



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

# **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT**

**TO:** Development Management Committee (North)

**BY:** Development Manager

**DATE:** 1 November 2016

**DEVELOPMENT:** Demolition of existing leisure centre and associated facilities, demolition of existing Bowls Club canopy and existing external sports pitches.  
Erection of new 2- storey leisure centre with associated parking, landscaping and facilities

**SITE:** Broadbridge Heath Sports Centre Wickhurst Lane Broadbridge Heath Horsham

**WARD:** Broadbridge Heath

**APPLICATION:** DC/16/1844

**APPLICANT:** Horsham District Council

**REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA:** Council's own application

**RECOMMENDATION:** Grant permission, subject to the referral of the application to the Secretary of State

## **1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

To consider the planning application.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

#### 1.1 The application comprises the following elements:

- Demolition of the existing leisure centre – except a portion of the existing indoor sprint track known as 'the Tube', of approximately 30m in length, so involving a loss of (4337 sqm)
- The original application proposed the use of the tube for storage purposes, that has now been amended to a multi use sports area
- Removal of the MUGAs that lie between the leisure centre and the bowls club (to be replaced by the MUGAS recently approved on land to the south of the centre)
- Construction of new leisure centre (3787 sqm) with associated landscaping and parking

#### 1.2 The centre will provide for a range of facilities including the ancillary facilities that ensure the operation of the centre such as offices and plant room. In terms of facilities for use by the general public however the following are amongst those proposed:

6 court sports hall (currently three)  
Party room  
Multi use room and store  
Activity space (say clip and climb) and store

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Studio for dance and store

Sensory room

Treatment rooms (3)

Studios and stores

Fitness suite including free weights area and changing

Group cycle studio

Retention of part of 'the tube' for multi use, including some indoor athletics use. This would lie on the western side of the car park and would not be attached to the new centre.

Retention of the athletics canopy adjacent to the athletics track – as a free standing structure

- 1.3 The centre has been designed with its principal elevation facing south towards the future MUGAs, sports pitches and football pavilion and incorporates the main entrance to the leisure centre. To the south between the centre and the adjacent sports pitches/MUGAs would lie a series of seating terraces. Parking of 174 spaces would lie to the west of the building on the site of the existing centre, adjacent to the athletics track. The retained portion of 'the Tube' would lie on the western side of the site adjacent to the track and separated from the leisure centre by the proposed car park. Cycle parking is proposed at the front and rear of the building.
- 1.4 Externally the centre adopts a contemporary approach which the architect describes as a "series of boxes (i.e. the sports hall box, fitness suite box, studio box)" each with a separate identity and use of materials.
- 1.5 The first view of the centre when approaching by road would be that facing the Tesco car park. The north western corner incorporates the fitness suite and weight room at first floor which has been designed to provide visual interest on the north and west facing elevations with views of the fitness suite available through the glazed façade and views outside from within the fitness suite. This element of the centre would comprise glazed panels framed by close boarded timber. Sitting to the east of the fitness suite the upper levels of the sports hall would project, with its vertical 'hit and miss' timber façade (i.e. timber slats). When viewed from the Tesco car park the ground floor of the sports hall would have a brick façade with the timber façade at the upper floors only. At ground floor level a mixture of glazing and aluminium cladding would provide the walls for the ground floor party room and plant room which sit beneath the fitness suite. The southern elevation would incorporate glazing with strong horizontal timber boarding and horizontal hit and miss timber cladding at first floor level across some of the glazed areas. The entrance to the centre would be recessed beneath the first floor timber and glazed facades. The elevation facing towards the Bowls Club would include the brick/timber clad sports hall towards the front of the building with the rear part of that elevation comprising solid walls (fibre board) to accommodate changing facilities and studios behind. The mass of this solid walling would be broken up by horizontal timber cladding.
- 1.6 Signage incorporating the name of the centre would be integrated into the vertical timber 'hit and miss' cladding on the sports hall facing onto the Tesco car park.
- 1.7 A report to Cabinet in November 2015 entitled "Proposals for the Redevelopment of Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre" provides useful background to this current planning application. It proposed that

*"the major facility should be located at the current site of the Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre (BBHLC). This centre will complement the satellite provision in the market towns of Billingshurst, Southwater, Steyning, Henfield and Storrington and the major "wet side" services at The Pavilions in the Park in Horsham. The site will comprise of a new leisure centre conjoined with the existing indoor Bowls Centre plus five new Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). It will also retain the existing athletics track. The Centre will adjoin a new recreation ground comprising, football pitches, pavilion, open access ball court, skate park*

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*and informal recreation area which is being created on section 106 land (s106) to the south of the centre in order to meet the needs of the local population.*

*Both the Business Case and the more recent analysis identify the benefits of creating a strategic location for dry-side provision and that this should be at Broadbridge Heath. It can accommodate a wider range of sports and recreational activity, generating much higher levels of participation and achieves longer term value for money.*

*Although studies show that the district is well served with sports facilities to meet the needs of the current population, this infrastructure will not have the capacity to cope with the predicted population growth unless additional facilities are provided. It is critical to maximise the capacity of BBHLC so that it takes account of these factors.*

