

David Lloyd, Southampton West End

Planning Statement

David Lloyd Clubs

David Lloyd Leisure Ltd

24 April 2024

LICHFIELDS

68470/01/IAN/CA
31684915v4

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
	The Planning Application Submission	1
	Statement Structure	1
2.0	Context	3
3.0	Site and Surrounding Area	4
4.0	Proposed Development	6
5.0	Planning Policy Context	7
	Statutory Development Plan	7
	Emerging Policy	7
	Other Material Considerations	7
6.0	Planning Policy Analysis	10
	Principle of Development	10
	Policy WE4 (The Ageas Bowl and Tennis Centre, Botley Road)	11
	Design and Sustainability	13
	Lighting	13
	Biodiversity Net Gain Considerations	14
	Other Considerations	14
7.0	Conclusion	15

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of David Lloyd Leisure Limited, to accompany a retrospective full planning application for the provision of padel tennis courts, a social area and associated flood lighting at David Lloyd Southampton West End, Botley Road, SO30 3XA. The description of development is as follows:

1.2 *“Retrospective application for two padel courts, social area and associated flood lighting.”*

1.3 David Lloyd Leisure Limited did not initially apply for planning permission, as the development is sited on an existing tennis court, with padel being a short form of tennis. We have spoken with David Lloyd and agreed that a retrospective application is, however, required.

The Planning Application Submission

1.4 This document considers the planning issues associated with the proposed development in the context of national and local planning policy and guidance.

1.5 This statement should be read in conjunction with the other documents that have been submitted with the planning application, including:

- 1 Planning application form;
- 2 Covering letter;
- 3 Site Location Plan (A-PL-001xP01);
- 4 The following planning application drawings (prepared by HCD Architects):
 - a Existing Site Plan (A-PL-002XP01);
 - b Proposed Site Plan (A-PL-003XP01);
 - c Padel Court Plan and Elevations (A-PL-100XP02);
 - d Padel Social Plan (A-PL-101XP02)
- 5 Design and Access Statement (prepared by HCD Architects);
- 6 External Lighting Report (prepared by Elm Building Service Engineers LTD);
- 7 External Padel Courts Lighting Design including Lux Spill (prepared by Elm Building Service Engineers LTD).

Statement Structure

1.6 This Planning Statement contains seven sections:

- 1 Section 2 provides a brief background to David Lloyd;
- 2 Section 3 provides a summary of the site and surrounding area and the relevant planning history;
- 3 Section 4 describes the proposal;
- 4 Section 5 reviews the relevant national and local planning policy;

- 5 Section 6 assesses the key planning considerations; and
- 6 Section 7 provides a conclusion to this statement.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 David Lloyd Clubs (David Lloyd) is Europe's premier health, racquets and fitness provider. The company has operated for over 30 years and owns some 100 David Lloyd Clubs in the UK and a further twenty-four across Europe. David Lloyd has ambitious growth plans both in the UK and Europe.
- 2.2 The business has some 660,000 members and is a significant employer in the health and fitness market, employing over 8,600 people. These include an expert health and fitness team of over 2,000 professionals and more than 680 tennis coaches.
- 2.3 David Lloyd's racquet facilities are unrivalled in the UK, with some 1,000 tennis courts, 400 badminton courts and squash courts.
- 2.4 In addition to the racquets facilities, across all Clubs, David Lloyd has over 150 swimming pools and the company offers more than 10,000 exercise classes every week.
- 2.5 David Lloyd also provides significant coaching programs for children, both as part of the normal operation of its Clubs and as 'outreach' to local schools, colleges and other amateur organisations. It is estimated that every week some 25,000 children swim and some 16,000 receive tennis coaching at David Lloyd clubs.
- 2.6 In addition to the core activities of racquets and health and fitness, a number of clubs also benefit from health and beauty spas, lounges, food and beverage, creches, nurseries and specialist sports shops.
- 2.7 The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the need for both physical and mental resilience and David Lloyd are at the forefront of development, both in fitness innovation across its Clubs, and mindful-wellness through group exercise classes and spas, and its family-focused provision.

3.0 Site and Surrounding Area

- 3.1 The site is part of David Lloyd Southampton West End (the Club), which is located wholly within the administrative boundary of Eastleigh Borough Council. Vehicular access to the club is gained from the B3035 (Botley Road).

