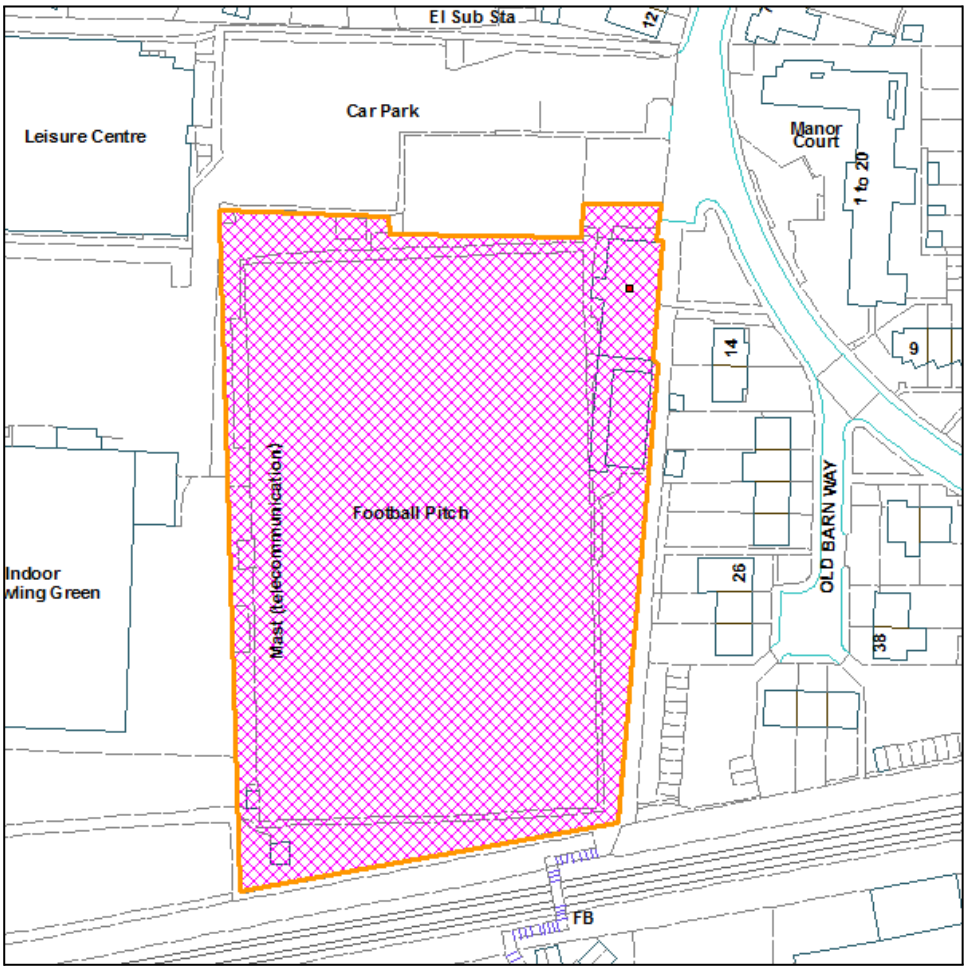
Application Number:	**AWDM/1217/23**	**Recommendation - APPROVE subject to legal agreement**
Site:	**Southwick Football Club, Old Barn Way, Southwick**	
Proposal:	**Redevelopment of the Former Southwick Football Club, comprising the replacement of existing turf pitch with 3G pitch and replacement floodlights, demolition of existing clubhouse and erection of replacement Sports Hub Building, erection of spectator stand along with other ancillary infrastructure, including 8m high ball stop netting and 4.5m high ball stop fence.**	
Applicant:	Russell Martin Foundation	Ward: Eastbrook
Agent:	Mr Matthew Walton - PWA Planning	
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to the site of the former Southwick Football Club which is off Old Barn Way to the east of Southwick Recreation Ground and the indoor bowling green and to the south west of Southwick Leisure Centre. There is a motorcycle training facility directly to the north with the leisure centre car park beyond that. There are residential houses further to the north and to the east. To the south is the south coast railway line. A footpath runs along the eastern boundary which leads to the railway bridge. The site has existing access from the NW corner, off the leisure centre car park.

