PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO:	Planning Committee
BY:	Head of Development and Building Control
DATE:	4th November 2025
DEVELOPMENT:	Creation of a new multi-use games area.
SITE:	King George V Recreation Ground, Shermanbury Road, Partridge Green, West Sussex
WARD:	Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead
APPLICATION:	DC/25/0721
APPLICANT:	**Name:** Cllr Nicholas Hare **Address:** The Parish Office Village Hall, Village Hall Lane, Partridge Green, RH13 8HX

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: More than eight persons in different households have made written representations within the consultation period raising material planning considerations that are inconsistent with the recommendation of the Head of Development and Building Control.

RECOMMENDATION: To approve planning permission subject to appropriate conditions

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

To consider the planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

1.1 The application is made by West Grinstead Parish Council and seeks planning permission to create a new all-weather multi-use games area (MUGA) on the King George V Playing Fields in Partridge Green. The proposed pitch would be located on grassland towards the northern part of the playing fields, close to the northern boundary which is screened by trees. To the east of the pitch are the existing tennis courts, and to the south is the sports pavilion. The application seeks to erect the MUGA for the purposes of sports and recreation in order to enhance the sporting facilities on site, alongside the existing tennis courts, cricket pitch and playing field. The pitch would be 37m by 25.5m, sized to accommodate 5-a-aside use. 3m high mesh fencing would surround the MUGA, rising to 4.5m in height behind the goals. External seating and paving is to be provided, along with planting. No floodlighting is proposed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

1.2 The application site sits outside the built-up area boundary of Partridge Green within an area used for formal and informal recreation. The site is outside of any conservation area and located approximately 45m away from the nearest listed building at Old Priors (Grade II),

which sits to the northeast of the site on the opposite side of Shermanbury Road. A further Grade II listed building (Deans Cottage) sits approximately 60m to the west of the site, beyond and intervening dwelling. The site is screened on all sides by mature trees and hedges with access from the Shermanbury Road at the north-west corner leading to a car park fronting the pavilion. Residential housing sits to the north and west of the application site and to the east and south are fields.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

National Planning Policy Framework

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 – Heritage Assets
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

West Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031):
Policy 2: Open Space
Policy 5: Community Facilities

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets
Policy 25: Parking
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish Design Statement

Planning Advice Notes:
Shaping Development in Horsham
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

None relevant.

3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk.

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.2 **HDC Environmental Health:** Comment: -

3.3 Do not consider potential noise associated with the development to be a material issue. The proposed location of the MUGA is on an established recreation ground that also includes a children's playground, skate park, tennis courts and cricket pitch.

3.4 The site of the MUGA is separated from the properties to the west by the existing children's playground and the access road to the car park. Shermanbury Road lies between proposed MUGA and the properties to the north. Due to these separation distances, activities on the MUGA are therefore unlikely to be a source significant adverse noise impacts. As no floodlighting is to be provided, the onset of darkness will naturally limit the use of the MUGA. However use of the MUGA could be further controlled by ensuring the access gates is secured at dusk.

3.5 There should be no installation of floodlighting or other exterior lighting without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.

3.6 **Parks and Countryside:** No Objection / More Information: -

3.7 The addition of this open access, all weather activity facility will help to address a deficiency of provision for young people in the Parish of West Grinstead.

3.8 Further clarification is required on the surface and drainage to help ensure that the facility does not flood.

3.9 There are some improvements that could be made to the space to make it more gender inclusive.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

3.10 **Sports England**: No Objection to this application as it is considered to meet exception 5 of their Playing Field Policy and to accord with Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.11 It is recommended that conditions are attached to any grant of planning permission requiring:

- Full details of the pitch construction including carpet and type of infill proposed
- If a 3G carpet with rubber crumb infill proposed, measures to prevent the loss of infill
- A maintenance and management plan including accumulation of a sink fund for future replacement
- FIFA quality and FA registration for match play

3.12 **WSCC Highways**: Comment

3.13 The application seeks to creation of a new multi-use games area (MUGA), with its primary function providing a five-a-side football pitch. The site is located within the King George V Recreation Ground on Shermanbury Road, a B-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30mph in this location.