The Club

- 3.2 The Club consists of a multi-storey sport complex with associated car parking.
- 3.3 The existing David Lloyd Leisure Club, sits to the north-east of Southampton City Centre. To the north of the club is a residential area, to the east is a Holiday Inn Hotel, and the south is a car park attached to the Utilita Bowl Stadium. The site is bound to the west by screening in the form of hedgerow and trees, with a truck dealer beyond.

The Site

- 3.4 The subject site is 0.07 hectares in size. This is a retrospective planning application therefore the proposed development is already in situ. Prior to development the site was occupied by 1no tennis court.

Heritage

- 3.5 The site contains no above-ground designated heritage assets and is not located within a Conservation Area.

Flood Risk

- 3.6 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, an area with the lowest probability of flooding.

Site Designations

- 3.7 According to Eastleigh Borough Council's policy map, the following designations apply to the site under the Local Plan:
- Urban Edge (Policy S2)
 - Land at Ageas Bowl and Tennis Centre (Policy WE4)

Planning History

- 3.8 Lichfields has undertaken a search of planning applications available on Eastleigh DC's online planning portal. Relevant applications are listed below.

Table 3.1 Site Planning History

Reference number	Description	Decision and date
Z/30368/013/00	Extension to existing gymnasium and extension to existing indoor swimming pool	Granted, August 1997
Z/20268/010/00	Erection of air supported structure over two tennis courts	Granted, October 1997
Z/03068/010/00	Erection of 17 floodlighting columns to six external tennis courts	Granted, November 1997

Reference number	Description	Decision and date
Z/30368/016/00	Siting of portable storage building to rear of building	Withdrawn 2002
Z/30368/017/00	Erection of air supported structure over two tennis courts between 01 October and 31 March and erection of 14 flood lighting columns to illuminate four tennis courts	Granted July 1998
Z/30368/030/00	Siting of portable building for temporary office use	Temporarily approve February 2000
Z/30368/031/00	Construction of single storey extension for spa pool	Granted, April 2000
A/10/67908	Retention of free standing sign	Refused, January 2011
A/13/72992	Display of 1no. 6m high internally illuminated freestanding sign & 1no. 2.5m high internally illuminated freestanding sign.	Refused, October 2013
F/17/82203	Proposed installation of a CHP unit	Granted, April 2018
DC/18/83311	Discharge of condition 3 of permitted planning application F/17/82203 (noise mitigation) for the proposed installation of a CHP (Combined Heat & Power) unit.	Non determined
PN/23/95409	Prior notification application for a solar PV system (under 1MW in size) mounted on the building's roof via a pitched roof clamp system.	Prior approval granted, July 2023

Source: Eastleigh BC

- 3.9 As highlighted above, there has historically been consistent support from Eastleigh BC for the evolution of the business and the club, noting the site's location near other recreational facilities, open space and sporting facilities.

4.0 **Proposed Development**

- 4.1 This application seeks retrospective planning permission for two padel courts, a social area, and associated flood lighting. Further details of the development are set out in the Design and Access Statement and planning drawings.
- 4.2 The description of development is as follows:
- “Retrospective application for two padel courts, social area, and associated floor lighting.”*
- 4.3 The two padel courts are built via a pillar structure with 10mm glass panels at either end of the courts, measuring 3 metres in height, with an additional metre of anti-injury mesh infill above. The remaining sides of the court are bound with anti-injury mesh infill panels, measuring 3 metres in height. The playing surface will be the latest technology in artificial grass.
- 4.4 There are 4no. 240W LED projectors provided per court to evenly light the space, which offer a large reduction in energy use when compared to traditional halide lamps, with longer life and greater eco-efficiency. The lighting columns measure 6 metres in height.
- 4.5 To complement the new padel courts a social space has been provided, consisting of a defined seating area. The seating area is finished in resin bound gravel, with two cantilevered parasols with LED lighting, offering shading and weather protection.
- 4.6 Detailed plans prepared by HCD Architects accompany this planning application. information regarding design can be found in the Design and Access Statement, also produced by HCD Architects, submitted alongside this planning application.

5.0 **Planning Policy Context**

- 5.1 This section outlines the Statutory Development Plan and identifies the relevant planning policy context, also having regard to other material planning considerations.

Statutory Development Plan

- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

- 5.3 The Statutory Development Plan for the site comprises:

- 1 Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (adopted 2022)
- 2 Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted 2013)

- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (‘NPPF’) (2023) and Planning for Sport Guidance (2019) are also material considerations.