It is proposed to demolish the existing derelict clubhouse on the east side of the site and to construct a new single storey clubhouse (3.45m high, 35m long, 14.1m wide) with changing rooms, bar, kitchen and a flexible space for health/wellbeing uses in broadly the same location. It is also proposed to replace the grass pitch with a new 3G (artificial grass) full-size football pitch (100m x 64m) adjacent to the proposed clubhouse building and new, replacement floodlights. A new covered spectator stand for 56 people is proposed (4.3m high, 24m long, 4.3m wide) on the eastern side of the pitch together with new turnstiles with two dugouts provided on the west side of the pitch. Improved access from the existing car parking area is to be provided with a new site entrance and two accessible parking spaces close to the building off Old Barn Way. An area of open storage is to be provided at the southern end of the pitch.

The new clubhouse will have a contemporary design with render and brickwork. It will be flat roofed with potential for PV panels and rainwater harvesting.

Visualisation 2: Proposed Clubhouse. Front. Contemporary design with render and brickwork facing on external walls. Flat roof with the potential for sustainable technologies such as PV panels and rainwater harvesting (TBC).



New 8m high ball stop netting is to be installed at the southern end of the pitch, to protect the railway line, and on the eastern boundary to protect residents. A 4.5m high ball stop fence is proposed around the perimeter of the pitch.

The floodlights will be similar positions to existing and at the same height as existing.

The site is owned by Adur District Council and this is a Regulation 4 application.

The applicants are the Russell Martin Foundation (RMF) and the intention is to use the site as a community facility. The requested hours of operation of the pitch are 08:00 to 22:00 every day, allowing an additional 15 minutes for locking up and switching off the floodlights.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement (including Sustainability and Energy Statement, Refuse and Recycling Statement, Statement of Community Involvement and Sports Need Assessment), Design & Access Statement, Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy, Acoustic Survey & Assessment, Contaminated Land Assessment and Transport Statement.

A separate application to determine if prior approval is required for the proposed demolition of the clubhouse, changing rooms and WC's (NOTICE/0015/23) which has been determined (Prior approval not required). Demolition was due to have commenced in late October.

Relevant Planning History

SW/7/02Refurbishment (Including Brick Cladding) Of Changing Rooms, Directors Lounge, Canopied Terraced Seating & Press Box

SW/6/96 8 New floodlighting columns (16 metres high) to replace existing 6 columns

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection from a transport/highways aspect.

<u>Access/Location</u>
Access to the site is from Old Barn Way, a 'D' classified residential road with a 30mph speed limit. Parking restrictions in the form of double yellow lines are provided outside the car park access; however, for most parts the road has no parking restrictions. There is a leisure centre car park adjacent to the Football ground, and whilst this does not form part of this application, there is a proposed pedestrian connection from the car park into the site which would suggest this is available for use by the football club.

<u>Sustainable Travel</u>
WSCC has undertaken a desktop review of the site location and are of the view that this site provides good connections on foot and via public transport. PROW E149 runs parallel with the football pitch and provides direct access over the railway line, via a footbridge which links into Eastbrook Way, the A259 coast road, and WSCC signed cycle networks.

Fishersgate Train station is located to the east of the site and connects into the public highway via shared use footways and public rights of way. Bus stops are also located close to the site, under 200m on Manor Hall Road.
Therefore, WSCC is satisfied that the site can be accessed by sustainable travel modes.

Proposed use
Currently the site is used during weekdays by local schools as part of the RMF Youth programme, local football teams, and during the school holidays.
The proposals will see the replacement of the existing turf pitch, and the refurbishment of the existing clubhouse to create a higher quality facility. This will allow the existing use to continue but because of the refurbishment to the clubhouse there will be an increase in health education and improvement programmes.

