

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Wellness Retreat

The Sports Pavilion, Church Lane, Ashington, RH20 3JY

Applicant / Operator	Vision Saunas / Vision Mobile Saunas Ltd
Proposal	Creation of a small-scale wellness retreat adjoining the existing RH20 Fitness / BatesFit facility
Document purpose	Supporting Planning Statement
Date	August 2026

This statement should be read alongside the submitted site/block plan, proposed layout drawings, office drawings, changing-room drawings and decking details.

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for the creation of a small-scale wellness retreat on land associated with The Sports Pavilion / RH20 Fitness at Church Lane, Ashington. The proposal is intended to complement the established fitness and recreation use of the site by providing sauna, cold-water immersion, shower and changing facilities within a carefully arranged outdoor wellness area.

2. Site and Existing Context

The application site lies immediately adjacent to the existing RH20 Fitness / BatesFit building. The wider setting includes the sports pavilion, playing field, access and car-parking area and Church Lane. The proposed retreat occupies the grassed area in front of the existing fitness building, rather than introducing an unrelated use into an isolated location. Existing access arrangements and the established relationship with the fitness facility provide a logical setting for the proposed wellness use.

3. Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises a compact wellness retreat including a site office, sauna, two plunge pools, outdoor showers, an L-shaped changing-room and belongings-storage structure, a composite decking platform and associated boundary treatment. The layout retains a grassed area between the office and principal wellness deck and is arranged to provide a clear and functional sequence from entrance, reception/office and changing facilities through to the sauna, plunge pools and showers.

4. Site Office

A small site office is proposed, measuring approximately 4.0 m by 2.4 m with an overall height of approximately 2.4 m. It will be of timber-frame construction, externally finished in vertical timber cladding with a flat felted roof. The office is designed as a lightweight structure supported on ground screws. Glazed doors provide access and natural light while maintaining a simple garden-room appearance appropriate to the leisure setting.

5. Sauna, Changing and Storage Facilities

The sauna forms the principal wellness feature and is positioned within the decked area. The changing accommodation is arranged as an L-shaped structure with three individual changing rooms along the principal side and storage for visitors' belongings along the shorter side. The changing structure is intended to use a timber frame, timber cladding and a flat felted roof, with a maximum overall height kept modest and in keeping with the scale of the surrounding development. Ground-screw foundations allow the structures to be installed with limited excavation and ground disturbance.

6. Decking, Plunge Pools and Showers

A composite decking platform approximately 7.0 m long by 4.0 m wide is proposed in front of and around the sauna. The platform will be constructed from a pressure-treated timber sub-frame supported on ground screws and finished with durable, slip-resistant composite decking. Two plunge pools and the outdoor shower installation will be positioned on the deck. The deck creates a clean, level and accessible surface while allowing services and drainage routes to be coordinated beneath the platform.

7. Boundary Treatment and Visibility

The existing boundary arrangement is retained in principle. At the approach to the site, the proposed fence line is angled back to improve visibility. This treatment has been incorporated deliberately to maintain a clearer relationship between the site entrance and Church Lane and to avoid an unnecessarily enclosed corner at the access.

8. Access, Parking and Movement

The proposal makes use of the existing site access and the established parking area serving the sports and fitness facilities. The wellness retreat is closely related to the existing fitness use and is not intended to create a separate vehicular access. The internal layout is compact and legible, with visitors moving from the entrance and office through the grassed area to the changing and wellness facilities.

9. Drainage and Services

The showers will be supplied from the existing mains water infrastructure where practicable, with wastewater directed to an appropriate existing drainage connection subject to final technical confirmation. The plunge pools will be capable of being drained in a controlled manner to the appropriate waste system. Electrical supplies for lighting, office use and wellness equipment will be installed by competent contractors and connected from the existing site infrastructure where suitable. Final drainage and electrical details will comply with the relevant technical and safety requirements.

10. Design, Materials and Appearance

The design approach is intentionally simple and low-rise. Timber cladding, dark flat felted roofs, composite decking and restrained boundary treatments create a coherent palette suited to an outdoor wellness setting. The lightweight structures are visually subordinate to the existing sports pavilion and have been designed to avoid excessive bulk. The use of ground screws reduces the need for extensive concrete foundations and assists in keeping construction intervention proportionate to the scale of the proposal.

11. Amenity and Operation

The retreat is intended as a managed wellness facility associated with exercise, recovery and relaxation. The site will be supervised during operation. Activities are principally low-noise and do not involve amplified entertainment or other uses normally associated with significant disturbance. The layout places the operational elements together within a defined area and retains existing separation from surrounding residential properties provided by the road network, boundaries and wider site context.

12. Planning Policy Considerations

The proposal should be considered against the development plan and national planning policy in force at the time of determination. Horsham District Council confirms that the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework remains its current Local Plan, while a replacement plan is progressing through the plan-making process. The Ashington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019–2031 was made in June 2021 and also forms part of the local planning context.

13. Health, Recreation and Sustainable Development

The proposal has a clear relationship with health, fitness and recreation. National planning policy supports healthy and inclusive places and recognises the importance of facilities that enable healthy lifestyles, physical activity and community wellbeing. The retreat would broaden the range of wellness

and recovery facilities available alongside an established fitness use. In sustainability terms, the scheme reuses an already-served site, relies on existing access and parking infrastructure, uses compact lightweight buildings and seeks to minimise intrusive foundation works.

14. Impact on Open Space

Although the proposal occupies part of an existing grassed area, it represents an alternative recreational and wellness provision directly associated with the established sports and fitness setting. The scheme is compact, retains meaningful grassed space within the site and does not extend onto the main playing field shown to the north. The proposed use therefore maintains the site's overall recreational character while diversifying the facilities available to users.

15. Conclusion

The proposed Vision Saunas wellness retreat represents a modest and complementary addition to the existing sports and fitness facilities at Church Lane. It provides facilities focused on health, recovery and wellbeing through a carefully planned combination of sauna, plunge pools, showers, changing accommodation and associated office space. The development is low-rise, uses a coherent palette of materials, makes use of existing access and parking, incorporates a visibility improvement to the boundary and uses ground-screw construction to limit unnecessary ground disturbance. On this basis, the proposal is considered capable of integrating appropriately with the existing site and supporting its established recreation and wellbeing function. Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought.

Planning policy sources checked: Horsham District Council current Local Plan and Ashington neighbourhood planning pages; National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026).