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan

- 5.5 It is considered that the following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

- 1 Policy S1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- 2 Policy S2: Approach to New Development
- 3 Policy DM1: General Criteria for New Development
- 4 Policy DM32: Provision of Recreation and Open Space Facilities
- 5 Policy DM34: New and Enhanced Recreation and Open Space Facilities
- 6 Policy DM36: Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities
- 7 Policy WE4: Land at Ageas Bowl and Tennis Centre, Botley Road, West End

Emerging Policy

- 5.6 Eastleigh BC is in the process of reviewing the Eastleigh Local Plan (adopted 2022), although this is in very early stages. Call for Sites (Reg 18) took place in Summer 2023. Public consultation on Issues and Options is due to take place in Autumn 2024. Adoption of the Plan is anticipated in Spring 2029.

- 5.7 No weight will be given to the emerging plan due to the current timescales.

Other Material Considerations

- 5.8 **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 5.9 The revised NPPF was published in December 2023 and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

- 5.10 The focus of the revised document is in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation. It states that when assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and determine applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations, including the policies of the NPPF, indicate otherwise.
- 5.11 Local authorities should support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- 5.12 Paragraph 85 recognises the planning system should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 5.13 The Government recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction, creating safe and accessible communities and enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. The NPPF states that the planning system has a role in helping to create an environment where activities are made easier and public health can be improved. It acknowledges that access to opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities (paragraph 102).
- 5.14 The NPPF acknowledges that the planning systems should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 123).
- 5.15 **Sport England – Planning for Sport Guidance (2019)**
- 5.16 In June 2019, Sport England produced the Planning for Sport Guidance that focuses on 12 principles which seek to help the planning system provide opportunities for all to take part in sport and physical activity.
- 5.17 The guidance builds upon the importance the Government has placed on the need for the planning system to enable and support healthy lifestyles, in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.18 At the heart of the guidance are the overarching principles, principle 1 states planning must recognise and give significant weight to the benefits of sports and physical activity. It is acknowledged that formal, informal, team, group or individual activities, sport and physical activity generates considerable socio-economic benefits to individuals, communities and the wider society. The guidance also provides a set of principles following three key themes; protect, enhance and provide.
- 5.19 Principle 6 states planning must “*support improvements to existing sport and physical activity provision where they are needed*”. The guidance adds improvements to existing sports and physical activity provision can play a key role in helping people to become and stay active as well as improving the use and viability of the provision. They can enhance the

experience for existing users, increase the capacity of the provision and ensure the best use is made of a site for sport and physical activity.

6.0 Planning Policy Analysis

- 6.1 This section assesses the proposed development against relevant policies in the Statutory Development Plan having regard to other material considerations, as set out in the previous section.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The NPPF recognises the importance of sports and recreation facilities as key mechanisms which can promote 'healthy and safe communities' (Chapter 8). The Framework states that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

“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.”

- 6.3 Chapter 8 of the NPPF continues to highlight the importance of having “access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity” for the well-being and health of communities.

- 6.4 At the local level, various policies endorse the protection of existing sports and recreation facilities and supports new provision within suitable locations.

- 6.5 Policy S1 (Delivering sustainable development) seeks new development in the Borough that meet community needs and enhances equal and easy access to a range of community facilities.

- 6.6 Policy S2 (Approach to New Development) seeks to promote the delivery of, inter alia, sports facilities and other community facilities. Within the urban edge (subject site designation), policy S2 states that there is a presumption in favour of new development.

- 6.7 Policy DM32 (Protection of Recreation and Open Space Facilities) endorses the protection of existing recreation facilities, with development for alternative recreation facilities being acceptable only in exceptional circumstances, including where there is a clear need for the alternative facility. Development ancillary to the recreational use may be permitted on recreation sites provided that it does not adversely affect land forming part of, or capable of forming part of, a playing pitch/ court/green.

- 6.8 Policy DM34 (New and Enhanced Recreation and Open Space Facilities) endorses the provision, extension and enhancement of private recreation facilities and supports such development, provided they accord with the general development criteria of the Local Plan.

