

REFERENCE NO: CR/2023/0118/FUL

LOCATION: [THREE BRIDGES FOOTBALL CLUB, JUBILEE WALK, THREE BRIDGES, CRAWLEY](#)
WARD: Three Bridges
PROPOSAL: REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING PITCH WITH 3G FOOTBALL TURF PITCH (3G FTP) (8962 SQ. METRES) AND ASSOCIATED WORKS INCLUDING ERECTION OF NEW FENCING WITH ENTRANCE GATES TO FORM AN ENCLOSURE AROUND THE PITCH PERIMETER, REPLACEMENT PITCH BARRIERS AND INSTALLATION OF A STORAGE CONTAINER WITHIN THE 3G FTP ENCLOSURE. ERECTION OF 6 NO. 15.0 M HIGH FLOODLIGHTS AROUND THE 3G FTP PERIMETER WITH LED LUMINAIRES. RESURFACING AND EXTENSION OF HARD-STANDING AREAS. ERECTION OF 2.5 M HIGH ACOUSTIC FENCE

TARGET DECISION DATE: 23 May 2023

CASE OFFICER: Mr G. Felstead

APPLICANT'S NAME: Mr Richard Munn

AGENT'S NAME: S&C Slatter

PLANS & DRAWINGS CONSIDERED:-

Drawing Number	Revision	Drawing Title
S22-188/DWG/0001		Location Plan
S22-188/DWG/0002		Existing Site Plan
S22-188/DWG/0003		Proposed Site Plan
S22-188/DWG/0004	01	Proposed Floor Plan
S22-188/DWG/0005		Proposed Layout
S22-188/DWG/0006		Proposed Drainage
S22-188/DWG/0007		Proposed Floodlights
S22-188/DWG/0008	01	Proposed Elevations

CONSULTEE NOTIFICATIONS & RESPONSES:-

1. GAL Aerodrome Safeguarding	No objection - the proposed development does not conflict with safeguarding criteria, crane informative recommended.
2. WSCC Highways	No objection subject to conditions
3. National Air Traffic Services (NATS)	No objection
4. Drainage Officer	No objection
5. Environmental Health Officer	No objections subject to conditions
6. Sport England	No objection subject to conditions
7. Strategic Planning	No objection

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS:-

1 to 12, & 14 & 15 Grove Court
150a Three Bridges Road
Three Bridges Pavilion
150B, 152, 154, 154A, 154B, 156, 156A and 156B Three Bridges Road:
Crawley Jubilee Club.

RESPONSES RECEIVED:-

None

REASON FOR REPORTING TO COMMITTEE:-

Major application.

THE APPLICATION SITE:-

- 1.1 Three Bridges Football Club is located at the end of Jubilee Walk, adjacent to Haslett Avenue East, in the Three Bridges neighbourhood. The application site currently comprises a full-size grassed 11v11 players football pitch, with associated dug outs and a spectator stand along the northern perimeter of the pitch; and clubhouse towards the southern perimeter. There is fencing around the site and 6 floodlights around the pitch.
- 1.2 A hard surfaced car park of 130 spaces is located to the south, east and west of the football pitch, that wraps around the clubhouse. Hedgerows and trees are present along the northern and western boundaries of the football ground. Beyond the football ground to the north and west is the Three Bridges Playing Fields recreation ground and play area. Jubilee Field is to the east and includes a basketball court with floodlights. There is a 2m high close boarded fence along the boundaries.
- 1.3. To the north-east of the football ground are the Jubilee Club and a boxing club on Jubilee Walk with associated car parking. There are residential properties further to the east at Kingsland Court. The closest residential neighbours to the proposed development are located to the north along Three Bridges Road, with Grove Court approximately 35m away with an intervening car park and 150-155 Three Bridges Road approximately 50m away with intervening rear gardens. No 2 Jubilee Walk is to the north-east is approximately 125m away with a number of intervening non-residential buildings. To the south is Sutherland House, separated from the site by Haslett Avenue East, which is an office to residential conversion approximately 60m away. Also to the south of the A2220 (Haslett Avenue East) is Stephenson Way industrial estate.
- 1.4 The site is owned by Crawley Borough Council and leased to the football club. The site lies within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone. It is within an amber zone for Great Crested Newts. The recreation ground and other land around the football club site is designated as Structural Landscaping.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-

- 2.1 The application proposes the replacement of the existing pitch with a 3G Football AstroTurf Pitch of 8962 sqm and includes associated works. The proposal comprises:
 - A 3G artificial football pitch replacing the existing grass football pitch;
 - 4.5m high ball stop fencing with entrance gates to form an enclosure around the 3G pitch and its immediate surroundings;
 - 1.1m high replacement perimeter barrier around the pitch with entrance gates internally within the fenced 3G pitch enclosure;
 - 2.6m high replacement maintenance equipment storage container (15 sq. metres) within the 3G pitch enclosure adjacent to the clubhouse;
 - 6 x 15.0m high replacement floodlights around the 3G pitch perimeter with LED luminaires (sports area lighting)
 - Resurfaced and extended hard-standing areas around the 3G pitch perimeter for pedestrian, player, officials access and circulation and spectator viewing, vehicular maintenance and emergency access; and open-air storage for portable football goals.
 - A 2.5m high acoustic barrier along the northern corner of the site.