3.14 No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangement, whilst pedestrian access will utilise existing and proposed paths within the recreation grounds. There is an existing car park which will be retained, and no additional car parking provision will be provided as part of these proposals.

3.15 The LHA are minded to accept the point made in the submitted Design and Access Statement, whereby the proposals for a five-a-side football pitch represent an enhancement to what already exists on-site, given the nature of a recreational ground already providing space for such activities. As such, the LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements over what the site currently generates as existing.

3.16 In addition to the above, the LHA would consider this site a sustainable location within the village, that is well accessible on foot or by bicycle. Nearby bus stops on Shermanbury Road served by the 17 route provide an alternative sustainable option for travel to the site.

3.17 In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

3.18 Representations:
15 letters of Objection have been received from 13 addresses, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Traffic – traffic expected to worsen with the use.
- Unsuitable location - should be located away from residents
- Overdevelopment which would detract from existing attractiveness of the playing fields
- Parking – parking already an issue and inadequate.
- Concerns regarding floodlighting
- Noise – close to existing housing, the nature of the facility is likely to extend into early hours.
- Green space should be protected
- Biodiversity Net Gain not achievable

3.19 109 letters of Support have been received from 87 addresses, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- Great asset for the village providing year-round accessible facility
- Promote outdoor activity for young people and physical and mental wellbeing
- There is a need for high-quality facilities for young people
- Proposed development benefits the whole village
- Utilising an existing park and designed to enhance existing community facilities

3.20 Parish Comments:
Partridge Green Parish Council: Support.

3.21 Member Comments:
None received

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

4.1 The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

4.2 The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

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

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

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

Principle of Development:

6.1 The Statutory basis for decision taking in planning is Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the Development Plan comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the West Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

6.2 The King George V Playing Fields sit on the eastern side of Partridge Green adjacent to, but outside of, the defined built-up area boundary of Partridge Green. This represents a location which would be considered as countryside in policy terms.

6.3 Policy 26 of the HDPF seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development unless it is considered essential and appropriate in scale; whilst also meeting one of four criteria. The criteria includes: supporting the needs of agriculture or forestry; enabling the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; providing for quiet informal recreational use; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas.

6.4 As the proposal is for new sports facilities, Policy 43 of the HDPF is also relevant. Policy 43 relates to Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation and states that:
'*The provision of new or improved community facilities or services will be supported, particularly where they meet the identified needs of local communities as indicated in the current Sport, Open Space and Recreation Study and other relevant studies, or contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure.*
In addition to supporting facilities or services located in accordance with the Development Hierarchy and Strategic Development locations, sites located outside built-up areas will be supported where this is the only practicable option and where a suitable site well related to an existing settlement exists.'

6.5 Policy 5 of the West Grinstead Parish Council states that '*Development proposals to enhance and maintain recreational, leisure and community facilities will be supported*.'

6.6 Paragraph 96(c) of the NPPF states that:

'*Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: ....enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling*.'

6.7 Paragraph 98 of the NPPF then states that:

'*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….*'

6.8 Furthermore Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states that:

'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.'

6.9 Finally, Paragraph 104 of the NPPF states that:

'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.'

6.10 While the proposal would result in development which is located outside of the built-up area boundary, the proposal would create an all-weather multi-use games area that would be on an area of existing open space within sports playing field land. The proposal would create an all-weather pitch which would be of better quality and would have clear benefits for the sports and recreational provision for the local area. The benefits of a new multi-use games area would outweigh the loss of this section which had previously (2007) had a grass pitch marked out on it of approximate dimensions 41m x 25.44m. The proposal would better formalise this area for sporting and recreational provision and make use of an area of land that is otherwise difficult to use.

