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**David Lloyd, Wickwoods
Country Club
Planning Statement**

David Lloyd Clubs
David Lloyd Leisure Ltd
01 March 2024

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of David Lloyd Leisure Limited, to accompany a full planning application for the provision of padel tennis courts and associated flood lighting at Wickwoods Country Club, Hotel & Spa, Wickwoods, Shaves Wood Ln, Albourne, Hassocks, BN6 9DY. The description of development is as follows:

“Planning application for three padel courts and associated flood lighting.”

The Planning Application Submission

1.2 This document considers the planning issues associated with the proposed development in the context of national and local planning policy and guidance.

1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the other documents that have been submitted with the planning application, including:

- 1 Planning application form;
- 2 Site Location Plan (A-PL-100 – Rev P01) - prepared by HCD Architects;
- 3 The following planning application drawings prepared by HCD Architects:
 - a Existing Site Plan (A-PL-101 – Rev P01);
 - b Proposed Site Plan (A-PL-102 – Rev P01);
 - c Padel Court Plan and Elevations (A-PL-103 – Rev P01);
- 4 Design & Access Statement – prepared by HCD Architects;
- 5 External Lighting Design & Lighting Assessment – prepared by Elm Building Services
- 6 Ecosystem Services Statement (within Planning Statement) – prepared by Lichfields; and
- 7 Arboricultural Impact Assessment (inc. Tree Survey) – prepared by RMT Tree Consultancy Ltd.

Statement Structure

1.4 This Planning Statement contains seven sections:

- Section 2 of this statement provides a brief background into David Lloyd;
- Section 3 provides a summary of the site and surrounding area and the relevant planning history;
- Section 4 describes the proposal;
- Section 5 reviews the relevant national and local planning policy;
- Section 6 assesses the key planning considerations;
- Section 7 comprises the Ecosystem Services Statement; and
- Section 8 provides a conclusion to the statement.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 David Lloyd Clubs (David Lloyd) is Europe's premier health, racquets and fitness provider. The company has operated for over 30 years and owns 103 David Lloyd Clubs in the UK and a further twenty-four across Europe. David Lloyd has ambitious growth plans both in both the UK and Europe.
- 2.2 The business has some 730,000 members and is a significant employer in the health and fitness market, employing over 8,000 people. These include an expert health and fitness team of over 2,000 professionals and more than 680 tennis coaches.
- 2.3 David Lloyd's racquets facilities are unrivalled in the UK, with some 1,000 tennis courts, 400 badminton courts and squash courts.
- 2.4 In addition to the racquets' facilities, across all Clubs, David Lloyd has over 150 swimming pools and the company offers more than 10,000 exercise classes every week.
- 2.5 David Lloyd also provides significant coaching programs for children, both as part of the normal operation of its Clubs and as 'outreach' to local schools, colleges and other amateur organisations. It is estimated that every week some 25,000 children swim and some 16,000 receive tennis coaching at David Lloyd Clubs.
- 2.6 In addition to the core activities of racquets and health and fitness, a number of Clubs also benefit from health and beauty spas, lounges, food and beverage, crèches, nurseries and specialist sports shops.
- 2.7 The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the need for both physical and mental resilience and David Lloyd are at the forefront of development, both in fitness innovation across its Clubs, and mindful-wellness through group exercise classes and spas, and its family-focused provision.

3.0 Site and Surrounding Area

3.1 The site is part of Wickwoods Country Club (the Club), which is located wholly within the administrative boundary of South Downs National Park Authority. Vehicular access to the Club is gained from Shaves Wood Lane.

The Club

3.2 The Club consists of a country club, hotel and spa with associated car parking. The principal frontage of the main building faces east onto a dedicated car park which extends both north and south of the building. The existing tennis courts are located to the north west of the building. To the north, south and west the site is bounded by hedgerow and trees. The existing outdoor swimming pool is located immediately to the south west of the building.

3.3 The proposed site for the Padel courts will be in the existing footprint of the tennis courts. The perimeter of the club to the west and north is designated as 'Ancient Woodland'.

