Planning Statement

Applicant: South Holland District Council

Proposal: Full Planning Application for Proposed Health and Wellbeing Hub and Associated Infrastructure

Site: Castle Sports Centre & Swimming Pool, Albion Street, Spalding PE11 2AJ

Date: May 2024

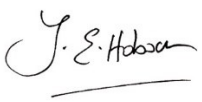
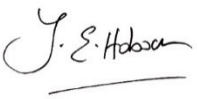
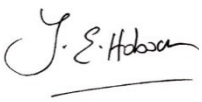
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Appendix 1 - Economic Case Technical Prepared by AMION Consulting July 2022

1.0 Introduction.

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by JEH Planning Ltd on behalf of South Holland District Council hereafter referred to as 'SHDC' or 'the Applicant'.

1.2 The Applicant has submitted a full planning application for the demolition of the existing Castle Swimming Pool building and the construction of a two storey extension including basement area to the existing Castle Sports Complex building to provide new and upgrade indoor leisure and health related facilities including two new swimming pools, plant area and changing rooms. The proposal also relates to the reconfiguration of the existing leisure building to provide upgraded sports facilities and related supporting services. Within the grounds of the Castle Leisure Centre there will be provision of a new 3G artificial turf pitch (ATP), an Informal Outdoor Games Area (IOGA), other outdoor play areas, a 'Park Run' running track, a health and wellbeing garden and an outdoor splash pad relating to the new swimming pool. The provision of supporting infrastructure including additional car parking and, landscaped areas would also be provided.

1.3 It should be noted that the applicant is also preparing a separate but related outline application with all matters reserved for future determination for an extra care facility to be located on the demolished site of the existing Castle Swimming Pool building. The relationship between the two applications is due to the success of achieving a Levelling Up (LUF) Grant issues by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the package of measures that form the basis of these proposed developments.

1.4 The submission of this full application aligns with the Government's aim of building a strong economy and healthy communities as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023). The proposed development will provide a high quality scheme delivering much improved leisure facilities to Spalding and the surround district in a well-connected and highly accessible location. The scheme will result in environmental, social and economic benefits through the creation of a leisure, an increase in jobs, biodiversity net gain, and creating a development with sustainable transport links.

1.5 This statement describes the site and its surrounding context; sets out details of the application proposals; identifies relevant planning policy and guidance; and goes on to appraise the suitability of the proposals having regard to these policies.

1.6 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to provide the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and other interested parties with the information necessary to appraise the application proposal against the wide range of established policies and guidance. Section 11 includes detail a summary of the benefits that will be delivered by the scheme and judgments about the 'planning balance'.

1.7 Following the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening letter (8th April 2024), the LPA responded on 9th May 2024 agreeing that an Environmental Statement (ES) would not be necessary. However relevant environmental disciplines have been undertaken to enable a robust assessment of the impacts of the scheme prior to the determination of the planning application. This assessment work also helps to inform the LPA's determination of the application by ensuring that any likely environmental effects are understood, together with the measures taken to mitigate them and to maximise any environmental benefits.

1.8 The application has been informed by extensive pre-application discussions with the LPA and other consultees such as Sport England, the County Highways, and the Environment Agency.

1.9 Through design mitigation measures as identified within the various plans and documents submitted, the application seeks to strike an appropriate balance between the need to provide economic and social opportunities with the need to protect and, where possible, enhance the surrounding environment. This statement explains how this is achieved and how the proposals accord with the adopted development plan and the relevant national planning policy guidance.

1.10 The application is accompanied by a suite of supporting information as detailed below, the scope of which was agreed with the LPA during pre-application discussions:

Application	Author
Cover Letter dated 22 May 2024	JEH Planning
Completed Full Application forms and Certificates A dated 22 May 2024	JEH Planning

Planning Application Fee for the sum of £31,700 based on GEFA of 3,699sqm	Applicant paid direct to LPA

Drawings	Ref No
Existing Location Site Plan - H&WH	M00514-SBA-01-00-DR-A-0100 (P02)
Existing Topographical Site Survey	M00514-SBA-01-00-DR-A-0102 (P02)
Indicative Masterplan	M00514-SBA-00-00-DR-A-0103 (P03)
Proposed Site Plan - H&WH	M00514-SBA-00-00-DR-A-0104 (P03)
Existing Ground Floor Plan	M00514-SBA-01-00-DR-A-0110 (P01)
Existing First Floor Plan	M00514-SBA-01-01-DR-A-0111 (P01)
Existing Roof Plan	M00514-SBA-01-02-DR-A-0112 (P01)
Existing Elevations 1 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0113 (P01)
Existing Elevations 2 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0114 (P01)
Existing Section 1 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0115 (P01)
Existing Section 2 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0116 (P01)
Demolition Ground Floor Plan	M00514-SBA-01-00-DR-A-0120 (P01)
Demolition First Floor Plan	M00514-SBA-01-01-DR-A-0121 (P01)
Demolition Roof Plan	M00514-SBA-01-02-DR-A-0122 (P01)
Demolition Elevations 1 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0123 (P01)
Demolition Elevations 2 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0124(P01)
Demolition Sections 1 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0125 (P01)
Demolition Sections 2 of 2	M00514-SBA-01-ZZ-DR-A-0126 (P01)
Proposed Basement Plan	M00514-SBA-02-B1-DR-A-0130 (P02)

Drawings	Ref No
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	M00514-SBA-02-00-DR-A-0131 (P02)
Proposed First Floor Plan	M00514-SBA-02-01-DR-A-0132 (P02)
Proposed Roof Plan	M00514-SBA-02-02-DR-A-0133 (P02)
Proposed Sections 1 of 2	M00514-SBA-02-ZZ-DR-A-0134 (P02)
Proposed Sections 2 of 2	M00514-SBA-02-ZZ-DR-A-0135 (P02)
Proposed Elevations 1 of 2	M00514-SBA-02-ZZ-DR-A-0136 (P02)
Proposed Elevations 2 of 2	M00514-SBA-02-ZZ-DR-A-0137 (P02)
3D View 1	M00514-SBA-02-XX-DR-A-0140 (P02)
3D View 2	M00514-SBA-02-XX-DR-A-0141 (P02)
Site Phasing Plan	M00514-SBA-00-00-DR-A-0105 (P03)
Landscape Proposed Site Plan by One Environmental	M00514-ONE-ZZ-XX-D-L-0002 P02
Detailed Planting Plan Sheet 1 by One Environmental	M00514-ONE-ZZ-XX-D-L-0201 P03
Detailed Planting Plan Sheet 2 by One Environmental	M00514-ONE-ZZ-XX-D-L-0202 P03
Detailed Planting Plan Sheet 3 by One Environmental	M00514-ONE-ZZ-XX-D-L-0203 P03
Site Sections by One Environmental	M00514-ONE-ZZ-XX-D-L-0401 P01

Reports	Ref No /Date	Author
Planning Statement	JEH 085/ Rev 2 22 May 2024	JEH Planning
Statement of Community Involvement	JEH/085 Rev 3	JEH Planning

Reports	Ref No /Date	Author
Design and Access Statement	M00514 20 May 2024	Saunders Boston
Playing field Exception Test 5 Statement	Report V8 20 May 2024	Max Associates
Sequential Test/ Exception Test Assessment	JEH 085/ Rev 2 21 May 2024	JEH Planning
Flood Risk Assessment i	15 rd May 2024 M00514-ENG-XX-ZZ-RP-C-0002 Rev P04	Engenuiti
Drainage Strategy (SuDs/Foul Water)	02 May 2024 M00514-ENG-ZZ-XX-RP-C-0003 Rev P02	Engenuiti
Preliminary Ecological Assessment	SQ-1167 Issue 3 14th May 2024	Estrada
Bat Survey	SQ- 1354 Issue 2 30th August 2023	Estrada
BNG Metric	No Reference	Estrada
Desk Based Archaeological Assessment	AAL Site Code: SPAS 23 November 2023	Allen Archaeology
Built Heritage Assessment	2520887.1 May 2024	Marrons
Ground Investigation Report	AG3565-23-AR81 May 2024	Applied Geology
Transport Assessment (Inc Parking Strategy)	SHH-BWB-GEN-XX-RP-TR-0003 P02 7 May 2024	BWB Consulting
Framework Travel Plan	SHH-BWB-GEN-XX-RP-TR-0005 P02 8 May 2024	BWB Consulting
Noise Assessment - Environmental Survey & Preliminary Acoustic Design -	PC-23-0226-RP1-Rev A 10th May 2024	Pace Consulting
Air Quality Assessment	SHH-BWB-XX-ZZ-RP-LA-0001_AQA Rev 1.0 26 April 2024	BWB Consulting
External Lighting Assessment	M00514-VZV-ZZ-ZZ-RP-E-0630 P02 10 May 2024	Van Zyl & de Villiers Ltd Consulting Engineers

Reports	Ref No /Date	Author
Construction Environmental Plan	RMS-PL~1.DOC Rev 3 20 May 2024	Willmott Dixon
Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment	RT-MME-160845-01 Oct 2023	Middlemarch
Arboricultural Impact Assessment	RT-MME-160845-02 Rev B Date: May 2024	Middlemarch
Materials And Waste	RMS-PR-060b RISK REV-A MAY-2021	Willmott Dixon
Indicative operational Waste Management Plan	21 May 2024	SHDC
Ventilation Extraction Statement	M00514-VZV-ZZ-XX-RP-M-0003 P02 10 May 2024	Van Zyl & de Villiers Ltd Consulting Engineers

1.11 As can be seem from the above tables, a full package of drawings has been submitted to not only demonstrate how the proposed development will be developed but also an illustrative masterplan has been proposed of the whole site to show how this application integrates with the related Extra Care proposal on the existing swimming pool site to ensure a joined up and coordinated approach is achieved especially in relation to connections, design and layout, biodiversity considerations and infrastructure provision such as the overall drainage strategy.

1.12 To clarify, the whole site forms part of this full application whereas the site of the existing Castle Swimming Pool is the area relating to the Extra Care home proposal which forms part of a separate outline application.

1.13 This report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** sets out the context and background behind the proposals.
- **Section 3** provides information on the physical characteristics of the site and other factual details.
- **Section 4** outlines the pre-application approach and feedback from the LPA and other key statutory consultees and bodies.
- **Section 5** sets out the community engagement undertaken to date.
- **Section 6** outlines the nature and scale of the proposed development.

- **Section 7** identifies the relevant National and Local Plan Policies explaining the weight that should be attached to the relevant policies.
- **Section 8** provides the planning assessment relating to establishing the principle of development included an understanding of other material considerations such as the need for the development.
- **Section 9** assesses the three pillars of sustainability and the technical considerations in the context of compliance with the relevant policies, taking into account other material considerations to demonstrating the proposal achieves sustainable development.
- **Section 10** provides an outline of the proposed phasing and delivery strategy for the key element of the development which is dependent on receiving LUF Funding.
- **Section 11** provides a summary and conclusion of the planning benefits whilst applying the planning balance.