Need for a 3G Pitch

6.11 Horsham District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review (June 2021) sets out the existing open space provision within the district, its condition, distribution and overall quality. For the purpose of the study, playing pitches and built facilities were included within the figures for parks and gardens. As part of the review West Grinstead, which contains the King George V Playing Fields, has a current provision of parks and gardens of +1.9 sqm per person. Therefore, there is currently an overprovision of parks and gardens within this part of the district. The review also highlighted that there is currently an undersupply of provision for children (-0.2 sqm pp) and young people (-0.4 sqm pp).

6.12 The future projections indicate that there will be an increase in population and therefore a greater requirement for open space provision. Within West Grinstead this is projected to result in a deficit of -0.07 hectares of parks and -0.08 hectares for child's play and -0.13 hectares for young people. The future projections indicate that there needs to be new developments to contribute to provision of open space and also provision for young people. Within the Horsham District Council Playing Pitch Strategy Document (May 2019), West Grinstead is not highlighted as an area that has a need for a playing pitch. However, it is considered that there is still a need for new developments for young people and a MUGA pitch in this location would contribute to addressing this need, particularly as Partridge Green does not otherwise have an all-weather pitch such as the one proposed.

6.13 In their consultation response, The Council's Parks and Countryside team have identified that West Grinstead has an existing deficiency in youth facilities of 0.12ha. The team are supportive of the proposal as the addition of this facility will help to address the deficiency by adding in 0.09 ha of all-weather activity space which is likely to be well used by young people.

6.14 Sport England have also raised no objection to the application as it is considered to accord with exception 5 of the Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document (March 2018), and paragraph 104 of the NPPF. Sports England consider that the proposal would not impact on the existing sports on the site, football, tennis and cricket, and would replace a similar sized pitch that hasn't been marked out for many years with an all-weather pitch, making good use of otherwise, difficult to use land.

6.15 Sport England have also advised that their lack of objection is subject to conditions being applied to secure the quality of construction and FA registration; details of the design and layout of the pitch construction, infill containment, and a management and maintenance scheme for the pitch. These conditions are considered reasonable and necessary and are included in the list of recommended conditions at the end of the report.

6.16 Against this backdrop, the proposed development would replace the current grassed area with an all-weather pitch. This would serve to improve the quantity (in terms of being able to accommodate greater year-round use) and quality of the sports facilities on this site, thereby satisfying Policy 5 of the West Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed development is therefore, in this regard, considered compliant with the West Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 43 of the HDPF, and Paragraphs 96, 98, 103 and 104 of the NPPF.

Design and Appearance:

6.17 Policy 33 of the HDPF promotes development that is of a high-quality design, which is based upon a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental, and policy context. Development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, and accessible environment that complements locally distinctive characters and heritage of the district. Development should contribute to a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings.

6.18 The scale of the MUGA would be in accordance with guidance from The Football Association. The proposed pitch would be 37m x 25.5m and have two fence heights: the majority of the perimeter fence would be 3m in height, except behind the goals where the fencing would be 4.5m in height. The proposal also seeks to dig into the topography, ensuring the proposed levels will accommodate the proposed pitch perimeter fencing and match the height of the existing tennis courts. The location of the pitch would utilise a place that is already in use for informal recreational grounds and play, with a line of trees along the northern playing fields boundary screening the majority of the view of the pitch from public vantage points. While there would be some visual impact, mainly from the north-west, as the pitch utilises an area of land already in use for recreational purposes, this is not considered to be detrimental to the landscape.

6.19 The proposed MUGA will be constructed of 'rebound fence' panelling, designed specifically for sports area. The Design and Access Statement states that the wire construction enhances rigidity, whilst minimises vibrations along the fence, and makes it durable enough to withstand high-impact sports and stop balls from escaping, as well as providing clear visibility in and outside of the games area. The fence panelling would be powder coated to match the green colour fencing surrounding the existing tennis court, to create consistency with what already exists on site. It is noted that Sports England made reference to needing to make the pitch bigger within their consultation response, however, due to the pitch not being intended for club level use, this is not required. It is considered that the proposed perimeter fencing would not be an intrusive addition to the recreation ground and would reflect the expected visual appearance of a football pitch within a recreation ground, similar to the existing tennis court on site.

