

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	14 September 2017
By	Director of Planning
Local Authority	East Hampshire District Council
Application Number	SDNP/17/02581/FUL
Applicant	Mr I Cook – Sports & Leisure Management Ltd
Application	Alterations and refurbishment works including a two storey infill extension and installation of associated new plant equipment (amended plans and supplementary information received 23 June 2017).
Address	Taro Leisure Centre, Penns Place, Peterfield, Hampshire, GU31 4EP.

Recommendation: That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in Paragraph 10.1 of this report.

Executive Summary

This application seeks permission for alterations and an infill extension to the Leisure Centre (owned by East Hampshire District Council) incorporating some internal alterations and the installation of associated plant equipment. The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Petersfield but is a well-established sports facility serving the local community.

The principle of extension and enhancement to this community facility is considered to be acceptable and the design of the scheme is also considered to be in keeping in this location where there are a number of community buildings.

There have been a considerable number of objections in relation to the loss of one squash court in order to provide a play area on the right hand side by the entrance. Whilst the objections are noted, the proposals involve the provision of sports recreation facilities and it is not considered that the loss of a squash court could be sustained as a reason for refusal, given that the proposals continue to provide recreational facilities (albeit in a different recreational activity). It is also considered that the applicants have, on balance, put forward sufficient reasoning for providing recreational facilities in place of the squash court to accord with the relevant policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, such works could be carried out at a later date, resulting in the loss of the squash court, given that they would then only be internal works and would not require planning permission.

The application is placed before the Committee for consideration given the number of representations received and because the application site and facility is owned by East Hampshire District Council.

I. Site Description

- I.1 Taro Leisure Centre is a sports facility located on the western side of Penns Place around 2km to the east of the Petersfield Town Centre. The site extends to approximately 1.4 hectares and is occupied by a sports centre building constructed in the 1970's and

subsequently extended in the 1990's. It comprises two main elements each of two storey scale forming the "wet-side" swimming pool and café area to the south and the main sports hall to the north, which are linked by a single storey entrance/reception area. The building is constructed of red brick with buff brick details under a profiled metal sheet pitched roof. The facility is served by a main car parking area to the east. The ground is generally level across the site.

- 1.2 The leisure centre is located on the eastern edge of Petersfield within an area of sports and community land uses. The East Hampshire District Council offices are located to the east of a central parking area, with Petersfield Rugby Club to the north. "The Cottage" is an office building attached to the Council Offices occupied by a firm of building surveyors. These buildings are surrounded by extensive playing pitches. The nearest residential dwellings are located in Clare Gardens, approximately 200m to the south west of the leisure centre.
- 1.3 The site is within the Petersfield Neighbourhood Development Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan shows the site to be outside the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) for Petersfield.

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 There are various planning applications relating to alterations to the leisure centre, however there is no planning history directly relevant to the consideration of the current proposal.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks full permission for an extension and alterations to the Taro Leisure Centre.
- 3.2 The submitted plans show a two storey/first floor extension above and to the front of the central entrance/reception area, extending into the pedestrian circulation space to the front of the building. The extension is of a contemporary design viewed as a box like infill between the two main elements of the building, with first floor projecting beyond the entrance. Materials are shown to be colour coated cladding panels with plinth brickwork and feature glazing. Some render is shown to be added to the existing building.
- 3.3 The extension would provide a new entrance lobby with enlarged reception desk, extension of the café seating area, alterations to the toilets and the conversion of one squash court to a soft play area. The first floor would be utilised as an extension to the existing fitness suite. Replacement of, and addition to, the existing external plant (air conditioning units) are also proposed.
- 3.4 No alterations are proposed to the existing access arrangements or parking layout.
- 3.5 Amended plans and a supplementary Transport Statement were received on the 23 June 2017. These drawings show cycle parking to the front of the new extension and the addition of a double door leading from the café to the external seating area. Additional plans have also been submitted proposing an additional air conditioning unit.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 **Petersfield Town Council:** No objection.
- 4.2 **Environmental Health:** No objection subject to conditions restricting the hours of operation of the plant.
- 4.3 **Landscape Officer:** No objection.
- 4.4 **Sports Development Officer:** No objection.
 - Spoken with the National Governing Body (NGB) Squash England and they have clarified that all NGB squash programmes can run on two courts.
 - Received information regarding squash usage figures at the Taro being 16% in 2015 and 13% in 2016. This shows a small decline in usage over the existing three courts. With two courts the usage figures should steadily increase.
 - (Officer Note: Subsequent e-mail from Squash England confirms that they do not consider that the PSC can run programmes on just two courts).