2.0 Background and Context

2.1 The existing site of the Castle Sport Complex and Swimming Pool facilities are owned by the Council and managed by Parkwood Leisure on a short-term contract of five years. The complex was opened in 1974 and due to the age and deteriorating state of the existing site, the applicant instigated a review of the leisure provision initially in 2019. The South Holland Sports Facilities Strategy 2019 identified the need for improvements to Castle Sports Centre and highlighted the following:

> *"The pools at the Castle Sports Complex were built in 1974 and are therefore nearing the end of their planned life. As a result, the quality of provision of many elements of the facilities is poor. Many users are highly critical, and it is evident from the responses to the local community survey that many people are travelling outside the district to access better quality facilities elsewhere."*
>
> *"One of the pools is a diving pit, with a depth of 5m. This has very little use for its primary purpose, its dimensions are not well suited to other forms of swimming for which there is higher demand, such as swimming lessons and the volume of water is expensive to run in terms of utilities costs."*
>
> *"The location of the pools in a standalone building separate from the dryside facilities at the Castle Sports Complex creates additional operational complexity and extra management costs."*

2.2 The condition survey for both Castle Sports Complex and Swimming Pool highlighted maintenance, repair and redecorating costs required, which included refurbishment works to the ceilings, floors, stairs, external walls, windows for the castle Sport Complex. For the existing swimming pool this would require the installation of an external DDA compliant lift together with re-surfacing and decorating the existing ramp. The swimming pool also required overall improvements to the mechanical and electrical works in the plant room.

2.3 During this initial feasibility work, it was recognised that these refurbishment costs are further exacerbated by the fact that the site is split across two sites, making overheads, and staffing more costly. Advice was also provided by leisure consultants, and it was concluded that the Castle Sports Complex building itself is inflexible in terms of changes to current leisure trends and sports provision.

2.4 Against this background, the applicant considered options of replacing or re-developing the Complex. As part of a thorough design process, which involved consulting a wide team of specialists, a brief was developed to suit both community and specialist feedback. The preferred option that was consider related to incorporating an extension to the existing leisure centre and the construction of a new building to provide further sport, activity, and wellbeing facilities as well as relocated the swimming pool.

2.5 The 2022 Round 2 Levelling Up Fund presented the applicant with an opportunity to consider the entire site more holistically and the concept of a district-wide Health and Wellbeing Hub was developed further through ongoing consultation. In January 2023, the Levelling up Funding was awarded to this scheme which has then triggered the preparation of this planning application.

2.6 The funding is provided to form part of the necessary capital investment required for delivery of the LUF proposal. The description of the LUF bid proposals states that:

> 'This regeneration and cultural investment project is a Health and Wellbeing ("Hub") in Spalding, Lincolnshire. The total capital cost is £26 million, of which South Holland District Council is applying for £20 million LUF funding. The transformational scheme will inspire residents of Spalding and the district to be active and healthy, enabling them to live longer healthy lives, tackling longstanding health inequalities. The Hub integrates new and significantly redeveloped swimming pools, and other indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, with health provision, community spaces and Extra Care accommodation. The Masterplan includes new cycleways and pedestrian routes, linking the site to the town centre.'

2.7 The proposal that forms this planning application is consistent with delivering the LUF fund that has been awarded to the Council.

3.0 The Site and Surroundings

Site Context

3.1 The site comprises land and buildings immediately situated to the North of the town centre of the settlement of Spalding which is identified as a Sub Regional Centre South Holland District with the adopted Local Plan.

3.2 Spalding town lies on the River Welland and is situated ca. 22km to the north-east of Peterborough, with nearby towns including Bourne ca. 15km to the west and Boston ca. 22km to the north-east.

Character and Use of the Site

3.3 The site accommodates the existing Castle Sports Leisure Complex and is irregular in shape covering a total area of approximately 4.99 hectares.

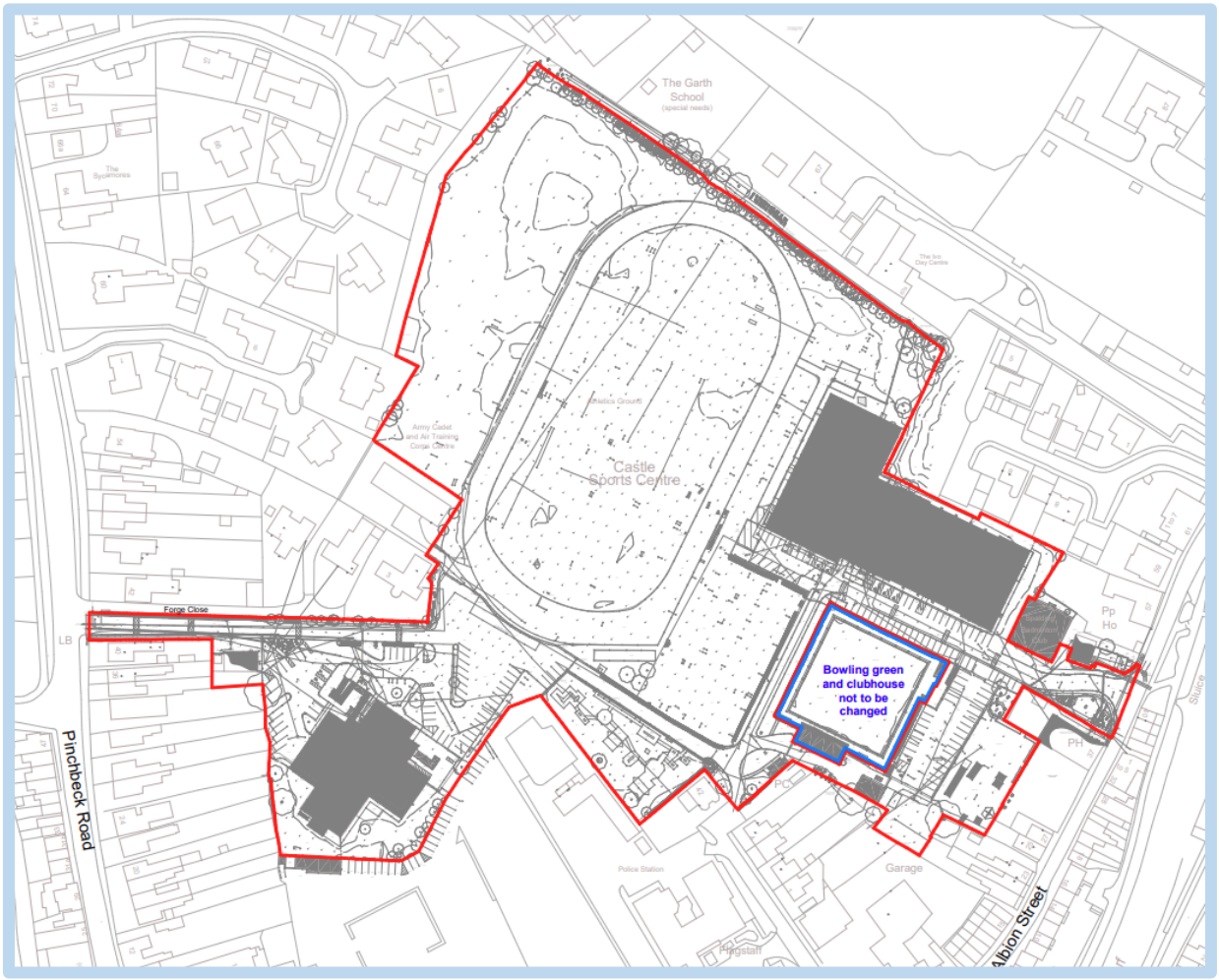


Fig 1 : Site Location Plan

3.4 The site area includes the existing Castle Swimming Pool building, car parking, children's play areas, an old disused cinder running track with one football pitch centre field (changing for this facility are provided in existing swimming pool), a leisure centre comprising upstairs gym, and a sports hall including an indoor bowls area.

Existing Site Levels

3.5 The topography plan shows a 1:40 fall into the site from Albion Street between levels of approximately 5.2m AOD and 4.3m AOD. To the east of the existing car park, levels are also elevated 4.3m AOD compared to the car park at 3.7m AOD. Elsewhere levels are fairly flat, varying between levels of 4.0m AOD and 3.2 m AOD.

Site Boundaries and Surrounding Uses

3.6 The Project Site is located on the northern edge of the town centre, ca. 550m north-east of Spalding Railway Station. It is located to the west of Albion Street and to the east of Pinchbeck Road, two key thoroughfares within the town.

3.7 Site is surrounded by built development on all sides, apart from a small rectangular area of open land to the north-east. The built development is primarily residential in nature to the north and more commercial to the south, reflecting the Site's position at the northern periphery of the town centre.

3.8 Immediately to the rear of the existing Castle Sports centre to the north is a residential cul de sac called Chambers Court and Ivo Resource and Day Centre.

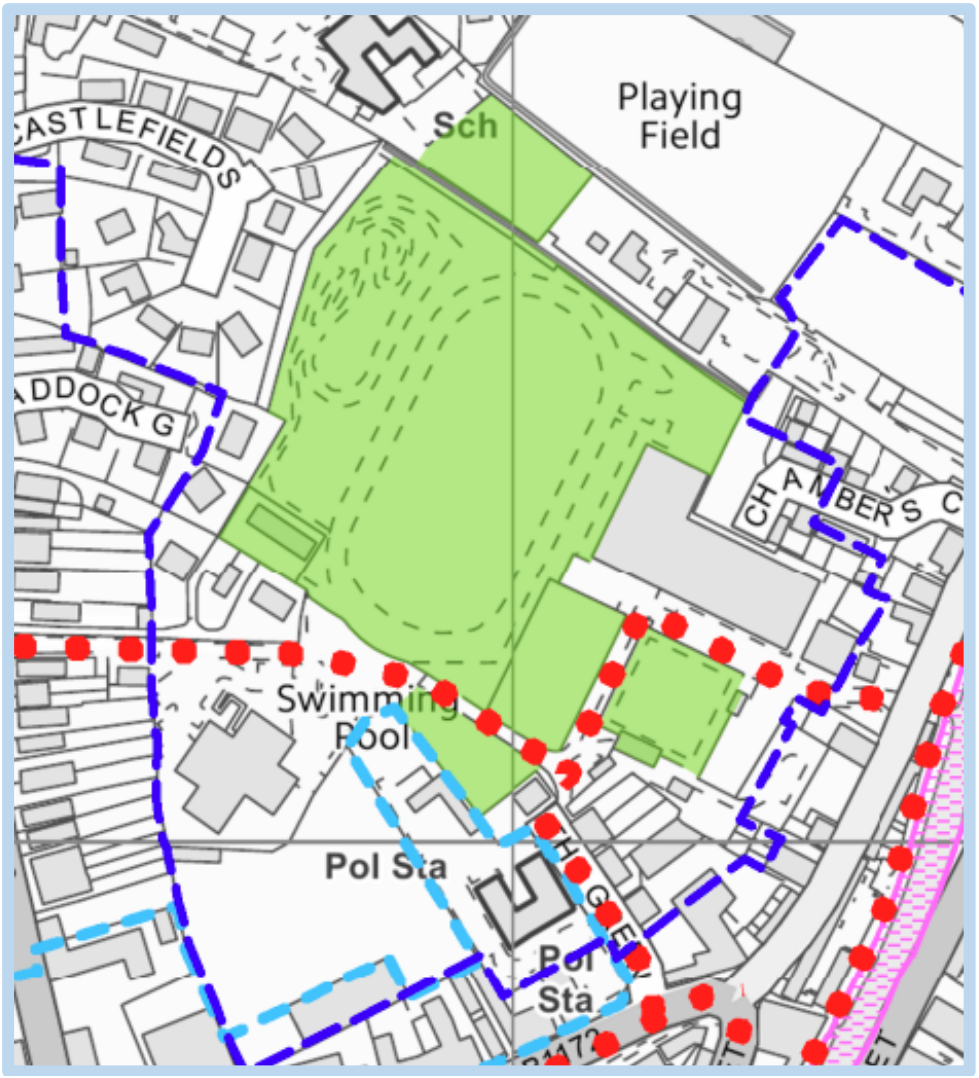
Existing Access Arrangements

3.9 The main access to the site is via Albion Street but there is also a private vehicular access from Forge Close to the south-west directly off Pinchbeck Road which serves the existing Castle Swimming Pool. Between these two access points there are existing pedestrian and cycle links across the site which connect the two points of access in to the site but there is no through route for vehicles.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

Local Plan Allocation

3.10 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 was adopted on 8th March 2019 and these policies will be the starting point in the planning determination process. Below is the relevant extract from the Policies Map relating to the site.



