

Planning Policy Statement
For
Proposed Creation of a “Golfpod” Practice Facility
With Associated Hard & Soft Landscaping

At
Mannings Heath Golf & Wine Estate

**Hammerpond Road, Mannings Heath, Horsham,
West Sussex RH13 6PG**

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1. PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The following section outlines the consistencies between the application proposal for a Golfpod at Mannings Heath Golf & Wine Estate and the applicable policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and Horsham District Council.

1.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The following policies are of relevance to this proposal:

1.1.1. Achieving Sustainable Development (Chapter 2)

7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.

8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

9. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

1.1.2. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 2

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 2 of the NPPF in the following ways:

Economic Role – providing a profitable facility for use by members and guests (including families) to Mannings Heath Golf & Wine Estate.

Social Role – providing modern facilities that will encourage the maximum golf and leisure developmental outcomes with the benefits to health and wellbeing associated with this.

Environmental Role – ensuring that the existing natural environment is not harmed and that facilities are designed to conserve and reduce energy wastage wherever possible.

In a sporting context, this proposal seeks to:

- Provide opportunities for the local community and sports organisations to participate in sport and physical activity for health improvement and development of their skills, particularly amongst low participant groups;
- Operate in line with the national agenda for sport taking into account nationally adopted strategies;
- Generate positive attitudes in sport and physical activity by young people and reducing the dropout rate in sports participation with age;
- Increase the number of people of all ages and abilities participating in sport and physical activity including people with disabilities;
- Use the facilities to encourage the range, quality and number of sports club links and to stimulate competition that is inclusive of young people and adults;
- Provide affordable access to the facilities and to be self-financing in terms of community use;
- Contribute to Sport England , England Golf, Golf Foundation and R&A strategic objectives for grassroots golf development;
- Satisfy competition play and training needs with a robust sustainable business plan to monitor the delivery of the golf development plan on a regular basis. The operators will review a variety of objectives and controls to correctly manage, adequately operate and maintain the facility;

- Maintenance Considerations and Sustainability

Energy and Waste Reduction:

The proposed GolfPod is extremely compact as set against a full sized driving range which requires a 25,000m², the Golfpod requires a maximum land take of only 1200 m² by comparison. This means the energy requirements for a GolfPod is minimal as compared to the all year round (warmer winters) mowing , ball picking , aeration tining and repairing required for a 25,000m² grass outfield..

Significant reduction in the use of energy and / or water, and reduce waste in the construction and operation of the facility will be achieved by:

- No need to wash golf balls (golf ball washers use a lot of water and power)
- Minimal Lighting (minimal electricity consumption – no need for powerful flood lights)
- Automated ball picking using efficient electric robots (no need for utility vehicles traversing a large outfield collecting balls every day)
- No loss of balls
-

In conclusion the proposals will enhance the existing leisure opportunities at the club with:

- Better quality provision
- Provide access to greater quantity of provision
- In a suitable location
- Supported by effective and appropriate management arrangements
- Implemented with best practice construction techniques to minimise waste, pollution and energy use

1.1.3. Building a strong, competitive economy (Chapter 6)

85. Planning policies and decisions 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. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

88. *Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

- (d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

89. *Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*

1.1.4. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 6

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 6 of the NPPF in the following ways:

- a. The proposal adds economic robustness to the existing leisure elements in that the new practice facility provides more leisure diversification as both a winter and summer revenue.
- b. The onset of technology (ball tracking systems and virtual screens) such as 'Trackman' and 'InRange' provides a dynamic and fun practice facility that all age ranges can use, as the software creates different games revolving around golf which is attractive to children and adults.
- c. The covered bays will be light aluminium and simple in form and open sided. The location is adjacent to the existing built environment but also located so that it does not impact on key visual receptors. (See also 'Visual Impact Appraisal'.
- d. The ground modelling is simple and organic in form reflecting the same character of the surrounding topography.

1.1.5. Promoting healthy and safe communities (Chapter 8)

96. *Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of beautiful, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian*

routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

- c) 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.*

97. *To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

Open space and recreation

102. *Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.*

1.1.6. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 8

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 8 of the NPPF in the following ways:

The proposal would provide a year-round sport and leisure facility that would facilitate social interaction and encourage exercise throughout the day and year.