- 6.9 Policy DM36 (Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities) endorses the development of new community, cultural and leisure facilities and extensions to existing facilities. Policy DM36 states that development within the urban edge for extensions to existing facilities will need to demonstrate that:

- 6.10 *a. they are readily accessible to the communities they are intended to serve by a variety of modes of transport;*

- 6.11 *b. there is no adverse impact on existing and proposed centres; and*

- 6.12 *c. there are no suitable, viable and available sites within an existing centre or edge of centre location.*

Assessment

- 6.13 David Lloyd has undertaken this development in response to Members' needs. It is considered that the provision of padel tennis facilities provides significant enhancements to the existing facilities at the Club, alongside promoting outdoor sport and recreation.
- 6.14 The proposed padel tennis courts replace an underused tennis courts in response to the growing demand for padel tennis facilities. It is considered the padel courts will experience more use than the existing tennis courts, promoting sport and activity amongst members. The proposed padel tennis courts are brand new, providing more modern, higher quality facilities than the existing courts to meet the needs of the population. The padel tennis courts also diversify the sporting and recreation facilities available at the club.
- 6.15 As is outlined in the Design and Access Statement, the demand for padel tennis facilities is rapidly increasing, demonstrating clear need for this facility. The alternative provision of padel facilities in replacement of the traditional tennis court is more appropriate to the needs of the community in light of the growing demand for padel tennis.
- 6.16 The padel courts will provide members with the opportunity to focus on improving their mental well-being and health, helping to positively meet current and future member demands and needs.
- 6.17 The Club is in the urban fringe as defined by the interactive planning policy map. It already successfully operates as a health club and according to planning history has done since at least 1997 and it is therefore considered the Club is readily available to communities. The Club is readily accessible by various modes of transport, being well served by the M27, and adjacent bus stops on Botley Road. Given the existing operation of the Club it is considered the padel courts will not have any adverse impacts on existing and proposed centres. There are no suitable, viable or available sites in an existing centre or edge of centre location given David Lloyd are seeking to expand this specific Club; it is not possible to locate the padel courts at an alternative site.
- 6.18 Considering the national and local policy position above, the proposal for enhancing and increasing the sports and recreational facilities at this site via the development increases Members' access to a variety of sport and recreational uses and therefore, is supported in principle and accords with the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan.

Policy WE4 (The Ageas Bowl and Tennis Centre, Botley Road)

- 6.19 Policy WE4 deals with a wider area of land that incorporates the Club. Development at the site will be supported where it promotes the site's role in meeting sporting needs in the Borough. The policy details a number of criteria that development at the site must meet to reach positive determination. These include, inter alia:

“buildings or structures must be appropriate in scale, form and location to the predominantly green and open character of the area, taking account of the different characteristics of the site; and should only be visible from the surrounding area in the context of the wider landscape setting;

development achieves a high quality design by paying careful attention to detailing, hard landscaping and planting;

inside the urban edge (as defined by the policies map) development is for outdoor or indoor sports/recreation; leisure; hotel or office/research use provided that:

- *enables the enhancement of sporting facilities on the site.*

proposals for floodlighting on any part of the site must be of a scale, form, location and luminosity that would not affect the predominantly open character of the area or the biodiversity interests of the adjacent SINC or protected/priority species. The hours of use of any floodlighting may be limited in order to minimise its impact on nearby residential property;

proposals must be accompanied by satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access and must include provision for improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.”

Assessment

- 6.20 The 2no. padel courts replace 1no. under-used traditional tennis court, making use of previously developed land. The padel courts are therefore considered appropriate in scale, form and location to the open character of the surrounding area given they are reflective of that of the previous tennis court. Additionally, the social hub is subservient to the main Club building and is ancillary to the padel courts; the social hub is therefore appropriate in terms of scale, form and location. The site is screened by vegetation and will not be any more visible from the surrounding area than it was prior to installation of the padel courts and social hub, with the Club having operated successfully for at least 27 years (according to the planning history) within the wider landscape.
- 6.21 The Design and Access Statement provides more detail about the high quality design of the padel courts and social hub. The padel courts are designed to a modern specification, utilising the latest technology to be attractive to the entire population. The social hub is of a subservient but high quality design, making use of space adjacent to the courts via providing a canopy-adjacent structure allowing members and spectators an area to convene.
- 6.22 The Club is in the urban edge as defined by Eastleigh BC's interactive planning policy map. The development is for outdoor sports/recreation and enhances the sporting facilities at the Club through providing space for the population to engage in alternative sports.
- 6.23 More detail is provided below and in the submitted lighting report regarding floodlighting. It is considered that the floodlighting provided at the padel courts is of a scale, form, location and luminosity that will not cause any adverse impacts to the surrounding area given there is limited spill over the site boundary. The padel court floodlighting is lower on height and more directional than any equivalent lighting associated with the tennis courts.

