

PLANNING STATEMENT



**Proposed Padel & Pickleball Courts
including Clubhouse Pavilion**
at Land off Westlode Street, Spalding

On behalf of Broadgate Builders (Spalding) Ltd

October 2026

Site Name	Land off Westlode Street, Spalding
Client Name	Broadgate Builders (Spalding) Ltd
Type of Report	Planning Statement
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Checked by	Client
Revision	1
Date	October 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Broadgate Builders (Spalding) Ltd ('applicant') to support the Full planning application for the redevelopment of a section of the existing car park to provide a dedicated Padel and Pickleball facility including clubhouse with reception area, changing facilities, social space and associated ancillary provisions on land off Westlode Street, Spalding ('the Site').

1.2 The description of development is for:

Full planning permission for the redevelopment of part of the existing car park to provide a dedicated and covered padel and pickleball facility including clubhouse pavilion, car parking and associated works

1.3 The proposal comprises a covered structure that houses 4 courts (two single Padel Courts and two double Padel/Pickleball courts) and a separate modular shipping container for the clubhouse pavilion, which will have external timber cladding. The car parking spaces in the Site serve the surrounding uses and is located between the Spalding Police Station site and Spalding Bowls. 92 existing car parking space will need to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. However, the proposal will also include 24 dedicated car parking space of which eight will be for electric vehicle and 12 cycle parking spaces. The loss of car parking spaces is not considered to be a significant issue given the highly sustainable location of the site which can be accessed via walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport.

1.4 According to the adopted Local Plan inset map for Spalding, the Site is located immediately adjacent to the Town Centre Boundary and is adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary. The Site also lies south of Castle Sports Centre & Swimming Pool complex, which is being redeveloped, and east of Spalding town centre. The proposed development will therefore form an integrated part of the wider sport and leisure hub that includes the sports complex to the north and Spalding United FC to the east.

1.5 The proposed development would therefore complement the existing and emerging health and leisure facilities close to the Site which will help to promote and encourage local residents of all ages to access high quality health facilities in a central location.

- 1.6 The Site occupies previously developed land in a highly sustainable location in the centre of Spalding. The proposed development is therefore expected to deliver the substantial social, economic and environmental benefits which will outweigh any harms identified. An assessment of the material planning considerations is set out in detailed within Section 6 of this Planning Statement.
- 1.7 The Application is supported by an extensive suite of technical and design documents which provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the Proposed Development and supporting justification.

Scope of submission

- 1.8 In accordance with South Holland District Council Local List (2019), the planning application is accompanied by the relevant technical documents and detailed plans that are required to validate the application. The submission comprises the following information:

Plans/Documents	Prepared by	Ref/Date
Application Forms, Notices, Certificates	Broadgate Builders	
Existing GF Site Plan	24three	1100 rev P02
Proposed GF Site Plan	24three	1200 rev P04
Proposed Roof Site Plan	24three	1201 rev P02
Proposed Block Plan	24three	1202 rev P02
Site Location Plan	24three	1203 rev P02
Existing Site Elevations	24three	3000 rev P02
Proposed Padel Elevations	24three	3200 rev P02
Proposed Site Elevations	24three	3210 rev P02
Proposed Site Visuals – Sheet 1	24three	3220 rev P01
Proposed Site Visuals – Sheet 2	24three	3225 rev P01
Proposed Sections	24three	4200 rev P02
Design and Access Statement	24three	0100 revP01 dated 01/10/2026
Proposed Padel Plans	24three	2200 rev P02
Pavilion Plans and Elevations	24three	2201 rev P02
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment	Tetra Tech	794-PLN-HER-02556.01 V1.1 dated 29 September 2026
Biodiversity Statement & Metric Assessment	Middlemarch	RT-MME-185539-02 dated September 2026

Plans/Documents	Prepared by	Ref/Date
Built Heritage Statement	Tetra Tech	794-PLN-HER-02563.02 V1.1 29/09/26 – dated September 2026
Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy	Woods Hardwick	Rev A 02/10/2026 – dated September 2026
Lighting Assessment	Light-designs	V1: 0926 dated 26/09/2026
Planning Statement	Ceres Property	Rev 1 dated October 2026
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	Middlemarch	RT-MME-185539-01 – Rev A - 30/09/2026 dated September 2026
Noise Assessment	LFAcoustics	Rev 1.0 of 30/09/26 dated September 2026
Transport Statement	Woods Hardwick	First issue 24/09/2026 – dated September 2026

- 1.9 This Planning Statement summarises the key elements of the Proposed Development, assesses the proposals against the adopted Development Plan and other material considerations. It demonstrates that the scheme represents sustainable development and that its benefits outweigh any limited adverse impacts. Accordingly, planning permission should be granted without delay.

2. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Site measures approximately 0.229ha and comprises hardstanding area, which forms part of a wider dedicated car park to the rear of existing buildings that front onto Westlode Street. Access into the car parking is via existing access points off Westlode Street. Non-motorised access to the site can also be achieved from the north.
- 2.2 The Site shares the eastern boundary with the Spalding Police Station, which defined by a 2.5 metre high security perimeter fence part of which is partly covered by planting.
- 2.3 To the north of the Site is the Castle Sport Centre complex, which is in the process of being redeveloped and will include an Extracare facility of the existing centre site. To the south are commercial and residential properties fronting or accessed via Westlode Street. To the west is the remaining car park and beyond this the town centre and Spalding United FC football ground.

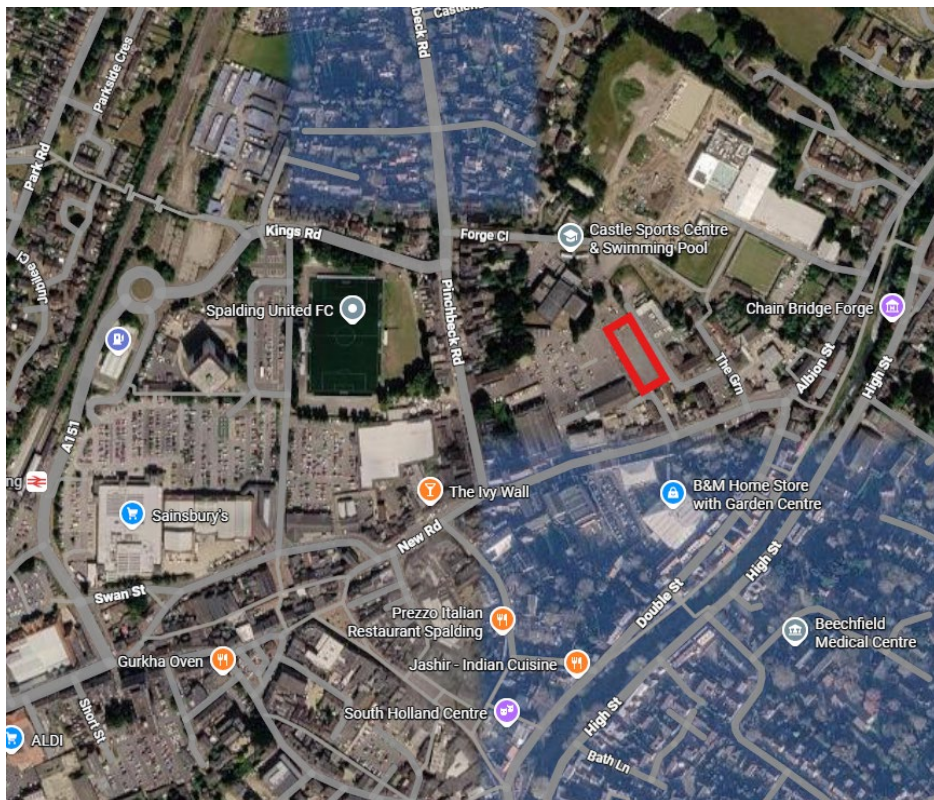


Fig1 – aerial view of site and surrounding area (source Google Maps)

Technical assessment

- 2.4 The Site comprises a flat previously developed parcel of land made up of tarmac and painted lines. There are no green features within the Site but there are trees in the adjacent police station site. The Site is not subject to any ecological or above ground heritage or landscape designations and constraints.
- 2.5 There are no unusual ground conditions, no environmental designations, and it is neither within nor adjacent to a Conservation Area, nor does it contain or lie in proximity to listed buildings or other heritage assets. While the Site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, this is consistent with much of the South- East Lincolnshire administrative area. As set out within the Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by Woods Hardwick, appropriate mitigation will be provided to ensure suitable protection against flood risk.
- 2.6 The Site is well connected via road and public transport links and benefits from convenient (walking, wheelie and cycling) access to a wide range of shops, services and facilities.
- 2.7 The Site is not subject to any relevant planning history.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposed description of development is for the following:

Full planning permission for the redevelopment of part of the existing car park to provide a dedicated and covered padel and pickleball facility including clubhouse pavilion, car parking and associated works

3.2 The proposal includes the following elements:

- A contemporary powder coated portal frame structure comprising four accessible and courts consisting of two single Padel courts and two single and double Padel and Pickleball Courts
- A contemporary timber clad flat roof clubhouse pavilion with reception area, changing facilities and viewing area and ancillary provision;
- Dedicated parking provision comprising 24 car parking space with 8 EV charging spaces; and 12 covered cycle spaces; and
- Ornamental landscaping including trees around the structures and outdoor seating to enhance the visual appearance and social cohesion of the Site.