*A single large Centre (supported by satellite provision in the market towns) provides economies of scale to the operator and the Council and justifies investment in a wide range of facilities, both indoor and outdoor, to create a sporting and leisure hub. Broadbridge Heath is the preferred location because the current site is in the Council's ownership, the area has good transport links, it serves a rapidly growing population in the locality and is adjacent to the S106 land which provides an opportunity to serve a wider range of sports and leisure activities".*

- 1.8 The report considered 5 options for the provision of leisure facilities and this application is the result of that study. Not only were the needs and desires of existing users considered against the potential of a new facility to meet the needs and desires of new users as a result of the growing population, but the projected revenue implications of each option were also considered. This report also considered the implications of the proposed scheme against paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which deals with the retention of existing sport and recreational facilities. It also considered the financial implications of each option against the current financial situation. In simple terms whilst the current facility is a net drain on the Councils budget the proposed scheme would turn that around and provide an annual net gain.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.9 The site lies within the built-up area of Broadbridge Heath and comprises land stretching from directly adjacent to the Bowls Centre up to the edge of the athletics area to the west of the existing leisure centre. It incorporates the existing leisure centre and MUGAs.
- 1.10 The southern boundary adjoins the land being developed for sports pitches, the northern boundary adjoins the access road to the Bowls Centre and adjacent Tesco car park. Beyond 'the tube' and spectator stand which is being retained lies the running track with football pitch in the middle. To the south of the running track lies the residential development by Countryside Properties which is currently being completed. To the east of the Bowls Centre lies the A24.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICY

- 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Building a strong, competitive economy (Section 1)  
Promoting sustainable transport (Section 4)

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Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (Section 6)  
Requiring good design (Section 7)  
Promoting healthy communities (Section 8)  
Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal heritage (Section 10)  
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Section 11)  
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (Section 12)

Planning Practice Guidance

### RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICY

2.3

Horsham District Planning Framework

Policy 1 (Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development)  
Policy 2 (Strategic Policy: Strategic Development)  
Policy 3 (Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy)  
Policy 4 (Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion)  
Policy 24 (Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection)  
Policy 31 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity)  
Policy 32 (Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development)  
Policy 33 (Development Principles)  
Policy 35 (Strategic Policy: Climate Change)  
Policy 37 (Sustainable Construction)  
Policy 38 (Strategic Policy: Flooding)  
Policy 39 (Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision)  
Policy 40 (Sustainable Transport)  
Policy 41 (Parking)  
Policy 42 (Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities)  
Policy 43 (Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation)

### RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.4 None

### PLANNING HISTORY

HR/181/85	Erection of a retail store & sports centre with playing pitches, running track and parking area	Permitted
WN/2/85	Reg.4 - 70000 sq.ft. retail store with anc. car parking & landscaping together with provision of enhanced recreational facilities (outline)	Permitted
BB/11/94	Erection of an indoor bowls centre	Permitted
BB/2/95	Extension to long jump pit building	Permitted
DC/07/2751	Variation of Condition 6 under application HR/7/85 (also WN/2/85) and Condition 8 under application HR/181/85 (also WN/33/85) to vary the hours of operation of the recreational facilities to Monday-Friday 07.00 to 00.00, Saturday 09.00 to 00.00 and Sunday 09.00 to 23.00	Permitted

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DC/16/1263	Development of 5no MUGA playing pitches with associated floodlights, fencing and access footpath on open land south of Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre.	Permitted
DC/16/2272	Erection of covered stand for spectator seating and 8no 15m high floodlight columns for use ancillary to football pitches.	Pending consideration

### 3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

#### INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 **Environmental Health Officer: (Summarised)** No objection subject to conditions  
Although there are no objections to this application in principle this department is mindful of the increased developments surrounding the current site. I understand that the nearest noise sensitive building will be 95 m west of the new leisure centre.

A noise assessment has been submitted as part of the application which assessed noise from plant noise, leisure centre noise breakout and MUGA pitches. Controls include restriction on hours of operation and sealed doubled glazed windows. The report predicts that noise levels generated at the site should be no louder than the existing background noise at the nearest noise sensitive property.

Broadbridge Heath Football Club who competes in the Sussex County League currently shares the leisure centre and I understand that the new facility will continue with this arrangement. No mention has been made to noise from public address (PA) systems or crowd noise. If a public address system is to be installed it is recommended that prior to the commencement of the development, details of a scheme to protect neighbouring residential properties from noise from the proposed activities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved details shall be implemented in full prior to the development being operated and shall thereafter be permanently maintained in full accordance with the approved details.

Although this level of football attracts small crowds, noise from bursts of crowd cheering and chanting can have an impact on neighbouring residents. In the absence of any recognised guidelines specific to the assessment of the impact on residents of noise from sports stadia, it has been necessary to consider the ways in which effects of noise can be reduced to an acceptable level. Generally there is little that can be done to control vocal noise from crowds. In order to reduce the spectator noise impact I recommend planning conditions to prevent spectators from taking air horns, drums, trumpets, etc. into the stadium.