4.5 **Tree Officer:** No objection.

4.6 **Highways:** No objection following further information requested in relation to the expected increase in use of the Leisure Centre. (Supplementary Transport Statement was supplied).

5. **Representations**

5.1 **73 letters of objection**

- Object to the loss of one of the squash courts to a soft play area as it is a valuable sporting resource.
- Loss of squash court should be subject to public consultation.
- The loss of this court together with 7 more in the area will effectively mean the slow demise of squash.
- Loss of income to Taro through loss of squash court.
- Concerns about adequacy of data relating to squash court usage.
- Design of the extension is not in keeping with the existing building and needs more detail to provide a more visually attractive façade.

5.2 **Letter of objection from Petersfield Squash Club**

- Issues with submission of application including application form not confirming whether pre-application discussions had taken place, no consultation having been carried out with key stakeholders prior to submission, and lack of playing field/sports provision assessment as required by local validation list.
- Proposed change to squash court 1 involves knocking archways in an existing external wall, resulting in the loss of an existing sports facility. Being an external change to the building structure this should be subject to usual planning policy considerations, irrespective of whether or not the change could be made at a later date.
- Removal of the squash court is contrary to Para 74 of the NPPF as it will result in the loss of an existing viable sports facility with no replacement provision planned.
- Concern as to why Sport England have not been formally consulted.
- Squash England have stated they believe a club the size of PSC justifies the need for 3 courts.
- The synergy of 3 courts is vitally important to the club. Many members started playing squash casually on Court 1, whilst seeing coaching and team matches taking place on Courts 2 or 3. This resulted in players joining the club.
- All 3 courts are needed to ensure that squash can continue to thrive in the National Park.
- Squash continues to be popular with participation rates up by 6% over the last 10 years with the result being that as a nation we continue to be in the top 3 in the world.
- Utilisation figures published for the previous 2 years at the leisure centre show in excess of 20% utilisation of the squash courts, which is high for any sporting facility given the limited times that most people can play.
- Hampshire Squash is increasingly important on the National Scene with a number of key results this year.
- Squash provides an unrivalled fitness workout. Need to preserve facilities and ensure the next generation have somewhere to get exercise and character building competition they need.
- 3 alternative cost neutral design proposals have already been put forward that would allow retention of Court 1 whilst meeting the needs of the SLM. These have been presented to the owner of the facilities, but more time is needed.

5.3 **Petersfield Society**

- No objection in principle.
- Taro Centre is in need of an upgraded reception area to make it more user friendly and energy efficient.
- Architectural treatment of the entrance 'pod' is not entirely convincing although the concept is a logical solution to joining two buildings already inconsistent in styling. More

visually attractive alternatives to the façade treatment are available than the options presented.

- Detailed design of the elevations should be a planning condition.
- Several objections have been received from members of the public objecting to the loss of a squash court, but it is not possible to comment without looking at the statistics.

6. Planning Policy Context

- 6.1 Applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant statutory development plan comprises the **East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014)**, the saved policies of the **East Hampshire District Local Plan: 2nd Revision 2006** and the **Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan**. The relevant policies are set out in section 7 below.

National Park Purposes

- 6.2 The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas;
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 2010

- 6.3 Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was issued and came into effect on 27 March 2012. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection and the NPPF states at paragraph 115 that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the national parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight in National Parks.