Minor off site highway improvements
Two new disabled car parking spaces will be provided on the public highway. The applicant will need to apply for a license for these to be advisory bays, and they also need to show how these will link into the existing footway and provide some minor improvements here as well.

At present there are no dropped kerbs in situ, and plans are required to show the disabled bay proposals including how the dropped kerb/tactile paving will be laid out. Please provide a plan to the LPA for approval.
The applicant will be required to undertake the works as part of a 278 agreement.

Cycle parking
This is provided for within the site, creating a secure location, and should provide cover to keep dry in wet weather. Access to these stores would be from the main car park access as shown on the plan. This should be a minimum of 3m wide, and we would also require this access to be included on any dimension drawing. This will allow for both pedestrians and cyclists to use this.

WSCC car and cycle parking guidance for outdoor sports facilities recommends the following cycle parking standards:

1 space per 100sqm for staff and 1 space per 100sqm for customers. This equates to 110 spaces, which could be seen as quite an elevated level of parking spaces. As such WSCC would advise the applicant to provide the number of spaces to start with that it anticipates it will need, with a view to expansion should the need arise.

Transport Statement
Whilst it would be useful to understand the existing number of trips generated by the existing use, given the site's sustainable location, its proximity to public transport, and the fact this is a refurbishment rather than a change of use, WSCC are also of the view that the number of trips created by the proposal would be similar and is not expected to increase significantly.

Travel Plan
The club would be required to create a working travel plan, which can be secured via a condition prior to occupation, to encourage use of public transport to its site.

WSCC are now requesting a Travel Plan Auditing Fee to cover the resource costs of assessing and auditing Travel Plans through the planning process, and as part of the 5-year monitoring period. This fee equates to £3,500 and should be secured via a s106 agreement or unilateral undertaking

Conditions: Minor highway works, CMP and cycle parking

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Environmental Health*** officer has no objections in principle as this is just an improvement on an existing facility.

Given the proximity of the club house to neighbouring residential property he recommends a condition restricting the times of use.

He suggests that the premises be vacated by 11:30pm. This allows 11pm for sales, 20 minutes drinking up time and ten minutes for staff to vacate the premises once closed. He would allow an exception for New Year where the premises shall be vacated by 01:00Hrs. Hence 8am to 11:30pm with the additional time for New Year.

He also recommends a noise management plan condition for the use of the facility to cover such things as community liaison and complaint procedures.

Southern Water: Request details of foul sewerage and surface water disposal by condition

Local Lead Flood Authority: Original Comments: Object to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) & Drainage Strategy relating to:

- There is an inadequate level of detail in the FRA and Drainage Strategy to show that flood risk will not increase.
- The application is not in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 167 and 169, PPG Flood risk and coastal change or Policy 36: Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage in the Adur Local Plan 2017

We will consider reviewing this objection if the following issues are adequately addressed.

1. There is no drainage layout or calculations to show the proposals will adequately drain the site.
2. Please can the full infiltration test results be provided. Winter groundwater monitoring is also required

LLFA: Second Comments: We maintain our objection to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) & Drainage Strategy relating to:

1. There is an inadequate level of detail in the FRA and Drainage Strategy to show that flood risk will not increase.
2. The application is not in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 167 and 169,

PPG Flood risk and coastal change or Policy 36: Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage in the Adur Local Plan 2017

We will consider reviewing this objection if the issues as highlighted below are adequately addressed:

1. FSR rainfall has been superseded as it underestimates the volume of rainfall. Please use FEH2022 instead for all calculations.
2. A Cv value of 0.75 is currently being used in calculations, which means that not all the water within the catchment is draining into the proposed drainage system. A Cv value of 1 should be used instead.
3. Further detail on the 3G pitch drainage is required.
4. Please can the calculations for the spectator stand be provided.

LLFA: Third Comments: To be reported

Network Rail: Due to the close proximity of the proposed works to Network Rail's land and the operational railway, Network Rail requests that, where applicable, the applicant / developer follows the attached Asset Protection informatives which are issued to all proposals within close proximity to the railway.

