



Planning, Design and Access Statement

Southwater Sports Club, Church Lane, Southwater RH13 9BT

Planning permission is sought for the '1.8m fence to separate the 2 existing football pitches, a 1.1m low-level spectator barrier around the south-west and north-west edges of the north football pitch and associated permeable accessible path'

Hilton & Wallace Ltd
15 Larkspur Way
Southwater
Horsham
RH13 9GR

Tel. 0785 525 6660
E-mail. nkw@hiltonandwallace.co.uk

May 2026

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1. Introduction & Proposal

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for '1.8m fence to separate the 2 existing football pitches, a low-level spectator barrier around the south-west and north-west edges of the north football pitch and associated permeable footpath for improved accessibility'.
- 1.2 The Football Association (FA) require various standards in community football facilities for safety and accessibility. To ensure compliance, permission is sought for a low-level spectator boundary around the pitches designed to improve spectator and player safety. This comprises a single rail with a mesh panel 1.1 metres tall, typical of local community facilities. A permeable path around the south-west and north-west edges of the north football pitch is also required for accessibility. The pitches already have a 1.8-metre-high fence around the outer perimeters, but permission is also sought to add fencing down the centre of the two pitches for safety and practical reasons, as the pitches are in close proximity.
- 1.3 All facilities have been carefully selected and designed to have the lowest level of impact appropriate to their local setting. The proposed additions are essential to ensure Southwater can progress in the FA football system, even at these grassroots levels, Grades 5-7.



Figure 1- Site Plan

2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Southwater Sports Club was relocated in 2019 as part of a planning consent for 540 homes by Berkeley Homes. This included a community building, 2 x football pitches, a cricket pitch, 2 x tennis courts, a multi-use games area (MUGA), a skate park, and a LEAP-NEAP with associated access. The wider sports club is accessed by motor vehicles from Church Lane, and the football pitches are located to the north of the clubhouse and cricket pitch, and to the northwest of the Downs Link Playground. The football pitches and sports club are easily accessible to local pedestrians via the Downs Link. The Southwater Sports Club and Southwater Football Club are for members only (membership is available to the public), but as with most local village football teams, the members are predominantly from the local community of all age groups.
- 2.2 A cluster of listed buildings are situated south of the site on the opposite side of Church Lane, including Grade II Holy Innocents Church, Vicarage Cottage, and Southwater House. Further to the north of the site is a Grade II listed College Farmhouse.
- 2.3 The local Public Rights of Way network is routed along the west and east site perimeters; bridleway PROW 3568_1 and footway PROW 1655, both of which join the northwest-southeast routed Downs Link, a national recreational trail PROW 3568, which runs the north perimeter of the site.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The following planning history is relevant to the sports club.

3.2 Southwater Sports Club was relocated in April 2019 following the planning consent by Berkeley Homes for:

- DC/14/0590 Residential development of up to 540 dwellings and 54 retirement living apartments, associated vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access, drainage and landscape works (Outline) (Development affects the setting of a Listed Building) Permitted 31/03/2014.
- DC/16/1919 Provision of a community building, 2 x football pitches, a cricket pitch, 2 x tennis courts, a multi-use games area (MUGA), a skate park, a LEAP-NEAP with associated access, parking and landscaping works (application for approval of Reserved Matters following outline approval DC/14/0590- Residential development of up to 540 dwellings and 54 retirement living apartments, associated vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access, drainage and landscape works) Permitted 08/03/2017.
- DC/17/0851 – Amended community building porch entrance and roof hip tiling.
- DISC/17/0158 Approval of details reserved by condition 2 (football and cricket pitch specifications) of DC/16/1919.
- DISC/18/0026 Approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (tennis court spec) 6 (play equipment), 10 (fencing) and 11 (planting detail) in relation to provision of a community building, 2 x football pitches, a cricket pitch, 2 x tennis courts, a multi-use games area (MUGA), a skate park, a LEAP-NEAP with associated access, parking and landscaping works (planning permission DC/16/1919).

- DC/19/2315 Planning permission was approved for the 'Erection of a triple bay practice cricket net'.
- DC/23/0256 Planning permission was granted on 29th September 2023 for the 'Erection of 1.8m high fencing around existing football pitches (Retrospective)'.
- DC/24/1495 -Erection of four 20m wide ball stop nets with poles to the four goal ends on the existing community football pitches at Southwater Sports Club. Approved 27th November 2024.

4.0 Planning Policy Framework – Identification

- 4.1 This section provides the national and local planning policy context relevant to this pre-application submission.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- 4.2 Section 38(6) requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Framework (Feb 2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision

Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Neighbourhood Plan: Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016-2031)

SNP1 - Core Principles

SNP7 - Formal/Informal Sports Area

SNP16 - Design

6.0 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 6.1 Horsham Local Plan 2015 supports the provision of new or improved community facilities or services and seeks to encourage access to employment, health, educational and recreational opportunities. Policy 43 relates to Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation and states *“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”*. The Neighbourhood Plan also concurs, stating *“Leisure and sporting facilities should continue to be maintained and enhanced where possible”*. The Southwater Sports Club is listed as part of its community infrastructure. The proposal aligns with the goals of improving recreation. The proposed works are considered minor and ancillary to the established use of the sports club. The proposed alterations are essential for accessibility, safety, and practicality, and to meet the Football Association standards.

Character, Design and Heritage

- 6.2 The site is not listed or within any heritage-related designations. The nearest listed buildings in Church Lane and College Farm are located 150-250 metres from the site. Given the distance, the gradient of the land and the separating presence of trees and other multi-storey new buildings situated in between, the proposal would not cause any harm to the preservation of these heritage assets. The site already comprises a 1.8-metre mesh fence around the outer perimeter; therefore, the central divider fence will have limited external visibility and impact. The proposed permeable path and spectator rail are typical of such community football facilities, and it is considered that the site will maintain its character of sports football pitches in an established Sports Club.

Impact on Amenities of Neighbours

- 6.3 The proposed internal fence alterations and path will not change the nature or frequency of the existing football matches occurring and are at a sufficient distance from any nearby homes to prevent any adverse impact on amenities.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed spectator railing, dividing fence, and permeable path are essential to ensure that the existing sports facilities are fully accessible and safe for all players and spectators. The proposal would fully comply with all relevant planning policies. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application be recommended for approval.