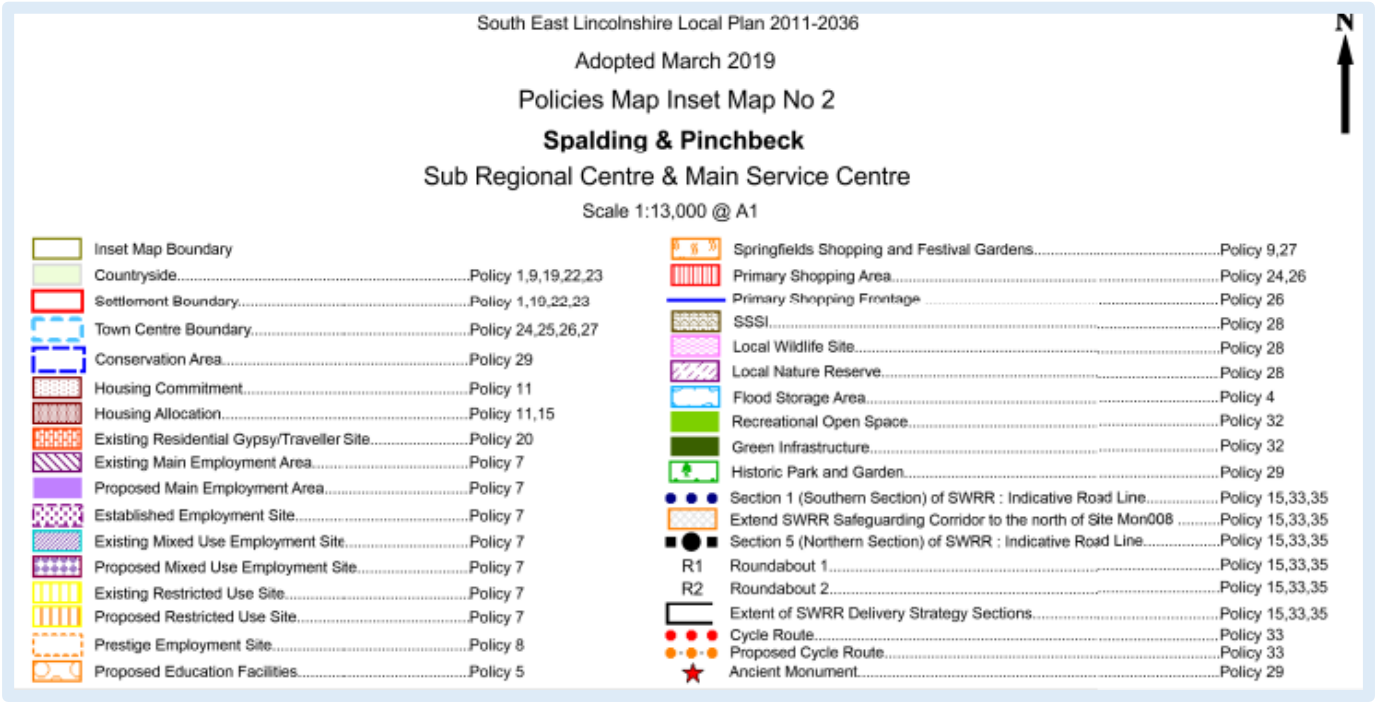


Fig 2 SE Lincolnshire Local Plan Proposal Map

3.11 Both the Swimming Pool Building and the Castle Leisure Building together with their associated parking areas are shown on the Proposal Map without any designation. However, the outdoor recreation areas are designated Green which relates to Policy 32 – Recreational Open Space/ Community, Health and Well Being.

3.12 The policy seeks to guard against the loss of existing, valued community facilities. Such losses will be permitted only if it can be demonstrated that in the case of sport or recreational facilities and the redevelopment will retain the facility in sport or recreational use, albeit of a different type.

3.13 The notation also identifies cycle routes linkages between Pinchbeck Road, Albion Street and The Green. Policy 33 seeks to protecting existing footpaths, cycle routes and public rights of way from development.

Other Designations

3.14 The EA's Flood Map for Planning shows that the site is in Flood Zone 3 (high risk) where land is defined as land having a 1 in 100 (1%) or greater annual probability of river flooding or 1 in 200 (0.5%) or greater annual probability of tidal flooding. These EA flood maps assume no flooding defences exist, but existing fluvial defences are in place along Coronation Channel and the River Welland, which combined with the sluices to the north of Spalding, protect the area from tidal surges.

3.15 The majority of the site is not located within a designated Conservation Area. However, Spalding Conversation Area immediately abuts the western and eastern site boundary and there is modest encroachment into the site at the two access points and the eastern positions of the site proposed for car parking (see blue dashed line on figure 2 above)..

3.16 There are no locally or statutorily listed structures or Scheduled Monuments on the site but there are seven listed buildings located in close proximity on the western side of Albion Street within the Conservation area.

3.17 The site does not fall within any statutory environmental designations. The nearest statutory designated ecological site is Vernatt Local Nature Reserve located approximately 0.85 kms from the application site.

Recent/Relevant Planning History

3.18 There have been no recent planning applications/permissions relating to the site.

4.0 Pre application Planning Advice

4.1 In Paragraphs 39-46, the NPPF highlights the value of pre-application engagement with decision-making authorities and other key stakeholders. The following section summaries the consultation which has been undertaken to date.

Consultation with the LPA

4.2 The Applicant has engaged positively and proactively in a programme of pre-application advice with the LPA, structured around a formal Planning Performance Agreement and regular feedback and discussions with the case officer, the Head of Planning and other relevant officers from various disciplines within the Council dating back to Summer of 2022.

4.3 We submitted a formal pre-application enquiry on 23th February and we received a detailed response from the LPA on 11th April 2024 and we have been guided by these comments which provide consideration of the following key issues:

- Principle of the Development
- Layout and Design
- Residential Amenity
- Highway Safety and Parking
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Planning Obligations

4.4 The pre-application advice also confirmed the validation requirements for the full planning application submission.

4.5 We address each of the above matters within Sections 8,9 and 10 of this Planning Statement together with reference to the supporting documentation and drawings that have been prepared. However, as a matter of seeking to establish the planning suitability of the principle of development, the initial advice is both positive and supportive. The conclusion of the LPA's advice confirms the following:

'The development will support Spalding's role as a sub-regional centre and therefore will comply with Policy 1 (A1) of the SELLP. As the development proposes a new and improved swimming and teaching pool facilities, there is no loss of community facility and therefore the development is deemed to comply with Policy 32 of the SELLP.'

4.6 During the pre-application stage we also engaged with the LPA with a request for an EIA Screening Opinion on 8th April 2024 and received a response on 9TH May 2024. The LPA have agreed that the application does not need to be considered under the EIA regulations.

Consultation with Sport England

4.7 The applicant has entered into constructive pre-application discussions with Sport England. We initially had a meeting with Sport England on 8th November 2023 We subsequently submitted a formal pre application on 13th March 2024 which included a pack of drawings and a version of our Playing field Exceptions Assessment prepared by Max Associates which demonstrated that the benefits of an alternative sports facility outweigh the loss of an area of playing field.

4.8 Sport England responded with detailed comments in an email dated 5th April 2024. Whilst there were detailed to address SE confirmed that subject to the satisfactory submission of the detail at formal application stage, they considered a re-designed proposal appears capable of complying with the requirements in Exception 5 (and Paragraph 103c of the NPPF).

4.9 Since these comments were received, we have had a further virtual meeting on 14th May and, where feasible, we have amended the proposal to address the concerns and provided further justification to clarify the proposal. These matters are addressed within the updated version of the Exceptions Test Assessment Prepared by Max Associates. It is accepted that during the determination process further ongoing discussions with Sport England may be required.

Summary

4.10 Detailed consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders through the design and pre-application process. The points raised to date by each party have been carefully addressed within the proposals which form the submission.

5.0 Public Consultation

5.1 A central theme of current planning legislation and guidance is placing increased importance on community involvement as the planning system operates in the public interest to make sure that the development results in a better place for people to live. The approach to community involvement has had due regard to the Localism Act 2011, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), NPPF along with the LPA's Statement of Community Involvement adopted in 2020.

5.2 The NPPF is central to encouraging engagement with the local community. Paragraph 39 confirms that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussions enable better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

5.3 The applicant is committed to public engagement and specifically commissioned JEH Planning to oversee and coordinate the consultation strategy with key stakeholders and the local community.

5.4 Prior to the preparation of this application, the proposal has already evolved through a comprehensive programme of consultation through the initial work in connection with the successful Levelling Up bid. There is significant strategic support for the scheme from the leader of the Council, Sir John Hayes MP, and others.

5.5 The overall composition of the proposal is the result of ongoing community, stakeholder engagement and in-depth partnership work that initially took place from 2019 to 2022 that has gained a full understanding of the needs and requirements of the local community. The emergence of shared strategic and organisational partnership goals has been forged and consulted on to agree delivery roles and endorsed through council briefings with their total support.

5.6 A full pre-application consultation process was agreed with the LPA at the beginning of 2024 and undertaken in advance of a planning application being submitted. Residents and stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the proposals at all stages of our public consultation via a consultation website (including the exhibition boards and material held between 14th March until 5th April 2024) and a number of physical exhibitions held during this time.

5.7 A questionnaire form and email address were also made available throughout the course of the pre-application consultation, for interested parties to enable them to provide their feedback to the project team.

5.8 The applicant and their project team have reviewed all the feedback received to date, and the main comments raised by the local community have been addressed with the introduction of changes and appropriate levels of mitigation that have been informed by technical evidence. Details of the feedback received and how these matters have been addressed are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement report which accompanies this submission.

