

## Committee Report

Item No: 7A

Reference: DC/23/01323  
Case Officer: Vincent Pearce

Ward: Chilton.

Ward Member/s: Councillors Terrence Carter & David Napier

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RECOMMENDATION – 1. Grant conditional FULL planning permission for the development Described in 1 below  
2. Grant conditional OUTLINE planning permission for the development described in 2 below

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### **Description of Development**

HYBRID APPLICATION - for the project known as Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (*acronym-SHELF*) comprising the two components described below:

#### 1: FULL APPLICATION for:

Works of demolition and construction to provide a new shared sports pavilion to replace the existing building, a new sports hall, enhance existing /deliver new outdoor recreational facilities , and relocated play area along with the provision of associated parking, amended vehicular access, lighting, means of enclosure, landscaping, highway improvements and other associated works.

Within this element are what are described by the applicant as packages 1 and 2 of the project in terms of delivery bundles. These being:

#### **Package 1:** *(planned for commencement in the second half of 2024)*

- Improvements to grass pitches
- Trim trail
- 3G pitch
- MUGA (Multi Use Games Area)
- Mini Athletics circuit
- Active Track

#### **Package 2:** *(planned for start after Package 1 but with preparation of full technical details from early 2024 to inform the tender process)*

- Pavilion
- Sports Hall
- Improved car parking

#### 2: OUTLINE APPLICATION for:

Construction of a mixed-use community Wellbeing Hub.

**Package 3:** This element represents what the applicant describes as 'Package 3' of the overall project and implementation is unlikely to proceed until package 1 and package 2. have been delivered.

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CLASSIFICATION: Official

If approved, this element will need to be subject to a Reserved Matters submission before it can proceed, unlike packages 1 and 2 which if approved will benefit from full permissions. although conditions associated with these earlier phases will however still need to be satisfactorily discharged.

**Location:**

Chilton Sports Club, Chilton Way, Stowmarket, IP14 1SZ

**Expiry Date:** Extension of time agreed

**Application Type:** REVISED (16.10.2023) to from FULL to HYBRID comprising both FULL and OUTLINE elements (as described above under 'Description of Development')

**Dev't Type:** Major Large Scale - All Other

**Applicant:** Mid Suffolk District Council

**Agent:** Saunders Boston Architects

**Parish/Town:** Chilton (Stowmarket) and adjacent to Onehouse

**Site Area:** 18ha (44.5acre)

**Density of Development:** not relevant

**Gross Density:** (Total Site): not applicable

**Net Density:** not applicable

**Details of Previous Committee / Resolutions and any member site visit:** None

**Has a Committee Call In request been received from a Council Member (Appendix 1):** No

**Has the application been subject to Pre-Application Advice:** Yes: Pre-application enquiry DC/23/00560 and a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) .

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Please note: that within this report text in green box shows calculations and summary commentary on these, text in yellow boxes highlight an issue and text in blue boxes provides a conclusion

calculation

issue !

conclusion

✓ denotes acceptability

✗ denotes unacceptability

## Transparency Statement:

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THIS IS A 'COUNCIL'S OWN' APPLICATION submitted on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council's Regeneration Service by Boston Saunders Architects. It includes development that is intended to be undertaken by Mid Suffolk District Council on land owned or controlled by Mid Suffolk District Council or on land owned or controlled by Suffolk County Council. (and Stowmarket High School). By being presented to and determined by (or with the due Authority of) the Planning Committee, in Public, the process is open and transparent. Like any other application submitted by any other applicant the Planning Committee is required to determine the application on its own individual planning merits after careful consideration of all material planning considerations.

The applicant being a Service of the Council is a not a material planning consideration.

Members will vote based on their own individual assessment of those merits after having regard to all material planning considerations and then having undertaken their own weighting of these to inform their own planning balance.

## Supporting Technical Reports: include

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Design and Access Statement  
Transport Assessment  
Preliminary Ecological Assessment  
Mechanical, Electrical and Public Health Strategy  
Endoscope Survey (Bats)<sup>1</sup>  
Bat Survey  
eDNA<sup>2</sup> Survey (Great Crested Newts)  
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment  
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Calculator  
Ground Level Roost Assessment Report  
Ecology Report  
Ecology summary  
Noise Impact Assessment  
Lighting Assessment  
CCTV Drainage Survey  
Flood Risk Assessment  
Surface Water Drainage Strategy  
Arboricultural Impact Assessment  
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

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<sup>1</sup> Endoscope allows surveyor to look into inaccessible locations for evidence of bats

<sup>2</sup> An eDNA survey involves the analysis of water samples (collected by an Ecologist and analysed in a laboratory which has passed a proficiency testing scheme) to determine whether there is environmental DNA from Great Crested Newts present in an environment, such as a pond or other body of water.

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## PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

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### **The application is referred to committee for the following reason/s:**

1. This is a planning application submitted on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council's Regeneration Service on land that in part the Council owns or controls through partnership working with other public sector land-owners. The Council intends to undertake the development if planning permission is granted.

The Council's Formal Constitution requires such applications to be determined by the Council's Development Control Committee in public. This is to ensure full transparency by allowing public viewing of the proceedings, representations to be made directly at the meeting under the having your say protocol and for Councillors to ask appropriate questions, debate the merits of the proposal and then determine the merits of the application as they reasonably see fit - if they believe they are in a position so to do.

2. This is a '*Major*' planning application of a size and scale that exceeds the threshold below which the Chief Planning Officer would (were it not for 1 above) otherwise be able to determine under Delegated Authority.

### **The Nature of the Revised Application**

On 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 the application as initially submitted was revised from a FULL application for all components to one comprising a FULL application for all the previously proposed development except for the proposed Wellbeing Hub which is now the subject of an associated OUTLINE application. This combination is described as a HYBRID application.

The reason for adjusting the application in respect of the Wellbeing Hub is that its design may be subject to further amendment and so it was considered appropriate to pursue this element in outline. That said access and scale are to be determined. The applicant has confirmed that the proposed Wellbeing Hub will not exceed two floors of accommodation and will comprise a level of floorspace that is intended to be 'up to' the same total floor area as previously proposed when this element was included in the full application.

Consequently technical reports submitted in support of the initial application, such as that relating to traffic and highway issues, and/or strategic drainage remain valid and relevant and do not require adjustment.

Viability may be a material planning consideration where a developer has indicated it is not possible to provide any or part of the reasonable mitigation sought by a local planning authority by way of a Section 106 Agreement.

The Council is however unable to enter into a S106 Agreement with itself and so that scenario cannot apply.



A financial appraisal to test any claim that required mitigation is ‘unaffordable’ could be required but that is not the case here. ‘

### **Additional note: Project Viability**

Members are advised that it is for applicants/developers to determine their exposure to risk when pursuing a development proposal/s. The Council as local planning authority cannot consider the extent to which it believes a proposed development as submitted may or may not be deliverable on financial grounds. That is not a material planning consideration. If the application is successful then authority to proceed with implementation depend on others (*Members and officers*) within the Council.

When determining planning applications The Committee representing the Council as local planning authority must judge the individual planning merits of those proposals having first had regard to all material planning considerations.

### **Publicity**

The Development Management Service has initiated the following publicity in respect of the application:

- Site notices
- Neighbour notification letters
- Public notices

### **Format of Report**

This is a lengthy report, covering as it does a wide range of planning issues. It contains an extensive and detailed analysis of relevant material planning considerations before providing the planning balance and its conclusions and recommendations. Consequently, it opens below with an Executive Summary which encapsulates what are considered to be the headline key issues.

The Executive Summary is not however a substitute for the depth of analysis contained in the full the report.

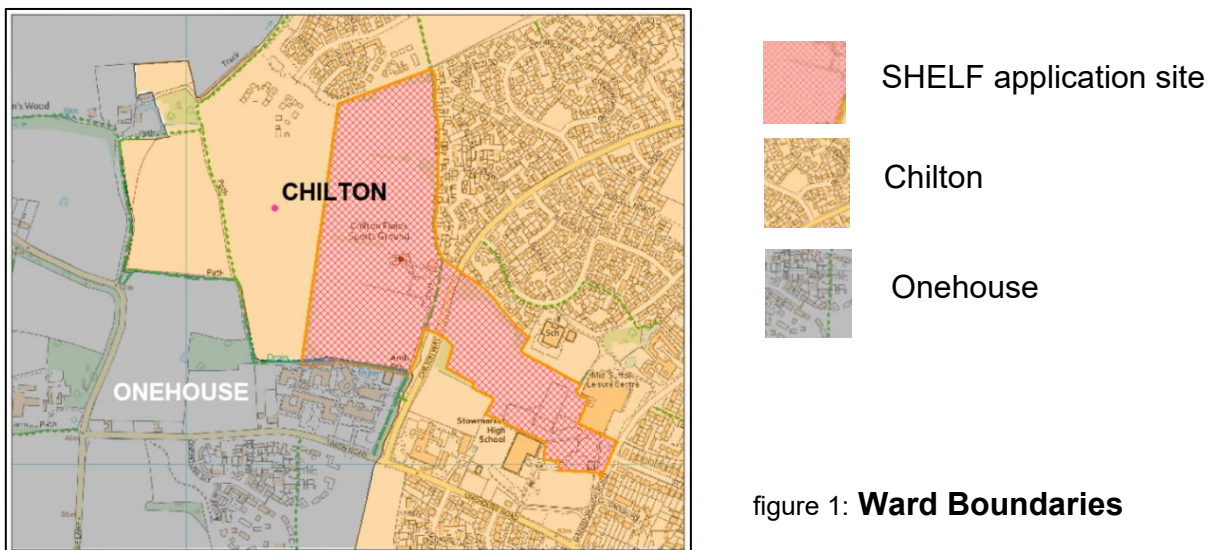


figure 1: **Ward Boundaries**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- ES1 The application before Members is for development associated with the project known as 'SHELF' which stands for Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities.
- ES2 SHELF looks to deliver a range of services and facilities that build on existing uses in or adjoining the site such as the Chiton Fields Sports Pitches and Clubhouse, Stowmarket High School and Stowmarket Leisure Centre.
- ES3 The application before Members is what is known as a 'hybrid' application because it contains both FULL and OUTLINE elements.
- ES4 The FULL application is for
- ES5 The OUTLINE application is for
- ES6 If the application is successful the applicant is expecting to implement the development in three work packages which starts not unexpectedly with work package 1. Namely, improvements to grass pitches, trim trail, 3G pitch, MUGA, mini athletics circuit.
- ES7 Package 2 comprises: Pavilion, Sports Hall and parking
- ES8 Package 3 comprises: wellbeing Hub
- ES9 The application is supported by Stowmarket Town Council and Onehouse Parish Council both of whom have their own commentary to make. (as is reported in full within this report)
- ES10 Suffolk County Council as local highway authority and the lead local flood authority has not objected to the application although conditions are recommended.
- ES11 The Local Highway Authority having considered relevant information including a Transport Assessment has determined that the cumulative impact of the proposed development on highway safety will not be severe. (*the test in paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework*). LP29 - Safe, Sustainable and Active travel is satisfied.
- ES12 The proposed development does not give rise to fluvial flood risk and it satisfies the requirements of paragraphs 165-171 of the NPPF (December 2023). [NPPF]. LP27 is satisfied.
- ES12 The development is within the built-up area of Stowmarket and is considered to be highly sustainable. It complies with SP03 - The Sustainable Location of New Development of the Adopted Joint Local Plan 2023.
- ES13 Whilst its primary purpose is not as an employment use it does comply with SP05 (5) (a-f) and is on the A14 Strategic Transport Corridor. Albeit the proposal is not primarily an employment use it will contribute towards supporting a prosperous economy and so conforms with the objective behind LP09.
- ES14 The proposal includes a variety of enhancements to the local pedestrian and cycle network

which will increase connectivity and encourage accessibility by means other than the fossil fuel powered cars. LP29 is satisfied.

- ES15 With **conditions** requiring specific additional on-site parking provision in locations identified in this report, the proposal will meet relevant standards in the Adopted Suffolk Guide for Parking. (Edition 4 of October 2023).
- ES16 In terms of the proposals 'green credentials' the applicant is seeking to incorporate green technology such as air source heat pumps for heating, roof mounted pv for power and will use where possible sustainable materials to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good'. LP23 is satisfied.
- ES17 Some short-term ecological/biodiversity harm is identified and this report does not underplay this fact. The applicant has made convincing operational/functional justification for the proposed tree/hedgerow loss and has taken appropriate steps to ensure the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy in paragraph 186 (a) of the NPPF (December 2023) is followed and appropriate mitigation and compensation is delivered.
- ES18 It is noteworthy that the development is expected to result in a circa 20% BNG as a result of mitigation measures and extensive tree and hedgerow planting. LP15 and 16 are satisfied.
- ES19 In terms of landscape impact the changing character of the landscape hereabouts as a result of extensive largescale residential development to the west on what was previously open countryside will change the context of the application site forever. The good news is that the low level of new build on Chilton Fields and the extensive replanting will mean the site continues to serve as a valuable green oasis within what is becoming an urbanised setting. LP17 is satisfied
- ES20 Officers are of the opinion that the nature of the proposed uses are such as not to pose a material threat to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and so is not contrary to SP06 - Retail and Main Town Centre nor LP11 - Retail and Town Centres.
- ES21 Design quality is high and the proposal with the mitigation measures included in the proposal and additional **conditions** will satisfy LP24 in terms of impact on residential amenity.
- ES22 The health, education activity sport and community components within the application absolutely tick the box in respect of policies LP28 -Services and Facilities Within the Community as well as LP31 - Health and Education Provision in regard to those specific elements.
- ES23 The proposed development will not result in any harm to any designated or non-designated heritage asset/s in the vicinity. LP19 is therefore satisfied and it also complies with section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.
- ES24 The proposal is considered acceptable subject to securing a written undertaking or Memorandum of Understanding from the applicant to the County Council that commits to paying a financial contribution of £17,500 (index linked) to provide a Traffic Regulation Order and physical works for parking restrictions on roads adjacent to the development, should the need arise due to evidence that on-street parking issues occur as a result of the development within an agreed period (typically 5 years from full operation of the development) and appropriate conditions.

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### Summary of Relevant Policies

- SP03 [The Sustainable Location of New Development](#)
- SP05 Employment Land
- SP06 Retail and Main Town Centre Uses
- SP08 Strategic Infrastructure Provision
- SP09 Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- SP10 Climate Change
- LP09 Supporting a Prosperous Economy
- LP11 Retail and Town Centres
- LP15 Environmental Protection and Conservation
- LP16 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP17 Landscape
- LP19 The Historic Environment
- LP23 Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP24 [Design and Residential Amenity](#)
- LP25 Energy Sources, Storage and Distribution
- LP26 Water Resources and infrastructure
- LP27 [Flood Risk and Vulnerability](#)
- LP28 [Services and Facilities Within the Community](#)
- LP29 [Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport](#)
- LP31 [Health and Education Provision](#)

The policies in [blue](#) text above are considered to be those within the basket of relevant policies that are most important for the determination of this application<sup>3</sup>.

### Neighbourhood Plan Status

This application site is not within a Neighbourhood Plan Area and nor is one being prepared.

### Other

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023, Government)

Suffolk Guide for Parking (4<sup>th</sup> Edition - October 2023, Suffolk County Council)

Building for a Healthy Life (2020, Urban Design Group)

Suffolk Design (Suffolk County Council) (on-line living version)

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<sup>3</sup> The 'Wavendon' principle after the High Court decision in respect of Wavendon Properties Limited v Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government [2019] EWHC 2367 (Admin)

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## CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

During the course of the application Consultation and Representations from various statutory, non-statutory, Parish/Town Councils, individuals within the community and other interested parties have been received. These are summarised below.

A: Summary of Consultations

### Parish and Town Councils

#### ■ STOWMARKET TOWN COUNCIL: (17 November 2023)

*"The Town Council has no objection to the grant of planning consent but Members of the Committee raised the following concerns:*

- a. The Town Council is not convinced that there will be adequate parking provided as part of the scheme;*
- b. A transport statement has not been provided as part of the application;*
- c. It is disappointing to see that there is still a high degree of uncertainty over the Well-being Hub such that it is only possible to seek outline permission in respect of this facility when the project has been in [sic]*

#### ■ STOWMARKET TOWN COUNCIL: (23 April 2023)

*"The Town Council fully supports the grant of planning permission for the development. Stowmarket requires investment in new infrastructure and amenities to support the future of local sports clubs and to encourage participation in activities that will promote the health and wellbeing of local people. The new facilities are also needed by Stowmarket High School and its pupils. Whilst all local clubs needs are not necessarily met through the proposals and not all clubs appear to understand how they are to be involved in the management and use of the site, the Town Council believes that the greater good is served by proceeding with the current and long-awaited set of proposals. Positive engagement will be required subsequently with all stakeholders and potential users about the use of the facilities."*

#### ■ ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL: (24 January 2024)

***"I understand from Dan Boulter that Onehouse PC comment has been logged as an objection to the SHELF application 23/01323.***

***Our comment: Councillors are concerned regarding the loss of mature trees and ask if these can be relocated rather than felled. New planting will take 30 years to grow was not***

***an objection - it was a comment to ask that relocating the trees could be looked at rather than felling.***

***Since the matter has been investigated and due to the close proximity of the trees it is not possible to relocate then we are satisfied this is not an option. It is pleasing that there is a 3-1 planting ration vs felling and we will have to be patient to see them mature.***

***[We] ask that our comment is amended to purely that - a comment and not an objection.***

■ ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL : (13 November 2023)

*“Onehouse Parish Council has no additional comment.”*

■ ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL: (13 April 2023)

*“Councillors are concerned regarding the loss of mature trees and ask if these can be relocated rather than felled. New planting will take 30 years to grow”*

## **District Councillor/s - Ward Member**

■ Councillor Terrance Carter: (14 November 2023)

A Ward Member for Chilton; and,  
Deputy Town Mayor, Stowmarket Town Council

*“I second in full the comments made by Mid Suffolk Disability Forum regards the importance of changing places, about accessibility and play equipment.*

*Despite it's age, the play area in Chilton Fields is much loved and well used, so I would prefer to restore and retain what equipment we can, yet also expand and include accessible equipment for all abilities and look at a more wheelfriendly ground substrate than the current bark.*

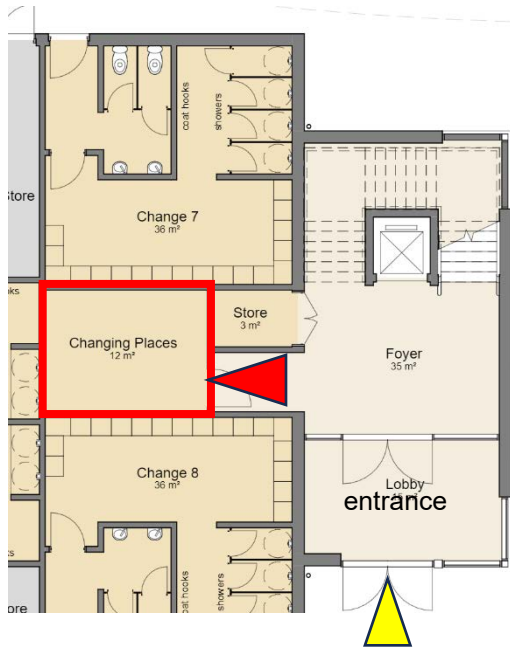
*I do have concerns regarding the closure of the school parking/drop off location, and for the work being next to the leisure centre. We are already a very car-centric location with many vehicle related problems and parking issues specifically to Gainsborough road, which as it is cannot be solved without the implementation of double yellow lines on the side of the road of the leisure centre, these problems will only be compounded by building next to the leisure centre and the impact of the use of and assuming temporary partial closure to the carpark.”*

## **Officer comment**

**Members are advised that the proposed Pavilion includes ‘Changing Places’ space.**

**continued.....**





The Wellbeing Hub, being an outline application, does not include internal layout details. It is however reasonable to expect Reserved Matters details to include changing places space - in the event that outline planning permission is granted.

The proposed Sports Hall does not include changing space, although 2 separate school group changing rooms are included.

The proposed Sports Hall will be connected to the existing Leisure Centre by a covered walkway and further research is being undertaken to identify the availability (or not) of changing places space within the Leisure Centre that could also serve the proposed Sports Hall. ( an update will be provided via relevant Tabled Papers or verbally at the meeting)

figure 2: **'Changing Space' Area - Pavilion**

Councillor Carter's comments in respect of the existing play area are noted. Retaining popular play equipment where it is in good condition makes sense. The proposal does not include details as to the equipment that will be provided but there is no reason why a condition cannot be added to any permission that is forthcoming (if Members are minded to approve the proposal) to require the nature and specification of such equipment to be submitted for approval in the normal way. The condition can also indicate that the applicant should seek to incorporate existing play equipment, where it is safe, in good condition and age appropriate, into the new play area.

Councillor Carter correctly identifies that the proposal will eventually lead to the loss of the existing coach /bus parking/drop off area on Gainsborough Road that serves Stowmarket High School and the Leisure Centre.



figure 3: **Present Coach Drop-Off Area**

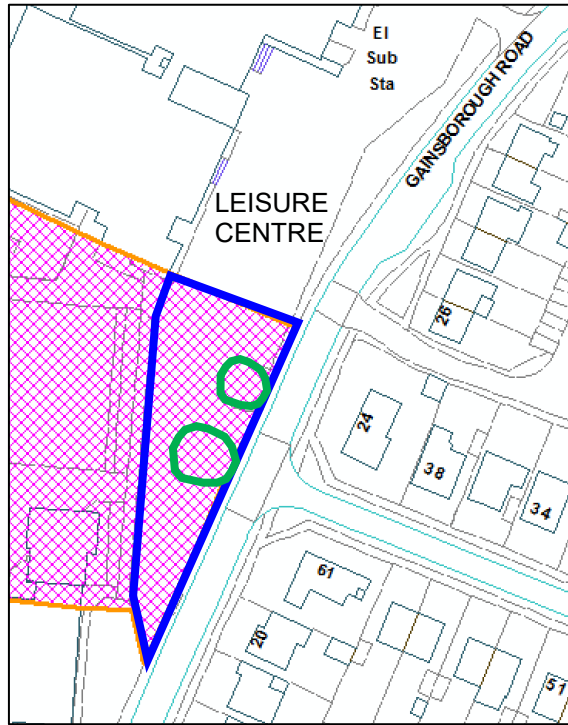


figure 4:  
**Present Coach  
Drop-off Area**

It is understood that Suffolk County Council and the School are working on plans to provide new improved coach/bus facilities on land to the south on what was the 'old' school site. Provision of replacement facilities is not part of the current application before the Committee.

## **Local Representations**

### Objections

TWO OBJECTIONS from two local addresses have been received. Concerns expressed include:

- Affects local ecology/wildlife
- Dominating /overbearing
- Increase in pollution
- Landscape impact
- Loss of open space
- Loss of trees
- Application lacking information
- Design
- More open space needed
- Affected sports clubs have been ignored
- Should include more football
- No hockey, netball basket ball

## Neutral

TWO NEUTRAL comments have been received from two different local addresses in which support is expressed for increased opportunities for support but this is caveated by

- (i) disappointment that there is no netball included (Not included in the netball reference above) and
  - (ii) building work,
- inadequate parking provision,
- inadequate public transport provision,
- increase in traffic/ highway issues
- residential amenity and
- sustainability

Taylor Wimpey (Developer of the Northfields): 10 October 2023

*“Regrettably, Taylor Wimpey continues to have a number of concerns with the Council’s SHELF application. Despite a positive working relationship on a number of projects across the district, in this instance, there has been a disappointing lack of communication and moreover lack of engagement on the part of the Council with Taylor Wimpey. This notably includes failure to be properly notified of the application in the first instance, as an adjoining neighbour. Taylor Wimpey therefore feels compelled to respond to the application setting out these concerns at this late stage having [as you are aware] tried repeatedly to seek meetings and work collaboratively on how our Northfield View Phase 2D Application might work alongside the SHELF Application for the wider benefits of the community.*

*It has been acknowledged by both the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (BMSDC) and Taylor Wimpey, that there is a potential for the two parties to work together in order to provide central sporting facilities, funded via existing triggers within the S106 for Northfield View being revisited by Taylor Wimpey to make financial contributions earlier than currently anticipated, to assist the SHELF application. This would then ensure a joint approach and avoid the duplication of facilities such as the sports pavilions and MUGAs. At the same time, there is an acknowledgment from both the District Council and also the Parish Council that a small amount of additional development ‘should’ be acceptable, subject to securing suitable open space requirements and linkages to the Paupers Graves. It is understood that the package of community benefits will be key.*

*Despite all of these elements having been discussed and verbally agreed in conjunction with valuable input from Onehouse Parish Council, over a sustained period, nothing to-date has been formalised to this effect.*

*Therefore, there remains a genuine concern that if the SHELF application is taken to a Planning Committee as planned, Members may well pick up on the relationship between the SHELF application and elements that are expected to be provided by Northfield View. If there is nothing formal in place at this stage then Taylor Wimpey remained concerned that this could then jeopardise their final phase of development at Northfield View (NV2D), whenever it is eventually brought forward.*

*Following our meeting on 25 September, we are still waiting for a response from BMSDC into whether a Counsel Opinion is going to be sought in relation to the two applications. It remains our opinion that the SHELF requires BMSDC to lead on initial legal enquires.*

*The piecemeal approach to communication with Taylor Wimpey throughout this process has been both frustrating and disappointing, particularly when both parties have previously enjoyed a very positive working relationship. It is with regret that a positive outcome for both parties was not able to be secured sooner in this particular instance.*

*To make it clear, Taylor Wimpey wishes to continue to work with BMSDC in bringing forward both applications - SHELF and NV2D. However, the current uncertainty means Taylor Wimpey must give serious consideration into safeguarding their own interests, which in this instance means protecting their final phase of development at Northfield View.*

*If no formal agreement can be reached in the lead up to the SHELF application, then Taylor Wimpey may well have to reconsider their position in support of this application.*

*In the spirit of cooperation, we hope this letter will help to enable further discussions to take place that will resolve an agreed position for all concerned parties. We very much look forward to hearing from you.”*

## Support

### [Stowmarket Rugby Club \(response from Sarah Relf\) 13 September 2023](#)

*Stowmarket Rugby Club is fully supportive of the SHELF scheme and the opportunities it offers us as a club. We are also excited to be part of the wider SHELF collaborative efforts around increasing the health and wellbeing of Stowmarket residents through improved sporting and well-being facilities. We hope our club will be central to achieving the SHELF ambitions.*

*With regards to the planning application itself we are fully supportive of the plans as shown. We can also confirm that we have been actively engaged throughout the design process including being able to directly influence the architects in how the plans have developed.*

*The plans as shown in this application reflect our requests for amendments and changes.*

*We have also engaged with all members of our club who were in unanimous support of the proposals.*

*We hope the planning committee will see fit to approve the plans as shown.”*

■ **Stowmarket High School: (response from the then headteacher) 25 April 2023**

*As Headteacher of Stowmarket High I am delighted to be involved with this exceptional project. At the heart of its purpose is a commitment to provide better facilities for the school and local community, achieved through cooperation and collaboration between numerous important agencies. The existing facilities are considerable in size but largely ineffective, unfit for purpose or under-utilised*

*As Stowmarket faces rapid expansion and its limited facilities come under strain, coupled with a limited amount of desirable attractions, this project offers the community exceptional and innovative facilities.*

*As Mid Suffolk pushes to achieve its health and wellbeing goals, SHELF represents a tangible demonstration of ambition and belief in the power of collaboration.*

*We all are suffering under the strain of the massive rise in post covid mental health issues, and with services unable to cope, SHELF offers a beacon to the young people and to their families that we are listening and that we have support available. By connecting this to sports and physical activity, through harnessing the energy and passion of volunteer community clubs, professional agencies and education, SHELF has the ambition to achieve something extraordinary. In real terms, the school site will be greatly enhanced and improved after the unfortunate limitations of its recent new build. As the local population grows, the school will need to expand, and this project has had the foresight to factor this in, building a future proofed design plan. There are challenges to be addressed around the traffic issues on Gainsborough Road and the access points for buses and taxis to the school. I am keen to engage in meaningful discussion around this issue.*

*I wholeheartedly support this planning application.”*

■ **Stowmarket Volleyball Club: (response from Chair, Mark Ames): 18 September 2023**

*“Our club is pleased to support the development of these new facilities and looks forward to working in partnership with other organisations to make best use of them.*

*The existing sports hall at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre has been in high demand for many years. Meanwhile Stowmarket has seen a reduction in sports hall space since the Middle School was demolished whilst the population of the towns and some of the villages it serves has grown. We're pleased to see the plans include provision of a new sports hall designed to Sport England's current guidance. Amongst other configurations this will allow two full-size volleyball courts side-by-side with a service zone behind each end; something no other facility available to us in Mid Suffolk currently offers.*

*As part of the stakeholder engagement process we have been working with the technical team and have determined that one of the training courts in the existing hall will be unaffected by the development whilst installation of new floor plugs and re-painting the lines will allow the other training court to be shifted to accommodate the new corridor through the existing sports hall.*



*We look forward to continue to work with the technical team as part of the stakeholder engagement process to review the more detailed design of the corridor and on the fit-out plans and logistics as the new corridor is installed.”*

■ [Waveney Valley Academies Trust, \(who hold the long-term lease of land and buildings at Stowmarket High School\): 13 November 2023](#)

*“We are pleased to be part of this collaborative project, which would not only give students at the school access to much improved facilities but would create and enhance opportunities for the growing Stowmarket community as a whole.”*

■ [Stowmarket and District Cycle Club \(response from Chair Paul Moss\): 14 September 2023](#)

*“As a club we currently have nowhere that we call home, we just have meeting places that we ride from and ride back to. One of those places is the Chilton Fields car park and on a Wednesday night in the summer the whole place is buzzing. Any enhancement to this facility will help to encourage physical activity and competitive sport for all and whilst there is little cycle specific provision in this application it will provide us with somewhere that we may call home and could provide us the potential to provide cycle training to all levels and help to grow the grass level cycle sport participation within the town”*

■ [Everyone Active: \(response from Anselm Gurney\): 26 April 2023](#)

*“As Partnership Manager for Everyone Active I oversee the management of the Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket and I am a member of the working groups which have been developing the plans for the Stowmarket, Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) Project.*

*I strongly support this project because I know that there is a very high level of demand for the new sports facilities which are proposed. The town of Stowmarket has been growing at a fast rate and the sports facilities have not expanded sufficiently to keep up with the current level of demand.*

*The existing 4 court sports hall is full with bookings during peak time and I have had to turn new bookings away in the past because we have not been able to accommodate them. There is a huge unmet demand for a 3G pitch in Stowmarket for the local football clubs to train and play on, as the nearest similar facilities are in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, and I anticipate that the new facility will very quickly be booked to capacity in the peak periods. I have also had to turn away booking requests for netball courts because we do not have suitable facilities at the site, and this has meant that clubs based in Stowmarket are having to train and play on facilities outside the town. Stowmarket Striders is a very successful running club, with a large membership but it doesn't have its own track and it needs a facility of this type to further expand, particularly its activities for juniors.*

*The fact that these facilities would be shared with Stowmarket High School would maximise their use during off peak times and would further strengthen the existing partnerships between the school, the leisure centre and the local sports clubs.*

*The concept of a 'Wellness Hub' which is what we are creating is a good one. The construction of a new building to house various medical services to be located next to the leisure centre and the school, will make it easier for clients to transition between the different partners. For example, medical professionals will be able to refer patients onto the GP referral scheme at the leisure centre ensuring a smooth transition from one to the other, and children from Stowmarket High School will be able to access the mental health services available right next door.*

*The SHELF project is not only about providing the right facilities it is also about connecting these services in the right way to deliver the maximum benefit to the local community, and this is all being built into the overall design.”*

NEUTRAL

 [Mid Suffolk Disability Forum \(response from Linda Hoggarth\) 20 September 2023](#)

*“Mid Suffolk Disability Forum The Mid Suffolk Disability Forum has given its comments regarding access for disabled people directly to the Architects and Mid Suffolk District Council in face-to-face meetings.*

*We have welcomed the opportunity to have this direct input to the development. It is noted that the buildings will comply with relevant Building Regulations and therefore should be fully accessible and inclusive in their design.*

*With regard to the Design and Access Statement, it is noted that Section 8 Inclusive and Accessibility Strategy for the Pavilion and Well-being Hub makes no mention of the Changing Places facility. We would remind the applicant that this should also be included and meet BS8300 in order to meet the required standard for a Changing Places facility.*

*There is mention of a Play Area but no reference to any equipment being provided.*

*We would ask that if there is play equipment that this is of inclusive design to accommodate children with disabilities.*

*It is not clear from the drawings how many accessible car parking spaces are provided in total in the development and the exact location of these in relation to the entrances to the buildings.*

*All efforts should be made to ensure all footpaths are wide enough for wheelchair users, with a minimum width of 1500mm, and that any dropped kerbs are absolutely level with roadways for ease of access. Where a crossing is provided, such as in Chilton Way, the importance of dropped kerbs on either side of the road being directly opposite to each other and level with the road should be noted.*

*All surfaces should be firm, durable and level. No loose gravel, cobbles or uneven setts should be used.”*

*(Note: All individual representations are counted and considered. Repeated and/or additional communication from a single individual will be counted as one representation.)*

## National Consultees

### ■ Sport England: (12 January 2024)

*“ After a review of the latest submission and consideration of planning conditions, Sport England wishes to withdraw the objection to the application as it is considered to accord with exception 2, 3 and 5 of our playing fields policy and to meet paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework, strictly subject to the following conditions being imposed should the local planning authority (LPA) resolve to approve the application:*

#### *Construction and Phasing Plan*

*No development shall commence until a detailed construction management and development phasing scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with Sport England. The scheme must set out details of the size, location, type, and make-up of retained and replacement facilities together with arrangements for access throughout the course of development and upon its completion, as well as the timescale and specification for remediation of any playing field damage that occurs temporarily during implementation of the development. The scheme must include a timetable for the provision of the retained and replacement facilities. The approved scheme shall be implemented and complied with in full throughout the carrying out of the development.*

*Reason: To ensure the satisfactory quantity, quality and accessibility of compensatory provision which secures a continuity of use of the sport facilities and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\**

#### *Replacement Pavilion*

*The replacement pavilion shall be provided and made available for use prior to the loss of the existing pavilion and notwithstanding the details submitted as part of the current planning application, shall be constructed substantially in accordance with Sport England/National Governing Body Design Pavilion Design Guidance for rugby and football current at the time of construction, and in accordance with details that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority following consultation with Sport England.*

*Reason: To ensure the replacement pavilion is fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*

#### *Artificial Grass Pitch Design*

*The construction of the artificial grass pitch shall not be commenced until details of the construction specification including layout, line markings and materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority following consultation with Sport England.*

*Reason: To ensure the artificial grass pitch is fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*



### *Artificial Grass Pitch Management and Maintenance Scheme*

*The use of the artificial grass pitch shall not commence until a detailed Management and Maintenance scheme for the artificial grass pitch, including management responsibilities, a maintenance schedule and a mechanism for review shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the artificial grass pitch.*

*Reason: To ensure that facility is capable of being managed and maintained to deliver a facility which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*

### *Athletics Track Design*

*The construction of the athletics track shall not be commenced until details of the construction specification including layout, line markings and materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority following consultation with Sport England.*

*Reason: To ensure that the athletics track is fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*

### *Athletics Track Management and Maintenance Scheme*

*The use of the athletics track shall not commence until a detailed Management and Maintenance scheme for the athletics track, including management responsibilities, a maintenance schedule and a mechanism for review shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the athletics track.*

*Reason: To ensure that facility is capable of being managed and maintained to deliver a facility which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*

*If the LPA is minded to approve the application without imposing the above conditions then Sport England objects to the application as it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to our Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 103 of the NPPF.*

*If you wish to amend the wording of the conditions or use another mechanism in lieu of the conditions, please contact us to discuss. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments.*

Please note that this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.

### **Officer comment:**

**The fact that Sport England has withdrawn its previous objection is important and needs to be afforded significant weight. They are an arms-length body of government responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England. The revised**

consultation response follows a round table meeting (virtual) between representatives of Sport England, DM and Regen held on 4th January 2024 during which all the features of the proposal were explored in detail. It has therefore been accepted that the proposal is designed to: enhance sports provision in and around Stowmarket, widen participation, encourage activity and inclusivity.

Sport England's acknowledgement that the proposal complies with paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) is welcomed as is their confirmation that it accords with exemptions 2, 3 and 5 of their Playing Fields Policy and Guidance. (2018)



figures 5:  
**Sport England  
Playing Fields  
Policy Document**

Sport England will 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, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole, meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.

#### Exception 2

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

#### Exception 3

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any part of a playing field and any of its playing pitches.

#### Exception 5

The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

**Historic England: (1 November 2023)**

“It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals.”

## County Council Responses

### ■ Highways : (21 December 2023)

*“Whilst full details of the access arrangements, highway improvements and internal infrastructure have not been provided at this stage, following further discussions, we are satisfied these can be agreed via planning condition.*

*Please note that we will not support the discharge of any conditions relating to layout and highway improvements unless they represent the following agreed principles:*

- *A new shared surface facility on the western side of Gainsborough Road;*
- *Appropriate access improvements on Gainsborough Road to facilitate pedestrian and cycle*
- *access and crossing facilities;*
- *Crossing improvements on Chilton Way to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists.*
- *Sustainable travel routes and connections to and within the development.*

*As well as the following S106/ UU contribution:*

- *A financial contribution to cover any off-site parking issues resulting from the proposal is also required to make the proposal acceptable to the Highway authority, as detailed overleaf.*

*Recommended planning conditions:*

#### **Condition:**

*No part of the development shall be commenced until full details of the proposed access and crossing improvements on Gainsborough Road (as indicatively shown on drawing no. 2211-769 502) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved access improvements shall be laid out and constructed in their entirety prior to the occupation of the building. Thereafter the accesses shall be retained in their approved form.*

*Reason: To ensure that the accesses are designed and constructed to an appropriate and acceptably safe specification and made available for use at an appropriate time.*

#### **Condition:**

*No part of the development shall be commenced until details of proposed off-site highway improvements comprising a shared use facility on the western side of Gainsborough Road and associated works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be laid out and constructed in its entirety prior to occupation.*

*Reason: To ensure that the necessary highway improvements are designed and constructed to an appropriate specification and made available for use at an appropriate time in the interests of*

*highway safety and sustainable travel.*

**Condition:** *No part of the development shall be commenced until details of the proposed off-site highway improvements on Chilton Way indicatively shown on Drawing No. 2211-769 602A have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be laid out and constructed in its entirety prior to occupation.*

**Reason:** *To ensure that the necessary highway improvements are designed and constructed to an appropriate specification and made available for use at an appropriate time in the interests of highway safety and sustainable travel.*

**Condition:**

*Before the improved accesses and crossing points on Gainsborough Road are first used visibility splays shall be provided as shown on Drawing No. 2211-769 504 with X dimension of 2.4 and 2 metres and a Y dimension of 70 metres [tangential to the nearside edge of the carriageway] and thereafter retained in the specified form. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part 2 Class A of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no obstruction to visibility shall be erected, constructed, planted or permitted to grow over 0.6 metres high within the areas of the visibility splays.*

**Reason:** *To ensure drivers of vehicles entering the highway have sufficient visibility to manoeuvre safely including giving way to approaching users of the highway without them having to take avoiding action and to ensure drivers of vehicles on the public highway have sufficient warning of a vehicle emerging in order to take avoiding action, if necessary.*

**Condition:**

*Before the development is commenced, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway including any system to dispose of the water. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the access is first used and shall be retained thereafter in its approved form.*

**Reason:** *To prevent hazards caused by flowing water or ice on the highway.*

**Condition:**

*Before the development is commenced, details of the internal vehicular routes, footpaths and cycle routes, (including routes, layout, levels, gradients, surfacing and all lighting), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

**Reason:** *In the interests of highway safety to ensure that roads and footways are constructed to an acceptable standard.*

**Condition:**

*Before the development is commenced details of all areas and infrastructure to be provided for the loading, unloading, manoeuvring and parking of vehicles including powered two-wheeled vehicles and electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter and used for no other purpose.*

*Reason: To ensure the provision and long term maintenance of adequate on-site space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles in accordance with the current Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2023) where on-street parking and or loading, unloading and manoeuvring would be detrimental to highway safety.*

**Condition:**

*Before the development is commenced, details of all areas to be provided for secure, covered and lit cycle storage including electric assisted cycles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter and used for no other purpose.*

*Reason: To promote sustainable travel by ensuring the provision at an appropriate time and long term maintenance of adequate on-site areas and infrastructure for the storage of cycles and charging of electrically assisted cycles in accordance with Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2023).*

**Condition:**

*Before the development is commenced, details of the areas to be provided for the storage and presentation for collection/emptying of refuse and recycling bins shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter for no other purpose.*

*Reason: To ensure that space is provided for refuse and recycling bins to be stored and presented for emptying and left by operatives after emptying clear of the highway and access to avoid causing obstruction and dangers for the public using the highway.*

**Condition:**

*Before the development hereby permitted is commenced a Construction Management Plan shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Construction of the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plan.*

*The Construction Management Plan shall include the following matters:*

- a) parking and turning for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors*
- b) loading and unloading of plant and materials*
- c) piling techniques (if applicable)*
- d) storage of plant and materials*
- e) provision and use of wheel washing facilities*
- f) programme of site and all associated works such as utilities including details of traffic*



- management necessary to undertake these works*
- g) site working and delivery times*
  - h) a communications plan to inform local residents of the program of works*
  - i) provision of boundary hoarding and lighting*
  - j) details of proposed means of dust suppression*
  - k) details of measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction*
  - l) haul routes for construction traffic on the highway network and*
  - m) monitoring and review mechanisms.*
  - n) Details of deliveries times to the site during construction phase.*
  - o) Layout of facilities above to be included on a plan.*

*Reason: In the interest of highway safety to avoid the hazard caused by mud on the highway and to ensure minimal adverse impact on the public highway during the construction phase.*

**S106/ UU Contribution:**

*A financial contribution of £17,500 (index linked) to provide a Traffic Regulation Order and physical works for parking restrictions on roads adjacent to the development, should the need arise due to evidence that on-street parking issues occur as a result of the development within an agreed period (typically 5 years from full operation of the development).*

*The proposal is not acceptable to the Highway Authority without this contribution, as significant on-street parking or loading, unloading and manoeuvring resulting from the proposal, would be detrimental to highway safety.”*

**Public Rights of Way (PRoW): (17 November 2023)**

*“We do not object to this proposal provided the following is taken into account:*

- 1. PROW MUST remain open, unobstructed, and safe for the public to use at all times, including throughout any construction period. If it is necessary to temporarily close or divert a PROW, the appropriate process must be followed (please see points 4 and 5 below).*
- 2. PROW are divided into the following classifications:*
  - Public Footpath – only for use on foot or with a mobility vehicle*
  - Public Bridleway – use as per a public footpath, and on horseback or by bicycle*
  - Restricted Byway – use as per a bridleway, and by a ‘non-motorised vehicle’, e.g. a horse and carriage*
  - Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) – can be used by all vehicles, in addition to people on foot, mobility vehicle, horseback and bicycle*

*All currently recorded PROW are shown on the Definitive Map and described in the Definitive Statement (together forming the legal record of all currently recorded PROW). There may be other PROW that exist which have not been registered on the Definitive*

Map. These paths are either historical paths that were not claimed under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or since, or paths that have been created by years of public use. To check for any unrecorded rights or anomalies, please contact [DefinitiveMaps@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:DefinitiveMaps@suffolk.gov.uk).

