



## **Town & Country Planning Act 1990**

Construction of Permanent Clubhouse with Associated Landscaping

**The Inspiration Golf Club, Downes Barn Farm, West End  
Road, Hillingdon**

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

March 2024

**Enplan, St Anne's House, 111 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XY** Offices also at Milton Keynes  
Directors: PG Russell-Vick DipLA CMLI • MA Carpenter BA(Hons) MRTPI • RJ Hodgetts BA(Hons) DipLA CMLI

01273 007807

info@enplan.net

www.enplan.net

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of The Inspiration Golf Club Ltd, the applicant, in respect of a proposal for a permanent clubhouse building and associated landscaping at The Inspiration Golf Club, Downes Barn Farm, West End Road, Hillingdon.
- 1.2 The following documents are submitted in support of the application:
  - Planning Statement (this document)
  - Landscape Strategy (drawing 02-1054-303 rev B)
  - Energy Statement
  - CIL forms
  - Drawings:
    - AL 001 rev F – Site Location Plan and Proposed Site Layout (scale 1:2500 and 1:1000 at A1)
    - AL 002 rev F – Proposed Site Layout (scale 1:200 at A1)
    - AL 003 rev F – Proposed Site Layout Around Clubhouse CGI (scale 1:200 at A1)
    - AL 005 rev E –Clubhouse Plans, Elevations, Sections and CGI (scale 1:100 at A1)
    - AL 006 rev F – Clubhouse CGI (scale 1:100 at A1)
    - AL 008 rev F – Foul and Surface Water Drainage Layout (scale 1:500 at A1)

## 2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.81ha and comprises an area of land in the south eastern corner of The Inspiration Golf Course at Downes Barn Farm, West End Road, Hillingdon. It is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding Greater London but is not subject to any other landscape or planning designations.
- 2.2 The golf course is not yet operational but has been largely completed. It is located to the north east of Hillingdon to the west of West End Road and south of the A40.
- 2.3 The access to the site is via West End Road to the east. The golf course extends beyond the application site to the north and west. The application site comprises the area originally proposed for the clubhouse and car parking facilities.



*Aerial Photograph – application site shaded red (courtesy of <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>)*

- 2.4 To the south of the golf course (and the application site) is Sharvel Lane, beyond which is land comprising some open fields in other leisure use (a shooting school and club) as well as a trading estate. There are existing hedges to this site boundary along with a post and rail fence.
- 2.5 To the east of the main area of the application site lies an existing residential property, Downes Barn Farm and the access road to the clubhouse curves around the property boundary.
- 2.6 To the east of the site on the opposite side of West End Road there is some residential development set back behind a grassed area. There is another golf course behind this

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development, further to the east. That golf club is also owned and operated by the applicant.

- 2.7 To the north of the site, adjacent to the boundary of the golf course, is C & L Country Club. Further north of that is the A40 with Northolt Aerodrome and further residential development beyond.
- 2.8 To the west of the site is the golf course, beyond which are fields and woodland including a Local Nature Reserve and public open space.

## 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The application site is part of a larger site which was granted permission on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008 for “Construction of 18 hole golf course, new clubhouse, car parking, access and landscaping”. The permission (ref 2292/APP/2006/2475) has been implemented and the golf course has been constructed. The originally proposed clubhouse and parking area have not been constructed.
- 3.2 A separate application has been submitted for a temporary clubhouse on the site (shown in outline on the submitted drawings) to serve the golf course while the permanent clubhouse, for which this application seeks permission, is constructed. The temporary clubhouse application includes the proposed service area and car park.