The Site

3.4 The subject site is 0.11 hectares in size. This site is currently occupied by two tennis courts.

3.5 Mature trees and woodland border the west and north of the application site.

Heritage

3.6 The site contains no above-ground Designated Heritage Assets and is not located within a Conservation Area.

Flood Risk

3.7 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, an area with the lowest probability of flooding.

Site Designations

3.8 According to South Downs National Park Authority's policy map, the site is not subject to any designations.

Planning History

3.9 Lichfields has undertaken a search of planning applications available on South Downs National Park Authority's online planning portal. Relevant applications to the site are listed below.

Table 3.1 Site Planning History

| Application reference | Description | Decision and date |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| SDNP/22/05794/LDE | Implementation of planning permission SDNP/19/00948/FUL for construction of a single-storey extension to provide spa facilities, storage and a bar lounge, prior to confirmation of discharge of pre-commencement conditions. | Approved 03 Feb 2023 |
| SDNP/22/00239/FUL | Provision of 5no. lodges and extension to existing tennis court building to provide two paddle tennis courts. | Approved 26 Jan 2023 |

| Application reference | Description | Decision and date |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| SDNP/22/04947/CCC | Confirmation that Condition 1 of planning approval SDNP/19/00948/FUL has been complied with. | Approved 28 Nov 2022 |
| SDNP/22/02088/DCOND | Discharge of Conditions 4 (Materials), Condition 5 (Noise Prevention) and Condition 10 (Site Setup) of Planning Approval SDNP/19/00948/FUL. | Approved 24 Aug 2022 |
| SDNP/20/01944/FUL | Provision of 8no. eco-friendly sustainable retreat lodges, associated with the existing Wickwoods Country Club. | Approved 04 Sep 2020 |
| SDNP/19/01500/FUL | Construction of an open air Spa Garden. | Approved 03 Jun 2019 |
| SDNP/19/00948/FUL | Construction of a single-storey extension to the front elevation to provide additional facilities including spa treatment rooms and kitchen storage. Construction of a first floor extension to provide a bar lounge and additional spa facilities. Fenestration upgrades to include the application of zinc, timber cladding and render to enhance the external appearance. | Approved 31 May 2019 |
| SDNP/18/01809/DCOND | Discharge of Conditions 5 and 7 on planning consent SDNP/17/05237/FUL | Approved 24 May 2018 |
| SDNP/17/05237/FUL | Construction of a single-storey detached building to create a 'Spin Studio' | Approved 10 Jan 2018 |
| SDNP/17/02314/FUL | Construction of a single-storey detached building to create a 'Spin Studio' | Approved 28 Jul 2017 |
| SDNP/15/02169/FUL | Erection of a Tennis Lodge | Approved 15 Jul 2015 |
| SDNP/13/03576/FUL | Erection of a Conservatory at the Rear of Wickwoods Country Club, Hotel and Spa | Approved 11 Oct 2013 |
| SDNP/12/03158/FUL | Additional 2 tennis courts and the replacement of the existing plastic dome over 2 existing courts with a new purpose built cover to extend also over the two new courts. | Approved 22 Mar 2013 |
| 12/00728/FUL | South Downs National Park Additional 2 tennis courts and the replacement of the existing plastic dome over 2 existing courts with a new purpose built cover to extend also over the two new courts. Additional reports received 9th July 2012 - Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Tree Report. | Approved 24 Aug 2012 |
| 11/02331/FUL | 2-storey side extension to northern end of building to provide hotel accommodation and single storey extension to southern end of building to enlarge club facilities. | Approved 15 Feb 2012 |
| 10/03160/FUL | Extension of country club to provide new swimming pool. | Approved 27 Jan 2011 |
| 02/02400/FUL | New function room and link to kitchen. | Approved 12 Dec 2002 |
| 02/01823/FUL | Single storey extension to enlarge gymnasium and studio facilities. | Approved 08 Oct 2002 |
| 01/02567/FUL | Single storey extension to provide spa/sauna facilities. | Approved 22 Feb 2002 |
| WK/004/77 | Change of use from private house to private residential club. | Approved 02 Nov 1977 |

Source: South Downs National Park Authority

3.10

As highlighted above, there has historically been consistent support from South Downs National Park Authority for the evolution of the business and the club, notwithstanding its location within the National Park, and given the Club's unique nature and well screened position of its facilities.

