



## 3G Artificial Grass Pitch for Hadleigh Suffolk Vision

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### Introduction

Hadleigh Town Council (HTC) in conjunction with Hadleigh United Football Club (HUFC) and Hadleigh Rugby Football Club (HRFC) have been working together to present their vision to the Suffolk FA, the Rugby Football Union and the Football Foundation to install a Full Size Floodlit 3G All Weather Grass (AGP) for use by the Community at the Layham Road Sports Ground (LRSG) in Hadleigh Suffolk IP7 5NE.

Hadleigh has been identified as a priority area in the [Babergh District Local Football Facility Plan \(FFFP\)](#)

The Hadleigh 3G Project includes the provision of a new Sports Changing Room facility. The current Sports Pavilion Building is due to be rebuilt following extensive fire damage in June 2020.

### Usage

Hadleigh United FC is located at the Millfield Ground adjacent to the Layham Road Sports Ground and has 31 Teams affiliated to the Suffolk FA for 2020/21 ranging from Under 6 Boys and Girls Development Teams to two Veterans Teams. The Club is also a venue for the Suffolk Wildcats supporting this Suffolk FA initiative. For some years the Club has struggled to find the pitch capacity to match the size of their organisation and it is currently utilising all available pitches in Hadleigh. HUFC will become the predominant user of a Floodlit 3G Pitch in the evenings and at weekends.

Hadleigh Rugby Club operates from the Layham Road Sports Ground and has registered their interest to become a 3G Pitch user for:-

- Contact rugby training activities for their youth and senior sections comprising 11 age groups from U7s -U18s and their adult mens squad.
- Mini rugby festivals (U7s to U12s)
- Practical CPD courses for coaches and referees delivered by and on behalf of Eastern Counties Rugby Union, the RFU, England Rugby and Northampton Saints.
- Contact rugby training for representative level youth teams/squads (Suffolk and Eastern Counties)

Contact rugby activity will require the addition of a shock layer to the 3G Pitch Specification.

Hadleigh County Primary School has registered their interest in using a new 3G for their sports related events.

The only available All Weather Pitch in Hadleigh is an ageing 'Astro' type pitch built in 2012 and located at the Hadleigh High School. This facility is managed by Abbeycroft Leisure on



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behalf of Suffolk County Council and is heavily used weekday evenings by several sports clubs.

Other Local Football Clubs have been approached and to date Brett Vale Ladies FC have registered their interest.

Hadleigh Mens Walking Football Club have indicated their desire to use a 3G AGP.

A detailed Programme of Use has been drafted and this indicates that already between HUFC and HRFC their usage levels will be close to the maximum level available on weekday evenings during the clubs respective playing seasons.

### **Quality**

The LRSG is owned by HTC and offers 12 acres of grass pitch area restricted by covenants as a public sports and recreational ground. LRSG is located just on the outskirts of Hadleigh south of the River Brett with no housing in the immediate surrounding area and no housing developments are planned for this area.

HTC is considering building a new Sports Pavilion to replace a timber frame flat roof building built in 1984 that is now boarded up and out of use following a fire in June 2020. The proposed new facility will incorporate 4 changing rooms with toilets and showers and also changing rooms for male and female officials all meeting the FA and RFU minimum standards; a Club Room for the Hadleigh Tennis Club who operate on Tennis Courts at the LRSG; equipment storage for User Clubs; Office space and meeting rooms; Access for the disabled.

There is already in place a Tarmacadam parking area with spaces for 40 vehicles at LRSG located between the Sports Pavilion site and the proposed site for the 3G Pitch. There is grass space available to expand the Car Parking area.

Access to LRSG is via Layham Road, a two way road half a mile from Hadleigh High Street.

All of the above factors make the location of a 3G Pitch at LRSG an attractive and quality proposition.

### **Engagement**

HUFC is an FA Charter Standard Club with 20 FA Level 1, 1 Level 2 and 2 Level 3 coaches supporting their Youth Section Teams and 2 FA Level 3(UEFA B) qualified Coaches supporting their senior teams.

HUFC's coaches are engaged in supporting FA affiliated development teams for boys and girls from under 6 in addition to the Suffolk Wildcats midweek training activities.



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HUFC operates a Saturday Morning 'Minis' and 'Diddies' Football club for boys and girls from age 4 to 6.

HUFC will be able to extend their coaching, training and match play activities with the proposed Floodlit 3G All Weather Grass Pitch that will expand the overall club's activities particularly during the winter months.

HRFC is an England Rugby Accredited Club with 26 RFU qualified coaches supporting teams across all age grades (U6s to adult). The coaching team includes 7 Level 2 coaches and 2 ELRA qualified referees.

