



PLANNING STATEMENT

**IN RESPECT OF A FULL PLANNING
APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN
ALL-WEATHER FOOTBALL PITCH WITH
BOUNDARY FENCING AND FLOODLIGHTS AND
AN EXTENSION TO THE EXISTING CAR PARK**

AT

**LANGHO FOOTBALL, SPORTS AND SOCIAL
CLUB, DEWHURST ROAD, LANGHO, BB6 8AF.**

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Our Client:	Langho Football Sports and Social Club
Our Ref:	Read/505/2827/GH
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

- 1.1 Gary Hoerty Associates has been instructed by Mr M Ellison of Langho Football Sports and Social Club to submit a full planning application on behalf of the club for the construction of an all-weather football pitch with boundary fencing and floodlights and an extension to the existing car park at Dewhurst Road, Langho BB6 8AF.
- 1.2 The club has its main site, including the clubhouse, at Dewhurst Road, but it also has other pitches relatively nearby at Northcote Road, Langho. Although not within the context of a formal pre-application enquiry, our clients did discuss their proposal with Peter Fletcher, an officer of the Council who deals with sports related matters. After discussing the matter with the Council's planning officers, Peter Fletcher advised our clients that the Council's preferred location for the new all-weather pitch would be at the main site on Dewhurst Road rather than the club's other site at Northcote Road.
- 1.3 In this Planning Statement we will refer to the planning history of the site; describe the application site and surroundings; describe the proposed development and examine the proposal against the relevant national planning guidance and local planning policies which support our conclusion that the proposal represents sustainable development and should therefore be approved by the Local Planning Authority subject to any reasonable and necessary planning conditions.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 There have been two previous planning applications relating to the club's site at Dewhurst Road as follows:
- 2.2 Planning application app3/1998/0520 – Proposed erection of sports club and changing facilities. The application was approved on 5 November 1998 and the permission has been implemented.
- 2.3 Planning application 3/2012/0225 – Proposed all-weather football pitch with associated works. The application was approved on 22 June 2012 and the permission has been implemented.

3. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 Langho Football, Sports and Social Club is situated in Langho with The Rydings to the east, Dewhurst Road to the west, Longsight Road (A59) to the north and The Dales to the south, this network of roads effectively

encloses the Club's land with their grass pitches occupying the majority of the site. The clubhouse and car park are located on the western edge of the site close to Dewhurst Road which is the highway that gives access to the car park. The existing all-weather pitch is to the north west of the club house and car park and it is surrounded by a belt of mature trees.

- 3.2 Within the immediate locality are the Longsight Nursery and Longsight Stables to the east of the site; the residential estate of The Rydings and The Dales to the south; the Kemple View Hospital to the south west; and the Sanctuary of Healing and residential properties on Dewhurst Road to the west.
- 3.3 In planning policy terms, the application site is in the open countryside outside any settlement boundary but is not covered by any special designations such as Green Belt or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The club's existing all-weather pitch is not full-size having dimensions of 39m by 24m plus a 3m wide strip down both sides and both ends of the pitch, giving overall dimensions of 45m by 30m. This area is surrounded by 3m high green coloured metal mesh fencing. At each corner of the fenced area there is a 10m high floodlight column.
- 4.2 This small all-weather pitch is a valuable part of the club's facilities. However, as part of the club's continued development, there is a need for a full-size all-weather pitch. This application therefore seeks permission for an all-weather pitch measuring 100m by 70m with 3m strips down both sides and both ends of the pitch giving overall dimensions of 106m by 76m. This area would be surrounded by a 6m high green coloured plastic coated steel mesh fence and there will be six 15m high floodlight columns. The proposed new pitch will be constructed to the Football Associations 3G approved standard and its dimensions are such that, in addition to matches using the whole of the pitch, three groups can train on the surface at the same time by playing across the pitch.
- 4.3 The proposed new all-weather pitch would be located on the area presently occupied by a full-size grass football pitch on the northern part of the site. Between the proposed location of the new pitch and the A59 there is a single large detached house within a large curtilage. On the boundary of that dwelling with the application site there is substantial natural screening in the form of a hedge and a number of mature trees.