- 2.2 The application is supported by the following documents:
- Design and Access Statement with Planning Statement
 - Water Management and Maintenance Plan
 - FA Grassroots Football Strategy
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Floodlight Design Document
 - Noise Impact Assessment
 - Water Neutrality Statement
 - Water Management Operation and Maintenance Plan
- 2.3 The submitted details indicate that the project aims to:
- Provide a match play and training facility for local football to support and advance community sport.
 - Provide a reliable sports surface to ensure safe and consistent use and guaranteed all-weather play.
 - Support targeted programmes primarily focusing with the development of grassroots football.
 - Support continued growth of football within local teams.
 - Reduce pressure on existing training and matchplay facilities locally.
 - Work strategically with other facilities and organisations locally to support football growth and development.

The two tables below show the existing use of the facilities and the expanded use expected from the proposed facilities. Currently the pitch is used for 70 matches per year and for training on 100 occasions per year, as it is a grass pitch and would be susceptible to damage if subject to a higher level of use. The new, more durable, artificial surface would enable a wider range of use over the week. The bottom table indicates that, whilst first team use would remain the same, use for adult, young adult, children's, schools and pensioner training/matches would increase. The first team currently play in the Isthmian League South East Division.

Table 2: Existing Occupancy Use

	Detail of Use	Number of Users	Hours per Day	Occurrences per year	Hours per Year
Football Pitch Training	Matches	40	3	70	210
	1st Team Training	20	2	100	200
Clubhouse Private Hire	Full Day	61	10	5	50
	Evening Event	61	5	63	315
Spectators	Matches	250	3	70	210
Office	Office Space	3	8	150	1200

Table 2: Proposed Occupancy Use

	Detail of Use	Number of Users	Hours per Day	Occurrences per year	Hours per Year
Football Pitch Training (teams that will use showers)	Matches	40	3	70	210
	1st Team Training	20	2	100	200
	YA Training	40	1	250	250
	Adult Training	40	9	50	450
Football Pitch Training (no use of use showers)	Childrens Training	60	17	50	850
	School Training	35	1	180	180
	OAP Training	20	1	50	50
Clubhouse Private Hire	Full Day	61	10	5	50
	Evening Event	61	5	63	315
Spectators	Matches	250	3	70	210
Office	Office Space	4	8	350	2800

PLANNING HISTORY:-

- 3.1 The Three Bridges Football club site has an extensive planning history. The previous applications cover car parking, seating, the clubhouse and floodlighting. The following applications are the most relevant:

CR/1111/1986 ERECTION OF NEW SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB - approved 16.06.1986 – Implemented.

CR/1999/0275/FUL ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY SIDE EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING CLUBHOUSE – approved 11.06.1999 – Implemented.

CR1999/0374/FULL ERECTION OF COVERED SPECTATOR SEATING - approved 11.08.1999 – Implemented.

CR/1999/0375/FUL UPGRADING OF EXISTING FLOODLIGHTS approved 18.08.1999
Condition 3:

Except with the written prior consent of the Local Planning Authority the floodlighting shall not be switched on between 10.30pm and 7.30am

REASON: in the interests of residential amenity

CR/2002/0872/FUL ERECTION OF LIGHTING FOR CAR PARK approved 21.02.2003
Condition 2:

The illumination of the site shall be masked so that the light source is not visible to users of the adjacent highway in Haslett Avenue.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy T2 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2000.

CR/2011/0073/FUL - RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF CAR PARK FOR UP TO 54 CARS AT ANY ONE TIME WITHIN AREA A BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 07.30 AND 18.00 BY EMPLOYEES OF CLUB SPONSORS UNRELATED TO SPECIFIC SPORTING ACTIVITY AND THE SURFACING OF AREA B – approved 29.03.2011. This relates to employee and club sponsor use of the car park, not football matches.

CR/2011/0163/FULL - RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A 50 PEOPLE CAPACITY STAND AND NEW EXTERNAL DOOR IN CLUB HOUSE – approved 6.06.2011

CR/2021/0424/ADV PROPOSED ILLUMINATED SIGN TO DISPLAY MATCH EVENTS - approved 23.09.2021

CR/2022/0548/FUL RETROSPECTIVE ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR ILLUMINATED AND NON STATIC ADVERTISEMENT DISPLAY BOARD – refused 12.09.2023

PLANNING POLICY:-

National Planning Policy Framework: September 2023

- 4.1 This document sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant sections for this application include:

Section 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

Paragraph 92 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places 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 attractive, 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.

