- 1,100 swim school pupils
- 60 cricket players
- 471 sports club members

- It also indicates attendances at the new facility will increase by circa 500,000 per annum upon completion and opening

This gives a total of 6,412 people who would benefit immediately from the project.

The maximum potential number of beneficiaries within Huntingdonshire is estimated at 192,482 people.

Social Value

National Perspective:

The project will contribute significantly to [the social value of sport as defined by Sport England](#), by increasing opportunities for sustained physical activity across all age groups. National evidence shows that each adult who meets recommended activity levels generates an average of £2,500 in wellbeing benefits annually, while active children and young people contribute up to £4,100 per person per year. In addition, regular sport volunteering, facilitated by accessible, high-quality facilities adds up to £2,100 in wellbeing value per individual.

Beyond these personal benefits, increased participation also results in reduced demand on public health services, with each active adult generating an estimated £315 in annual healthcare savings. These outcomes reflect the wider contribution of sport and physical activity to England's social value, estimated at over £100 billion per year. By delivering a new 8 lane pool with learner pool with a co-located health and wellbeing hub and improvements to ancillary provision through a new gym, studios, padel and pickleball courts this project aligns directly with Sport England's strategic framework and will help unlock both local wellbeing improvements and wider system savings.

District Wide Perspective:

Locally, the scale of social value generated by sport and physical activity in Huntingdonshire is already substantial. Sport England estimates the total annual value at over £220 million, made up of £30.86 million in physical and mental health outcomes, £130.1 million in mental wellbeing, and £62.7 million in social and community development. These figures highlight the essential role that local infrastructure plays in delivering long-term value across the district.

Project Perspective:

Key headline benefits of the Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub are as follows:

- The Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub is projected to generate over £7.2 million in social value within its first year alone, **delivering a £4.72 return for every £1 invested, demonstrating strong value for money for residents and public finances.**

- More than three quarters of the project's social value (77%) will directly benefit residents, improving health, wellbeing and community participation across Huntingdonshire.
- The hub will deliver substantial health benefits through increased physical activity, with over £5.5 million of the total social value linked to improved physical and mental wellbeing for participants.
- Children and young people are a major beneficiary, with the project expected to generate over £1.6 million in wellbeing benefits through increased youth participation in sport and physical activity.
- The main social value report for this project can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

Community Benefit

Local authority leisure services exist primarily to improve residents' health, wellbeing and to reduce inequalities. Unlike a private gym model (where success is primarily measured by profit), a council run leisure facility is designed to maximise participation and public benefit across the whole community, including people who are least likely to be active and most likely to experience poor health outcomes.

A key advantage of a council run facility is that income is retained and reinvested into:

- facility maintenance and renewal (protecting long-term viability),
- safeguarding and workforce quality,
- community access initiatives and targeted programmes, and
- improvements that respond to local need (rather than shareholder return).

There is compelling evidence that regular physical activity reduces the risk of major illnesses (including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers) and improves mental wellbeing. The NHS also notes that being physically active can reduce the risk of early death by up to [30%](#).

Furthermore, increased capacity and participation with the addition of four extra lanes and a learner pool, One Leisure would be able to significantly increase swim school capacity (currently c. 1,000 pupils), widening access to lessons and improving progression opportunities.

Retaining the facilities within the public authority means it is easier to work with and respond to the needs of other partners including those from health, who themselves are undergoing change, and there will be opportunities to co-locate with them – examples of which are about to happen imminently – but which can be expanded in future.

Health Benefits

Swim England confirm that community swimming pools are positive investments for communities for multiple reasons. Community pools serve as an encouragement to community health and increase the social cohesiveness of the

area. Community pools can have many benefits on the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of the community as illustrated below:

- Improves community bonds.
- Confidence
- Fitness for all – Swimming/Physical Activity is fun.
- Increases public safety.
- Combats childhood obesity
- Local employment
- Pathways to other sports

This opportunity will also allow The One Leisure Active Lifestyles team an opportunity to utilise the Huntingdon Sport and Health Hub 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 centre.

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 excellent quality value for money services.

Appendix 1: Social Value Benefits:

Level	Social Value Indicator	Annual Value
National (England)	Total social value of sport & physical activity	£100+ billion
	Wellbeing value per active adult	£2,500 per person
	Wellbeing value per active child/young person	Up to £4,100 per person
	Wellbeing value from sport volunteering	Up to £2,100 per person
	Healthcare savings per active adult	£315 per person
District (Huntingdonshire)	Total social value of sport & activity	£220 million
	Physical & mental health benefits	£30.86 million
	Mental wellbeing	£130.1 million
	Social & community development	£62.7 million
Local (Huntingdon Sport & Health Hub)	Social Value	£7.2 million & £4.72 for every £1 spent
	Health, Wellbeing and Community Participation	77% of Local Residents Impacted Directly
	Improved Physical and Mental Wellbeing	£5.5 million Social Value
	Improved Children and Young People Physical and Mental Wellbeing	£1.6 million Social Value