The South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2013

- 6.4 The PMP outlines a vision and long term outcomes for the National Park, as well as 5 year policies and a continually updated Delivery Framework. It is a material consideration in planning applications. The following policies are relevant: 1, 3, 43 and 49.
- 6.5 The development plan policies listed below have been assessed for their compliance with the NPPF and are considered to be compliant with it.

7. Planning Policy

- 7.1 The relevant policies in the **East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy** are:

- CP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP2 – Spatial Strategy
- CP6 – Rural Economy and Enterprise
- CP8 – Town and Village Facilities and Services
- CP16 – Protection and Provision of Social Infrastructure, Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- CP17 – Protection of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
- CP19 – Development within the Countryside
- CP20 – Landscape
- CP24 – Sustainable Construction
- CP25 – Flood Risk
- CP27 – Pollution
- CP29 – Design
- CP31 – Transport

- MTRA4 – Development in the Countryside
- CPI3 – High quality design
- CPI6 – Biodiversity
- CPI7 – Flood Risk
- CPI9 – South Downs National Park
- CP20 – Heritage and Landscape Character.

7.2 The relevant saved policies in the **East Hampshire District Local Plan: 2nd Revision 2006** are:

- HC3 – Public Services, Community, Cultural, Leisure and Sport Facilities, Community Facilities
- C6 – Tree Protection

7.3 The relevant policies in the **Petersfield Neighbourhood Development Plan** are:

- BEP1 – Character, setting and quality of the town's built environment
- BEP6 – Settlement boundary
- BEP7 – Sustainable and adaptable buildings
- CPI (C10) – Maintain and enhance existing community and education facilities
- CP3 – Overall increase of community and education facility provision
- CP4 – Provide appropriate mix of sports and recreation facilities

The South Downs Local Plan: Preferred Options

7.4 A draft Local Plan (the South Downs National Park Preferred Options) is currently being developed, which will contain up to date planning policies specific to the National Park. It was published for public consultation in September 2015. The consultation period concluded on 28 October 2015, after which the responses received are being considered by the Authority. The next stage in the plan preparation will be the proposed submission version, which is anticipated to be published in September 2017. Until this time, the policies contained in the Preferred Options Local Plan are a material consideration in the assessment of any planning application. Based on the early stage of preparation the policies within the Preferred Options Local Plan are currently afforded limited weight.

8. Planning Assessment

Principle of development:

- 8.1 Policy BEP6 of the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan identifies the application site as being outside the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) for Petersfield, thus falling within an area where the countryside policies of the development plan apply.
- 8.2 Policy CP2 of the Joint Core Strategy directs new development growth and to make the best use of previously developed land and buildings within existing built up areas. Policy CPI6 of the Joint Core Strategy seeks to prevent the loss of existing Community Facilities, whilst supporting proposals for new and improved facilities, public services, leisure and cultural uses that result in improvements to meeting the needs of the District. Such development should be in locations which are easily accessible to all sectors of the community.
- 8.3 Policy CPI9 (development within the countryside) of the JCS seeks to restrict development in the countryside to that with a genuine and proven need for a countryside location, with Policy CP6 within the National Park allowing for development which provides local services for local people as well as the expansion of existing businesses.
- 8.4 The NPPF at Paragraph 70 advises that to deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, decisions should plan positively for the provision of Community facilities, including sports venues, to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. Para 73 highlights the importance of access to opportunities for sport and recreation as making an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

8.5 The application proposes the extension of and alterations to a leisure centre which would provide an enhancement to the entrance and reception area, and seeks to improve the sports facilities at this site. The location of the existing building therefore dictates the need for a countryside location. It is noted that Policy CP10 of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Taro Leisure Centre as a priority for enhancement.