Paragraph 93 - To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

c) Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

d) Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

e) Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

Open space and recreation

Paragraph 98

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.

Paragraph 99

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Section 12 Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 130 - Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

(a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

(c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

(d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

(e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

(f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users ; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraph 174

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

Paragraph 185

Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life⁶⁵; b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Crawley Borough Local Plan (2015-2030) (adopted December 2015)

4.2 The relevant policies include:

- Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. In line with the planned approach to Crawley as a new town, and the spatial patterns relating to the neighbourhood principles, when considering development proposals the council will take a positive approach to approving development which is sustainable.
- Policy CH2: Principles of Good Urban Design seeks to assist in the creation, retention or enhancement of successful places.
- Policy CH3: Normal Requirements of All New Development requires proposals to:
 - a) Be based on a thorough understanding of the significance and distinctiveness of the site and its immediate and wider context and demonstrate how attractive or important features which make a positive contribution to the area would be integrated, protected and enhanced. These features include: views, landmarks, footpaths, rights of way, trees, green spaces, hedges, other historic landscape features or nature conservation assets, walls and buildings;
 - b) Be of high quality in terms of their urban, landscape and architectural design and relate sympathetically to their surroundings in terms of scale, density, height, massing, orientation, views, landscape, layout, details and materials. Proposals must be supported by a future management and maintenance plan for all shared hard and soft landscaping, semi public or semi private areas to ensure these areas become well-established. Contributions towards street scene improvements, public art and CCTV will be sought in accordance with council guidance;
 - c) Provide or retain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, including compliance with internal standards for new dwellings as set out in Policy CH5, and not cause unreasonable harm to the amenity of the surrounding area by way of overlooking, dominance or overshadowing, traffic generation and general activity, for example noise, smells and/or vibration;
 - d) Retain existing individual or groups of trees that contribute positively to the area and allow sufficient space for trees to reach maturity. Sufficient space should also be provided in private gardens that would not be overshadowed by tree canopies; and proposals should ensure that rooms within buildings would receive adequate daylight. Where a development is proposed or where trees would be lost to development, tree planting should accord with the standards set out in Policy
 - e) Demonstrate how “Secure by Design” principles and guidance set out in “Secured by Design” design guide (as amended) have been incorporated into development proposals to reduce crime, the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder. For all development, the potential impact on

community safety must be carefully considered at the earliest opportunity to ensure that measures are integrated into proposals without compromising other objectives;

f) Meet the requirements necessary for their safe and proper use, in particular with regard to access, circulation and manoeuvring, vehicle and cycle parking, loading and unloading, and the storage and collection of waste/recycling; and

g) In respect of residential schemes, demonstrate how the Building for Life 12 criteria (as amended) for the evaluation of the design quality of residential proposals have been taken into account and would be delivered through the scheme.

- Policy ENV4: Open Space, Sport, and Recreation; The policy states: proposals that remove or affect the continued use of existing open space, sport and recreational spaces will not be permitted unless:
 - a) An assessment of the needs for open space, sport and recreation clearly show the site to be surplus to requirements; or
 - b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss. Whilst a site may be surplus to requirements as open space it may still be of environmental or cultural value; or the site's development may have unacceptable visual or amenity impact, or adversely affect its wider green infrastructure functions, including for climate change mitigation. Therefore, applicants should also carefully consider the character and other environmental policies in the Plan.
- Policy ENV6: Sustainable Design and Construction - The Policy states: All development, including the alteration and extension of existing buildings, should consider how it may achieve the sustainability objectives.
- Policy ENV8: Development and Flood Risk – This Policy states that development proposals must avoid areas which are exposed to an unacceptable risk from flooding, and must not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Policy ENV10: Pollution Management and Land Contamination – This Policy states that: to prevent unacceptable risks from environmental pollution and land contamination, development, including extensions and intensification of existing uses, will be permitted where the proposed use:
 - a) would not lead to a significant increase (including cumulative increase) in levels of pollution or hazards, or where impacts can be appropriately mitigated to ensure impacts are controlled, and as far as possible reduced; and
 - b) is appropriate to its location in that it would not result in unacceptable disturbance or nuisance to the amenity of adjacent land uses and occupiers.
- Policy ENV11: Development and Noise states that people's quality of life will be protected from unacceptable noise impacts by managing the relationship between noise sensitive development and noise sources.
- Policy IN1: Infrastructure Provision states that existing infrastructure services and facilities will be protected where they contribute to the town, unless equivalent or improved provision is made.
- Policy IN4: Car and Cycle Parking Standards states that development will be permitted where parking is provided in accordance with the Council's parking standards.
- Policy IN5: The Location and Provision of New Infrastructure supports the provision of new or improved infrastructure that add to the range and quality of facilities in the town.