- 4.4 This new facility will increase the demand for parking spaces. Permission is therefore also sought for an extension to the existing car park to increase the number of spaces from 24 to 53.
- 4.5 The all-weather pitch will offer significant benefit to the club over the existing grass pitch being playable all year round and for longer hours due to the artificial lighting and avoiding games being cancelled due to a waterlogged pitch.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS.

General

- 5.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If it is to be approved, a development must satisfy as far as possible guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) and the relevant Policies of the Council's adopted Core Strategy. Below, we therefore consider the proposal against the principal appropriate policies and guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

- 5.2 The NPPF 2019 is the main national planning policy guidance influencing planning decision making in England. It states that the main purpose of the planning system in the country is the achievement of sustainable development; and that, for decision taking this means that proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay.
- 5.3 Section 6 of the NPPF relates to "building a strong, competitive economy" and paragraphs 83 and 84 are particularly relevant to this application as they relate to "supporting a prosperous rural economy"
- 5.4 Paragraph 83 states:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*

- c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

5.5 Paragraph 84 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

5.6 The approval of this application will support the continued development of an existing football, sports and social club. As such, we consider the proposal to represent a sustainable rural leisure development that is supported by paragraph 83(c). Furthermore, although in the open countryside in planning policy terms, the site is not isolated from the towns and villages of the Borough and is served by the A59, the principal road in Borough. As such, the proposal will assist towards the retention and development of an existing accessible sports venue in accordance with paragraph 83(d). The increase in the number of people using the club will also result in increased custom for other local businesses and services in the area to the benefit of the local economy.

5.7 The proposal, therefore, in our opinion, fully complies with the relevant guidance of NPPF. We will now consider the proposal against the relevant policies of the Council’s adopted Core Strategy.

Council’s Core Strategy 2008/2028 – A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adoption Version

Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.

5.8 Key Statement DS2 identifies that the Council when considering development proposals should take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in NPPF.

The policy states that where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in that framework indicate that development should be restricted. The proposed addition of a full-size all-weather pitch and additional parking spaces at the existing football, sports and social club represents sustainable development as defined in NPPF and we will demonstrate below that the development will comply with all the relevant Policies of the Council's adopted Core Strategy.

Policy DMG1: General considerations

- 5.9 This is a general development management policy which states that, in determining planning applications, all development must satisfy a total of twenty criteria relating to the matters of design, access, amenity, environment and infrastructure. We will consider the proposal below against the requirements of this Policy that we consider to be relevant to the consideration of this application.

The development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.

- 5.10 With respect to this requirement, the application relates to an existing sports club in an area containing a variety of land uses, and the club has an existing all-weather pitch that is enclosed by green coloured fencing and is illuminated by floodlights. The larger pitch with higher fencing and higher floodlight columns is important to the continued development of the club but is a proposed development that is entirely appropriate to the site and the locality. All-weather pitches of this type and with the associated fencing and floodlights are now a common feature at local sports clubs. Therefore, although it might be more visually prominent than the existing smaller pitch, the proposed larger pitch will not result in a feature that would be in any way obtrusive or discordant in the locality as it is entirely appropriate to the existing established use of the site. We therefore consider the proposal to satisfy this requirement of Policy DMG1.

The development must consider: the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.

- 5.11 With respect to this requirement, the layout of the development is determined by the existing layout of the facilities at the club. The proposed pitch will be sited on the only part of the club's land that can accommodate a pitch of the required size and the additional parking spaces will be formed by extending the existing car park. As stated above, we consider the visual appearance of the proposal to be entirely appropriate to the existing use of the site. Although within the open countryside in policy terms, the site is surrounded by built development such that the proposal will not have any detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area. We will cover the effects of the proposal on existing amenities under the separate requirement below.

The development must consider the potential traffic and car parking implications; and must ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.

- 5.12 With respect to these related requirements, the access to the existing 24 space car park is, in our opinion, adequate and safe and we consider it capable of serving the extended car park of 53 spaces without the need for any improvements or alterations. We also consider the proposed additional 29 spaces to be appropriate to cater for the extra demand for spaces that will be generated by the proposed all-weather pitch. However, if any concerns are raised by the County Council's highways officers with regards to the matters of access and parking, we would look to deal with these prior to the determination of the application.

The development must not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.