6.20 Overall, whilst the changed land level, surfacing and fencing would undoubtably change the overall appearance of the site, its use would remain for sporting and recreational purposes in line with the existing wider sports and leisure use of the site. It is therefore considered that the visual and character effects of the proposed development are acceptable and would comply with the relevant requirements of HDPF Policies 32 and 33.

Trees and Landscaping:

6.21 Policy 31 of the HDPF 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity' states that 'Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained' and that development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.

6.22 There is a line of mature trees which run along the boundary of the recreation ground with the road. A site plan has been provided which indicates the root protection areas of these trees. The red circles outline that the proposed pitch would be outside of the root protection area of the trees. The existing trees would screen some views of the pitch from the road which runs alongside the recreation ground. The proposed biodiversity enhancements would involve the addition of grass and wildflowers to the area surrounding the pitch. These enhancements and the protection of the root protection area of the surrounding trees would ensure that the pitch would not have a detrimental impact on the existing green infrastructure.

Residential Amenity:

6.23 Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be

required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

6.24 There have been 123 representation letters received as part of the consultation of the application. Officers note that a significant number of representations have been received supporting the proposal, as it would be a positive addition to the village and support the physical and mental wellbeing of younger people. The objections to the proposal relating to traffic, parking, noise and biodiversity net gain are also acknowledged.

6.25 It is considered the main impact to residential amenity would be on the property known as Robin Shaw which sits along the western boundary of the King George V Playing Fields, given its close proximity. Robin Shaw directly abuts the site access and is in close proximity to the car park, which sits between the property and the location of the proposed MUGA.

6.26 The proposal is a new facility and as such, creates a new demand, which will result in an intensified use of the playing fields. However, given the existing use of the site as a recreational playing field, it is not considered that any increase in noise levels would be so substantial as to warrant the refusal of permission. The MUGA is sized for 5-a-side use, hereby limiting the number of users, whilst the proposed fencing would utilise materials that would facilitate minimised vibrations and durable to withstand the impact of balls. Whilst some noise from player shouting, ball strike and general use of the facility will occur, these would be during daylight hours only given the absence of floodlighting and would be in the context of an existing recreation ground. Overall, such impacts are not considered to be so significant as to justify the refusal of planning permission.

6.27 In respect of lighting, no floodlighting or other external lighting is proposed, meaning use of the MUGA would be limited to daylight hours only. The Council's Environmental Health Department have advised a suitable condition to restrict any potential lighting proposals.

6.28 Overall, whilst it is acknowledged that some impacts on private amenity are likely to arise from the proposal, it is considered that due to the existing use of the site, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable degree of harm to the private amenity of nearby residential occupiers.

Highways Impacts:

6.29 Policy 40 of the HDPF, seeks to ensure that development is appropriately supported by transport infrastructure and encourages a strategic re-balancing away from reliance on the use of the private vehicle as a means of access to jobs, homes, services and facilities. Policy 40, inter alia, seeks to ensure that development maintains the existing transport network, is located in areas where a choice of transport modes is available and minimises the distances which people need to travel. Development, in addition, must provide a safe and suitable means of access to vehicles, pedestrians and other highways users.

6.30 Policy 41 of the HDPF stipulates that development must provide adequate parking and facilities to meet the needs of anticipated users, with consideration given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking and electric/low emission vehicles. Development which involves the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere or the need for development overrides the loss of parking and where necessary measures are in place to mitigate against the impact.