4.0 **Proposed Development**

- 4.1 This application seeks planning permission for three padel courts and associated flood lighting. Further details of the development are set out in the Design and Access Statement and planning drawings.
- 4.2 The description of development is as follows:
“Planning application for three padel courts and associated flood lighting.”
- 4.3 The three padel courts will be contained within the existing tennis courts and are built via a pillar structure with 10mm glass panels at either end of the courts, measuring 3 metres in height, with an additional metre of anti-injury mesh infill above. The remaining sides of the court are bound with anti-injury mesh infill panels, measuring 3 metres in height. The playing surface uses artificial grass.
- 4.4 There are 4no. 240W LED projectors provided per court to evenly light the space, which offer a large reduction in energy use when compared to traditional halide lamps, with longer life and greater eco-efficiency. The lighting columns measure 6.2 metres in height.
- 4.5 Detailed plans prepared by HCD Architects accompany this planning application. Information regarding design and materials can be found in the Design and Access Statement, also produced by HCD Architects, submitted alongside this planning application.
- 4.6 The next section considers the policy context of the development, having regard to the development plan and other material consideration.

Padel Tennis

What is ‘Padel Tennis’?

- 4.7 Padel Tennis (Padel) is a form of tennis that is easy to play, fun and extremely sociable.
- 4.8 It is played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court about a third of the size of a tennis court. The enclosures are transparent which allows spectating.
- 4.9 The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve underhand and the walls are used as part of the game, with the ball allowed to bounce off them.
- 4.10 The reduced court size and ability to play off the walls enables players with reduced mobility to participate as there is less court space to cover.
- 4.11 Padel can be played in groups of mixed ages and abilities, as it is not power dominant. For this reason, several generations can be engaged in a single game and the sport presents the opportunity for a wider reach and longevity of play than many other racquet-led sports, notably tennis. Participants are also less likely to suffer impact or other stress related injuries.
- 4.12 One of the fastest growing sports across continental Europe, Padel has gained increasing popularity over recent years, with over six million people currently playing in Spain. The sport is a good entry route into lawn tennis, as well as being suitable for former lawn tennis players no-longer able to cover the court area of lawn tennis.

4.13 As of November 2020, there are around 6,000 active Padel players across Britain across 114 Padel courts at 59 clubs. However, this number is set to grow substantially over the coming years.

Padel in the UK

4.14 In 1992 the British Paddle Association was formed by a group of passionate British expats seeking to compete in the 1992 World Paddle Championships. Since then, the sport has seen slow, but steady growth throughout Britain.

4.15 In 2019 the LTA, recognising the linked benefits of Padel with tennis and the opportunity for inclusion of 'all generation growth', announced it was to integrate British Padel into the organisation's day-to-day operations.

4.16 At the end of 2020 there were around 6,000 active Padel players across the UK. There are also currently 114 Padel courts in Britain at 59 clubs. This number, with the support of the LTA and David Lloyd, as the premier racquets Club in the UK, is set to grow substantially over the coming years.

4.17 In November 2020 the LTA was confirmed as the national governing body for Padel and as part of its Padel Development Plan it is looking to have 400 Padel courts in place across Great Britain by 2023. As part of this initiative, David Lloyd is seeking to integrate Padel into all of its new Clubs and is presently working across its portfolio to identify opportunities to retrofit Padel Tennis courts.

Construction of Padel Courts

4.18 The Padel court internal playing area is 20m x 10m wide and is marked with two service lines and a centre line.

4.19 All Padel courts have the requirement for the inclusion of rebound ends (with fencing above). At the ends of the court a minimum height of 4.0m metres is required. The first 3.0m, from playing surface level, can comprise any transparent or solid material (glass, bricks, etc.) which does not affect ball bounce, and the upper 1.0m is metal fence (metal weld mesh).

4.20 In the U.K. most Padel court ends comprise toughened glass rebound panels with a weld mesh section over but could comprise other materials such as rendered blockwork for the first 3.0m.

4.21 A 3D visual of the proposed padel courts has been provided below and further details are shown within the submitted Design and Access Statement, prepared by HCD Architects.