8.6 The principle of development is, therefore, considered to be in accordance with the aims of Policies CP6, CP16 and CP19 of the Joint Core Strategy, Policy CP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as Government Advice contained within the NPPF. The principle in relation to sports provision is considered in more detail below.

Design and visual impact of the development:

8.7 Policy CP29 of the JCS stipulates that new development will be required to seek exemplary standards of design, ensure that layout and design contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place, to be sympathetic to its setting, make a positive contribution to the overall appearance of an area, be accessible to all and minimises the opportunity for crime. Policy CP20 requires development to conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the District's natural environment and that of the National Park and its purposes. Development should also protect and enhance development in the wider landscape and land at the urban edge.

8.8 Policy BEPI of the Neighbourhood Plan expects all development to meet the highest standards of design and make a positive contribution to the character of Petersfield. Proposals must respect and enhance Petersfield's distinctive built character and its high quality countryside setting. Where innovative and contemporary designs are proposed they must be complementary to their context.

8.9 The development relates to an extension and alteration to the Leisure Centre. The extension would infill a link between the main swimming pool and the sports hall elements of the centre. Whilst it would project around 2.7m beyond the front of the existing squash court, the aim is to enhance the entrance for visitors, which is currently recessed and not easily visible.

8.10 The new entrance would enhance legibility and be contained within the central courtyard area created by the leisure centre, Council Offices and Rugby Club, thus having no significant impact within the wider landscape. The extension would be lower than the existing ridge, thus would not be visible from the playing fields to the west, and so the scale respects the massing of the existing building. The drawings also detail the inclusion of a render panel to the wall of the squash court, which is currently a stark expanse of brickwork, with enhancement of the existing façade.

8.11 The extension is of a contemporary design and would create a central focus for the building to define its entrance for users. The glazed first floor would frame the fitness suite to provide a central feature and break up the existing mass of brickwork to the squash court and pitched roof over the pool.

8.12 The proposal would remove a raised planter and cherry tree outside the main entrance, with the submitted plans showing this would be a hard block paved pathway. A replacement Antarctic Beech tree is shown as part of the landscaped area within the car park.

8.13 Overall the extension is considered to be of a good standard of design which would enhance the entrance to the leisure centre, would have an acceptable visual impact within the area and would protect the landscape and setting of the National Park. For these reasons the proposal complies with Policies CP20 and CP20 of the Joint Core Strategy and Policy BEPI of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties

8.14 Policy CP27 (Pollution) of the JCS does not provide for development if it would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy or through excessive overshadowing. Policy CP29 (Design) requires that development is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting and to its relationship with adjoining buildings and spaces around buildings.

- 8.15 The site is located within an area of mainly community type land uses, with the nearest residential properties approximately 200 metres to the south-west. The extension would be well separated from neighbouring buildings, and would be viewed against the existing structure. Thus the extension would have no adverse impact on neighbouring occupiers for reasons of loss of privacy, outlook or overshadowing.
- 8.16 The Council's Environmental Health Officer (Pollution) has no objection to the proposal. The acoustic report demonstrates that the proposed new plant is unlikely to adversely impact nearby residential premises, but assumes that the plant will only operate between 06:00 to 23:00 hours. As such, the EHO recommends that a condition is attached limiting the use of the proposed plant to these hours, as the impact has not been considered outside these times. The applicant has confirmed that the plant would only be operated during opening hours.
- 8.17 For these reasons the application is considered to be in accordance with the aims of policies CP27 and CP29 of the Joint Core Strategy.