6.31 The proposed development does not seek to introduce a new point of highway access, or any alteration to the existing access and parking arrangements on site. The site already benefits from an existing car park that is utilised by park users. According to the Planning Statement, there are 10 existing car parking spaces. However, from aerial imagery and a site visit, there are more than 10 parking spaces within the site. The Design and Access Statement states that the design of the access to the MUGA would utilise existing site

pathways leading from the car park and sports pavilion and provides two entry points. WSCC Highways were minded to accept the point made in the Design and Access Statement, whereby the proposals for a five-a-side football pitch represent an enhancement to what already exists on-site. They also considered the site to be a sustainable location within the village, which is well accessible on foot or by bicycle. It is considered that due to the existing use as a recreational playing field, there would not be an intensification of use and therefore there is not anticipated to be an increased need for parking. Therefore, the current parking would be sufficient for the proposed pitch.

6.32 Whilst Officers consider that some intensification of use would occur, there nevertheless remains sufficient access and parkin arrangements, noting that many users would be able to easily walk and cycle to the facility.

Water Neutrality:

6.33 The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

6.34 Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

6.35 A statement supplied by the agent confirms that the proposed MUGA would be designed and operated to ensure there would be no additional water usage on-site, aligning with the principles of water neutrality. The existing water usage would be maintained on site. Therefore, the development can be screened out from the requirement to demonstrate water neutrality.

Other Matters

<u>Drainage:</u>

6.36 It is noted that a detailed drainage strategy was requested by Parks and Countryside to support the proposal. It is advised that there are no records of the site of the MUGA being subject to surface or fluvial flooding therefore in this instance a drainage strategy can be secure by way of pre-commencement condition.

<u>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):</u>

6.37 Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

6.38 The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the

development is completed. Off-site gains on unregistered sites and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

6.39 The Applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Metric which demonstrates a 10.04% net gain is achievable by way of onsite biodiversity gains. The Biodiversity Units (BU) lost as a result of the development would be 0.28 units. The Biodiversity Units delivered would be 0.31 units. This would fall below the 0.5BU threshold meaning it is not required to be secured by s106 legal agreement. The informative attached details that the proposed net gain shall be secured post-decision.

Conclusions and Planning Balance:

6.40 The application site is located in a sustainable location adjacent to the built-up area boundary of Partridge Green, where access by foot and bicycle is possible. As such, the proposal is well-related to the host settlement in accordance with policy 43 of the HDPF.

6.41 NPPF Paragraphs 96 (c), 98 and 103 confirm that planning policies and decisions should aim to promote opportunities to encourage social interaction, enable and support healthy lifestyles and opportunities to increase the sustainability of communities, including through the provision of sports facilities. The health and wellbeing to be derived from the proposed development, therefore, should be accorded significant weight in-line with the provisions of the NPPF in this regard.

6.42 It is not considered that the proposed development would unacceptably impact upon local character and appearance, highway safety or operation, or upon neighbouring and nearby users/occupiers of land and property, subject to appropriate conditions.

6.43 The site has provided the required net gain for biodiversity and opportunities to incorporate other minor biodiversity enhancements have been secured by way of appropriately worded conditions.

6.44 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with development plan policy, and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions recommended below.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to appropriate conditions as detailed below.

1 Plans list

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

3 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: No development shall commence until details of the design and layout of the pitch construction including carpet and infill and pitch markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The multi-use games area shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: No development shall commence until details of the design and layout of infill containment for the artificial grass pitch have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The artificial grass pitch shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

6 **Pre-commencement condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:

(a) a non-technical summary;
(b) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan; and
(c) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan from the completion of development.

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

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years after the completion of development, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7 **Regulatory Condition:** No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal planning application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

8 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Biodiversity Net Gain Condition

Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:
(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission is Horsham District Council.

This permission will require the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan before development is begun.

For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of the consented development please see the link:
Submit a biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements
There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These can be found at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214 of the Planning Practice Guidance, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain.

Irreplaceable habitat
If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.