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## 4.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The application proposes the construction of a permanent clubhouse building with associated landscaping. Permission for the car park is sought as part of a separate application for the temporary clubhouse. The temporary clubhouse building is proposed to enable the operation of the golf course while construction of the permanent clubhouse is ongoing.
- 4.2 The extant permission for the golf course included a clubhouse and car park. This current application along with the application for the temporary clubhouse seek to vary the design and layout of this area.
- 4.3 The permanent clubhouse would be located approximately in the same position as the approved building. The temporary clubhouse would be situated just to the north. Both will be directly accessible from the access road. When construction of the permanent clubhouse is completed, the temporary clubhouse will be removed from the site.
- 4.4 The original clubhouse had a floor area of approximately 458m<sup>2</sup> and a curved roof with a maximum height of 4.3m. The proposed permanent clubhouse has an internal floor area of approximately 341m<sup>3</sup> and sloping roof with a maximum height of 4.57m. The proposed clubhouse is more modestly sized than the originally approved building in order to minimise the impact on the Green Belt.
- 4.5 As with the previously approved building, the proposed clubhouse will accommodate a reception area, office, male and female changing and locker facilities, a kitchen and dining area. There will be PV panels on the roof of the building and the remainder will comprise a green roof.
- 4.6 The temporary clubhouse application also includes the car park and service yard which will be required to service the operation of the golf club.
- 4.7 The car park will provide a total of 108 car parking spaces including 20 with electric vehicle charging facilities, 12 disabled spaces for blue badge holders and 6 spaces for brown badge holders. 6 motorcycle parking spaces and 22 bicycle spaces are also provided. The car park includes a service route with delivery layby as well as providing a storage area and the refuse/recycling area.
- 4.8 The clubhouse will be surrounded by landscaped garden areas with hardsurfaced paths and an external patio. There will also be a putting green as part of the landscaped area to the north of the clubhouse.
- 4.9 The landscaping proposals include turf/lawn areas along with decorative planting, some tree planting and hedgerows to the boundaries of the car park and the buggy parking area. Additional native understorey shrub planting with trees is also proposed to the existing bund along the southern boundary of the site to strengthen the screening of the proposal from the road to the south.

## 5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (see section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 5.2 Where a proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan it should be approved without delay, as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at para 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018.
- 5.3 The development plan comprises Parts 1 and 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan. The Local Plan Part 1 (Strategic policies) was adopted in November 2012. The Local Plan Part 2 comprises site allocations and designations, development management policies and the Policies Map. It was adopted in January 2020.
- 5.4 In addition to the policies of the development plan, the London Plan (2021), the national guidance provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the associated online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are all relevant to the consideration of the application.

### Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 (Strategic Policies)

- 5.5 In accordance with the NPPF the plan supports the presumption in favour of sustainable development and this is set out in policy NPPF1.
- 5.6 Policy BE1 concerns the built environment and seeks to ensure the quality of new development. It requires development to (inter alia):
 

*“Achieve a high quality of design in all new buildings, alterations, extensions and the public realm which enhances the local distinctiveness of the area, contributes to community cohesion and a sense of place;*

*Improve the quality of the public realm and provide for public and private spaces that are attractive, safe, functional, diverse, sustainable, accessible to all, respect the local character and landscape, integrate with the development, enhance and protect biodiversity through the inclusion of living walls, roofs and areas for wildlife, encourage physical activity and where appropriate introduce public art”.*
- 5.7 Policy EM2 sets out the Council's intention to maintain the extent, hierarchy and strategic functions of the Green Belt. It states that proposals for development within the Green Belt will be assessed against national and London Plan policies including the very special circumstances test.
- 5.8 Policy EM5 states that the Council will safeguard, enhance and extend the network of sport and leisure spaces that meet local community needs and facilitate active lifestyles

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by providing active sport and leisure spaces. It also notes that there will be a presumption against any net loss of active sport and leisure facilities in the borough.

5.9 Policy CI2 concerns leisure and recreation and sets out the Council's intention to secure good quality, well maintained leisure and recreation facilities. It will achieve this by (inter alia) safeguarding existing viable leisure and recreational facilities and supporting proposals for new and improved facilities as well as seeking to promote the need for development to have inclusive and accessible design to tackle climate change and include facilities that promote sustainable transportation.

## **Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (Development Management Policies)**

5.10 Policy DMHB11 concerns the design of new development. This seeks to ensure that all new buildings are designed to the highest standards and incorporate principles of good design including (inter alia); harmonising with the local context, ensuring the use of high quality materials, ensuring the internal design maximises sustainability and use of landscaping and planting to protect and enhance amenity and biodiversity. The policy also required development proposals to make sufficient provision for recycling and waste including access for collection.

5.11 Policy DMHB12 addresses the public realm and requires new development to (inter alia) include suitable landscaping treatment, provide safe pedestrian and cycle movement, and where appropriate to include the installation of public art.

5.12 Policy DMHB14 requires development to retain or enhance existing landscaping, trees and biodiversity. It indicates that proposals will be required to provide a landscape scheme including hard and soft landscaping appropriate to the character of the area which supports and enhances biodiversity.

5.13 Policy DMEI2 seeks to reduce carbon emissions.

5.14 Policy DMEI4 concerns development in the Green Belt. This reflects the NPPF policies that inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt unless there are very special circumstances. It goes on to state that redevelopment of sites in the Green Belt will only be permitted where the proposal would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, having regard to a number of criteria such as the height, bulk, footprint and character of buildings and the proportion of the site that is already developed.