6.0 Overview of the Development

Description of Development

6.1 The Proposed Development comprises a full application and the formal description on the planning application states as follows:

> "'Full application for the subsequent demolition of the existing swimming pool building following the construction of a two storey extension including basement area to the existing Castle Sports Complex building to provide new and upgrade indoor leisure and health related facilities including two new swimming pools, plant area and changing rooms. Reconfiguration of the existing building to provide new and upgraded sports facilities and physical activity facilities and related supporting services. The provision of a new 3G artificial turf pitch (ATP), an Informal Outdoor Games Area (IOGA), other outdoor play areas, an informal running trail/track, a health and well being garden and an outdoor splash pad relating to the new swimming pool. The provision of supporting infrastructure including additional car parking and, landscaped areas.'

6.2 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out the key design and layout principles that have influenced the development proposal. It confirms that the proposed development is based on an operational and design-led approach, analysing and enhancing the existing environment in terms of green infrastructure and utilising these natural assets.

Scale, Nature and Composition of the Proposal

6.3 The scale, nature and composition of the proposal is also as a direct response to a review of the leisure provision and providing upgraded facilities that better aligned with the future needs of the local community. The proposed development also relates specifically to the successful Levelling Up bid where grant funding has been awarded to the applicant to address health and wellbeing outcomes in South Holland, through the provision of improved sport, recreation and leisure facilities, alongside the closer integration of health and wellbeing services and facilities for residents.

6.4 The existing swimming pool will be demolished, and a new swimming facility will be created as an extension to the existing 'dry side' of the complex. This would include an improved six-lane 25 metre pool, as well as a new, larger teaching pool aimed at supporting learners of all ages, family swimming and physiotherapy and rehabilitation activity. A cubicle changing village would be introduced, along with an outdoor splash pad for younger children and families.

6.5 Other than the relocated swimming, the inside of the main Hub building would include reconfigured sports hall and upstairs gym fitness suite. Activity play zones would be introduced, one for toddlers and one for older children, overlooked by a new café.

6.6 On the first floor level, indoor cycling and fitness studios would be available for classes, as well as a downstairs studio suitable as a party space.

6.7 There would be a dedicated assisted exercise area and a health and wellbeing space for appointments and sessions with health practitioners, including services to support with mental health, diabetes, Alzheimer's and dementia support.

6.8 Within the reconfigured Hub building new changing place facilities would be created through the project.

6.9 In terms of the outdoor sports and Leisure uses, the proposals include a new 3G artificial turf floodlit football pitch as well as a separate outdoor informal games area, catering for a variety of other sports including basketball and netball.

6.10 Alongside the splashpad would be an outdoor play area for children and families to use, with a park run track suitable for walkers, runners or cyclists running around the edge of and through the site.

6.11 A community garden would also be created, allowing residents space to grow and share plants and vegetables in a communal, accessible environment. A sensory garden would also be introduced to further enhance the health and wellbeing offer of the development.

6.12 Table 2 in the Exception Test assessment report prepared by Max Associates that accompanies this application provided a detailed schedule of the existing and proposed future sports and recreation facilities provision.

Proposed Vehicular Access and Parking

6.13 The proposed main point of vehicular access will continue to be from Albion Street but it is also intended that school buses dropping pupils off at the new swimming pool would continue to access the leisure complexed from Pinchbeck Road/Forge Close. A new turning and drop off facility has been introduced to allow buses and mini bus to turnaround at the end of Forge Close.

6.14 In terms of car parking, the eastern area that serves the H & W Hub building from Albion Road will be reconfigured and extended to the south east. This will increase the car parking provision in this area to 133 spaces.

6.15 An additional 42 car parking spaces are also proposed in the southern portion of the site and these will be accessed via Pinchbeck Road/ Forge Close. This car parking area will generally service the activities associated with the proposed Artificial Turf Pitch

6.16 Therefore, the total number of car parking spaces would be 172 of which 11 are disabled and 6 are EV Charge spaces. The development is also providing 15 cycle parking spaces, located close to the main entrance.

6.17 It is not proposed to create a vehicular link within the site that would create a connection between Pinchbeck Road and Albion Road. However, there are several proposed footpath and cycle connections across the site that would provide links between the two roads.

6.18 The proposed plant room for the new swimming pool within the extended Hub Building requires vehicular access and therefore a private service road together with a turning facility has been provided which is accessed via Pinchbeck Road.

6.19 The layout of the proposal has also had regard to the existing access arrangements to the Air Cadets building from Forge Close and the existing Outside Bowls area from Albion Road as both of these uses fall outside of the planning application.

Water Treatment of the Swimming Pool

6.20 The nature of swimming pool water treatment management involves the use of hazardous chemicals to ensure that pool water disinfection and PH control are effectively managed, to maintain safe good quality bathing waters. The precise nature of the pool water disinfection systems has yet to be determined but will generally involve the use of chlorine based chemicals for disinfection and acid (usually diluted hydrochloric acid) to manage PH levels.

6.21 The use and storage of these chemicals is tightly managed and controlled in accordance with COSHH regulations. Those controls will be fully employed and mandated through the operator contract requirements for health and safety management.

6.22 These types of chemicals are delivered and stored in maximum 25l secure storage containers with acid and chlorine being stored and used separately to ensure that mixing is prohibited. Furthermore, the use of modern disinfection measures, such as ultra violet treatment systems, minimises the amounts of chemical chlorination and therefore chemicals that would need to be used. It is anticipated that an ultra-violet disinfection system would be installed as part of the water treatment plant solution.

The Wider Masterplan

6.23 The submitted illustrative masterplan demonstrates how the proposal integrates with the proposed extra care facility that forms part of a separate but related outline application in relation to the area of the site where the existing swimming pool is intended to be demolished. In terms of this area of the application site, we propose that following demolish of the swimming pool the material will be removed and the land remediated on a temporary basis before the delivery of the extra care facility.

Sustainable Construction

6.24 The Proposed Hub will, where feasible, incorporate best practice sustainable building principles, to develop public facilities that minimise their impact on the environment.

6.25 Both the new and existing parts of the building will be clad in a composite cladding system with high levels of thermal performance and air tightness. It is likely that the building will utilise the latest heat pump technology to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. The use of renewable technology will also feature on this building with photovoltaic cells mounted on the roof.

7.0 Planning Policy Context

7.1 The whole purpose and intention of the planning system is to enable the development of appropriate sites which are sustainable, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework or NPPF) and, in particular, paragraph 8.

7.2 The purpose of the planning system is to positively promote the spatial organisation of land in order to achieve long-term sustainable development. In the Planning Acts, 'sustainable development' means managing the use, development and protection of land, the built environment and natural resources. Indeed, planning is a vital means of securing the long-term wellbeing of our communities. It enables the efficient use of resources and infrastructure, with multiple benefits to society, the environment and the economy.

7.3 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 2 of the Framework recognises the provisions of Section 38(6) stating:

> "Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account when preparing the development plan and is material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements"

7.4 In this instance the Development Plan comprises:

- The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (SELLP) was adopted by South Holland District Council on 8 March 2019.

7.5 The site is not subject to any made Neighbourhood Plans.

7.6 The revised NPPF confirms, at Paragraph 225, that existing policy should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this revised Framework. Due weight can be given to policies according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (i.e. the closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.)

7.7 The correct approach to determining whether a proposal is in compliance with a Development Plan is uncontroversial:

- All the relevant policies should be identified.
- An assessment should be made as to whether the proposal complies or not with each of those policies and the weight to be given to these;
- The development plan must be read as a whole;
- It must be recognised that separate policies within the same development plan can pull in different directions; and,
- A development can conflict with one individual policy and still comply with the development plan as a whole.

The Development Plan

The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan

7.8 The SE Lincolnshire Local Plan was adopted in March 2019 and in the context of the proposal, reference is made to the following Strategic Priorities set out in the Local Plan which are relevant:

Strategic Priority 1: To deliver sustainable development in South East Lincolnshire that seeks to meet the social and economic needs of the area, whilst protecting and enhancing its environment for the enjoyment of future generations.

Strategic Priority 3: To ensure that development contributes to the provision of necessary physical, social and green infrastructure to deliver planned levels of growth at the right time and to mitigate its impacts on existing communities and the environment.

Strategic Priority 5: To protect a mutually-supportive hierarchy of vibrant self-contained town centres and secure their enhancement by promoting an appropriate mix and scale of retail, leisure and other town centre uses and by maximising opportunities for regeneration.

Strategic Priority 10: To provide equal opportunities for everyone who lives, visits, works and invests in South East Lincolnshire by helping to create more sustainable communities, reduce locational disadvantage and upgrade a range of community facilities recognising that these all contribute to the fulfilment, health and well-being of residents and visitors alike.

7.9 The relevant Local Plan policies for the purposes of assessing this application are as follows:

Policy 1 Spatial Strategy – sets out where development is to be directed (A) and where there are areas of limited development opportunity (B) , restraint (C) and the Countryside (D).

Policy 2 Development Management – requires proposals to demonstrate sustainable development considerations have been met through a number of criteria.

Policy 3 Design of New Development – requires development to create distinctive places through the use of high quality and inclusive design, demonstrating compliance with a number of considerations.

Policy 4 Approach to Flood Risk – developments must satisfy the sequential test and be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment covering risk from all sources of flooding including the impacts of climate change. It must be demonstrated that surface water from the development can be managed and will not increase the risk of flooding to third parties.

Policy 5 – Meeting Physical Infrastructure and Service Needs - Planning permission will be granted for new development provided that developers can demonstrate that there is or will be sufficient physical infrastructure and service needs capacity to support and meet the needs of the proposed development. A planning condition and/or legal agreement may be required to help secure the arising need.

Policy 6 Developer Contributions - Non-residential development of 1,000sqm gross floorspace or more will be expected to mitigate their impacts upon infrastructure, services and the environment to ensure that such developments are acceptable in planning terms. Contributions will be secured through section 106 (legal) agreements.

Policy 28 The Natural Environment – Requires the protection, enhancement and management of natural assets, by ensuring all development proposals provide an overall net gain in biodiversity.

Policy 29 The Historic Environment - Distinctive elements of the South East Lincolnshire historic environment will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Policy 30 'Pollution' – Supports development which do not result in unacceptable adverse impacts, taking account of mitigation measures.

Policy 31 Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy - All development proposals will be required to demonstrate that the consequences of current climate change has been addressed, minimised and mitigated.

Policy 32 Community, Health and Wellbeing- Development shall contribute to the creation of socially-cohesive and inclusive communities; reducing health inequalities; and improving the community's health and well-being.

Policy 33: Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network - Protecting existing footpaths, cycle routes and public rights of way from development; and improving connectivity to create a more coherent walking and cycling network through the provision of new multi-user routes.

Other Material Policy Considerations

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

7.10 The Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and Paragraph 224 confirms that these policies are material considerations that should be taken into account when dealing with applications from the day of its publication.

7.11 There are three objectives (Para 8) of sustainable development comprising the economic, social and environmental roles.

7.12 So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the Framework identifies how this presumption is to be applied in making decisions on individual applications stating:

7.13 Paragraph 11 of the Framework identifies how this presumption is to be applied in making decisions on individual applications stating:-

"For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date , granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed ; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".