Training for youth and senior squads takes place mid week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Fixtures for the senior squad (1<sup>st</sup> XV and 2<sup>nd</sup> XV) take place on Saturday afternoon between the end of August and April. All junior fixtures are on a Sunday, typically between 9am and 1pm.

With access to an AGP HRFC will be able to:

- enhance and expand its rugby training, coaching and rugby related development activities for all age grades and for both men and women
- safely and reliably offer out-of-season rugby related activities including: Rugby Camps; Touch Rugby, CPD courses and general fitness programmes
- reduce and/or eradicate completely the need to cancel training sessions due to poor playing surface conditions
- attract more youth and adult players and establish Layham Road as a recognised regional centre of excellence for rugby development.

Within the Hadleigh Community there are a number of other Clubs that have already indicated their desire to engage with us and make use of the proposed 3G Pitch and Associated Facilities, namely:-

Hadleigh Mens Walking Football  
Outdoor Fitness Clubs  
Hadleigh Hares Running Club  
Hadleigh County Primary School

As this Vision document moves into the public domain we expect several other clubs and the general public to come forward and express their interest in using the 3G Pitch.



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### **Sustainability**

HTC will take prime responsibility for installing and maintaining the proposed 3G Pitch and will be seeking to engage with or facilitate a separate organisation to manage the facility. The projected income from hire as indicated in the draft Programme of Use, suggests there will be adequate operational income from hiring the 3G Pitch to afford the management and maintenance of the facility in accordance with manufacturers specification and provide for a sinking fund to cover for the long term maintenance expenditure.

### **Inclusivity**

HTC has a number of initiatives planned for 2020/21 and beyond to engage with the young and disadvantaged people in Hadleigh (e.g forming a Youth Council) and from these initiatives we expect to see a greater participation in sporting activities that a 3G and new Sports Pavilion facility will facilitate.

### **Project Team**

HTC formed a Working Group in June 2019 to make recommendations to HTC in respect of the day to day operations as well as recommend the long term future direction of the LRSG. The Working Group includes Town Councillors, LRSG Users and invited members of the public. The Working Group has jointly produced this Vision document and would act as the Project Steering Group making recommendations and seeking milestone decisions from HTC on the 3G Pitch and Sports Pavilion Project. The project team will include the services of HTC's Full Time Projects Officer who would develop the overall Project Plan. The Town Council has yet to decide if the additional services of an external 3G Pitch specialist consultant are required and would take advice from the Football Foundation in this matter.

### **Security of Tenure**

HTC owns the freehold of the LRSG purchased in 1981.

### **Planning Permission**

Babergh District Council (BDC) are the local Planning Authority. BDC were approached in March 2019 by HUFC with a Pre Application Enquiry for a small sized 3G AGP which at that time was being considered by HUFC on the adjacent Millfield Ground. No Planning issues were identified at that time, and the Planning Officer indicated if an alternative and the now proposed 3G Pitch location was to be within the LRSG, an area further away from residential housing, BDC would look favourably at an application for a 3G AGP at LRSG.



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### **Management**

The proposed new Sports Pavilion Building will contain Office space for the Administration and Management of the LRSG. HTC is considering relocating its Back Office staff to the new building where existing staff could manage and control the facility during the working day with part time staff picking up the management of evening activities where needed. HTC wishes to explore an outsourcing arrangement with Abbeycroft Leisure who currently manage a number of Sports Facilities on behalf of Babergh and Mid Suffolk and West Suffolk District Councils. HTC will also consider forming a Charitable organisation the Hadleigh Community Sports Federation to take a long term responsibility for the LRSG site.

### **Budgetary Costs and Partnership Funding**

The Football Foundation has indicated the provision of a full size 3G Pitch fully enclosed and floodlit will be circa 700K. The indications are that with an application that demonstrates a strong business case led by the expansion of football activities, we should expect a grant offer of circa 60-70 % from the Football Foundation.

The Budgetary cost for the new Sports Pavilion based on a Modular Construction design will be in the region of 650K subject to a final design and site surveys.

HTC currently has 70K funds earmarked for the rebuild of the Sports Pavilion, and has already budgeted to increase the earmarked fund to £90K by March 2021. HTC has borrowing powers and can apply to the Public Works Loan Board to support the project should this be needed.

HTC plans to make an application to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council for funding support .

The RFU has indicated they will contribute towards the added costs to add a shock layer within the 3G pitch specification to support contact Rugby training.

The Football Foundation have indicated they can also contribute towards the associated facilities such as new changing rooms for the 3G Pitch Users.

Commerical Sponsorship will be sought from local businesses and we have already received positive signals of financial support from one private source.