- 5.13 With respect to this requirement, as previously stated, the location of the proposed pitch is somewhat dictated by the location and layout of the existing grass pitches and other facilities at the club. Having said that, the proposed location is as far away from the houses at The Rydings and The Dales as it is possible to get within the applicants' site. The proposal will, in our opinion, have no detrimental impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of those dwellings.
- 5.14 Adjoining the proposed location of the pitch to the north is the large detached dwelling, Longsight House, which stands in a large curtilage that has tree and hedge screening on its boundary with the application site. Due to the separation distance between the proposed pitch and the dwelling and the existing intervening screening we do not consider that the proposal would not have any seriously detrimental effects upon the amenities of the occupiers of Longsight House. The land upon which the artificial pitch is to be formed is, of course, presently an existing grass

pitch. The major difference between the existing grass pitch and the proposed all-weather pitch would be the general increase in use of the pitch and its use during evening hours as a result of the floodlights. In granting permission for the existing smaller floodlit pitch, the Council considered it appropriate to impose a condition that the approved floodlights shall not be used outside the hours of 0900 to 2200 Monday to Saturday and 0900 to 2000 on Sundays unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority. We consider that the imposition of such a condition to control the hours of use of the floodlights proposed in this current application would satisfactorily protect the amenities of the occupiers of Longsight House.

- 5.15 In our opinion, the development undoubtedly complies with the relevant requirements of Policy DMG1.

Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations

- 5.16 Policy DMG2 requires development to be in accordance with the Core Strategy development strategy and to support the spatial vision and identifies certain forms of development that are acceptable outside of the settlement areas, three of which are relevant to the determination of this application and they are

1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area.

4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.

5. The development is for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.

- 5.17 As the application relates to the improvement of the facilities of an existing established sports club, we consider that the proposal is a recreational development that is fully compliant with Policy DMG2.

- 5.18 The Policy also states that *‘within the Open Countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.’* For reasons already given in this Statement, we consider that the proposal satisfies this requirement of Policy DMG2.

Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection

- 5.19 This policy identifies that development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape features and sets out a list of relevant landscape features. Of relevance to this application, the policy refers to “woodlands” and “hedgerows and individual trees”. Whilst we would not necessarily consider it to constitute a woodland, the existing all-weather pitch is surrounded by trees that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order; and there are existing trees and hedges in the curtilage of Longsight House adjoining the northern boundary of the application site. It was possible for the existing all-weather pitch to be approved even though it was surrounded by protected trees as the development works were kept outside the root protection areas (RPA’s) of the trees. Those same protected trees will adjoin the western end of the all-weather pitch proposed in this application. However, as shown on the submitted plans the development works are outside the RPA’s of the trees on the eastern edge of the group; and will also not impact upon the trees and hedges adjoining the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.20 We therefore contend that the proposal is acceptable with respect to its potential effects upon trees and hedgerows and none of the other features mentioned in Policy DME2 are applicable to this site. As such, in our opinion, the proposal complies with the relevant requirements of this Policy.

Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

- 5.21 Policy DMB1 indicates that the Council will support proposals that are intended to support business growth in the local economy provided such proposals are in conformity with other relevant policies of the local plan. This general Policy is, perhaps, not specifically intended to relate to sporting/recreational developments such as that proposed in this application. However, the Club is also a business and the proposed development is in full conformity with all the relevant policies of the Core Strategy. We therefore consider that the proposal is compliant with the intentions of Policy DMB1.

Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development

- 5.22 Policy DMB3 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the Borough subject to a number of criteria being met. Those criteria are that the proposed development should not conflict with other policies of the plan; the site should immediately adjoin an existing group of buildings; the proposal should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or

design; and the site should be particularly well related to the highway network and would not create any adverse traffic problems. These criteria are similar to the requirements of other Policies of the Core Strategy as referred to above. We consider that, through our examination of the application against those other Policies, we have demonstrated that the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy DMB3.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposed full-size all-weather football pitch is important to the continued development and success of the Langho Football Sports and Social Club. It will provide an excellent recreational facility for the young people and adults of Ribble Valley, whilst also providing increased custom for other local businesses to the benefit of the local economy.
- 6.2 We consider that in this Planning Statement we have demonstrated that the proposal conforms to the NPPF and the adopted Core Strategy. As such we consider that the application should be approved subject to any reasonable and necessary conditions.