Access and Parking Arrangements:

- 8.18 Vehicular access to the Taro Leisure Centre is via Penns Place, leading to an internal access road into a main car parking area to the east of the centre, with a further parking area available adjacent to the Council Offices and Petersfield Rugby Club. There is a footway along the western side of Penns Place and a public footpath along the edge of the sports fields to the south.
- 8.19 The proposed extension to the leisure centre would be located entirely on a pedestrian circulatory area to the front of the building, and would not encroach into the existing parking or access area. No changes are proposed to the vehicular access and parking arrangements on the site. It is noted that the extension would increase the floor space of the fitness suite by 257m². This is likely to result in an increase in the usage of the fitness suite at the leisure centre, although no increase in vehicle parking provision is shown. However, the peak time for use of the fitness suite is after normal office hours, when plenty of car parking becomes available within the car park adjacent to the Council Offices. As such, the increase in floor space is unlikely to cause any parking or highway safety issues. The Highways Authority requested further information on the expected increase in use of the Taro Centre and what will be the expected increase in vehicular use of the car park. Following the receipt of the supplementary Transport Statement, the Traffic Management Team has confirmed that it has no adverse comments on the application
- 8.20 The extension would result in the relocation of the 16no cycle parking spaces to adjacent to the front entrance of the building which is considered to be acceptable.
- 8.21 For these reasons the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the aims of Policy CP31 of the Joint Core Strategy.

Sports Provision:

- 8.22 Policy CPI 6 (Protection and Provision of Social Infrastructure) of the JCS seeks to prevent the loss of existing community facilities, whilst supporting proposals for new and improved facilities, public services, leisure and cultural uses that result in improvements to meeting the needs of the District. Primarily the first part of the policy relates to the change of use or loss of premises currently used for, amongst other uses, leisure facilities. It is important at the outset to note that the proposals effectively result in no loss of leisure facilities but a re-organisation of the 'type' of leisure facility being provided (with additional floor space of approximately just under 400sq.m). The consequence of any approval would essentially be that new and improved leisure facilities would be provided.
- 8.23 Policy CPI 6 confirms that such new and improved facilities resulting in improvements to meeting the needs of the district will be supported. Whilst it is noted that a significant number of objections have been received which argue that the loss of the squash court to provide for other leisure facilities will not meet the specific needs of the squash playing community, it does not necessarily follow that the works are not meeting the needs of the wider district with the different facilities that it would be providing.

- 8.24 Policy CP17 relates to the loss of a sport recreation or play facility but it is considered that this policy is not relevant given that sport/recreation facilities generally are being retained and improved, albeit that a particular type of facility is being lost in order to provide alternative sport/recreation facilities within the building.
- 8.25 Policy CPI of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Taro Leisure Centre as one in a list of important community facilities to be retained, enhanced or developed in accordance with the corresponding description to ensure a range of quality, accessible and safe facilities that meet the diverse needs of the community. Particular reference is given to a priority for enhancement of this facility. As a broad principle, the development proposes the retention and enhancement of the leisure facility and is considered to be in accordance with Policy CPI
- 8.26 Policy CP4 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan confirms that a development resulting in the loss of a sport, recreation or play facility will only be permitted where, amongst other things, an assessment has been undertaken which shows that the sport, recreation or play facility is surplus to requirements; or the development is for alternative sports, recreation or play provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss.
- 8.27 The development would enhance general customer facilities at the leisure centre and also increase the floor space of the fitness suite by approximately 257 m².
- 8.28 The development would also result in the loss of one of the three squash courts at the leisure centre, through its conversion to a soft play area. This has attracted a significant number of objections from third parties.
- 8.29 The applicant confirms that the brief for the proposed work was developed in line with an over-arching principle to create a facility for the whole community. This identified a requirement to provide accommodation for a range of services and activities for typically hard to reach members of the community across all ages. As part of this an area for the expansion of the existing play zone was identified as a requirement to maintain and develop the exercise provision for children and include additional zones for the under 4s and encourage use for all ages over 5 years.
- 8.30 The Council's Sports Development Officer has commented that she has spoken with the National Governing Body (NGB) Squash England, who have confirmed that all NGB squash programmes can run on two courts. Information has also been received regarding squash usage figures at the Taro being 16% in 2015 and 13% in 2016, which shows a small decline in usage over the existing three courts. With two courts the usage figures should increase. As such the Sports Development Officer has no objections to the plans submitted and confirmed that she would be happy to work with Everyone Active and the local clubs to support them and help to promote any existing and new initiatives that they would like to run. Some concern has been raised that the usage figures provide an untrue picture of the usage given that there is considerable use of all three courts at peak times in the evenings and at weekends. Notwithstanding this, the owners believe that the loss of this area in order to increase play provision outweighs the benefits of having three squash courts. It is considered that the owner's endeavours to provide facilities to meet a wider community outweigh the disbenefits of the loss of one squash court.
- 8.31 It is noted that one of the representations has included details of how it is considered that the needs expressed in the plans could be met without the need for the squash court to be lost. The applicants have confirmed that they wish for the development to proceed on the basis of the submitted plans. They confirm that the soft play area requires both a physical and visual connection with the central café/reception space to ensure parents can monitor their children but also to allow staff to effectively manage the space. They are of the view that to position the play facility behind reception would create an isolated, unsupervised area, making a functionally compromised facility which could not be operated effectively. They also confirm that the plan would be made less feasible by the fact that it requires a costly double storey extension to be built in order to accommodate the soft play facility which would not be financially viable.