The GolfPod proposal is consistent with Chapter 8 of the NPPF as it will deliver genuine beneficial outcomes in the following ways:

- a. Promote healthy lifestyles by providing social and recreational facilities;
- b. Provide access to a high quality open space and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of the local community and beyond;
- c. Better sporting provisions and a more attractive and ecologically diverse facility (see BNG report) and a genuine asset for the estate, local community sporting groups and organisations;
- d. Provide a clean, safe and modern facility to inspire sporting participation and will enhance the existing sport and recreation provision in the area;
- e. The proposed development will encourage social interaction and inspire more people of all ages to participate in sport;
- f. The proposal will be sited close to onsite facilities and close to Mannings Heath; providing convenient access for all visitors ;
- i. Mannings Heath Golf & Wine Estate is an important local business and any proposals to improve its quality and attraction as a provision for the public to undertake a recreational activity should be supported. Its function as a high quality facility that suits newcomers and beginners wishing to learn the game is particularly important.
- j. The Golfpod is just the type of facility that attracts and nurtures young talent for the future. It will be able to provide teaching facilities for all areas of the game at an affordable level and in an environment that is in no way elitist. The approval of the GolfPod will allow the golf club to develop as a centre of excellence in the area .

1.1.7. Promoting sustainable transport (Chapter 9)

108. *Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

- (a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- (b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- (c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- (d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- (e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.*

111. *If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:*

- (a) the accessibility of the development;*
- (b) the type, mix and use of development;*
- (c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- (d) local car ownership levels; and*
- (e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.*

Considering development proposals

115. *Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*

116. *Within this context, applications for development should:*

- (a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;*
- (b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;*
- (c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;*
- (d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and*
- (e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.*

117. *All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.*

1.1.8. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 9

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 9 of the NPPF in the following ways:

- a. There is already a large car park at the estate. The bays only house ten golfers or families (who will tend to come in one car anyway). Most golfers will use the facility for around 45mins to an hour. This represents a very small trip rate.
- b. Being close to Mannings Heath and Horsham, the Golfpod is accessible with the ability to walk, cycle or take public transport to the facility rather than use a car.

1.1.9. Making effective use of land (Chapter 11)

123. *Planning policies and decisions 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. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.*

124. *Planning policies and decisions should:*

(a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;

(b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

Achieving appropriate densities

128. *Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:*

(a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;

(b) local market conditions and viability;

(c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;

(d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

(e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

1.1.10. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 11

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 11 of the NPPF in the following ways:

a. The GolfPod will sit on a small section of land that is made up of a tennis court, other hard landscape features (access paths and parking) and an area of amenity grass.

b. The new proposal provides numerous environmental gains (see ecological study / BNG)

c. The proposed covered bays are simple in form and scale.

d. The site is already close to the built environment of the clubhouse / hotel and car park.

1.1.11. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places (Chapter 12)

131. *The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.*

135. *Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

137. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

139. Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- (a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- (b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*

1.1.12. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 12

The GolfPod practice facility is situated close to the hotel / Clubhouse and car park and so is kept within the built “ hub” or hotel “ curtilage” of the landscape, which also contains a tennis court , paths , buggy parking , various sheds , tanks, Klargesters and hard landscaping.

In this regard the GolfPod is not out of context with what would be expected in a local hotel leisure and golfing landscape that has got planning approval for leisure, parking and associated buildings.

The conversion of the tennis court and remainder of the surrounding grassland into a compact GolfPod to woodland copse, wildflower meadow and water / wetland featuring (abatement zone) will enhance natural landscape to the north, east and south.

The bays themselves are set behind a large evergreen formal hedge and the actual netting is very translucent (it has to be very light for engineering reasons). The main, more prominent features, will be the 15m (back) and 12m (front) high netting support stanchions. The stanchions are painted anthracite grey which helps reduce their visual impact.

The tree and shrub planting will further reduce their impact, with the support structures are within a visual envelope that is extremely limited. The GolfPod is also cut down into the existing slope to reduce visibility.

The Golfpod has no effect on the street scene being away from the boundary and set low down in the landscape behind trees.

Within the context of the High Weald National Landscape the stanchions will be an obvious built feature when stood very close to by an onlooker, but planting will eventually screen what are only four supports.

1.1.13. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment (Chapter 15)

180. *Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- (e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air*

and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

(f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and biodiversity

185. *To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:*

(a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity 65 ; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation 66 ; and

(b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

186. *When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

(a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

(d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while 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 or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

188. *The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.*

191. *Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

(a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;

(b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and

(c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

192. *Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to*

improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.

193. *Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.*

193. *The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities.*

1.1.14. Consistencies between Proposal and Chapter 15

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 15 of the NPPF in the following ways:

- a. The BNG calculation came to 53.09%
- b. The proposals include measures to increase habitat and biodiversity and to conserve / protect existing features. These include planting of trees and the creation of wildflower grass meadow. (refer to ecology report by L Morris Ecology)

1.2. Horsham District Planning Framework

1.2.1. Introduction

The proposal has been assessed against the Horsham District Planning Framework .