Draft Crawley Borough Local Plan 2024-2040

4.3 The Local Plan Review 2024-2040 was submitted for examination on 31 July 2023. The examination commenced on 21 November 2023. Limited weight should therefore be given to the following policies:

- Policy SD2: Enabling Healthy Lifestyles and Wellbeing
- Policy CL2: Making Successful Places: Principles of Good Urban Design
- Policy DD1: Normal Requirements of All New Development
- Policy DD2: Inclusive Design
- Policy SDC1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy SDC3: Tackling Water Stress
- Policy EP1: Development and Flood Risk
- Policy EP4: Development and Noise
- Policy OS1 Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- Policy ST1: Development and Requirements for Sustainable Transport
- Policy ST2: Car and Cycle Parking Standards

4.4 Following public consultation in summer 2023, the following policies received only supportive comments or have no significant unresolved objections and there therefore considered to have significant weight. These are:

- Policy DD5 (Aerodrome Safeguarding) states that development will only be supported if it is consistent with the continued safe operation of Gatwick Airport.
- Policy EP3 (Land and Water Quality) seeks to ensure people's health and quality of life, property and the wider environment will be protected from land contamination and water quality issues.
- Policy EP6 (External Lighting) states that development must demonstrate how it will use minimal lighting to achieve the required purpose, minimise light pollution to as to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and highway safety, prevent unacceptable sky glow, glare, light spillage and unnecessary energy usage.

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.5 The following Supplementary Planning Documents are also relevant to this application:

- Urban Design SPD – Adopted October 2016 - This relates to development of all scales and uses, and aims to help applicants submit good quality schemes, which meet national and local planning policy requirements.
- Green Infrastructure SPD – Adopted October 2016 - Crawley's green infrastructure network supports the environment and the wellbeing of residents. Green infrastructure functions include: recreation, biodiversity, climate change mitigation/adaptation, drainage, transport, job creation, visual amenity, and food and fuel sources.
- Planning and Climate Change (adopted October 2016) – Sets out a range of guidance seeking to reduce energy consumption, minimise carbon emissions during development, supporting District Energy Networks, using low carbon or renewable energy sources, tackling water stress, coping with future temperature extremes, dealing with flood risk and promoting sustainable transport.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-

5.1 The main planning considerations for this application are:

- Principle of the development
- Design and appearance
- Residential amenity
- Access and parking requirements
- Drainage
- Water neutrality.

Principle of the development

5.2 The application principally involves converting the existing natural turf football pitch at Three Bridges Football Club's ground to an artificial grass pitch (AGP) with a 3G surface suitable for football. The application also involves new or replacement supporting infrastructure for the AGP including ball stop fencing, pitch barriers, a storage container and resurfacing/extending hardstanding areas around the perimeter of the pitch. The application also involves replacing the six existing floodlights around the pitch with new masts mounted with LED luminaires and installation of a 2.5m high acoustic fence around the northern corner of the site.

5.3 Policy ENV4 Open Space, Sport, and Recreation sets out that proposals that remove or affect the continued use of existing open space, sport and recreation spaces will not be permitted unless, *"the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location"*.

5.4 The proposed 3G Pitch would replace an existing grass football pitch and, as a result of its greater durability and all weather nature, could support intensified football activities. The primary purpose of the application site would remain unaltered, facilitating football club activities and community

access. Policy EN4 refers to the evidence of the Playing Pitch strategy, to help define the existing provision, future provision and the adequacy of provision. The Playing Pitch Strategy C Needs Assessment evidence document has been used to review this proposal.

- 5.5 There are currently 2 full size AGPs within Crawley at Broadfield and Thomas Bennett. The playing pitch strategy identifies that there is a deficit of 3 full-size AGPs within the Borough. With an increase in the population and future demands, three new AGP pitches will be required by the end of the next Local Plan period.
- 5.6 The replacement of the current grass football pitch with a full size 3G pitch would help reduce the deficit of AGPs within the Borough. It will also provide provision to an area that does not currently have a 3G pitch. The pitch would be flexible, with the capability to provide smaller playing areas within the full size pitch. Community access will enable other clubs, communities, and individuals to play on the surface when not required by the football club, which currently is not available.
- 5.7 Sport England has considered the application in light of the NPPF (in particular paragraph 99), and against its adopted Playing Fields Policy, which states:

'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.'