A Light Impact Assessment has been provided for the application of the MUGA pitches which states that the proposed sports lighting installation will achieve the illuminance levels required to allow various sports to be played outside of daylight hours.

Mitigation measures should also be included for any other pitches for the prevention of light pollution and light trespass and to safeguard the living conditions of local residents. It is recommended that prior to the commencement of the development precise details of any other floodlighting should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In addition, it is recommended that the external facilities are not illuminated outside of the hours of 08:00 – 22:00 Monday to Sunday.

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Additionally conditions are recommended addressing the following issues:

- construction and demolition
- hours of use on grounds maintenance
- refuse collection
- hours of use on external activities

- 3.2 **HDC Strategic Planning: Drainage:** No objection subject to condition  
I have no overall objections to the drainage strategy proposed therefore until detailed design information has been submitted at the appropriate planning stage, suitable drainage conditions should be applied that include securing the implementation and maintenance of the SuDS features to ensure they remain effective for the lifetime of the development.
- 3.3 **HDC Landscape Officer:**  
Comments awaited
- 3.4 **HDC Access Officer (Summarised):** Comments were provided at the design stage and no further comments to add.

### OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- 3.5 **Ecology: (Summary):** No objection subject to condition  
No objection subject to a condition requiring any building or vegetation clearance taking place outside the bird nesting season
- 3.6 **Sussex Police:** Comment  
The applicant's attention is drawn to the website [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com) which will provide the applicant with in-depth crime prevention advice.
- 3.7 **WSCC Flood Authority: (Summary)** Recommends conditions  
The proposed development is shown to be at 'negligible' risk from ground water flooding based on the current mapping. Where the intention is to dispose of surface water via filtration/soakaway, these should be shown to be suitable through an appropriate assessment carried out under the methodology set out in BRE Digest 365 or equivalent.

The potential for ground water contamination within a source protection zone has not been considered by the LLFA. The LPA should consult with the EA if this is considered as a risk.

The FRA for this application proposes that permeable paving and underground cellular storage would be used as the primary method to restrict the run off from the development. This method would, in principle, meet the requirements of the NPPF, PPG and associated guidance documents. Development should not commence until finalised detailed surface water drainage designs and calculations for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles, for the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage designs should clearly demonstrate that the surface water runoff generated up to and including the 100 year, plus climate change, critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the current site following the corresponding rainfall event.

Development shall not commence until full details of the maintenance and management of the SuDS system is set out in a site-specific maintenance manual and submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved designs.

- 3.8 **WSCC Highways: Summarised)** No objection subject to conditions  
I have reviewed the Design and Access Statement, the Transport Statement and Travel Plan and confirm that no highway objections are raised to the proposal. Access would be retained from the north via the existing Tesco roundabout at the junction of Old Wickhurst

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Lane and the current Broadbridge Heath bypass. This latter road is now carrying less traffic as a result of the completion of the new east-west link road to the south which will allow the current bypass to be closed to through traffic in due course. It will also improve the capacity of the existing Tesco roundabout leading to lower waiting times and shorter queue lengths on the side road.

As regards parking, I note that 174 new car parking spaces would serve the site plus a new traffic circulation and drop-off area. This all looks satisfactory and the amount of car parking should be adequate bearing in mind that the site is located in a sustainable location with good pedestrian, cycle and bus access to nearby neighbourhoods. A condition relating to a travel plan is recommended.

### 3.9 **Sport England: (Summarised)** Objection

Sport England objects to the application because it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 74 of the NPPF. It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years. The FA feel that there is insufficient detail contained within this application that satisfies the FA and Sussex FA that the replacement playing field and sports pavilion is adequate to meet the needs of Broadbridge Heath FC and will be constructed and fully operational prior to the loss of any existing facilities. Whilst it acknowledges a wider development of the site including the construction of grass pitches on adjacent open space this element is subject to final agreement between the neighbouring residential developer and Horsham DC. The two applications are inextricably linked as the football club are at risk of displacement should the linked scheme fail to progress to an acceptable standard or be delayed. There is insufficient design detail contained within this application relating to the football elements of the scheme. For example, should changing rooms not be close enough to the existing pitch, this will cause Broadbridge Heath FC to lose their ground grading, meaning they will be displaced from the site. This prejudices the use of the playing pitch within the running track.

England Athletics state that although the indoor tube will be retained on a smaller scale, the opportunity for continuation of current usage will be lost entirely with the building to become a storage area. Although a small part of the building will be used for toilets accessible from the outdoor track, the specialist facility which has local, county and regional significance will be lost completely.

The Tube currently provides specialist indoor training opportunities for pole vault, horizontal jumps, a throwing cage, with a spiked floor for technical events sprints and hurdles, all of which will be lost. The venue is also used for coach education and development workshops on a local and national level. Without seeing a programming example, there is nothing available to confirm a view that athletics provision will be re-provided within the sports centre. However, with the time and space for athletics which will be lost should the Tube become a storage area, it would be logical to assume that fitting this time into a sports hall designed primarily for badminton, would be difficult to achieve. Therefore, England Athletics do not feel that there is adequate replacement in the designs for the current indoor provision used by our sport which will be lost.