Sport England: No objection. As part of our assessment we have consulted with Sussex County Football Association and the Football Foundation. (FA/FF), both of whom support the project.

A natural grass pitch requires very little maintenance compared to a 3G artificial grass pitch (AGP). Indeed, without the regular required maintenance the AGP will quickly fall into disrepair. A second issue to consider, is that the AGP has a limited life depending on its use. On average the 'carpet' (the top of the AGP) requires replacement every 10 years, which is a significant cost. However, the benefits of an AGP is looked at in the terms of usage which far exceeds a natural grass pitch.

To ensure that the AGP is kept up to standard, we require a planning condition which will also cover the sinking fund required for the carpet replacement.

There are no details of the construction of the AGP or the containment measure proposed to prevent the 3G particulars from leaving the pitch. Both of these are fundamental to ensure the AGP is fit for purpose and there is no impact on the surrounding environment. Therefore, we will need planning conditions to ensure these issues are addressed.

According to the Local Football Facilities Plan, which is published by Sussex FA and the FF, there is a need for a 3G AGP in the locality and therefore this new AGP will assist in meeting the under provision. We would suggest a community use condition.

Therefore, Sport England is satisfied, subject to planning conditions, that the replacement 3G AGP for the natural grass pitch would meet our planning policy exception E5.

Turning to the other items which planning permission Is being sought, the demolition of existing clubhouse and erection of replacement Sports Hub Building, erection of spectator stand along with other ancillary infrastructure, Sport England is satisfied that these meet our planning policy exception E2.

It is disappointing that the extension to the pavilion for changing only has a single sex official changing accommodation. When Sport England questioned this, we were told if there was different gender officiating, they could use the disabled changing area. This is really a poor response and Sport England would encourage the applicants to revisit this design decision.

Conditions: Details of design of AGP; preparation of community use agreement; preparation of management and maintenance scheme

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 policies 1, 2, 8, 15, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36
Adur and Worthing Playing Pitch Strategy (Dec 2019)
Sustainable Energy SPD (August 2019)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy 32 of the Adur Local Plan supports proposals for sports facilities and formal sports provision while Policy 33 supports improvements to social and community facilities.

In this case the proposal seeks to upgrade facilities at an existing football ground, providing a pitch that can be used all year round plus new clubhouse facilities with improved community use. The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment

Report (December 2019) identifies that a substantial and growing number of clubs use, or would like to use, 3G artificial grass pitches (AGPs) for training. Sport England has advised that, according to the Local Football Facilities Plan, which is published by Sussex FA and the Football Foundation, there is a need for a 3G AGP in the locality and therefore this new AGP will assist in meeting the under provision. As such, there is no objection to the principle of the redevelopment and replacement pitch and clubhouse.

While the use of the site will be managed by the Russell Martin Foundation for their activities there is the opportunity for wider community use and a condition is recommended by Sport England to ensure that a community use agreement prepared to include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-non-members, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review.

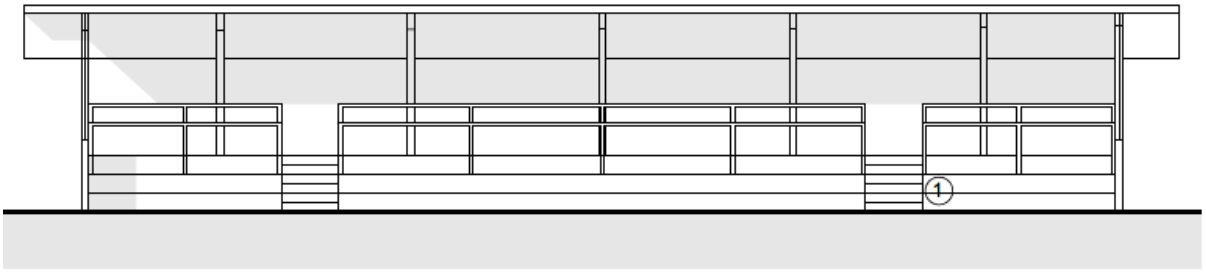
Visual amenity

The proposal will see the construction of a modern new clubhouse building which is considered to be a considerable improvement on the previous building which had fallen into disrepair. It will be in a similar location and of a comparable scale to the previous building and will not be noticeably more prominent. The development will enhance the site overall to the benefit of the surrounding area.