3.3 The courts are arranged beneath a single vaulted canopy, with their layout designed to make efficient use of the constrained site while providing appropriate space for play, circulation and safe access. The courts incorporate tempered glass enclosures alongside a powder-coated steel portal-frame structure supporting a fire-retardant, open-weave fabric roof. The roof allows approximately 60% light transmission, helping to maximise natural daylight and maintain a lightweight and visually permeable appearance. The vaulted roof has also been designed so that its scale responds to the rooflines of surrounding leisure and commercial buildings.

3.4 The clubhouse pavilion adopts a similarly contemporary but relatively simple design approach. It would be formed from three 40ft shipping containers, which are externally insulated and finished with vertical timber cladding, providing a compact modular building alongside the courts. The pavilion accommodates the principal entrance to the facility and associated supporting accommodation, while the wider scheme incorporates level access routes and accessible facilities.

3.5 The proposal retains 24 dedicated on site car parking to serve the facility, accessed from Westlode Street via the existing surrounding highway network. The scheme also incorporates eight new

electric vehicle charging bays and 12 cycle parking bays, supporting access by both electric vehicles and bicycles. The parking and access arrangements have been integrated into the overall site layout alongside the courts, pavilion and servicing areas.

- 3.6 The proposed landscaping around the covered courts and clubhouse pavilion, together with the proposed outdoor seating, would help to soften the appearance of the structures and introduce greenery into an otherwise wholly hard surfaced area. The seating would also provide an attractive and welcoming space for participants, visitors and staff to meet and socialise, supporting the facility's wider contribution to community interaction and well-being.

Pre-application engagement

- 3.7 As part of the development of our proposals, we have engaged directly with the project team responsible for the delivery of the South Holland Health and Wellbeing Hub to understand how the proposed padel facility would sit alongside, and complement, the wider development. This engagement has been positive, with the Health and Wellbeing Hub project team confirming that the proposed padel facility would be complementary to the Hub and its emerging leisure offer. In particular, the proposals are considered to align positively with the wider regeneration, town centre footfall, physical activity and health and wellbeing objectives underpinning the Hub project, providing an additional and complementary leisure opportunity and further strengthening the range of health, wellbeing and active leisure provision available at this location.

Padel and Pickleball

- 3.8 Padel and pickleball have quickly become two of the fastest growing sports in the world, attracting children, adults, and older players alike. Their rise comes from a simple formula: both are easy to learn, highly social, and enjoyable from the very first game.
- 3.9 In the UK, padel and pickleball are rapidly becoming mainstream sports, driven by their social nature, simple entry point, and appeal across generations. Padel participation in Britain more than doubled to 860,000 adults and juniors in 2025 (Source: LTA Padel), while pickleball continues to expand through clubs, leisure centres, schools, and community venues. It is estimated that in 2023 there are around 270 pickleball venues and 7,000 players in the UK, with the game expected to grow further in the coming years (Source: LTA Pickleball).

- 3.10 Padel and pickleball are transforming the way people of all ages play sport. Once relatively unknown outside of specialist communities, both activities have become popular in schools, leisure centres, clubs, parks, and private facilities. Their rapid growth reflects a wider demand for sports that are accessible, social, and fun without requiring years of technical training.
- 3.11 One of the biggest reasons for their popularity is that people can start playing almost immediately. Unlike some sports that demand expensive equipment, high fitness levels, or advanced skills before a game becomes enjoyable, padel and pickleball allow newcomers to rally, compete, and have fun from their first session. Families can play together, friends can form regular social groups, and older adults can stay active through a lower-impact form of exercise.
- 3.12 At the time of writing, Spalding does not have a permanent and dedicated Padel and/or Pickleball facility.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 (as amended) requires that if regard is to be had to the development plan, for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The relevant local and national policies and other material considerations are set out below.

Development Plan

- 4.3 The development plan for South Holland District Council comprises the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, adopted in March 2019, which sets out the framework for managing growth across South Holland and Boston for the period 2011–2036.
- 4.4 The key planning policies from the adopted Local Plan are:
- Policy 1: Spatial Strategy;
 - Policy 2: Development Management;
 - Policy 3: Design of New Development;
 - Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk;
 - Policy 29: The Historic Environment;
 - Policy 30: Pollution;
 - Policy 32: Community, Health and Well-being;
 - Policy 33: Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network;
 - Policy 36: Vehicle and Cycle Parking.

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.5 The SELLP became five years old on 8 March 2024. The Plan was reviewed by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC) on 1 July 2024 and found not to require updating. However, since then the National Planning Policy Framework has been updated twice, mostly recently in August 2026.

- 4.6 The Council has therefore commenced a Call for Sites consultation as part of the initial information gathering work to prepare a new Local Plan, which will replace the current Plan and plan for growth beyond the current plan period. However, given the very early stage of the local plan review, for the purpose of decision making for this planning application, the SELLP will provide the planning policy framework for assessing the proposed development.