8.32 It is also an important consideration to note that, were the plans to be amended to retain the squash court, works to convert the area to a play area at a later date would not require permission as this would represent an internal change within the facility from a squash court to a recreational play area, which are both D2 (Assembly and Leisure) Uses. For these reasons the proposal is considered to conform with the aims of Policy CPI6 of the JCS and CPI and CP4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.33 Notwithstanding the above, consideration should be given as to whether the proposals would meet the purposes of the park and the duty in meeting those purposes. Whilst the proposal conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the area, there is the question as to, when carrying out the purposes, the proposals serve to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the Park. Again, this returns to the issue as to whether the proposed provision of an alternative leisure facility fosters the well-being of the community. One could argue that any proposals which result in the provision of one aspect of a leisure facility at the expense of another will invariably foster the social well-being of the Community for some at the expense of others and it is therefore considered that the proposal meets the purposes of the park.

Impact on Trees:

8.34 None of the trees within the vicinity of the leisure centre are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, thus Policy C6 of the EHDLP: 2nd Review is not applicable.

8.35 The development would require the removal of a cherry tree located within a raised planter to the front of the building. The Council's Arboriculture Officer has been consulted and raises no objection to the loss of this tree. A replacement "Antarctic Beech" tree is proposed as a replacement, and it is suggested that this is secured through a condition. This species has been agreed by the Arboriculture Officer.

Drainage:

8.36 The application is located on land identified as Flood Zone 1, which is at lowest risk from flooding. The development would be contained within an existing hard surfaced area to the front of the building, thus the development would not result in an increase in impermeable area, so surface water run off would not be increased. It is considered, therefore, that the disposal of surface water from the development could be satisfactorily dealt with through the Building Regulations. For these reasons the proposal is in accordance with the aims of Policy CP25 of the JCS.

Other Issues:

8.37 **Sustainable Energy** - Policy CP24 of the JCS requires non-residential development with a floor space over 500 m², on completion, from 2014 meets the minimum 4 BREEAM 'excellent' and from 2016 5* BREEAM 'excellent' and also provides at least 10% of energy demand from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources. The gross internal floor space resulting from this development would be 409m², thus it is not of a scale which falls within the scope of Policy CP24.

8.38 The application is supported by a Carbon Reduction Strategy which incorporates passive design strategies (natural daylighting and enhanced fabric efficiencies) as well as active design strategies (heat recovery, high efficient fans, low energy lighting) to reduce energy consumption. In addition, Low or Zero Carbon (LZC) technologies would be incorporated to provide space heating and cooling to all new, high occupancy areas. Since this falls below the policy threshold, this matter would be covered through application of Part L2B of the Building Regulations.

8.39 **Ecology** - The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre has highlighted that hazel dormice have been recorded within 400 metres of the site. Given the proposal relates to a hard surfaced area to the front of the building, the presence of hazel dormice is highly unlikely, therefore the views of the County Ecologist have not been sought in this instance.