An alternative storage solution which would allow the tube to be retained for athletics use would be actively encouraged from England Athletics. This will mitigate for the likely limited access available in the new sports hall.

The Lawn Tennis Association notes that the proposed surface is Porous Macadam Polymeric. In the LTA's opinion this is not as suitable a surface for tennis as normal Porous Macadam. The LTA would therefore be of the opinion that the proposed surface is not an adequate replacement of the existing facilities

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Should the local planning authority be minded to grant planning permission for the proposal, contrary to Sport England's objection then in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, the application should be referred to the Secretary of State, via the National Planning Casework Unit.

### PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

#### 3.10 **Broadbridge Heath Parish Council**

Comments awaited

- 3.11 64 letters of objection received from members of the public and users of The Tube including the Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre Joint Users Group (BJUG), the Sussex Schools Athletics Association, the Burgess Hill runners, the Shipley Bowmen, the BBHLC 50 Plus Group, the Blue Star Harriers and a number of coaches and athletes who use this facility, raising the following objections:
- Lack of compliance with paragraph 74 of the NPPF insofar as the replacement scheme does not represent the provision of equivalent or better facilities than existing.
  - Loss of the tube represents the loss of an important regional athletics facility with the nearest other such facility being in Sutton
  - A number of athletics activities that currently take place would not be able to continue if the retained part of the tube is to be used for storage
  - The position of the cycling facilities are too far from the entrance,
  - The location of the scheme does not integrate well with existing cycling routes
  - Conflict between access to the cycle storage areas and the public car park
  - The councils usage figures are misleading
  - the over 50 group has over 450 members who account for 5% of all visits to the centre each year (the largest off peak user of the centre) whose usage would be adversely affected by the proposed changes: having to squeeze an ever growing membership into a smaller space with potential difficulties arranging a schedule to provide for all current activities
  - Lack of adequate replacement café facilities: with only pre-prepared snacks and sandwiches rather than freshly made salads, snacks and sandwiches
  - Unacceptable treatment of HAODS – such as to require their relocation – which is only on a temporary basis at present. They could be wholly retained at the leisure centre if the Tube were retained in its entirety.
- 3.12 *Officer Comment:* The changes made to the application in respect of the use of the Tube have been re-advertised and the outcome of the re-consultation will be reported to committee.

## **4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS**

- 4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

## **5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER**

- 5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.



## 6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

6.1 The main issues concern the principle of the loss of the existing facilities considered against paragraph 74 of the NPPF, design/impact upon surrounding streetscene, parking/access/impact upon the highway, neighbours amenities and ecology.

### 6.2 Principle of Development/NPPF Considerations:

Section 8 of the NPPF addresses the issue of promoting healthy communities. Paragraph 74 of this specifically addresses the issue of the loss/replacement of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land and states:

*Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

6.3 Policy 43 of the HDPF addresses the delivery of and access to leisure facilities. It advises that the provision of new or improved community facilities will be supported particularly where they meet the needs of local communities. Proposals that will result in the loss of sites and premises will be resisted unless equally usable facilities can be conveniently provided nearby. It will be necessary to demonstrate that continued use of a community facility or service is no longer feasible taking into account factors such as appropriate marketing, the demand for the use of the site or premises, its quality and usability and the identification of a potential future occupier. Where it cannot be demonstrated that such a loss is surplus to requirements Policy 43 addresses this issue in the same way as para 74 of the NPPF.

6.4 The application, as originally submitted, resulted in the conclusion by Sport England that the replacement facility would not represent an equivalent or better facility than existing and therefore that the scheme would not comply with the NPPF, thus requiring HDC to refer the scheme to the Secretary of State, if it is resolved to grant permission.

6.5 In response to the objections received the Council has amended the scheme to change the use of the retained part of 'the tube' from storage to a mixed use facility. Additional information regarding the facilities and timing of the provision of those facilities in close proximity to the leisure centre has also been provided; seeking to overcome the concerns expressed. At the time this report was written, Sport England have yet to consider the amendments and this report is therefore written against the background of an objection by Sport England. Any revised comments received relating to the amended scheme will be reported to the Committee as an update to this report.

6.6 Sport England's current concerns relate to three issues:

1. Loss of the Tube – a county wide athletics facility which forms part of the existing leisure centre and which lies adjacent to the athletics track.

6.7 The existing centre includes an indoor sprint track within that part of the leisure centre known as 'the tube'. It lies adjacent to the running track and access can be gained both from the track and from the existing leisure centre. It is large enough to provide other facilities on and alongside the track including long/triple jump, high jump, pole vaulting, trampolining, throwing nets for discus and shot, javelin net, climbing ropes, wall bars,

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general conditioning equipment such as weights and medicine balls and space for sportsball events for juniors.