6.24 The Club has operated successfully for many decades, and as such it is considered that there is existing satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access and facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

6.25 It is considered that the padel courts and social hub are compliant with the provisions of policy WE4 for reasons outlined above, and WE4 is supportive of the development.

Design and Sustainability

6.26 Policy DM1 (General Approach to New Development) seeks to ensure that new development considers the context of the site including the character, appearance and uses of surrounding land. Development should be compatible with surrounding uses and integrate well with these in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting.

Assessment

6.27 In response to the above policy considerations, the Design and Access Statement submitted alongside this application considers the design matters in full. However, we summarise here the main design considerations.

6.28 The new padel facilities are adjacent to the existing Club, providing ease of access and flow for members accessing the new facilities. The materials used are of sustainable high quality and in keeping with the aesthetic of the existing leisure club. The development is in an underused part of the site and the proposals enhance this part of the David Lloyd Club.

6.29 The development is sympathetic with the appearance and character of the local environment, and appropriate in scale, design, materials, and siting. The facilities are visually attractive and align with the high-quality aesthetics of the existing David Lloyd Club, crucially, providing a development which will diversify health and recreational facilities at the Club. The facilities fall within the existing club boundary and are screened by extensive vegetation on the site's western boundary. The proposals therefore accord with the design principles set out within the Local Plan.

Lighting

6.30 Policy WE4 seeks to ensure that proposal for floodlighting at the site will be of a scale, form, location and luminosity that would not affect the predominantly open character of the area.

Assessment

6.31 A detailed External Lighting Report and Lighting Design Plan, prepared by Elm Building Services Engineers Ltd, accompany this application, which provide detail on the position and illuminance of the flood lighting.

6.32 The Lighting Design Plan demonstrates the extent of the light spill from the padel courts. It is shown that there is limited spill beyond the site boundary. It is concluded that the lighting is of a scale, form, location and luminosity that would not affect the predominantly open character of the area, and therefore accords with Policy WE4 of the Local Plan.

- 6.33 The lighting implemented in association with the padel tennis courts is significantly lower on height and more directional than any equivalent lighting that would have been placed on the existing tennis courts.

Biodiversity Net Gain Considerations

- 6.34 Due to the site comprising of existing tennis courts and hardstanding area, the Biodiversity Net Gain de minimis exemption applies to the site i.e there is no requirement to provide biodiversity net gain as part of this application. For clarity:
- the development does not impact on any onsite priority habitat;
 - the existing tennis courts and hardstanding area at the subject site are classified as developed land: sealed surfaces which have a biodiversity value of zero under the statutory biodiversity metric; and
 - there are no other onsite habitats.

Other Considerations

- 6.35 Policy DM1 (General criteria for new development) states that “*All new development should (as relevant):*
- a. not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance:*
 - i. residential amenities of both new and existing residents; the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside and the coast;*
 - ii. biodiversity (avoiding significant adverse impacts); and*
 - iii. the significance of heritage assets;...”*

Assessment

- 6.36 Due to the site’s location within the DLL club, the subject site is bound by the existing DLL facilities and set a significant distance from residential properties to the north of the club. Therefore, the development would not have a significant impact on residential amenity.
- 6.37 The site comprises existing built development (tennis courts and hardstanding area), therefore, there would not be an unacceptable impact on Biodiversity. Furthermore, there are no heritage assets within the site or in close proximity.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the application for retrospective planning permission is compliant with and supported by national and local policy.
- 7.2 The application seeks retrospective planning permission for two padel tennis courts, a social area and associated flood lighting. The development diversifies and enhances the Club's offering and facilitates the projected increase of members to the site through the proposed improvements. The facilities are of a scale and design that are sympathetic and subordinate to that of the existing buildings.
- 7.3 In summary, it is considered that the development is in accordance with national, regional, local and emerging planning policy, in demonstrating the need to make the most efficient use of land, create high quality development and in maximising the use of the existing facilities whilst supporting business and member participation without impeding amenity.
- 7.4 Any queries, please contact Caitlin Attrill (M 07376044468/ E caitlin.attrill@lichfields.uk) or Ian Anderson (M 07947362618/ E ian.anderson@lichfields.uk).