5.15 Policy DMEI7 seeks to ensure that development retains and enhances biodiversity.

5.16 Policy DMEI10 concerns water management, efficiency and quality. It requires new build developments to demonstrate that appropriate SuDS have been incorporated into the

design. It also requires developments to include water efficiency measures including the collection and reuse of rain water.

- 5.17 Policy DMCI3 indicates that public open space will be protected and enhanced and that development will only be permitted where it is linked to the functional use of the open space and does not harm its character, appearance or function.
- 5.18 Policy DMT6 states that development must comply with the Council's parking standards and that car parks for new development will be required to contain conveniently located disabled parking spaces. The parking standards indicate that for commercial development, 10% of parking spaces must be for blue badge holders and 5% for brown badge holders. It states that parking for electric vehicles should be provided at a minimum of 5% of parking spaces with 5% passive provision.

## The London Plan

- 5.19 The London Plan sets out the overall strategic plan for London. Hillingdon is one of the London Boroughs which is covered by this plan.
- 5.20 Policy GG1 seeks to build strong and inclusive communities. It requires (inter alia) the provision of *“access to good quality community spaces, services amenities and infrastructure that accommodate, encourage and strengthen communities, increasing active participation and social integration, and addressing social isolation”* and that those involved in planning and development *“seek to ensure that London continues to generate a wide range of economic and other opportunities”*.
- 5.21 Policy GG3 sets out how the plan proposes to create a healthy city improving the health of residents. This includes requiring those involved in planning and development to (inter alia) *“promote more active and healthy lives for all Londoners and enable them to make healthy choices”* and *“plan for improved access to and quality of green spaces, the provision of new green infrastructure, and spaces for play, recreation and sports”*.
- 5.22 Policy GG6 indicates that development should seek to improve energy efficiency and ensure that it is designed to adapt to climate change and makes efficient use of water.
- 5.23 Policy D3 sets out the design led approach to development. It states that development proposals should (inter alia) *“provide conveniently located green and open spaces for social interaction, play, relaxation and physical activity”*.
- 5.24 Policy D4 emphasises the need to deliver good design and policy D5 sets out the need for design to be accessible and inclusive.
- 5.25 Policy S5 concerns sports and recreation facilities. The policy states that existing sports and recreation facilities should be retained. It also notes that development on existing open space such as within Green Belts should consider the potential impact of

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development in connection with the Borough's own policies as well as the specific Green Belt policy in the London Plan.

- 5.26 Policy G2 states that London's Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development. It also states that "*subject to national planning policy tests, the enhancement of the Green Belt to provide appropriate multi-functional beneficial uses for Londoners should be supported*".
- 5.27 Policy SI2 sets out the need to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and how development should minimise energy demand in accordance with the energy hierarchy; be lean, be clean, be green, be seen.
- 5.28 Policy SI5 concerns water infrastructure. This requires development to incorporate water saving and recycling measures to achieve lower water consumption rates and maximise future-proofing.
- 5.29 Policy SI7 seeks to reduce waste and support the circular economy. It requires development design to include adequate and easily accessible storage and collection systems for separate collection of dry recyclables and food.
- 5.30 Policy SI12 sets out the need for development proposals to minimise flood risk.
- 5.31 Policy SI13 states that development should aim to achieve greenfield run-off rates for surface water, should reuse rainwater and should use permeable hard surfacing.
- 5.32 Policy T5 requires development to include appropriate levels of secure cycle parking.
- 5.33 Policy T6.4 concerns car parking for hotel and leisure uses. This indicates that infrastructure for electric vehicles should be provided. It also requires provision of disabled parking spaces in accordance with the levels set out in policy T6.5 and table 10.6. For recreational uses the requirement is 6 % of the total parking spaces to be designated disabled bays and 4 % to be enlarged bays.
- 5.34 Policy T7 requires development proposals to facilitate safe, clean, and efficient deliveries and servicing.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**

- 5.35 The updated December 2023 version of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 5.36 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the 3 objectives to sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.37 Paragraph 102 aims to provide access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for physical activity to deliver both health benefits and nature benefits including efforts to address climate change.

5.38 Chapter 12 sets out how plans and decision making should achieve well designed places. It states at para 131 that “*the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*”.

5.39 Paragraph 135 sets out a list of criteria for developments including that they (inter alia) “*are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping*”, “*establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit*”, “*optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space)*” and “*create places... which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users*”.