- 6.8 It provides a regional facility particularly useful for winter training with the nearest other such facilities being in Sutton and Ashford. We are advised by users that coaches from Hastings to Portsmouth and Horley to Brighton use the facility as well as being home to the Horsham Blue Star Harriers.
- 6.9 The original application sought to retain approximately just under a 30m length of the Tube (the existing length being providing a 60 m spring track), located on the western side of the car park to be used for storage. Following the objection from Sport England the application has been amended to retain this element of the Tube for an informal multi use space. In effect that means that it could be retained for use by athletes for some of their activities. In particular it will provide an indoor space that can provide shelter and assembly during inclement weather and a very useful warm up space and suitable area for general conditioning work. Whilst it would not be long enough for some of the athletics disciplines or high enough for pole vaulting, with creative use of rebound boards and other training aids such as jump mats there are opportunities for a wide range of training facilities to be provided. All other activities that currently take place in 'the Tube' will benefit from improved or comparative facilities within the new Leisure Centre. At the time of writing this report, the change of use for the retained end of 'the Tube', which will also provide significant opportunities for other sports and recreation activities other than athletics, was undergoing a re-consultation and the responses of Sport England and those who had previously objected to its loss to storage are unknown. Those responses will be provided as an update to this report at the Committee meeting.
- 6.10 It is clear from the results of the consultation exercise that this facility is a valuable regional facility that HDC is not planning to replace elsewhere should this scheme go ahead and nor is it understood that any other body would replace this facility if it were lost. However the Council is not under any statutory obligation to provide this facility and would not require permission to close it.
- 6.11 The leisure complex in its current form, including this facility, is a loss making enterprise. This does not explicitly form part of the paragraph 74 considerations. However, as a Council, the decision has been taken to seek to make the leisure centre an economically sustainable venture which includes the reduction of 'the Tube' facility.
- 6.12 Very simply, the new centre seeks to provide for a wider and greater level of activities for the local population, for a population who are not higher level competitors, but who are local to the Broadbridge Heath area. Whilst the revised scheme retains part of 'the Tube' for some indoor athletics uses, the new scheme will inevitably result in the loss of some of the athletics training facilities which are valued by those competing at a higher level from both the Broadbridge Heath area and also from around the county and beyond. It is useful to consider how this was addressed in the report to Cabinet in November 2015:

*"The loss of the Tube will have an impact on a relatively small number of athletes. However, the provision of a multi-use sports hall, enhanced fitness suite and additional studios will increase annual attendances at the centre from just over 200,000 to over 400,000 during the first 4 years after it is opened.*

*Additionally, athletes will retain the 'all weather' track and field outdoor facility with access to extra usage times once the football club is relocated.*

*Whilst it is accepted that not providing the indoor track represents the loss of a specialist facility, this does not prevent the nurturing and developing of local talent. Additionally, the new proposal will mean it will be possible to accommodate children within the main hall and provide a competitive element through sports hall athletics sessions.*

*Although this by no means replaces the current indoor track, it does mean that athletics remains well catered for against other local authorities in the region.*

*On the basis that a six court hall is considered to meet more of the diverse needs of a growing population than the Tube would, it is assessed that the gains from this proposal outweigh the loss and for this reason, HDC is confident that its proposal for Option 3 fully complies with NPPF (Para 74)".*

- 6.13 Considering the paragraph 74 provisions it is clear that the facilities are not surplus to requirement, they must then be considered in terms of the quantity and quality of provision, the location and whether the need for what would be offered clearly outweighs the loss of some of the athletics activities that 'the Tube' currently offers.
- 6.14 It is a difficult assessment when effectively one sport/activity is being weighed against another. Taking the whole proposal into account, this scheme would provide a financially secure facility (rather than a loss making facility) and therefore a facility which would have a more likely assured longevity; it would provide a wide range of activities which would appeal to the local general population and as a result of the increase in level of provision, of for example the fitness suite and badminton courts, would provide greater access to those activities for local residents. In conjunction with the MUGAs that have already been approved (application ref DC/1263) and the pitches and pavilion for which permission will be/is being sought (no application yet submitted for the pavilion and pitches), the complex will provide a comprehensive local leisure facility for local residents. Against this there would be less provision of some specialist athletics facilities for both local and more distant users.
- 6.15 Other objections received in respect of the leisure centre concern the loss of the existing facility for the Horsham Amateur and Operatic Drama Society (HAODS), the proposal for a smaller kitchen and the loss of the existing clubroom for the badminton club. Alternative temporary facilities for HAODS are currently under discussion and it is anticipated that this issue will be resolved before the existing centre is closed.
- 6.16 A kitchen/store and servery to service the café is now proposed, albeit that may not be as large as existing facilities. The existing facility can be hired out for private events and whilst the smaller kitchen may preclude that use, the neighbouring Bowls centre has a kitchen and facilities that could be used, so that overall a good level of provision within the immediate area will be maintained.
- 6.17 The badminton club have exclusive use of part of the existing centre with access to other users of the centre being prevented. The proposed leisure centre is a public facility and it is not proposed to replicate this 'private club' element of the existing facility. However, the centre will provide greater access to more badminton courts for the general population and the club, which represents a positive outcome for the sport of badminton.
- 6.18 To conclude therefore on the first part of Sport England's objection regarding the loss of 'the Tube', a balance must be struck between retention of specialist facilities serving a limited number of users, additional facilities that would serve a wider proportion of the local population, and the need for the facility to be economically viable to ensure its longevity and on-going provision. It is the Officers' view that the current proposal strikes such a balance, and that while the reduced offer of athletics facilities within 'the Tube' is not ideal, the current proposal would result in significant public benefits that outweigh this loss.