7.14 Beyond Chapter 4 of the Framework there are 13 topic areas (as well as Annex 1 and 2) which form the Framework document; those topic areas considered of relevance to this planning application are set out below:

7.15 Support for employment generating development is a strong theme within the NPPF. Paragraph 85 sets out that '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.

7.16 At paragraph 90 the NPPF supports the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.

7.17 Chapter 8 promotes heathy and safe communities and paragraph 96 confirms that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which 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.

7.18 Paragraph 97 encourages planning decisions to take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

7.19 In terms of open space and recreation paragraph 102 confirms 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.

7.20 Paragraph 103 deals with the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, and states that it 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.'

7.21 The overriding message from the Framework is that planning authorities should plan positively for new development and approve all individual proposals wherever possible. In particular, they should approve proposals that accord with statutory plans without delay. The Framework proposes that planning permission should be granted where the plan is absent, silent, or where relevant policies are out of date.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

7.22 The LPA has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process. The relevant adopted SPDs are as follows:

- The South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- . Cycling considerations for planning applications SPD

8.0 Planning Assessment

8.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that planning applications are to be determined in accordance with the policies in the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This section demonstrates that having regard to the key issues, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development which is generally in accordance with the relevant policies found within the Development Plan as a whole. It shows there are also other material considerations, and these would create significant benefits that should be given weight in the overall planning balance.

8.2 This section of the report identifies the main planning considerations relating to the principle of the development and provides an assessment of the planning merits of the case in support of the proposed development.

Principle of Development - Overview

8.3 Policy 1 (A1) of the Local Plan gives priority to development in Sub Regional centres within the district which includes Spalding and encourages development in these specific locations to ensure the spatial strategy and objectives for the district are achieved. As such the proposed development to provide new sport centre and related facilities including the replacement swimming pool would support these objectives and therefore comply with Policy 1 (A1).

8.4 The playing field and bowling green is shaded green in the SELLP as recreational open space, and this designation is covered by Policy 32. The development would lead to the upgrading of existing sporting and leisure facilities and would improve community's health and well-being and therefore underlying objectives of this policy would be satisfied.

8.5 It is accepted that the relocation of the swimming pool to the existing leisure building will involve the loss of open spaces designated under Policy 32. However the policy allows for the redevelopment of an existing community facility where the loss resulting from the proposed redevelopment will be replaced by equivalent or better provision (in terms of quantity and quality) in a suitable nearby location.

8.6 Also (in the case of sports facilities or recreational open space) the redevelopment is for an alternative sports or recreational provision, the need for which has clearly demonstrate outweighs any loss of the playing field area.

8.7 As justified in the Exception Test report proposed by Max Associates, the development proposes a new and improved swimming and teaching pool facilities together with other indoor and outdoor sport and recreation provisions that would, in overall terms, be better in quantity and quality terms compared to the current provision. The proposed alternative types of sport and recreation provision have also been demonstrated would help address identified local deficiencies and needs. To this end the development would contribute to the creation of socially-cohesive and inclusive communities; reducing health inequalities; and improving the community's health and well-being.

8.8 It will protect the existing cycle and footpath routes, improve security of the area, encourage community use which are accessible to all sections of the community.

8.9 In terms of the final strand of Policy 32 the proposal would be as close as possible to the community they will serve; be readily accessible by public transport, on foot, and by bicycle; be compatible with nearby uses and the character and appearance of the neighbourhood; and be located and designed to enable (where possible) shared use with other services/facilities.

8.10 On this basis, there would be no loss of community facility development, indeed the proposal would contribute to the creation of a healthy community. Therefore, the development is deemed to comply with the objectives of Policy 32 of the SELLP.

Other Material Considerations

8.11 We have assessed 'other material consideration' associated with the development in the context of Section 38 of the Act, that should be given significant weight in the planning 'balanced' assessment when considering the principle of this development proposal. We have therefore submitted evidence that focuses on the following key factors:

1. Sport, Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment

8.12 As referred to in Section 2 above, the South Holland Sports Facilities Strategy (SFS) 2019 identified the need for improvements to Castle Sports Centre. The condition survey for Castle Sports Complex and Swimming Pool highlighted significant maintenance, repair and redecorating costs required for the Sports Centre and for the swimming pool. The swimming pool also requires overall mechanical and electrical work. It is recognised that the key components and plant room parts required can no longer be replaced. The assessment also concludes that running and maintenance costs are exacerbated by the fact that the existing facilities are split across two sites, making overheads, and staffing extremely costly.

8.13 In terms of swimming provision, the SFS strategy confirmed that:

> 'Facility Planning Model (FPM) run for swimming pools in South Holland calculates that the district is a significant net exporter of swimming demand. It estimates that 19.0% of all swimming demand is exported to facilities in neighbouring areas, compared with 0.7% of demand which is imported from neighbouring areas. This is supported by the survey of local users which identified that significant numbers of South Holland residents have stopped using the Castle Sports Complex pools because of the poor quality of facilities and are travelling as far as Kings Lynn to access alternative, better quality provision.'

8.14 The Facility Planning Model estimated the unmet demand and calculated that this was 145m2, however, this is due to the population being outside the catchment area, so building more water space at Castle Sports Complex would not solve this unmet demand. However, the FPS report did go on to say that due to future population growth, there is potential demand for a 20m x 6 lane pool by 2036. Therefore, there is a clear need to re-develop / provide a facility in Spalding to meet swimming requirements for residents, provide a facility which is fit for purpose and replaces the old aging facility. The new facility would provide 60m2 of additional water space and an outside splash pad.

8.15 The current sports hall provision has eight badminton courts. Given the consultation undertaken, it is not considered that by simply providing eight badminton courts is a solution to impact inactive people with lower proportions at the 'Active' stage or 'Preparation' stage of the behaviour change models. Therefore, it is proposed to provide a four-court hall, but with the equivalent space for specific activities for younger people for example, adventure play and TAG Active and multi-purpose studios.

8.16 In terms of outdoor sports facilities, the scheme has been designed to promote health and wellbeing for all members of the community irrespective of background or ability to be active. To achieve this, facilities and programmes are varied to reflect the interests and cultures in the area. A full-size artificial turf pitch and an outdoor games area provide opportunities for sport and informal activities to appeal to a wide range of the community. Both pitches will be floodlit allowing maximum access to the community.

8.17 The 2019 Sports Facility Strategy identified that there is no identified strategic need to provide additional athletics track in South Holland to replace the unsafe closed cinder track. Although provision of a Compact Athletics Facility would provide opportunities for introductory level athletics for young people it was considered that this kind of facility would be more suited to a school site. As an alternative to the loss of the athletics track the proposed new health and wellbeing facility would provide trails that can be used for running, walking, and cycling and Park Run.

8.18 An additional study was commission by the applicant entitled 'Strategic Outcomes Planning Model' (SOPM) which was completed in July 2022 by Max Associates. The Strategy outlined the key local and national strategic priorities and considers how sport, leisure and wellbeing can contribute towards achieving them. It then sets out the insight data used to understand the socio demographic context of the district up to 2036 (the time frame of the Local Plan) reviewing the District's demographic profile, health profile and physical activity participation rates. The SOPM then goes on to consider how the outcomes can be delivered sustainably.

8.19 This evidenced based approach has influence what interventions are required so that under-represented and inactive communities can become more active. These service, places and spaces intervention recommendations were identified and taken forward and the business case has been created to secure a commitment by all relevant partners to deliver and implement the planned interventions.

8.20 The SOPM highlights that South Holland has the 4th worst adult activity rate in England; 40% of adults and 48% of children are not meeting recommended activity rates. The high physical inactivity rate is linked to a significantly higher proportion of adults in South Holland being over-weight or obese when compared to England. This has ramifications in terms of the health problems experienced by residents, with residents suffering from high under 75 mortality rates from cardiovascular diseases and a high prevalence of diabetes. Physical inactivity is also impacting on children as over 25% of year 6 school children in the district are classified as obese or severely obese.

8.21 The need for outputs from the scheme's proposal is exacerbated by South Holland's rapidly ageing population. As of 2020, the proportion of residents in South Holland aged 65 or over was above 25% which compares to 19% nationally. The proportion of working age residents in South Holland declined between 2010 to 2020 to 58%, 4% below the national average.

8.22 Having an older population and lower levels of employment compared to national levels correlate to lower levels of activity in adults as evidenced by Sport England. Therefore, outputs from the scheme include increasing participation, particularly focused on older people and those aged 16-24 years old, improved mental and physical health, encourage less anti-social behaviour, increased skills via work experience and apprenticeships and improved social connectivity.

8.23 Against these outputs, the proposed development will specifically improve on the following key needs:

- Physical inactivity – provision of new sports and leisure facilities provides the opportunity for all residents including adult and children to engage in physical activity.
- Poor quality and insufficient community facilities – delivery of the Hub will provide swimming pools, a sports hall, play area, health space, 3G pitch

and more. The facilities will be fit for purpose and meet the needs of the current and future local population.

- Active travel – new public realm and walking and cycling routes will encourage modal shift towards sustainable travel modes, particularly for people travelling into the town centre and to Pinchbeck Road and Albion Street.

8.24 It should also be appreciated that future demand for local amenities will increase as a direct consequence of significant planned housing growth identified in the Local Plan. The population in South Holland is projected to increase from 98,000 in 2022 to 107,000 in 2036, this totalling 11,861 new dwellings district-wide between now and 2036. Of these new dwellings, 5,510 are allocated within Spalding itself, largely located to the west of the town and framed around the delivery of a new western relief road. This increase will also increase the demand for community facilities in the district.

2. Levelling Up Funding

8.25 The 2022 Round 2 Levelling Up Fund presented the Council with an opportunity to consider the entire site more holistically and the concept of a district-wide Health and Wellbeing Hub was developed through further consultation. The needs evidence referred to above, formed part of the bid and in January 2023, the Levelling up Funding was successfully awarded by the Government for the development that relates to this planning submission.

8.26 The Government clearly supports and agrees with the applicant that the proposal will create a new and improved offer for the district focused on health, wellbeing, leisure, sport, recreation and community spaces. The Levelling Up Fund is specifically designed to secure capital investment in infrastructure that has the potential to improve lives and give people pride in their communities. And so, to be able to deliver the benefits of this development through this funding initiative is a material consideration that should be given substantial weight when assessing the planning balance.

8.27 The council has secured £20m LUF of the overall £26m capital cost required for the project. It is committed to provide match funding but is also seeking partner support from other bodies such as the Football Foundational and Sport England. Therefore there is a strong level of support and commitment to deliver this project.

3. Sport England Exception No 5- Whether the benefits of an alternative sports facility on a playing field outweigh the loss of an area of playing field.

8.28 In addition to satisfying the requirements of Policy 32 of the Local Plan, the site is considered to constitute playing field, therefore Sport England advises that this proposal requires statutory consultation, under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, at the formal planning application stage.

8.29 Sport England considers proposals affecting playing fields in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (in particular Paragraph 103 that playing field should not be built on unless various criteria are met.).

8.30 Sport England stance is that they may oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of all or any part of a playing field. However, there are Exceptions that are set out in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document.