Visualisation 1: Aerial. Proposed Hub building and external accessible parking area. Floodlit 3G pitch to rear.



The pitch improvements and ancillary development are also not considered to be visually harmful. The proposed spectator stand is a modest structure which will not be unduly prominent.



West Elevation

The new boundary treatments, including a 4.5m ball stop fence (which will enclose the pitch, partly following the site boundary and partly the pitch), and where appropriate a 8m ball stopping net (along the eastern boundary and southern boundary to protect adjacent residential properties and the railway) are also not considered to cause significant visual harm.

Residential amenity

The new pitch will enable the site to be used more intensively than previously and hours of use are stated as being 0800 - 2215 every day. The clubhouse will contain a bar and there is the potential for events to take place within the flexible community space provided at the southern end of the building. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has advised that he has no objection to the proposal provided the clubhouse is vacated by 11:30pm. This allows 11pm for sales, 20 minutes drinking up time and ten minutes for staff to vacate the premises once closed. He would allow an exception for New Year where the premises should be vacated by 01:00. He also recommends a noise management plan condition for the use of the facility to cover such things as community liaison and complaint procedures.

The new floodlights will replace existing and final details of their design and lighting can be reserved by condition to ensure there is no harmful light overspill. The previous permission for the floodlights did not contain any restriction on usage but it is considered, with the increased use of the site, necessary to ensure that the amenities of residents are protected and a condition is recommended to ensure that the lights are switched off by 2230 each day.

The spectator stand will be on the eastern side of the pitch facing west and will have solid steel panels at its rear to reduce any noise and to prevent overlooking of neighbouring dwellings to the east.

Accessibility and parking

The proposal will result in an increase in usage of the facility, due to the all-weather pitch and improved facilities but the Transport Statement submitted with the application states that any increase is unlikely to be significant and there will not be a material impact on the local road network. Parking will be provided in a small area to the north of the pitch, accessed from the leisure centre car park.

West Sussex Highways have not raised any concerns on transport grounds as the site is in a sustainable location, in close proximity to public transport. They agree that the number of trips created by the proposal would be similar to existing and is not expected to increase significantly. In order to encourage sustainable travel, the club will be required to create a working travel plan, which can be secured via a condition. A legal agreement to secure the travel plan monitoring fee is being prepared.

Flood risk and Drainage

The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy advises that the site is in Flood Zone 1, at lowest risk of flooding. Surface water flooding poses the highest risk, particularly as the grass pitch is being replaced with an artificial surface. All pitch drainage is proposed to be included and it is expected that surface water will infiltrate through the surface back into the ground. Surface water runoff from the building roofs is also proposed to discharge into a new soakaway to be constructed under the proposed pitch.

If it is not possible for an infiltration drainage system to be viable for this development site, following testing, it is intended that a new surface water drainage system will be installed for the new facilities, enabling a restricted discharge into the public surface water sewer system.

The Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) is currently maintaining an objection to the application on flood risk grounds due to inadequate information being submitted to date. The applicants have been asked to address the comments in the LLFA response and their revised FRA is awaited.

Ordinarily the matter would not be reported to the Planning Committee before such an important objection has been overcome but, in this case, it is vital that the application has a decision before the end of the year in order to meet funding application deadlines. It is hoped that a positive outcome will be achieved before the Committee date and Members will be updated at the meeting.

Trees and Landscaping

Existing trees around the site boundary are to be retained and new landscaped areas are to be provided at the north and southwestern end of the pitch to replace existing hard surfaced areas, which will also help with improving the biodiversity value of the site (see section later in the report).