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### 2. Lack of co-ordination between the loss of the existing changing facilities for Broadbridge Heath FC and the provision of new facilities.

- 6.19 The primary concern is that the football team lose access to changing facilities whilst using the existing pitch and/or the existing pitch and changing facilities so that the team could not compete temporarily until new facilities become available.
- 6.20 The team currently play on a pitch in the middle of the athletics track with their changing facilities in the leisure centre, immediately adjacent. Both the pitch and changing facilities need to be of a certain standard and lie within a certain distance of each other in order to be FA compliant.
- 6.21 A new pitch and pavilion will in due course lie on land to the south of the existing/proposed leisure centres and it is understood that the standard of the pitch and the pavilion will aim to meet the standards required by the FA to enable Broadbridge Heath FC to continue playing at the required standard. At the time of writing this report an application has been received for the floodlights and stands proposed as part of that development, although the main application for the pitches and pavilion is awaited. The discussions held between the Council, the club and the FA have all been aimed at making the facilities fully FA compliant.

The application for football pitches will seek permission for various works including the provision of three sports pitches, a pavilion for use by the Broadbridge Heath football club and ancillary works such as fencing, access road etc. As a result of the uncertainty about the submission date of that application it is unclear precisely upon which date the new pitch and pavilion would be available for use, should planning permission be forthcoming. Whilst the existing pitch can be retained until such time as the new pitch is available for use, clearly the existing leisure centre will have to be demolished to allow for provision of parking and that, in Sports England view, could leave a gap in provision of changing facilities.

- 6.22 If necessary, temporary facilities could be provided within the required distance of the existing pitch and to the required standard, to bridge the gap between the demolition of the existing leisure facility and the completion of the new pavilion. This particular issue could be dealt with by means of the provision of temporary changing facilities to cover that period between the existing leisure centre being demolished and the new facilities being available should the development programme make that necessary. A condition to this effect forms part of this recommendation. This approach was not available to Sport England when making their comments and is under discussion with them.
- 6.23 Works are already taking place preparing the land to the south of the leisure centre for the new pitches - with the land having already been levelled and with drainage now being laid before a final top surface is laid and seeded. It is hoped that the drainage works will be completed so that a first seeding can take place this year (weather permitting) and that this will be supplemented or will be carried out at the start of next year in order to provide a playing surface at the earliest opportunity. These works are being inspected by the Council and thus far the scheme under construction is considered to be an acceptable standard to meet FA regulations. Since the works are underway and subject to an inspection by the FA ahead of their required use, it is unclear precisely when the pitch will become available for use by the club. However the existing pitch can be retained until that time.
- 6.24 This land will be transferred to the Council in due course pursuant to the terms of the original S106 agreement for the wider development site. It is not considered therefore that the club will be without a pitch, which would be regulation compliant, at any point.
- 6.25 In summary it is considered that with the use of a condition to ensure provision of temporary changing facilities, if necessary, and with the existing and proposed pitches, that the Council is able to demonstrate the continuity required of facilities for the

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Broadbridge Heath football club, such as to overcome the objections of Sport England. Certainly when considered against the provisions of paragraph 74 the proposed facilities would result in a better quality and quantity of facilities compared to those being lost.

### 3. The potential loss of a suitable tennis surface on the MUGAs (DC/16/1263)

- 6.26 The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) have commented that the proposed surface on the MUGAs (already approved by Committee under reference DC/16/1263) would be a porous macadam polymeric surface. This is not considered as suitable a surface for tennis as normal porous macadam and the LTA therefore consider that this is not an adequate replacement for the existing facilities.
- 6.27 The outdoor MUGAs at Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre have always been Type 4 polymeric surfaces which have proved very popular with users and very flexible for the range of activities undertaken at the Centre. In 2015 interim resurfacing took place leaving the surfaces as purely macadam with a view to adding the polymeric top surface at a later date. The decision has been taken not to proceed with this in light of the replacement option.
- 6.28 The existing MUGAs which were originally three courts have been reconfigured to provide four courts, two in an east-west direction and two in a north–south direction. The new MUGA provision will provide five courts.
- 6.29 Consideration was given to the type of surface to be provided with the new provision and in particular potentially providing a number of 3g synthetic turf courts. Following a detailed review and taking account of representations from user groups and the operator, the decision was taken to replace the MUGAs with the same surface as previously in place, namely Type 4 polymeric. Account was also taken of the specific mixed programming requirements for the Centre and MUGA provision elsewhere in the catchment area.
- 6.30 In conclusion on the matter of Sport England’s third objection, it is therefore considered that the permitted MUGAs are an appropriate replacement for the existing courts.