8.31 The proposal for indoor and outdoor sports facilities would be assessed against Sport England's playing field policy Exception 5. This requires that the proposed facilities should have a greater value to sport than the area of playing field that would be lost to the proposed development.

8.32 We engaged in pre application discussions with Sport England to address this matter and they confirmed that subject to the satisfactory submission of some revised details at formal application stage as outlined in their feedback, they confirmed a re-designed proposal appears capable of complying with the requirements in Exception 5 (and Paragraph 103c of the NPPF).

8.33 The Exceptions 5 report prepared by Max Associates has been update as well as the relevant plans and drawings to take on board the comments of Sport England where practicable. The changes to the proposal since the original submission have been identified in the updated Exceptions 5 report and where it has not been possible to agree to the changes requested by SE we have provide robust evidence to justify our position.

8.34 On balance we have demonstrated that the proposal will deliver a higher standard of leisure and sports facilities. Replacing the existing adult grass pitch with a 3G AGP and health and wellbeing hub will better align with the targets of the South Holland Council's Playing Pitch Strategy. Sports Facility Strategy and South Holland Council's Local Football Facilities Plan.

4. Alternative Site Options

8.35 Prior to identifying the preferred development option, the Strategic Outcome Planning Model prepared by Max Associates in July 2022 reviewed a number of options to refurbish and create new facilities at various locations on the site. The site plan below sets out the options considered. Location B is where the existing swimming pool is located. The options considered are:

- New build swimming Pool sites – A, B and C
- 'Wet side' new build to the existing dry site – D, E and F

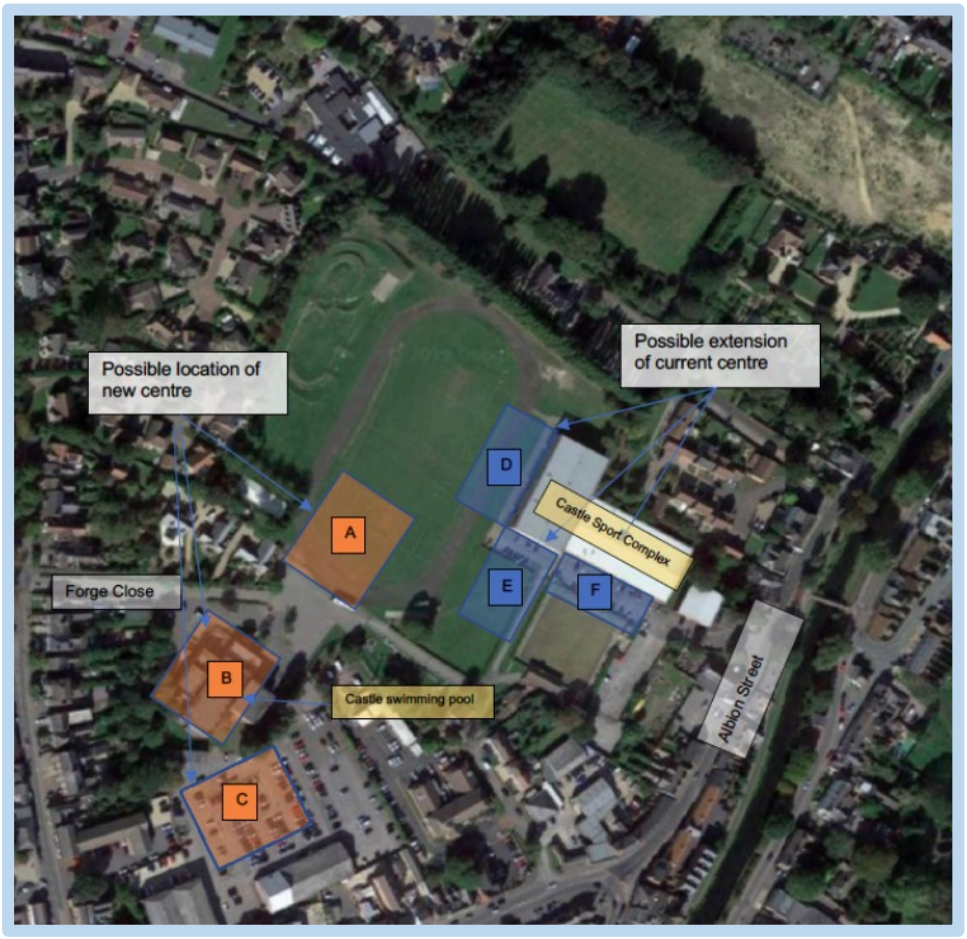


Fig 3: Alternative Site Options

8.36 These site options have also been assessed in the context of the Flood Risk Sequential Test assessment, the methodology for which has been agreed at the pre application stage with the LPA and can be found in a separate document that accompanies this application.

8.37 The benefit of providing the leisure centre on the existing site, is that it is council-owned land, so there will be no additional land purchase costs. Therefore, Site C was discounted due to this land not belonging to the Council. Site B is not the ideal location for a new build, as being on the existing swimming pool site, would mean a loss of service whilst the existing centre was demolished, and then new pool constructed and fitted out. Site A would be a good location for a new build but would impinge on the space that is ideally for the 3G pitch and other proposed outdoor facilities.

8.38 A site analysis was undertaken in relation to flood risk, archaeology, contamination ecology and easement constraints of each location but given the structural soundness of the existing sports complex, it was determined that building the new swimming complex on to the existing sports complex would be the most cost-effective option, as well as maximizing use of the whole site. Based on the site constraints and maximising the applicant's delivery outcomes it was considered that Site D was the best location to progress.

Conclusions on the Principle of Development

8.39 We have demonstrated that Spalding is identified as a Sub Regional Centre where growth and services should be directed and therefore the proposed leisure and wellbeing hub would be in accordance with Policy 1 (A1).

8.40 A compelling needs case has been presented to justify the proposal is required in this location based on the current us of the site.

8.41 In terms of assessing the proposal against Policy 32 of the Local Plan and Sport England's Exception 5 Test as a result of the potential loss of a playing field area, we have demonstrated the proposal will deliver a higher standard and value of leisure and sports facilities to the community compared to the area of playing field that would be lost.

8.42 The alternative site choices available confirmed the reasons why the application site and its proposed arrangement is the most preferable option.

8.43 Irrespective of the supporting evidence which concludes that the site and the location of the new swimming pool is the best location to support the operation needs of the proposed development and the local community having regard to the key criteria including site availability, suitability and deliverability, it is only necessary in planning terms to show that it is an acceptable location, which we have demonstrated.

9.0 Applying the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

9.1 At the heart of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be at the heart of the plan-making and decision taking. This is the overarching consideration laid out in Government policy. The Framework confirms the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies when determining development proposals and this is a final 'other material consideration' in the decision making process.

9.2 There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. 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.

9.3 The consideration of whether a development proposal represents sustainable development is a question unaffected by whether it accords with policies in an up-to-date Development Plan. The determination of whether a proposal represents sustainable development is a planning judgment based upon the criteria set out in the Framework.

9.4 In making the planning balance, the Framework does not indicate that any one element should represent a trump card. However equally that does not mean that a proposal has to pass all three of the sustainability tests to be acceptable and that any of the three roles can act as a trump card against the development. The Framework is clear, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

9.5 For the Framework's sustainability test to have meaning all of the competing considerations have to be assessed together and an overall balanced conclusion reached.

9.6 Whilst the starting point for decision making is the development plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development always applies and feeds into the planning balance. Consequently, it is necessary to consider the proposals against the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Economic Role

9.7 The economic role of sustainable construction contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and also by identifying and coordinating development requirements including the provisions of infrastructure.

9.8 As part of the LUF bid the applicant commissioned detailed economic case by AMION Consulting to support the Health and Wellbeing Hub. This document was prepared in July 2022 and can be found in Appendix 1.

9.9 The note confirms at paragraph 2.3 that based on the additionality assumptions in HCA Additionality Guide[1] and the employment densities guidance, the project creates around 401 net additional jobs for South Holland residents, contributing over £22.5m per annum in GVA. It concludes that these benefits will have a considerable effect on the local economy.

9.10 The report also considers economic benefits of the scheme, and these are broadly categorised as:

- Construction employment benefits within the economy over the build period.
- Direct Operational Employment Benefits: 37.76 FTE jobs are proposed to be accommodated on site
- Increases in indirect and induced employment benefits in terms of additional expenditure available in the local economy. The estimated benefits arising from the project due to the reduction in barriers to employment for local workers is calculated to be £3.9m.
- The delivery of new commercial floorspace at the Health and Wellbeing Hub will play a key role in creating and safeguarding employment in South Holland.

[1] HCA Additionality Guide, Fourth Edition, 2014

- In addition to the financial recompense people receive from employment, it is widely recognised that there is also a benefit to an individual from being in work.
- It is expected that there will be wider training and learning benefits for the economy. Additional GVA will be created as a result of upskilling amongst the workforce.

9.11 The report confirms that the proposal will have positive distributional effects, by encouraging investment within South Holland and the wider region helping to re-balance the economy away from London and the South East. It reflects the critical importance of the Health and Wellbeing Hub project in supporting the aims of the Levelling Up Fund through attracting investment and promoting a transition to a higher value economy within declining economies such as South Holland.. As such, the scheme has the potential to boost the local economy which is of economic benefit.

9.12 The proposals will make a direct and positive contribution towards the NPPF's objective of building a strong and competitive economy and the local policies focused on delivering economic prosperity.

Social Role

Promoting Inclusive Accessibility by Sustainable Modes of Travel

9.13 A key element of national, regional, and local policy is to ensure that new developments are located in areas where sustainable modes of travel are available.

9.14 There are good opportunities for pedestrian and cycle travel to the site with residential areas and the town centre within walking and cycling distance and appropriate improved infrastructure provided as part of this scheme connecting the site with Spalding. The integration of good cycle and pedestrian connections accords with Policy 33 in the SELLP.

9.15 The site benefits from good levels of public transport connectivity. Seven services (37, 505, B3, B3X, B9, B13 and IT2) are available from the nearest bus stops located circa 250m from the proposed sport centre on Pinchbeck Road. Furthermore, Spalding Bus Station is located approximately 500m walking distance west from the proposed Sports Centre's main entrance, and can be accessed via the footways and signalised crossing on Pinchbeck Road and Kings Road.

9.16 The nearest railway station to the site is Spalding Train Station which is approximately 900m walking distance to the west of the site. The station provides hourly East Midlands services in either direction, between Lincoln and Peterborough.

9.17 It is therefore considered that the site is in an accessible and sustainable location, with opportunities for employees and visitors to travel by non-car modes, where appropriate, and a Travel Plan will help deliver these modes of travel.

Delivering Improved Health and Wellbeing

9.18 As is evidence from the needs assessment set out in the previous section, a key theme of the proposal is to promote facilities and services that provide the opportunity to improve Health and Wellbeing within the Local Community. Therefore, this application concludes that the development will lead to several positive health impacts that have been specifically devised to address local issues such as an aging population and higher that the national average unemployment both of which can lead to lower levels of activity.