Below are what are considered to be the relevant local planning policies for the proposals:-

HDPF Policy 1 – Sustainable Development
HDPF Policy 15 – Rural Economic Development
HDPF Policy 16 – Leisure and Recreation
HDPF Policy 23 – Landscape and Townscape Character
HDPF Policy 24 – Environmental Protection
HDPF Policy 25 – Natural Environment and Biodiversity
HDPF Policy 26 – Countryside Protection
HDPF Policy 32 – Quality of New Development
HDPF Policy 33 – Development Principles
HDPF Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport

Policy 1 – Sustainable Development

Policy 1 seeks to achieve sustainable development by balancing economic, environmental and social objectives.

- The proposal will improve an established leisure destination that has operated successfully for many years within the district. By enhancing year-round golfing opportunities, the development supports healthy recreation, encourages participation in sport and contributes to the continued economic resilience of the golf club.
- The proposal utilises existing infrastructure, including the established access, parking areas and internal circulation routes, thereby avoiding unnecessary new development elsewhere.
- The modest scale of the building, together with the absence of floodlighting or significant engineering works, ensures that environmental impacts remain low.

Accordingly, the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with Policy 1.

Policy 15 – Rural Economic Development

Mannings Heath Golf Club is an established rural leisure business making an important contribution to the local visitor economy and rural employment.

- The proposed driving range building represents investment in an existing enterprise rather than the creation of a new land use. The development will improve the quality of facilities available to members, visitors, coaching programmes and beginners, helping to maintain the long-term competitiveness and viability of the golf club.
- The proposal therefore directly supports the objectives of Policy 15 by strengthening an established rural business through appropriate investment.

Policy 16 – Leisure and Recreation

Policy 16 supports proposals that improve existing sport and recreational facilities.

- The proposed building forms part of the continued evolution of Mannings Heath Golf Club as an established recreational destination. The covered practice facility will allow users to practise throughout the year, improving accessibility during periods of poor weather and supporting coaching activities.
- Importantly, the proposal does not introduce a new recreational use or intensify the site in a manner that would fundamentally alter its character. Rather, it represents an enhancement of an existing sporting facility that promotes participation in golf and supports community health and wellbeing.
- The proposal is therefore fully consistent with Policy 16.

Policy 23 – Landscape and Townscape Character

The site lies within an established golf course landscape where buildings associated with golf operations already form part of the character of the site.

- The proposed building has been designed as a simple, low-profile structure with a footprint appropriate to its operational purpose. Measuring only 7 metres in width, its narrow form reduces its visual mass, while its positioning within the golf course ensures that it will be viewed in the context of existing recreational infrastructure rather than as isolated development within open countryside.
- The use of recessive external materials and colours will assist the building in blending with the surrounding landscape.
- No floodlighting is proposed, eliminating concerns regarding night-time visual intrusion or impacts on the wider rural landscape.
- Consequently, the proposal will conserve the character and appearance of the countryside and complies with Policy 23.

Policy 24 – Environmental Protection

Policy 24 requires development to avoid unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring occupiers and environmental quality.

- The proposed building is associated with an existing golf course where golfing activity already occurs throughout the day. The covered driving range will not generate materially different forms of activity from those already experienced at the site.
- Crucially:
 - No external floodlighting is proposed.
 - There will be no increase in night-time activity arising from illuminated practice.
 - No significant mechanical plant or industrial processes are involved.
 - Existing operational hours of the golf club remain unchanged.

The absence of floodlighting significantly reduces any potential effects relating to light pollution, landscape character, ecological disturbance and residential amenity.

- The proposal therefore satisfies the environmental objectives of Policy 24.

Policy 25 – Natural Environment and Biodiversity

The proposal occupies land within an established and actively managed golf course where the principal recreational use is already established.

- The development has been designed to minimise disturbance to existing vegetation and landscape features. Existing trees and hedgerows surrounding the practice area will continue to provide ecological value and visual screening.
- Where appropriate, biodiversity enhancements may be incorporated through additional native planting and habitat improvements consistent with Biodiversity Net Gain objectives.
- The proposal therefore accords with Policy 25.

Policy 26 – Countryside Protection

The proposal is located within the countryside where recreational development associated with an established golf course is an appropriate rural land use.

- A driving range building is intrinsically linked to the operation of the golf club and requires a location immediately adjacent to the practice area. There is no realistic alternative location within an urban settlement that could fulfil the same operational function.
- Although the building has a footprint of approximately 210 square metres, its elongated form, modest height and integration within the existing golf course ensure that it preserves the openness and rural character of the surrounding landscape.
- The proposal therefore represents development that is appropriate within the countryside and fully accords with Policy 26.

Policy 32 – Quality of New Development

The building has been designed to provide a functional yet high-quality recreational facility appropriate to its rural location.