- 5.8 *Exception 5 of Sport England's adopted Playing Fields Policy states :*

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

- 5.9 Sport England consider that,

The conversion of the natural turf pitch to an AGP would provide a consistent all weather surface that would be capable of intensive use throughout the year for matches, training and coaching. The rationale for the proposal is to improve the quality and capacity of Three Bridges FC's pitch. At present, the limited carrying capacity of the natural turf pitch (around 80 matches per season) restricts its use mainly to match play. The proposed artificial surface would allow Three Bridges FC to use the pitch for match play and training for its mini and junior section as well as the senior teams. The enhanced facility would also allow the club to develop disability, LGBT and homeless football due to the additional capacity offered.

The artificial surface and enhanced sports lighting combined would address the capacity deficiencies of the existing natural turf pitch as it could be used in all weathers throughout the year, would provide a consistent surface that would improve skills development and performance and provide a revenue source for supporting the sustainability of the pitch and the wider club facilities.

The facility could be used by other clubs and community groups when not required by Three Bridges FC. Subject to the 3G surface meeting the appropriate FIFA standard, the AGP would still allow the club to meet its FA ground grading requirements (the technical requirements that have to be met to host senior football in the non-league pyramid).

- 5.10 In terms of strategic need, Sport England advise that *'The Football Foundation (who represent the FA and the Sussex FA) have advised that the Crawley Local Football Facilities Plan (2019) identified a shortfall of 3 full size 3G AGPs in the Borough with gaps in provision in the east and west of Crawley. The proposed facility has been identified in the Local Football Facilities Plan as a priority project to help address this deficiency. Consequently, the Football Foundation and Sussex FA are supportive of the proposal. The Football Foundation has also advised that the design of the facility will meet the FA's design guidance if it is delivered through their framework as currently proposed'.*

- 5.11 Sport England also comment, *'subject to the appropriate artificial surface being delivered, all of the existing match use of the natural turf pitch should be able to transfer to the AGP. However, the surface will only be sanctioned for match play if it is certified as meeting the appropriate FIFA standard and therefore it will be essential that the surface is designed and maintained to this standard in practice. All of the ancillary facilities proposed around the perimeter of the pitch would not have an adverse impact on the use of the pitch.'*
- 5.12 Sport England conclude that *'the potential sports development benefits that the proposed AGP would offer would clearly outweigh the detriment caused by the impact on the playing field.'* Sport England therefore consider that the proposed development would meet exception 5 of their Playing Fields Policy. They have no objection, subject to a community use agreement and certification of the pitch surface. These aspects can be secured by a s106 agreement.
- 5.13 The principle of the replacement pitch is therefore supported as it would provide Crawley with enhanced facilities complying with Policy ENV4. The community use and pitch certification requirements from Sport England can be secured through a s106 legal agreement and the applicant has indicated a willingness to enter into this. The specific details of the proposal are considered in more detail below.

Design and appearance

- 5.14 The pitch and associated infrastructure would be situated in the same location as the existing facilities. However, there are also new elements, comprising perimeter fencing, an acoustic barrier, pitch barriers, a maintenance equipment storage container and an open air storage compound.
- 5.15 The pitch barrier consists of a 1.1m high fence that would run around the perimeter of the pitch itself, with the 4.5m high ball stop fencing forming a taller enclosure around the pitch and outer hardstanding areas. Both types would be steel mesh fencing and dark green in colour.
- 5.16 The 2.5m high acoustic fence would sit on the northern boundary and provide a noise barrier to protect residential properties along Three Bridges Road, including Grove Court. It is recommended that a condition is imposed requiring the submission of technical details of the acoustic fence, including its materials and external appearance.
- 5.17 The 2.6m high maintenance equipment store would be located to the west of the pitch and sited within the fenced 3G AGP enclosure. It would be green in colour and made of high tensile profiled steel. The open air storage area would be 20m x 10m and is to be at the west end of the pitch and would be used to store portable football goals.
- 5.18 The six replacement floodlights would be 15.0m high around the 3G pitch perimeter and would provide artificial lighting for sports activities after dusk, mainly during autumn and winter seasons. They would be replacement structures (the six existing floodlights would be removed and replaced with the proposed new lighting system of the same height) and would be prominent within the football ground and would be visible from nearby residential properties, public areas and Haslett Avenue East. However, the current floodlights are also visible, albeit partially concealed by substantial tree and other vegetation, boundary treatments, and buildings surrounding the football ground and are an established feature of the street scene associated with the football ground. The new lights would be silver grey coloured with galvanised finish and LED luminaires; and therefore discreet against a daytime skyline. As the new lights would replace existing floodlights, it is not considered that the impact of the lights on the visual amenities of the area would give rise to a material adverse impact.
- 5.19 Overall, the visual impact of the various aspect of the development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies.

Residential amenity

- 5.20 The site has been established as a football ground for many years. The application is not seeking to increase the number of pitches or other facilities, but to improve the pitch to allow for increased use

by the football club and by community groups. This would involve significantly longer periods of use, such as additional evening training sessions and weekend 5-a-side tournaments.