8.40 **Response to comments by Petersfield Squash Club** – Most of the issues raised in the objection by the Squash Club have been addressed elsewhere in the report however in response to the remaining issues, the following comments are made:

- 8.41 Whilst a playing field/sports provision assessment was not requested at validation stage (and it is arguable whether one should have been requested given that sports and recreation facilities per se are not being lost, just the ratio of types of activities being provided), further information has been requested during the planning application process in order to assess the proposals against the requirements of Policy CP4 of the Neighbourhood Plan. This information has been submitted by the applicant, the details of which are mentioned in the report above.
- 8.42 The Authority are charged with being proportionate with regard to requirements at validation stage. The lack of a completed box in relation to whether there had been pre-application discussions, whilst regrettable, would not have resulted in the application being made invalid.
- 8.43 Paragraph 74 of the NPPF has similar wording to Policy CP4 where it confirms that sports and recreation buildings should not be built on unless amongst other things the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss. Consideration of this (with relation to Policy CP4) has been given as set out above.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The Joint Core Strategy identifies the application site as falling outside the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) for Petersfield and thus within an area where the Countryside policies of the development plan apply. The proposal would enhance an existing recreational facility and thus the principle of the development is considered to be in accordance with the aims of policies CP2, CP6, CP16 and CP19 of the Joint Core Strategy, Policy CP1 and CP4 of the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan, as well as Government advice contained within the NPPF. It is considered that the benefits of providing recreation facilities endeavouring to reach the wider community ensure the proposals accord with Policy CP4 of the Neighbourhood Plan specifically.
- 9.2 The scale and external appearance of the extension are considered to be acceptable and would preserve the setting and landscape character of the National Park as well as its special characteristics. The development would not impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring buildings and is considered to be acceptable in terms of impacts on sporting facilities, drainage, trees, access and parking.
- 9.3 Having regard to the above and having taken into account all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan, Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Reason for Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed below under the heading "Plans Referred to in Consideration of this Application".

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
 3. The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved details associated with the application.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of amenity and in accordance with the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy
 4. Prior to the development hereby approved first being brought into use, all external lighting to be installed on the site shall be undertaken in accordance with a Lighting Strategy which has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning

Authority. This Strategy shall include details of measures to be taken to minimise any vertical light spillage. All lighting shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and thereafter no form of street lighting or other external lighting shall be installed within the site unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and to prevent vertical light spillage.

5. Any external plant shall be installed on the site in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained to the agreed specification thereafter. The plant shall only operate between 06:00 to 23:00 hours.

Reason: To prevent noise and disturbance to residential amenity from plant and equipment as the impact has not been considered outside these times.

6. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and in accordance with the recommendations of the appropriate British Standards or other recognised codes of good practice. These works shall be carried out in the first planting season after practical completion or first occupation of the development, whichever is earlier, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with others of species, size and number as originally approved unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the provision and establishment of a reasonable standard of landscape in accordance with the approved designs.

7. Prior to the development hereby approved first being brought into use, the cycle parking shown on drawing number 2016-283 / A-PL-006 rev A shall be provided and retained thereafter.

Reason: To provide suitable parking for cycles, in the interests of highway safety.

11. Crime and Disorder Implication

- 11.1 It is considered that the proposal does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

12. Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 This planning application has been considered in light of statute and case law and any interference with an individual's human rights is considered to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised.

13. Equality Act 2010

- 13.1 Due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010.

14. Proactive Working

- 14.1 In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the NPPF. This has included the opportunity to provide additional information to overcome technical issues.

TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Robert Ainslie
Tel: 01730 819265
email: Robert.ainslie@southdowns.gov.uk
Appendices I. Site Location Map
SDNPA Legal Services, Director of Planning.
Consultees

Background Documents

All planning application plans, supporting documents, consultations and third party responses

<http://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OQ3R9ETUJIK00>

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60772/116950.pdf

South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2013

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/>

East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-policy>

East Hampshire District Local Plan Review 2006

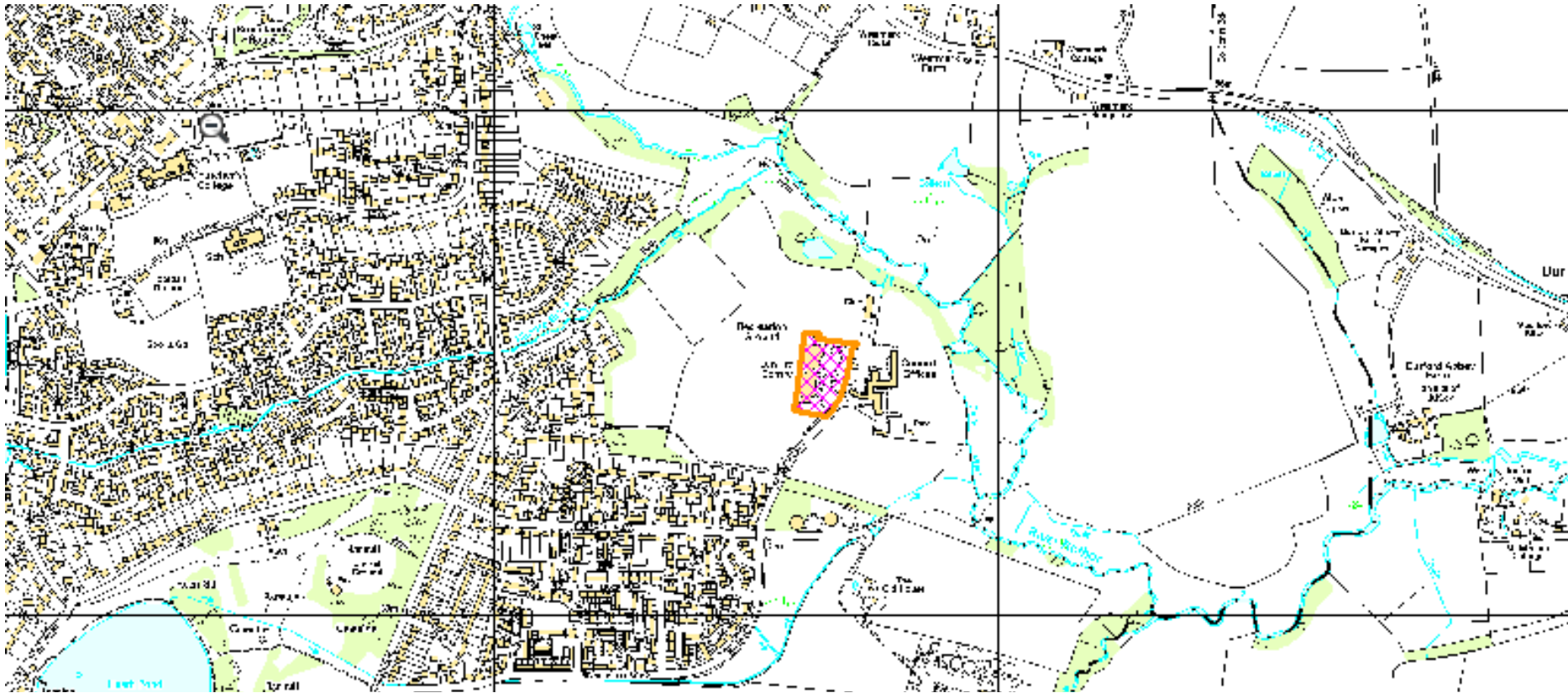
<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan#>

Petersfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-development-plans/petersfield-neighbourhood-plan/>

South Downs Local Plan – Preferred Options

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan/local-plan-preferred-options-public-consultation/>



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