3. The applicant, and any future owners, residents etc, must have private rights to take motorised vehicles over a PROW other than a BOAT. To do so without lawful authority is an offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988. Any damage to a PROW resulting from works must be made good by the applicant. Suffolk County Council is not responsible for the maintenance and repair of PROW beyond the wear and tear of normal use for its classification and will seek to recover the costs of any such damage it is required to remedy. We do not keep records of private rights and suggest that a solicitor is contacted.
4. The granting of planning permission IS SEPARATE to any consents that may be required in relation to PROW. It DOES NOT give authorisation for structures such as gates to be erected on a PROW, or the temporary or permanent closure or diversion of a PROW. Nothing may be done to close, alter the alignment, width, surface, or condition of a PROW, or to create a structure such as a gate upon a PROW, without the due legal process being followed, and permission being granted from the Rights of Way & Access Team as appropriate. Permission may or may not be granted depending on all the circumstances. To apply for permission from Suffolk County Council (as the highway authority for Suffolk) please see below:

- To apply for permission to carry out work on a PROW, or seek a temporary closure – [https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roadsand-](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roadsand-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/rights-and-responsibilities/)

[transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/rights-and-responsibilities/](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roadsand-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/rights-and-responsibilities/) or telephone 0345 606 6071.

PLEASE NOTE, that any damage to a PROW resulting from works must be made good by the applicant. Suffolk County Council is not responsible for the maintenance and repair of PROW beyond the wear and tear of normal use for its classification and will seek to recover the costs of any such damage it is required to remedy.

- To apply for permission for structures such as gates to be constructed on a PROW – contact the relevant Area Rights of Way Team - contact the relevant Area Rights of Way Team <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rightsof-way-in-suffolk/public-rights-of-way-contacts/> or telephone 0345 606 6071.
5. To apply for permission for a PROW to be stopped up or diverted within a development site, the officer at the appropriate borough or district council should be contacted as early an opportunity as possible to discuss the making of an order under s257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-insuffolk/public-rights-of-way-contacts/>

*PLEASE NOTE, that nothing may be done to stop up or divert the legal alignment of a PROW until the due legal process has been completed and the order has come into force.*

- 6. Under Section 167 of the Highways Act 1980 any structural retaining wall within 3.66 metres of a PROW with a retained height in excess of 1.37 metres, must not be constructed without the prior written approval of drawings and specifications by Suffolk County Council. The process to be followed to gain approval will depend on the nature and complexity of the proposals.*

*Construction of any retaining wall or structure that supports a PROW or is likely to affect the stability of the PROW may also need prior approval at the discretion of Suffolk County Council. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss preliminary proposals at an early stage.*

- 7. Any hedges adjacent to PROW must be planted a minimum of 2.0 metres from the edge of the path in order to allow for annual growth. The landowner is responsible for the maintenance of the hedge and hedges must not obstruct the PROW. Some hedge types may need more space, and this should be taken into account by the applicant. In addition, any fencing should be positioned a minimum of 0.5 metre from the edge of the path in order to allow for cutting and maintenance of the path and should not be allowed to obstruct the PROW.*
- 8. There may be a further requirement to enhance the PROW network relating to this development. If this is the case, a separate response will contain any further information.”*

## Floods and Water

***“We have reviewed the following submitted documents and we recommend approval of this application subject to conditions:***

- Flood Risk Assessment Ref 221058/A Prais Dated March 2023*
- Surface Water Drainage Strategy Ref 221058/S Rice V1 Dated Dec 2023*

*We propose the following condition in relation to surface water drainage for this application.*

***Full Application*** - Works of demolition and construction to provide a new shared sports pavilion to replace the existing building, a new sports hall, enhance existing /deliver new outdoor recreational facilities , and relocated play area along with the provision of associated parking, amended vehicular access, lighting, means of enclosure, landscaping, highway improvements and other associated works

- 1. The strategy for the disposal of surface water (dated December 2023, ref: 221058/S Rice) and the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (dated March 2023, ref: 221058/A Prais) shall be*



*implemented as approved in writing by the local planning authority (LPA). The strategy shall thereafter be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved strategy.*

*Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal, to ensure that the proposed development can be adequately drained*

**Outline Application** - Construction of a Mixed-Use Community Wellbeing Hub Building.

1. *Concurrent with the first reserved matters application(s) a surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority (LPA). The scheme shall be in accordance with the approved FRA and include:*
  - a. *Dimensioned plans and drawings of the surface water drainage scheme;*
  - b. *Further infiltration testing on the site in accordance with BRE 365 and the use of infiltration as the means of drainage if the infiltration rates and groundwater levels show it to be possible;*
  - c. *If the use of infiltration is not possible then modelling shall be submitted to demonstrate that the surface water runoff will be restricted to  $Q_{bar}$  or 2l/s/ha for all events up to the critical 1 in 100 year rainfall events including climate change as specified in the FRA;*
  - d. *Modelling of the surface water drainage scheme to show that the attenuation/infiltration features will contain the 1 in 100 year rainfall event including climate change;*
  - e. *Modelling of the surface water conveyance network in the 1 in 30 year rainfall event to show no above ground flooding, and modelling of the volumes of any above ground flooding from the pipe network in a 1 in 100 year rainfall event including climate change, along with topographic plans showing where the water will flow and be stored to ensure no flooding of buildings or offsite flows;*
  - f. *Topographical plans depicting all exceedance flow paths and demonstration that the flows would not flood buildings or flow offsite, and if they are to be directed to the surface water drainage system then the potential additional rates and volumes of surface water must be included within the modelling of the surface water system;*
  - g. *Details of the maintenance and management of the surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.*
  - h. *Details of a Construction Surface Water Management Plan (CSWMP) detailing how surface water and storm water will be managed on the site during construction (including demolition and site clearance operations) is submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The CSWMP shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved plan for the duration of construction. The approved CSWMP and shall include: Method statements, scaled and dimensioned plans and drawings detailing surface water management proposals to include:-*
    - i. *Temporary drainage systems*
    - ii. *Measures for managing pollution / water quality and protecting controlled waters and watercourses*
    - iii. *Measures for managing any on or offsite flood risk associated with construction*

*The scheme shall be fully implemented as approved.*

*Reasons: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage and disposal of surface water from the site for the lifetime of the development. To ensure the development does not cause increased flood risk, or pollution of watercourses or groundwater. To ensure clear arrangements are in place for ongoing operation and maintenance of the disposal of surface water drainage.*

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/guidance-on-development-and-flood-risk/construction-surface-water-management-plan/>

- 2. Within 28 days of practical completion of the last dwelling or unit, a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) verification report shall be submitted to the LPA, detailing that the SuDS have been inspected, have been built and function in accordance with the approved designs and drawings. The report shall include details of all SuDS components and piped networks have been submitted, in an approved form, to and approved in writing by the LPA for inclusion on the Lead Local Flood Authority's Flood Risk Asset Register.*

*Reason: To ensure that the surface water drainage system has been built in accordance with the approved drawings and is fit to be put into operation and to ensure that the Sustainable Drainage System has been implemented as permitted and that all flood risk assets and their owners are recorded onto the LLFA's statutory flood risk asset register as required under s21 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in order to enable the proper management of flood risk within the county of Suffolk*

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/flood-risk-asset-register/>

#### *Informatives*

- Any works to a watercourse may require consent under section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991*
- Any discharge to a watercourse or groundwater needs to comply with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017*
- Any discharge of surface water to a watercourse that drains into an Internal Drainage Board district catchment may be is subject to payment of a surface water developer contribution*
- Any works to lay new surface water drainage pipes underneath the public highway will need a licence under section 50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act*
- Any works to a main river may require an environmental permit”*

#### **Archaeology: (13 November 2024)**

*“We have looked at the proposal. In our opinion there would be no significant impact on known archaeological sites or areas with archaeological potential. **We have no objection** to the development and do not believe any archaeological mitigation is required.”*

#### **Developer Contributions: (21 March 2023) (30 October 2023)**

*“ I have **no comments to make** on this application but have copied in service colleagues who might have comments.”*

■ **Suffolk Fire & Rescue: (30 November 2023)** (no further comments from previous comments of 13 March 2023\*)

- Proposal will need to meet Buildings Regs
- No additional water supply for fire-fighting purposes is required
- Standard sprinkler advice

■ **Public Health: (4 April 2023)**

#### Population data.

Suffolk Observatory ([www.suffolkobservatory.info](http://www.suffolkobservatory.info)) mid-2020 estimate data on population for Stowmarket is 21,343. 18% of residents are aged 65+ which is slightly lower than the England average of 18.5%. 19.7% of residents are aged 0-15 years which is higher than the England average at 19.2%. 62.3% of residents are aged 16-64 years which is the England average.

#### Inclusivity and Dementia.

We welcome Policy 8.0, ‘Inclusivity & Accessibility Strategy (Pavilion & Wellbeing Hub)’. This makes good intention for inclusive use of the space, referencing the Disability Discrimination Act and BS 8300. Recognising our ageing population, we would recommend however that the Policy could be expanded to include the needs of those living with Dementia.

Though not a perfect parallel, we suggest reviewing the resource linked below, ‘Dementia-friendly Health and Social Care Environments’. Sections 4 and 5 may be particularly useful in designing space that is dementia friendly.

[Health Building Note 08-02: Dementia-friendly health and social care environments \(england.nhs.uk\)](http://england.nhs.uk)

The following RTPi resource may also be helpful. [RTPi | Dementia and Town Planning](#)

We also suggest an inclusion to make outdoor spaces and facilities accessible to residents with limited mobility (inclusion of benches, including Chatty Benches <https://healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk/news/are-you-happy-to-chat-it-starts-with-hello> and well-maintained paths etc). This could help to make an elderly population feel more included as part of the community and reduce isolation of vulnerable groups.

#### Neurodiversity.

We recommend the Design and Access Statement could go further to make the facility neurodiversity friendly. We suggest reviewing the resource [Neurodiversity and Buildings Checklist - BBC](#) and the embedded document below.



## **design for the mind neurodiversity and th**

The following resources may also be helpful. [RTPI | Neurodiversity - Autism-friendly environments and good practice in planning](#)



## **2014-UAR-ASPECTSS -SchoolDesign-final-1**

### Open Spaces.

We welcome Policy 3.2.1, 'Existing Facilities' that recognises the creation of partnerships with stakeholders as key. In this regard, we would recommend engagement with young people in some of the stakeholder discussions to shape the communities which could be linked with the facility. Youth agencies eg as well as local Youth Councils/steering groups.

We specifically recommend ensuring open space is inclusive for girls. Please see the below embedded resource that outlines some of the challenges this group face, together with some possible solutions.



## **Inclusive Spaces and Places for Girls and Yc**

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Internal Consultee Responses follow...

## Internal Consultee Responses

### ■ Place Ecology: (29 November 2023)

*“ No objection subject to securing ecological mitigation and biodiversity enhancements”*

#### **Conditions** (FULL and OUTLINE)

- *Implementation in accordance with ecological appraisal recommendations*
- *BNG Plan*
- *Biodiversity Enhancement Layout*
- *Wildlife sensitive lighting design scheme*

### ■ Heritage: (14 November 2023)

*“ The application is now proposed as a Hybrid application, with some works still proposed in Full, but the wellbeing hub building now proposed in Outline. I consider that the proposed Full works would continue to **not impact the significance of any heritage assets.***

*As the well-being hub is now proposed in Outline its exact nature is now not specified, but on the basis that it would be broadly in the same location and of the same scale as previously, I consider that it would also continue to **not cause any harm to any heritage assets.**”*

### ■ Waste Manager: (6 April 2023) (9 November 2023)

*“No objection subject to **conditions**”*

- *To provide a sweep path analysis to ensure that the RCV can make access to all areas to collect the waste and recycling.*
- *Please provide plans of the waste storage facilities for the Sports pavilion building, these must be sufficient capacity to accommodate all the waste types to be disposed of and appropriate segregation. There must be level threshold access and suitable doors to enable bins to be moved with ease and a dropped curb if the bin store is not on road level. Details of storage compounds requirements can be located within the waste guidance*

### ■ Environmental Health: Noise/odour/light: (13 November 2023)

*“The report appears to be robust and takes into consideration the items raised at the pre application discussion stage.*

*Background monitoring was undertaken to determine the levels for existing residential premises and predicted for the proposed residential development to the Eastern side of the sports pitches.*

*The noise impact assessment looks at the predicted noise from the activities in comparison with the existing ambient noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receptors.*

*The methodology is based on IOA/IEMA recommendations and also considers the outcomes based on other recommended levels, for example community noise.*

*The report makes the following recommendations for the operational hours of the outdoor sports facilities to prevent undue disturbance, based on the outcomes of the modelling:*

- Monday to Friday – 07:00 to 22:00,*
- Saturdays – 08:00 to 21:00,*
- Sundays and Bank Holidays – 08:00 to 19:00*

*I would suggest that the following is added by way of a **condition** to any planning permission granted to ensure that the Council retains control of the site and to prevent a detriment affect on the health and wellbeing of residents in nearby residential dwellings.*

*Hours of permitted Use*

- The Hours of use for all outdoor sports facilities on site shall not be used outside of the following times*
- Monday to Friday – 07:00 to 22:00,*
- Saturdays – 08:00 to 21:00,*
- Sundays and Bank Holidays – 08:00 to 19:00*

*Fixed plant noise from the proposed development has been assessed under the current BS4142 criteria. Both individually and cumulatively albeit based on similar plant due to none specified at this stage for this site. The impact of these are favourable with maximum levels recommended by NOVA ACOUSTICS.*

*I recommend the following **conditions** for the plant:*

- Ongoing requirement – BS4142 limit on external noise levels. The rating level of sound emitted from fixed plant and/or machinery associated with the development for use hereby approved shall not exceed background sound levels (taken to be 48dB LA90,15min) between the hours of 0700-2300 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises) and shall not exceed the background sound level of 24dB LA90,15min between 2300-0700 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest/any sound sensitive premises). All measurements shall be made in accordance with the methodology of the current version of BS4142 (Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound) and/or its subsequent amendments. Where access to the nearest sound sensitive property is not possible, measurements shall be undertaken at an appropriate location and corrected to establish the noise levels at the nearest sound sensitive property.  
Reason: to minimise detriment to nearby residential amenity*



- *Prior to the development coming into beneficial use, the developer shall have first submitted a 'Post-Completion Noise Inspection Schedule' that identifies a selection of NSR to be the subject of the noise assessment identified below to the LPA for approval. In the event that the local planning authority agrees that Schedule then no use of the plant for beneficial use shall commence until such assessments identified in the Schedule have been undertaken, the result submitted in writing to and formally agreed by the LPA.  
The Post-Completion Noise assessment shall comprise*

*Results as to the extent to which the installed plant meets the requirements of the acoustic report submitted and approved under condition xx achieve measured noise levels in external amenity (garden) areas of the nearest NSR's to meet the World Health*

*Organisation recommendations daytime and night-time periods.*

*Evidenced results to demonstrate that the background sound levels (taken to be 48dB LA90,15min) between the hours of 0700-2300 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises) and 24dB LA90,15min between 2300-0700 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest/any sound sensitive premises are not exceeded.*

*In the event that the submitted information fails to satisfy the LPA that the predicted noise reduction levels have been achieved at any of the properties identified within the schedule, then the restriction on any use continues to apply until such time as the developer has been able to agree and install additional mitigation measures for the fixed plant that has first been agreed in writing with the LPA.*

*Reason: The Council wishes to ensure the level of predicted noise reduction forecast by the applicant's noise consultant is actually achieved. This the Council requires to ensure that the occupiers of the nearest noise sensitive receptors and those yet to be constructed under previous planning permissions are not subjected to unacceptable road noise intrusion in the interest of safeguarding residential amenity and public health.*

*My comments relating to lighting from the site still remain appropriate and I ask that those conditions requested are added to any permissions granted for both, full and outline parts of the amended application.*

*The comments submitted regarding the requirement for a CMS and construction activities conditions also requested previously for the full application remain valid for both the full and outline parts of the hybrid application."*

**■** [Environmental Health: Land Contamination \(8 December 2023\) \(11 April 2023\)](#)

*"I can confirm that I have no objection to the proposed development from the perspective of land contamination. I would only request that the LPA are contacted in the event of unexpected ground conditions being encountered during construction and that the below minimum precautions are undertaken until such time as the LPA responds to the notification. I would also advise that the developer is made aware that the responsibility for the safe development of the site lies with them."*

■ Environmental Health: Air Quality: (30 March 2023) (8 December 2023)

*“I understand that this application is for several different uses, which could lead to a wide range of traffic flow scenarios.*

*Therefore, I am unable to rule out the need for an air quality assessment with the information that I have available I recommend that an air quality assessment (or statement justifying why one is not required) is requested, in line with the Environmental Protection UK (EPUK) Guidance, 2017 – Land Use Planning and Development Control: Planning for Air Quality. Please could I be reconsumed when this information is submitted. Without this information, I am unable assess the impact of this proposal on air quality, and would recommend refusal due to insufficient information.”*

**Officer comment:**

The latest Transport Assessment submitted by the applicant shows that traffic levels associated with this development will be relatively low. The level of activity associated with the new Pavilion replacing an existing clubhouse is not material. The proposed Wellbeing Hub is an OUTLINE element but evenso predicted traffic levels are not considered by officers of an order to justify an Air Quality Assessment when largescale residential expansion has been permitted nearby.

■ Public Realm : (30 March 2023) (2 November 2023)

*“Public Realm officers have no comment to make”*

■ Place Landscape: (19 October 2023)

*“This letter sets out our desk-based consultation response to how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.*

*The application is in two parts, element one is the replacement and relocation of an existing sports pavilion building, play area, parking area and associated landscape works on Chilton Fields, recreation grounds. Element two is the creation of a building to with a new wellbeing hub and sports hall facility and associated landscaping between Stowmarket High School and the existing Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre.*

*Generally we have no objection to the principle of these developments. The submission did not include sufficient detail for us to provide a comprehensive response, but offer the below comments and recommendations and ask that these are taken into consideration if minded for approval:*

- *Landscape and Visual Appraisal did not form part of the submission. While the proposed developments would either be seen in the context of surrounding development or would constitute a replacement structure, we would still consider that there will be landscape and visual effects. There may also other constraints which have not been identified.*



- *In general there is a lack of information about the existing site conditions e.g. levels, boundary treatments, features such as play equipment and trim tail etc.*
- *There is also insufficient information regarding the proposed schemes eg boundary treatments, surfacing, cycle storage, planting, rainwater harvesting and features etc.*
- *Further details of establishment, management and maintenance of soft landscaping are required, though this could be secured by condition.*
- *It is unclear whether the proposed pedestrian route between the staff parking at the recreation grounds to the wellbeing hub forms part of the full or outline application. In either case further details are required for us to understand the requirements and effects e.g. the openness, public accessibility, lighting etc all require further explanation.*
- *Photovoltaic cells are proposed on the sloping roof of the pavilion, while the wellbeing hub has a flat roof with no details of the surface finish. The opportunity to provide a green roof or bio-solar should be explored.*
- *Element 1 Sport Pavilion – Full*

*The relocation of the pavilion will result in a loss of a significant number of early mature trees.*

*While elevations of the building have been provided the proposed height of the new building was not noted.*

*Further details of the rainwater harvesting system and use should be submitted.*

*The proposed pavilion is intended as a multifunctional building including social spaces served by a bar and kitchen. Currently deliveries vehicles will be parked at the front/lobby entrance end of the building some distance away from the service areas. We would recommend that further consideration is given to this layout.*

- *Element 2 Well Being Hub – Outline*

*There will be a loss of trees and hedgerow from this area which would appear to have been proposed to be replaced. Further details of species and size will need to be provided. The location of the replacement planting should be carefully considered to ensure no loss of public amenity (views onto trees) and long-term retention should the school expand or be redeveloped.*

*We welcome the inclusion of specimen trees within the paving to the front of the wellbeing hub. We would expect that suitable species are selected and that the specification of the planting environment will be high quality ie suitable growing medium, use of soil cells, root barriers, underground/hidden guying, correct specification of paving.*

*The wellbeing hub is noted to have a ‘green roof’ for the first floor terraced. Further details, what this surface is constructed from, how this will be accessible for use and maintained are required.*

*Details of the paved surface surrounding the wellbeing hub needs further design progression. Use of changing colours and materials for informal play for the nursery children and as an assessment tool for those attending occupational therapy was discussed at pre-application stage. While it may be possible to accommodate these, the landscape scheme needs to demonstrate that this will be a pleasant, cohesive and high-quality surface, avoiding a piecemeal appearance.*

*If minded for approval, we suggest the following conditions for your consideration:*

**ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME.**

*No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.*

*The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roof, planting preparation and establishment operations.*

*The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, built features and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.*

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or lost due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of lost and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity.*

**ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)**

*No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:*

- 1. Drawings showing:*
  - a. The extent of the LMP; i.e. only showing the areas to which the LMP applies, areas of private ownership should be excluded*

2. *Written Specification detailing:*

- a. *All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.*
- b. *All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.*
- c. *Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment*
- d. *All operations and procedures for surface water drainage system; inspection of linear drains and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter.*

3. *Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.*

*Reason - To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic.*

**ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF LANDSCAPING WORKS:  
PLAYSPACE PROVISION**

*Details of the onsite children's playspace provision contained within the proposed play spaces, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any landscaping works commencing. The details shall include the:*

- a. *Location, layout, design of the playspace;*
- b. *Surfacing;*
- c. *Signage; and*
- d. *Equipment/ features.*
- e. *Installation sign-off and certification*
- f. *Annual inspections*

*The playspace and equipment/features shall be laid out and installed prior to the first occupation of the development.*

*Reason - To ensure adequate control over the design and future management of the playspace is considered.*

Others

 **Anglian Water: (3 October 2023)**

*"Thank you for providing the CCTV which has proven to contain very useful information which has allowed us to refine our assessment. The survey contains significant new information that has demonstrated that sewers that we have recorded on our asset maps as being 225mm are, in fact 375mm. The survey also demonstrate that the manhole depths have steeper gradients than we had assumed and the updates utilities drawings allow us to more confidently estimate the existing catchment. Following the submission of the survey we have undertaken an enhanced desktop*

assessment and this has indicated that there is sufficient residual capacity to accommodate the proposed surface water flow without surcharging the public sewer. *To this end we would support your current, proposed surface water strategy.*”

#### Officer comment

The support of Anglian Water following the undertaking of additional sewer survey work by the applicant attracts significant weight. This now means that earlier questions relating the surface water drainage on the Gainsborough Road side of the development (specifically to serve the proposed Wellbeing Hub) have now been answered to the satisfaction of Anglian Water. It has been established with Anglian Water that there is sufficient capacity to accept the flows.

#### ■ British Horse Society: (9 April 2023)

*“I am responding to this planning application on behalf of The British Horse Society, an equestrian Charity which represents the 3 million horse riders in the UK. Nationally equestrians have just 22% of the rights of way network. In Suffolk, they have just 18% of the rights of way network, increasingly disjointed by roads which were once quiet and are now heavily used by traffic resulting from development within the County. It is therefore important that these public rights are protected.*

*The British Horse Society has no objection to this application, however the proposed site does contain a public right of way (PROW): Onehouse Bridleway 51. The Bridleway should remain open to walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and should be unobstructed, and safe for the public to use at all times, including throughout the construction period.*

*Horse riding is a year-round activity which (along with associated activities such as mucking out and pasture maintenance) expends sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise, this is important when considering that physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK (All Our Health, Public Health England, 2022).*

*Although the benefits of health and wellbeing are experienced by both men and women horse riders, the majority of those who ride regularly are women, and a sizeable proportion are over forty-five years of age. This is a valuable aspect of horse riding, since at National level, women in general have been identified as a social group with below average levels of participation in sport and physical exercise. (Sport England 2007)*

*There are also considerable psychological and social benefits from equestrian activities, as the BHS is demonstrating through the Changing Lives through Horses initiative.*

*Road Safety is a particular concern to equestrians, who are among the most vulnerable road users. Because of the difficulties that equestrians encounter on roads, they avoid using them wherever possible. Road use is often unavoidable; however, it is simply because people have nowhere else to exercise their horses. An additional factor is that the network is fragmented, and roads are often the only available links between one Right of Way and the next.*

*Thank you for taking the time to consider this response.”*

## ■ East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board: (22 March 2023)

*“The site is near to the Internal Drainage District (IDD) of the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and is within the Board’s Watershed Catchment (meaning water from the site will eventually enter the IDD). Maps are available on the Board’s webpages showing the Internal Drainage District ([https://www.wlma.org.uk/uploads/ESIDB\\_Index\\_plan.pdf](https://www.wlma.org.uk/uploads/ESIDB_Index_plan.pdf)) as well as the wider watershed catchment ([https://www.wlma.org.uk/uploads/ESIDB\\_Watershed.pdf](https://www.wlma.org.uk/uploads/ESIDB_Watershed.pdf)).*

*I note that the applicant has provided a drainage strategy for the site within their application, however I am pleased to see that the Flood Risk Assessment (Conisbee, March 2023) references that a drainage strategy which follows the SuDS hierarchy and restricts peak runoff rate will be developed. We recommend that a drainage strategy is supplied which has been considered in line with the Planning Practice Guidance SuDS discharge location hierarchy.*

*If it is proposed that the site disposes of surface water via infiltration, we recommend that the viability of this proposal is evidenced. As such we would recommend that the proposed strategy is supported by ground investigation to determine the infiltration potential of the site and the depth to groundwater. If on-site material were to be considered favourable then we would advise infiltration testing in line with BRE Digest 365 (or equivalent) to be undertaken to determine its efficiency.*

*If (following testing) a strategy wholly reliant on infiltration is not viable and a surface water discharge proposed to a watercourse within the watershed catchment of the Board’s IDD then we request that this be in line with the Non-Statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), specifically S2 and S4. Resultantly we recommend that the discharge from this site is attenuated to the Greenfield Runoff Rates wherever possible.*

*The reason for our recommendation is to promote sustainable development within the Board’s Watershed Catchment therefore ensuring that flood risk is not increased within the Internal Drainage District (required as per paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework). For further information regarding the Board’s involvement in the planning process please see our Planning and Byelaw Strategy, available online.”*

## ■ Essex and Suffolk Water: (14 November 2023)

*“Just to confirm that the following is outside of our supply area – Anglian Water will provide both mains water and waste water services: Chilton Sports Club, Chilton Way, Stowmarket”*

## ■ Mid Suffolk Disability Forum: ( 20 September 2023) (2 November 2023)

*“The Mid Suffolk Disability Forum has given its comments regarding access for disabled people directly to the Architects and Mid Suffolk District Council in face-to-face meetings.*

*We have welcomed the opportunity to have this direct input to the development. It is noted that the buildings will comply with relevant Building Regulations and therefore should be fully accessible and inclusive in their design.*

*With regard to the Design and Access Statement, it is noted that Section 8 Inclusive and Accessibility Strategy for the Pavilion and Well-being Hub makes no mention of the Changing Places facility. We would remind the applicant that this should also be included and meet BS8300 in order to meet the required standard for a Changing Places facility.*

*There is mention of a Play Area but no reference to any equipment being provided. We would ask that if there is play equipment that this is of inclusive design to accommodate children with disabilities.*

*It is not clear from the drawings how many accessible car parking spaces are provided in total in the development and the exact location of these in relation to the entrances to the buildings.*

*All efforts should be made to ensure all footpaths are wide enough for wheelchair users, with a minimum width of 1500mm, and that any dropped kerbs are absolutely level with roadways for ease of access. Where a crossing is provided, such as in Chilton Way, the importance of dropped kerbs on either side of the road being directly opposite to each other and level with the road should be noted.*

*All surfaces should be firm, durable and level. No loose gravel, cobbles or uneven setts should be used.”*

## B: Representations

At the time of writing this report various letters/emails/online comments have been received. These are summarised below. The full text of these representations and others that may be received after this report has been produced can be viewed on-line .

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Relevant Planning History follows.....



## RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

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### CHILTON FIELDS

REF: 3459/16	Erection of a front extension to the Club House.	DECISION: GTD 08.09.2016
REF: 1299/14	Erection of 4 no. floodlights	DECISION: REC
REF: 0707/13	Erection of rear lean-to extension	DECISION: REC
REF: 0119/12	Erection of storage buildings (following removal of 4 storage containers)	DECISION: REC
REF: 1141/11	Application for premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003.	DECISION: REC
REF: 0918/09	Provision of two additional changing rooms for sports use plus officials changing facilities.	DECISION: GTD 12.06.2009
REF: 1070/09	Installation of new floodlighting to established Rugby pitch behind Clubhouse.	DECISION: GTD 24.07.2009
REF: 2409/08	Installation of new floodlighting to rugby pitch and removal of old training floodlights	DECISION: WFI 22.09.2008
REF: 3152/07	Internal alterations and extensions to increase existing changing rooms, stores and clubroom/bar. Improvements to toilet facilities. New Lobby.	DECISION: GTD 07.12.2007
REF: 3124/06	Single storey extension to form new meeting room.	DECISION: GTD 31.01.2007
REF: 0991/87	Erection of clubroom with changing facilities, using existing access	DECISION: REC
REF: 0621/83	Use of 30.8 acres of land as playing fields, including laying of land drains, filling pond and construction of access road, north of	DECISION: GTD 08.09.1983

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## STOWMARKET SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE

REF: 1585/11	Erection of single-storey extension to form new fitness studio	DECISION: GTD 19.07.2011
REF: 4029/08	Provision of additional car parking and cycle spaces. Re-surfacing part of existing car park.	DECISION: GTD 20.04.2009
REF: 3891/08	Creation of additional car parking spaces and resurfacing of existing car park.	DECISION: REC
REF: 0084/94/	Erection of extension to leisure centre with alteration to access and car park.	DECISION: GTD 16.03.1994
REF: 0309/86	Erection of indoor bowls hall with layout of additional car parking, and formation of two new vehicular access including one temporary access for construction traffic	DECISION: GTD 04.06.1986
REF: 0765/84	Erection of indoor swimming pools with associated car parking.	DECISION: GTD 08.11.1984
REF: 1072/79	Alterations and additions to Sports Centre	DECISION: GTD 21.01.1980

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## STOWMARKET HIGH SCHOOL

REF: DC/18/02398	Planning Application. Demolition of existing school buildings and construction of new teaching building and refurbishment of current 6th Form building, together with associated landscaping.	DECISION: GTD 11.10.2018
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## NORTHFIELDS

REF: DC/20/05912	Reserved Matters Application following approval of Outline Planning Permission 5007/16- Northfield View Phase 2b will be providing: 100No dwellings , including affordable housing; associated hard and soft landscaping and infrastructure;	DECISION: GTD 31.03.2021
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Provision of Public Open Space,  
Footpath and Cycleway.

REF: DC/21/06052	Submission of Details (Reserved Matters in part) for Phase 2C of Outline Planning Permission 5007/16. Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be considered for the erection of 234 no. residential dwellings, public open space, and associated infrastructure.	DECISION: GTD 23.09.2022
REF: DC/20/05912	Reserved Matters Application following approval of Outline Planning Permission 5007/16- Northfield View Phase 2b will be providing: 100No dwellings , including affordable housing; associated hard and soft landscaping and infrastructure; Provision of Public Open Space, Footpath and Cycleway.	DECISION: GTD 31.03.2021
REF: 5007/16	Application for Outline Planning Permission for erection of 600 new dwellings together with a local centre, sports pavilion, open space and recreation facilities. (All Matters Reserved).	DECISION: GTD 05.07.2018
REF: 5005/16	Application for full planning permission for highway and utilities infrastructure, including: main spine road, emergency access, drainage and attenuation, a pumping station, electricity substations and other utilities.	DECISION: GTD 03.07.2017

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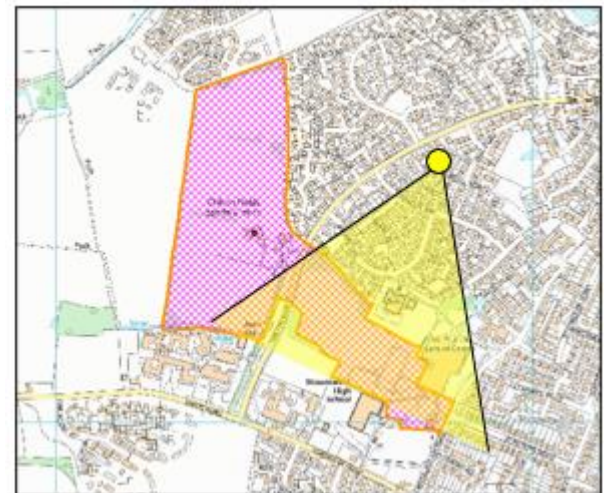


**1.0 The Site and Surroundings**

1.1 These are described pictorially below.



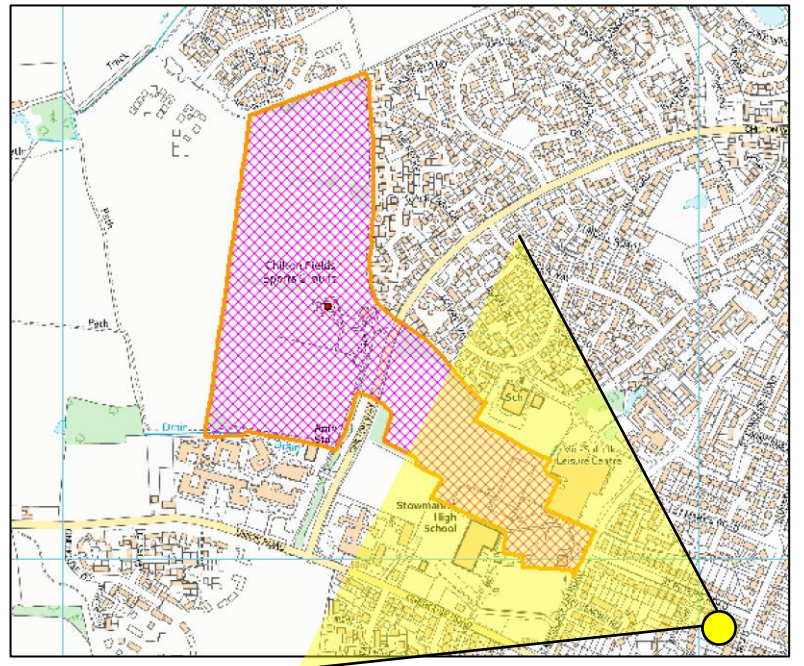
figures 6:  
**Setting of Application Site - 1**  
**Aerial View**



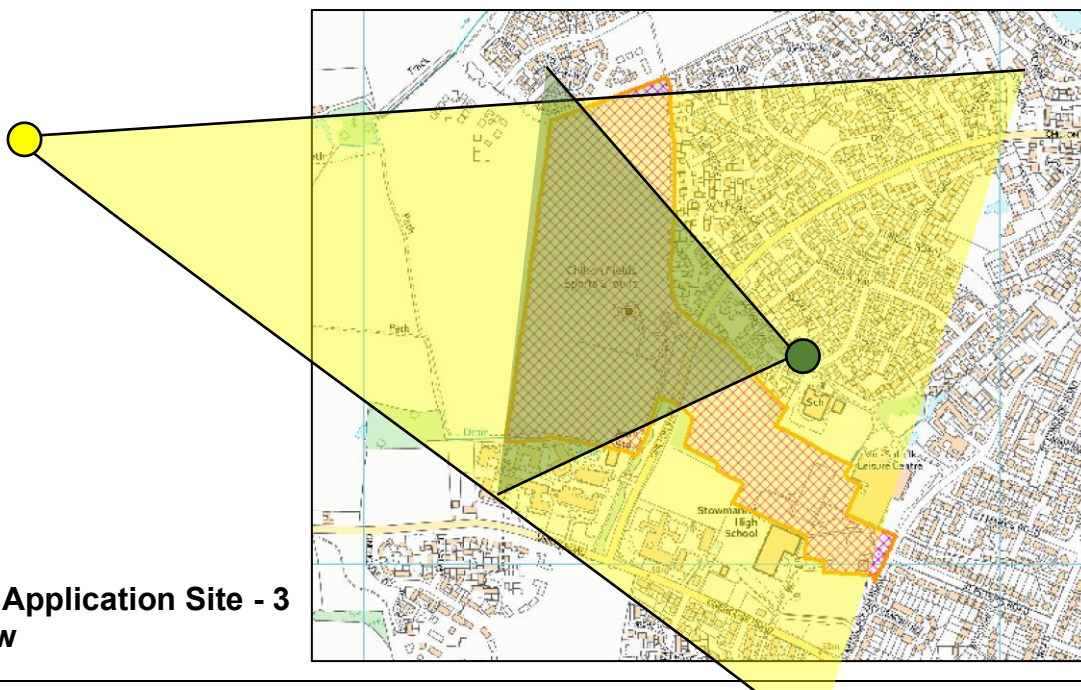




figures 7:  
**Setting of Application Site - 2**  
**Aerial View**





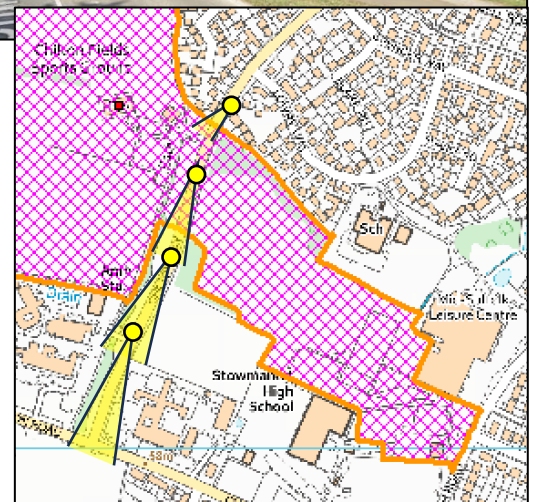


figures 8:  
**Setting of Application Site - 3  
Aerial View**





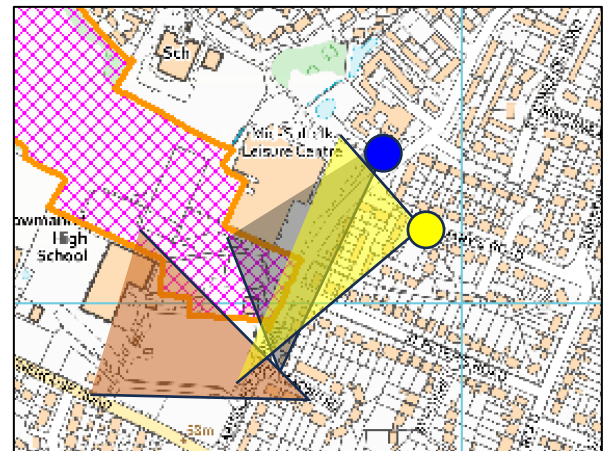
figures 9:  
**Setting of Application Site - 4  
Chilton Way**