- Its simple architectural form reflects the utilitarian character commonly associated with golf course buildings while avoiding unnecessary visual complexity. The proportions of the building are consistent with its intended use, and careful selection of external materials will ensure compatibility with the wider character of Mannings Heath Golf Club.
- The proposal demonstrates good design by balancing operational requirements with landscape sensitivity.
- The development therefore complies with Policy 32.

Policy 33 – Development Principles

The proposal benefits from the comprehensive infrastructure already serving Mannings Heath Golf Club.

- No new vehicular access is required, and the existing parking facilities are capable of accommodating anticipated demand. Internal circulation arrangements remain unchanged, and the proposal integrates seamlessly into the existing operation of the golf club.
- The development therefore represents efficient use of existing infrastructure without placing additional pressure upon the surrounding highway network.
- The proposal accords with Policy 33.

Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport

The proposal is expected to generate only limited additional vehicle movements because it enhances an existing leisure facility rather than creating a new destination.

- Visitors will continue to utilise the existing access arrangements and established parking provision at Mannings Heath Golf Club.
- The proposal will not adversely affect highway safety or the efficient operation of the local road network and therefore complies with Policy 40

Overall Planning Balance

The proposed covered driving range building represents a modest and sympathetic enhancement to an established golf club that has long contributed to sport, recreation and the rural economy within Horsham District.

- The development:
 - supports the long-term sustainability of Mannings Heath Golf Club;
 - promotes participation in sport and healthy lifestyles;
 - strengthens an established rural leisure business;
 - utilises existing infrastructure without requiring new access arrangements;

- avoids the environmental impacts commonly associated with driving ranges through the omission of external floodlighting;
- has been designed to integrate sensitively within the existing golf course landscape; and
- gives rise to no unacceptable impacts upon landscape character, neighbouring amenity, ecology or highway safety.

When assessed against the development plan as a whole, the proposal is fully compliant with the objectives of Policies 1, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 32, 33 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

- The proposal also reflects the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework by supporting sustainable rural economic growth, encouraging healthy communities, protecting the natural environment and achieving well-designed places.
- For these reasons, the proposal constitutes sustainable development and planning permission should be granted.

2. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

2.1. Summary

The application site is located within the established operational area of Mannings Heath Golf Club and occupies land immediately adjacent to the existing clubhouse and principal customer car park. The proposal therefore forms part of the existing developed core of the golf club rather than representing isolated or sporadic development within the open countryside.

- The proposed covered driving range has been carefully positioned to make use of the existing golf club infrastructure, including established vehicular access, parking provision and pedestrian connections. Consequently, no additional access roads, parking areas or significant engineering works are required.
- The site benefits from mature woodland belts and established tree planting surrounding the practice area. These landscape features provide effective visual containment and naturally screen the proposed building from the wider countryside. As a result, the development will be experienced principally within the context of the existing golf club and will have only limited visibility from the surrounding landscape.
- Importantly, there are no public rights of way immediately adjacent to the application site, and there are no nearby publicly accessible viewpoints from which the building would be prominently viewed. The existing woodland structure and landform substantially reduce opportunities for long-distance views, ensuring that the development does not appear visually intrusive.
- The proposal has deliberately been designed as a modest, functional structure measuring approximately 30 metres in length and 7 metres in width. Its relatively low profile and simple form are characteristic of buildings commonly associated with golf courses and outdoor sporting facilities. Appropriate external materials and muted colours will further reduce its visual presence and allow the building to integrate successfully into its surroundings.
- Unlike many modern driving range developments, no large scale outward facing floodlighting is proposed. Instead all it requires is directional low intensity lighting on a 30m x 30m area. This is a significant environmental benefit, ensuring that the proposal preserves the rural character of the area, avoids light pollution, protects dark skies and minimises any potential effects on nearby wildlife or neighbouring properties. The absence of large scale floodlighting also confirms that the proposal will not materially alter the existing pattern of activity at the golf club during the evening hours.
- Overall, the proposal represents a logical and sustainable enhancement to an established recreational facility. It is operationally necessary for the continued development of Mannings Heath Golf Club and has been located where its environmental effects are minimised through the use of existing infrastructure, established landscaping and natural screening.
- These site-specific characteristics demonstrate that the proposal fully accords with the objectives of Policies 23, 24, 26, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework by protecting the character of the countryside, safeguarding visual amenity, making efficient use of existing infrastructure and delivering high-quality development appropriate to its rural setting.

- The proposal makes use of existing access, parking and services, avoiding the need for additional infrastructure or significant engineering works.
- The covered bays building's scale—approximately 210 m²—is modest when considered against the extensive grounds and established built facilities of the golf club.

2.2. Conclusion

The design accords with all the relevant NPPF and Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) policies having been through an iterative design process via in depth consultant investigations and appraisals of the site in question.

It is therefore respectfully requested that this proposal be considered for approval.