Other material consideration

- 4.7 Spalding Town Council does not have a made neighbourhood plan. However, the town council is working with South Holland District Council to prepare a Plan for Neighbourhood to support the future of Spalding town centre, although this is unlikely to have any direct impact on the proposed development.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)

- 4.8 The latest version of the NPPF was published in August 2026 following a lengthy consultation process. The revised NPPF now contains national policies for plan making and decision making which are required to take precedent where Local Plan policies are out of date or are in conflict with national policies.
- 4.9 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides clear support for the delivery of new sport and leisure facilities as part of creating healthy and inclusive communities.
- 4.10 The following key provisions are particularly relevant to this proposal:
- 4.11 **Policy S3 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development:** establishes the overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development and provides that proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan and the NPPF decision-making policies should be approved without delay.
- 4.12 **Policy S4 – Principle of development within settlements:** states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless their benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the NPPF's decision-making policies. This provides strong support in principle for appropriately located development within existing settlements.
- 4.13 **Policy HC4 – New and improved community facilities and public health benefits:** particularly relevant to the proposal, requiring substantial weight to be given to the benefits of development

which provides new or improved community facilities and makes a demonstrable contribution to promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction. The policy expressly identifies new recreation facilities as an example.

- 4.14 **Policy DP3 – Key principles for well-designed places:** supports the creation of healthy, mixed, vibrant and integrated communities and places which facilitate social interaction and healthy lifestyles. It also seeks good connections to surrounding areas and prioritises walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.
- 4.15 **Policy TR3 – Locating development in sustainable locations:** supports development in locations which enable good accessibility, encourage sustainable patterns of movement, make effective use of existing transport infrastructure and provide genuine choices between different modes of transport.
- 4.16 **Policy TR4 – Street design, access and parking:** requires transport considerations to be integrated into development, prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling and facilitating access to public transport, alongside appropriate cycle and vehicle parking.
- 4.17 **Policy L2 – Making effective use of land:** gives substantial weight to the benefits of making better use of vacant and underutilised land, including the redevelopment of underutilised car parks. This is particularly relevant to the proposal given its use of part of an existing car park.
- 4.18 **Policy TC2 – Development in town centres:** requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of proposals which support the overall vitality and viability of town centres, including through the diversification and intensification of uses.

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this context, the NPPF is a material consideration of significant weight.
- 5.2 Policy S3 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It requires proposals within settlements to be considered under Policy S4 and confirms that development which accords with an up-to-date Development Plan and the NPPF's decision-making policies should be approved without delay. This provides the overarching basis for assessing the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits against any identified adverse effects.
- 5.3 The key material planning considerations relevant to the determination of the proposed development are as follows:
- Principle of development;
 - Access and highways;
 - Layout, design and scale;
 - Residential amenity;
 - Other technical matters
 - Ecology and Landscaping;
 - Flood Risk and Drainage;
 - Heritage.
- 5.4 The assessment of the proposed development shall demonstrate that the proposed development will delivery sustainable development and provide significant economic, social and environmental benefits.

Principle of development

- 5.5 The principle of development is strongly supported by local and national planning policy.

- 5.6 The proposed development aligns with the overarching strategic priorities: Priority 1, which seeks to achieve sustainable development and meet the social and economic needs of the area; Priority 5, which seeks to secure enhancements by promoting a mix of retail, leisure and other town centre uses and maximising opportunities for regeneration; Priority 9, which seeks to promote the efficient use of land and prioritises the reuse of previously developed land; and Priority 10, which seeks to create sustainable communities, reduce locational disadvantages and upgrade community facilities to support the fulfilment, health and well-being of residents and visitors.
- 5.7 Local Plan Policy 1 states that Spalding, together with Boston, is identified as a Sub-Regional Centre to which development should be directed. Spalding is a highly sustainable location for growth due to its designated town centre, extensive range of services and facilities, and high level of accessibility by public transport.
- 5.8 Although the Site lies outside the defined town centre boundary, it is located immediately adjacent to it, with direct links to the main town centre, and is to the south of the main sports and leisure centre serving Spalding. The Castle Sports Centre is undergoing significant regeneration to provide new and enhanced multi-purpose sports facilities, including a swimming pool and fitness centre, to promote active lifestyles and the well-being of residents of all ages. However, the centre does not provide padel or pickleball courts. The proposed development would therefore complement the regeneration of the Sports Centre and provide a high-quality, accessible and dedicated padel and pickleball facility to meet growing demand for all ages groups.
- 5.9 The proposed development would therefore broaden the range of sporting opportunities available to residents of Spalding and neighbouring settlements, while promoting health and well-being. It would comply with Local Plan Policy 32, which states that proposals which create socially cohesive and inclusive communities, reduce health inequalities, and improve community health and well-being will be supported.
- 5.10 The proposal would also comply with NPPF Policy HC4, which provides strong national policy support by requiring substantial weight to be given to the benefits of new or improved community facilities and development that demonstrably promotes good health, prevents ill-health, reduces health inequalities or supports social interaction. By delivering a dedicated and accessible padel and pickleball facility, the proposal would broaden local sporting opportunities, encourage active lifestyles and provide a new setting for community participation and social interaction, thereby according directly with Policy HC4.