5.40 Chapter 13 seeks to protect Green Belt land. Paragraph 152 states that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 goes on to state that the construction of new buildings should usually be considered inappropriate development and then lists exceptions to this. These exceptions include “*the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it*” and “*the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces*”.

5.41 Chapter 15 refers to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. This chapter seeks to improve biodiversity and states at para 186 that “*opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design*”.

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## 6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 The key issues in the determination of this application are considered to be:

- Principle of development (including sustainability)
- Impact on the Green Belt

### Principle of Development

6.2 The principle of development is considered to be acceptable by virtue of the extant consent for a clubhouse on the application site. The permitted golf course will require a clubhouse in order to operate. The golf course will provide an outdoor leisure and recreation use promoting physical activity and health. The design of the building on a single storey with level access and paved footpaths will provide an accessible facility. The scheme is considered to accord with policies EM5 and CI2 of the Local Plan Part 1, policy DMCI3 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policies GG1, GG3, D3, D5 and S5 of the London Plan.

6.3 The application site is in the Green Belt where development would usually be considered inappropriate, however, the provision of facilities in connection with outdoor sport and recreation is one of a number of specifically stated exceptions to that (NPPF para 154).

6.4 The proposed new permanent clubhouse would replace that originally permitted with a building of a smaller footprint. The original clubhouse had a floor area of approximately 458m<sup>2</sup> and a curved roof with a maximum height of 4.3m. The proposed permanent clubhouse has an internal floor area of approximately 341m<sup>3</sup> and sloping roof with a maximum height of 4.57m. Whilst the maximum height of the now proposed building is slightly greater than that approved, the change in the form of the roof from curved to sloping will reduce its massing and visual impact.

6.5 The permanent clubhouse is of a high quality design employing appropriate materials which will create a sense of place while achieving sustainability and energy efficiency including provision of PV panels and a green roof. Additional detail regarding energy efficiency is set out in the accompanying Energy Statement. This high quality design will be further supported by the landscaping of the site including a statue/public art in the car park. Consequently, the proposal is considered to comply with policy BE1 of the Local Plan Part 1, policies DMHB11 and DMHB12 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policy D4 of the London Plan.

6.6 Para 149 of the NPPF also allows for the replacement of existing buildings in the Green Belt provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger. As set out above, the facilities contained within the clubhouse would be the same as those originally permitted and the building would be in the same use. Whilst the originally permitted clubhouse has not yet been constructed, it is considered that the principle of its

replacement with a smaller building would be acceptable in terms of national planning policy.

6.7 The car park permitted under the original application for the golf course is proposed to be provided as part of the separate application for the temporary clubhouse in an amended layout to optimise areas of associated landscaping.

6.8 The landscaped areas around the clubhouse and car park along with the use of permeable paving to the car park and footpaths will help to reduce any potential surface water run-off. The submitted plans include foul and surface water drainage details for the proposal. Consequently, the development is considered to accord with policy DMEI10 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policies SI12 and SI13 of the London Plan.

6.9 Furthermore, the application site currently comprises hard packed earth with some grassed areas. It currently has very limited ecological value and similarly limited ability to support protected species. However, the proposed landscaped areas around the clubhouse with appropriate planting as well as additional native planting to the bund along the site's southern boundary offers an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity and ecological value of the site as well as its visual appearance. The submitted Landscape Strategy drawing sets out details of the planting scheme. Consequently, the proposal is considered to comply with policies DMHB14 and DMEI7 of the Local Plan Part 2.

6.10 The car park includes 20 electric vehicle charging spaces and 6 motorcycle spaces as well as two cycle parking areas which can accommodate 22 cycles to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport. It also includes 12 spaces for blue badge holders and 6 spaces for brown badge holders. Consequently, the scheme is considered to comply with policy CI2 of the Local Plan Part 1, policy DMT6 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policies T5, T6.4 and T6.5 of the London Plan.

### **Sustainability**

6.11 The proposal is considered to meet the NPPF's three objectives for sustainable development; social, economic and environmental as follows:

#### *Social*

6.12 The scheme would deliver a high quality, well designed and accessible recreational facilities that support the community's health, social and cultural well-being. Consequently, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the social objective of sustainable development.

#### *Economic*

6.13 The proposal would create construction jobs during the build period. It would attract business rates payments which would in turn support the provision of infrastructure and services. The scheme would contribute to the local economy with the provision of 17 full time and 7 part time jobs. It will also attract Mayoral CIL contributions which will help to

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fund the Elizabeth Line and Crossrail 2 in London. Consequently, it is considered that the proposal complies with the economic objective of sustainable development.