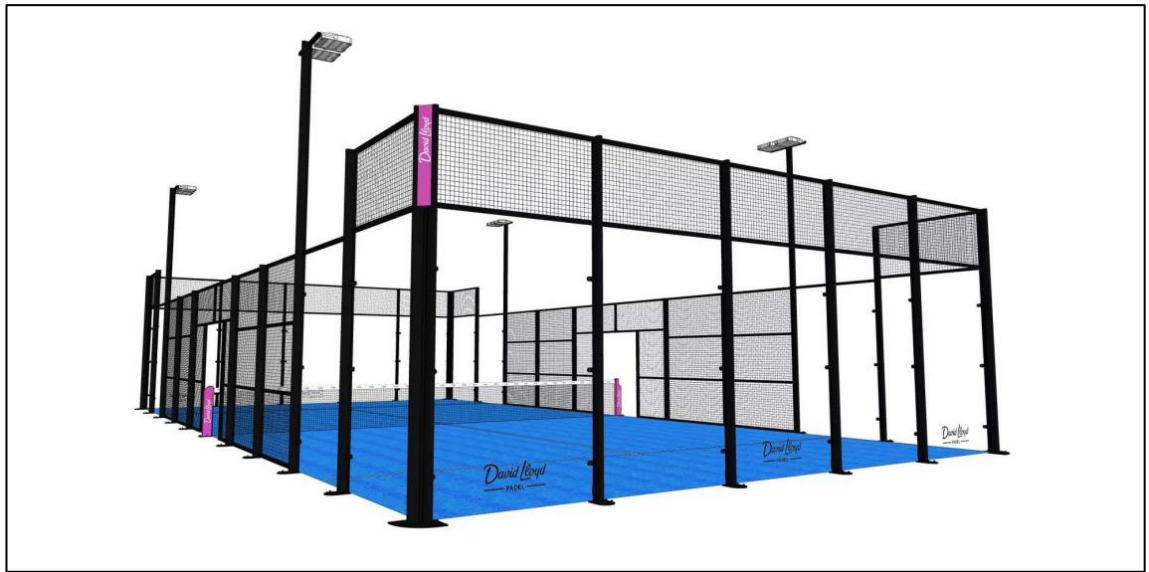


Figure 4.1 Padel Court 3D Visual

Source: David Lloyd

5.0 **Planning Policy Context**

5.1 This section outlines the Statutory Development Plan and identifies the relevant planning policy context, also having regard to other material planning considerations.

Statutory Development Plan

5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

5.3 The Statutory Development Plan for the site comprises:

- 1 South Downs Local Plan; and
- 2 Policies Map 2014-2033.

5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (‘NPPF’) (2023) and Planning for Sport Guidance (2019) are also material considerations.

South Downs Local Plan (2019)

5.5 It is considered that the following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

- Core Policy SD1: Sustainable Development;
- Strategic Policy SD4: Landscape Character;
- Strategic Policy SD5 Design;
- Strategic Policy SD7: Relative Tranquillity;
- Strategic Policy SD8: Dark Night Skies;
- Development Management Policy SD11: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows;
- Strategic Policy SD23: Sustainable Tourism
- Strategic Policy SD34: Sustaining the Local Economy;
- Development Management Policy SD46: Provision and Protection of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities and Burial Grounds/Cemeteries; and
- Strategic Policy SD48: Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources.

Other Material Considerations

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan (2016)

5.6 South Downs National Park Authority adopted the Albourne Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan in October 2016.

5.7 Albourne Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole Parish area for the period up to 2031 and sets out the development principles and allocation of areas for future building and land use.

5.8 The strategic objectives of the plan comprise the following:

- *Keeping the “village-feel” and sense of place*
- *Protecting and enhancing the environment*
- *Promoting economic vitality and diversity*
- *Ensuring cohesive and safe communities*
- *Supporting healthy lifestyles*

5.9 The plan is a material consideration to this application and relevant policies and aims of the Albourne Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan include the following:

- ALC2 - South Downs National Park
- Dark Skies Initiative

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

5.10 The revised NPPF was published in December 2023 and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

5.11 The focus of the revised document is on the delivery of new housing, as opposed to the granting of planning permission. It states that when assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and determine applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations, including the policies of the NPPF, indicate otherwise.

5.12 Local authorities should support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

5.13 Paragraph 85 recognises the planning system should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

5.14 The Government recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction, creating safe and accessible communities and enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. The NPPF states that the planning system has a role in helping to create an environment where activities are made easier and public health can be improved. It acknowledges that access to opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities (paragraph 96).

5.15 The NPPF acknowledges that the planning systems should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 123).

Sport England – Planning for Sport Guidance (2019)

- 5.16 In June 2019, Sport England produced the Planning for Sport Guidance that focuses on 12 principles which seek to help the planning system provide opportunities for all to take part in sport and physical activity.
- 5.17 The guidance builds upon the importance the Government has placed on the need for the planning system to enable and support healthy lifestyles, in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.18 At the heart of the guidance are the overarching principles, principle 1 states planning must recognise and give significant weight to the benefits of sports and physical activity. It is acknowledged that formal, informal, team, group or individual activities, sport and physical activity generates considerable socio-economic benefits to individuals, communities and the wider society. The guidance also provides a set of principles following three key themes; protect, enhance and provide.
- 5.19 Principle 6 states planning must “*support improvements to existing sport and physical activity provision where they are needed*”. The guidance adds improvements to existing sports and physical activity provision can play a key role in helping people to become and stay active as well as improving the use and viability of the provision. They can enhance the experience for existing users, increase the capacity of the provision and ensure the best use is made of a site for sport and physical activity.

6.0 **Planning Policy Analysis**

- 6.1 This section assesses the development against relevant policies in the Statutory Development Plan having regard to other material considerations, as set out in the previous section.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The NPPF recognises the importance of sports and recreation facilities as key mechanisms which can promote ‘healthy and safe communities’ (Chapter 8). The Framework states that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

“enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”

- 6.3 Chapter 8 of the NPPF continues to highlight the importance of having “access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity” for the well-being and health of communities.

- 6.4 At the local level, Strategic Policy SD34 (Sustaining the Local Economy) supports proposals that foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park where they provide flexibility for established businesses to secure future resilience and protect local jobs and intensify the commercial use of an employment site and make a more efficient use of brownfield land.

- 6.5 Strategic Policy SD23 (Sustainable Tourism) also supports proposals for recreation facilities where the proposals provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and ancillary facilities are not disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the visitor facilities.

- 6.6 Development Management Policy SD46 (Provision and Protection of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities and Burial Grounds/Cemeteries) also supports proposals for buildings for local sport and recreational facilities outside of settlement boundaries when ancillary to and essential for the use of the land for outdoor sport and recreation.

Assessment

- 6.7 David Lloyd has undertaken this development in response to Members’ needs, due to the demand for padel tennis facilities.
- 6.8 The development provides significant enhancements to the existing sporting facilities at the Club, as there were previously no padel courts. The proposals will enhance outdoor sport and recreation.
- 6.9 Furthermore, the proposal site currently represents significantly under-utilised land within the applicant’s ownership. Paragraph 119 of the NPPF outlines that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land, making as much use as possible of previously developed land. This proposal seeks to enhance the use of an already developed site and makes efficient use of land by replacing an underused tennis court with three padel courts.

- 6.10 Considering the national and local policy position above, the proposal for enhancing and increasing the sports and recreational facilities at this site via the development increases Members' access to a variety of sport and recreational uses and therefore, is supported in principle and accords with the requirements of the NPPF and the Local Plan.

Design and Sustainability

- 6.11 Strategic Policy SD4 (Landscape Character) states that development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance landscape character by demonstrating that the design, layout and scale of proposals conserve and enhance existing landscape and seascape character features which contribute to the distinctive character, pattern and evolution of the landscape and they will safeguard the experiential and amenity qualities of the landscape.
- 6.12 Strategic Policy SD5 (Design) confirms that development proposals will only be permitted where they adopt a landscape-led approach and respect the local character, through sensitive and high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area.
- 6.13 Strategic Policy SD48 (Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources) states that all development proposals, including retrofitting, will be required to demonstrate, proportionately, how the development addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation through the on-site use of zero and/or low carbon technologies, sustainable design and construction, and low carbon materials.

Assessment

- 6.14 In response to the above policy considerations, the Design and Access Statement submitted alongside this application considers the design matters in full. However, we summarise here the main design considerations.
- 6.15 The new padel facilities are adjacent to the existing Club, providing ease of access and flow for members accessing the new facilities. The materials used are of sustainable high quality and in keeping with the aesthetic of the existing leisure club. The development is in an underused part of the site and the proposals enhance this part of the Club. The proposed development will be contained within the existing tennis courts and will therefore not impact on trees and the surrounding landscape.
- 6.16 The development is sympathetic with the appearance and character of the local environment, and appropriate in scale, design, materials, and siting. The facilities are visually attractive and align with the high-quality aesthetics of the existing Country Club, crucially, providing a development which will diversify health and recreational facilities at the Club. The facilities fall within the existing club boundary and are screened by extensive vegetation on the application site's western and northern boundaries and it is noted that the existing club is hidden from view from Shaves Wood Lane by mature trees and hedgerow.
- 6.17 Further information regarding design and materials can be found in the Design and Access Statement, also produced by HCD Architects, submitted alongside this planning application.
- 6.18 The proposals therefore accord with the design principles set out within the Local Plan.

Lighting

- 6.19 Strategic Policy SD7 (Relative Tranquillity) notes that proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance relative tranquillity and should consider direct impacts that the proposals are likely to cause by changes in the visual and aural environment in the immediate vicinity of the proposals.
- 6.20 Strategic Policy SD8 (Dark Night Skies) states that development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of dark night skies and the integrity of the Dark Sky Core. Development proposals must also demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken and ensure that the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not negatively affected having regard to the following hierarchy:
- “a) The installation of lighting is avoided; and*
- b) If lighting cannot be avoided, it is demonstrated to be necessary and appropriate, for its intended purpose or use:*
- i. Any adverse impacts are avoided; or*
- ii. If that is not achievable, then adverse impacts are mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent.”*
- 6.21 Development Management Policy SD54 (Pollution and Air Quality) confirms that proposals will be permitted provided that levels of air, noise, vibration, light, water, odour or other pollutants do not have a significant negative affect on people and the natural environment now or in the foreseeable future, taking into account cumulative impacts and any mitigation.

Assessment

- 6.22 A detailed External Lighting Report and Lighting Design Plan, prepared by Elm Building Services Engineers Ltd, accompany this application, which provide detail on the position and illuminance of the flood lighting.
- 6.23 The Lighting Design Plan demonstrates the extent of the light spill from the padel courts. It is shown that there is limited spill beyond the site boundary. It is concluded that the lighting is not intrusive to neighbouring uses and therefore accords with the Local Plan.
- 6.24 The lighting implemented in association with the padel tennis courts is significantly lower in height, more directional and more energy-efficient compared to the existing lighting on the existing tennis courts.

Trees

- 6.25 Development Management Policy SD11 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows) states that proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance trees, hedgerows and woodlands.
- 6.26 The policy notes that development proposals must provide adequate protection zones and buffers around hedgerows and other woodland and trees to prevent damage to root systems

and taking account of future growth. A minimum buffer of 15 metres will be required between the development and ancient woodland or veteran trees.

Assessment

- 6.27 A detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment, including Tree Survey, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, has been prepared by RMT Tree Consultancy Ltd and accompanies this application.
- 6.28 This Assessment provides greater detail on the appropriate mitigation recommended to prevent or minimise harm and details mitigation as relevant. This includes minor pruning remedial works in order to provide adequate clearances for construction of the canvas roof and construction access, it will be necessary to carry out pruning works to category C trees T2, T6, T7, T9, T12 and T13, category C group G14 and category B tree T49. These works will not have a significant impact on these trees and are considered to be unremarkable specimens of limited landscape value. To note, the proposed development will be contained within the existing tennis courts and will therefore not impact on trees and the surrounding landscape.
- 6.29 The report concludes that the development will not require the removal any of the surveyed trees or groups, the trees to be retained will be protected during development and methods for ensuring their protection have been included within the Assessment and the development is sympathetic to the leafy character of the area.

7.0 Ecosystems Services Statement

7.1 Policy SD2, Ecosystem Services, of the South Downs Local Plan (2019) states that:

1. *“Development proposals will be permitted where they have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. This will be achieved through the use of high quality design, and by delivering all opportunities to:*
 - a) *Sustainably manage land and water environments;*
 - b) *Protect and provide more, better and joined up natural habitats;*
 - c) *Conserve water resources and improve water quality;*
 - d) *Manage and mitigate the risk of flooding;*
 - e) *Improve the National Park’s resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change;*
 - f) *Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means;*
 - g) *Conserve and enhance soils, use soils sustainably and protect the best and most versatile agricultural land;*
 - h) *Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials;*
 - i) *Reduce levels of pollution;*
 - j) *Improve opportunities for peoples’ health and wellbeing; and*
 - k) *Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities.*
2. *Development proposals must be supported by a statement that sets out how the development proposal impacts, both positively and negatively, on ecosystem services.”*

7.2 As such and in line with the above policy requirements, this application is accompanied by the following Ecosystem Services Statement:

- The planning application has aimed to create a positive impact on the natural environment and facilitate its ability to contribute goods and services. However, it is noted that as the proposal only comprises minor development for the erection of three padel courts and associated flood lighting, this has been undertaken where feasible and in line with the small-scale nature of the development.
- The proposed lighting used to evenly light the space offers a greater reduction in potential energy use when compared to traditional halide lamps, with longer life and greater eco-efficiency. As such, energy efficient lighting will be used to reduce any light pollution levels arising out of the proposals.
- The proposed works will not have a significant impact on the existing trees on the site as the proposed development will be contained within the existing tennis courts. Minor pruning remedial works are proposed in order to provide adequate clearances for construction of the canvas roof and construction access and this will not have a significant impact on these trees and are considered to be unremarkable

specimens of limited landscape value. The development will not require the removal any of the surveyed trees or groups, the trees to be retained will be protected during development and methods for ensuring their protection have been included within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the development is sympathetic to the leafy character of the area. There will therefore not be any impact on the existing trees and the surrounding landscape, in accordance with Policy SD11, Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows, of the adopted Local Plan

- A desktop Soil Assessment has been provided as part of the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment in order to confirm whether the soil on the proposal site is shrinkable and to ensure that the existing soils can be enhanced and conserved. This notes that the underlying soil is potentially shrinkable and as such any foundations will need to be deepened because of the presence of mudstone.
- In terms of improving the opportunities for people's health and wellbeing, the proposals provide significant enhancements to the site's existing sporting facilities which are intended to raise the importance of health and wellbeing in the area and enhance outdoor sport and recreation.
- The proposals will also aim to provide members with the opportunity to focus on improving their mental well-being and health, helping to positively meet current and future member demands and needs.
- The proposal site currently represents significantly under-utilised land within the applicant's ownership and therefore the proposals seek to enhance the use of an already developed site and make efficient use of land by replacing an underused tennis court with three padel courts.
- With regards to flood risk, the site is located within Flood Zone 1, according to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, and is therefore situated in an area with a low probability of flooding.
- Overall, the proposals are sympathetic with the appearance and character of the local environment, and are appropriate in scale, design materials, layout and siting. The proposed development provides multiple ecosystem services which contribute to the benefits available from the natural environment for all members and visitors.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the application for planning permission is compliant with and supported by national and local policy.
- 8.2 The application seeks planning permission for three padel tennis courts and associated flood lighting. The development diversifies and enhances the Club's offering and facilitates the projected increase of members to the site through the proposed improvements. The facilities are of a scale and design that are sympathetic and subordinate to that of the existing buildings.
- 8.3 In summary, it is considered that the development is in accordance with national, regional, local planning policy, in demonstrating the need to make the most efficient use of land, create high quality development and in maximising the use of the existing facilities whilst supporting business and member participation without impeding amenity.
- 8.4 If there are any comments or queries or clarifications sought on any of the points raised in this Statement on in the Planning Application, then please contact Ian Anderson at ian.anderson@lichfields.uk or Ollie Collins at ollie.collins@lichfields.uk.

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