- 5.11 Overall, the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development in principle. It would make efficient use of previously developed land in a highly accessible location adjoining Spalding town centre and established sports and leisure facilities, while delivering a dedicated sporting facility that would broaden local recreational choice, promote active lifestyles, and support community health and social interaction for all age groups. The proposal therefore accords with the strategic objectives and Policies 1 and 32 of the Local Plan, together with NPPF Policies S3, S4, L2 and HC4, and should be supported in principle.

Access and highways

- 5.12 The NPPF promotes accessible development and sustainable patterns of travel. Policy TR3 requires development to be located where it can limit the need to travel by private car, provide a genuine choice of transport modes and make effective use of existing transport infrastructure. Policy TR4 requires transport considerations to be integral to design, prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling, facilitating access to public transport and providing suitable access and parking, including cycle and electric vehicle provision. Policy TR6 further requires significant transport effects to be proportionately assessed and confirms that development should only be refused where it would result in a severe adverse impact on the transport network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 5.13 Vehicular access to the proposed development would utilise the existing access from Westlode Street, with vehicles continuing to enter and leave the site through the established circulation arrangements serving the wider car park. No new vehicular access onto the public highway is therefore required. Pedestrian and cycle access would similarly be available from Westlode Street, with an additional connection available from Pinchbeck Road and Forge Close through the Castle Swimming Pool car park and a proposed northern pedestrian/cycle gate. The proposed site layout illustrates the relationship between the facility, dedicated parking area and surrounding car park.
- 5.14 To support this application a Transport Statement has been prepared which has assessed the likely traffic generation associated with the four proposed courts using TRICS data for comparable tennis club facilities. This forecasts approximately 4 two-way vehicle trips during the AM peak hour and 12 two-way trips during the PM peak hour. These movements are below the 30 two-way trip threshold, and the Transport Statement therefore concludes that further junction capacity assessment or modelling is not necessary as that the proposal would not have a material impact on the operational capacity of the local highway network.

- 5.15 The development would provide a dedicated car park comprising 24 spaces including eight spaces equipped with electric vehicle charging points, together with 12 sheltered cycle parking spaces. The proposed development does not fall within any of the development types in the Parking Standards in Appendix 6 of the Local Plan and so the parking provision for the proposal will be assessed on a site by site basis.
- 5.16 The Transport Statement considers the proposed level of parking sufficient having regard to the anticipated maximum number of players using the courts and the site's highly sustainable town centre location, which provides opportunities for journeys by modes other than the private car. The proposed parking provision for the development would also comply with Local Plan policy 36, as it would provide dedicated car parking and sheltered cycle parking provision in a convenient location to the proposed use.
- 5.17 Importantly, the Site is well placed to encourage sustainable travel. Existing footways provide connections from Westlode Street towards Spalding town centre, while nearby shared pedestrian/cycle infrastructure provides connections towards the River Welland and wider cycle network. The Kings Road bus stops are approximately 450m from the site, Spalding Bus Station is within around a nine-minute walk, and Spalding railway station is approximately 500m to the west. The DfT Connectivity Tool assessment records the site within Band A for walking, cycling and public transport connectivity to residential and workplace destinations within South Holland, supporting the conclusion that visitors and employees would have a genuine opportunity to reach the development by sustainable modes.
- 5.18 Accordingly, the principal transport mitigation is inherent within the location and design of the scheme: retention of the established access arrangements, provision of dedicated on-site parking and EV charging, secure cycle parking, and convenient pedestrian and cycle connections to surrounding streets and public transport services. These measures, together with the site's strong existing sustainable transport accessibility and relatively modest forecast trip generation, would help minimise reliance on private vehicles.
- 5.19 Overall, the Transport Statement concludes that the development would not result in a significant or adverse impact on the local highway network and that there is no highway or transportation reason why the proposal should not be supported. The proposal therefore accords with NPPF Policies TR3 and TR4 by locating development in an accessible location, prioritising sustainable travel and providing appropriate access, cycle parking, vehicle parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. It also complies with Policy TR6, as the submitted Transport Statement demonstrates

that the development would not have a severe adverse impact on the transport network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Layout, Design and Scale