*Environmental*

6.14 The application site is not on land which benefits from any national or local designation other than Green Belt. The proposal is a form of development which is considered acceptable in policy terms in a Green Belt location.

6.15 Policy DMEI2 of the Local Plan requires new proposals to improve sustainability by reducing carbon emissions and policy DMEI10 seeks to reduce water consumption.

6.16 The scheme proposes a number of sustainability, energy efficiency and water efficiency measures and design features as follows:

- Rainwater collection for watering landscaped areas
- Permeable paving for car parking areas to reduce surface water run-off
- Landscaping/planting around the clubhouse to reduce surface water run-off and enhance biodiversity
- Dual flush WCs and water saving fittings with dishwashers/washing machines etc specified to minimise water usage
- Low energy lighting used throughout the building
- Photovoltaic panels installed on the roof
- Green roof to the building
- Appropriate glazing and insulation specifications to ensure the building meets current building regulations for energy efficiency
- Recycling encouraged with the provision of separate bins for waste and recycling
- Local materials from sustainable sources would be used in the construction of the building wherever possible
- All timber would be sourced from FSC Accredited suppliers
- Wherever possible, labour would be sourced from the local area thereby supporting the local economy, providing employment opportunities for local tradespeople and businesses as well as reducing the need to travel
- Provision of 21 EV charging points

6.17 Consequently, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the environmental objective of sustainable development.

6.18 Overall, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development and complies with policy NPPF1 of the Local Plan Part 1, policies DMEI2 and DMEI10 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policies GG6, SI2 and SI5 of the London Plan as well as the NPPF.

## Impact on the Green Belt

6.19 The application site is within the Green Belt but is not subject to any other national or local landscape or planning designations.

6.20 As set out above, development is generally considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt subject to a number of exceptions which include provision of facilities in connection with outdoor sport and recreation such as clubhouses for golf courses. Consequently, the proposal is considered to comply with policy EM2 of the Local Plan Part 1, policy DMEI4 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policies S5 and G2 of the London Plan.

6.21 The original permission included a clubhouse in approximately the same location as the now proposed permanent clubhouse. This location has been carefully considered and chosen in order to benefit from the screening provided by the two storey Downe Barns Farmhouse and the existing mature hedges along its boundaries. Furthermore, the proximity of the new building to the existing dwelling will minimise visual intrusion and impact on openness of the Green Belt. The design has changed from a curved roof to a sloping roof and the floor area has been reduced. These amendments reduce the size and mass of the building further minimising any impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

6.22 The temporary clubhouse will be removed once the permanent building is completed and brought into use and the applicant is willing to accept a planning condition to ensure this so that there is no additional impact on the Green Belt resulting from an additional building.

6.23 A refuse, recycling and storage area along with a delivery layby is proposed adjacent to the permanent clubhouse and this is accessed via a dedicated service road for ease of deliveries/refuse collection and to allow delivery and refuse vehicles to travel through the site in a forward gear. Consequently, the proposal is considered to comply with policy DMHB11 of the Local Plan Part 2 and policies SI7 and T7 of the London Plan

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## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of The Inspiration Golf Club Ltd, the applicant, in respect of a proposal for a permanent clubhouse building and associated landscaping at The Inspiration Golf Club, Downes Barn Farm, West End Road, Hillingdon.
- 7.2 The application site benefits from an extant consent for a clubhouse and car park serving the permitted golf course currently under construction, although that clubhouse and car park have not yet been constructed. A separate application for a temporary clubhouse and car park with service yard has been submitted. The current application seeks permission for a permanent clubhouse which would replace the temporary clubhouse once it is completed.
- 7.3 The proposal accords with local and national planning policy guidance being one of the forms of development listed as acceptable in a Green Belt location. It would provide high quality, well designed and accessible recreational facilities to support the community's health, social and cultural well-being.
- 7.4 The proposed permanent clubhouse is smaller in footprint than that previously permitted and would minimise any impact on the Green Belt by virtue of its reduced size and massing along with its location adjacent to an existing two storey dwelling and existing boundary planting.
- 7.5 The car park includes 20 electric vehicle charging spaces as well as cycle parking to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.6 The temporary clubhouse will be removed from the site when the permanent clubhouse is completed. This can be secured by planning condition.
- 7.7 The site currently has very limited ecological value and similarly limited ability to support protected species. However, the proposed landscaped areas around the clubhouse with appropriate planting as well as additional native planting to the bund along the site's southern boundary offers an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity and ecological value of the site.
- 7.8 In conclusion, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and satisfies the relevant development plan policies. It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the application be supported.