### Design/Impact upon Surrounding Streetscene

- 6.31 The NPPF as part of the core planning principles requires high quality design. This is expanded in Section 7 of that document where good design is considered as being indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It advises however that design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.
- 6.32 At a local level, Policies 32 and 33 seek to achieve the same result, ensuring that new development provides an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment.
- 6.33 The character of the wider existing area is one of different characters:  
– the leisure/commercial area which incorporates the site, the athletics track, Bowls Club and that area to the north with the Tesco Store, Petrol Station and all the associated parking  
- the residential development currently under construction to the south of the leisure centre and athletics track.  
- the open land to the south which will in due course form the sports pitches

This Centre will relate to all these areas but in terms of built form, most closely to the area to the north of the new dwellings and sports pitches.

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The character of the buildings within which the new centre will lie are functional and of little architectural merit or interest.

- 6.34 By contrast the proposed new leisure centre would offer an attractive, contemporary design which would, by virtue of the design and arrangement of uses internally and externally, create a building that relates well to its surroundings by creating views into and out of the site and building, creating an attractive focal point within this part of Broadbridge Heath.
- 6.35 The adjacent Bowls club is the only other building in close proximity to the site with which this new Centre has to interact. By its very nature the new Centre will create a substantial building with a bulk and mass that is hard to disguise. However, because the adjacent building is also a bulky 'boxy' design this becomes less of an issue and the design can more easily reflect the nature of the use. The design that has been chosen, using a number of 'boxes', with different layers and materials allows the bulk of the sports hall to be broken up with different levels around it. The variety of materials provides interest to the elevations and allows the centre to provide interaction with its surroundings, facilitating views in and out of the centre in a way that the current centre and the bowls club do not: for instance views of the fitness suite would be available from across both adjacent car parks; likewise the café would be visible from outside the site. This makes the centre more interesting and welcoming than the current leisure centre which presents quite an enclosed space when viewed from outside.
- 6.36 The external areas around the building provide a range of the essential requirements such as parking, pedestrian access, cycle racks and seating areas although with relatively modest amount of green open space. However subject to a detailed planting/landscaping plan the impact of that space could be maximised to create a modest green space in front and to the rear of the centre to soften the bulk and mass of the leisure centre. Given the level of hard landscaping around the wider site this would be an enhancement of the built form.
- 6.37 Overall it is considered that this design would be a positive benefit to the character of the surrounding area and that this aspect of the scheme would comply with both national and local policy objectives.

### Parking/Access/Impact upon the Highway

- 6.38 Central to the NPPF is the aim to secure a sustainable future and that includes ensuring that facilities are located in a sustainable position and that sustainable modes of transport are encouraged.
- 6.39 At a local level Policy 40 of the HDPF seeks to re-balance the transport network in favour of non-car modes of transport and ensuring that development is appropriate in scale to the existing transport infrastructure, integrated with the wider network of routes including public rights of way and cycle paths, and provides safe and suitable access for all vehicles pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and the delivery of goods.
- 6.40 The proposed centre would be located within the settlement boundary in close proximity to existing shops, the new village centre and significant levels of existing and new housing nearing completion. It would make provision for sufficient new parking but would lie adjacent to an existing supermarket with significant levels of parking and close to the Bowls club with its own car park. It is clear therefore that the users of this centre would have sufficient parking available and would not therefore be required to park in either the adjacent residential areas nor on the public highway such as to cause any obstructions to the free flow of traffic. No objections are raised by the Highways Authority to the levels of traffic expected to attend this site.

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- 6.41 The nearby residential areas are still being developed but include some cycle routes that could be used by those seeking to visit the site. Certainly sufficient provision is made for the parking of bicycles around the site with good access to the entrance. In terms of access on foot the adjacent residential areas will include access in due course to this centre. Certainly the centre lies within walking distance of large numbers of residents (existing and future) and this location was broadly determined as the site of a new leisure centre when the adjacent Countryside Properties development was determined by application reference DC/09/2101.
- 6.42 The site is well served by the local bus network and overall this site is considered to represent a sustainable location, with the means to access the site by other means than the private car and to be compliant with the overall locational strategy of both national and local planning policies.

### Neighbour Amenities

- 6.43 The NPPF sets out as one of the core planning principles a good standard of amenity of all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. At the local level Policy 33 of the HDPF seeks to do likewise whilst being more specific about the types of harm that it seeks to prevent or avoid.
- 6.44 The Countryside Properties development currently being completed will place flats and houses in close proximity to the existing leisure centre, being located to the south west of the Centre and directly to the south of the running track and football pitch in the centre of the running track. Therefore as existing those future residents would experience noise and disturbance that arises from the use of the facilities currently in situ.
- 6.45 The scheme under consideration would move the leisure centre further from those residents, placing a car park on the site of the existing centre. It will however form part of a larger redevelopment of this part of the site for leisure purposes which will involve new pitches and a pavilion all of which were identified and agreed as part of the original outline application and all of which are likely to have a greater impact upon those residents than the centre or car park. The new leisure centre entrance would be placed at the rear of the building facing onto the pitches so some noise may be apparent to nearby residents as people enter and leave the centre, but that is not expected to be at such levels that it would at any time of the day/night be unacceptable. Likewise, noise is likely to be evident from cars using the car park, but again not at such levels as to constitute a nuisance or loss of amenities to the nearest residents.
- 6.46 Visually the southern boundary around the running track is formed by a well planted embankment, which reduces the direct line of sight to the car park from those nearest dwellings currently under construction. The centre itself would be far enough away from any dwellings not to be considered visually intrusive.
- 6.47 Overall it is not considered that the scheme would adversely affect any residents' amenities significantly and that this aspect of the scheme would be policy compliant.