Sustainability

There is a lack of specific detail with regard to energy efficiency measures but solar PV panels and rainwater harvesting are mentioned in the supporting statement as being possible to install on the roof of the clubhouse.

The Council would normally expect new commercial buildings to achieve BREEAM Very Good standard, as required by Policy 18 but the Planning Statement advises that the costs associated with this are prohibitive and it is unlikely that this will be

achieved without threatening the viability of the project. It is recommended therefore that final details of sustainability measures are secured by condition to ensure that the building is as energy efficient as practicable without necessarily meeting the BREAAM Very Good rating.

Contaminated land

A preliminary investigation on behalf of the applicants has concluded that there is no contamination on or off site that is likely to cause harm to the identified receptors and the site is therefore considered to be safe and suitable for the intended use.

The report recommends that a watching brief is maintained throughout the development and that any signs of potential contamination found are fully investigated, with appropriate remedial action taken as necessary. This can be secured by condition.

Ecology and biodiversity

The Ecological Assessment provides the results of ecological surveys undertaken in July 2023. The surveys did not find any evidence of bats. A high population of slow worms was present and the proposal is to retain boundary habitats allowing them to remain on site. An opportunity exists to increase the ecological value of the site through the creation of a wildlife corridor running parallel to the railway line, with new trees planted, bird nesting boxes introduced, an invertebrate box hedgehog access points created within boundary walls plus the replacement of hardstanding adjacent to the northern fence boundary with wildflower meadow planting. Mitigation during construction and enhancement measures can be secured by condition.

Recommendation

Subject to (i) the receipt of an acceptable FRA and the removal of the LLFA objection, and (ii) the completion of a legal agreement to secure a Travel Plan Auditing Fee of £3500.

Approve

Subject to conditions:-

1. Approved Plans.

2. Time limit.

3. Opening hours of the clubhouse 8am to 11:30pm. with an exception for New Year where the premises shall be vacated by 01:00 hrs.

4. Pitch shall only be used between the hours of 0800 - 2215 hours Mondays to Saturdays and 0900 - 1015 hours on Sundays.

5. Details of height, design and lighting of floodlights to be submitted and approved prior to their installation.

6. Floodlighting hours 0800 - 2230 every day.

7. No public address or sound amplification system shall be installed or used at the facility without the prior approval of the local planning authority.

8. No part of the development shall be first occupied until such time as a minor highway works plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the minor highway improvements constructed in accordance with this plan. The plan shall include 2 x disabled parking bays on Old Barn Way, and the provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

9. Travel Plan to be agreed.

10. Construction Management Plan.

11. No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

12. Car parking to be provided

13. Materials.

14. Landscaping.

15. No development shall commence until details of the design and layout of the artificial grass pitch, in particular a section through the edge of the pitch showing the mitigation barriers, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]. The artificial grass pitch shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details. The use of the development shall not commence until:

    (a) certification that the Artificial Grass Pitch hereby permitted has met FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf – FIFA Quality or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (IMS) and
    (b) confirmation that the facility has been registered on the Football Association's Register of Football Turf Pitches has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

16. Within 9 months of the date of this permission, a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply artificial grass pitch, changing accommodation and car parking and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non- non-members, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

17. Before the artificial grass pitch is brought into use, a Management and Maintenance Scheme for the facility 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. This shall include measures to ensure the replacement of the Artificial Grass Pitch within the manufacturer's specified period. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the facility.

18. Noise management plan for the use of the facility to cover such things as community liaison and complaint procedures.

19. Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of foul sewerage and surface water disposal have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.

20. Fencing to be installed prior to first use.

21. External lighting details.

22. Cut and fill details.

23. Sustainability and energy efficiency measures to be submitted and approved in writing prior to commencement.

24. Contaminated land watching brief.

25. Ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development and implemented prior to commencement of use plus any other conditions as recommended by the LLFA.