- 5.20 Local Plan policy 2 states proposal for development will be permitted provided sustainable development considerations are met such as, in relation to the proposed development, the size, layout and scale and relationship with existing development and land uses; design and orientation; maximising the use of sustainable materials and resources; and access and vehicle generation levels. In terms of design, Local Plan policy 3 states all development will seek to create distinctive places through the use of high quality and inclusive design and layout, make innovative use of local traditional styles and materials.
- 5.21 NPPF Policy DP3 requires development to respond positively to its context and integrate with its surroundings through appropriate layout, scale, materials and design. Proposals should create healthy, inclusive and accessible places, support sustainable movement, make efficient use of land, incorporate appropriate green infrastructure and provide attractive, safe and well-defined spaces that contribute to local character and identity.
- 5.22 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) provides the main design rationale for the proposed development, which is summarised below.
- 5.23 The DAS explains that the design has evolved from the Site's constrained, previously developed form, its position within an established leisure quarter and the need to accommodate the courts, pavilion, circulation, servicing and accessible routes efficiently within the Site.
- 5.24 The layout makes good use of the available space by placing the courts together under one covered structure. Access is provided at both the northern and southern ends of the Site, while the clubhouse pavilion is positioned to provide a clear main entrance and support the day-to-day running of the facility. The clubhouse would be made from three reused shipping containers, which would be insulated and clad in vertical timber to give the building a simple but contemporary appearance.
- 5.25 The covered courts would be similar in height to the surrounding leisure and commercial buildings, while the clubhouse would remain low and relatively small. The courts would have clear glass walls, a dark-coated steel frame and a fabric roof that allows natural light into the building which would also reduce the perceived height of the structure. The use of timber cladding and glass walls would

help the courts and clubhouse fit comfortably within the wider leisure area. The contemporary design would make a positive contribution to the appearance of the Site and complement the regeneration of the sport centre to the north.

- 5.26 Overall, the proposal is of an appropriate size and layout, of high quality design and appearance for its location, makes efficient use of the Site in a highly sustainable location, and would be easy and safe for visitors to use. It therefore complies with Local Plan Policy 2, meets the design aims of Policy 3 and accords with NPPF Policy DP3.

Residential amenity

- 5.27 Local Plan Policy 3 requires development proposals to demonstrate how, amongst other matters, the impact on residential amenity have been secured. Policy 30 states development proposals will not be permitted where it would lead to unacceptable adverse impact on, amongst other things, the amenities of the area.
- 5.28 NPPF Policy P3 requires development to protect the health, living conditions and quality of life of nearby residents. Proposals should avoid unacceptable effects from noise, artificial lighting and other forms of pollution, taking account of existing conditions and cumulative impacts, and should incorporate suitable mitigation where necessary to ensure that residential amenity is maintained.
- 5.29 The Site is located in an area of Spalding where commercial and leisure uses are prevalent. However, whilst there are some residential dwellings nearby, the proposed development is of a scale and distance away from existing dwellings which would not cause any significant residential amenity issues, particularly in terms of noise and disturbance on its own or cumulatively with other uses as the proposal would be enclosed.
- 5.30 In terms of noise, a Noise Assessment supports this application. It confirms that the site lies within an established commercial area with no existing nearby noise-sensitive receptors. The consented ExtraCare development, approximately 27 metres from the proposed courts, has nevertheless been assessed as a future sensitive receptor. Modelling predicts noise levels of up to 47 dB LAeq,1hr, below the relevant 50 dB guideline, with acceptable internal and external noise conditions maintained. The proposed use is therefore assessed as resulting in a No Observed Effect Level, with no significant adverse noise impacts on neighbouring uses or the wider area, consistent with the NPPF.

- 5.31 The submitted Lighting Assessment demonstrates that the proposed court lighting would provide the required illumination while minimising light spill and obtrusive light beyond the Site. The 6-metre-high asymmetric floodlights would be installed at a 0-degree upward angle, directing light onto the courts and avoiding direct upward light in accordance with Dark Sky principles. The impacts on surrounding land and building façades are generally very low, including on the Police Station building and indoor bowling alley building. The highest level of illumination would occur on the side of the building to the east at the rear of the police compound, rather than nearby residential receptor. Further mitigation would include directional downlighting to the pavilion, time controls to ensure all external lighting is switched off after use. Subject to these controls, the lighting would not result in unacceptable light pollution or materially affect the amenity of nearby residents or surrounding uses.
- 5.32 The proposed facility would operate between 05:00 and 23:00. These hours are considered appropriate having regard to the Site's location on the edge of town centre, its established commercial and leisure context, and its separation from nearby residential properties. Together with the enclosed nature of the facility and the proposed controls on noise and lighting, the operating hours would not result in unacceptable disturbance or materially harm the living conditions of nearby residents or existing commercial operators.
- 5.33 The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or loss of daylight to nearby residential properties, having regard to the separation distances and the relationship of the development to surrounding buildings. It would also be compatible with neighbouring non-residential uses and would complement the wider leisure and community offer, including the proposed ExtraCare development on the Castle Sports Centre site.
- 5.34 Overall, having regard to the Site's established leisure and commercial setting, the enclosed nature and modest scale of the facility, and its separation from nearby homes, the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of nearby residents. Subject to the proposed controls on lighting and hours of use, the development would safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring residents and therefore accords with Local Plan Policies 3 and 30 and NPPF Policy P3.

Other technical matters:

Ecology and biodiversity

- 5.35 Local Plan policy 28 suggests development proposals should protect and where possible enhance biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 5.36 The NPPF requires development proposals to protect and enhance the natural environment. Policy N2 requires proposals to consider existing habitats and natural features, avoid or minimise harm to biodiversity, strengthen ecological networks and use green infrastructure and landscaping to deliver biodiversity, drainage, climate and amenity benefits, with appropriate long-term management. Policy N3 supports the retention and provision of suitable trees, while Policy N6 requires development affecting designated sites, protected species or irreplaceable habitats to meet the relevant safeguards and be refused where significant harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated.
- 5.37 The Site is not located within an ecological designation and is an existing car park which comprises tarmac. There are no green features within the Site aside from the vegetation growing up the metal fence boundary of the Police Station. However, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Statement and Metric Assessment have been carried out to support this application.
- 5.38 The PEA confirms that the Site comprises entirely existing hardstanding with negligible ecological value and no suitable habitat for protected or notable species. Given the small scale of the development, absence of habitat connectivity and separation from designated nature conservation sites, no significant ecological effects are anticipated and no further species-specific surveys or mitigation are required. However, the main ecological consideration relates to the potential impact from lighting and pruning adjacent trees and hedgerows which if required should avoid bird nesting season. Where lighting is proposed/required then PEA recommends the lighting is designed to minimise and direct the illumination.
- 5.39 The Biodiversity Statement and Metric Assessment confirms that the development qualifies for the *de minimis* exemption from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain, as the Site comprises developed sealed/unsealed surface with a baseline biodiversity value of zero. The proposals therefore result in no net loss of biodiversity units, with no requirement for off-site biodiversity units or further BNG measures.

- 5.40 Overall, the proposal would redevelop existing hardstanding of negligible ecological value, would not affect any designated site or suitable habitat for protected species, and would result in no loss of biodiversity units. Subject to sensitive lighting and any vegetation works avoiding the bird nesting season, the development would protect adjacent ecological features and accords with Local Plan Policy 28 and NPPF Policies N2, N3 and N6. The proposal is therefore acceptable in ecological terms and should be supported.

Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy

- 5.41 Local Plan policy 4 state that development within areas at risk of flooding will be permitted where it can be demonstrated the vulnerability of the proposed use is compatible with the flood zone and would not lead to or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 5.42 NPPF Policies F4 to F8 require flood risk to be assessed through a proportionate site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, with development directed to areas at the lowest risk through the sequential test and, where necessary, the exception test. Development in areas at risk must be safe for its lifetime, provide safe access and escape where appropriate, avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere and incorporate sustainable drainage systems that control runoff and, where possible, deliver wider water quality, biodiversity and amenity benefits.
- 5.43 To support his application a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy (DA) have been prepared. The FRA confirms that, while the Site lies within Flood Zone 3, the proposed leisure use is classified as *less vulnerable* and is considered appropriate in flood risk terms. Flood-resilient construction will be incorporated to the padel courts to at least 300mm above predicted flood levels, with the unaffected southern part of the site providing safe refuge and access/egress.
- 5.44 In terms of surface water, the DS states that this will be attenuated within below-ground geocellular storage and discharged to the existing combined sewer at a restricted rate of 2 l/s, with the system designed for the 1 in 100 year event plus a 40% climate-change allowance, providing a significant betterment over existing runoff rates. Foul flows will connect to the existing Anglian Water sewer network, with sufficient capacity anticipated given the scale of the development. Overall, the strategy demonstrates that surface and foul water can be appropriately managed without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 5.45 The assessment concludes that the development would not increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere and that there is no flood risk or drainage reason why the proposal should not proceed.

- 5.46 Overall, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy demonstrate that the less vulnerable leisure use would remain safe for its lifetime, provide safe refuge and access, and would not increase flood risk on the Site or elsewhere. The proposed attenuation and restricted discharge would provide a significant reduction in surface water runoff compared with the existing position, while foul drainage can be accommodated within the existing network. The proposal therefore accords with Local Plan Policy 4 and NPPF Policies F4 to F8 and should be supported in flood risk and drainage terms.

Heritage

- 5.47 Local Plan policy 29 requires development proposals to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets above and below ground.
- 5.48 NPPF Policies HE4, HE5 and HE6 require development proposals affecting heritage assets, including through changes within their setting, to conserve their significance and be supported by a proportionate assessment of the likely effects. Where no loss of a heritage asset is proposed, the key consideration is whether the development would preserve, enhance or cause harm to its significance; any harm must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, with substantial weight given to the asset's conservation.
- 5.49 The Site is not located within the Spalding Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the Site. However, a Heritage Statement and an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) have been prepared to support this application.
- 5.50 The Heritage Statement confirms that the site contains no designated or non-designated built heritage assets and forms a neutral element within the setting of the Spalding Conservation Area. The proposed development would result in a limited change to this setting but, having regard to its siting, scale, design and surrounding built context, would have a neutral effect on the significance of the Conservation Area and cause no heritage harm. Accordingly, the heritage balancing exercise under NPPF Policy HE6 is not engaged.
- 5.51 In terms of archaeology, the DBA confirms that there are no Scheduled Monuments within the site or 1 km search area and no known archaeological constraints that would prevent development. The site has moderate potential for Roman remains, but low or negligible potential for significant remains from other periods. While construction could affect any previously unknown archaeology, the assessment concludes that, given the small scale of the scheme and anticipated nature of any

remains, the benefits of the proposed community sports facility outweigh the potential harm. Any necessary archaeological investigation can be appropriately secured by planning condition.

- 5.52 Overall, the proposal would not result in the loss of, or harm to, any designated or non-designated heritage asset. Its siting, scale and design would have a neutral effect on the significance and setting of the Spalding Conservation Area, while any potential effects on previously unknown archaeological remains can be appropriately addressed through a proportionate planning condition. The development therefore conserves the historic environment in accordance with Local Plan Policy 29 and NPPF Policies HE4, HE5 and HE6 and should be supported in heritage terms.

6. PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The application Site forms part of an existing car park to the rear of the properties facing Westlode Street and adjacent to the town centre boundary of Spalding. The proposal is for:

Full planning permission for the redevelopment of part of the existing car park to provide a dedicated and covered padel and pickleball facility including clubhouse pavilion, car parking and associated works

- 6.2 The proposal is located in a highly sustainable and accessible position on previously developed land immediately adjoining Spalding town centre and other services and facilities. It would make efficient use of an underused part of an existing car park and provide a dedicated padel and pickleball facility that complements the Castle Sports Centre and wider sport and leisure uses to the north. The development would broaden local sporting choice, promote active lifestyles, health and well-being, and provide an inclusive setting for social interaction and community participation. These are substantial social benefits that attract significant weight under Local Plan Policies 1 and 32 and NPPF Policies S3, S4, L2, HC4 and TC2.
- 6.3 The proposal would deliver a contemporary but proportionate development that responds positively to the established leisure setting without appearance out of character. The covered courts would have a lightweight appearance, while the smaller clubhouse pavilion, formed from reused shipping containers and finished in timber cladding, would provide a simple and attractive supporting building. These structures would also be framed by ornamental landscaping which would enhance the appearance of the facility and provide a location for visitors and staff to socialise at all age groups.
- 6.4 The layout makes efficient use of the Site, provides safe and inclusive access and accords with Local Plan Policies 2 and 3 and NPPF Policy DP3. The Site is also well served by walking, cycling and public transport, with dedicated cycle parking, vehicle parking and electric vehicle charging. Forecast traffic generation is modest and the development would not have a severe effect on the highway network or an unacceptable effect on highway safety, consistent with NPPF Policies TR3, TR4 and TR6 and Local Plan Policies 33 and 36.
- 6.5 The submitted technical evidence demonstrates that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable environmental or amenity effects. Noise levels would remain acceptable at existing

and future sensitive receptors, with lighting and operating hours capable of being controlled where necessary. The Site is existing hardstanding of negligible ecological value, no heritage harm has been identified, and any archaeological interest can be addressed through a proportionate condition. The proposed flood-resilient design, surface-water attenuation and restricted discharge would ensure that the development remains safe and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The proposal therefore accords with Local Plan Policies 3, 4, 28, 29 and 30 and the relevant requirements of NPPF Policies P3, N2, N3, N6, F4 to F8 and HE4 to HE6.

- 6.6 In the overall planning balance, the proposal would deliver clear and substantial social and economic benefits. Pre-application engagement was undertaken with the project team responsible for delivering the South Holland Health and Wellbeing Hub, who confirmed their support for the proposal and recognised that it would complement the Hub's emerging leisure offer and wider health and wellbeing objectives. The development would support the continued regeneration and vitality of Spalding's town centre and leisure quarter, attract additional visitors, support linked trips and expenditure at nearby businesses, and create opportunities for employment, community use and wider participation in sport. It would strengthen social and community cohesion by providing a welcoming venue where residents, clubs, schools and groups can meet and take part in accessible recreation. No adverse effect has been identified that would substantially outweigh these benefits.
- 6.7 The proposed development therefore represents sustainable development that accords with the Development Plan and the NPPF when read as a whole, and should be approved without delay in accordance with NPPF Policy S3.