9.19 It will provide a centre for physical and mental health and wellbeing across all ages and abilities serving the South Holland area. Outcomes of the project will also include increased cycle and pedestrian flows around the hub due to the enhanced routes created which will in turn improve the local environment and have a positive health impact. This development will therefore deliver the benefits required by Policy 33 of the SELLP.

Environmental Role

9.20 The environmental dimension of sustainability is concerned with protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

9.21 This planning application is supported by an extensive range of environmental and technical documents and background information as stated below. These collectively address general development management considerations to demonstrate that generally, any harm would be limited in nature and adverse impacts can be easily mitigated through the imposition of suitably worded conditions.

Access and Impact on the Highway Network

9.22 The Transport Assessment has considered the potential traffic impact of the proposed development and concludes that the proposals are in accordance with the statutory development plan and other material considerations.

9.23 The development site is in a location which is accessible by a range of transport modes, ensuring sustainable access. The submitted Travel Plan identifies that the site benefits from good existing walking and cycling links. The site is also accessible by bus, with the closest bus stop adjacent to the site access which has regular bus services. The Travel Plan identifies the initiatives and measures that will be implemented to achieve specific target levels.

9.24 The proposed level of car parking has also taken into account typical standards associated with these types of sporting and leisure uses to arrive at 172 spaces to service the development split into two areas (133 on eastern side and 42 on western side).

9.25 It is noted the site is bordered by the Westlode Car Park, and on-street bays on Westlode Street are also located a short distance to the south. A parking beat survey was undertaken by our transport consultant at both of the above locations to determine the typical level of available parking spaces.

9.26 The survey shows that the proposed parking provision and additional available off-site provision would more than adequately serve the development. However, it should also be noted that the site's highly sustainable location and the travel plan initiatives is likely to reduce the parking demand generated by the proposed development in reality.

9.27 Overall, the Transport Assessment concludes that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on the capacity of the highway network. The proposed development is not predicted to have a significant impact on the future operation of the junctions assessed.The proposed development therefore accords with Policies 2, 3, 31and 33 of the Local Plan, as well as the NPPF.

Noise

9.28 The noise assessment has assessed the existing ambient and background noise climate at the boundary of the site.

9.29 Findings indicate that the Artificial Turf Pitch unprotected, would produce a noise level beyond the criterion of 50dBA. This is a value which is stated to protect the majority of people from even moderate annoyance in the context of residential garden amenity. Therefore, to mitigate this effect to a satisfactory level, a 2m acoustic barrier to the northwest and northern boundaries is proposed. It has been calculated that this intervention would reduce the noise to below this value by 5dB and 3dB respectively.

9.30 The noise assessment also provides criteria to control noise emission from proposed plant and occupational noise, aimed at avoiding noise nuisance and aligning with the aims of the Noise Policy Statement for England and current guidance.

9.31 Based on the noise assessment and the proposed mitigation measures, the development would comply with Policies 2 and 30 of the Local Plan, with no identified noise constraints.

Air Quality

9.32 An Air Quality Assessment has been prepared as part of this planning application. The air quality assessment has considered the potential impacts associated with both the construction phase and operational phase of the proposed scheme in line with the appropriate guidance published by the Institute for Air Quality Management (IAQM).

9.33 The site is not included within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

9.34 In terms of the broader qualitative assessment the potential impacts on local air quality from construction activities confirms there is a low risk of impact associated with dust and particulate matter emissions due to construction activities. This will be further reduced through good site practice and mitigation measures, secured through a Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs).

9.35 A quantitative assessment of the potential impacts of the operational phase of the proposed scheme on sensitive human receptors was undertaken. The results show that the proposed scheme would not result in any exceedances of the annual mean pollutant objectives in any of the modelled scenarios.

9.36 Based on the assessment results, the application site is suitable for its proposed land use and will comply with Policies 2 and 30 of the Local Plan, and National Planning Policy Framework, with no identified air quality constraints.

Ecology and Biodiversity

9.37 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken.by Estrada Ecology Ltd in July 2023.

9.38 Given the distance between the site and the nearest statutory designated ecological sites (Vernatt Local Nature Reserve is located approximately 0.85 kms from the application site), no significant adverse effects are anticipated.

9.39 Due to the size of the proposed development, it is considered likely that any ecological impacts will be restricted to a site level, as works will be concentrated within the site itself and no impacts are predicted.

9.40 Priority habitats were not recorded within the application boundary other than hedgerows which fall under the loose category of boundary and linear features. Given the ornamental nature of the hedges, they are deemed not to constitute either priority habitat or important hedgerows under the hedgerow regulations 1997.

9.41 One potential bat roost feature was recorded on the south-western corner of the Castle Bowling Club building. A further dusk bat activity survey was undertaken on 26th August 2023. No bats of any species were recorded emerging from or entering any structure subject to survey within the site.

9.42 In terms of other protected species the following was concluded:

- Badger- Terrestrial habitat along the northern boundary of the site was considered to provide low suitability for badgers. No evidence of badgers was recorded.
- Hedgehogs - No evidence of Western European hedgehog was recorded during the survey.
- Reptile and Amphibians – the site is deemed to have negligible suitability for the aquatic life stages of amphibians. The site is largely open and exposed, failing to provide cover for reptiles.

9.43 Through embedded mitigation, including avoidance measures, best practice construction management and substantial green infrastructure creation, the proposed development represents an opportunity to provide on site biodiversity provision.

9.44 Dedicated areas for the provision of biodiversity net gains are incorporated into the proposals. The approach to delivering BNG is based on Natural England's biodiversity metric which quantifies the predicted net change in biodiversity value.

9.45 The site largely comprises recreational amenity grassland and as such, the habitat on site is generally classified as being of poor quality.

9.46 The approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity accords with Policies 2, 28 and 31 of the Local Plan

Lighting

9.47 Through the sensitive, best practice approach to lighting design, the site will have no significant effects on off site receptors. Light spill and obtrusive lighting effects will be removed by the approach proposed to the orientation, height and specification of lighting installed on site.

9.48 British standards are to be followed through best practice and guidance with regard to ecological features and species (such as bats) to prevent significant effects.

9.49 The development would not result in an increase in lighting levels that would have an unacceptable affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment and so would comply with Policies 2,3 and 30 of the Local Plan.

Arboricultural

9.50 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment presents the results of an assessment of the existing trees arboricultural value, based on their current condition and quality and provide an assessment of impact arising from the proposed development of the site.

9.51 The development has been designed around the retention of existing tree cover, and tree protection measures will be used throughout construction, including the use of tree protection fences.

9.52 It is considered that the proposals meet the objectives of Policies 2 and 3, through the retention of a high proportion of the existing tree cover around the site boundaries, as far as can be achieved, whilst also delivering the scheme. New native species planting to include trees and hedgerows will mitigate for the loss of existing flora.

Ground Conditions

9.53 A Ground Condition Phase 1Desk Study has been prepared by Applied Geology and the preliminary geo environmental conclusion is that overall risk from land contamination at the site is considered to be low to moderate for a redeveloped site but would need to be confirmed by appropriate intrusive investigation, testing and assessment of the results of the investigation.

9.54 . The works demonstrate that the application site is, or can be made safe and stable, to meet the requirements of National Planning Policy and Policy 30 of the Local Plan with regard to development on unstable land.

Flood Risk

9.55 The Site is located in Flood Zone 3, with the entirety of Spalding falling within this zone. The South East Lincolnshire SFRA identifies that the Site lies outside of the 'Functional Floodplain', and is therefore located within Flood Zone 3a.

9.56 In discussion with the LPA at the pre application stage, we have agreed on an appropriate methodology for assessing the proposal in the context of the sequential test that would be in accordance with Policy 4 of the Local Plan and the NPPF. This approach forms part of a separate report that accompanies this application.

9.57 For this application, the proposed development is considered 'Less Vulnerable' as it is a building used for leisure. It confirms in Table 2 of the NPPG Ref ID 7-079-20220825 that 'less vulnerable' developments such as for leisure proposals within Flood Zone 3 do not require the Exception Test so it has not been undertaken.

9.58 Existing fluvial defences are in place along Coronation Channel and the River Welland, which combined with the sluices to the north of Spalding, protect the area from tidal surges. It is understood that these defences consist of earth embankments and upstream flood storage reservoirs. The EA has confirmed that when the flood defences are taken into account, the modelled flood extents do not impact the site.

9.59 Given the presence of flood defences that are routinely inspected, the site is generally considered to be at low risk of flooding. However, there is a high residual risk of flooding if the flood defences fail or there is a breach. The EA has indicated that they would not formally consult on the proposals as the development is considered 'less vulnerable' and a 'danger to most'. Instead, they would refer to the standing advice and expect the Local Planning Authority to determine if the application is appropriate.

9.60 The South East Lincolnshire Standing Advice Matrix in Figure 5-7 provides guidance on developments as classified by the NPPG and the South East Lincolnshire Residual Flood Hazard Map. The proposed development falls within the 'appropriate mitigation' cell. Raising land or building thresholds are not appropriate due to the extension tying into the existing building FFL of approx. 3.51m and therefore other mitigation measures are suggested. These include:

- utilising flood resilient design, construction and materials. For depths up to 0.3m a water exclusion strategy is to be adopted, minimising water entry and maintaining structural integrity by incorporating flood barriers. For depths 0.3-0.6m, water is to kept out in full or in part. For depths above 0.6m, water is to be allowed through the building via water passages.
- A Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan is recommended for the proposed development for site users to follow in the event of flooding when the site is in use. If warning of a flood is received ahead of the event, site users should avoid the proposed development.

9.61 The risk of flooding from Ordinary Watercourses is low. There is an ordinary watercourse running along the site northern boundary line and the IDB Welland and Deepings have no records of flooding within the vicinity of the site.

9.62 The risk of flooding from surface water flooding is generally considered to be low, with small areas of medium risk at low laying areas. A surface water strategy has been developed to mitigate risk on and off site.

9.63 The site lies outside of the maximum extents of flooding from reservoirs and the risk of flooding is low but if flood defences fail or are breached, the risk is high. The same mitigation measures applied to river flooding should be applied to reservoir flooding.

9.64 The risk of groundwater flooding is high due to proposed plant room basements and appropriate waterproofing measures should be implemented.

9.65 The risk of sewer flooding is medium. There are two foul rising mains and a foul pumping station located onsite that pose a risk of flooding should the mains burst, or the pump fail. Appropriate mitigation is to adhere to the required easements.

9.66 The risk of flooding from artificial sources is medium. The water main passing through the site should be avoided when intrusive groundworks are being carried out.

9.67 The proposed development is sustainable in terms of flood risk and complies with the requirement set out in policies within the NPPF, PPG and Policy 4 of the Local Plan.

Surface and Foul Water Drainage

9.68 The proposed strategy is to convey surface water to the IDB water course to the north of the site. The discharge rate will be limited to Qbar greenfield rate of 1.65l/s for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year +25% climate change event. The Artificial 3G pitch (designed by others) will discharge into the same water course via a separate drainage network, and will be restricted to the greenfield runoff rate.