- 5.21 The site does not share any boundaries with immediate residential buildings, with the nearest buildings in Grove Court and Nos. 150 - 156 Three Bridges Road, being some 35-50 metres away. The latter houses have long rear gardens of some 45m in length. It is considered therefore that, due to the overall nature and limited physical scale of the development, the similar existing football ground and the level of separation, that there would be no negative visual impacts by way of overbearing or loss of privacy on the amenities of nearby surrounding occupiers from the new pitch, floodlights and associated infrastructure.
- 5.22 In terms of the use and the potential for increased activity and noise levels arising from the all weather pitch, facilitated by the floodlights, the applicant has submitted a noise impact assessment in accordance with current guidelines given in Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) Acoustics - Planning Implications (Design Guidance 2015). The assessment details predicted noise levels from the pitch and impacts at nearby noise-sensitive properties.
- 5.23 The use of the pitch would give rise to noise from various sources, including talking/shouting from players and spectators, ball impact and whistles. The Environmental Health officer has considered the noise impacts of the development and comments that acoustic protection around the northern corner of the ground is required in particular to address potential noise disturbance from the use of whistles. He is seeking an acoustic screen, 2.5m in height, along part of the northern boundary of the site, which the football club has agreed to provide. There should be minimal impact on amenity as a result, given the separation distances from residential properties and subject to the implementation of the acoustic barrier. Details of the fence and its noise mitigating properties can be secured by condition.
- 5.24 The design of the floodlights is such that is very little light spillage and back light is projected around the 3G pitch enclosure. This, coupled with the adequate distances to any residential neighbours; will generate minimal impacts to residential amenity; with no unacceptable light trespass into windows and with little glare. The Environmental Health officer has advised that details submitted with the application demonstrate that light intrusion that could adversely affect nearby residents' health and quality of life would be avoided.
- 5.25 The current grass pitch is not subject to any days or hours of use restriction, but the floodlights are limited by condition 3 on permission CR/1999/0375/FUL which states that they shall not be operated between 10.30pm and 7.30am and this applies 7 days per week.
- 5.26 The artificial pitch application will result in an increased football club use and community use of the facilities throughout the week, with the associated operation of the floodlights. Given this intensification of the use, it is considered appropriate to apply a condition relating to both the hours of use of the pitch and the operation of the floodlights. After the final session/activity ceases each evening, a further short period of illumination is required for players, coaches, parents and any spectators to safely leave the facility. This extra illuminated period will also enable loose equipment and portable goals to be moved into storage positions, and for the supervisor to lock-up the pitch enclosure each evening.
- 5.27 Taking into account the existing lawful planning position for the use of the site and the request for extended times, the recommended condition for the hours of operation of the 3G pitch is 08:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday, and Sunday 08:00 to 18:00 only, with the floodlights to be only be operated between the hours of 08:00 to 22:15 Monday to Saturday and 08:00 to 18:15 Sunday.
- 5.28 In conclusion on this issue, it is considered that, subject to the acoustic barrier, control over the hours of use and given the separation distance, there would be no adverse impact on the noise environment for these nearby occupiers.

Trees and landscaping

- 5.29 There are a number of trees around the site boundaries, some with canopies overhanging the existing timber boundary fence around the site. Discussions are ongoing with the applicant about the potential

impact of the proposed boundary fence and also about measures to protect the roots of nearby trees. A further update will be provided on this issue once the required measures are agreed.

Access and parking requirements

- 5.30 No change is proposed to the existing vehicular access to the site from Jubilee Walk. The introduction of an artificial pitch, which provides enhanced durability to play over longer periods and also during wet weather conditions, would result in additional traffic movement. However, it is not anticipated by WSCC Highways that this would cause a detrimental impact on the operation of the local and strategic highway network. A construction management plan condition is recommended for the implementation of the works. The site is in a sustainable location as it is located in the urban area, easily accessible by road and public transport links.
- 5.31 The site contains 130 parking spaces and the scheme does not propose any additional parking. The Council's parking standards seek one space per fifteen seats for a stadium. The existing level of parking on-site is in excess of the required parking to meet the standards. The peak parking demand and traffic flow on the site will be the same as on any current match day. Thus, although the facilities would be used more intensively throughout the week, it will not lead to an increase in peak parking demand over and above a league match. It is not considered that the intensification of use and associated vehicular movements will impact negatively on neighbouring occupiers the highway network or add to parking stress in the locality.
- 5.32 Overall, this site occupies a highly sustainable and accessible location, the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the access and operational requirements are considered to have been adequately addressed. Vehicle parking is also provided to an acceptable standard. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies SD1 of the CBLP and the parking standards within of the Urban Design SPD.