figures 10:  
**Setting of Application Site - 5  
Gainsborough Road**



CLASSIFICATION: Official



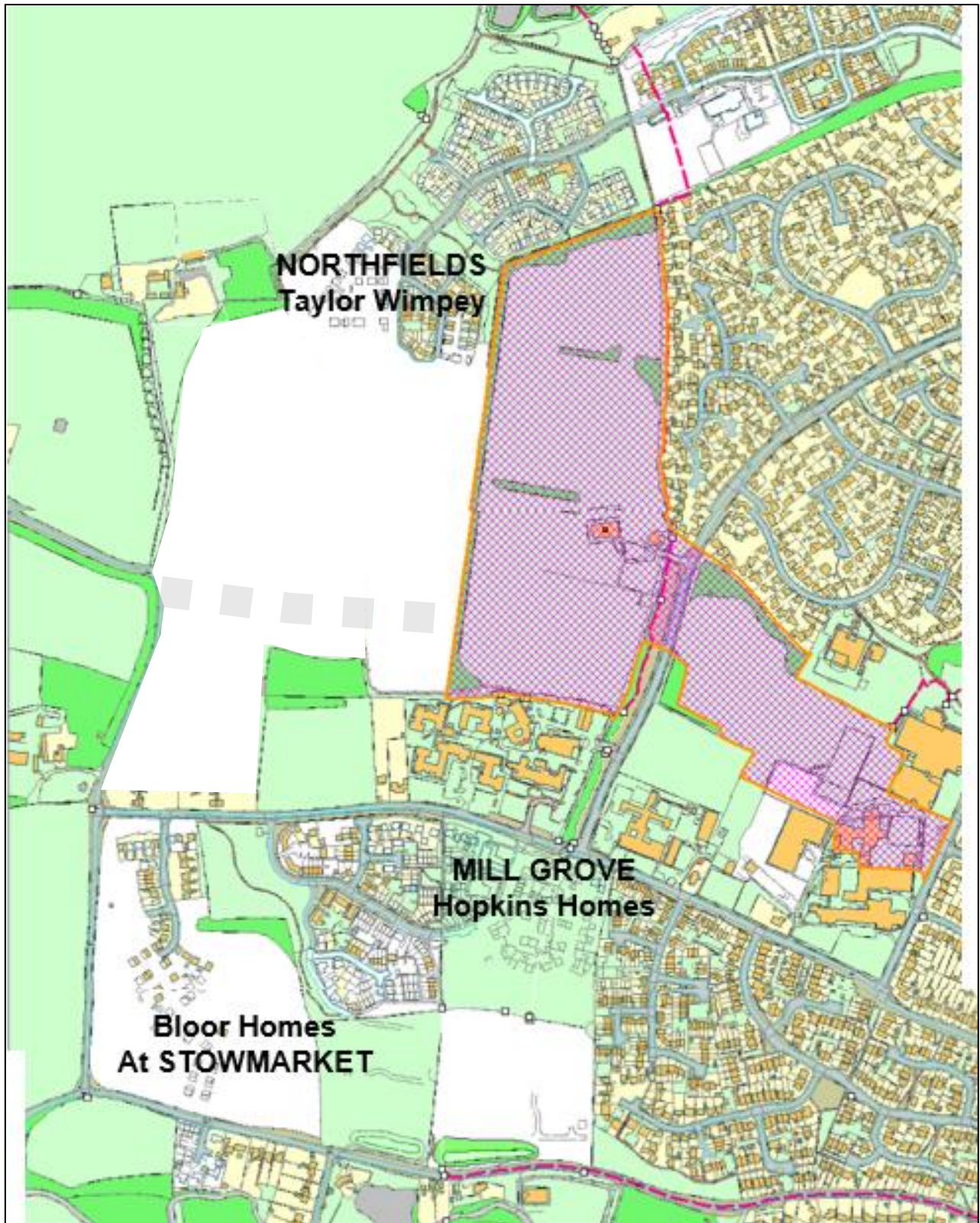


figure 11: **Nearby Major Residential Sites**

## 2.0 Description of Proposal

2.1 This is provided pictorially below.

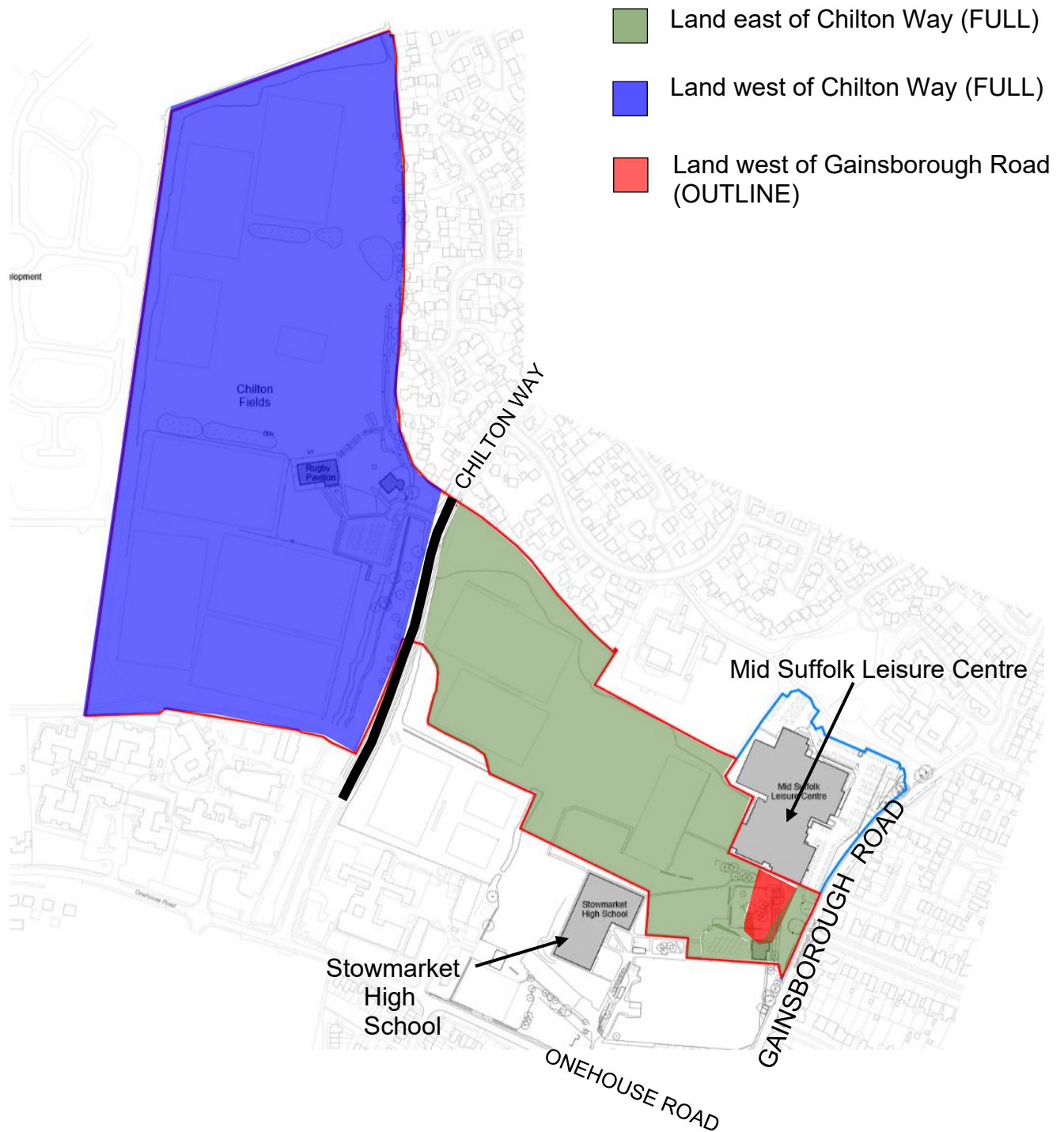


figure 12: The Three Proposed Development Areas



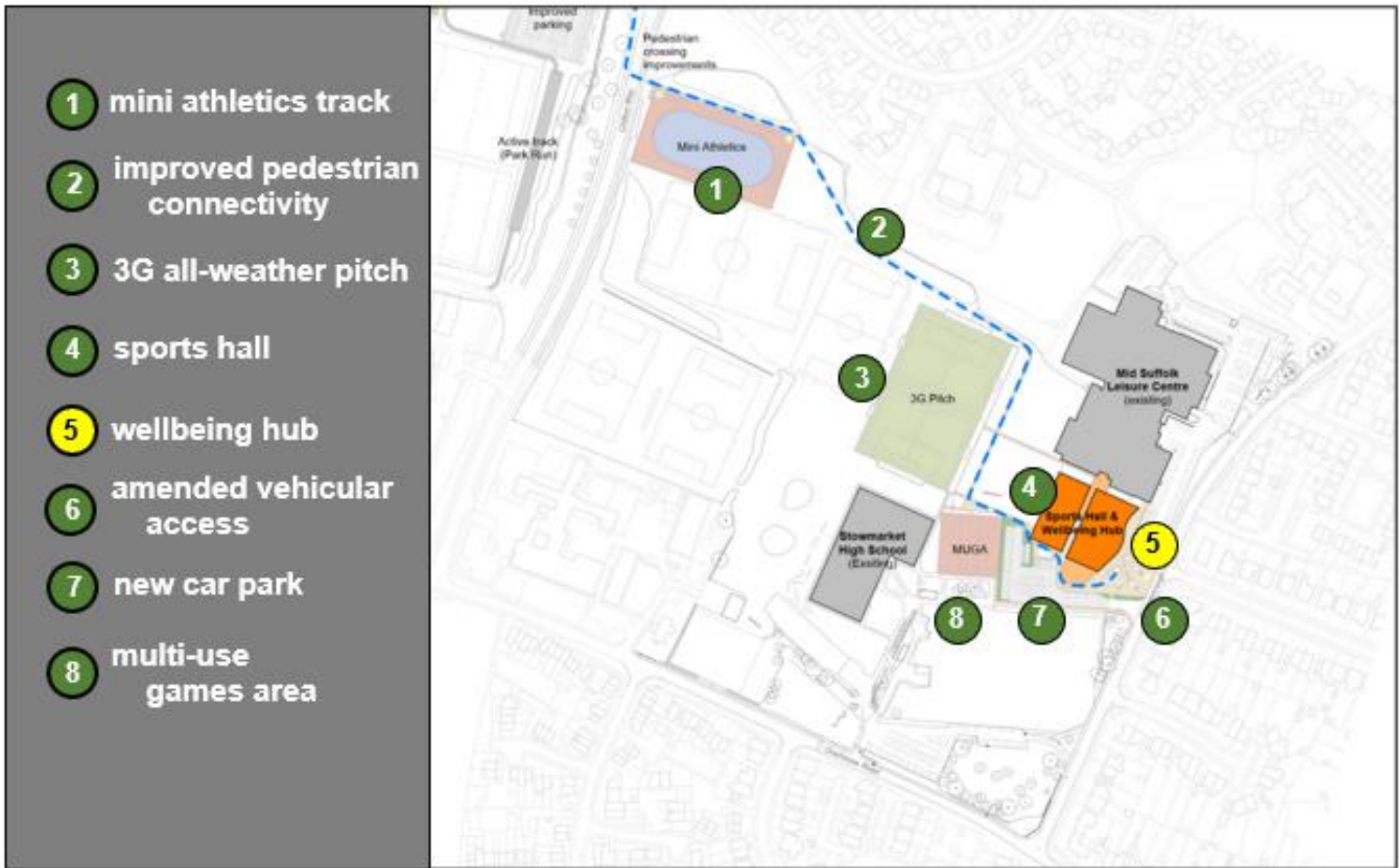


figure 13: Plan - Main Components of Proposal on Land East of Chilton Way (green) and West of Gainsborough Road (yellow)

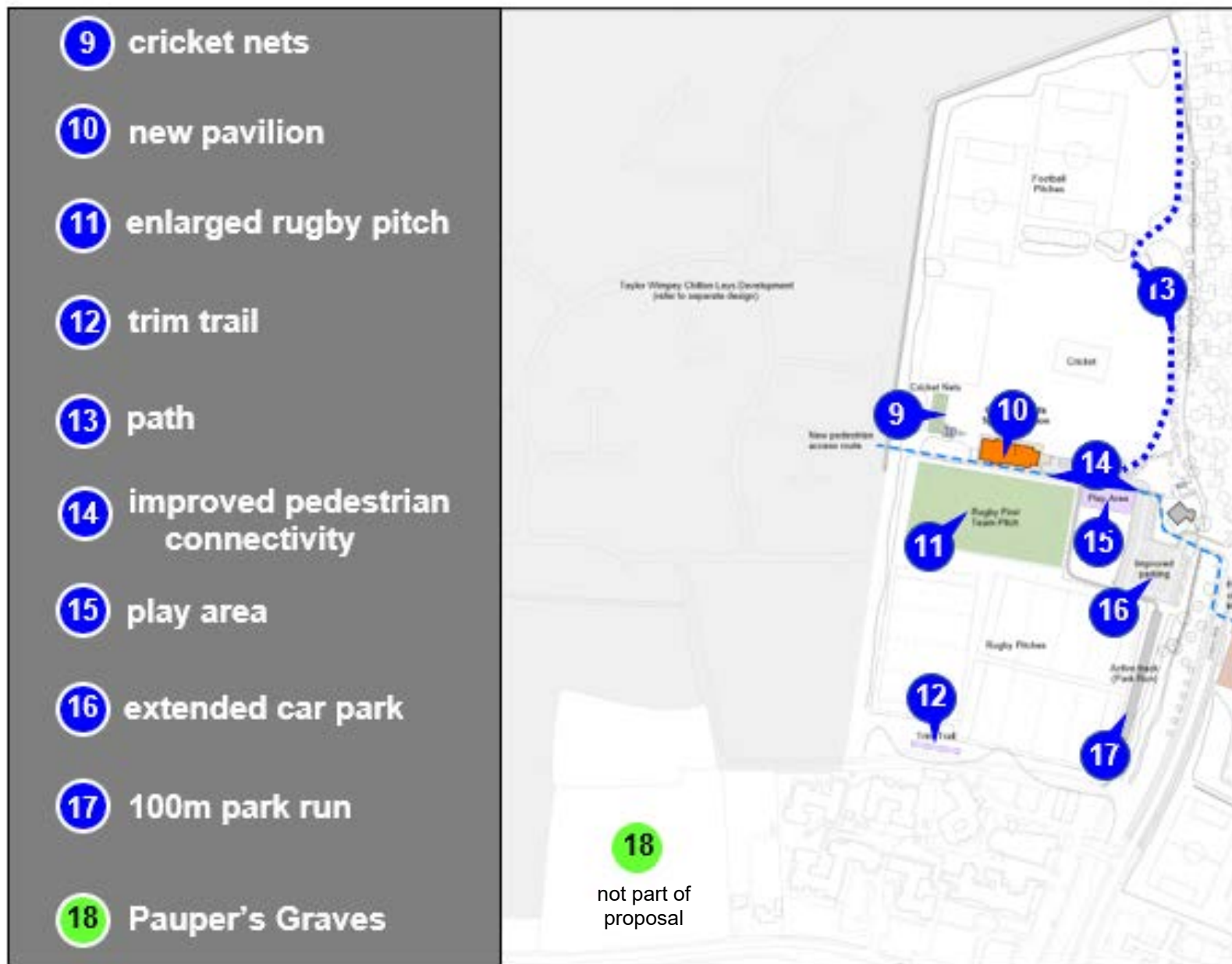


figure14: **Plan - Main Components of Proposal on Land West of Chilton Way (blue)**



**LAND ON WEST SIDE OF CHILTON WAY - Chilton Fields**

Existing	Image	Proposed	Image
sports pitches		enlarge the main rugby pitch	
Single storey pavilion/clubhouse (social space can be booked for events)		Demolish existing building and build a new 2 storey replacement (with lift) on nearby site to provide changing rooms and officials rooms (gr fl), and social/event space on the first floor with external terrace space/viewing areas	
Early years nursery Chilton Way		Building retained but use may transfer to new Wellbeing Hub.  If it does transfer the existing building will be reused	

figure 15a: Images - Main Components of Proposal on Land West of Chilton Way (blue)

<p>Car park Fields</p> <p>Chilton</p>		<p>Retained and expanded (physical area and no. of spaces)</p>	
<p>Gainsborough Road</p>		<p>New parking area</p>	
<p>Play Area Chilton Fields</p>		<p>Moved and improved</p>	<p>details of equipment to be conditioned</p> 

figure15b: Images - Main Components of Proposal on Land West of Chilton Way (blue) : 2 and parking

LAND ON EAST SIDE OF CHILTON WAY

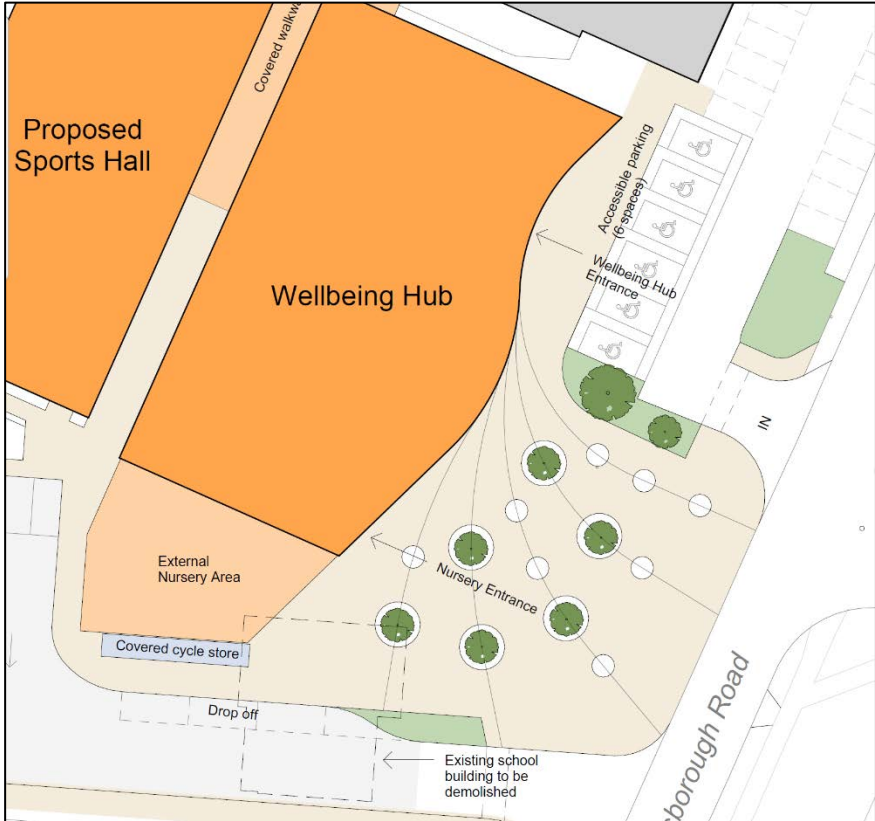
Existing	Image	Proposed	Image
<p>school sports pitches (grass)</p>		<p>Retain usable pitch space but provide new Mini athletics track and wildlife areas</p>	
<p>hard surface pitch &amp; small multi use area</p>		<p>replace with large 3G all-weather pitch and new MUGA</p>	

figure15c: **Main components of proposal on land west of Chilton Way (blue)**



school grounds (open non-specific)		100m grass running area	Adjacent to Leisure Centre block

LAND ON WEST SIDE OF GAINSBOROUGH ROAD			
Existing	Image	Proposed	Image
none	n/a	Wellbeing Hub building	Outline proposal.



figures 15d: **Main components Wellbeing Hub**

## Proposed Opening Hours

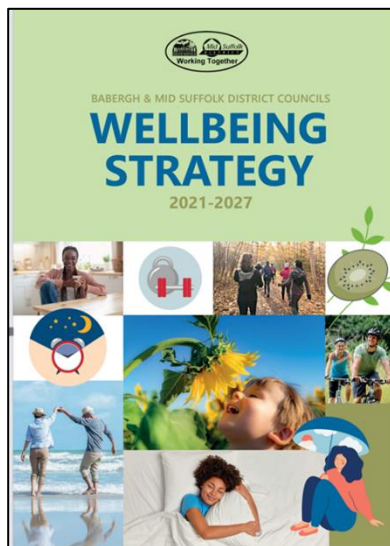
### Pavilion

Monday - Friday	06.00hrs - 22.30hrs
Saturday	06.00hrs - 22.30hrs
Sunday & Bank Hols	06.00hrs - 22.00hrs

### Wellbeing Hub

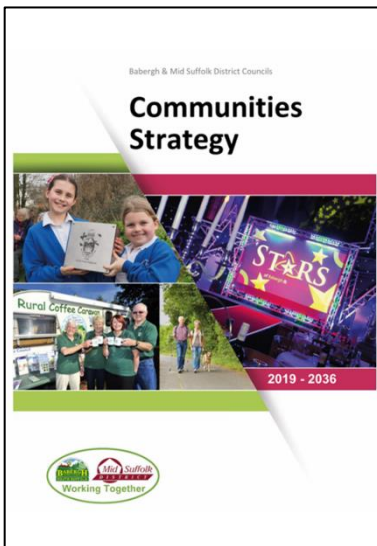
Monday - Friday	07.00hrs - 19.00hrs
Saturday	07.00hrs - 19.00hrs
Sunday & Bank Hols	07.00hrs - 19.00hrs

Whilst the following do not form part of the Council's Adopted Development Plan the applicant is promoting this project as helping to deliver objectives contained in the Council's published Wellbeing, Communities and Leisure Strategies. When assessing any planning application (*not just those submitted by the Council itself*) reference can be made to the Council's 'Strategy' documents. (eg; employment uses and the Employment Strategy)

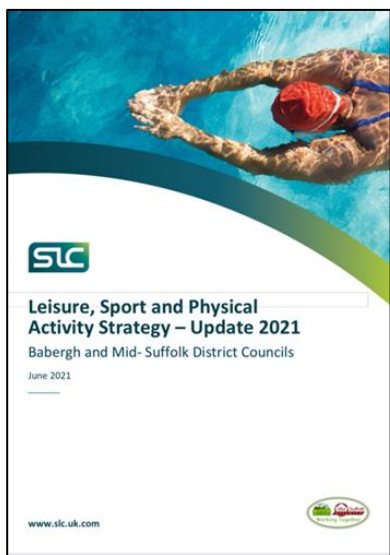


'The residents of Mid Suffolk\* will have the best possible conditions for good wellbeing and have lives that are healthy, happy and rewarding.'

- Families to lead active, healthy, safe, and independent lives and manage their own health & wellbeing;
- All communities to have sustainable and inclusive spaces, and spaces, which maximise health & wellbeing opportunities and benefits; and
- A reduction in Health inequalities.



“Our goal is to create the right conditions for communities to thrive; to bring volunteers, community leaders and publicly funded services together to plan and provide the most sustainable support for each other so that our communities are resilient and connected places for people to live and work. Our Strategy sets out both the opportunities and challenges this presents as well as our tactics for delivering the change and improvements that you want to see.”



“To support and enable increased levels of sport and physical activity participation across Babergh and Mid Suffolk; to support the improvement of health and wellbeing within our communities, particularly those from less active groups experiencing greater health inequalities.”

- **Reduce levels of inactivity amongst communities and in localities experiencing greater health inequalities**
- **Increase opportunities for all residents to move more through an accessible, diverse and inclusive programme of activities**
- **Sustainable community sport, leisure and physical activity facilities that enable and support all residents to be active**
- **Green open spaces providing formal and informal opportunities for all residents to be ‘everyday active’**

\* The Strategies also applies in Babergh



The proposal is also being promoted by the applicant as supporting the Council's Priorities Plan January 2024.

"We want our communities in Mid Suffolk to thrive and we believe this can be achieved by working together. We will achieve this by:

1. Providing open & honest leadership.
2. Putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the heart of everything we do.
3. Providing high quality council services that are easy to access when needed and that can be relied on.
4. Ensuring we are financially responsible with public money.
5. Continuing to listen to, and work in partnership with, all citizens of Mid Suffolk.
6. Working closely and cooperatively with others.
7. Enabling and empowering citizens to be active in their communities.
8. Nurturing community resilience and helping it to become more robust."

Of particular relevance to the application before Members are perhaps 2 and 7 but all touch the project in one way or another.

"These are the actions we want to focus on. Some of these we can achieve directly but some we can only influence others to deliver as we do not run these services, but we will continue to represent everyone and lobby hard on their behalf."

Extract

#### Community Wellbeing

- Enabling improved physical and mental wellbeing
- Enabling greater access to green spaces
- Enhancing walking and cycling opportunities
- Addressing inequalities (including health, poverty, educational and employment)
- Promoting greater pride in your place

The Priorities Plan was agreed by Full Council on 25 January 2024.

It is the Adopted Development Plan (principally in the shape of the Joint Local Plan 2023 Part One Policies and any saved policies) that must be the starting point for consideration of the merits of any application. As it is up to date it is the primary reference point.

The Strategies referred to above are incidental and carry no weight for the purpose of determining planning applications.

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## DETAILED ASSESSMENT

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### 3.0 Principle of Use

3.1 First, it is appropriate to consider the proposal in the context of existing uses across the site and how they compare. Our starting point will be to compare against the Use Classes Order, in order to establish whether or not the proposed uses constitute a material change of use whether in whole or in part.

Site Location	Existing lawful use	Proposed Use
Land west of Chilton Way (Chilton Fields)	Sport and recreation in the shape of outdoor sports pitches with clubhouse building <sup>4</sup> (Class F2) (Use Classes Order 2020) ( <i>abbr'v.</i> UCO20) and parking and nursery <sup>5</sup> (pre-school) (Class E) (UCO20)	No change
Land east of Chilton Way (Stowmarket High School and grounds)	Education use <sup>6</sup> (Stowmarket High School) (Class F1) (UCO20) with associated ancillary indoor and outdoor sport and leisure uses with a degree of community access	No change
Stowmarket Sports and Leisure Centre Gainsborough Road	Indoor sports and leisure <sup>7</sup> (Class E) (UCO20)	Sports Hall extension: Class E(d)  Wellbeing Hub  Shop: Class E(a) Café: Class E(b) Clinic/Health space: Class E(e) Nursery Space: Class E(f) Office: <sup>8</sup> Class E (g)(i)  No change on the basis that although the range of uses now proposed is wider than those that currently exists, all the proposed uses are within the same Use Class that has amalgamated a number of previously separate uses <sup>9</sup> into the same use class.

figure16: **Main Components by Use**

<sup>4</sup> Previously Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) Use Classes Order 1987 before 2020 Amendment Regs

<sup>5</sup> Previously Class D1 (Non-Residential Institution) Use Classes Order 1987 before 2020 Amendment Regs

<sup>6</sup> Previously Class D1 (Non-Residential Institution) Use Classes Order 1987 before 2020 Amendment Regs

<sup>7</sup> Previously Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) Use Classes Order 1987 before 2020 Amendment Regs

<sup>8</sup> Previously Class B1 (a) Business (offices) before 2020 Amendment Regs

<sup>9</sup> If individual planning permissions relating to any of elements of the existing uses carried a condition/s restricting the use to a particular/specific type/s within one Use Class, by reference to the Order in force at the time of

- 3.2 It is however considered prudent to consider the Sports Hall extension and Wellbeing Hub (Class E) as changes of use, as land ownership is fragmented and parts of the Wellbeing Hub/Sports Hall may be located on what is currently school land (Class F1) and some of the outdoor sports areas (Class F2) may be located on what currently leisure centre land (Class E). – or other minor permutations.
- 3.3 By doing so Members will have fully considered any planning implications that may arise from a change of use that may subsequently have been found to have occurred when land titles are compared.
- 3.4 From a planning procedural perspective, the applicant has declared that all relevant land-owners have been formally notified by them of the application.
- 3.5 The applicant further advises that it has involved those land-owners in negotiations as part of its own separate pre-application and project management discussions (without the involvement of the Development Management Service) and therefore to some extent the layout has been shaped by those discussions.
- 3.6 The relevant sections of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 are reproduced at appendix 1 of this report for reference.
- 3.7 The report now turns to considering the principle of the use in the context of the basket of planning policies viewed by officers to be those '*most important for determining the application*<sup>10</sup>. (at this point applied here in respect of relevance to the principle of use.) (Note: sections most relevant to the case at hand are highlighted in emboldened text)
- 3.8 The proposed development accords with relevant sections of JLP Policy LP28 - 'Services and Facilities Within the Community', which states:

1. *Provision of New and/or Expanded Services and Facilities*

- a. *Proposals for new accessible local services and community facilities will be supported where the proposal is well related to and meets the needs of the community.*

- b. *Development of and improvements to services and facilities which would assist in safeguarding a viable community asset will be supported subject to Plan policy compliance. The facility should be a proportionate scale to the settlement and should not adversely affect existing facilities. Proposals, particularly those located outside settlement boundaries, must demonstrate evidence of the*

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granting permission or any such Order that may revoke, amend or otherwise replace that Order, then any use outside of that specifically restricted by condition within what would otherwise have been the same Use Class will constitute a material change of use

<sup>10</sup> 'Wavendon' Judgement. High Court before Mr Justice Dove 14/06/2019 Neutral Citation Number: [2019] EWHC 1524 (Admin)

*community need for and/or the benefits of the new facilities and good accessibility to the community to be served.*

- c. All development should have a high standard of design and sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and townscape, with no adverse effects on heritage assets and their settings.*
- d. For open space, all developments in excess of 1 hectare will be required to provide on-site open space provision to meet the needs it creates having regard to what is already in the area and the most recent Open Space Assessment. This is unless the LPA considers it more appropriate to make improvements to existing open space within the locality in an equally or more accessible location than the proposed development.*

## **2. Loss of Services and Facilities**

*Development involving or comprising of the loss of an existing community facility, service or premises, which is currently or last used to provide such use, will only be permitted if either:*

- a. Compensatory provision of an alternative or improved facility will be, provided in an equally accessible or improved location; or*
- b. The applicant can sufficiently demonstrate that the service or facility is not viable and is no longer performing a functional role in its current or future form and it is not needed for an economically viable alternative community use.  
(n/a)*
- 3. Evidence to demonstrate that a service or facility is not viable, either in its current or future form should be agreed with the relevant LPA in advance (before being gathered) and should include:*
  - a. A sustained marketing period, normally of 6 months, undertaken at a realistic asking price on a range of terms and in an appropriate format by an independent qualified assessor;*
  - b. Regard to any material considerations, designations or adopted plans for the area; and*
  - c. Regard to relevant evidence on levels of community need and/or requirements.*

*(above n/a)*

4. *Conversion of community facilities or premises into residential dwelling(s) must demonstrate compliance with part 2 and part 3 above and Policy LP04.”*  
(n/a)

In particular,

3.9 LP28 (1)(a)

It will provide new accessible local services and community facilities and as such the policy presumption (LP31 (1)(a) is one of support.

The site is within easy walking/cycling distance of large numbers of existing homes and the established community on the south-west side of Stowmarket.

It is also adjacent to the Northfields Development site which when complete will have added 600 new homes and some 1300 people to the locality.

3.10 LP28 (1)(b)

It will in part develop and improve existing services and facilities on offer locally and particularly in the Leisure Centre and across the open air sports sites which will assist in safeguarding a viable community asset. Namely:

the expansion of sports hall facilities which will widen the range of sports opportunities and expand the capacity of existing facilities to attract more users.

Pitch improvement to allow rugby to be played at a higher level

Addition of all-weather MUGA to expand range of sports opportunities and to expand capacity to accommodate higher frequency usage as a result of synthetic surfacing.

Provision of a mini athletics track to expand the range of sporting activity that can be undertaken on the site. This enables

Jogging track (trim trail) will offer facilities for both formal and informal exercise which expands health and wellbeing opportunities for local people.

Purpose built modern rentable Community floorspace will provide a decent venue for a variety of community activities, events and meeting spaces.

The opportunity for joined up service provision in the form of clinics and advice within the wellbeing hub.

The proposed community café will provide a place to socialise and help combat loneliness, get food/refreshments and potentially provide a warm place in winter for those in fuel poverty.

3.11 Accessibility

The replacement of the existing single-storey clubhouse on Chilton Fields with a modern, purpose built, two-storey pavilion with improved changing room facilities, elevated viewing terraces and expansive flexible internal social/clubhouse space represents

*'compensatory provision with an improved facility'* and also features enhanced internal accessibility. (it includes a lift<sup>11</sup>)

The Wellbeing Hub is also expected to meet accessibility requirements.

3.12 LP28 (1)(c)

The proposed development is being pursued on the basis of being something of an exemplar in terms of design and green credentials

3.13 The proposed development accords with relevant sections of JLP Policy LP31 - 'Health and Education Provision', which states:

1. *Sites proposed, or in current health and educational use, will be protected for that use. The change of use, or re-development of educational establishments and their grounds, will not be permitted unless:*
  - a. *It can be clearly demonstrated that the use of the site is genuinely redundant and the use is not viable in its current form, or an alternative economically viable community use(s) cannot be found;*
  - b. *Satisfactory alternative capacity and/or improved facilities will be provided; and*
  - c. *For educational uses, the area of the site to be redeveloped is in excess of Government guidelines for playing field provision, taking into account future educational projections.*
2. *Further to the above, in order to prevent land-locking development adjacent to existing schools and healthcare facilities should not compromise their ability to expand to an appropriate size in the future.*
3. *The Councils will respond positively to and support appropriate and well-designed applications regarding the creation of new health and/or education facilities, and extensions to existing facilities. The Councils will be supportive of proposals that enable dual use of existing and new health and education facilities which can also be used by the community and agreed under a Community Use Agreement. Where necessary, the Councils will utilise planning obligations to help to mitigate any adverse impacts of an educational or health development and assist in delivering development that has a positive impact on the community.*

3.14 In terms of LP31 (1) the proposal has the ability to provide new nurse accommodation within the Wellbeing Hub should that be seen as a benefit and so this element of existing education use will not be lost. Indeed it may remain in its current location within Chilton Fields depending on how the Wellbeing Hub in Package 3 evolves.

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<sup>11</sup> The existing clubhouse being single storey doesn't need a lift and so the provision of a lift in the new building is not in and of itself an improvement on what exists but its inclusion will mean the new building and its improved facilities are fully accessible



- 3.15 The overall proposal does not prevent Stowmarket High School from expanding should the need arise and to some degree is adding to the facilities it has to offer its pupils. It is therefore compliant with LP31 (2)
- 3.16 In terms of LP31 (3) the proposal not only protects existing facilities but expands them. The distribution of activity may change and the all-weather MUGS may mean inferior facilities are replaced but all in all the proposal represents a significant investment in improving sport and recreation facilities but also accessibility to them.
- 3.17 It is clearly possible to see how the proposed facilities could be managed with partner agencies to increase participation in a range of activities that could result in health and wellbeing benefits (both physical and mental). Increasingly social prescribing by GPs is seen part of their arsenal of methods for improving wellbeing beyond (or in collaboration with) talking therapies and /or medication.
- 3.18 The proposal conforms with SP03 - The Sustainable Location of New Development as the site is within the Built-Up Area of Stowmarket as defined on the 2023 Policies Map



figure17: ' **Built-Up** ' Area Boundary: Stowmarket

- 3.19 The proposal is considered to satisfy LP29 Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport in the following regards:

Paragraph 1: The proposal incorporates a range of works designed to improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility to from and across the site, linking it with wider parts of the area

Paragraph 2: The proposed accessibility improvements referred to above have been worked up in co-ordination with Suffolk County Council which is currently working on its own strategy/projects for improving connectivity and accessibility in this part of Stowmarket. The result of this collaboration should be a comprehensive local network.

Paragraph 3 Parking provision has been at the heart of discussions with officers and the package developed will be described in greater detail within the parking section of this report.

Paragraph 5 Suffolk County Council as local highway authority supports the proposal

Paragraphs 4, and 6 do not apply in this case.

### 3.20 NPPF December 2023

96. “ Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which: a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages; b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of beautiful, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and c) 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.”

102. *“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, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”*

- 3.21 Whilst the proposal is not in and of itself being promoted primarily as an employment use it will generate new job opportunities and comprise and number of uses that might ordinarily be considered to constitute Town Centre Uses.
- 3.22 These are defined in the AJLP2023 at Policy SP06 - Retail and Main Town Centre Uses (1) footnote 1, as being:
- “Main town centre uses include retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres), leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls), offices and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities) [NPPF, 2021].”*
- 3.23 Like all Councils the Authority seeks protect the viability and vitality of designated Town Centres/Centres as they are sustainable locations and traditionally have been the engine room of key parts of the local economy.
- 3.24 To that end regard needs to be given to SP06 (1) and (2) which state:
- “1) Proposals for new main town centre uses will be supported in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Stowmarket town centres (as defined on the Policies Map) and centres that are defined in made Neighbourhood Plans.*
- 2) A sequential test will be applied for proposals for main town centre uses which are neither in defined town centre areas, nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. “*
- 3.25 Whilst the proposed development includes leisure, intensive sport, recreational uses it has to be recognised that the site is already a significant recreation/leisure facility outside of the Town Centre. Much of what is being proposed is an expansion of existing facilities and as such these will not prejudice the wellbeing of Stowmarket Town Centre. In many ways it would not be possible nor desirable to accommodate a facility of this size in the Town Centre.
- 3.26 The proposed uses do include office space and a café which are Town Centre uses but the café element is so small as to pose no threat to established hospitality businesses within the Town Centre. It will be geared (but not exclusively) to serving users of the facilities on site and is to be seen very much as an incidental use to these.
- 3.27 The possible office space within the Wellbeing Hub is not planned to be orthodox speculative office floorspace that might be best located in a designated Centre but rather to complement the health and wellbeing uses within the building. So for example health providers would have office/touchdown space within the building but might also be delivering services within the associated clinic spaces and/or within the local community. This community-based working is acceptable within the built-up area of Stowmarket is reflective of the Council’s desire to support communities. There is a strong functional

connection between all the elements within the proposed development and therefore bringing them all together in one place is seen as good for effective working rather than having them dispersed hither and thither. (and therefore less likely to be accessible to the community they serve and less likely to facilitate linked trips and joined-up cross agency service delivery.

- 3.28 Consequently it is not appropriate or necessary to undertake a sequential test as the proposed development is location specific for good reason and is not expected to divert *'trade'* from the Town Centre.
- 3.29 SP05 is not considered particularly relevant as this is not an employment use in the sense of employment generation/activity being its reason for being. Any new jobs it will create are a side show not the main act and to that extent are ancillary to the Sport Health Education and Leisure functions.
- 3.30 Similarly LP09 is only tangentially relevant as the proposal is not in and of itself one that can be said to be a primarily employment based. TO the extent it may be relevant the proposal meets the criteria in the policy.

- “ 1. Proposals for employment use must:
- a. Be sensitive to the surroundings, including any residential and other amenity, landscape and heritage assets;
  - b. Demonstrate a high standard of design;
  - c. Where necessary, provide contributions to the enhancement of the digital infrastructure network; and
  - d. Demonstrate a safe and suitable access for all users, sufficient on-site parking and that it will not have a severe impact on the road network. “

## 2.31 The Proposed Uses (by Use Class)

- 3.32 The relevant sections of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 are reproduced below for reference: (the text in blue are the parts that are considered to relate to the proposed development before Members)

PART A: Commercial, Business and Service

Class E. Commercial, Business and Service

Use, or part use, for all or any of the following purposes—

- (a) for the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public,

- (b) for the sale of food and drink principally to visiting members of the public where consumption of that food and drink is mostly undertaken on the premises,
- (c) for the provision of the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public<sup>12</sup>—
  - (i) financial services,
  - (ii) professional services (other than health or medical services), or
  - (iii) any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality,
- (d) for indoor sport, recreation or fitness, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, principally to visiting members of the public,
- (e) for the provision of medical or health services, principally to visiting members of the public, except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner,
- (f) for a creche, day nursery or day centre, not including a residential use, principally to visiting members of the public,
- (g) for —
  - (i) an office to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
  - (ii) the research and development of products or processes, or
  - (iii) any industrial process,

being a use, which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

## PART B Local Community and Learning

### Class F.1 Learning and non-residential institutions

Any use not including residential use—

- (a) for the provision of education,
- (b) for the display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire),
- (c) as a museum,
- (d) as a public library or public reading room,
- (e) as a public hall or exhibition hall,
- (f) for, or in connection with, public worship or religious instruction,
- (g) as a law court.

### Class F.2 Local community

Use as—

- (a) a shop mostly selling essential goods, including food, to visiting members of the public in circumstances where—
  - (i) the shop's premises cover an area not more than 280 metres square, and

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<sup>12</sup> Whilst community citizens advice, debt counselling, legal advice, employability advice etc may be delivered within the Wellbeing Hub, it is not intended to let out space to commercial professional service providers, such as independent accountants, financial advisers, solicitors etc.



(ii) there is no other such facility within 1000 metre radius of the shop's location,<sup>13</sup>

- (b) a hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community,
- (c) an area or place for outdoor sport or recreation, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms,
- (d) an indoor or outdoor swimming pool or skating rink.

3.32 In the event that Members are minded to grant permission it is recommended that a condition controlling the permitted uses is attached in order to prevent unforeseen impacts from arising that were not taken into account at the present time of considering the merits of the proposal should the applicant's intentions change over time.

3.33 Sub Conclusion: Principle of Proposed Uses

3.34 Officers having had regard to relevant local and national policies and the nature and distribution of the uses proposed are of the opinion that they are acceptable in principle for the reasons discussed above.



3.34 Next stage of the Assessment

3.36 Having established what in officers opinion is the acceptability of the proposed uses in principle, this report will now move on to assess the merits of the application in regard to the submitted details. *(remembering that these relate directly to the FULL application rather than the OUTLINE save for access)*

#### 4.0 Trees

4.1 The application is not without some adverse environmental/ecological impact, at least in the short-term and this report does not downplay this.

4.2 What follows is a detailed exploration of these by way of their nature and scale, along with an analysis of the 'validity' of the submitted justification and then consideration of the arboricultural mitigation proposed by the applicant as to the extent that it will or will not satisfactorily repair that harm but also whether it is likely or not to enhance what are the present baseline arboricultural conditions.

4.3 The majority of the tree loss is prompted by the proposed construction of the Pavilion and the Wellbeing hub in the locations being promoted by the applicant.

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<sup>13</sup> It is noted that there is a Londis store within approx. 466m (by road/footway) from the proposed Wellbeing Hub and any shop here would constitute a Class E use.

4.5 In summary:

flora type	proposed for removal	proposed planting	difference
individual trees	68	69	+1
saplings		5200sq.m.	+5,200sq.m
hedgerow	140m	247m	+107

figure18: **Flora Loss and Gain**

- 4.6 The plan below shows the areas where existing established flora is proposed to be removed to accommodate the development as submitted.
- 4.7 The majority of the trees that would be lost to accommodate the proposed two-storey Pavilion building are Alders.
- 4.8 Alders are often planted in rows to form wind breaks and have an ability to thrive in wet conditions.
- 4.9 From the existing pattern of planting, it appears they may originally have been planted on the site as a wind break. They are tightly packed in rows. Indeed they are so tightly packed that their canopies entwine as do their root systems. *(Please see photograph as figure XX).*
- 4.10 Many exhibit a distinct lean to the north-east which suggests that their growth has been impacted by the UK's predominantly south west winds and possibly wet ground conditions.
- 4.11 The diagram below *(as produced by DM)* describe the applicant's reasoning for proposing some tree loss. From an operational/logistical perspective these make sense

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Tree related diagrams and images follow.....



## The Alder

*Alnus glutinosa*

Swamp-dweller, water-lover. The wood of this tough tree doesn't rot when waterlogged, instead turning stronger and harder

Soft and porous, alder wood is only durable if kept wet, and its value to humans is down to its ability to withstand rotting in water. Historically, it has been used in the construction of boats, sluice gates and water pipes. These days, alder wood is used to make timber veneers, pulp and plywood.

The roots have nitrogen-fixing nodules, conditioning the soil and improving soil fertility on former industrial wasteland and brownfield sites. Alders are also used in flood mitigation.

figure 19: **The Alders at the Rugby Club**

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/alder>



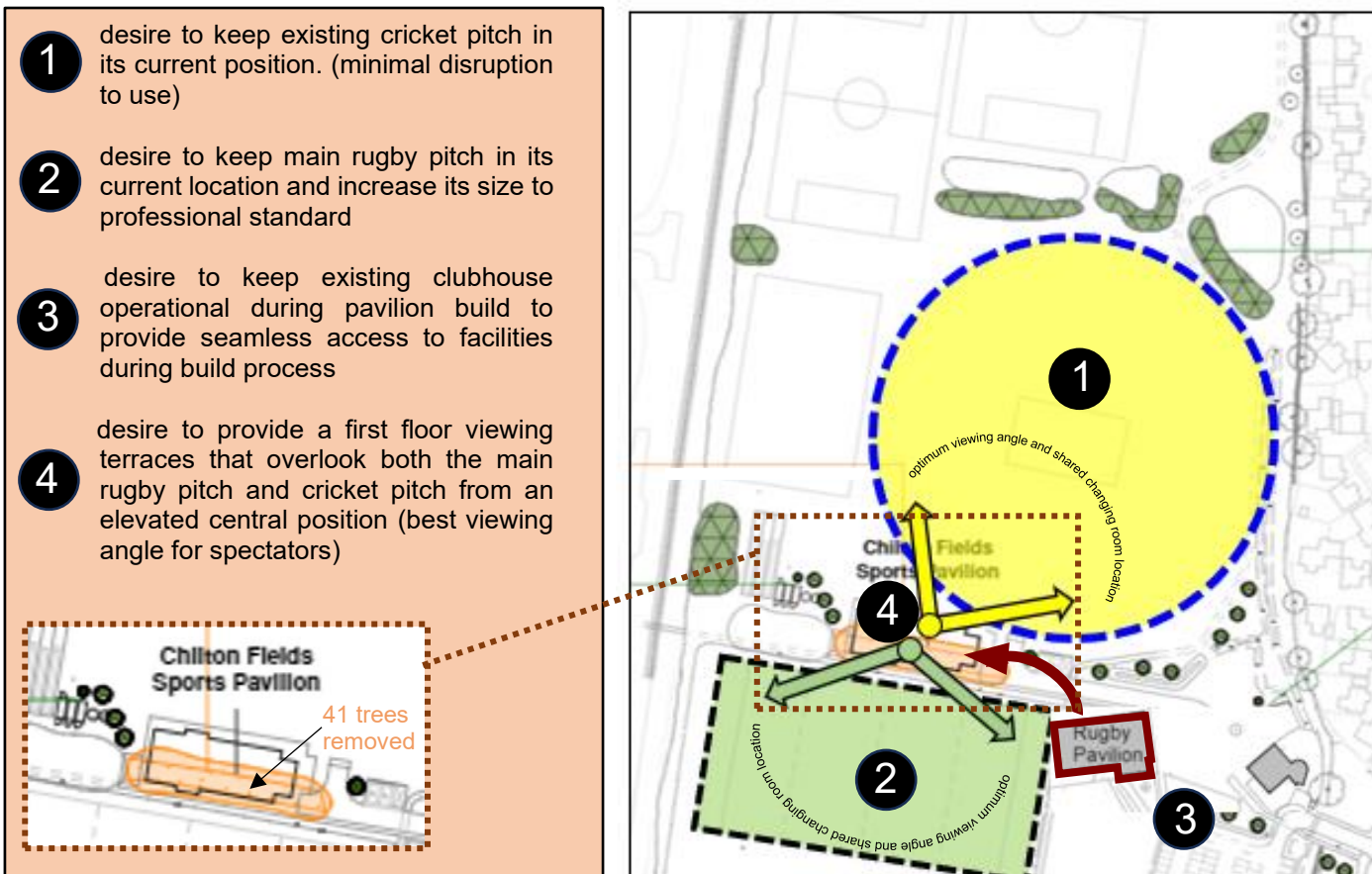


figure 20: **Location requirements - Pavilion**

4.12 Onehouse Parish Council asked that relocation of the mature Alders be explored as an Alternative to removal and this has been looked into.