### Ecology:

- 6.48 The NPPF seeks to ensure that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible. At a local level Policy 31 of the HDPF seeks to achieve likewise.
- 6.49 The wider site includes the potential for nesting birds and a condition is proposed to ensure that any development involving potential disturbance to birds takes place outside the bird nesting season. Subject to such a condition there are not objections to the scheme in this respect.

**Conclusion:**

- 6.50 This application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing leisure centre and the erection of a new leisure centre with part retention of 'the Tube' with associated parking and landscaping facilities.
- 6.51 Concern has been expressed regarding the loss of 'the Tube', a facility providing opportunities for indoor athletics at a regional level. In response to those concerns the application has been amended to retain part of 'the Tube' for multi-use purposes which will allow the continued use for some athletics activities. Considering the wider and long term benefits that the revised scheme as a whole would provide to the wider community, it is considered that this change is sufficient to make this scheme compliant with both national and local policies. The comprehensive development will ensure the provision of facilities that are significantly improved in terms of quantity and quality to those currently on offer and where losses are involved, in respect of a particular sport or activity, these would be offset by alternative provision, the need and benefits of which to the wider community would clearly outweigh the loss of particular facilities.
- 6.52 The scheme would also secure the continued use of the existing football pitch until a new pitch is available including the use of changing facilities – which, if necessary are to be provided on a temporary basis to secure continuous provision, detailed to be secured by condition.
- 6.53 The wider site has been identified for some years as the location for a new leisure centre and it will relate comfortably with the adjacent leisure uses and nearby residential development currently under construction. It would lie further from that residential development than the current centre and is not anticipated that there will be any loss of amenities to those residents resulting from the operation of these facilities. Nor is it expected that the use of the centre will conflict with the adjacent use of the Bowls club or supermarket.
- 6.54 The design of the centre is considered to represent an attractive building that will be an enhancement of the surrounding area, providing a contemporary facility as part of the re-development of the site and its surroundings to provide a range of sporting and leisure activities.

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to referral to the Secretary of State, and subject to appropriate conditions:

- 1 Approved Plans
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 Prior to the development of the site above the ground floor slab level, details shall be provided in writing to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of the proposed external materials. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.



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Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance upon completion in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

- 4 Prior to the occupation of any part of the development hereby approved full details of all hard and soft landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All such works as may be approved shall then be fully implemented in the first planting season, following commencement of the development hereby permitted and completed strictly in accordance with the approved details. Any plants or species which within a period of 5 years from the time of planting die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development and in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 Prior to the first use of the approved leisure centre site the approved access, parking and turning facilities for vehicles shall be provided, be available for use and shall be retained for those purposes thereafter.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory facilities are provided for access and the parking and turning of motor vehicles in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6 The premises shall not be open for trade or business except between the hours of 7am-midnight Monday - Friday, 9am- midnight on Saturdays and 9am - 11pm Sundays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 78 No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the entire construction period. The Plan shall provide details as appropriate but not necessarily be restricted to the following matters,
- the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction,
  - the method of access and routing of vehicles during construction,
  - the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors,
  - the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste,
  - the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development,
  - the erection and maintenance of security hoarding,
  - the provision of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders),
  - details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works,
  - measures to limit noise and dust emissions from the site during demolition and construction works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area.

- 8 Prior to the first use of the leisure centre details shall be submitted in writing to and be approved by the Local Planning Authority of all external lighting. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character and amenities of the area in accordance with the provisions of Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

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- 9 To avoid risk of harm to potentially nesting birds, removal of any trees and/or shrubs should be undertaken between September and the end of February when birds have ceased nesting. If this is not possible, and clearance is required to be removed between March and August, an Ecologist should check for active bird nests no more than seven days before works commence, and any active nests found should be protected as advised by the Ecologist until the birds have finished nesting

Reasons: To provide ecological protection and enhancement in accordance with NPPF paragraph 118 and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

- 10 Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water drainage and an implementation timetable has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include details of the proposed SuDS scheme, providing details of its future and ongoing maintenance. The drainage designs should clearly demonstrate that the surface water runoff generated up to and including the 100 year, plus climate change, critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the current site following the corresponding rainfall event. The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to protect water quality and to ensure the future maintenance of the surface water drainage system to comply with the NPPF and Policy 38 of the Horsham Development Planning Framework 2015.

- 11 The proposed grounds maintenance shall take place only between the hours of 0900 - 1800 hours Mondays to Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or bank holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residents in accordance with the provisions of Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

- 13 The leisure centre hereby approved shall only open between the hours of 0700 – 2300 hours Mondays to Saturdays and 0900 – 1100 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residential occupiers in accordance with the provisions of policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Background Papers: