

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This application was considered by the Planning Committee on 17th July 2023 where Members resolved to delegate to Officers to conclude outstanding matters related to biodiversity and ecology prior to granting planning permission with conditions. These matters are soon to be concluded. To assist the applicant, the formal grant of permission has been delayed so that these matters can be agreed within one decision, rather than by condition following grant.

1.2 It has become apparent in review of the resolution prior to the formal grant of planning permission that there was a discrepancy between the hours of use agreed by the applicant prior to the meeting and the hours that were displayed on screen at the Committee meeting itself. The hours displayed omitted Sunday and Bank Holiday hours and for clarity, the full hours are outlined below, to be secured by condition of permission.

1.3 The pitch, hereby approved, shall be used only within the following hours:

- 09:00-21:00 - Monday to Thursday;
- 09:00-18:00 – Fridays and Saturdays;
- 9:30-18:00 – Sundays; and
- Not at all on Bank Holidays.

For up to a maximum of five (5) competitive evening games per football season (August - June), use of the pitch shall not continue after 10:30pm.

1.4 This application is therefore brought back to the Planning Committee in the interest of completeness and transparency and to seek agreement from Members for the full and complete hours, which are necessary for the success of this community-focussed scheme.

The remainder of this report is unchanged from the report presented to the Planning Committee in July 2023, for reference and in the interest of clarity.

1.5 The application forms part of a strategy to stabilise, develop and grow Eastbourne A.F.C alongside a programme of investment in both quality of playing facilities and operation. It aims to support a desire to improve facilities in the Borough and to support 'grass roots' football and to encourage healthy lifestyle choices for the community.

1.6 The use of the site as an outdoor sports pitch is historic and there are no implications on the planning use class generated by this proposal. Planning permission is sought for development, including the replacement of the existing grass football pitch with a '3G' synthetic turf pitch to meet FA standards, together with improvements to the existing car parking and landscaping works, including the creation of native planting for biodiversity net gain at the site.

- 1.7 The proposal addresses a shortfall in artificial pitches within the Borough, as identified by the Football Foundation in the Local Football Facility Plan (2019) and would deliver improvements to the sporting facilities in the Borough. Together with the conditions recommended by Sport England, the proposal would not only be of benefit to Eastbourne United A.F.C, but would allow for increased access for the community, including local schools, other local football clubs, women's and girl's groups and over 50's walking football.
- 1.8 The impact upon ecology, amenity and the transport network have also been carefully considered and is acceptable on policy grounds, subject to conclusion of final ecology and biodiversity matters.
- 1.9 Officers seek delegated authority from the Committee to conclude the above matters and then to approve, subject to conditions.

2. Relevant Planning Policies

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision making
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

2.2 Eastbourne Core Strategy 2006-2027:

- B1: Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution
- B2: Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods
- C5: Ocklynge & Rodmill Neighbourhood Policy
- D1: Sustainable Development
- D7: Community, Sport and Health
- D8: Sustainable Travel – A2021 Quality Bus Corridor
- D9: Natural Environment
- D10: Historic Environment
- D10A: Design.

2.3 Saved policies of the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011:

- NE4: Sustainable Drainage Systems

NE28: Environmental Amenity
UHT1: Design of New Development
UHT4: Visual Amenity
UHT5: Protecting Walls/Landscape Features
UHT7: Landscaping
UHT8 Protection of Amenity Space
US4: Flood Protection and Surface Water Disposal
US5 Tidal Risk
TR2: Travel Demands
TR4 Quality Bus Corridors
TR6: Facilities for Cyclists
TR11: Car Parking
LCF21: Retention of Community Facilities.

2.4 Supplementary Planning Documents and other relevant guidance:

Sustainable Building Design SPD
Trees and Development SPG
EBC Sustainability in Development TAN
EBC Biodiversity Net Gain TAN
EBC Electric Vehicle Charging Points TAN.

3. Site Description

3.1 The application site is within the ownership of Eastbourne Borough Council and comprises an established football pitch with associated buildings and car parking.

The pitch is surrounded by an historic cinder running track, which has not been in use since 1999 and is overgrown.

To the south, the site is bounded by dwellings fronting Channel View Road and to the north, Wartling Road, which is also residential in character.

To the west is Princes Park Health Centre and Crumbles Pond is located immediately east of the site.

The site is accessed from Sidley Road, which transects Channel View Road and provides car parking in an 'unmarked' arrangement.

3.2 The site is located within the 'Ocklynge and Rodmill' as identified in the Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2006-2027 (adopted 2013).

3.3 Site Constraints:

Predominantly Residential Area
Environment Agency - Flood Zone 3
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Flood Zone 3a.

4. Proposed Development

- 4.1 The application seeks planning permission for the replacement of an existing grass football pitch with a '3G' synthetic turf pitch. This would involve the levelling of the existing pitch surface and replacement with the synthetic pitch. The application originally proposed building up of the pitch surface, but following concerns on flood capacity of the site from ESCC, this element has been revised to level the pitch through removal of topsoil. This would be redistributed within the site and utilised as part of the biodiversity net gain strategy for use as wildflower planting.
- 4.2 The proposal includes alterations to the existing car parking at the site, comprising an increase in the number of cars able to park at the site, amounting to 81 car parking spaces in total, including nine staff parking spaces and three disabled spaces.
- 4.3 The application proposes other alterations that would allow for a wider access to the site to be achieved for improved movement of traffic in and out of the site.

5. Relevant Planning History:

- 5.1 The site has a long planning history of minor application, the latest of which is 1987, but none is relevant to this planning proposal. As such, the history is not listed within this report.

6. Consultations:

6.1 Sport England:

Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application as it is considered to meet Sport England's policy. The absence of an objection is subject to the imposition of conditions should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application.

6.2 County Football Association/Football Foundation (FA/FF):

As identified within the application, there is no Playing Pitch Strategy for Eastbourne. However, the Local Football Facility Plan (2019) suggested a shortfall of two Artificial Grass Pitches.

The pitch dimensions shown on the proposed plan comply with FA permitted dimensions, whilst the planning documents state that a FIFA Quality pitch is to be provided which is appropriate for the clubs step level of football. The application provides confirmation that the pitch will be tested and placed on the 3G Pitch Register, which is welcome, as is the confirmation that a sinking fund is to be operated to enable the replacement of the carpet and shock pad in the future.

The proposal will support the club in maximising use of the facilities, with an artificial pitch providing increased capacity and therefore provide greater participation opportunities for the club and local community (including women & girls and youth provision identifies within their proposal).

Sussex FA and the Football Foundation are therefore supportive of the intention to develop facilities to help address local shortfalls by providing a facility to meet the required technical specifications.

The documentation does not detail modifications or replacement to the fencing surrounding the perimeter of the pitch, which is recommended to help manage infill loss from the pitch preventing migration to the environment. The FA Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitch Design Principles and Layouts sets out guidance on managing infill loss such as through the installation of low-level perimeter boards, and brush-off zones. Additional detail on how the proposal addresses this would be welcome.

6.3 England Athletics:

No objection from England Athletics as the track has not been used since 1999.

However, EA would urge the local authority to forward plan investment in the main 400m athletics facility in Eastbourne - located at Cross Levels Way (BN21 2UF) which will require a resurface in approximately 4years time (last resurfaced in 2000).

6.4 ESCC – Lead Local Flood Authority (SuDS):

The LLFA has dropped an initial objection on grounds of flood capacity following revisions to the scheme.

6.5 ESCC – Local Highway Authority:

No objection – Following revisions and subject to the imposition of conditions, including to secure a Management Plan and Travel Plan for the site, the Highways Officer recommends approval of the application.

6.6 Environment Agency:

No response received.

6.7 EBC – Specialist Advisor (Ecology and Biodiversity):

The Council's Ecologist has responded twice to consultation on ecology and biodiversity matters. Firstly, to request the submission of further information and again to advise that final work is required on the ecological impacts of redistributed topsoil.

Liaison is ongoing with regard to the final matters, which will be concluded in accordance with the recommendation to Members.

7. Other Representations

7.1 Notification:

Notification of this application has been undertaken in the form of:

- a. neighbour notification letters;
- b. site notices displayed in roads neighbouring the site.

7.2 Neighbour Representations:

A significant number of objections have been received following neighbour notification, including a petition (although no reasons for objection are included therewith). Letters of support have also been received.

Objections received on material planning grounds are listed below:

- Traffic generation
- Parking
- Noise and disturbance
- Light pollution
- Hours of use.

7.3 Other Representations:

None.

8. Appraisal:

8.1 Key Considerations:

8.2 Principle:

There is no principal conflict with adopted policy, which would prevent approval of the application, subject to consideration of the design and visual impact upon the character of the area and the impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupants and other material planning considerations, pursuant to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), policies of the Core Strategy 2006-2027 and saved policies of the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011.

The proposal is, in principle, in alignment with the overarching aims of promoting healthy lifestyle choices and providing improved community facilities for the Borough.

8.3 Design, Character and Impact Upon Landscape:

In terms of the visual amenity of the area, the proposals would not have any significant impact upon the wider area, given that the site is relatively enclosed and does not feature heavily in views from public areas.

However, the proposal would bring environmental improvements through the creation of wildflower planting areas and it is envisaged that, subject to

the approval of a good quality native planting scheme, that the amenity of the site would be improved in general.

8.4 Ecology and Biodiversity:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...' and that 'opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity...'.

The site is potentially ecologically sensitive, insofar as the Crumbles and Horsey Sewers Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lies north-east of the site and is hydrologically connected to the Crumbles Pond, which lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.

The proposals originally comprised an increase of 150mm to the level of the pitch and this was met with objection from the LLFA on grounds that this would reduce the capacity of the site for flood water should it be required at times of flooding.

This in-turn led to a revised proposal to skim the surface of the pitch to level it ready for the synthetic pitch installation and for the resulting topsoil to be redistributed elsewhere on the site.

Following comments received from the Council's Specialist Advisor (Ecology and Biodiversity), a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was commissioned by the applicant to survey the site for protected species/habitats and the impact of the topsoil distribution.

The applicant has explored use of the topsoil from the pitch for replanting in the interest of achieving biodiversity net gain for the site and mitigating the loss of any regrowth over the cinder athletics track. However, consultation with the Specialist Advisor has not been concluded and this is required prior to determination.

Both the Council's Ecologist and Sport England have raised the issue of microplastic pollution given the close proximity to the aquatic environment. As such, in line with Sport England's recommendations, a condition would capture measures to prevent the infill material from the pitch from environmental pollution, for example from surface water run off or player transfer. This can be prevented through an alternative (biodegradable) material being used, and/or through physical barriers. The details would be agreed with the respective consultees prior to discharge of the condition.

8.5 Transport and Parking:

The proposal would not affect the planning use of the site, which is established. However, the improvements to the pitch would allow for more engagement with the facilities and a greater frequency of use, together with continued use throughout the seasons of the year. It is therefore

envisaged that the proposal will generate increased trips to and from the site.

The site is in a sustainable location, with good access to public transport. Bus stops are located on Royal Parade (C558) and Seaside (A259) within 300m from the site access. These stops provide regular services to all of Eastbourne including the Town Centre and Hastings.

The nearest railway station is Eastbourne Station, where connections are available to London, Lewes and Brighton; however this is approximately 2.5km from the site.

The site is accessed from Channel View Road via Sidley Road. Alterations would allow for a wider access to the site to prevent blockages and ease traffic movements.

Turning to the issue of parking, the proposals would increase the level of parking at the site. East Sussex County Council Parking Guidance for Non-residential does not detail the level of parking required for football grounds and as such the number of pitches and intended usage has been considered to justify the level of parking provided. The current arrangement is unallocated, although 30 vehicles could reasonably be accommodated. The proposals would increase the provision to 81 parking spaces in total, including 9 staff spaces and 3 disabled spaces.

The Highway Officer advises that securing a Parking Management Plan by condition of permission would be sufficient to ensure that the vehicular movements would be suitably controlled on days of high demand, such as match days and/or tournaments, when increased visitors numbers would be expected. This would include stewardship over the grounds, the number and position of which would be agreed by the Highways Officer. However, based upon expected usage of the pitches, taking account of their number, sizes and expected player numbers, it is not envisaged that the site would be oversubscribed to a degree that would exacerbate on-street parking demand when compared to the existing arrangement.

Together with this, a Travel Plan (Statement) would be sought to encourage the use of alternative means of transport to the site other than private motor vehicle and this would also be secured by condition.

Cycle storage has not been provided; cycle parking would need to be incorporated within the design to encourage cycling to and from the ground. The storage would need to be conveniently located, covered and secure to encourage use. Details should be secured by condition.

Two electric vehicle charging spaces (with one charging device) would also be sought by condition of approval in line with the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Points Technical Advice Note.

8.6 Residential Amenity:

The use of the site as a sporting facility is established and unfettered. This means that the site can be used unrestricted.

However, this does not mean that the proposal would be no greater in terms of disturbance than the existing arrangement, as the proposal would generate greater use – as outlined within the submitted information.

The applicant is proposing the following hours of use and the busiest times are expected to be between 5pm – 10pm Monday to Friday for coaching sessions.

Monday to Friday - 9am to 10pm

Saturdays - 9am to 10pm

Sundays - 10am – 10pm.

Officers support the increased use of the pitch facilities, but do not agree that there should be no respite from the potential noise disturbance based upon the hours above. Officers will seek to reach agreement on further restricted hours and these will be reported to the Committee for consideration and secured by condition.

There has also been considerable concern raised from neighbouring residents from light pollution and the hours restriction will take account of the potential for disturbance in nighttime hours. This issue and any other mitigation agreed with the applicant will be reported to the Committee.

The requisite Parking Management Plan would seek to ensure that vehicles arrive and leave in an orderly fashion on matchdays to reduce the potential for disturbances arising.

8.7 Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3 and is identified as Flood Zone 3a within the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2022 (SFRA). This means that the site is at high risk of flooding. The SFRA also shows Crumbes Pond as being Flood Zone 3b (Functional Flood Plain).

ESCC as Lead Local Flood Authority has been consulted regarding the proposals. The original proposals to raise the level of the pitch by 150 millimetres was met with objection from the LLFA, due to the reduction in flood water capacity at the site. The proposals were therefore revised at the request of officers to address this issue and now propose a reduced level for the pitch with topsoil being redistributed to other areas of the site. This would maintain the flood water capacity of the site and the LLFA have agreed this revision following re consultation.

The existing grass pitch provides infiltrated drainage for surface water. The proposed synthetic replacement pitch would offer similar infiltration properties. However, at times of heavy rainfall all flooding this could lead to dissemination of the pitch infill material to other areas of the site or to

the neighbouring Crumbles Pond or beyond. Therefore, as mentioned above there is a need for features to be agreed to prevent material from leaving the pitch. A condition has been drafted, which would seek details regarding either drainage or other preventative measures to protect against environmental pollution.

8.8 Ecology and Biodiversity:

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report was submitted as part of this application which has concluded that no evidence was recorded on site which would suggest that the development proposals are likely to have a major adverse effect upon biodiversity. The main body of the site is formed of building, hard / bare ground and grassland with limited species diversity; this habitat is of limited ecological value.

The proposal has considered the ecological enhancement within the proposed development and this can be secured by way of a condition.

8.9 Planning Obligations:

The planning application qualifies for a Local Employment and Training Agreement as it meets the thresholds for a commercial development as detailed on page 11 of the Employment and Training Supplementary Planning Document, adopted November 2016.

The Regeneration team requests that were any approval to be given it is subject to a Local Employment and Training Agreement. This agreement would be secured by S106 legal agreement.

The Travel Plan for the development would be secured by S106 agreement, together with any additional heads of terms that are requested by ESCC Highways, comments from whom are yet to be received at the time of writing.

8.10 Human Rights Implications:

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore, the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

8.11 Conclusions:

Subject to conclusion of remaining matters and consultations and delegated authority, this application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Recommendation to approve the application subject to the following conditions:

10. Conditions:

- 10.1 **TIME LIMIT:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 10.2 **DRAWINGS:** The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings:

- Updated by addendum

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and ensure that development is carried out in accordance with the plans to which the permission relates.

- 10.3 **LANDSCAPING:** Prior to the completion or first occupation of the development, hereby approved, whichever is the sooner; details of the treatment of all parts of the site not covered by buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The site shall be landscaped strictly in accordance with the approved details in the first planting season after completion or first occupation of the development, whichever is the sooner.

Details shall include:

- a) a scaled plan showing all hard and soft landscaping, including vegetation to be retained and planting of trees and plants;
- b) details of all hard surfaces;
- c) all boundary treatments;
- d) a schedule detailing sizes, species and numbers of all proposed trees/plants;
- e) sufficient specification to ensure successful establishment and survival of new planting.

Any new tree or planting that dies or is removed, becomes severely damaged or diseased within five years of this permission shall be replaced in the following planting season. Replacement planting shall be in accordance with the approved details unless agreed otherwise with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the character and amenity of the area and in the interest of the biodiversity of the site.

- 10.4 **DETAILS OF PITCH:** No development shall commence until details of the design and layout of the mitigation for the grass infill of the artificial grass pitch have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with Sport England. The Artificial Grass Pitch shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to first use of the development, hereby approved, and retained as such for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to prevent impacts upon ecology and local watercourses.

10.5 **PITCH CERTIFICATION:** Use of the development shall not commence until:

- (a) certification that the Artificial Grass Pitch hereby permitted has met FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf, FIFA Quality or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (IMS); and
- (b) confirmation that the facility has been registered on the Football Association's Register of Football Turf Pitches.

have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose, sustainable and provides sporting benefits.

10.6 **COMMUNITY USE AGREEMENT:** Use of the development shall not commence until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the artificial grass pitch, lighting, changing accommodation including toilets and car parking and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-members, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility/facilities and to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport.

10.7 **CYCLE PARKING:** Details of covered and secure cycle parking spaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the cycle parking facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first use of the development, hereby approved, and retained as such for the lifetime of the development and shall not be used other than for the parking of cycles.

Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

10.8 **TRAVEL PLAN:** No part of the development shall be occupied until a Travel Plan (Statement) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The Travel Plan once approved shall thereafter be implemented as specified within the approved document. The Travel Plan shall be completed in accordance with the latest guidance and good practice documentation as published by the Department for Transport and/or as advised by the Highway Authority.

Reason: To encourage and promote sustainable transport.

- 10.9 **EV CHARGING:** Details of electric vehicle and cycle charging facilities, including their number, specification and location, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the facilities shall be implemented in accordance with the details approved prior to first use of the development, hereby approved, and retained as such thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To provide sustainable travel options in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

- 10.10 **ACCESS:** Prior to commencement of development hereby proposed the altered access shall be in the position shown on the submitted plan (Proposed layout) and laid out and constructed in accordance with the (attached HT407 form) and all works undertaken shall be executed and completed by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

- 10.11 **PARKING PROVISION:** The development shall not be occupied until a parking area has been provided in accordance with the approved plans which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and the area(s) shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking of motor vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

- 10.12 **PARKING SPACE DIMENSIONS:** The proposed parking spaces shall measure at least 2.5m by 5m (add an extra 50cm where spaces abut walls).

Reason: To provide adequate space for the parking of vehicles and to ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

- 10.13 **VEHICULAR TURNING SPACE:** The development shall not be occupied until a turning space for vehicles has been provided and constructed in accordance with the details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority) and the turning space shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be obstructed.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

- 10.14 **PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN:** The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until a Parking Management Plan has been

submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. This shall include, as a minimum, the Stewarding Plan and location of stewards, identification of suitable parking areas in the event that the football car park is full, methods of advising users of the football Club of the Parking Management Plan, staggered start times and a statement to increase awareness/use of sustainable travel options. The document should also detail that the parking situation will be monitored for a year after operation and should there be any issues that suitable measures to be agreed will be implemented to mitigate the development.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and the impact upon the highway network.

10.15 **HOURS OF USE:** The use, hereby approved, shall only operate within the following hours:

- Hours to be agreed

Reason: In the interest of protecting the amenity of neighbouring occupants.

11. Appendices

11.1 None.

12. Background Papers

12.1 None.