4.13 It would appear that the option of relocating these trees is not reasonably viable. This is due to:

- The overall size, growing pattern and entwined nature of the root systems of these trees means that the chances of healthy survival in a new location are significantly prejudiced;
- The cost of relocating a mature tree is prohibitively expensive and can only reasonably be justified for an individual specimen tree. For a group of some 40 trees that are not in and of themselves outstanding, it is difficult to justify when the survival rate is likely to be between 30 %and 50%. The relocation of a mature tree can cost as much as £30,000 per tree but even if the cost was £10,000 per tree moving 40 trees would equate to £400,000.

4.14 Clearly this means difficult choices for Members as it would appear that delivering the sports/community facilities in a position where they are best located for operational reasons means the loss of trees. Alternative locations for the proposed sports hall pavilion and wellbeing hub to reduce tree loss have been explored but these do not work operationally.

- 4.15 The proposed Wellbeing Hub (OUTLINE) and Sports Hall (FULL) also require the removal of existing trees to accommodate the buildings in the positions desired by the applicant.
- 4.16 The diagram below (as produced by DM) describes the applicant's reasoning for proposing some tree loss. From an operational/logistical perspective these make sense.

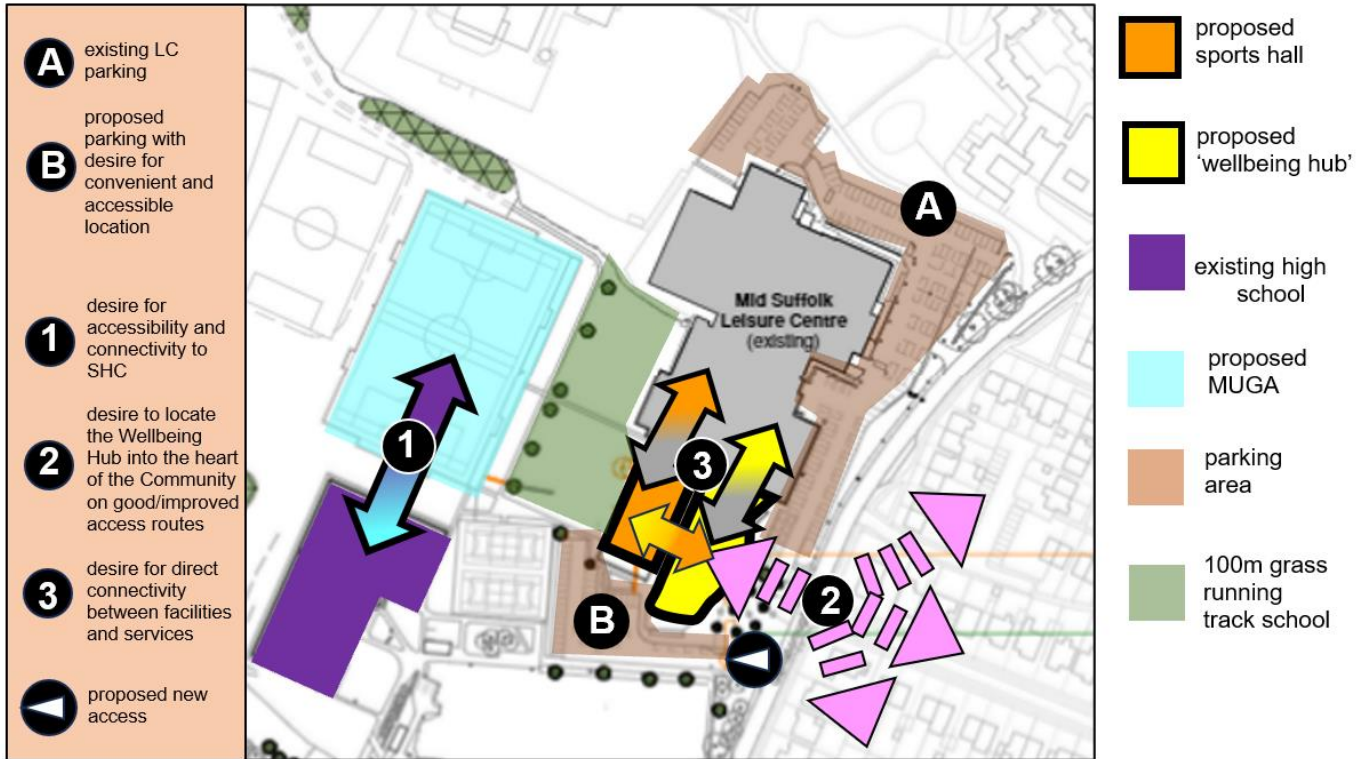


figure 21: Location Requirements - Wellbeing Hub and Sports Hall



figure 22: Trees on Gainsborough Road Frontage

- 4.17 There will inevitably be a strong reluctance to sanction any tree loss let alone the level of tree loss required here - but what mitigation is being proposed and will this provide adequate compensation?
- 4.18 A major feature of the proposal is the extent of new planting that it features. This includes the use of extra heavy standards (ehs).





Example of a large 16-18cm girth, 5m+ high large tree (ehs) from Barcham Tree Growers. Ely

<https://www.barcham.co.uk/>

figure 23: **Example of Extra Heavy Standard**

4.19 The table that appeared earlier in this report is reproduced below to highlight just how extensive new planting will be.

flora type	proposed for removal	proposed planting	difference
individual trees	68	69	+1
saplings		5200sq.m.	+5,200sq.m
hedgerow	140m	247m	+107

figure 24: **Tree Loss and Gain**

4.20 This means that proposed hedgerow replacement will be undertaken at a ratio of 1.76m : 1m (new : removed)

4.21 Whilst individual trees are proposed to be replaced at a rate of 1:1 and whilst it is proposed to include significant sapling planting across the site (representing new planting) it is recommended that the number of new individual trees be increased to a ratio of 1.5:1 (new : lost). Of this figure of 102 trees, 68 should be at least extra heavy standards in order to provide instant impact. If members agree then it is recommended that a condition to this effect be added to any permission of such is forthcoming.



figure 25: **Structural Landscaping**

- 4.22 Another safeguard against unwarranted tree removal is to condition felling such that it is only permitted to remove trees relevant to each particular work package once a legally binding contract to construct those elements has been entered into.
- 4.23 This would mean for example that the group of Alders described earlier could not be felled until such time as a binding contract for the construction of the Pavilion had been signed or the group of trees of the Gainsborough frontage could not be removed unless and until a binding contract to build the Wellbeing Hub had been entered in into. (save for those to be removed to accommodate the Sports Hall once a binding contract to build that had been entered into).
- 4.24 Whilst this might be seen as ‘unhelpful delay’ it will mean that if for any reason any part/s of the overall project do not occur or occur in a revised form (eg the Reserved Matters for the Wellbeing Hub could result in a change to the shape and footprint of the building) trees haven’t been removed unnecessarily.
- 4.25 So for example if the Sports Hall proceeded its proposed long blank flank elevation (it is after all effectively a functional box without windows) facing Gainsborough Road would be screened from view by the existing trees. As and when the Wellbeing Hub building followed its fully detailed elevations would provide dramatic visual interest to the street and conceal the dull elevation of the Sports Hall behind.
- 4.26 Another safeguard is to require advanced planting by condition and this is recommended.
- 4.27 It is strongly recommended that all areas of new planting (especially those where large trees are proposed) be the subject of a further comprehensive detailed landscape drawings and an associated Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
- 4.28 So to what extent does the proposal comply with the Council’s relevant AJLP2023 policies in terms of its impact on trees.
- 4.29 The new Local Plan now refers now to Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Ecological Networks. Trees are obviously part of that wider system.
- 4.30 Consideration of the impact of the development on existing trees must therefore be set within the context of AJLP2023 Policy LP 16 Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- 4.31 The guiding philosophy is that proposed development should follow the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy which is,
- AVOID
  - MITIGATE or
  - COMPENSATE

4.32 This hierarchy is derived from paragraph 186(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) which states:

*“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;”*

4.33 It is therefore appropriate to also look at the development’s impacts on ecology biodiversity and landscape along with proposed mitigation before reaching any conclusions in respect of its conformity to the wide-ranging LP16 and trees

## **5.0 Biodiversity/Ecology**

5.1 In an updated supporting biodiversity net gain statement consultants for the applicant conclude: *(full conclusion)*

*“ 5.29 With the proposed creation of new habitat and enhancement of on-Site [sic] habitats as described above, it is believed that a net gain will be achieved in line with best practice (CIEEM, 2019) and the clients target of 20%”*

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report 29.092023 prepared by Temple. page 31

5.2 Members will have noted the consultation response from the Council’s ecological advisor – ‘Place Services’ on 29 November 2023, that raises no objection subject to securing ecological mitigation and biodiversity enhancements. This response follows a series of exchanges that prompted the submission, by the applicant, of additional supporting ecological survey material.

5.3 Submitted material includes:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report v1.0 Final draft (Temple, October 2023)  
Great Crested  
Newt eDNA Survey Memorandum Letter V1.0 (Temple, May 2023)
- Great Crested Newt non-licensed Method Statement for Woodland removal (Temple, Sept 2023)
- Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) Memorandum Letter v1.0 (Temple, April 2023)
- Endoscope Survey/ Bat Hibernation Assessment Memorandum Letter 2.0 (Temple, April 2023)
- Bat Survey Report v1.0 Final (Temple, June 2023)
- SHELF Ecological summary
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment report v1.0 (Temple, Sept 2023)

- BNG Metric calculations
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – Biodiversity v1.0 (Temple, Sept 2023)
- Proposed External Lighting (Silcox Dawson & Partners, Feb 2023)

5.4 The fact that Place Services (Ecology) original concerns have now been allayed is significant and it is suggested that in the event that Members are minded to grant permission then, appropriate ecological **conditions** can be added to ensure the expected benefits are delivered. Namely:

#### FULL & OUTLINE

- Mitigation to be carried out in accordance with relevant ecology statements provided by the applicant. (*Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report v1.0 Final draft (Temple, October 2023) , Bat Survey Report v1.0 Final (Temple, June 2023), Great Crested Newt non-licensed Method Statement for Woodland removal (Temple, Sept 2023) and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – Biodiversity v1.0 (Temple, Sept 2023) )*)
- Submission of full Biodiversity Net Gain Plan to include management and monitoring plan (*Members will no doubt wish to ensure that estimated levels of Biodiversity Net Gain are actually achieved and that delivery does not fall short*)
- Biodiversity Plan (*providing the finalised details and locations of the enhancement measures contained within the BNG Assessment First Draft (Temple, Sept 2023), the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 calculations and Bat Survey Report v1.0 Final (Temple, June 2023)*).
- Wildlife sensitive lighting scheme

5.5 The strong emphasis on delivering biodiversity enhancement within the proposal accords with Adopted Joint Local Plan (December 2023) Policy SP09 Enhancement and Management of the Environment, particularly parts (1) and (4) which state respectively:

*“ 1) The Councils will require development to support and contribute to the conservation, enhancement and management of the natural and local environment and networks of green infrastructure, including: landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment and historic landscapes.”*

*“ 4) Through biodiversity net gain, all development will be required to protect and enhance biodiversity ensuring the measures are resilient to climate change.”*



5.6 The estimated 20% uplift significantly exceeds the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) target in the Council's Adopted Joint Local Plan (December 2023) Policy LP16 'Biodiversity & Geodiversity'.

5.7 LP 16 states:

1) *All development must follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy.*

Officer comment:

The applicant has sought to retain as many existing trees as possible but the locational requirements of the Pavilion, Sports Hall and Wellbeing Hub are such that some tree loss is unavoidable if the proposed development is to proceed in the form desired from a functional and operational perspective. The layout has therefore been approached with a view to trying to 'Avoid' (step one of the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy) unnecessary adverse impact. There is no evidence of wanton tree loss merely for the convenience of the project. The 'Mitigation' (step two of the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy) being proposed has been demonstrated to be acceptable producing a predicted circa 20% increase in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The proposal is supported by the Council's Ecology Consultant. The final step of the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy requires consideration to be given to 'Compensation'. As discussed, the proposed programme of replacement hedgerow and tree planting far exceeds the areas and numbers being lost to accommodate the proposed development. for example...

- individual trees will be replaced at a ratio of 1.5:1 (new : lost). 102:68 (by condition an uplift from the originally proposed 1:1)
- There will be net gain of 107 linear metres of hedgerow
- There will be 5,200 sq.m. of new landscape areas

In a welcome extra commitment the applicant has undertaken to use as much of the trees as possible of the trees that are removed to create new features within the site or elsewhere. These could include rustic furniture, natural play elements, wildlife habitats, bark surfacing and more.

2) *Development must:*

- a) *Protect designated and, where known, potentially designated sites. Proposed development which is likely to have an adverse impact upon designated and potentially designated sites, or that will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable biodiversity or geological features or habitats (such as ancient woodland and veteran/ancient trees) will not be supported;*

Officer comment  
Not applicable

- b) Protect and improve sites of geological value and in particular geological sites of international, national and local significance;*

Officer comment  
Not applicable

- c) Conserve, restore and contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity and geological conservation interests including Priority habitats and species. Enhancement for biodiversity should be commensurate with the scale of development;*

Officer comment  
Circa 20% BNG and extensive compensatory planting.

- d) Where possible plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of local networks of biodiversity with wildlife corridors that connect areas. This could include links to existing green infrastructure networks and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation so that these ecological networks will be more resilient to current and future pressures;*

Officer comment  
Although the proposal if approved will result in the loss of a total of 68 trees (by the time that all elements of the scheme are implemented - if permission is first granted) and some 140m of existing hedgerow the replacement planting will reinforce a number of existing green corridors and create new ones. The trees that will be lost to accommodate the Pavilion do not in themselves form part of a contiguous green corridor linking green nodes.

- e) Identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains, equivalent of a minimum 10% increase, for biodiversity. The Councils will seek appropriate resources from developers for monitoring of biodiversity net gain from developments. Where biodiversity assets cannot be retained or enhanced on site, the Councils will support the delivery of net gain in biodiversity off-site; and*

Officer comment  
Circa 20% BNG. Condition requiring ongoing BNG monitoring and reporting

- f) Apply measures to assist with the recovery of species listed in S41 of the NERC Act 2006.*

Officer comment

The application is supported by Place Service : Ecology subject to conditions

- 5.8 This level of enhancement demonstrates that the applicant has approached this project with the attitude that they wish to do more than ‘the minimum’
- 5.9 It also demonstrates that whilst the proposal includes the regrettable but seemingly unavoidable loss of some existing trees (if the project is to proceed in the form desired by the applicant), the overall impact on biodiversity is not a negative one as the extensive new planting and other mitigation included in the proposal provides more than adequate reparation.
- 5.10 Officers are satisfied that
- the proposed level of biodiversity enhancement within the proposal meets the objective within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) paragraph 185 (b) to *“identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”*
  - Such harm to biodiversity as it likely to result from the development is *‘compensated for’* and therefore refusal in line with paragraph 186(a) (NPPF December 2023) is not warranted.
  - Paragraph 186(b) of the NPPF (December 203) is it not engaged as the proposal is unlikely *“to have an adverse effect on”* a Site of Special Scientific of Interest (SSSI).
  - It is not *“development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees)”* and so is not contrary to paragraph 186(c) of the NPPF (December 2023) .
  - Whilst the *“primary objective”* of the proposal is not to *“conserve or enhance biodiversity”* – it is to deliver community facilities, *“opportunities to improve biodiversity”* have been *“integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity”* along with steps to *“enhance public access to nature where appropriate”*. THs meets the objectives within paragraph 186(d) of the NPPF (December 2023).
- 5.11 It is appropriate to also look at the development’s impacts on landscape along with proposed mitigation before reaching any conclusions in respect of its conformity to the wide-ranging LP16 and ecology and biodiversity.

## 6.0 Landscape

- 6.1 The application site is not located within or near an area that is statutorily designated for its landscape significance and therefore paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) and LP18 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' of the AJLP (2023) are not engaged.
- 6.2 Chilton Way
- 6.3 Presently the site's contribution to the value of the wider landscape on either side of Chilton Ways is derived from the fact that it is predominantly existing sports fields and school playing fields consisting of managed grass pitches within areas bounded by existing trees/hedgerow.
- 6.4 Currently, where publicly visible (*note most of the site is screened from Chilton Way by existing high hedgerow*) the land west and east of Chilton Way reads as open land within which sit a variety of taller but generally barely noticeable sports related features such as floodlights (during the day) and goal posts. That said the existing floodlighting make more of an impact within the landscape when deployed during hours of darkness, particularly if it is misty as the water molecules in the air diffract the light to create a hazy glow.
- 6.5 With the 600-unit Northfields Development to the west proceeding at pace the open landscape on the western edge of this part of Stowmarket will be changed for ever. The limit of urbanisation will be pushed closer to Onehouse than was previously the case.
- 6.6 This will leave the application site as an island of open landscape and the proposed development does little to alter this basic openness.
- 6.7 In that sense the site will continue to represent a vestigial publicly accessible 'green oasis', which is a good thing from a townscape, landscape, recreational and wellbeing perspective.
- 6.8 Built-form/s are presently a low-key presence due to their single storey height siting and the fact that there are only two within what is a large site area
- 6.9 The proposed two storey Pavilion whilst exceeding the height of the existing single storey clubhouse it will replace and the height of most of the existing boundary hedgerow (Northfields Development - west & (Chilton Way - east), will not in the opinion of officers, make a significant impact on the character of the landscape hereabouts.
- 6.10 This is because:
1. The location and height of the Pavilion in relation to viewing points on Northfields are such that intervening existing hedgerow and trees will effectively screen it from general view. Officers have illustrated this effect in the diagrams below.

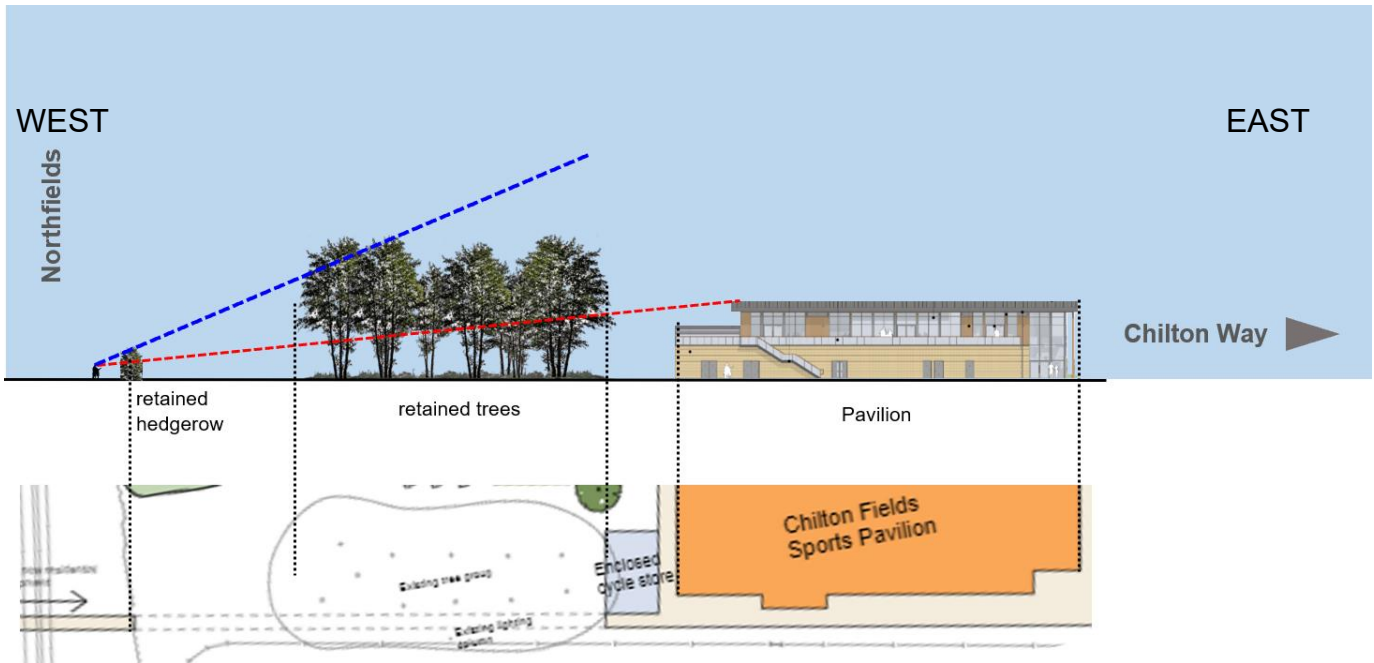


figure 26: **Pavilion and Retained Trees - Cross Section (west)**

- When viewed from the entrance on Chilton Way (the principal viewing point) it will be set back further into the distance than the existing clubhouse and therefore its two-storeys will recede. The fact that the closest part of the Pavilion will be some 153m from the closest point of Chilton Way will also help to minimise the visual impact of the Pavilion as will intervening additional landscaping.

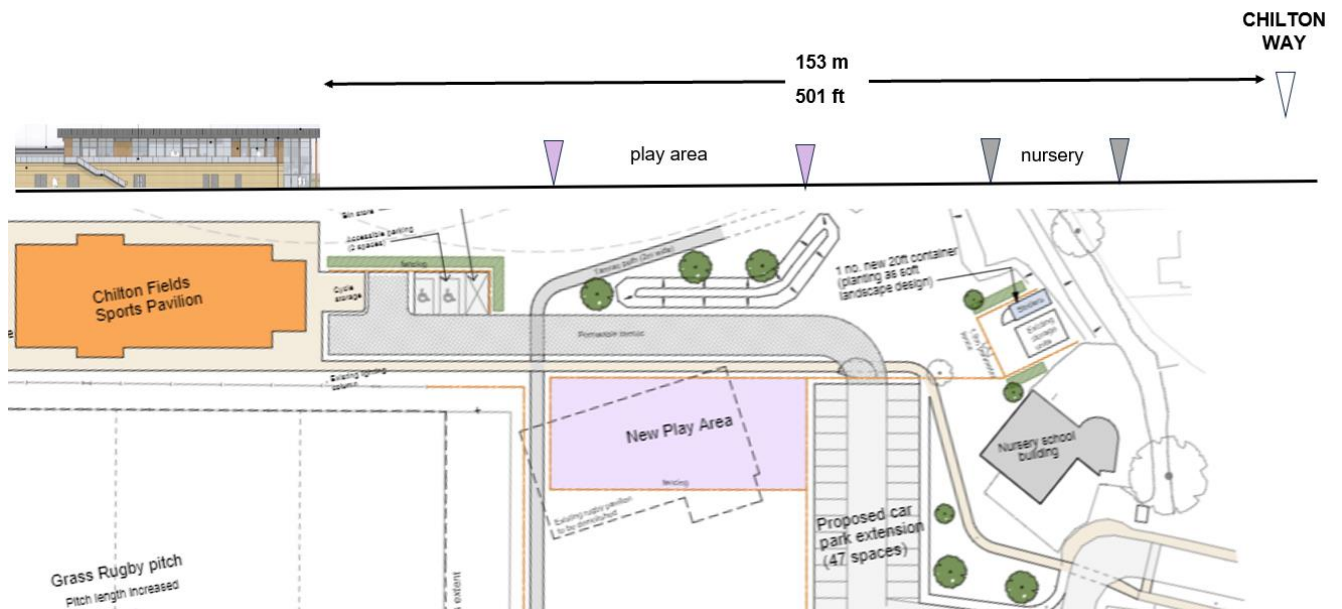


figure 27: **Pavilion to Chilton Way - Cross Section**





figure 28: Pavilion - Restricted Viewing Angle from Chilton Way

- 6.11 The landscape impacts of the proposed sports field improvements on the east side of Chilton Way are minimal as they do little to change the existing character of the land which is already open sports fields associated with Stowmarket High School. No buildings are proposed here within any part of the application.
- 6.12 There will be some additional floodlighting as part of the proposal (MUGA and 3G Pitch) and so there will be some impact on the landscape during periods when the facilities are in use and it is dark. That said the illumination from the floodlights will generally be seen with the urban lightscape of built-up Stowmarket.
- 6.13 Gainsborough Road
- 6.14 The impact of the Wellbeing Hub and Sports Hall on the treescape of Gainsborough Road have already been explored in paragraphs 4.1 - 4.33 above but it is also appropriate to record that the loss of trees on the Gainsborough Road frontage will have an impact on the urban landscape/townscape of this part of Stowmarket insofar as it will remove a pocket of greenery.
- 6.15 It is fair to say that whilst the present Leisure Centre building provides very popular and well used facilities, the building itself does little to enhance the quality of the street-scene and the existing trees beside it go some way to providing an attractive visual foil.
- 6.16 Any harm to the streetscene that could arise from the comparative 'blandness' of the Sport Halls appearance will be suitably ameliorated by the retention of some of the existing flora between it and the road (by **condition**) in the short-term or by the construction of what promises to be a striking Wellbeing Hub building that will present dynamic new built-form to the road.

6.17 LP 17- Landscape states

1. *To conserve and enhance landscape character development must:*
  - a. *Integrate with the existing landscape character of the area and reinforce the local distinctiveness and identity of individual settlements;*
  - b. *Be sensitive to the landscape and visual amenity impacts (including on dark skies and tranquil areas) on the natural environment and built character; and*
  - c. *Consider the topographical cumulative impact on landscape sensitivity.*
2. *Where significant landscape or visual impacts are likely to occur, a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) or a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) must be prepared to identify ways of avoiding, reducing and mitigating any adverse effects and opportunities for enhancement. “*

6.18 Members will have noted Place Services Landscape Comments in respect of the application not including a LVA. and this is as agreed with DM because significant Landscape and Visual Impacts are not expected to occur even with the discussed tree loss described earlier.

6.19 The visual context of the site is undergoing significant change as a result of adjoining residential development such that it will soon fit firmly within the urban grain of Stowmarket rather than the present edge of the Town at its boundary with the countryside.



figure 29: **Changing Landscape Context**



6.19 With this largescale expansion of urban Stowmarket .homes will occupy valley slopes and rising ground around the application site thereby forming a new urbanised foreground to any long views from the west.



figure 30: **LIDAR Image Showing Terrain in and around the Application Site**

6.20 Furthermore and as previously discussed whilst some of the existing group of largely Alder trees will be removed to facilitate construction of the new pavilion their loss will, to some degree, be masked by the retention of part of the same group at the western end of the row (it runs west to east) and new copse planting. This will therefore maintain prominent canopy presence when viewed from the Northfields directions.

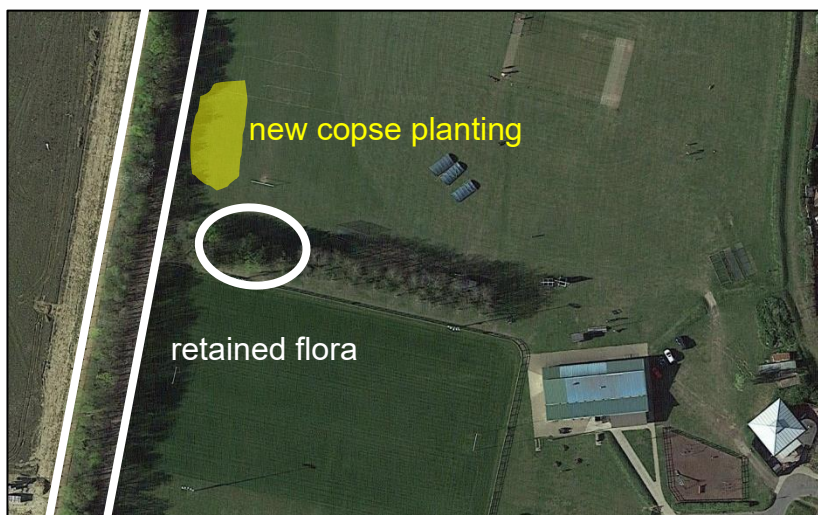


figure 31:  
**Retained/new  
Trees/hedgerow  
Adjacent to Pavilion**

6.21 Proposed new planting will if anything add to the impact and presence of tree canopy coverage within the immediate landscape hereabouts. The site will continue to provide something of a green open oasis within an increasingly urbanised environment and the new buildings will not impose for the reasons discussed earlier.

## 7.0 Summary Conclusion: Trees, Biodiversity, Ecology and Landscape

7.1 Whilst there is unfortunately some tree loss included within the proposal the applicant has been able to justify this on operational/functional grounds having looked at alternatives that have not proved appropriate if the project is to proceed in the desired formed.

7.2 Officers have however secured a mitigation package that meets the requirements of paragraph 186 (a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) by following the steps of what was previously described as the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy where good mitigation and compensation will be delivered.

7.3 Indeed the applicant's ecology consultant is predicting a circa 20% uplift in Biodiversity Net Gain which is well above the 10% minimum in LP16 (a) of the AJLP2023.

7.4 All things considered the public benefits that arise from the proposed development (as will be described and explored later in this report), the proposed mitigation, compensation and sustainability/green energy enhancements do in the opinion of officers do outweigh the short immediate environmental and ecological harm that will arise from tis development. The reason for tree loss where proposed is in the opinion of officers valid and justified if the full and immediate social, health and wellbeing, inclusivity, accessibility and longer term ecological and environment benefits of the scheme are to be realised.

7.5 The proposal is judged to accord with Policies LP15, 16 and 17 of the AJLP2023 for the reasons discussed.



8.0 Design follows.....

## 8.0 Design

8.1 The main new building forms within the FULL application are

- (i) The Pavilion; and,
- (ii) The Sports Hall

### 8.2 The Pavilion

8.3 This is a two-storey building comprising predominantly changing rooms, showers, toilets, rooms for match officials, and plant and equipment housing and club house, spectator viewing terraces and social space on the first floor. It is aligned on a west-east axis

8.4 The building has been cleverly designed to embrace:

- (i) the functional requirements and therefore aesthetic limitations of the ground floor minimally fenestrated 'private' accommodation in the form of a stylishly detailed gault brick plinth
- (ii) a flamboyance that reflects the highly social nature of first floor in the form of a predominantly glass that sits delicately on the 'solid' plinth below. This glass shell not only allows the first floor to seemingly float but also allows outstanding views of pitches from within whilst creating an almost invisible curtain between inside and outside space (viewing terraces) for spectators. The dual aspect nature of the design gives rugby and cricket spectators an equality of experience. The long south side overlooks the rugby pitches with its own viewing terrace and the long north side overlooks the cricket pitch with its own viewing terrace.

8.5 The two floors of accommodation sit below an overhanging gently sloping metal mono-pitch roof the runs north to south which offers the potential to enhance pv. (photovoltaic) coverage.

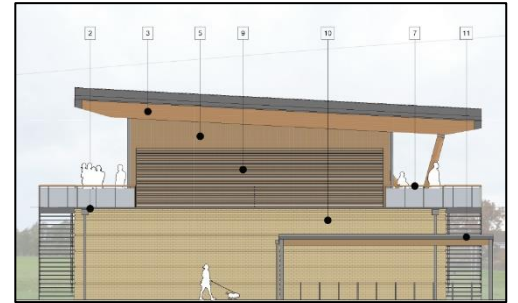
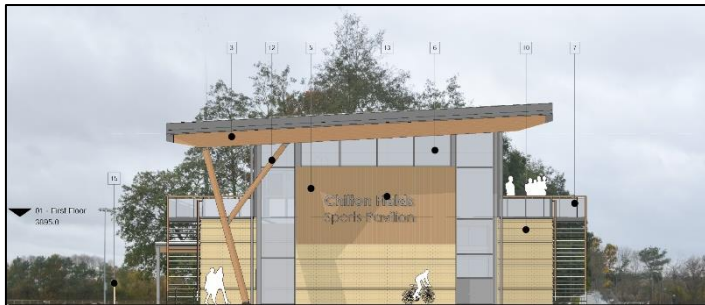
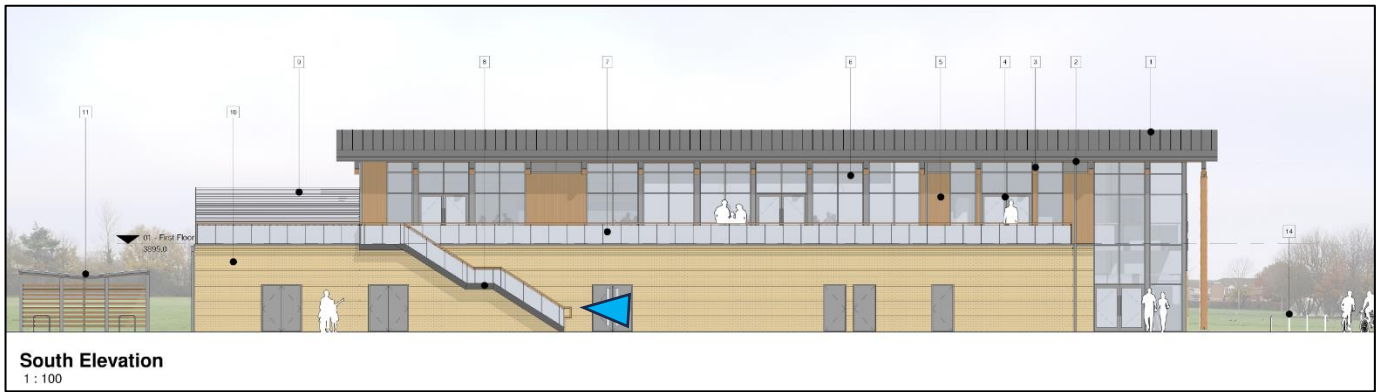
8.6 The roof also provides a degree of protection from the elements to each of the terraces.

8.7 This contemporary building will sit elegantly within the recreational landscape hereabouts and is a dramatic replacement for the existing building which whilst no doubt loved by many club members is now looking tired.

8.8 The new Pavilion at first floor includes flexible spaces and family friendly facilities that offer the opportunity of wider community use and greater attraction as event space that at present.

8.9 What follows is a pictorial exploration of the key features of the building





figures 32: **Pavilion Elevations**



figure 33:  
**Proposed Materials**



figure 34:  
**DM graphic illustrating the brise soleil effect created by visually elegant roof overhang**

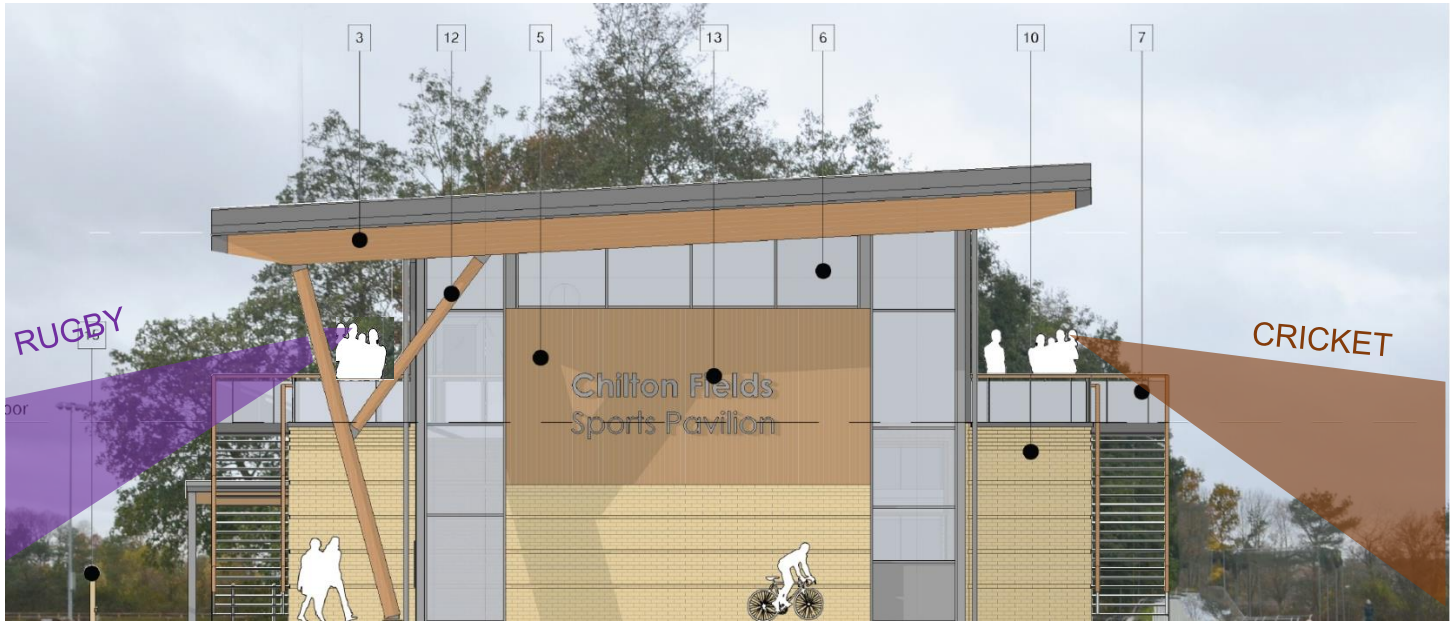


figure 35: **The Viewing Terraces - Side View**



figure 36: **The Viewing Terraces - outlook**





benches, and peninsula toilets as well as space for carers

figure 37: Pavilion Ground Floor Plan

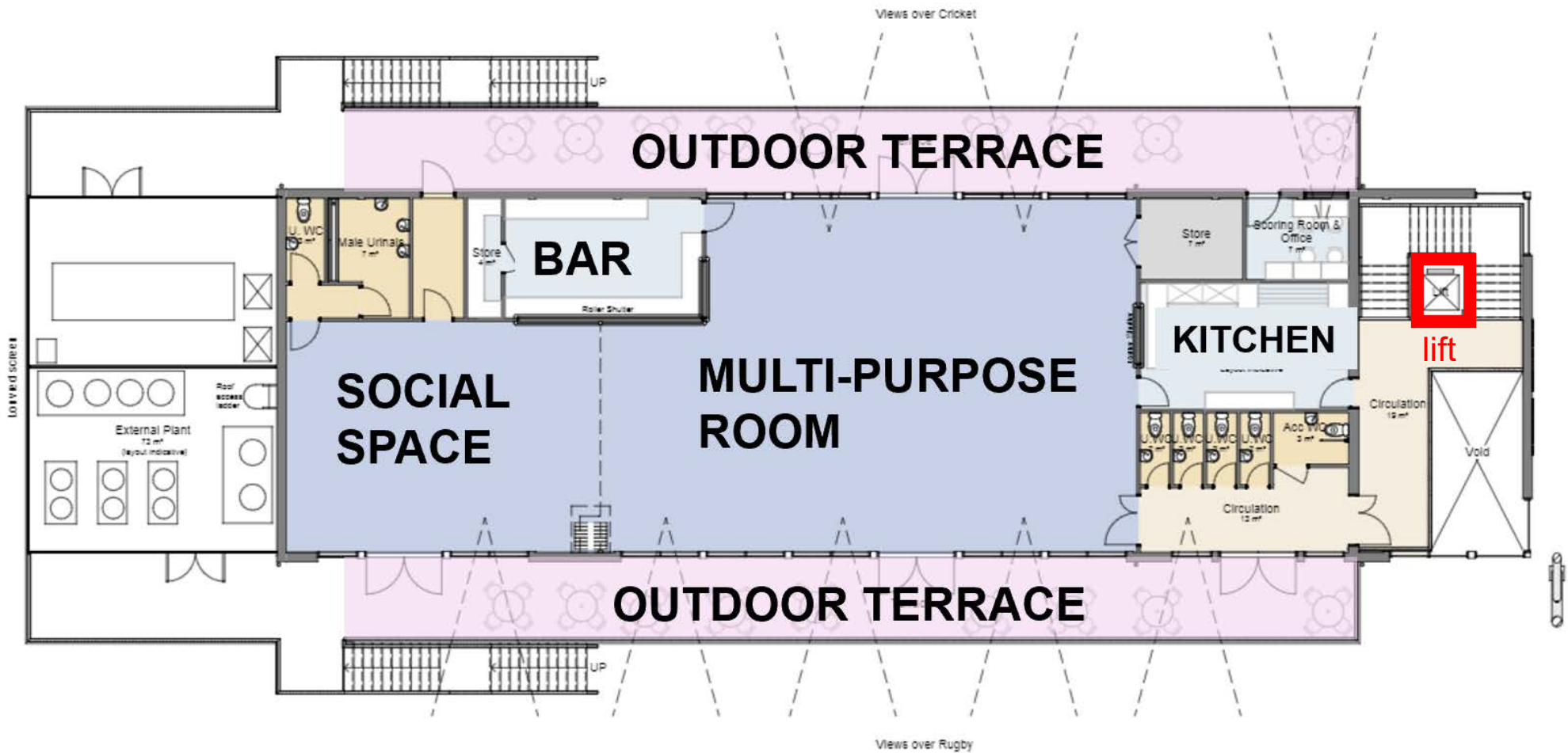


figure 38: Pavilion First Floor Plan





figure 39: Pavilion CGI's

## 8.10 The Sports Hall

8.11 In terms of its design one could believe it adheres to the modernist design philosophy that 'form should follow function.' This is not to denigrate the work of the project architect who has shown real flair and elan with the Pavilion design but, in reality, it is a largely windowless high-ceilinged box to accommodate the playing of indoor sports.

8.12 The lack of extensive perforation to the outside, whether that be doors or windows, helps to keep noise contained within the building. Large areas of glass are also an anathema in a sports hall because of issues with sunlight glare, heating effects and safety.

8.13 Fortunately, the sports hall is sited such that its large expanse of east facing blank flank wall will be screened from Gainsborough Road (*the primary public vantage point*) by either:

- retained trees (subject to the addition of suitable conditions in the event that Members are minded to grant permission); or,
- the construction of the Wellbeing Hub with its exciting public facing elevation between the sports hall and Gainsborough Road.

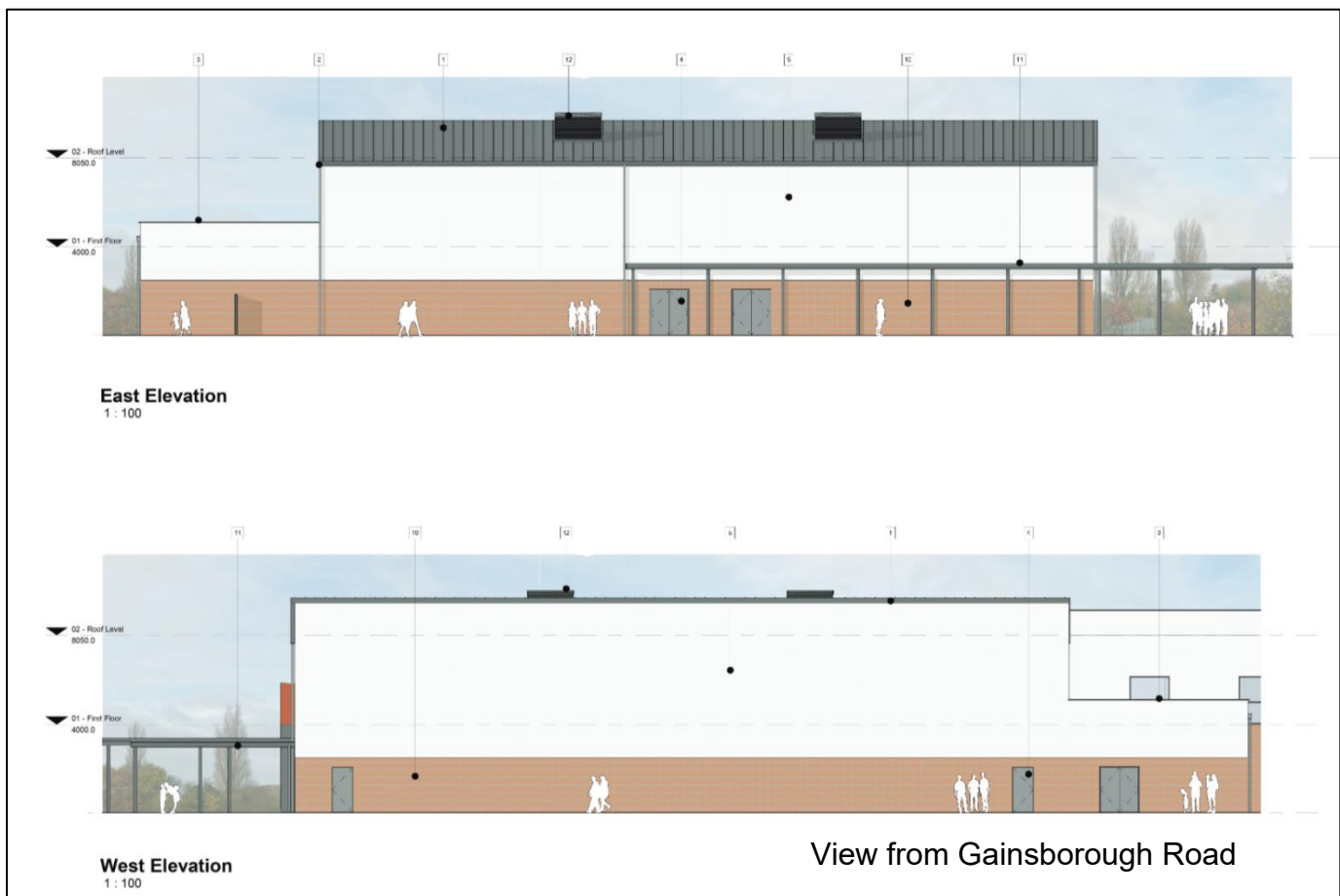
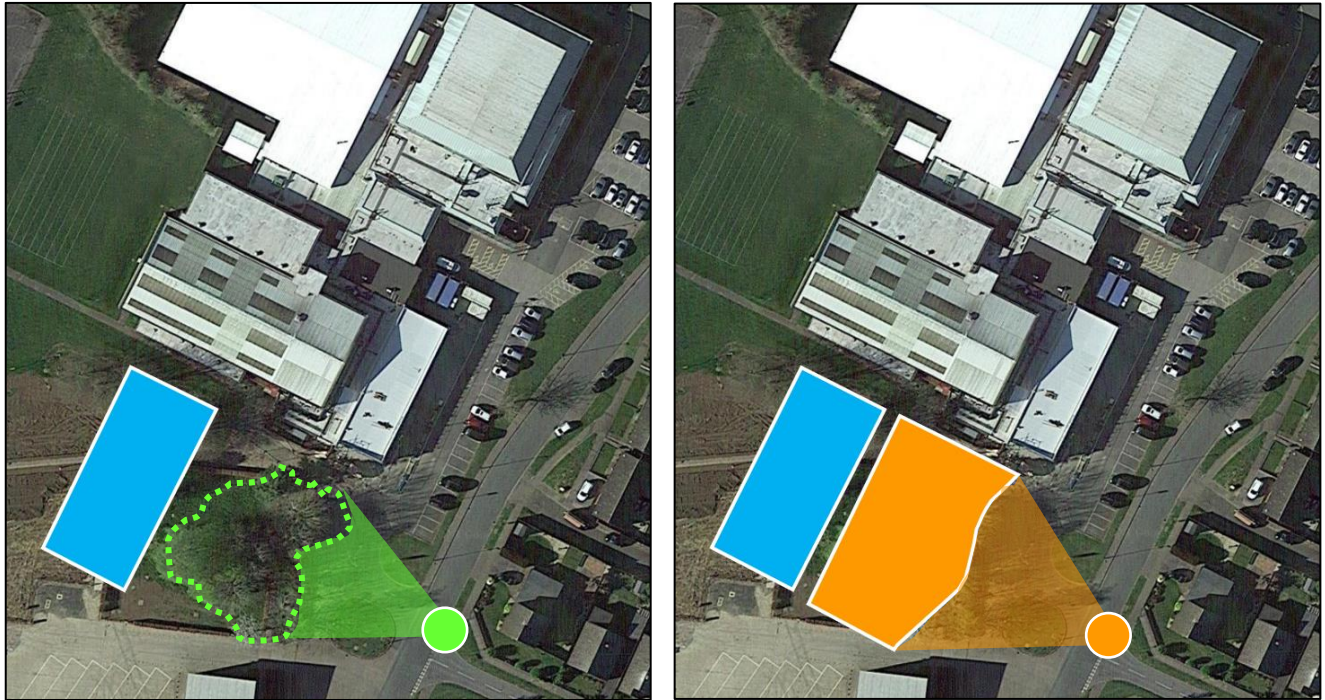


figure 40: **Sports Hall - Long Elevations**





figures 41: **Screening of Sports Hall from Gainsborough Road**

left: pre-Wellbeing Hub screened by trees retained

right: post Wellbeing Hub screened by the fully elevated details of the Hub building

- 8.14 Within the building four courts offering multi-sport space, changing rooms and storage space are proposed. The Hall will be used during the day at term times by pupils at Stowmarket High School for pe. (physical exercise).

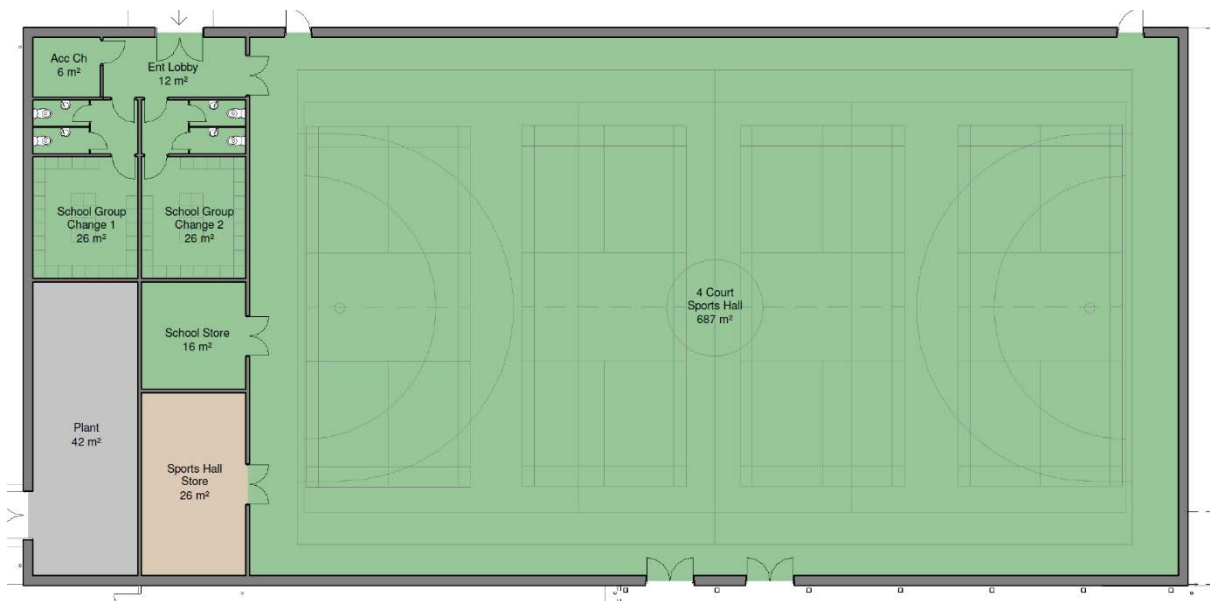


figure 42: **Sports Hall Floor Plan (single volume hall)**

8.15 **The Wellbeing Hub** (OUTLINE application)

8.16 Potentially the building is expected to be no more than two storeys in height.

8.17 The interior is expected to include flexible use space as well as fixed use space comprising a mix of uses that could include:

- community space/s
  - meeting rooms
  - exhibition/event space
  - community café
  - clinic space and associated office space
  - nursery space
  - 'activity' space
  - rehabilitation space
  - advice room/activity rooms
  - specialised educational space
- as well as waiting areas, toilets, and lifts

8.18 From illustrative drawings initially submitted (not formally part of the application) it would appear that the applicant is looking to promote a high-quality contemporary design for the building which is considered appropriate in this location

8.19 It is currently intended to link the building with the existing Leisure Centre and the proposed Sports Hall in terms of accessibility



figures 43: **Wellbeing Hub - Illustrative Elevations**

CLASSIFICATION: Official







- 8.20 When considering design we are obliged to have regard to Policy LP24 of the AJLP2023 Design and Residential Amenity.
- 8.21 Here we are only looking at design. Residential amenity will be considered separately a little later in this report.
- 8.22 LP24 (1) states:
- “ 1. All new development must be of high-quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its context. As appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, proposals must:*
- a. Respond to and safeguard the existing character/context;*
- b. Create character and interest;*
- c. Be designed for health, amenity, well-being and safety; and*
- d. Meet Space Standards (NDSS)”*
- 8.23 The proposed development (FULL) achieves objectives 1(a) (b) and (c) and (d) does not apply as this is not a residential development.
- 8.24 From the submitted illustrative drawings the Wellbeing Hub (OUTLINE) is expected to comply with LP24 (a), (b) and (c). (d) will also not apply. The ‘*proof of the pudding*’ in respect of design quality will be clear at Reserved Matters stage, if Members are minded to approve the current proposal. Certainly there is no indication to date that the applicant will look to dilute the quality shown illustratively.
- 8.25 The extent to which the design of the buildings will comply with LP23 - Sustainable Construction and Design will be explored separately within the sustainability section of this report which appears a little later.
- 8.26 A high standard of building design has been achieved in terms of the Pavilion and the same quality is expected to characterise the Wellbeing Hub when Reserved Matters details are submitted (In the event that the application before Members is approved).
- 8.27 The more austere (but ‘bright’ being rendered) appearance of the Sports Hall is a product of its function and whilst nowhere near as interesting visually as the Pavilion it will not be particularly prominent as it will be positioned behind the Wellbeing Hub which is expected to be designed as the show stopper and until then it will be shielded retained mature trees.
- 8.28 The proposal accords with relevant design policies LP23 and LP24 and guidance and if design is considered beyond ‘physical appearance’ to embrace wider attributes, then it sings.
- 8.29 These other elements of design are discussed throughout this report



9.1 This section of the report looks and proposed levels of parking, connectivity and active travel and then analyses them in the context of AJLP2023 Policy LP29 'Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport' which states:

- “
- 1) **All developments will be required to demonstrate safe and suitable access for all and must prioritise sustainable and active transport and maximise the opportunities to utilise these modes in accordance with the transport hierarchy. Where possible, active travel is to be tied in with the green infrastructure network to support net environmental gains.**
  - 2) *Development will be expected to contribute to the delivery of sustainable transport strategies for managing the cumulative impacts of growth, whilst protecting and enhancing the Public Rights of Way network.*
  - 3) *All development should be informed by the relevant parking guidance<sup>14</sup>, with adequate access for servicing and emergency vehicles.*
  - 4) *Where necessary, development will be expected to provide home to school transport contributions.*
  - 5) *Development proposals that are expected to, or likely to cause a significant increase in transport movements must:*
    - a) *Be supported by a transport statement and if appropriate a transport assessment<sup>15</sup>; and*
    - b) *Provide a travel plan informed by the relevant County<sup>16</sup> / National Guidance to mitigate the highway impact of development and maximise sustainable transport modes.*
  - 6) *Significant impacts on highway safety or the function of the highway network must be mitigated. Impact on highway safety must not be unacceptable and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network must not be severe.”*

9.2 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application concludes:

*“7.8 In conclusion, from the assessments carried out in this TA, it is considered that the proposed SHELF scheme will not have a severe impact on the operation*

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<sup>14</sup> Currently the Suffolk Guidance for Parking (updated October 2023)

<sup>15</sup> Indicative thresholds: a transport statement will be required for residential developments between 50 and 80 dwellings and a transport assessment should accompany residential developments of over 80 dwellings, however other circumstances will also be considered. Non-residential development will be considered on a case by case basis. The scope of transport statements and assessments should extend across administrative boundaries of the LPA where it is appropriate to do so.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/travel-plans/>

*and capacity of the local transport networks within the assessment study area. Sustainable infrastructure to encourage travel to the site by active modes has formed a key component of the masterplan.”*

KMC Transport Planning  
Transport Assessment May 2023

- 9.3 Suffolk County Council Highways has formally advised the Council that it agrees with this conclusion.
- 9.4 Currently the Chilton Fields Car Park is used by the existing pavilion and all users of the nursery. The existing pavilion is being removed and replaced by the new pavilion and will therefore result in some additional trips.
- 9.5 The nursery if it moves to the Wellbeing Hub will have its own drop off point / collection point but staff will continue to enjoy parking at Chilton Fields as at present
- 9.6 The existing sports facilities at Chilton Fields such as football, rugby, and cricket pitches already use the car park. Movements associated with use of the pitches is not expected to change and so they have not been included in trip generation calculations.
- 9.10 The traffic surveys also demonstrated that there is significantly more traffic on the local highway network in the weekday peak periods compared to the weekend. In addition, the net change in trips as a result of the proposals is greatest in the weekday peak hours, as these relate to staff of the Wellbeing Hub and users of the Pavilion in the afternoon peak. The other sports pitches are existing so these trips were already captured by the traffic surveys. Therefore, whilst there will be some increase in vehicle trips at the weekend, the total traffic flows will not exceed those on the network in the weekday peaks periods.
- 9.11 The TA reports that the Chilton Way / Union Road junction is operating well within its theoretical capacity and will continue to do so if the development is approved.
- 9.12 The same is true for the Gainsborough Road / Onehouse Road junction. 
- 9.13 In terms of daily traffic movements (worst case) these are estimated to be:

Chilton Way access: Predicted Traffic Movements follow....

Note: the negative entries represent what happens should the existing nursery relocate to the Wellbeing Hub

Time	In	Out	Total
07:00-08:00	10	0	10
08:00-09:00	-5	-18	-22
09:00-10:00	17	6	22
10:00-11:00	12	3	15
11:00-12:00	8	12	20
12:00-13:00	17	14	31
13:00-14:00	17	11	28
14:00-15:00	15	16	30
15:00-16:00	-11	-4	-15
16:00-17:00	9	25	33
17:00-18:00	3	17	20
18:00-19:00	3	8	10
19:00-20:00	1	2	3
20:00-21:00	4	2	7
21:00-22:00	0	1	1
22:00-23:00	0	4	4
Daily	100	99	199

#### Gainsborough Road - Wellbeing Hub Predicted Traffic Movements

Time	In	Out	Total
07:00-08:00	0	0	0
08:00-09:00	22	20	42
09:00-10:00	4	1	6
10:00-11:00	4	3	7
11:00-12:00	5	6	10
12:00-13:00	2	2	4
13:00-14:00	2	2	5
14:00-15:00	3	2	5
15:00-16:00	21	23	44
16:00-17:00	26	2	29
17:00-18:00	40	2	42
18:00-19:00	39	26	65
19:00-20:00	39	38	78
20:00-21:00	35	38	73
21:00-22:00	0	38	38
22:00-23:00	0	35	35
Daily	243	241	483

figure 45: **Table - Predicted Traffic Movements**



## 10.0 Current Parking Conditions

10.1 Members may already be aware that the use of the land at Chilton Fields already gives rise to complaints of haphazard parking on the verge at peak times which tend to be those where events attract larger than usual numbers of spectators or at weekends when juniors play or there is a tournament.

10.2 The Parking Service is currently investigating the situation.



figure 46: **Chilton Way - Verge Used for Unauthorised Parking (yellow)**

10.3 Similarly peak use of the Leisure Centre in Gainsborough Road occasionally generates complaints from nearby residents as a result of on-street parking which reduces the availability of parking space and/or restricts overall road width. The montage below (produced) by DM demonstrates how easily the passing width on Gainsborough Road is reduced by parking in both sides of the road.



figure 47: **Devt. Management Montage Showing Impact on Road Width of Parking on Both Sides of Gainsborough Road outside the Leisure Centre**

- 10.4 As a result Members will wish to consider the extent to which the proposed development will increase demand for parking spaces in the area and to what extent the applicant is delivering appropriate numbers of new on-site spaces such as to avoid adding to existing on-street parking pressure in the area.
- 10.5 That said Members may already have noted that Suffolk County Council, as local highway authority, has not objected to the proposal on the grounds of inadequate parking.
- 10.6 Frequent users of the current Leisure Centre are likely to be aware that its on-site parking is poorly signed and the circulation is confusing. This does give rise to frequent queuing of cars onto the highway during peak Leisure Centre times -often in the late afternoon /early evening when people drop into the gym after work.
- 10.7 This queuing can cause moderate congestion on Gainsborough Road and no matter how short the delay is in passing by (for local people going about their business) it reinforces the impression that there is insufficient parking. Obviously it does not mean that on occasion the demand for parking in the Leisure Centre's own car park exceeds availability. Anecdotally users report that since the installation of the pv panels over some of the parking spaces the supporting frames have reduced the effective width of parking spaces beneath to a point where a driver may decide to straddle two spaces in order to be able to open the door wide enough to be able to get out of the car or to avoid damage from/to an adjacent vehicle. Therefore whilst the environmental benefits that arise from having the pv panels in situ are laudable they are reducing parking capacity to a point that appears to be causing some issues locally.



figure 48: **Existing Leisure Centre Car Park - Showing Existing PV Panels**

- 10.8 Frequent users of the Leisure Centre also comment that the overflow parking area to the rear of the Centre is poorly signposted and lit and often and users are either not aware of it or don't fancy walking through the area in the dark on the grounds of concern for personal safety. This ought to be relatively easily fixed.
- 10.9 The applicant intends to deliver modifications to the existing car parking area to maximise access to all of the existing of spaces in parallel with the SHELF project but they do not form part of the proposal as they are likely not to require planning permission. These do not include modifying the pv panels over some of the current parking spaces.





figure 49:  
**The Existing Leisure Centre Car Park at the Rear of the Site that seems to be Least Preferred by Users**



figure 50:  
**The Existing Chilton Fields Car Park**



3.137 In addition to the marked-out spaces at Chilton Fields there is some capacity for extra ad-hoc parking but as this is informal and may not be usable in wintery or wet conditions it has not been included in the calculations.

3.138 The locations for this parking are indicated below:



figure 51: **Areas at Chilton Fields Used for Informal Parking**

## 11.0 Proposed 'On-site' Parking

11.1 The current application includes two areas of new and additional parking. These comprise:

1. Expansion of existing parking area with associated overflow parking area on Chilton Fields; and,
2. New parking area off Gainsborough Road





figure 52: **Proposed Parking -Chilton Fields Parking**



figure 52: **Proposed Parking - Sports Hall and Wellbeing Hub Gainsborough Road**

## 12.0 Parking Space Calculations

### NOTE:

Members may wonder why so much detailed analysis is included below in what is the main body of the report rather than appearing in a technical appendix.

The answer lies in transparency

Weekend and evening on-street parking congestion associated with use of the Leisure Centre and the existing facilities at Chilton Fields is already seen as a local issue by some residents.

This report sees to accurately describe existing parking provision , current parking requirements and then predicted requirements to accommodate the proposed development.

The calculations are complex and are based on specific assumptions. Officers are therefore anxious that the ‘workings- out’ (as with a maths calculation) are front and centre within the report and are not seen as being conveniently ‘tucked-away’ at the back of the report by anyone with a particular interest in the parking impacts of the proposal.

Note: (reference here to the Suffolk Guidance for Parking (SGfP) is the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of October 2023 – the current n guidance). Note the AJLP2023 refers to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in policy LP29 (3) footnote 40. This has been superseded by the 4<sup>th</sup> edition

#### 12.1.0 LAND WEST of CHILTON WAY (CHILTON FIELDS)

##### 12.1.1 PITCHES (package 1) SGfP: Pitches – 20 spaces per pitch

*NOTE: Pitches on land west side of Chilton Way already exist and so the status quo in respect of parking is unchanged but the proposal as an exercise if new would require 7 pitches x 20 spaces*

*∴ total parking space requirement if this was a proposal to provide 7 new pitches (which it isn't) would be:*

**140 spaces**

As there is no increase in pitches on Chilton Fields within the proposal it is appropriate in policy terms to say the parking is what it is. (ie currently 54 spaces)

However in view of known on-street (or more accurately on-verge) parking demand Members will no doubt hope to see an increase in off-street parking spaces to make up for is an historic shortfall - particularly as Chilton Fields is already as well used facility and the proposal will only add to its appeal.

*NOTE: The SGfP also has a requirement for 1 space per 10 spectator seats. The proposal does not include a traditional spectator stand and so its requirement is not directly relatable. The new pavilion does include a viewing terrace and indoor space*

*but the parking requirement for this is determined by reference to the parking standard described below for the pavilion itself.*

#### 12.1.2 PAVILION (package 2)

SGfP: - parking assessed on individual merit, although the general requirement for unidentified uses is - 1 space per 20sq.m.

*NOTE: the pavilion (first floor) contains approximately 220 sq.m. of public area (it can be assumed that the changing rooms will be used by players and so the per pitch requirement deals with these and the external terraces at first floor will be used by people also occupying the internal public area). Therefore the parking requirement is likely to be something in the order of  $220\text{sq.m} \div 20$ .*

total parking space requirement is potentially in the order of 11 spaces

#### 12.1.3 The total overall number of parking spaces within the proposal is therefore

existing spaces retained: 54

new spaces in expanded car park: 46 (+2 at Pavilion)

new overflow area spaces: circa 50

∴ TOTAL permanent = 102

this is a 89% increase over the existing provision.

∴ TOTAL available = 152 (Including overflow spaces)

this is a 181% increase over the existing provision.

12.1.4 On this basis the level of parking required for the pitches and Pavilion is  $0 + 11 = 11$  and so the level of proposed provision is in excess of what is required by strict adherence to the Adopted Guidance. ✓

12.1.5 Parking expansion is in delivery package 2 of the project which is logical as the demand arises from use of the new pavilion and other facilities in package 2

12.1.6 However, 11 spaces for the Pavilion 'seems' instinctively too low for periods when spectators are present, particularly in the light of the existing parking issues described previously.

12.1.7 The SGfP requirement for a stadium is 1 space per 15 sq.m and stadia usually come 6th entertainment hospitality space. Using that multiplier (*albeit not strictly relatable*) the parking requirement for the Pavilion becomes  $220 \div 15 = 15$  spaces

12.1.8 If one uses the SGfP multiplier for conference centres then 1 space per 5sq.m becomes the requirement. This produces the following requirement:  $220 \div 5 = 44$  spaces



12.1.9 It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of spaces that will be required to accommodate the proposals on the land west of Chilton Way . *(remember the SGfP refers to judging such proposals on their merits on a case by case basis rather than specifying a parking multiplier for that reason).*

The parking requirement of the Pavilion with no increase in the number existing pitches is therefore likely more likely to be between 11 and 44 and so the 46 extra permanent spaces appear sufficient.



12.1.10 If however one was starting afresh with developing the site for pitches and pavilion the contemporary standard would require between 151 and 184 spaces.

NOTE: The 220sq.m. of public area in the proposed Pavilion is not all new 'public area' on the site as the existing clubhouse also has public area and therefore also generates its own parking requirement. For the purpose of the calculations above the existing public area in the clubhouse has not been deducted from the overall total on new public area in the Pavilion on the basis that it will be removed once the new Pavilion is completed.



3.142.11 The availability therefore of some 150 spaces is considered to represent a significant and material improvement in off -street parking for the site even after the new development is taken into account . It actually addresses a significant element of the historic shortfall.



12.1.12 In producing the calculations above officers have not included a requirement for the existing Montessori nursery on the basis that the majority of the demand arises from narrow drop-off / collection trip slots at specific times when the existing car park is unlikely to be well-used. A 60-place nursery does however generate a parking requirement for:

12.1.13 **NURSERY**  
SGfP: 1 space per 4 pupils and 1 space per 20 visitors

60 pupils ÷ 4 = 15 spaces +  
60 visitors (assuming 1 per child) ÷ 20 = 3 spaces

∴ total parking space requirement is 18 spaces

12.2.0 LAND EAST of CHILTON WAY

12.2.1 SPORTS HALL (package 2)  
SGfP: 1 space per 10sq.m. of public area

*NOTE: proposed public area is 687sq.m. and so the parking requirement is calculated thus -  $687 \div 10$*

∴ total parking space requirement is 7 spaces

However with 4 courts there is likely to be between 8 and 16 players on court at any one time. Volley ball equates to two teams of 6 = 14 players.

Therefore the requirement for 7 spaces appears likely to be an under-estimate in reality. Perhaps although more than required by the Adopted Guidance, 16 would be a more realistic figure in the light of parking pressure in Gainsborough Road.

MUGA 3G and Mini athletics (package 2)  
SGfP: 20 spaces per pitch

*NOTE: these facilities will be used during school times by pupils and therefore there is no additional demand for parking spaces. However at other times they will form part of the public offer and so a parking requirement needs be calculated for such times. Working on the assumption that each of the above is an outdoor pitch the calculation would be  $20 \times 3$*

∴ total parking space requirement is potentially in the order of 60 spaces

12.2.2 The total parking spaces within the proposal on land east of Chilton Way in the new car park is: 44 NEW spaces

12.2.3 To some extent the proposal includes replacement and improvement of existing facilities although the mini athletics track is a new feature. If just this facility is included in the calculation the parking requirement is 20 spaces for the mini athletics track and 16 spaces for the Sports Hall (the latter being an increase over that specified in the SGfP). This produces a parking requirement expectation of 36 spaces.

Depending upon assumptions used, the proposed level of provision is therefore better than required.



12.2.4 However, having regard to the availability of the MUGA and 3G facility out of school hours adds a further need for 40 spaces.

In this scenario the proposed level of provision is approximately 40 spaces short.

This however is not the end of the story because the applicant is now proposing to make additional provision for further on-site parking provision and this will be factored into the debate later on in this section of the report.

Moreover, the applicant is also expecting to be able to access some existing nearby off-site spaces when these are not needed by the occupiers. More on this later



12.2.5 Members are advised that it is possible to expand parking space numbers further than initially proposed without having to adjust the layout and distribution of buildings. Officers believe it is necessary to expand proposed parking provision in order to ensure that opportunities for off street parking are optimised. The applicant has accepted this.

12.2.6 In the sketch shown below officers have demonstrated how more 'on-site' parking can be delivered and it is suggested that if Members are minded to grant permission, a condition be added requiring the car park to be extended as shown in order to deliver approximately 60 further permanent parking spaces with the ability to extend this further to create an overall uplift of circa 90 spaces (including to 60).



figure 53: **Suggested Required Additional Parking Area (condition needed)**



figure 55:  
**Possible Wellbeing Hub  
 Podium Parking Area**

12.2.7 On this basis the likely parking demand from the use of the sports hall and floodlit facilities (evenings and weekends) can be satisfactorily accommodated. 'Worst case' scenario requirement = 76 and spaces available with additional parking areas = 90.

12.2.8 Although utilising this area for additional parking may constrain further expansion of the Sports Hall ensuring the currently proposed Sports Hall (and Wellbeing Hub) is well served by on-site parking means at least the current proposal can be supported. If at some point in the future the applicant wishes to expand the Sports Hall then it must demonstrate that existing parking provision is maintained and that the new floorspace is supported with further on-site parking to accommodate the further demand.



figure 56: **Possible Additional Parking with Adjustment to Footprint of Hub**



## 12.3.0 LAND WEST of GAINSBOROUGH ROAD (Wellbeing Hub - OUTLINE)

### 12.3.1 WELLBEING HUB (package 3)

SGfP: various requirements apply depending on the nature of the uses being proposed and their respective quantum.

*NOTE: This element forms the outline application component of the hybrid application. Consequently it is difficult to assess the required level of on-site parking necessary to meet current standards as there are no definitive floorplans or elevations.*

However, using the initially submitted detailed drawings that preceded the conversion of this element of the proposal from full to outline the calculation and result would be as follows:

**OFFICE** floorspace: 1 space per 30sq.m.  
original quantum 266sq.m.sq.m.

∴ office parking space requirement would be 9 spaces

That said the initial office layout showed 84 workstations which potentially might suggest a need for 84 parking spaces but with high and unprecedented levels of modal shift (say 20% this figure might drop to 67 spaces). The assumption here does not take account of the covid and post covid shift towards the greater acceptance and utilisation of working from home, the effect of which might be to reduce the overall number of desk spaces required and in part this helps to explain why the applicant converted the full application for the Wellbeing Hub into an outline one.

**CAFÉ** floorspace(public area): SGfP - 1 space per 5 sq.m.  
original quantum 82sq.m.sq.m.

∴ cafe parking space requirement would be 16 spaces

**EXHIBITION SPACE** floorspace: SGfP - 1 space per 25sq.m.  
original quantum 74sq.m.

∴ exhibition parking space requirement would be 3 spaces

**COMMUNITY USE** floorspace: SGfP - 1 space per 20sq.m. (other)  
original quantum 92sq.m.

∴ exhibition parking space requirement would be 5 spaces

**HEALTH AND CONSULTING** floorspace: SGfP - 1 per FTE member of staff  
and 4 spaces per consulting room  
original quantum 281sq.m.

assuming that staff are already present on site within the office space there is no additional parking requirement. (this does however exclude the possibility of visiting staff. 7 consulting rooms (or equivalent) on the ground floor and 7 intervention spaces on the first floor generates a parking requirement for  $14 \times 4 =$  spaces

∴ health related parking space requirement would be 56 spaces

**NURSERY SPACE** floorspace: SGfP - 1 space per 4 pupils and 1 space per 20 visitors  
original quantum 281sq.m.

The Ofsted floorspace per pupil standard appears to vary depending on age of child from 1 per 2.3sq.m (under 2) to 1 per 3.5sq.m (over 5). Taking a midway point of 2.9 this would produce a parking requirement of  $65 \div 2.9 = 23$  spaces assuming each child attracted 1 visitor and further 4 spaces would be required.

∴ a crude estimate of the possible nursery related parking requirement would be 27 spaces

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sub conclusion in respect of parking land west of Gainsborough Road follows....

12.3.2 Accepting the above calculations are crude and based on a layout that has been withdrawn and may not represent the scheme that is presented under Reserved Matters (if outline permission is granted) the number of off-street spaces required to serve the Wellbeing Hub in a best-case scenario may be in the order of **89 spaces**.

Office	9 spaces
Café	16 spaces
Exhibition	3 spaces
Community	5 spaces
Health	56 spaces
Nursery	0 spaces (if it stays where it is on Chilton Fields)

In a worst-case scenario this requirement may be in the order of **191 spaces**

The best-case scenario in terms of additional on-site provision off Gainsborough Road without the further expansion is 44 new spaces. The figure of 44 is pertinent even though it is expected to serve the sports facilities described earlier because those facilities will generally only be available to school pupils during school times and are therefore not likely to generate demand during the day when parts of the Wellbeing Hub will be at peak use.

Members will note that if the proposal includes the 63 spaces identified by officers in the preceding set of calculations then the deficiency is addressed in the best-case scenario. (44 + 63 = 107 spaces).

If the further expansion area behind the Lesure centre is included then available spaces become 44 + 63 + 30 = 137.

If the footprint of the Wellbeing Hub is modified slightly a further 20 spaces can be created - 137+20 = 151 spaces

The residual 34 spaces for a worst-case scenario could be accommodated in a podium parking arrangement within the Wellbeing Hub and/or with an alternative off-site parking location



#### **12.4.0 Alternative additional off-street parking provision**

12.4.1 The applicant is securing access to additional off-site spaces within Stowmarket High School (78 spaces) Kingsfield (44 spaces) and Stow Lodge (29) via Service Level Agreements (SLAs) when the spaces are not in use by the occupiers. This potentially provides a further 159 spaces on an ad-hoc basis for an unknown period, most probably at weekends and in the evenings.

12.4.2 The ability to draw on off-site parking space availability is considered a benefit to not just the wellbeing hub element of the proposal but also the existing Leisure Centre and the expanded facilities included in package 2 of the proposal.

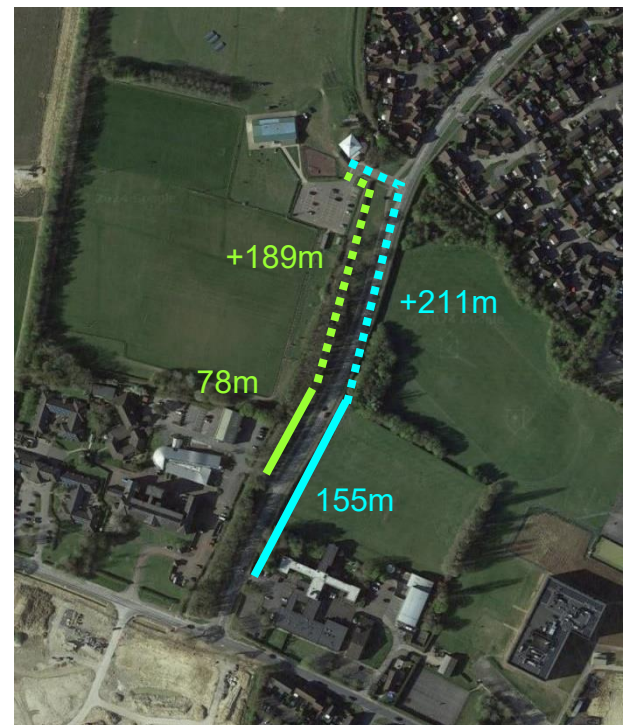
12.4.3 Potentially this takes overall parking space availability levels across the application site to circa 440 spaces:

152 Chilton Fields

137 Land off Gainsborough Road with no modification of the wellbeing Hub footprint

151 nearby off-street (via SLA's)

12.4.4 The approximate location of these additional SLA spaces is shown below.





- 12.5.0 Summary/Conclusion: Car parking
- 12.5.1 The proposed increased parking provision at Chilton Fields exceeds what is required to accommodate the demand from the proposed new development against the current parking standards.
- 12.5.2 With the increase in the size of the parking area identified in this report by Officers (DM) the proposed new parking area off Gainsborough Road will exceed that needed to accommodate the sports hall and mini athletics track.
- 12.5.3 If Members are minded to approve the application for these components then a condition is recommended requiring the expanded parking area to be implemented and open for use prior to the mini athletics track or the Sports Hall or both being available to the public.
- 12.5.4 With further on-site expansion and careful control of the Reserved Matters for the Wellbeing Hub the site is capable of absorbing the added demand for convenient off-street parking.
- 12.5.5 If one takes each of the worst-case scenarios described above and the also include remedying the historic shortfall of pitch related spaces at Chilton Field the figure comes to circa 450.
- 12.5.6 If achieved (with the aid of the off-site alternative parking - described above) then it will not only satisfactorily accommodate the proposed development but will also help to address historic shortfalls on Chilton Fields and help to alleviate current parking pressure at the Leisure Centre.
- 12.5.7 The applicant should be required to demonstrate that it has SLA's in place before implementing its package 1 works. Such SLAs must also be available for the Wellbeing Hub



### **13.0 Cycle parking**

- 13.1 In the same way that this report has looked at car parking it now turns to cycle Parking.
- 13.2 As you would expect from a project that is part of a wider initiative to encourage 'being active,' cycle parking facilities are a key feature.



figure 57: **Proposed Cycle Parking - Pavilion**

### 13.3 Cycle parking requirement for pitches:

20 + 1 per car parking space

20 + (100 car parking spaces ÷ 10)

=30

Cycle parking requirement for Pavilion: *(there is no direct formula in the SGfP 2023). Taking a use where you might expect to be a high cycle trip generator (fast food takeaway) then 2 spaces per 50sq.m.*

Public area within Pavilion 220sq.m

∴ cycle parking requirement is  $220 \div 50 = 4.4$  (then x 2) = 10

**TOTAL requirement is 40 cycle spaces.**  
**Spaces PROPOSED is 52 spaces**



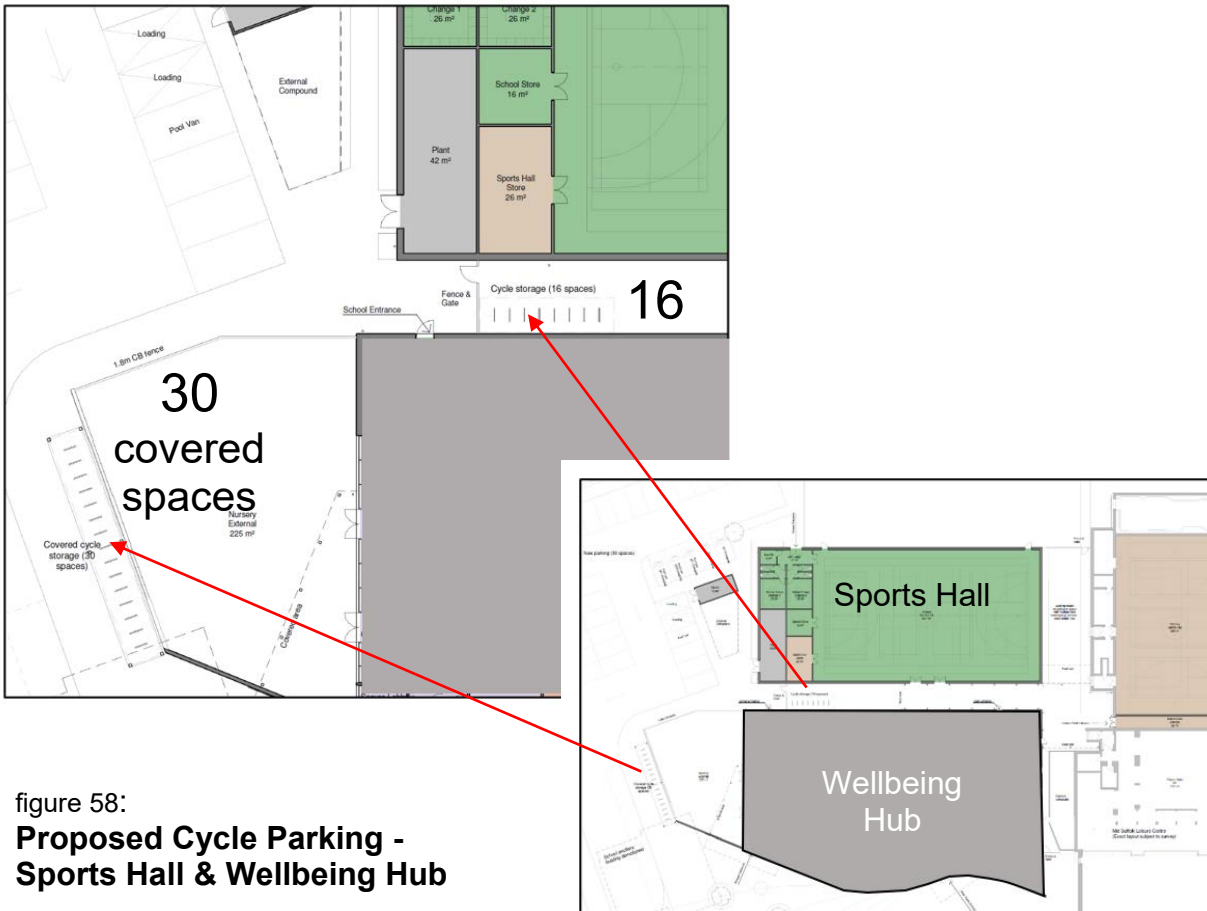


figure 58:  
**Proposed Cycle Parking -  
 Sports Hall & Wellbeing Hub**

13.4 Cycle parking requirement for Sports Hall:

20 spaces +  
 1 per 10 car parking spaces ( $44 \div 10 = 4$ ) = 4

∴ cycle parking requirement is 24

TOTAL requirement is 24 cycle spaces.  
 Spaces PROPOSED is 46 spaces



### 13.5 Cycle parking requirement for Wellbeing Hub

Using the office floorspace standard\* of 2 spaces per 200 m<sup>2</sup>

The Wellbeing Hub was originally shown (before conversion to OUTLINE application) as comprising:

Ground floor	1142sq.m.
First floor	888sq.m.
<b>Total</b>	<b>2030sq.m.</b>

∴ cycle parking requirement is  $2030 \div 200 = 10$  the  $2 \times 10 = 20$

**TOTAL requirement is 20 cycle spaces.**

**Spaces PROPOSED is 22 spaces (the unused residual from the Sports Hall)**

\*This representing a reasonable general multiplier. Remember however the Wellbeing Hub is subject to an outline application and final composition and distribution of uses is yet to be fixed



### 14.0 Disabled Parking Spaces

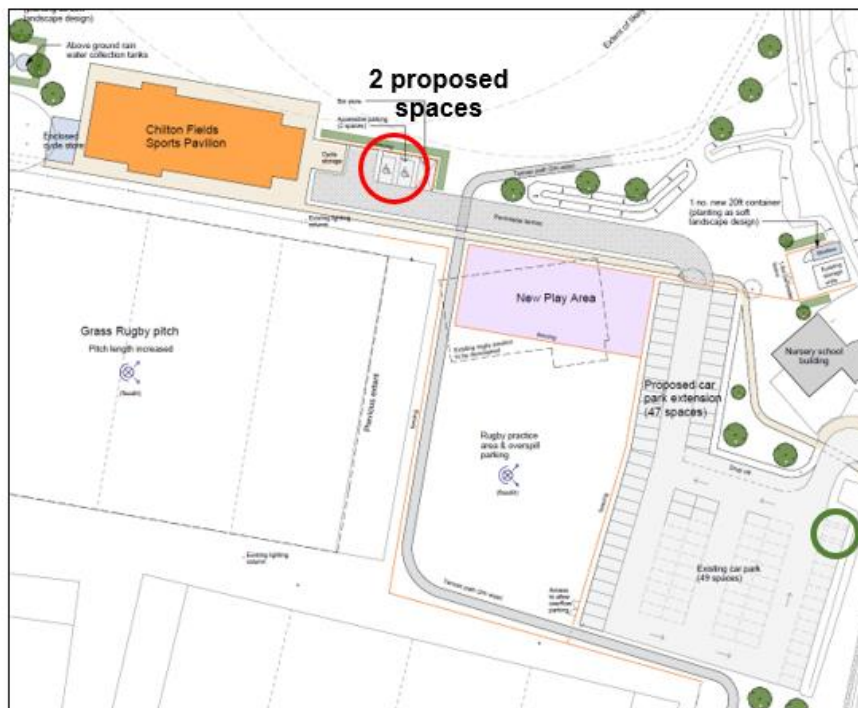


figure 59:  
**Disabled Parking - Pavilion**

**2 existing spaces**



## 14.1 Pavilion

Disabled parking space requirement (SGfP2023) (*where there are 200 or less parking bays*) is a minimum of 3 spaces or 6% of total capacity whichever is the greater. 6% of 100 spaces is 6. (and with overflow 9)

The proposal is therefore deficient by 4 disabled parking spaces (or 7 with overflow area)



14.2 It is therefore recommended that if Members are minded to grant permission a **condition** be added requiring a total of 6 conveniently located disabled parking spaces being provided prior to occupation of the Pavilion and a further 3 such spaces being marked out within the overflow parking area. (convenient to the main entrance to the Pavilion) - despite of there being 2 disabled parking spaces already within the existing car park, as these are not particularly convenient. To the main entrance to the proposed Pavilion

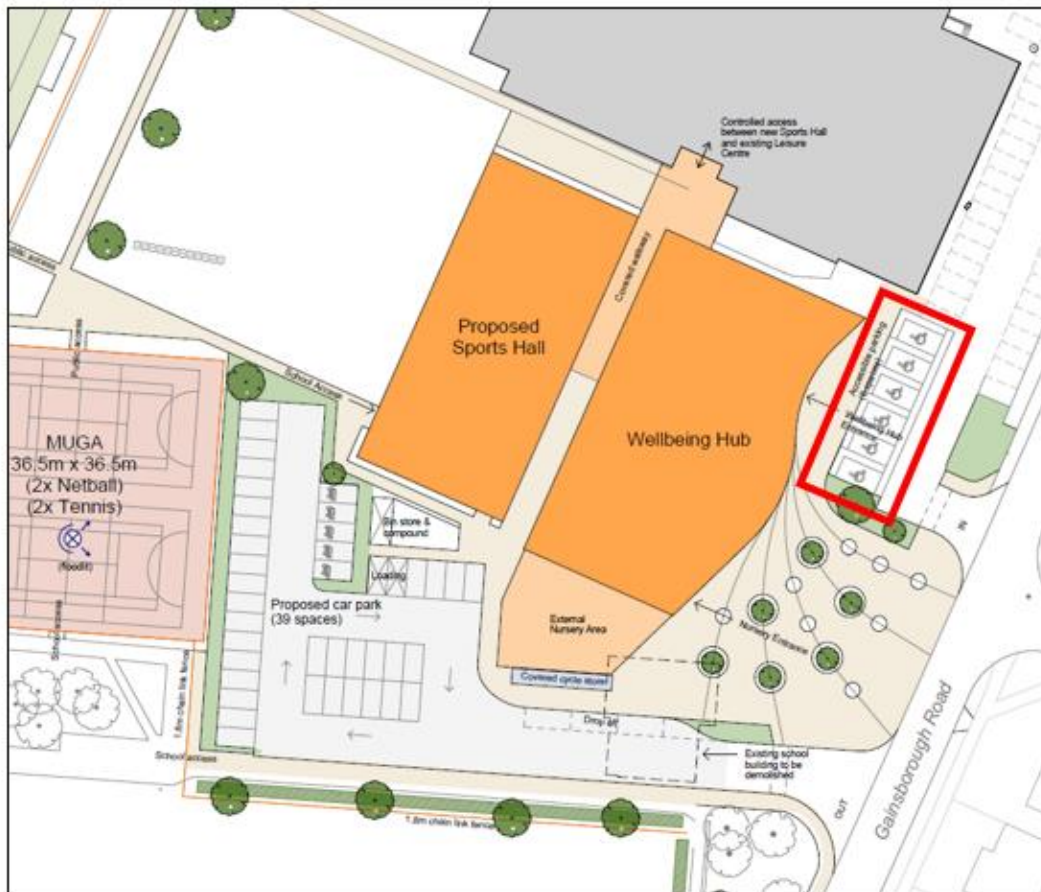


figure 60:  
**Disabled Parking -  
Sports Hall & Pavilion**

14.3 Disabled parking space requirement for a Sports Hall (SGfP2023) (*where there are 200 or less parking bays*) is a minimum of 3 spaces or 6% of total capacity whichever is the greater. 6% of 44 spaces is 3.

It is appropriate to include the 6 disabled parking spaces in front of the Wellbeing Hub if they are provided as part of package 2 along with the Sports Hall.

If car parking is expanded by approximately 50 spaces (as suggested is necessary by condition then 6% of 94 is 6.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with parking guidance in respect of the number of disabled parking spaces



14.4 A Wellbeing Hub requiring a car park of 200 bays, requires 2 disabled bays or 5% which ever is the greater. (*if the office use standard is used as a proxy*).

14.5 In 12.3.2 the worst case scenario required a car parking requirement of just under 200 spaces (based on initially submitted floorplans before the Wellbeing Hub was converted to an OUTLINE application).

14.6 5% of 200 car spaces is 10 disabled bays.

14.7 The 6 bays shown in the front of the Wellbeing Hub are required for the Sports Hall.

14.8 **This means that if the Wellbeing Hub is approved with the originally proposed floor area then, there will be a deficiency of circa 10 disabled parking bays.**



14.9 The provision of appropriate numbers of disabled parking bays can be secured by **condition** as there is space for this number - if all the car parking recommendations in this report are followed.



## 15.0 MAIN PARKING CONCLUSIONS

- 15.1 The new parking included within the proposal appears to be sufficient to satisfactorily support the proposed additional new floorspace west of Chilton Way and it is reasonable to argue that the increase in parking spaces on the land west of Chilton Way is a real benefit compared to the existing situation even with added floorspace and therefore likely use (footfall).
- 15.2 If as is intended these spaces are also available to users of facilities east of Chilton Way, along with the new spaces being proposed on site off Gainsborough Road the overall situation is a good one - particularly with the improved connectivity being proposed.
- 15.3 In terms of the Wellbeing Hub, it is perhaps unfair to now base an estimated parking requirement on a set of floorplans that have now been withdrawn following the conversion of this part of the application from full to outline.
- 15.4 The purpose of an outline application is to establish the acceptability or not of the proposed use/s in principle. As has already been opined the principle is considered acceptable for the reasons set out earlier in this report.
- 15.5 So why try and estimate the possible parking demand for the Wellbeing Hub?
- 15.6 In considering the merits of this proposal Members will want to be confident that if a Wellbeing Hub is to be built then, the site is capable of accommodating sufficient off-street parking to meet the Council's standards and not add to existing on street parking pressure in the area.
- 15.7 The complexity of the preceding calculations demonstrate how difficult it is to provide that assurance when one is looking at an outline proposal on a relatively constrained application site.
- 15.8 What is however clear as a result of this exercise is that any Wellbeing Hub will generate a considerable requirement for new on-site parking space, no matter how accessible for users in terms of active sustainable travel. Scope for creating new parking areas on the Gainsborough Roadside of the wider site is limited by the present red line and the applicant does not have access to blue land.
- 15.9 The existing parking for the Leisure Centre should not be factored into any Wellbeing Hub parking provision because space there is required to support the Leisure centre which itself regularly experiences significant demand for spaces such is its popularity and such is the fixed number of off-street spaces that are available.
- 15.10 Certainly shared parking with uses on other parts of the wider application site may be reasonable if as expected they are experiencing lower levels of demand during the day. The Wellbeing Hub is also likely to compete less (if at all) for parking spaces at weekends.
- 15.10 Central to the overall equation is the applicant's ability to deliver additional parking spaces through SLAs and for these to be meaningful in terms of numbers, availability when needed and longevity of the terms of the SLAs.

- 15.11 It is almost certain that the overall quantum of floorspace within the Wellbeing as first proposed will need to be reduced if parking provision is to remain in balance with new floorspace. (a smaller footprint potentially increases the space available for parking)
- 15.12 The applicant may need to approach the designing of the Wellbeing Hub with an innovative approach to encouraging active sustainable travel particularly if it includes what might be thought of as a normal office space. (albeit that some might be directly related to on-site community healthcare provision).
- 15.13 The applicant may if wishing to produce a building containing broadly the same quantum of floorspace as was originally proposed as part of the full application want to give consideration to how users can park off Chilton Way and be ferried sustainably to the Wellbeing Hub location.
- 15.14 Whilst potentially costly the applicant may wish to give consideration to having part of the ground floor as parking with essential high demand Community uses along with decked floorspace above.
- 15.15 It is therefore suggested that if Members are minded to grant outline planning permission for the Wellbeing Hub then a condition be added that make it clear that details submitted as Reserved Matters must include full details of the parking spaces that will be available to or provided to service that building and that the permission is granted without reference to an overall quantum of permitted floorspace or footprint.

## **16.0 Connectivity**

- 16.1 The proposed site for SHELF sits within 2.4km (1.5 miles) - which is considered to be the equivalent of approximately 30 minutes walking or 7.5 minutes cycling time – or less of all parts of Stowmarket (including the town centre, Combs Ford, and Cedars Park), Onehouse and the south west of Stowupland.
- 16.2 The route of National Cycle Route 51 passes through the town of Stowmarket and the proposed site for SHELF. This, combined with other stretches or sections of cycling routes being a mixture of traffic free routes and signed on-road cycle routes, means that the site is well connected from both the east and the west.
- 16.3 There are also walking routes approaching the site from all directions, which are a mixture of pedestrian pavements alongside residential roads and public rights of way footpaths.
- 16.4 This active travel connectivity is demonstrated in the following plans



- Figure 63 illustrates cycle paths and routes across Stowmarket in relation to the location of SHELF.
- Figure 64 illustrates the route of National Cycle Route 51 the immediacy of the proposed SHELF scheme and how it connects to Onehouse to the east and Stowmarket to the west, as well as some further sections of cycle path (in some areas this is shared cycle and pedestrian space).
- Figure 65 illustrates how pedestrians would access the site from surrounding pavements and walkways.
- Figure 66 illustrates how the LCWIP Settlement to Settlement Desire Lines affect the site.



figure 61:  
**Designated PRoW Map**

figure 62:  
**Aspirational Connectivity Route  
Onehouse Parish Council**



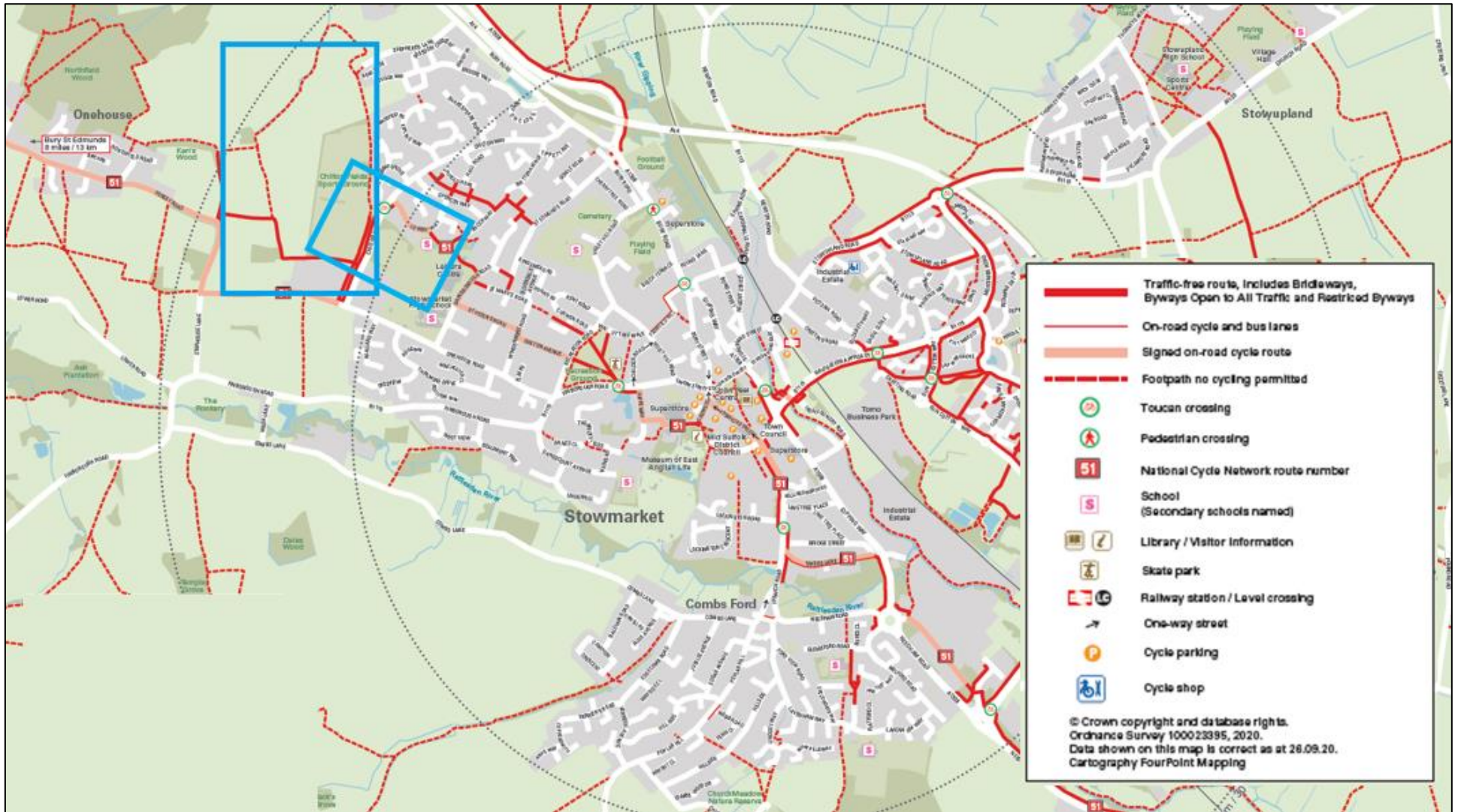


figure 63: Plan showing Highway Network In and Around Stowmarket and National Cycle-route 51



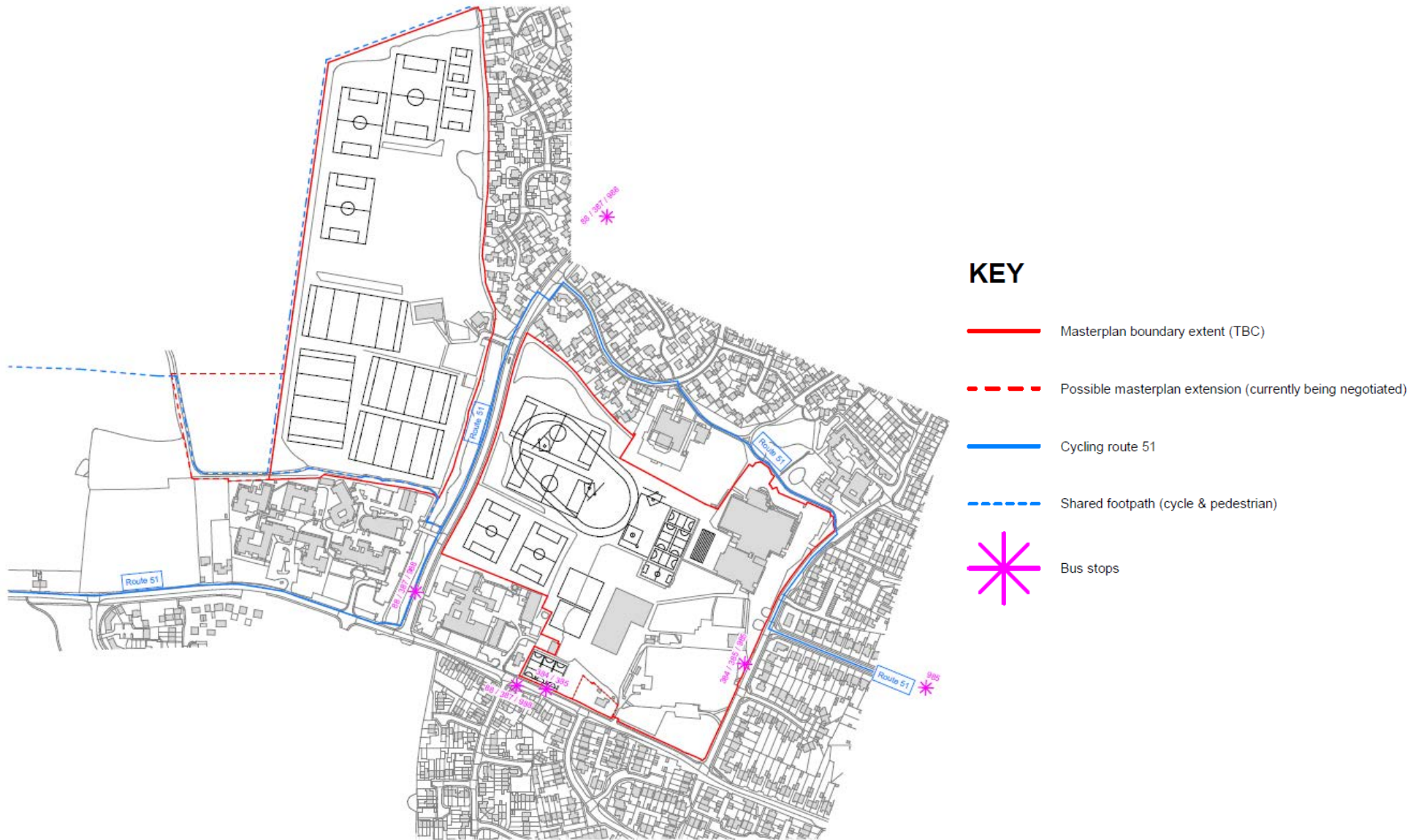
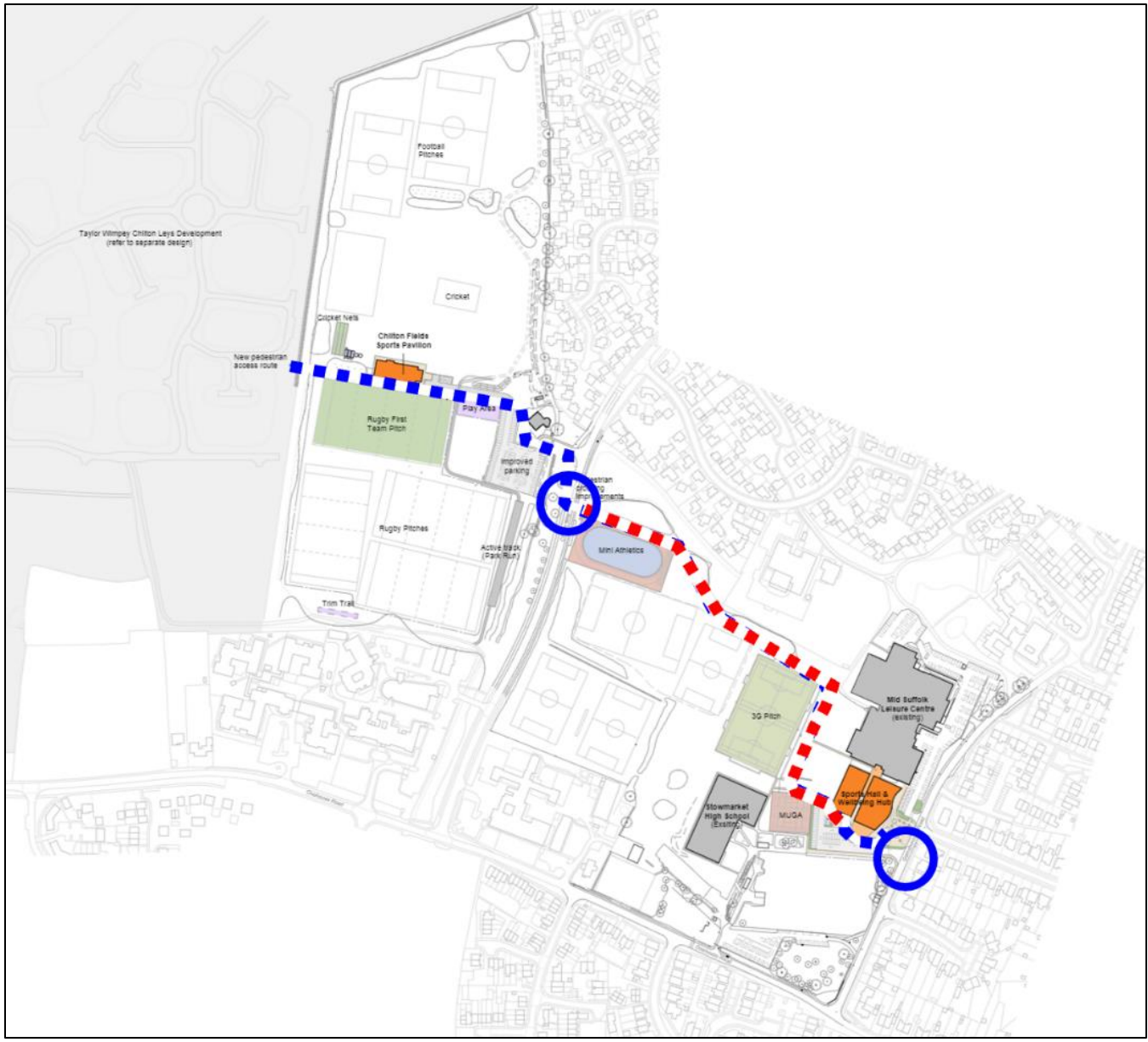


figure 64: Plan showing Route of National Cycle-route 51 the Immediacy of the Site



pedestrian/cycle route



School pedestrian route



crossing

figure 65: **Proposed links Through the Site - East of Chilton Way to Gainsborough Road**



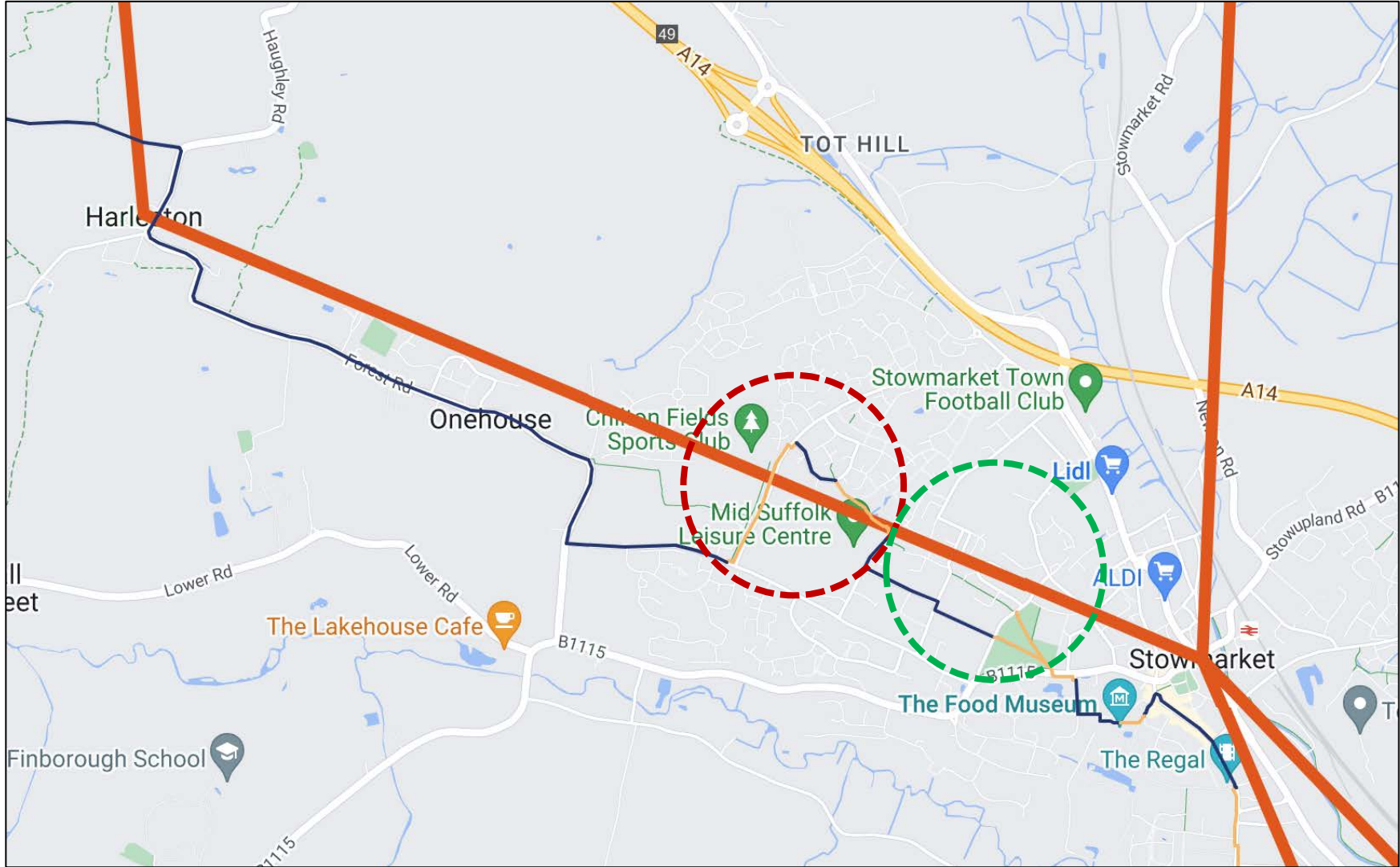


figure 66: **LCWIP Settlement to Settlement Desire Lines**

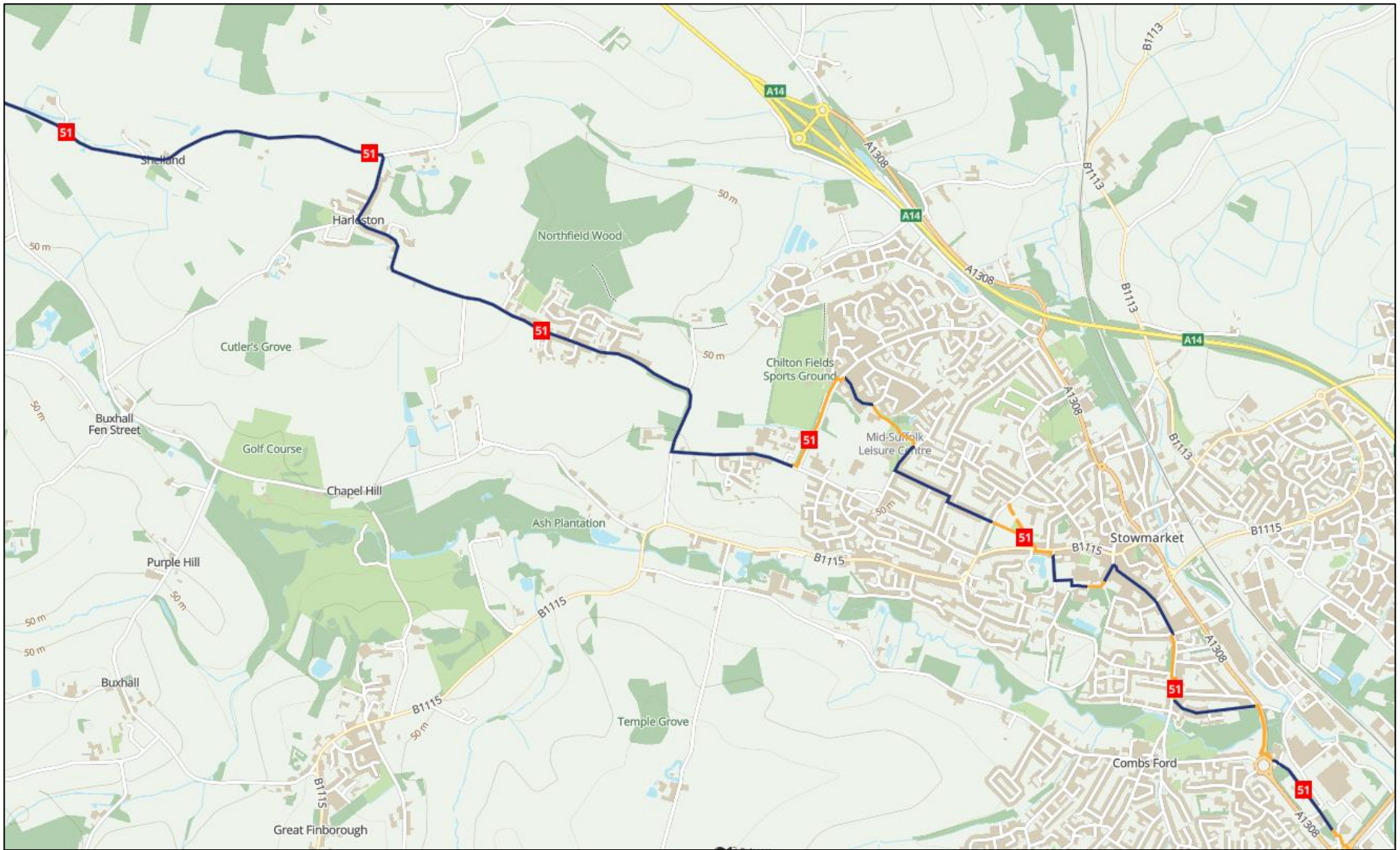


figure 67: National Cycle-route 51



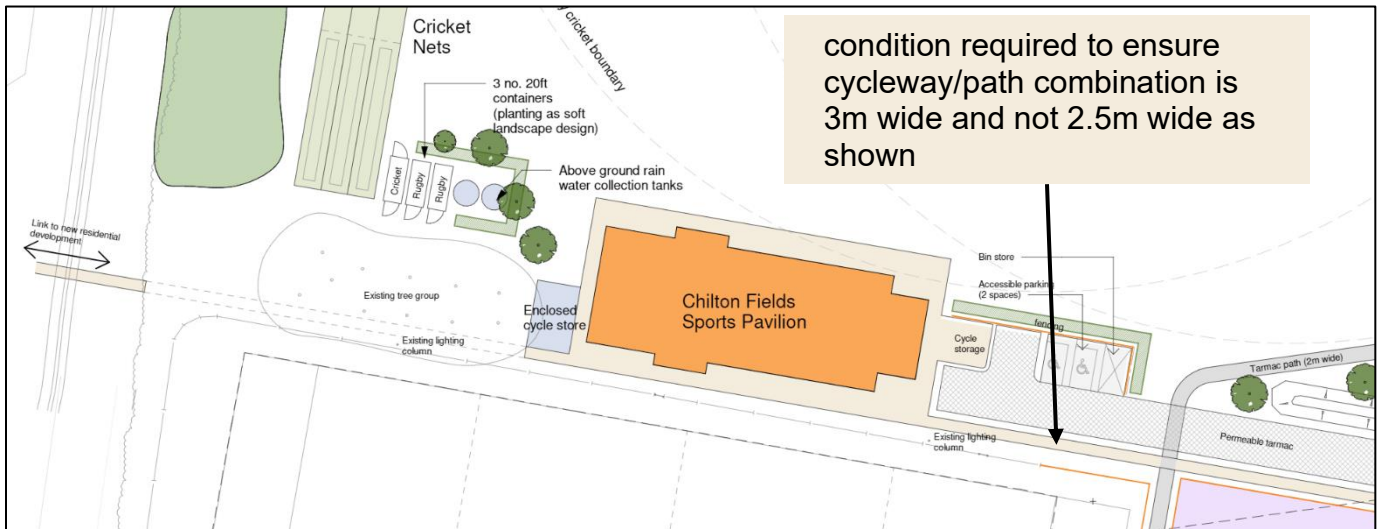


figure 68: **Proposed Cycle-route - Pavilion Area**

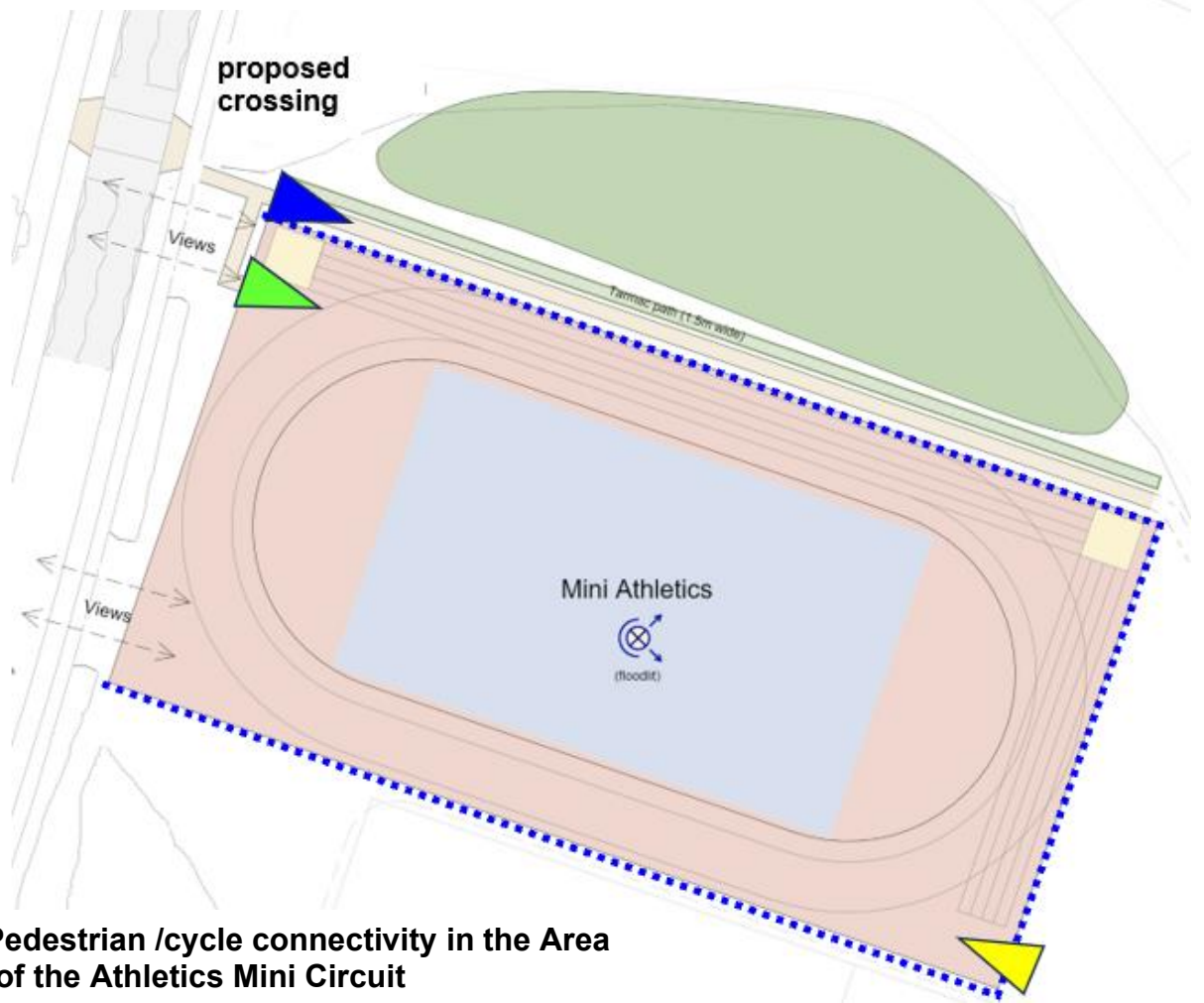


figure 69: **Pedestrian /cycle connectivity in the Area of the Athletics Mini Circuit**







figure 71: **Existing Vehicular Access point Gainsborough Road**



figure 72: **Building Indicated as being Demolished**



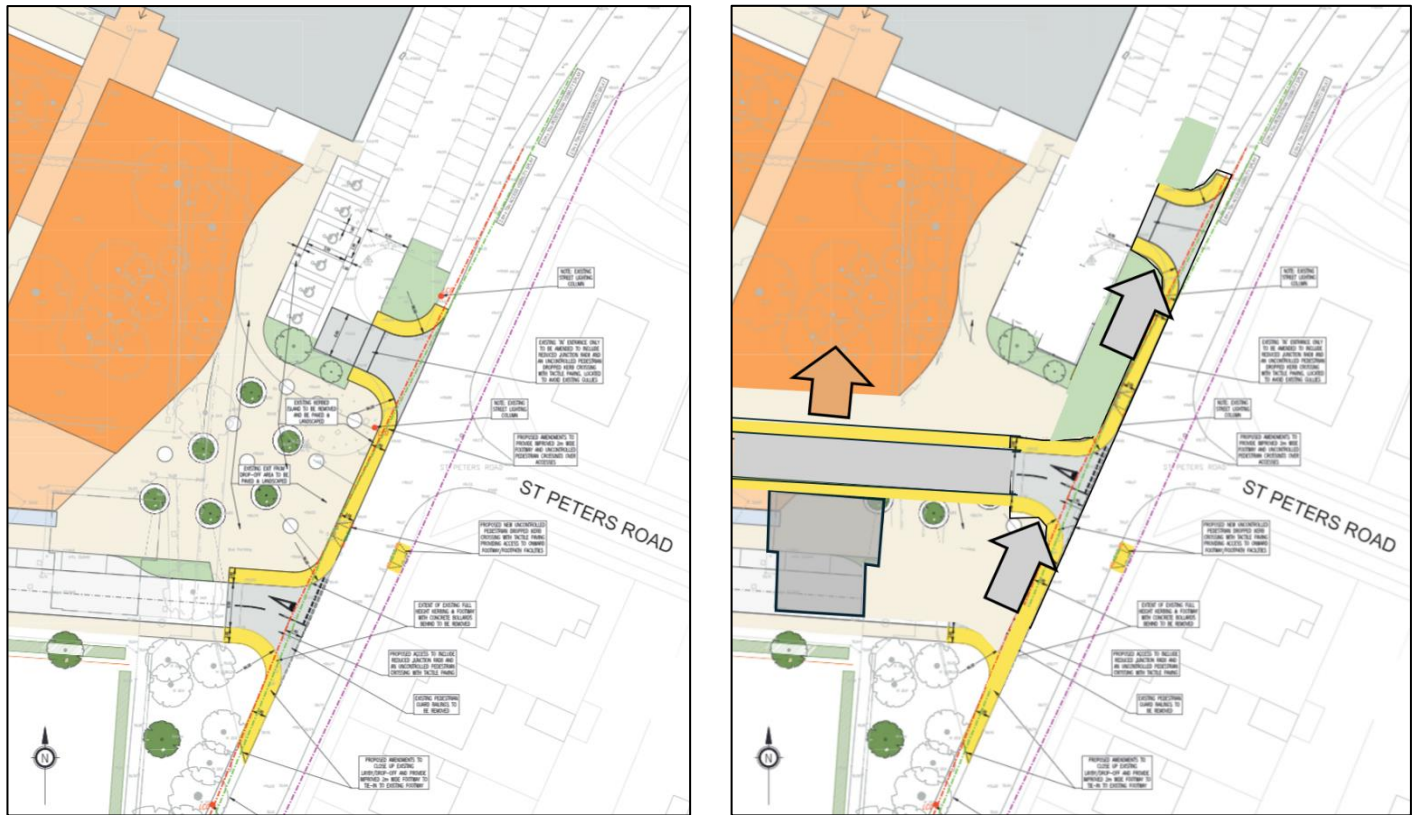


figure 73: **Access Alternatives if Building Not Demolished**

#### 17.4 Chilton Way

17.5 The existing access to Chilton Fields will continue to be used as the primary access point for vehicles.

17.6 It is however proposed to provide a signalised controlled crossing over Chilton Way in the vicinity off the access, rather than retain the current central refuge.



figure 74: **Existing Access to Chilton Fields and uncontrolled crossing on Chilton Way**

- 17.7 Once installed this will be a significant improvement in pedestrian/cycle accessibility and safety
- 18.0 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- 18.1 The LCWIP has identified and prioritised schemes that could improve people's access to safe, comfortable, direct and attractive active travel routes – including several in and around the outskirts of Stowmarket and proposed SHELF project. The Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council are both working to deliver a comprehensive and contiguous network of pedestrian and cycle routes within Stowmarket and the SHELF project has a role to play in plugging existing gaps in the network and extending new sections of routes being provided by developers as house building within the Town expands. Of particular relevance is of course the Northfields development which is under construction and contains various active travel features. It lies immediately west of the SHELF project site.
- 18.2 There is due to be enhancement and improvement of the stretch of National Cycle Route 51 approaching the location of the SHELF scheme from the eastern side, from the Stowmarket recreation ground. This scheme is being delivered by Suffolk County Council, with funding from national government active travel funding.
- 18.3 An initial scheme design was drawn up, which included the addition of safer crossings for cyclists along the route, widen the pathway and remove pinch points, and improve the visibility of, and for, cyclists at junctions. Details of this scheme design can be found in appendix 1. This route and design had previously been received well at public consultation. However, upon further investigation and more detailed feasibility works, it was found that this particular route design may be challenging and more costly than anticipated to deliver, due to the positioning of utilities equipment and other constraints which would have to be overcome. In light of this, alternative options are being considered to improve the walking, wheeling and cycling provision between the SHELF project and the recreation ground.
- 18.4 Whatever the final details of this scheme may be, the funding is already secured to deliver a safer and more attractive route for cyclists and pedestrians which will benefit those travelling between SHELF and the town centre, and project officers will continue to work with SCC to help facilitate the implementation of this scheme and ensure that the SHELF development is taken into account and complemented within the considerations given to active travel connectivity provision in this area.
- 18.5 Currently, the locality of the SHELF scheme is serviced by school and collage bus provision and a general public bus service which route stops at the nearest bus stops approximately every half an hour on weekdays and Saturdays until approximately 7pm.

Route Number	Direction/Destination	Frequency	Operator
<a href="#">88 &amp; 89</a>	To/from Needham Market & Ipswich	Based on stops at Stow Lodge Bus Stop Weekdays & Saturdays: every 30 mins, with an hourly gap between 07.30 and 08.30 (to allow for school buses). Sundays & Bank Holidays: No service	First Bus
<a href="#">384 &amp; 385</a>	From Stowupland High School to Bury St Edmunds, via Haughley, Wetherdon, Elmswell, Woolpit, Beyton/Norton, Thurston	Based on stops at Mallard Way and Stowmarket High School Bus Stops. Weekdays and Saturdays: 4 per day - early morning (approx. 6:30), 8:30am, lunchtime (approx. 13:15), afternoon (approx. 16:10) Sundays & Bank Holidays: No service	Stephensons
<a href="#">S01</a>	Suffolk One to Cedars Park	Mallard Way Bus Stop only. College transport services; 08:24 & 4:45 pm, when Suffolk One is open.	First Bus
<a href="#">387</a>	Stowupland High School - Combs Ford - Stowmarket Bus Route	Based on stops at Stow Lodge Bus Stop. School transport services; 08:30 and 16:05, when Stowupland High School is open.	Dan's Coach Travel
<a href="#">985</a>	From Stowmarket High School to Combs Ford, Combs, Little Finborough, Battisford Tye, Battisford, Ringshall, Wattisham Airfield, Great Bricett, Barking Tye, Barking.	School Bus Stop only. Outbound service arrives 08:45, inbound service departs at 15:05	First Bus
<a href="#">988</a>	Stowmarket - Elmswell - Woolpit - Thurston Community College	Based on stops at Stow Lodge Bus Stop. Thurston Community College Transport: 07:40 and 16:10, when Thurston Community College is open	Mulleys Motorways

18.6 This existing bus provision offers a reasonably good service to the location already, with it being a well-served destination compared to other locations within Mid Suffolk. However, it would still be beneficial to seek even further improvement to the frequency of services (as outlined in section 3.4), to allow even more flexibility on arrival and departure times for those wishing to access the SHELF project via bus, and to make bus travel an attractive means of travelling to the site.

18.7 Stowmarket Train station is serviced by two regular timetable services:

- Services running on the [Norwich to Ipswich and London Liverpool Street](#) line arrive at and depart from Stowmarket up to three times per hour on weekdays and Saturdays between 05:34 (or 05:29 on Saturdays) and 23:48, with additional frequencies at peak commute times. On Sundays, services run up to two times per hour between 07:25 and 23:50. There is access to and from Diss, Needham Market and Ipswich on this service.
- Services running on the [Ipswich to Cambridge and Peterborough](#) line arrive at and depart from Stowmarket up to two times per hour between 05:22 and 22:35 on weekdays. On weekends the service runs up to two times per hour (although more



often just once an hour, compared to the weekday service) from 10:09 to 22:35 on Saturdays, and from 07:50 to 21:19 on Sundays. There is access to and from Ipswich, Needham Market, Elmswell and Thurston on this service.

- 18.8 The cost of a standard class return train ticket, (as of 14 January 2024 - adult fare) and average journey time from nearby towns and villages is as follows:
- Ipswich: £6.50 (13 minutes journey time)
  - Needham Market: £3.30 (5 minutes journey time)
  - Diss: £9.20 (11 minutes journey time)
  - Elmswell: £5.30 (8 minutes journey time)
  - Thurston: £6.60 (14 minutes journey time)
- 18.9 Ticket costs can be cheaper, and significantly more cost effective for those using the train regularly to travel to the SHELF site, if purchased within a [Greater Anglia rail ticket discount or scheme](#), such as rail cards and season tickets, of which there are a wide variety available.
- 19.0 Conclusions in respect of compliance with LP29 Safe, Sustainable and Active Travel.**

- 19.1 Officers are satisfied that the proposal demonstrates safe and suitable access for all and is supported by the Mid Suffolk's Sustainable Travel Officer who has been actively involved in developing enhanced accessibility mitigation within the project.
- 19.2 The applicant has been required to prioritise sustainable and active transport (1) not just to reduce reliance on the car for local trips but also to help promote the health and wellbeing opportunities that are a wider key part of this project.
- 19.3 The proposed development also contributes to sustainable transport strategies (LCWIP) and includes mitigation that will help to manage cumulative impacts of growth particularly on the west side of Stowmarket (2). In terms of the ambitions of Onehouse Parish Council to improve west - east links from the village into Stowmarket and community facilities/services in west Stowmarket it also has a role to play because it will put a few more pieces of the local connectivity jigsaw into place
- 19.4 The scheme has been informed by the relevant parking standards and subject to the expanded 'on' and 'off'-street parking measures described in this report within the parking section parking provision will be acceptable.

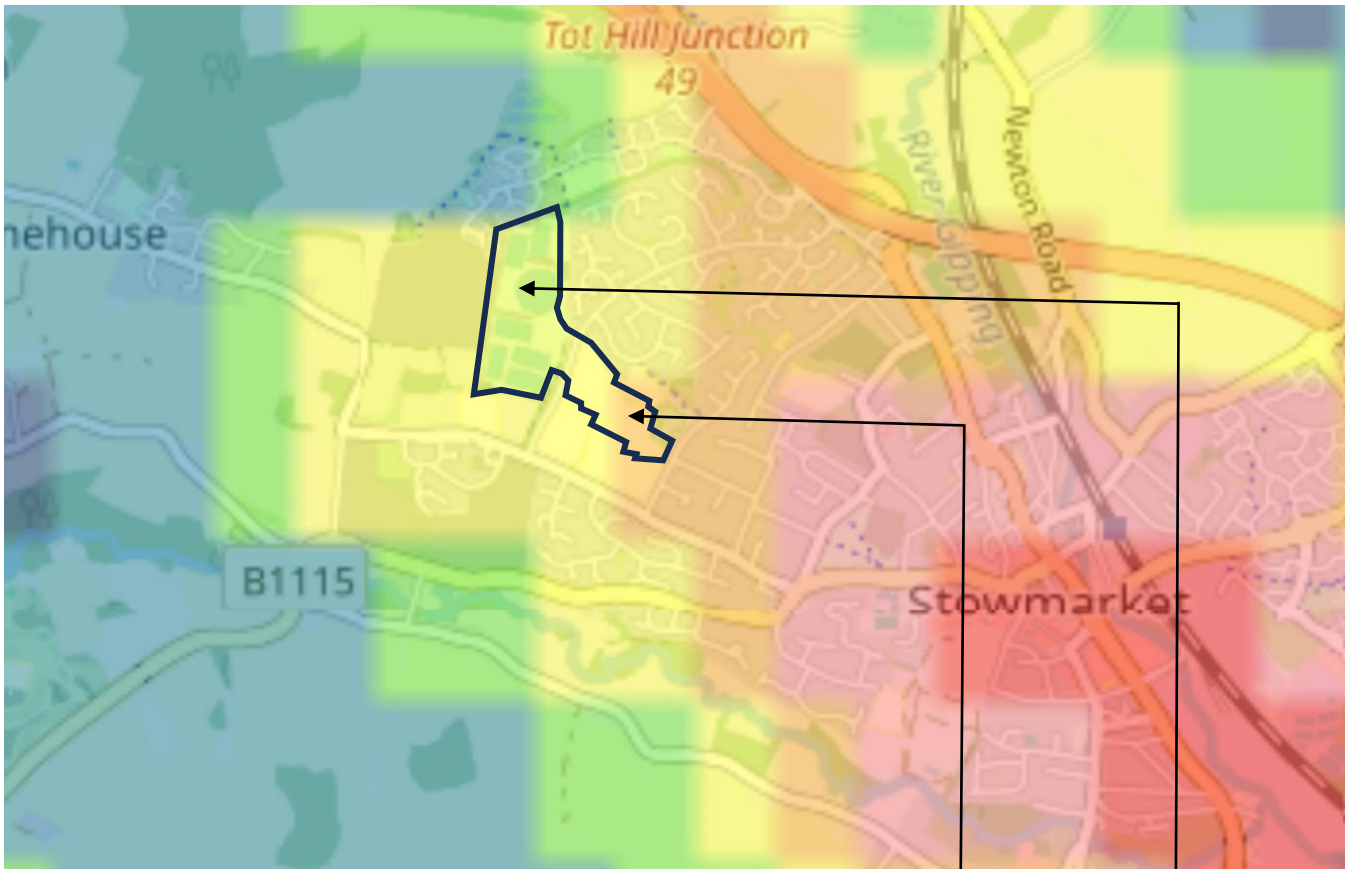
- 19.5 Suffolk County Council has accepted the submitted Transport Assessment and the mitigation proposed therein.
- 19.6 The applicant has focused on delivering safe sustainable and active travel as an intrinsic part of the project brief as the entire scheme is designed to be an enhanced community facility within the heart of this part Stowmarket. Making it easier to get to and from the site by foot and cycle is part of the holistic approach to delivering multi-agency facilities in recreation, leisure, support, education and health in a package that also offers the chance to not just to support the health and wellbeing agenda but also the prospects for achieving greater community resilience.
- 19.7 Suffolk County Council Highways has confirmed that in its opinion the cumulative impact is not 'severe' and therefore not refusible on highway grounds in the context of paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) and LP29 (6) of the AJLP2023.



## 20.0 Lighting

- 20.1 Whilst floodlighting already exists on parts of Chilton Fields, the applicant was required to submit a lighting impact assessment to support the current application because floodlighting coverage is planned to be expanded to include some of the proposed new outdoor facilities in order to extend their use into the evening. This is particularly useful during the winter months when it gets dark early. It also makes financial sense because it means income can be optimised subject to reasonable control on hours to prevent unacceptable nuisance (predominantly noise associated with playing sport outdoors) at unsocial times. Care has been taken to minimise the risks of lighting nuisance in terms of glare and spillage. How?
- 20.2 Presently the site falls in two of the middle bands of the CPRE's ( Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) dark sky spectrum. As you would expect the brightest parts of Stowmarket are found at its heart and night-time lighting (sky glow) levels fall in concentric bands like the skin of an onion as you move outwards towards the Town's rural hinterland.
- 20.3 As the approved largescale residential developments on the west side of Stowmarket get built out it is inevitable that the areas immediately to the west and the south of the application site will become brighter.
- 20.4 In that scenario the sports fields when not in use will potentially be darker pools in an otherwise artificially illuminated landscape.

20.5 The inclusion of additional floodlighting within the current proposal does have the potential to increase levels of sky glow. **This** aspect will be examined in this report.



<https://www.cpre.org.uk/light-pollution-dark-skies-map/>

(NanoWatts / cm<sup>2</sup>/sr )

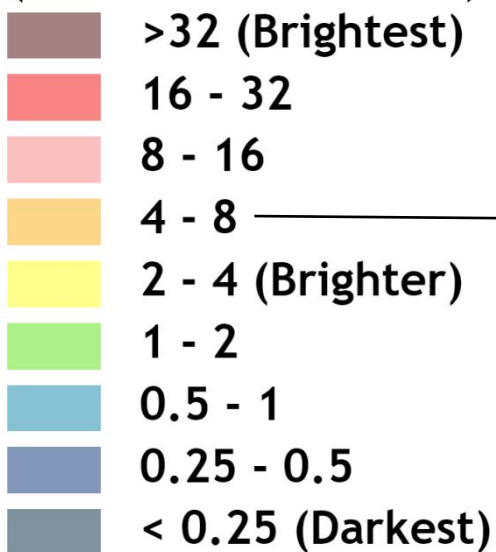


figure 74:  
**Extract from CPRE Dark Sky Map  
Stowmarket and Environs**

- 20.6 The application is supported with a Lighting Impact Assessment, dated March 2023, that was produced for the applicant by the lighting consultants - Silcock Dawson & Partners
- 20.7 That document describes how the lighting design was informed to minimise light pollution.
- 20.8 A relevant extract is included below:

*“The lighting scheme has been designed to provide adequate lighting levels for the various activities being undertaken. Whilst the new lighting for the multi-purpose area and pitches is from tall columns, this will ensure that the light output is specifically directed downwards to the areas that need to be illuminated and not be projected across the site past the boundaries.*

*The selected light fittings are specifically designed for this application with excellent light control to reduce light overspill, upward light and glare. The fittings are designed for lighting outdoor sports grounds and smaller sports stadiums where obtrusive light control is an essential requirement.*

*The occasion where lighting overspills into neighbouring properties at the Mini Athletics the scheme is compliant with obtrusive light requirements.*

*To further minimise lighting overspill selected fittings within this area have been provided with lighting shields to further minimise lighting spread with a max result of 3 Lux calculated. It should be noted that the lighting scheme model is based upon a flat open area with screening effect of trees not having been taken into account to provide a worst-case scenario.*

*The lighting will be controlled by time clocks and photocells to prevent energy wastage and control the hours of operation.*

*Lower column mounting heights have been used where possible with car parks fitting mounted on 6m lighting columns. The lower column mounting heights will help to reduce any lighting overspill. The selected fittings have been specifically designed for this application with excellent light control to reduce light overspill, upward light and glare; fittings photometrically optimised for lower mounting heights.*

*External public footpaths have been illuminated via the use of low-level lighting bollards with fitting placement and lighting optics where possible positioned to face away from adjoining sites and further reducing lighting overspill.*

*Low energy light fittings have been selected via the use of LED fittings due to their energy efficiency and long lifespan.*



*External lighting hours of operation controlled via a 3-position switch (On, Off & Auto), time clocks and photocell arrangement.”*

20.9 The lighting consultant acting for the applicant has described the intended lighting controls to be used to minimise the risk of nuisance and/or pollution thus:

*“The lighting system will be controlled to provide the lighting at the required times when the pitches are in use and reduce the energy consumption.*

*Areas are to be controlled separately with lighting generally time clock controlled with a photocell override to prevent the lighting being switched on during daylight hours. The time clock will prevent the lights being used outside the agreed hours of operation.*

- The car park lights will be automatically switched on in the morning at say 8.00am and switched off at 11.30pm at night. A photocell will switch the lights off during the daytime when there is sufficient sunlight. (Operation times to be confirmed).*
- The multi-use artificial sports pitch lights will have an overriding time clock which will turn the flood lights off at a predetermined time (currently anticipated to be 10.00pm on any day of the week). The lights will be manually switched on as required by the activity being undertaken on the pitch via a normal / high / off switch. This would allow the operator to select lighting suitable for the activity taking place. A photocell would override the switches ensuring the lights are switched off when there is sufficient sunlight. (Operation times to be confirmed).*
- The pitches will be individually controlled from local switches with auto-switch off at 11.00pm on any day of the week. (Operation times to be confirmed).*
- The assumption is that the external building lighting will be grouped and controlled from a main control position within the building through a 3-position switch (On, Off & Auto). Lighting will be generally time clock controlled with an external photocell override to prevent the lighting being switched on during daylight hours. The time clock will prevent the lighting being switched on during daylight hours. The time clock will prevent the lighting being used outside the agreed hours of operation. (Operation times to be confirmed).“*

20.10 Floodlights are understood to have a 20 to 30-minute cooling down time once switched off which means the lights do not immediately go dark but rather tend to progressively dim until when fully cooled, go off.

20.11 Therefore a floodlight that is switched off at say 22.00hrs will not be dark until 22.20-22.30 hrs. They do however soon lose their intensity. Residents living around Chilton Fields will already be familiar with the process.

20.12 If we compare the applicant's proposed opening times for the Pavilion with the suggested floodlighting switch off times and outdoor pitch use times there is a significant inconsistency. Let's take a closer look.

### Pavilion (opening hours)

Monday - Friday	06.00hrs - 22.30hrs
Saturday	06.00hrs - 22.30hrs
Sunday & Bank Hols	06.00hrs - 22.00hrs

### Floodlights - pitches

Any day switch off	23.00hrs
--------------------	----------

### Outdoor pitch use

*The submitted report makes the following recommendations for the operational hours of the outdoor sports facilities to prevent undue disturbance, based on the outcomes of the modelling:*

Monday to Friday	07:00 to 22:00hrs
Saturdays	08:00 to 21:00hrs
Sundays and Bank Holidays	08:00 to 19:00hrs

### Pavilion car park

Any day switch off	23.30hrs
--------------------	----------

20.13 If the Pavilion closes at 22.30 (Monday- Saturday) and use of pitches ceases at 22.00hrs (Monday-Friday) or 21.00hrs (Saturdays) or earlier still 19.00hrs (Sundays and Bank Holidays) then switching the floodlights off at 23.00 appears excessive

20.14 Having the car park lights turn off at 23.00hrs means that users of the car park will have the added security of not have to access their vehicles in the dark. Staff are more likely to leave the premises later than guests and so the extended lighting time makes sense.

20.15 Regard will need to be given however to the existing switch off times for floodlights already in use if the lights are not being changed as they may be subject to previously applied conditions. Mew floodlight installations can however be controlled by **condition**

20.16 Members will have noted the comments of Environmental Health in respect of noise control for outdoor pitches and they have suggested the times indicated by the applicant's consultant in respect of noise and the appropriate time to finish using the outdoor sports facilities are **conditioned**

20.17 If Members accept this proposition, then floodlight operation times should be conditioned to reflect the periods that the associated facility/facilities are permitted for use and not unnecessarily longer.



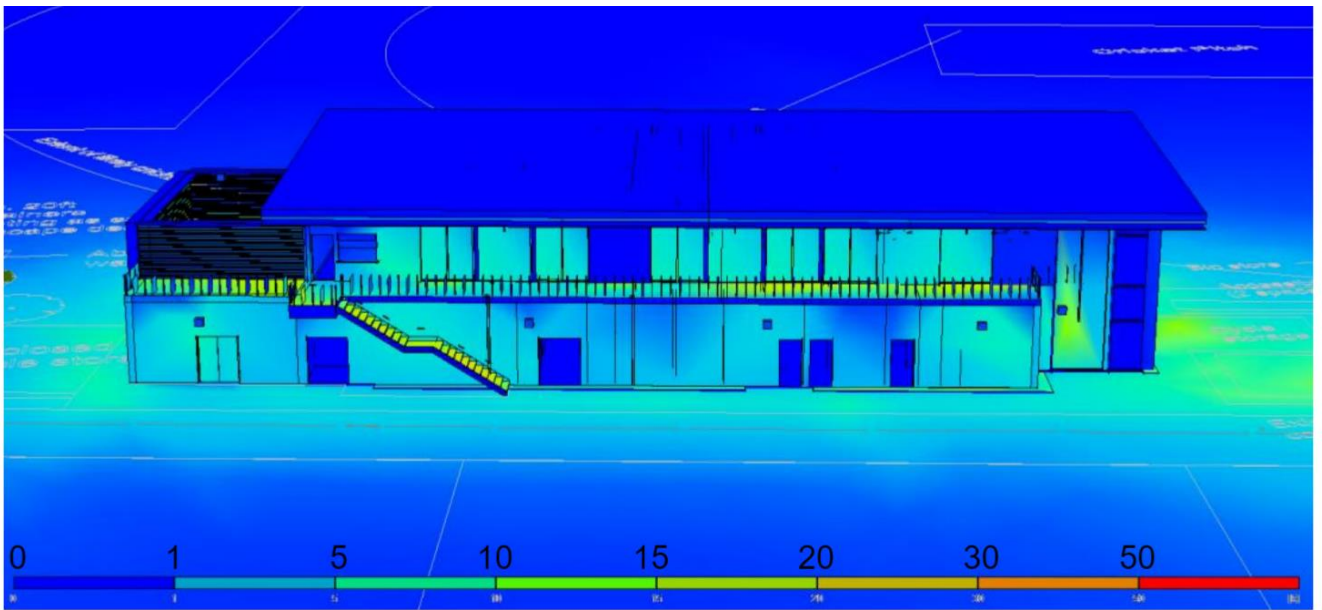
20.18 The lighting consultant has provided GCI images of how the Pavilion lighting will appear during the hours of darkness and these can be seen below.



Wall mounted fittings around building perimeter.

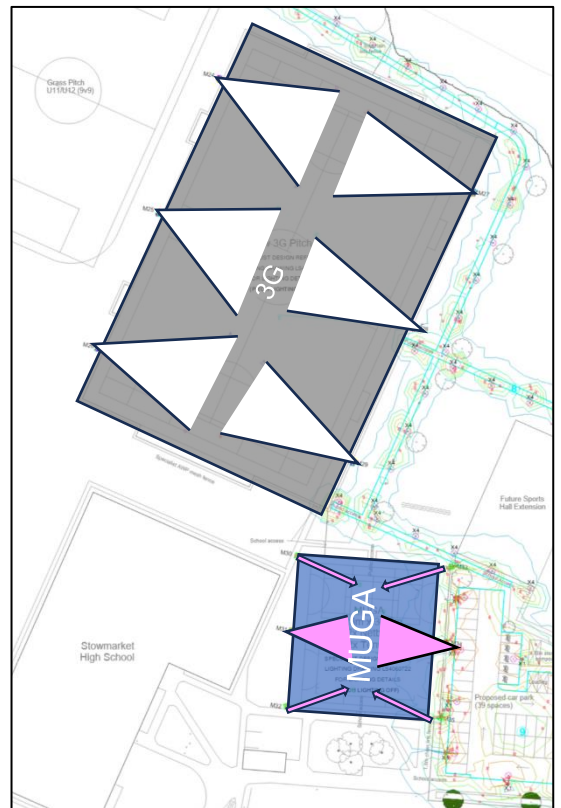
LED strip lighting for wall wash of building signage.

figure 75: Pavilion - external lighting CGI (Computer Generated Image)

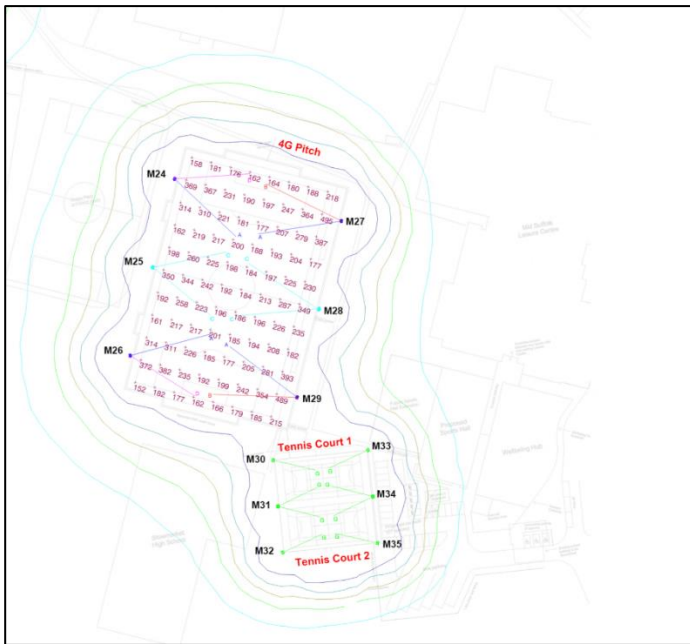
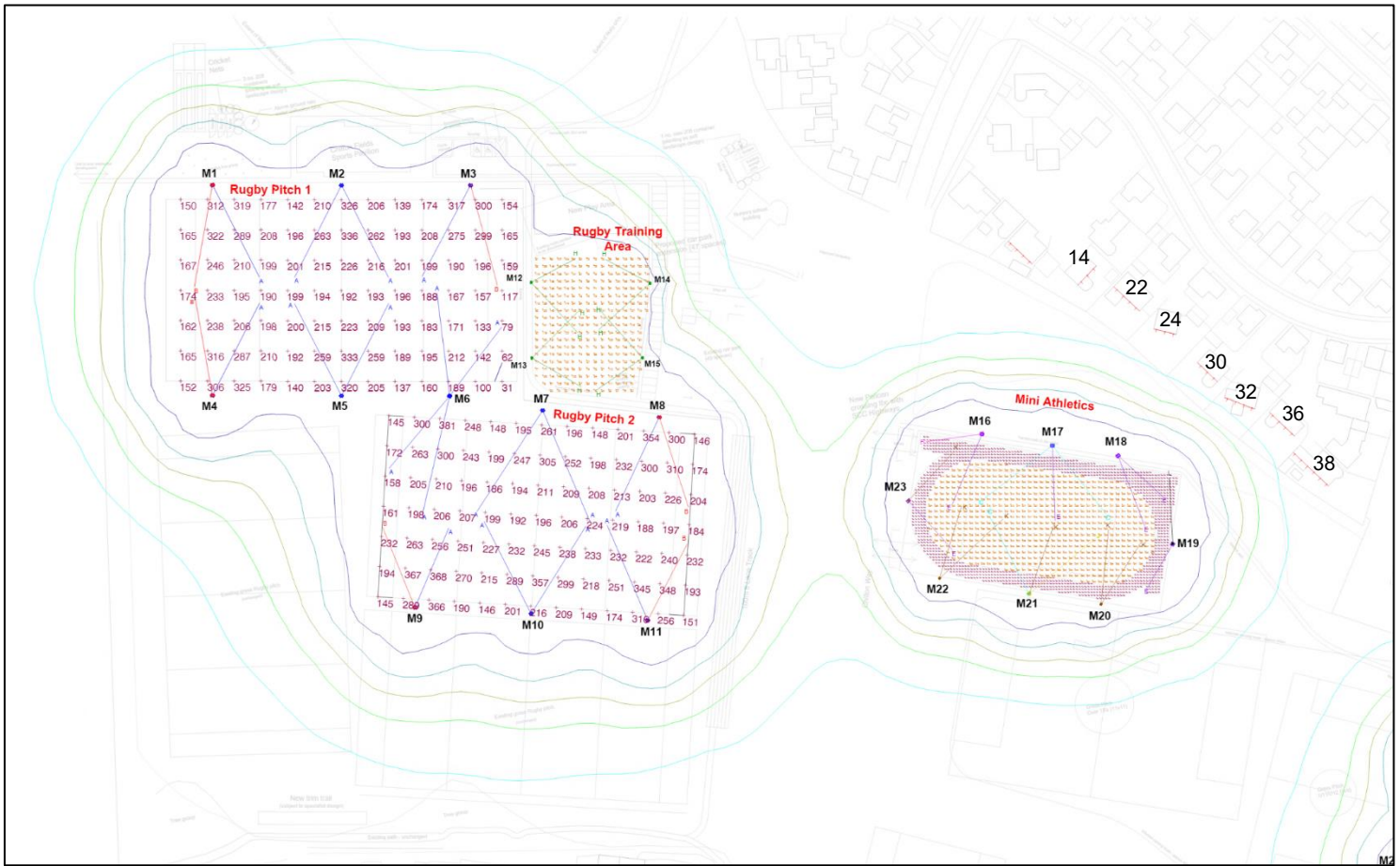




figures 77: **Floodlighting positions**







figures 78: **Light Spread diagrams**

20.19

The proposed lighting has been designed to avoid unacceptable sky glow as light will be thrown downwards. Lighting head design is now such that light spread can be successfully controlled.

20.20

The submitted light spread (spillage diagrams) show that very few adjoining premises are expected to be impacted. Where light is expected at the site boundary (Lowry Way) it will be at reduced levels and it is proposed to add shields to lamps to prevent nuisance provide protection from such illumination as will controlled switch off times.

20.21

Further discussion on these points is included in section 21.0 of this report in its analysis of the proposal against LP24

## 21.0 Residential Amenity

- 21.1 This is a large and widespread site on the built-up western edge of Stowmarket and inevitably has therefore, in places, existing residential neighbours.
- 21.2 It is also true to say that where once the site provided the buffer between urban and rural Stowmarket it will soon be engulfed by residential development now that 'Northfields' is being built-out.
- 21.3 The drawings that follow show the relationship of the application to existing and evolving residential development.
- 21.4 Residential amenity can be eroded in a number of ways and through a variety of external effects.
- 21.5 Underpinning protection of residential amenity is Article 1 and Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 1 states that every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his *[sic]* possessions and Article 8 provides, amongst other things, protection of your right to respect for your home.
- 21.6 Members will of course be aware that the planning system is exercised on the basis of common good and therefore private rights are often subordinated. That said the planning system is required to have regard to the adverse impacts of a development on the residential amenity enjoyed by affected properties that are unrelated to the proposed development.
- 21.7 This report will now consider the most likely sources of potential harm to residential amenity that might if not carefully mitigated or designed out or are incapable of being so ameliorated arise from the proposed development

## 21.8 Noise

Sporting activity, including:

- referees whistles
- shouting and possible swearing (*less likely with rugby than many other team contact sports*) from players and/or spectators.
- kick boards
- late night open-air conversation
- late night revellers
- game related shouting
- from the terrace areas on the Pavilion (*access to bar*)
- vehicle engine noise
- vehicles manoeuvring and traffic

- amplified sound
- music from Pavilion or externally from tannoy during matches tournaments or music at social events
- operation of external plant and equipment
- air source heat pumps
- extract and similar equipment

21.9 The applicant is proposing noise attenuating panels around the inside of the artificial pitches rather than solid kick boards. This will significantly reduce the risk of noise nuisance that is associated with footballs being kicked against rigid/solid surfaces or directly against weld mesh perimeter fencing. It is suggested that these elements of noise attenuation be **conditioned** to ensure they are provided and retained in the interest of safeguarding residential amenity.

21.10 It is also suggested that the playing of amplified sound be **conditioned** as recommended by Environmental Health

21.11 Details of all external plant needs to be **conditioned** to ensure that adequate controls are provided to prevent nuisance from noise vibration and odour

21.12 Car park vehicle noise is difficult to managed but by controlling operational times for the associated facilities and requiring the car parks to be gated and closed when the associated facilities are closed sufficient control will be delivered.

21.13 It is suggested that a **condition** be added to any permission (*if that is forthcoming*) requiring signs (*the content of which shall first be agreed with the local planning authority*) to be displayed within the site at locations to be agreed 'asking patrons to leave the premises quietly as there are residential neighbours in the vicinity and the clubs wish to be good neighbours'

21.14 By closing and gating the car parks it should be possible to prevent late the night anti-social behaviour that is often associated with 'out of hours' car related activity.  
**conditions**

21.15 **Light nuisance**

- floodlighting
- other external lighting
- car headlights (leaving car parks)

- 21.14 By controlling switch off times for floodlighting where this is relevant and relating them to reasonable operational times this should not pose an unacceptable risk to residential amenity. **conditions**
- 21.15 Headlight nuisance is not expected to be an issue as vehicles already access the Leisure Centre from an access point on Gainsbrough Road and the urban context means that vehicle related lighting is a familiar part of life.
- 21.16 **Overlooking**
- from upper floors of Pavilion and/or Wellbeing Hub (including terrace)
- 21.17 This will not be an issue in respect of the Pavilion as it is sufficiently distant and screened from nearby dwellings.
- 21.18 Any first floor accommodation within the Wellbeing Hub will be sufficiently set back from Gainsborough Road to provide residents on the opposite side of the road with adequate protection from the risk of overlooking. Hours of use of the terrace/roof garden should be **conditioned** to ensure no open air late night activity that could cause nuisance.
- 21.19 **Over shadowing and/or /Loss of daylight/sunlight**
- of either adjacent gardens or dwellings
- 21.20 This will not be an issue as the separation distances of new buildings from existing homes and gardens is so distant as not to pose such amenity risks
- 21.21 **Odour/fumes**
- from kitchen areas
  - from vehicles in car parks
- 21.22 The specification of kitchen related equipment and plant will be **conditioned** and so with advice and regulation from Environmental Health will be properly controlled.
- 21.23 The proposed car parking areas are sufficiently remote and unconfined so as not to pose any particular issue in regard to exhaust fumes in the proximity of residential dwellings
- 21.24 **Litter**
- 21.25 Provision and maintain of adequate litter bins will be **conditioned**.
- 21.26 **Dogs**
- 21.27 Chilton Fields is used by owners to exercise their dogs which is fine but those owners who do not pick up their dog's mess put the health and hygiene of people playing sport at risk. It is suggested that the applicant be required to review dog bin provision by



condition and provide further facilities if this is deemed necessary by the local planning authority and the Waste and Public Realm Services .

## 22.0 Drainage

22.1 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 (very low fluvial<sup>17</sup> flood risk), is not vulnerable to groundwater or reservoir flooding and is not in a designated critical drainage area. Therefore the Sequential Test within the NPPF (December 2024) is not triggered.



figures 79: **Surface Water Flood Risk Areas**

22.2 A small part of the site does however fall within an area with a medium to high surface water flood risk. The area in question wraps around the back of the existing leisure centre (west) and along its southern edge.

22.3 On this basis the northern end of the Proposed Sports Hall and the Wellbeing Hub are likely to fall within this area.

22.4 As a result and taking a precautionary approach the merits of this part of the proposal have been considered 'as if' the sequential test is engaged in line with policy LP27, SP10(a) and paragraph 168 of the NPPF (December 2023). The aim of the sequential test is to steer development to the areas with the lowest risk of flooding.

22.5 By engaging the sequential test, the starting point is whether there are other reasonably available sites for the proposed quantum and type of development elsewhere in the

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<sup>17</sup> Related to rivers and watercourses

district. No development should be permitted in areas at risk of flooding (from any source) if there are other reasonably available sites that are at a lower risk of flooding.

- 22.6 It is considered that there are no other reasonably available sites for the type and quantum of development proposed for the Sports Hall. The proposed Sports Hall is an extension to the existing Leisure Centre and will benefit operationally, financially and as an attraction from co-location.
- 22.7 The proposed Wellbeing Hub will provide a range of facilities and services that will also benefit from co-location with the Leisure Centre as it is already a well-used accessible community facility. Services planned for delivery within the Wellbeing Hub span across social, health, education and community uses in a way that will enable a cross service/cross provider delivery of important local services in a joined up holistic approach to supporting the community and the wellbeing of those within it.
- 22.8 Parts of Stowmarket are included in the most deprived parts of the East of England and a multi-agency approach is considered an effective way to deliver certain services that would be of help to those in need of support.
- 22.9 In bringing the project together the Regeneration Service has worked with partner agencies to assemble the application site in such a way as to maximise the scope for creating flexible space.
- 22.10 Whilst there are other sites/buildings in Stowmarket that may be owned by the Council and/or partner agencies these are not presently available and do not offer the locational advantages provided by the current application site.
- 22.11 In accordance with policy LP27 and paragraphs 169, 170 and 171 of the NPPF, the exception test is therefore engaged as the sequential test has been passed. The exception test is split into parts a) and b), both of which must be passed. Part a) requires development to provide wider sustainability benefits that outweigh the flood risk. Part b) requires the development to be safe for its lifetime, not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible improve the overall flood risk.
- 22.12 Part a)
- 22.13 This development will if approved provide a significant level of sustainability benefits that are identified throughout this report. These benefits align with the three sustainability objectives in paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023.
- 22.14 For the avoidance of doubt these include:
- the creation of new jobs (economic and social benefits) Largely within the Wellbeing Hub (OUTLINE)
  - a 20% BNG (environmental and social benefits)

- possibility of greater participation in exercise, sport and improved access to leisure and good quality recreation and sports facilities (wellbeing and social)
- enhanced connectivity via active travel (environmental and social)
- (social and economic benefits - health & wellbeing)
- improvements in connectivity (economic and environmental benefits)
- green energy generation (environmental and economic benefits)
- opportunity to deliver holistic approach to cross-provider user services (social and economic)
- expanded access to sports facilities for pupils at Stow High School (economic and social)
- provision of inclusive and accessible facilities (social and economic wellbeing)
- expands the commercial viability of the existing Leisure Centre (economic)

22.15 Part b)

22.16 The proposal will deliver drainage improvements through crated storage and attenuation in and around the Wellbeing Hub/parking area and as such this will address existing surface water issues within the site.

22.17 The present application if approved will provide a fixed permanent solution to mitigating current surface water flood risks.

22.18 On this basis and in the light of the LLFA's position the drainage aspects of this proposal are acceptable subject to the **conditions** recommended by the LLFA and Anglian Water and meet the tests within paragraphs 168-171 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023.

22.19 Members attention is drawn to Annex 3:Flood risk vulnerability classification of the NPPF (December 2023) which grades a range of land uses in terms of their vulnerability if sited within an area of medium to high surface water flood risk as this shows none of the proposed uses to be in the two highest vulnerabilities.

22.20 The proposed uses are described below by Vulnerability category from least vulnerable to most vulnerable.

'WATER COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT' all of the outdoor sports facilities and changing rooms fall within this category and so there is no issue here around the flood risk.

'LESS VULNERABLE' The proposed Pavilion, Sports Hall and large parts of the Wellbeing Hub and the proposed uses therein fall into this category

'MORE VULNERABLE' embraces non-residential health / educational and nursery uses. It should be noted that the existing nursery is in a low-risk surface water flood risk area and so is not impacted unless it is proposed to relocate the use into the Wellbeing Hub. None of the proposed Wellbeing Hub is expected to be used as traditional desk-based learning space and the Sports Hall tends to fall within the Less Vulnerable rather than the More Vulnerable category when being used by pupils. Some uses of the Wellbeing Hub could however sit within the more vulnerable category when final occupiers are known (in the event of pp being granted).

The proposed health related uses fall into the category of clinic spaces and it is not proposed to have hospital bed space.

No part/s of the proposal falls/fall within the most vulnerable use categories of:

'HIGHLY VULNERABLE' or '  
'ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE'

- 22.21 The proposal is acceptable as there is no significant Fluvial Flood Risk, the entire site being within Flood Risk Zone 1 (Fluvial).
- 22.22 A small part of the site is within a medium to high surface water flood risk (Pluvial) area and taking the 'precautionary approach described above the proposed uses are acceptable as having engaged the Sequential and passed and then engaged the ' Exception' test both parts of that (part (a) and (part b) are also passed. The precautionary approach has been taken because officers know that the Committee is highly attuned to tackling the consequences of the increased frequency and severity of flooding in the District.
- 22.23 The proposal includes measures that will mitigate and manage the existing surface water flood risk which potentially represents a betterment on the current situation.
- 22.24 The proposal conforms with relevant sections of Policy LP27 -Flood Risk and Vulnerability and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)



## 23.0 Heritage

- 23.1 Section 66(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision taker must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. What this means is that a finding of harm, even less than substantial harm, to the setting of a listed building is something that must be given "considerable importance and weight" in the balancing exercise and this presents a 'strong presumption' against permission being granted.
- 23.2 This is reflected in the advice in paragraph 205 of the NPPF that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset,

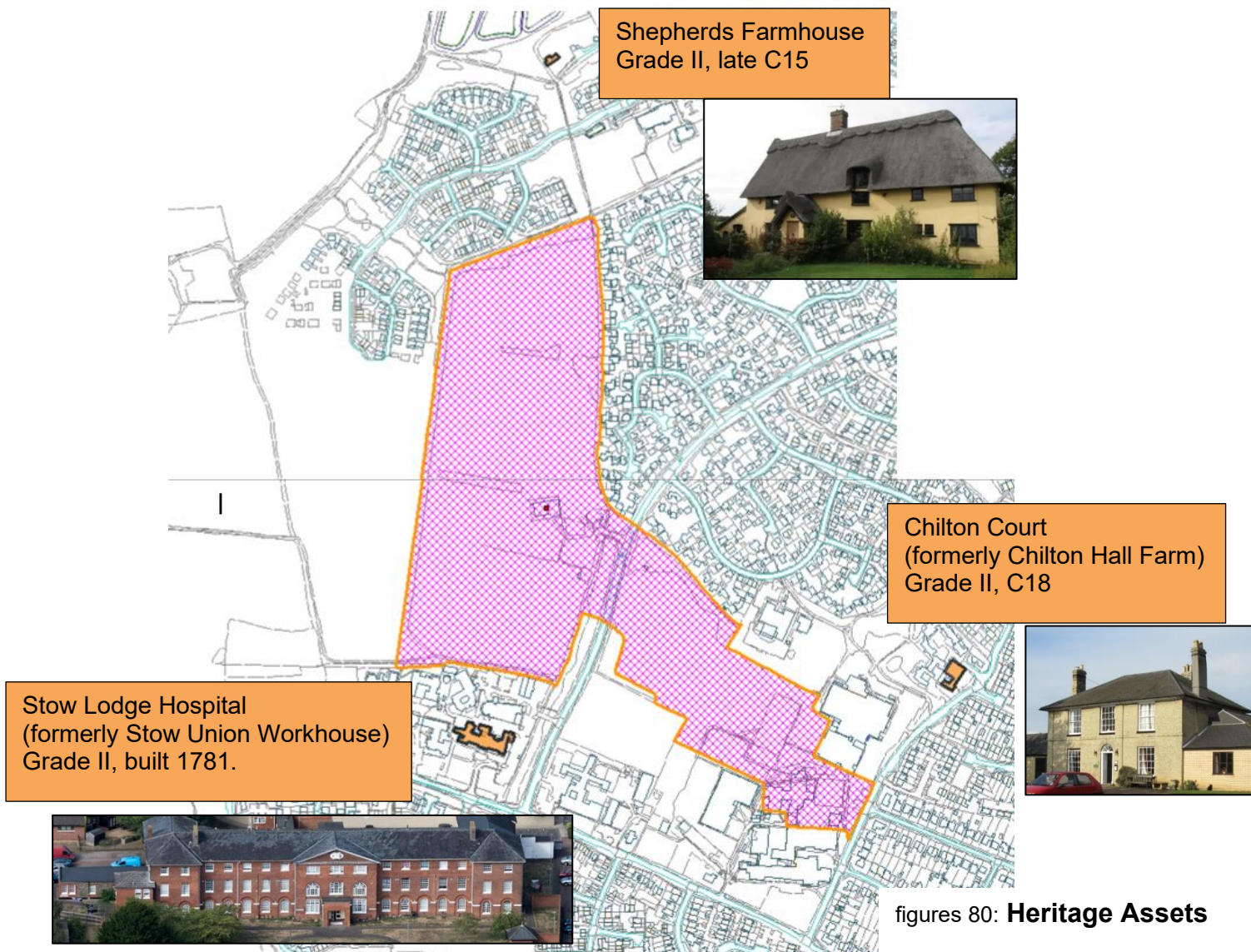


great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)." Consequently, any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification (NPPF, paragraph 206).

- 23.3 AJLP2023 Policy LP19 The Historic Environment reinforces the presumptions in Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023 – notably paragraph 195 which states:

*"These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations"*

- 23.4 The Council's Heritage Team has assessed that the proposal will 'not impact the significance of any heritage assets' (FULL application) and 'Not cause any harm to any heritage assets' (OUTLINE application).



- 23.5 Whilst the area known as the 'Paupers Graves' not directly affected by this proposal the applicant is in discussion with Onehouse Parish Council (who purchased the site at the start of this century in order to preserve it in the memory of those buried there and to facilitate its proper management for social/historical reasons) and relevant landowners to discuss the potential for increasing biodiversity and tree planting in and around the site.
- 23.6 Whilst this could represent additional off-site mitigation, it is not formally part of the application and cannot be taken into account here. The measures that are formally included within the application are expected to deliver a circa 20% BNG without such mitigation and reference to such an initiative is provided here merely for background information.



figures 81:  
**Paupers Graves Site  
Entrance  
Onehouse Parish Council**

- 23.7 The 'poor and destitute'<sup>18</sup> who died in Stow Lodge Workhouse <sup>19</sup>( were sewn into their sheets and buried in shallow graves marked only with a small numbered wooden cross in an area aside for such interments adjacent to the Lodge. These were the 'Paupers' Graves.



figures 82:  
**Stow Lodge**

<sup>18</sup> These included single mothers, widows, children, elderly people, and those with mental and physical disabilities

<sup>19</sup> The establishment of Houses of Industry, commonly known as workhouses, was enabled by the Workhouse Test Act of 1723 to offer indoor relief to the poor. Stow Incorporation was established by the Stow, Suffolk: Poor Relief Act 1778 c. 35 and was formed of the parishes of Buxhall, Combs, Creeting St. Peter, Great Finborough, Little Finborough, Harleston, Haughley, Old Newton, Onehouse, Shelland, Stow Upland, Stowmarket, and Wetherden.

Plans were approved for the construction of Union Workhouse in 1779 and it was completed in 1781 at a cost of £12,000.<sup>[5]</sup> According to White's Directory for Suffolk of 1844 it was described in 1810 as having "more the appearance of a gentleman's seat than a receptacle for paupers"

Inmates who died whilst in the workhouse were buried in the paupers graveyard nearby, which was purchased by Onehouse Parish Council in 2000 and is maintained by volunteers.

23.8 The OS map extract from 1884 below shows Stow Union Workhouse and associated infirmary and the adjacent burial ground that is now the site known as 'Paupers Grave's. The juxtaposition of the infirmary and the burial ground is poignant.

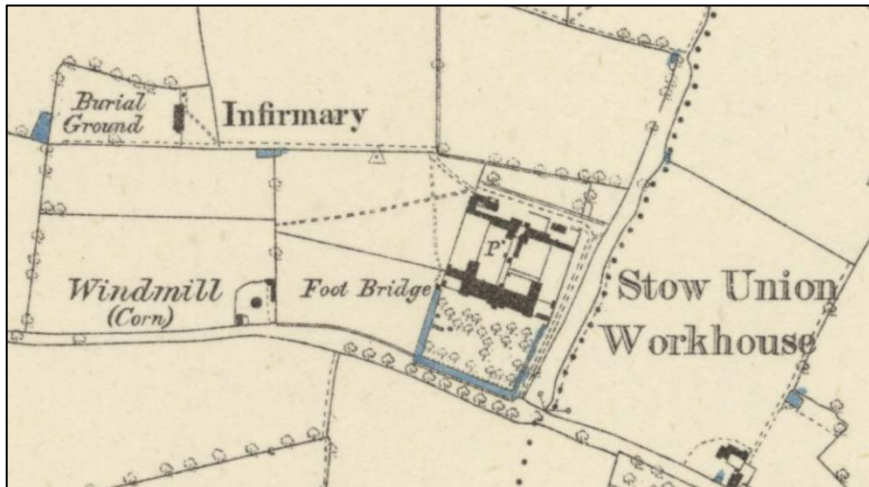


figure 83:  
**OS map from  
1884**

23.9 The proposed development is therefore considered to fully comply with LP19 and the requirements of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023). As it will not cause any harm to heritage assets in the vicinity or their settings, there are therefore no reasonable heritage grounds to refuse\* the application.

\*Note: Paragraph 11 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) advises local planning authorities...

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development...."*

*For decision-taking this means:*

*(c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.....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\*\*. (\*\*footnote 7 NPPF applies)*

*footnote 7 refers amongst other things to designated heritage assets being assets of particular importance. In the preset case there is no harm and so (c)I is not engaged*





## 24.0 **Employment and Town Centre Impacts**

24.1 Whilst the development is not primarily one that is being promoted to create new jobs/employment activity, it will result in job opportunities being created.

24.2 The majority will be within the Wellbeing Hub and as that element is the subject of an OUTLINE application the numbers are not known at present.

24.3 The applicant has however estimated that some 169 temporary construction jobs will be created by the development.

24.4 In policy terms our first point of reference here needs to be Policy SP03 - The Sustainable Location of New development and particularly part 2, which states:

*“The principle of development is established within settlement boundaries in accordance with the relevant policies of this plan.”*

24.5 The inclusion of office space and employment generating uses within the Wellbeing Hub is therefore acceptable in principle as we established in section 3.0 of this report.

24.6 As a result of the application site not being outside of the defined settlement boundary for Stowmarket part 2 (c ), table 5, SP05 Strategic Transport Corridor settings is not engaged. This relates to development outside of the settlement boundary that is however located on a Strategic Transport Corridor.

24.7 The AJLP2023 at page 12, includes the Plan’s ‘Key Diagram’ on which is shown the extent of the Strategic Road corridors within the District. The plan is at such a small scale and the notation for the Strategic Transport Corridors so schematic (seemingly based on a regular width from either side of the line of the A14) that it can only be used to broadly identify the extent of this designation.

24.8 However if one plots the route on an larger scale base map Strategic Transport Corridor includes almost all of Stowmarket, including the application site. The plan below shows this relationship for information purposes only as background to SP03 but does become relevant when looking at SP05 - Employment Land.

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Figure 84: Strategic Transport Corridor around Stowmarket (from AJLP2023 Ket Diagram)



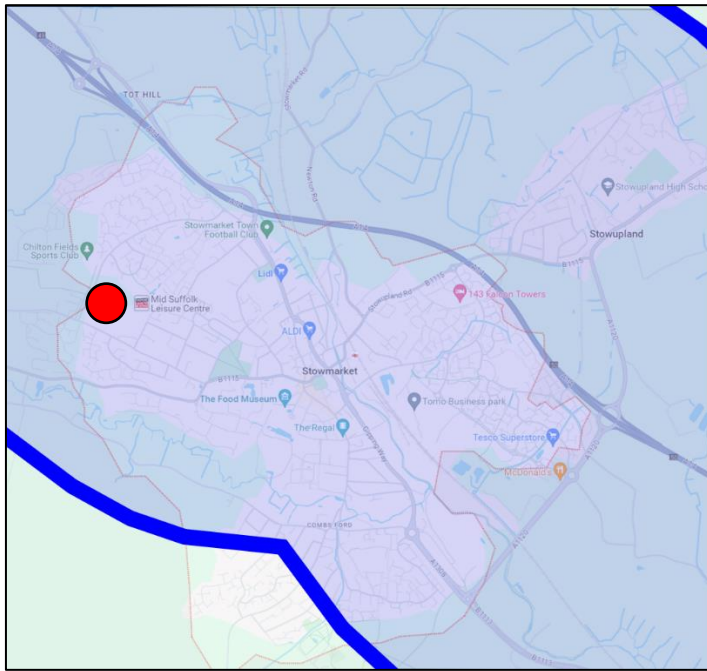


figure 84:  
**Strategic Transport Corridor  
 around Stowmarket**  
 (from AJLP2023 Ket Diagram)

- 24.9 We now turn to Policy SP05 - Employment Land.
- 24.10 SP05 seeks to direct employment uses in the first instance to designated employment sites and to protect existing employment uses in such areas.
- 24.11 No part of the SHELF site is defined as a strategic employment site and so what of elements within it -such as the potential office space in the Wellbeing Hub?
- 24.12 SP05 does permit employment use outside of designated employment sites along a Strategic Transport Corridor and as we have established the application site is within the defined A14 Strategic Transport Corridor.
- 24.13 Particularly relevant therefore is part 5 which states:

*“To ensure a deliverable supply of employment sites to accommodate the changing needs of the economy, development of other land for employment uses along the strategic transport corridors (as defined in the glossary) shall be supported in principle, subject to:*

- a. The applicant demonstrating that any proposal is deliverable and would enhance provision which cannot be accommodated on existing strategic employment sites;*
- b. All proposals demonstrating adequate highway capacity and access with sufficient on-site parking;*

- c. *Ensuring provision of accessibility to public transport, including walking and cycling provision*
- d. *The site design and layout being sensitive to the surroundings, including any landscape, heritage and biodiversity assets;*
- e. *Prioritisation being given to development on previously development land; and*
- f. *All new buildings demonstrating a high standard of design, by having regard to the relevant policies of the Plan. “*

24.14 With suitable conditions in place and in the light of preceding analysis along with decision of Full Council of 25 January 2024 in respect of Package 1 works the proposal satisfactorily meets all six pre-requisites.

24.15 This report now looks at the proposal in the context of SP06 - Retail and Town Centre Uses and LP 11 - Retail and Town centres and LP 09 - Supporting a Prosperous Economy.

24.16 SP05 (1) provides support for Main Town Centre uses in, amongst other locations, the defined Town Centre for Stowmarket. The application site however is not within that defined Town Centre. Part 2 then states that a sequential test will need to be applied for proposals that include Main Town Centre Uses that are not in a defined town centre.

24.17 This report will turn to an assessment of the relevance of the sequential test to the application at hand when it looks at the effect of LP11 next.


24.18 The proposal satisfied part 3 of SP05 in that the proposal does not cause any harm to designated heritage assets or their setting/s.

24.19 In the context of LP11 -Retail and Town Centres it is appropriate to look at the extent to which the proposed development engages with part 3 of that policy. That states:

*“ Where an application for Class E (retail and leisure development) outside of town centre boundaries is in excess of 400m<sup>2</sup>, an impact assessment will be required. A sequential test in accordance with the NPPF will be applied for any applications for main town centre uses, which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan, including Neighbourhood Plans where relevant. Applications which would fail the sequential test or are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of nearby centres will not be supported. “*

24.20 So what constitutes a Main Town Centre Use? Footnote 14 to policy SP06 at page 36 of the ADJLP2023 provides the answer

*“Main town centre uses include retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres), leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls), offices and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities.”*

- 24.21 As previously established any entertainment/food and drink use within the Pavilion is purely ancillary and incidental to the primary established use of Chilton Fields as a Sports Centre. It is not a independent use and therefore not one that is going to challenge the viability and vitality of the Town Centre or any other local centres. In any event at 220sq.m. the overall floorspace involved is significantly below the 400sq.m threshold in part 3 of LP11
- 24.22 The same applies to the possible community café in the Wellbeing Hub.
- 24.23 The office space within the Wellbeing Hub is expected to have a direct connection with the health services being offered within the building and in the local community by visiting health workers. Consequently the need for the space will be driven by locational, functional and operational imperatives. This is not speculative floorspace that could equally be located in the define Town Centre. As SHELF is an holistic approach to delivering services having a range of uses within one building to support services being provided in the building (such as the clinic spaces, advice spaces, support spaces, specialist educational spaces) makes this something of an innovation.
- 24.24 As a result of the above it is not considered appropriate to apply part 3 of LP11 as the proposed development is not one that will ever expect to be in the Town Centre because it is so strongly linked to the existing sports and Leisure Facilities at Chilton Fields and Stowmarket Leisure Centre and educational facilities at Stowmarket. Furthermore the health benefits being promoted as part of this development in terms of encouraging increased ‘activity’ are closely allied to the wider health uses being included.
- 24.25 In terms of the AJLP’s aim to Support a Prosperous Economy as underpins LP09 the proposal can be said to make its own contribution towards that goal without cutting across SP06 or LP11
- 24.25 The proposed development satisfies SP03 and SP05 and is not judged to harm the town centre and is therefore not contrary to the aims of SP06 or LP11. In its general effect the proposal will generate some employment opportunity and put some money into the local economy which is in line with LP09 but it is not primarily an employment use. Employment is an incidental output. Its main purpose is to expand recreational, health, educational, leisure facilities specifically in this location and is therefore heavily geographically driven.
- 24.26 In these respects the prosed development is acceptable 

## 25.0 Area Health Profile

25.1 How does Stowmarket and more particularly Chilton Ward compare in terms of the overall general health of the community compared to elsewhere? Let's take a look at some of the stand-out statistics.<sup>20</sup>

### 25.2 Obesity in Children

- o obesity prevalence in England is 10.1%
- o obesity prevalence in Stowmarket is 12.2%
- o obesity prevalence in Chilton is 13.5%

24% of children in Stowmarket are obese or overweight. 79% of obese children are found to remain obese in adulthood.

### 25.3 Asthma

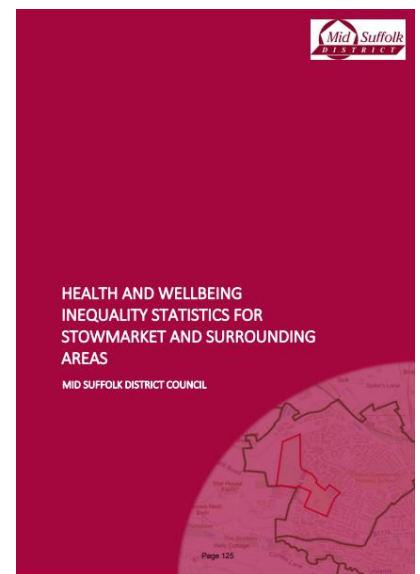
- o asthma prevalence in England is 6.0%
- o asthma prevalence in Stowmarket is 8.1%

### 25.4 Depression<sup>21</sup>

- o higher depression prevalence in England is 10.7%
- o higher depression prevalence in Chilton is 12.1%

### 25.5 Children meeting physical activity recommendations

- o those meeting the requirement in England is 47.0%
- o higher depression prevalence in Mid Suffolk is 38.0%



26.6 The statistics above are drawn from the document 'Health and Wellbeing Inequality Statistics for Stowmarket and Surrounding Areas. (October 2023: MSDC Regen)

26.7 The SHELF project has evolved and been informed by a desire to use access to activity as a way of tackling some of the health inequalities known to exist in Stowmarket/Chilton and beyond within the District.

26.8 Provision of clinic and advice space within the Wellbeing Hub is designed get practitioners and health specialist out directly into the community with access to a range of support from various providers and facilities. IT is part of an Holistic approach to healthcare and wellbeing.

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<sup>20</sup> from Agenda item 14 report ref: MC/23/36 Mid Suffolk Full Council 25 January 2024

<sup>21</sup> from Stowhealth - based in Chilton



## 27.0 Building for a Healthy Life

- 27.1 In 2020, the Urban Design Group published its Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) guide which provides design tools for creating places that are better for people and nature. The Guide replaced the Building for Life document.
- 27.2 This seminal guide looks at design in an holistic way and takes us beyond the more traditional design guides which tend to be dominated by how things look and are laid out from an aesthetic perspective.
- 27.3 The BHL guidance has informed the evolution of the SHELF project



figure 85:  
**Building for a Healthy  
Life Toolkit**

- 27.4 BHL is based around key themes of which perhaps the following are most relevant to SHELF:

### Integrated Neighbourhoods (particularly)

- natural connections
- walking, cycling and public transport
- facilities and services

### Streets for All (particularly)

- cycle and car parking
- green and blue infrastructure

- 27.5 The architects Boston and Saunders, employed to develop SHELF, have worked with the applicant to successfully embrace relevant themes in the BHL guide.

## 28.0 Health and Wellbeing

- 28.1 The positive link between being active and beneficial impact on health is one that has been the subject of mounting public, professional and academic debate - even more so in the face of the Covid 19 Pandemic.
- 28.2 The benefits of keeping active are now widely promoted. Indeed that debate is increasing delivery of ways to get more people active as part of a national drive towards prevention rather than cure.

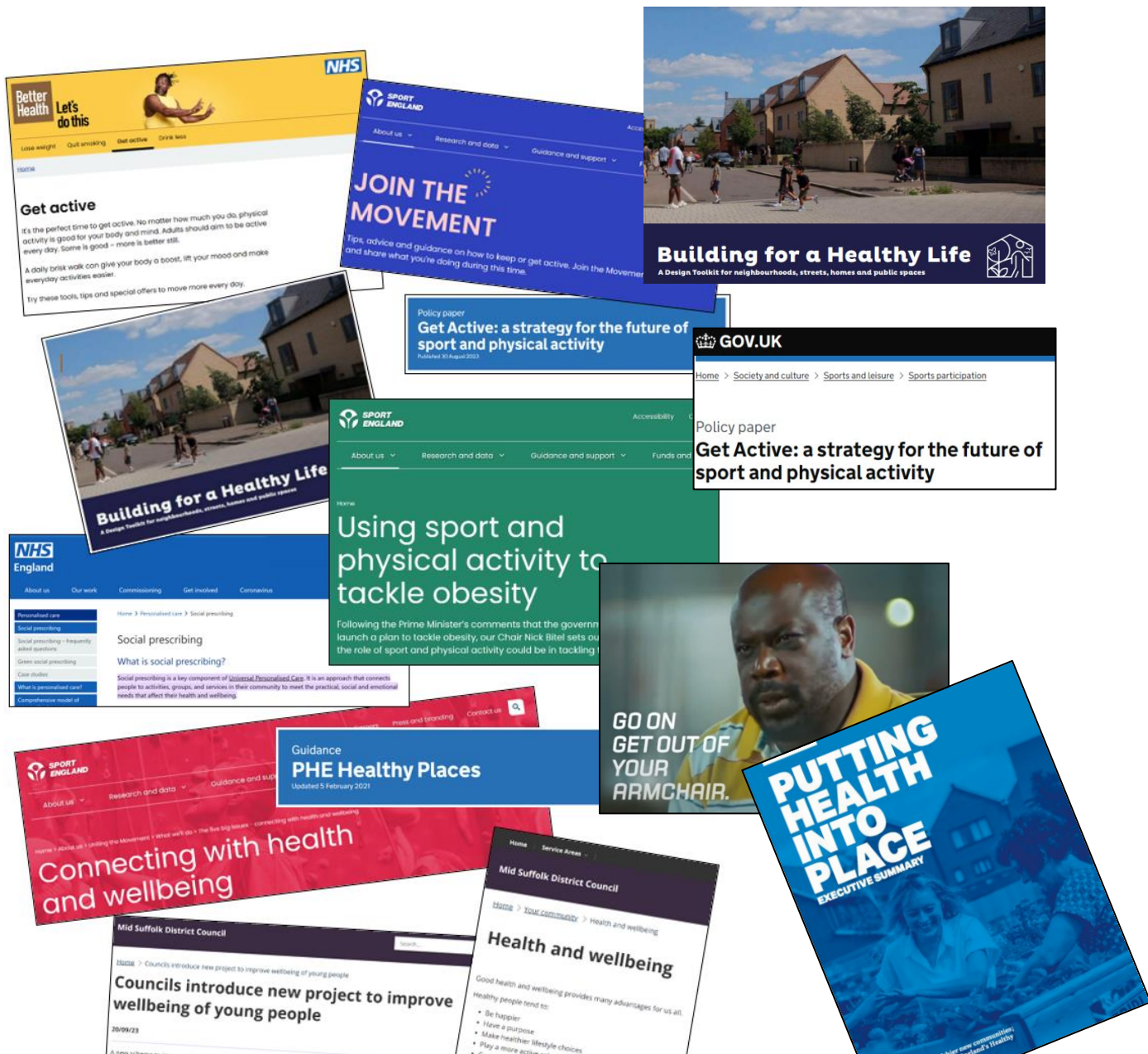


figure 86:  
**Examples of Documents, Campaigns and Advice linking Activity to Health and Wellbeing**

- 28.3 Members will be aware that Covid prompted the Council to introduce Health and Wellbeing specialists into the Planning Services at the time of the Covid emergency with a view to supporting a more holistic approach to design quality of our places. How can places contribute to better physical and mental health outcomes because they can? (that is perhaps a wider debate for another occasion). That Team is now leading and participating in cross service/partner and community initiatives to improve our 'Places' from a health and wellbeing perspective.
- 28.4 The SHELF project is an initiative from the Regeneration Service (with partners) designed to encourage and promote 'Being Active' - not just for its recreational and social benefits but also for health and wellbeing benefits.
- 28.5 Access to sport and recreation has now become a regular feature of 'social prescribing' by GP's and others as a replacement for or an adjunct to medication and/or talking therapies.
- 28.6 Members will have noted that Stowmarket Leisure Centre supports the wider project as part of the 'Everyone Active' programme.
- 28.7 The proposed development will expand opportunities to participate in both organised and informal activity. This means it will appeal not just to presently active keen team sports participants amongst us but also those of us, at whatever age, who are looking to gently become more active, perhaps from a relatively sedentary position. (no matter the motivation for wanting or the health imperative for needing so to do). For others it offers the chance to get back into 'being active' after a break when perhaps other pressures on time or commitments have not afforded the opportunity or priority.
- 28.8 Covid also showed us how the scourge of loneliness can have such a harmful impact on mental health and wellbeing.
- 28.9 The Wellbeing Hub presents an opportunity to take a wider view what supporting our Communities means in terms of delivering 'Social Value'
- 28.10 By working with its Health Provider partners and third sector players in terms of the services delivered within the Wellbeing Hub (which include a community café) a potentially exciting new approach can develop to tackling not just 'health' issues but also loneliness, and building resilience and support for those at the sharp end of the cost of living crisis.
- 28.11 Just by providing places for people to come together - whether in a 1:1 setting or in wider informal groups and by facilitating the expansion of support groups driven by those with relevant experience and/or skills from within the community the health and wellbeing outcomes could be significant. Particularly in an environment that is geared to delivering holistic services supported by relevant partners.
- 28.12 The outcome here could be (with appropriate 'buy-in' by providers along with resources and operational links) that Service Users who require a range of support might then be

able access a joined up multi-agency response. That however is a matter for others and not the Planning Committee.

28.13 What does the Adopted Local Plan 2023 say about the provision of Services and Facilities within the Community. Its position is clear at LP28 (1) (a) when it states:

*“1. Provision of New and/or Expanded Services and Facilities.*

*(a) Proposals for new accessible local services and community facilities will be supported where the proposal is well related to and meets the needs of the local community”*

28.14 That is certainly the case here.

28.15 Part 1 (b) is less relevant but it could be argued that by expanding facilities available at the Leisure Centre and by replacing the Rugby Clubhouse with a new well equipped Pavilion for a variety of occupiers the proposal is likely to help safeguard two important local community assets. The site is within the built-up area of Stowmarket and is accessible to the community it serves.

28.16 The design of the Pavilion (FULL application) is of a high standard and the Wellbeing Hub (OUTLINE application) is expected to be of an equally high standard. The proposed Sports Hall is more utilitarian in its appearance but this is to be expected as discussed earlier in the design section of this report.

28.17 Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposal meets criterion (c) in that it is of ‘a high standard of design and sympathetic to its surrounding landscape and townscape’.

28.18 Parts 1 (d), 2, 3 and 4 are not relevant.

28.19 Also of determinative significance is Policy LP31 - Health and Education Provision, specifically at part 3, which states:

*“3 The Councils will respond positively to and support appropriate and well-designed applications regarding the creation of new health and/or education facilities, and extensions to existing facilities. The Councils will be supportive of proposals that enable dual use of existing and new health and education facilities, which can also be used by the community and agreed under a Community Use Agreement. Where necessary, the Councils will utilise planning obligations to help to mitigate any adverse impacts of an educational or health development and assist in delivering development that has a positive impact on the community.”*

28.20 The SHELF project fits precisely into the category of development that LP31 (3) is there to support.



28.21 The proposed development fully accords with relevant sections of LP28 and LP31 which are two of the policies that are most important within the basket of relevant policies for the determination of this application. ✓

## 29.0 Education

29.1 Those elements of the SHELF project that are complementary to the education being delivered at Stowmarket High School (sport and physical exercise) and any delivered within the Wellbeing Hub by way of specialist educational support are in full accordance with LP28 and LP31 as the policy applies to both Education and Health ✓

## 30.0 Sustainability

30.1 Summarised below are the key sustainability features of the proposal

### Energy

- No Gas solution (no fossil fuels used to heat water or spaces)
- Reduced onsite Energy demand
  - Wellbeing Hub - 40% Betterment over current AD Part L of the Building Regulations
  - Sports Pavilion - 20% Betterment over current AD Part L of the Building Regulations
- Wellbeing Hub - uses Air-source heat pumps used to heat spaces and water
- Sports Pavilion - uses Air-source heat pumps used to heat spaces and water
- Low energy (LED) lighting throughout
- Low energy lifts
- Photovoltaic Array
  - Sports Pavilion Roof
  - Wellbeing Hub (office) Roof

### Electric Vehicle Charging

- Wellbeing Hub - 6 spaces (plus 6 passive)
- Sports Pavilion – 8 spaces (plus 8 passive)

The Suffolk Guide for Parking (4<sup>th</sup> Edition - October 2023) requires ev charging facilities to be provided at 15% for leisure uses and 20% for Class e(g) office uses.

On the assumption that that the Pavilion is fundamentally a leisure use and 48 new permanent parking spaces are being provided the ev. proportion at 15% = 7. Provision at 8 is slightly above the requirement.

On the basis that the Sports Hall accommodates a leisure use the same ev charging facility ratio applies. Therefore 44 spaces x 15%= 7. Providing 6 is therefore 1 below the requirement. If ,as required, the parking area is increased by a further 60 spaces then that is an additional 9 ev charging points. In this scenario the proposal is 10 ev charging points short of what is required.

The Wellbeing Hub will require its own parking and ev charging at between 15% and 20%. These are not included in the FULL application proposal.

#### Bus Network

- New bus stop near to Chilton Field entrance (separate application)

#### Pedestrian Connections

- East / West link across Chilton Fields
- Enhanced pedestrian crossing (Chilton Way)
- East / West Connection through the school site (outside school hours)
- Interconnections with adjacent development sites (around Chilton Fields)

#### Cycle Routes

- East / West link across Chilton Fields
- Interconnections with adjacent development sites (around Chilton Fields)
- Connection to Route 51 at Chilton Way and Gainsborough Road
- Cycle Parking
  - 52 spaces at Chilton Fields (min 40 req)
  - 46 spaces at the Wellbeing Hub (min 43 req)

#### Construction Technologies

- High levels of Airtightness
- High levels of Thermal efficiency (u-Values)
- Low E Glass

#### Natural Lighting & Ventilation

- Natural lighting to;
  - Public spaces
  - Offices
  - School Oasis
  - Nursery
  - Café
  - Social Spaces
  - Club Rooms
- Natural Ventilation;
  - Sport Hall
  - Social spaces (Pavilion)

#### Water consumption

- 25% improvement in water consumption

- Compared to BREEAM baseline
- Achieved by;
- Water efficient Taps
- Water efficient WCs
- Water efficient Showers
- Time limited showers (Pavilion Change)

#### Rain water collection

- Storage of rain water at the Sports Pavilion
- Used for irrigation of pitches

#### BREEAM

Very Good

Pavilion, Sports Hall and Wellbeing Hub

- Beyond MSDC Planning Policy for the Sports Pavilion

#### Biodiversity

- Planting of new trees
- Planting new hedge rows
- Providing new Bird boxes
- Providing new Bat boxes
- Woodland management
  - Thinning
  - Understory planting
  - Grass land management (long grass)
  - Guidance / Support from MSDC
- Opportunities relating to Great Crested Newts on adjacent site (under exploration).
- Green Roof at the Wellbeing Hub
- SuDS design
  - Permeable tarmac / paving
  - Rain gardens

30.2 The relevant AJLP2023 policy against which the green credentials of the application should be assessed is SP10 - Climate Change. It states:

*“1. The Councils will require all development to mitigate and adapt to climate change by:*

- a. Adopting a sequential risk-based approach taking into account future-proofing measures for impacts of flooding;*
- b. Conforming to the principle of Holistic Water Management;*
- c. Applying existing and innovative approaches to sustainable design and construction; and*
- d. Identifying opportunities, where appropriate, to deliver decentralised energy systems powered by a renewable or low carbon source and associated infrastructure, including community-led initiatives.”*

30.3 Also of particular relevance are:

- LP 23 - Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP 26 - Water Resources and Infrastructure
- LP 27 - Flood Risk and Vulnerability

30.4 The proposal accords with the Council's sustainability policies where they are relevant and the project includes some exemplar features that will help to raise the bar when it comes to tackling climate change through the incorporation of green technology into non-residential buildings.



30.5 Members are advised that the proposed all weather sports pitch is of the 3G type.

30.6 These often use a material known as '*black rubber crumb particles*' produced from tyres in the playing surface. That is the case here.

30.7 This micro-plastic infill on 3G sports pitches is very important as it helps to hold up the artificial grass fibres to keep them upright. It also gives the pitch the playing characteristics of natural grass and provides some shock absorption.



figure 84:  
**Strategic Transport Corridor  
around Stowmarket  
(from AJLP2023 Ket Diagram)**

30.8 Currently researchers are looking for sustainable alternatives but there appears to be no obvious alternative for 3G pitches.

30.9 Construction of the 3G pitch is being supported with funding from the Football Association (the FA.) and it is they who have backed 3G provision. 4G (fourth generation) pitches are still at an early stage of development but they offer the prospect of one element synthetic turf that eliminate the requirement for any infill material.

30.10 4G surfaces are expected to be significantly more costly than 3G even after they become more common place.



- 30.11 Whilst the use of the rubber crumb may not be ideal, environmentally, it is the widely used for its ability to produce playing experience that closely replicates that of a natural grass surface.
- 30.12 Artificial surfaces allow frequent use which optimises the amount of time the pitch is available whereas as grass surfaces cannot take the same level of punishment and certainly nowhere near the same level of use. They are therefore ideal for high use settings such as a sports ground where use will extend into the evening to maximise the opportunity for as many people as possible to get playing time.
- 30.13 However Sport England in its consultation response has identified a way of keeping technological advances in artificial playing surfaces under review such The construction of the artificial grass pitch shall not be commenced until details of the construction specification including layout, line markings and materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority following consultation such that the 3G pitch could subsequently be upgraded or depending of when construction occurs delivered without he rubber crumb.
- 30.14 They have recommended two **conditions** amongst others that will keep the door open to the use of alternative surfacing in the longer term. Officers believe the recommended conditions are helpful and go some way to keeping the situation under review. As they have been suggested by Sport England

### **31.0 Play Area**

- 31.1 As will have been noted from Councillor Terrace Carter's comments reported earlier in this report the existing play area and its equipment s well used and a much loved local amenity.
- 31.2 It makes absolute sense to keep as much of the existing play equipment as is in good condition and safe and incorporate it into the new play area. It is however noted that the play equipment currently in place is not particularly imaginative or challenging. It would be exciting to add more challenging play.
- 31.3 It also makes sense not to close the existing play area until the new replacement is finished and available for use in order to ensure there is no break in availability.
- 31.4 The applicant is looking to add equipment and enhance the play experience further and this should add to its attractiveness for play. Play is another way of stimulating healthy physical activity as well as encouraging social interaction.



figure 87a: **Existing Play Area and Equipment - Chilton Fields**



figures 87b: **Existing Play Area and Equipment - Chilton Fields**



## 32.0 Trim Trail and Green Gym

32.1 Examples of the type of equipment being considered for installation by the applicant are shown below.



figure 88: **Generic Examples of Trim Trail equipment from Design & Access Statement**

### 33.0 Summary Policy Analysis

331. The Analysis that follows is not intended to supplant the more detailed examination provided throughout this report. It is merely a quick summarised snap-shot that brings all the policy issues into one place.

Note the policies in blue text are those in the basket of relevant cases that are considered most important for the determination of this application.

Policy number	Policy title	Comments	
SP03	The Sustainable Location of New Development	The site is within the Built-up area of Stowmarket which is a Town at the apex of the District's settlement hierarchy and is as a result highly sustainable. The site is already in lawful use for recreational/educational purposes. SP03 (2 c) is not triggered	complies
SP05	Employment Land	The proposal meets SP05 (5) (a-f)	complies
SP06	Retail and Main Town Centre Uses	The proposal is adjudged not to be contrary this policy because of the holistic nature of the proposed uses and the fact that they have a strong synergy with existing sport, leisure, recreation and educational uses on the site and also include health and wellbeing uses that relate in good measure to the health benefits from increased activity as well as health service delivery for this part of Stowmarket	not contrary to objectives of protecting the vitality and viability of Town Centres
SP08 (2)	Strategic Infrastructure Provision	The proposal is itself makes a major contribution towards community infrastructure	complies insofar as is relevant
SP09	Enhancement and Management of the Environment	predicted to deliver BNG at circa 20%. Some tree and hedgerow loss but satisfactory mitigation follows the Biodiversity Mitigation	complies with the mitigation and compensation proposed



		Hierarchy in paragraph 186(a) of the NPPF December 2023	
SP10	Climate Change		complies
LP 09	Supporting a Prosperous Economy	This not primarily an development aimed at employment use/activity. Employment opportunities are an incident output	complies with the objectives therein
LP11	Retail and Town Centres	The proposal is not considered to comprise uses that will collectively or individually pose a threat to the vitality and viability of a designated Town Centre or other Centres because of its interrelationship to existing uses described above in the comments to SP06	not contrary to its objectives
LP15	Environmental Protection and Conservation		complies but conditions required
LP16	Biodiversity and Geodiversity		complies but conditions required
LP17	Landscape		complies but conditions required
LP19	The Historic Environment		complies as the is no harm to any heritage asset/s
LP23	Sustainable Construction and Design	BREEAM 'very good'	complies
LP24	Design and Residential Amenity		complies but conditions required
LP25 (1)(a)(b)	Energy Sources, Storage and Distribution	Air source. pv	complies but conditions required

LP26	Water Resources and infrastructure	Rainwater harvesting, recycling and water gardens	complies
LP27	Flood Risk and Vulnerability	Note the precautionary approach has been taken in the officers assessment and the proposal passes. (surface water [Pluvial] flood risk) There is no fluvial flood risk	complies but conditions required
LP28	Services and Facilities Within the Community	The raison d'être for the SHELF project	Absolutely hits the spot
LP29	Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport	Has this as a centre piece of the project	complies conditions required especially around car parking and disabled parking and ev charging facilities
LP31	Health and Education Provision	A primary driver for the SHELF project	Absolutely hits the spot

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PART FOUR - PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSIONS follows....



**34.0 Planning Balance and Conclusions**

34.1 This proposal conforms to the following relevant policies of the Adopted Joint Local Plan 2023 for reasons explored in the Assessment Section of this report.

- SP03 The Sustainable Location of New Development
- SP05 Employment Land to the extent it applies
- SP08 Strategic Infrastructure Provision
- SP09 Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- SP10 Climate Change
- LP15 Environmental Protection and Conservation
- LP16 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP17 Landscape
- LP19 The Historic Environment
- LP23 Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP24 Design and Residential Amenity
- LP25 Energy Sources, Storage and Distribution
- LP26 Water Resources and infrastructure
- LP27 Flood Risk and Vulnerability
- LP28 Services and Facilities Within the Community
- LP29 Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport
- LP31 Health and Education Provision

34.2 It is also adjudged to comply with the objectives that underpin SP06- Retail and Main Town Centre Uses and LP11 - Retail and Town Centres

34.3 This universal compliance particularly in respect of the most important policies for the determination of this application, attracts significant and overwhelming weight in favour of approving this application. Overall and in the round officers consider that the application accords with the development plan when read as a whole. Indeed paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 states that:

*“11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.....*

For decision-taking this means:

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

- 34.4 It is acknowledged that the proposal will result in some tree loss and the landscape hereabouts will be altered contrary to principles in policies LP15, 16 and 17. Officers are however of the opinion that proposed mitigation will provide an acceptable solution that when weighed in the balance is something that will in the longer term provide its own environmental benefits.
- 34.5 In terms of the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy within Paragraph 186(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023), it is acknowledged that whilst the initial adverse impact attracts moderate weight, the longer-term benefits counteract that impact and it is expected that overall there will be a significant biodiversity net gain to the tune of circa 20% and that the identified harm will be suitably mitigated and compensated. This overall benefit attracts greater weight.
- 34.6 It must also be further acknowledged that the landscape context of that part of the site, Chilton Fields, that was until recently on the edge of Stowmarket demarcating the boundary between urban and rural is and will be changed beyond recognition by largescale residential development. This needs to be afforded significant weight when assessing landscape impact.
- 34.7 Chilton Fields even with the new Pavilion which is a relatively low key structure set back from most public vantage points will continue to read as a largely open green oasis and the extensive tree planting will ensure that it continues to provide a strong green focal point in an otherwise urban landscape.
- 34.8 With suitable conditions to complement the design measures incorporated into the project to protect the amenity currently enjoyed by adjoining premises proposal will not result in material harm to the amenity to nearby properties. This attracts significant weight.
- 34.9 The applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Suffolk County Council as local highway authority that the proposal will not give rise to severe impacts and so is acceptable on highway safety and capacity grounds. Indeed the proposal provides for greater connectivity by foot and cycle and helps to plug gaps in the existing pedestrian/cycle network. This attracts significant weight
- 34.10 Whilst initially deficient in 'on-site' parking, with suitable conditions the overall parking provision within the scheme will increased to acceptable levels. The applicant is required to increase on-site parking provision for the Wellbeing Hub and Sports Hall. Suitable sites to achieve this have been identified and therefore can be delivered.



- 34.11 On Chilton Fields the overall parking provision will exceed what is required for the additional net increase in floorspace and will help to address an historic under-provision of parking spaces. This is welcomed and may help to relieve the occasional verge parking along Chilton Way.
- 34.12 In conclusion, the proposed development is policy compliant with the most important policies for the determination of the application. And accords with other relevant policies or in the case of SP06 and LP11 is deemed not contrary to their objectives because of the nature of the proposal.
- 34.12 If having judged the application against SP06 and LP11 one was to reach a different conclusion officers would continue to be of the opinion that the benefits of the scheme delivered in accord with SP03, SP05, LP24, LP27, LP28, LP29 and LP31.
- 34.13 The requirement of the local highway authority for funding towards can be simply achieved by the applicant giving the County Council a written undertaking/memorandum of understanding to the effect required.
- 34.14 The application accords with the development plan as a whole and there are no considerations which otherwise direct that permission should be refused contrary to the direction of the Plan.

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PART FIVE: RECOMMENDATION follows.....



**35.0 Recommendation**

That:

1. Subject to first securing, to the satisfaction of the Chief Planning Officer:
  - (i) A written commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from the applicant to pay Suffolk County Council a contribution of £17,500 (index linked) to provide a Traffic Regulation Order and physical works for parking restrictions on roads adjacent to the development, should the need arise due to evidence that on-street parking issues occur as a result of the development within an agreed period (typically 5 years from full operation of the development); and,
  - (ii) Confirmation by the applicant that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been signed to provide suitable off-site ad-hoc parking to supplement on-site parking provision and that such spaces will be available as part of the package 1 works.

Then:

2. The Chief Planning Officer be authorised to GRANT FULL planning permission for  
[Works of demolition and construction to provide a new shared sports pavilion to replace the existing building, a new sports hall, enhance existing /deliver new outdoor recreational facilities , and relocated play area along with the provision of associated parking, amended vehicular access, lighting, means of enclosure, landscaping, highway improvements and other associated works](#)

with appropriate conditions

and;

3. The Chief Planning Officer be authorised to GRANT OUTLINE planning permission for

[The construction of a mixed-use community wellbeing hub.](#)

with appropriate condition

Recommended conditions follow.....

Recommended Conditions *(these may be amended prior to or as a consequence of the meeting)*

## **FULL APPLICATION**

1. 2 years to commence
2. Approved drawings except where further detail required by other conditions
3. Notwithstanding the submitted detail in respect of the proposed car park accessed from Gainsborough Road further detail for an enlarged car park comprising at least 60 additional spaces shall be submitted to the Ipa for its consideration. Where the Ipa confirms in writing the submitted details to be acceptable those works shall then be implemented as required by condition 4.
4. All parking including those additional parking areas required by condition 3 are constructed as approved, completed and available for use before any other Package 2 works or buildings come into beneficial use. + levels ev charging to meet the SGfP2023 requirement as a minimum
5. Delivery of connectivity features
6. Adjusted levels of disabled parking provision
7. Materials
8. Notwithstanding the detail submitted showing 68 individual trees as replacing the 68 lost to accommodate the approved development details showing 104 replacement trees an extra heavy standard specification shall be submitted to the Ipa for its consideration. Where the Ipa confirms in writing the submitted details to be acceptable the approved trees shall then be implemented as required by condition 7.
9. No tree shown as being removed to accommodate any part of the development hereby approved shall be felled or lopped unless and until the applicant/developer has entered into a binding contract to build the element of the SHELF project that directly impacts that tree/s. As the implementation of SHELF is envisaged to occur in three work packages (phases) it is therefore exp that not all the trees identified as requiring removal will be removed at the same time. Consequently all such trees shall be protected as if they are subject to condition 8 until the need to remove them is triggered. To avoid any confusion the applicant shall agree in writing with the Ipa which trees to be removed relate to which element of the SHELF package. This is particularly important for the Pavilion, Sports Hall and Wellbeing Hub.
10. Tree protection
11. Implementation in accordance with ecological appraisal recommendations
12. BNG Plan Implementation of full mitigation strategy with review mechanism and facility to enhance to meet predicted level of BNG at the time of submission.
13. Biodiversity Enhancement Layout
14. Wildlife sensitive lighting design scheme
15. Tree, Landscaping and Ecological Management Plan to include advanced planting programme along with implementation timescales and ongoing management regime.
16. Details of how felled trees are to be recycled.
17. Notwithstanding such detail as shall have been submitted Full landscaping plans
18. Materials
19. Energy Statement

20. Further EV charging details
21. Control on opening hours of Pavilion and use of terraces
22. Events Plan
23. Control on hours of use of pitches and outdoor sports facilities
24. Control on Floodlighting times
25. Details of all external plant, including any roof plant enclosures and/or lift housing
26. Air source heat pump details and noise attenuation details
27. Details of lockable car park/s barrier/s and locking regime and times
28. Details of notices asking users to leave the premises and car parks quietly in the interest of neighbourliness
29. As advised by LHA
30. As advised by LLFA
31. Grampian condition in respect of crossings (signal-controlled Chilton Way and uncontrolled Gainsborough Road)
32. As reasonably (in the opinion of the CPO) required by Env Health and where not covered by other conditions
33. Floodlighting details and external lighting details
34. Details of noise attenuation panels for sports areas where these are to be used in place of kick boards. Kick boards are not permitted.
35. As advised by Sports England
36. Refuse collection arrangements
37. Details of litter and dog bins (Chilton Fields)
38. Details of new play equipment and re-use of existing equipment (Chilton fields)
39. Demolition Strategy
40. Parish Town Council Liaison Scheme
41. Submission and updating of build programme and phasing plan
42. Construction Management Plan (to include details of piling if required)
43. As may be reasonably required and agreed by the Planning Committee or by the Chief Planning Officer

## **OUTLINE**

- 44 All Reserved Matters submission/s within 5 years of the date of the outline pp
- 45 RM to include full drainage details, on-site parking & ev charging details demonstrating compliance with relevant parking standards, materials, energy and water conservation measures
- 46 Illustrative Drawing do not form part of the application or permission
- 47 Implementation within 3 years from the date of approval of the last RM
- 48 Controls on Uses to preclude unrestricted Class E use and hours + use of terrace
- 49 Grampian condition in respect of crossing and footway improvements
- 50 As relevant from FULL
- 51 As may be reasonably required and agreed by the Planning Committee or by the Chief Planning Officer