Drainage

- 5.33 The proposed development site is located within Flood Zone 1 (Low probability for flooding) and the scheme is classified by the Environment Agency as 'water compatible development.'
- 5.34 The removal of the natural grass surface could have an impact on surface water disposal as the permeable grass will be replaced with the artificial grass surface. To address this, storage would be provided within the permeable sub base of the pitch. The surface water from the proposed pitch would eventually discharge into the existing soakaway located near the northern corner of the pitch, through the introduction of a restricted outfall prior to the surface water connecting to that existing soakaway. As such, surface water will be restricted to greenfield equivalent rates, with attenuation to be provided within the permeable sub-base of the pitch.
- 5.35 The Council's Drainage Officer considers the development is water compatible and raises no objection to the flood and drainage risk management approach set out in the documents. Conditions are recommended in relation to the drainage works, including a management and maintenance plan and requiring a post construction certification.

Water neutrality

- 5.36 Crawley is situated in an area of serious water stress, as identified by the Environment Agency. The application site is supplied with water by Southern Water from its Sussex North Water Resource Zone (SNWRZ). This supply is sourced from abstraction points in the Arun Valley, which includes locations such as Amberley Wild Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Pulborough Brooks SSSI and Arun Valley Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site.
- 5.37 On 14 September 2021, the Council received a Position Statement from Natural England. The Natural England position is that it cannot be concluded that the existing abstraction within the SNWRZ is not having an impact on the Arun Valley sites. It advises that developments within this zone must not add to this impact.

- 5.38 Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Crawley Borough Council is the Competent Authority and has a duty to consider the impact of development on protected species and habitats. These Regulations and the Natural England Position Statement require, as a matter of law, applications for planning permission in the SNWRZ to demonstrate that they do not increase pressure on water resources and that they are “water neutral.” As a consequence, all applications that may affect water consumption need to be ‘screened’ to identify whether the proposed development, individually or in combination with other projects, will result in a significant effect on the Arun Valley sites.
- 5.39 This application is not exempt under the Screening process and therefore the applicants are required to submit evidence so that a judgement can be made by CBC as to whether there could be any potential significant impacts of the development on the Arun Valley sites by way of an ‘Appropriate Assessment’. In accordance with Natural England Position Statement, to meet this test the development must demonstrate that it is ‘water neutral’. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development being the same or lower after the development is in place.
- 5.40 This application is one where the intensified use proposed for the site, being a 3G pitch to replace the existing grass pitch, is potentially more efficient or water neutral than that of current use, as the artificial pitch would not need to be watered. However, the intensification of use throughout the week, with associated players, officials and spectators, could increase water use in itself from the additional use of showers and toilet facilities etc. So, whilst the demand for irrigation water use would fall, there would be an increase in water use within the changing rooms and toilets.
- 5.41 The applicants have provided a Water Neutrality Report and the increase in water use from additional people using the facility has been included in the calculations. This information has been independently assessed for CBC by a specialist consultant, Water Environment. They conclude that the assumptions applied in generating the water budget are reasonable and precautionary and, based on calculations included with the documents, show a water saving of 43%, with the cessation of pitch watering arising from the switch from a grass to artificial surface reducing existing water use by around 2,400m³/year. This amount of savings exceeds the increased consumption in showers/toilets resulting from increased use of the site. It is therefore considered that the development would be ‘water neutral’.
- 5.42 Based on these findings an Appropriate Assessment document is being prepared and sent to Natural England for comment (as required under Habitat Regulations).

CONCLUSIONS:-

- 6.1 The principle of a remodelled enhanced sports facility is acceptable in policy terms. It would expand the range of accessible sports, recreation, education, and community facilities; providing public benefit. The facility would provide a valued training and competition facility, and also improve team sports use by community groups.
- 6.2 The proposed design and siting is functional but is also considered visually acceptable and appropriate in its setting. The development is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.3 The development has also demonstrated water neutrality.
- 6.4 As a result, the proposal is considered to accord with the policies and objectives of the Crawley Borough Local Plan (2015–2030), the Supplementary Planning Documents and the NPPF (2023). It is therefore recommended to grant planning permission, subject to consultation on the Appropriate Assessment with Natural England, the completion of a s106 legal agreement securing community use and pitch certification and the imposition of relevant conditions.
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RECOMMENDATION RE: CR/2023/0118/FUL:-

Delegate the decision to **PERMIT** the application to the Head of Economy and Planning, subject to:

- the conclusion of consultation with Natural England under the Habitats Regulations;
- the completion of a S106 legal agreement securing community use and pitch certification; and
- the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plans as listed below save as varied by the conditions hereafter:
(Drawing numbers to be added)
REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. No development shall take place, including any works of site clearance, until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority covering the application site and any adjoining land which will be used during the construction period. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the entire construction period, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall provide details as appropriate, but not necessarily be restricted to the following matters:
 - the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction;
 - the method of access and routing of vehicles during construction;
 - the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors;
 - the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste;
 - the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development;
 - the erection and maintenance of security hoarding;
 - the provision of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders);
 - the prevention of deliveries at the site during school drop-off and pick-up time (generally 0800-0900 and 1430-1530); and
 - access arrangements from the public highway, including temporary accesses and alterations to existing accesses;
 REASON: In the interests of highway safety, to protect trees around the site and to protect the amenities of the area in accordance with Policies CH3 and IN1 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030, the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.
REASON why pre-commencement condition: As it relates to potential impact upon the trees and the surrounding area starting with the setting up for construction activities.
4. No above ground development shall take place until details of an acoustic barrier to be installed along the northern corner boundary of the site to mitigate against noise impacts at the nearest noise sensitive premises have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include information on materials to be used for the barrier including surface mass; method of construction; length and height specifications and the exact positioning of the barrier. The submission shall provide full details of the noise barrier mitigation calculations and projected noise levels at the façade of the nearest noise sensitive premises. The acoustic barrier shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the 3G football pitch hereby approved being first brought into use and thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development.
REASON: To protect against exposure to noise levels which could lead to significant or unacceptable adverse effects on the health and quality of life of existing or future residents in accordance with Policy ENV11 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030.
5. All perimeter fencing shall be fixed to its support posts with a neoprene isolator that is installed to fully isolate the panels from the posts. The neoprene isolators shall be maintained, and replaced as required due to wear and tear, thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: To mitigate the impact of noise arising from balls impacting fences and to protect residential amenity in accordance with Policies CH3 and ENV11 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Use of the 3G football pitch hereby permitted shall only take place between the hours of 08:00 to 22:00 from Monday to Saturday and 08:00 to 18:00 on Sundays. The floodlights hereby permitted shall only be operated between the hours of 08:00 to 22:15 from Monday to Saturday and 08:00 to 18:15 on Sundays.
REASON: To address noise and the impact of floodlighting in the interests of the residential amenities of nearby occupiers in accordance with Policies CH3, ENV10 and ENV11 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. The floodlighting hereby permitted shall be installed in accordance with the approved details, including the intensity of illumination and predicted lighting contours. Any variation to the lighting shall be first submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority on an application in that behalf.
REASON: To prevent light pollution which could adversely affect residential amenity and the health and quality of life of nearby residents in accordance with Policies CH3, ENV10 and ENV11 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.
8. The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details of the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy and the Water Management Operation and Maintenance Plan. The drainage scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the first use of the pitch hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the development.
REASON: To ensure that the development is suitably drained and to prevent flooding in accordance with Policy ENV8 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. The pitch hereby permitted shall not be brought into use unless and until a post construction certificate, confirming that the surface water drainage works have been constructed as stated and detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority .
REASON: As the drainage strategy uses a combination of underground and overground attenuation and it is therefore important to ensure the developer has fully complied with and constructed the flood mitigation features as detailed and designed, and in accordance with Policy ENV8 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

INFORMATIVES

1. Within the boundaries of Crawley Borough Council, the Control of Pollution Act 1974 is used to control noise from construction sites. Section 60 of the Act permits Local Authorities to specify the hours the noisy works are permitted.

The permitted hours for noisy construction work in the Borough of Crawley are as follows:

0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and

0800 to 1300 on Saturday.

With no noisy construction works taking place on Sundays, Bank Holidays, Public Holidays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Years' Day.

The developer shall employ at all times the best practical means to minimise noise disturbance to nearby residents. All construction work practises shall comply with B.S. 5228 1:2009 'Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites'.

Any exemptions to the above hours must be agreed with the Environmental Health Team in advance.

2. Given the nature of the proposed development, it is possible that a crane may be required during its construction. Gatwick Airport would, therefore, draw the applicant's attention to the requirement within the British Standard Code of Practice for the safe use of Cranes, for crane operators to consult the aerodrome before erecting a crane in close proximity to an aerodrome. Gatwick Airport requires a minimum of four weeks' notice. For crane queries/applications please visit Crane Permits (gatwickairport.com) or email cranes@gatwickairport.com.

3. With regard to drainage and conditions 8 and 9, the developer should note that it would be advisable to engage a third party consultant, which must not be the consultant responsible for the design of any aspect of the drainage strategy/plan, during the construction phase of the permeable sub-base of the pitch before the 3G facility is overlaid to ensure they can provide the required certification for this aspect of the work.

NPPF Statement

In determining this planning application, the Local Planning Authority assessed the proposal against all material considerations and has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions where possible and required, by:

- Liaising with consultees and the agent and discussing the proposal where considered appropriate and necessary in a timely manner during the course of the determination of the application.
- Seeking amended plans/additional information to address identified issues during the course of the application.

This decision has been taken in accordance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework, as set out in article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.