9.69 SuDS will be provided in the form of permeable paving, a lined swale and a lined basin. Further attenuation will be provided in the form of below ground geocellular tanks and within the subbase of hardstanding areas. The proposed drainage strategy plan can be found in Appendix I of the Drainage Strategy Report

9.70 The proposed foul drainage strategy is to convey all new foul drainage from the health and wellbeing hub via gravity to Anglian Water manhole 1002 of the combined sewer located in Albion Road to the East of the site. A pre-planning enquiry has been submitted to Anglian Water regarding this matter and is awaiting a response.

Historic Environment

9.71 There is a statutory duty on the LPA to consider designated heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the NPPF places 'great weight' on conversation of assets. There are no designated assets within the site, but the assessment has considered the relationship with the nearby designated assets including the Conservation Area and serval Listed Buildings located within the surround area.

9.72 The Built Impact Hertiage Assessment confirms that where the two small sections of the site falls within the conservation area the proposal makes a ' negative and a minor positive contribution' to its character and appearance respectively. However, the majority of the site, which lies outside of the conservation area boundary, makes a neutral contribution to its setting.

9.73 The nature of the proposed works mean that the use and overall pattern and character of development will remain essentially similar to its current state, with built development concentrated to the east and open areas to the south and west. As such, the overall character will remain unchanged. Proposed built elements, as well as the landscaping scheme, are consistent with its current appearance and will therefore have a neutral impact upon the Spalding Conservation Area and its setting.

9.74 A desk based Archaeological Assessment suggests low potential for the Roman and early medieval periods and negligible potential for the pre historic period. The former site of the Spalding Castle is believed to have been located immediately to the west of the site, which suggests a moderate potential for archaeological activity within the medieval period. There is also a moderate potential for activity of post medieval to be encountered within the proposed development site.

9.75 On this basis the intention of the applicant is to undertake and complete the trial trenching work during the determination period of the application to negate the need to incorporate a pre commencement condition regarding this matter.

9.76 The results of the assessment of the site, and its relationship with historic features of assets with mitigation in place satisfy the requirements of Policy 29 of the Local Plan and also accords with the NPPF policies regarding the historic environment.

Good Design

9.77 Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan, and Paragraph 131 of the Framework, emphasises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development…”

9.78 Paragraph 135 goes on to outline the specific elements that should be taken into account in decisions to ensure good design.

9.79 The Application submission includes a Design and Access Statement that sets out in detail the context to the proposals, the impact of site constraints, the design evolution process and an explanation of the proposed layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.

9.80 The building will adopt consistent design themes and treatments to present a cohesive appearance with the existing Sports and Leisure Building. An appropriate design, materials, and colouring strategy for the elevations of the buildings has been undertaken to ensure sympathetic views of the proposed extension building against its surrounding context.

9.81 Care has been taken in the design of the layout to ensure that the scheme will meet the criteria set out at Paragraph 135 of the Framework, as well as those found in Policy 3.

Approach to Energy Efficiency

9.82 The proposed development will improve the sustainability and environmental performance of the built environment by increasing energy efficiency, reducing CO2 emissions, generating energy services efficiently and implementing building integrated Low Carbon technology when compared to a traditional equivalent scheme.

9.83 The proposed development will include a range of measures and design features to respond to the climate change and emerging 'net zero' agenda including: high levels of thermal performance and air tightness; utilising the latest heat pump technology to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. Lighting will be LED including the fittings with the pool halls and the sports hall; and the use of renewable technology will feature with photovoltaic cells mounted on the roof.

9.84 We have demonstrated how the proposed scheme meets the energy and sustainability policies of the Council's current adopted Local Plan Policy 31.

Waste Management

9.85 Before a contractor commences works on any component of the development, they will be required to have prepared a detailed Site Waste Management Plan. The appointed contractor would demonstrate that their waste management proposals are compliant will all appropriate legislation.

9.86 The control and management of operational waste arising from the development will be addressed as part of agreeing a suitability worded condition but an outline schedule is provided at this stage.

9.87 The approach outlined will ensure that waste is minimised and managed through the provision of facilities for the storage of refuse/recycling bins in accordance with Policy 3 of the Local Plan.

10.0 Phasing and Delivery

10.1 Whether or not a proposed development is capable of being delivered can be a material consideration for the purposes of granting planning permission. In this context the delivery of this proposed development is dependent on receiving the support of Government grant funding which has been successfully awarded through the applicant's LUF bid. The total capital cost is £26 million for the project, of which South Holland District Council has secured £20 million of LUF funding. Other funding stream are also being considered from other organisations such as the Football Foundation and Sport England.

10.2 In order to gain access to the LUF fund there are obligations and restrictive timescale requirements that need to be adhered to by the applicant. It is therefore important that key milestones in the development, planning and construction processes are satisfied to qualify for the funding to be released.

10.3 To comply with various requirements, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the applicant have entered in to a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed on 19th July 2023. Whilst the MOU is not legally enforceable it describes the understanding between both parties for the use of the LUF fund.

10.4 It confirms that the funding is provided to form part of the necessary capital investment required for the delivery of the LUF proposal. Grant funding will be paid in six monthly tranches between 2022 to 2026.

10.5 The MOU sets out the whole project timeline with milestones and the applicant provided regular project reports to DLUHC demonstrating that outputs and outcomes are being met in line with the approved application. A key requirement is that the applicant must spend all the grant funding by the end of the funding period which is 31st March 2026. Given the assumed construction period is 18 month, the timescales are tight allowing for the various workstreams including the planning determination period. To ensure the applicant does not faulter on the agreed funding obligations, it is important that priority is given to the determination of both this planning application and the extra care proposal which forms part of the overall LUF bid package of measures.

10.6 In terms of the extra care facility, the quarterly monitoring and evaluation of project progress outlines the forecast delivery as being complete and delivered in financial year 2028/29. Whilst there is no specific capital funding for the extra care facility the Health and Wellbeing Hub proposal provides an important facilitating role through the enabling costs and works associated with providing a unconstrained serviced site as a result of the proposed demolition of the existing swimming pool site, its remediation and also securing outline planning consent for this use. This approach will remove any uncertainty regarding the site's deliverability thereby and maximise the chances of achieving best value whilst meeting the needs of the local community.

10.7 In terms of the proposed phasing of the development, the submitted phasing Plan identifies 4 phases with these being:

- Phase 1 – Blue – H&WH building, the car park area to serve this building and the 3G AGP
- Phase 2 – Red – Demolition of existing swimming pool
- Phase 3 – Yellow – Outdoor play, informal outdoor games area, E2 car park, coach turning and drop off
- Phase 4 – Purple – Extra Care Housing Scheme

10.8 Given the comments expressed by Sport England at the pre application stage, we propose that the 3G AGP will be completed prior to the new Health and Wellbeing Hub extension building being brought in to use. Once the new swimming pool is operational, the next phase will be to demolish the existing Swimming Pool building. This phase will be restricted to the footprint of the building only as this will allow the existing swimming pool car parking spaces to remaining operational. In the period between the 3G AGP coming into use and proposed car parking area E2 becoming available, the car parking around the existing swimming pool will continue to be available for users of the new AGP facility. In addition, Westlode Car Park to the southeast as well as other off site car parking associated with Spalding Town Centre will also be available.

10.9 Between the period of the new Health & Wellbeing Hub building opening and completion of the new coach turning and drop area, the existing coach turning and drop off area will remain in situ.

10.10 It is intended that the Extra Care housing scheme will come forward for development once demolition of the existing swimming pool has completed and an operator has been agreed.

11.0 Conclusions and Overall Planning Balance

11.1 This planning statement has been prepared by JEH Planning Limited on behalf of South Holland District Council ('The Applicant') in support of a full planning application for the demolition of the existing Castle Swimming Pool building and the construction of a two storey extension including basement area to the existing Castle Sports Complex building to provide new and upgrade indoor leisure and health related facilities including two new swimming pools, plant area and changing rooms at the Castle Sports Complex Spalding. There is also the provision for new outdoor sport and leisure facilities within the grounds of the site including an adult 3 G football pitch.

11.2 We have demonstrated that having regard to the key issues, the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant policies found within the Development Plan as a whole and it is specifically in compliance with Policy 32 relating to the Community facilities as it would contribute to the creation of socially cohesive and inclusive communities; reducing health inequalities; and improving the community's health and wellbeing.

11.3 We have also demonstrated the need for these facilities and when assessed against the existing provision in quantitative and qualitative terms, the proposal would amount to an overall enhancement that would outweigh the loss of both the existing playing field area and the existing swimming pool area which is proposed for the extra care facility and subject to a separate but related application.

11.4 South Holland District Council has undertaken significant preparatory work and, together with South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, has invested resources in developing the masterplan and engaging with stakeholders, partners and the local community.

11.5 There are also other material considerations, and these, together with the significant planning merits and benefits, should be given substantial weight in the overall planning balance. They cover the following general areas:

- The site will provide a centre for physical and mental health and wellbeing across all ages and abilities serving the South Holland area;

- It will improve accessibility to sports facilities for all members of the community and additional users of the sports centre annually.
- Outcomes of the project will also include increased cycle and pedestrian flows around the hub due to the enhanced routes created which will in turn improve the local environment and have a positive health impact.
- It will act as a catalyst for improved local economic performance and growth with increased footfall and enhanced connectivity towards the town centre;
- It will directly respond to the existing and growing health and wellbeing challenges in South Holland based on the need evidence that supported the LUF bid.
- The delivery of new high-quality public realm and the overall layout of the Hub will create an attractive area in Spalding town centre, hence developing pride in place and contributing to reducing local crime and a safer, more accessible environment for all.
- The proposed development will generate employment opportunities. This would deliver the following:
- Construction Phase- A significant number of construction jobs
- Operational Phase – Approximately 37.76 FTE gross direct jobs
- The provision of a comprehensive landscaping strategy to enhance greenspaces within the site.
- The proposal includes a range of measures to deliver a sustainable building. This would also include the provision of on site zero carbon renewable sources.
- The promotion of sustainable transport links, with use of the existing and improved footpaths and cycle ways to foster strong connections to the local area.

11.6 It is not expected that this development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on highway safety, residential amenity or other environmental considerations. Therefore, any perceived harm arising from the development will be minor in nature which can, where necessary, be mitigated and managed through reasonably worded planning conditions and design considerations. Furthermore, the planning benefits of the scheme would significantly outweigh any minor level of harm.

11.7 It is relevant in the context of the NPPF to consider whether the overall development proposed can be described as 'sustainable' for the purposes of policy. The three objectives of sustainable development have been assessed and in the applicant's view it can be described as a sustainable form of development that would benefit from the presumption in favour of such development set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

11.8 In conclusion, the proposal would be in accordance with the key policy objectives and vision found within the Development Plan as it would support the enhancement of sport and recreation provision in Spalding and South Holland more widely. It would provide good quality and enhanced services which would add to the quality of life and wellbeing for the residents in local community.

11.9 In view of the above, we consider the application provides the right type of development in the right place on the right site and delivers important social, economic and environmental benefits. It can therefore be described as sustainable development which should benefit from the presumption in favour of such development in accordance with the Local Plan and should be approved without delay.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Economic Case Technical Prepared by AMION Consulting July 2022