



Planning Statement

7nr Padel Courts

at

Eastleigh Football Club, The Silverlake Stadium, Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9HT

September 2025



Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Description of Proposed Development / An Introduction to Padel	2
3.0	Site and Surroundings	4
4.0	Design	5
5.0	Accessibility	7
6.0	Car Parking & Vehicle Access	7
7.0	Social Impact and Community Benefit	8
8.0	Canopies	9
9.0	Lighting Impact	12
10.0	Noise Impact Assessment	14
11.0	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain	15
12.0	Travel	16
13.0	Arboricultural Impact Assessment	17
14.0	Flood Risk	17
15.0	Conclusion	18

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by CRD Building Consultancy, in partnership with Eastleigh Football Club, to support a planning application for the construction of seven padel courts at their Silverlake Stadium in Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh.
- 1.2 Subject to planning approval, construction will begin in 2026.
- 1.3 There is currently significant unmet demand for Padel across Hampshire and the Southampton area, and this project offers an exciting opportunity to provide a new, accessible sport for the entire community to enjoy.
- 1.4 The proposed facility will be situated near the eastern boundary of Eastleigh Football Club on an area of un-used hardstanding adjacent to their existing floodlit artificial football pitches and to the east of the main stadium within an established sports zone.
- 1.5 In line with national and local planning policy, the proposed scheme has been carefully developed to address all relevant planning considerations, including:
 - Visual character and appearance.
 - The Amenity of neighbouring occupiers.
 - Access and car parking.
 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- 1.6 Eastleigh Football Club is a professional football club which competes in the National League, the fifth level of the English Football League system.
- 1.7 The club moved to the Silverlake Stadium in 1957 and have redeveloped and improved the site considerably since 2004 and it was extensively redeveloped during 2014 to include a restaurant, hospitality suite and a new south stand.
- 1.8 The seven padel courts will replace an area of disused hardstanding to the east of the site.
- 1.9 No changes are proposed to the means of access or the car parks, with over 360 parking opportunities available within marked parking areas.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development / An Introduction to Padel

- 2.1 The development comprises the construction of seven padel tennis courts, each measuring 20m x 10m which are enclosed by metal posts in-filled with clear toughened glazing and metal open mesh panels with the structure extending to 4m high. See photograph below.



- 2.2 Each court will have a blue or green synthetic turf surface and will be illuminated by integral floodlighting columns within the court frames.
- 2.3 Padel is a hybrid racket sport that blends elements of tennis and squash. It's particularly popular in countries like Spain and Sweden and is known for being easy to pick up, even for beginners.
- 2.4 Padel clubs are regularly opening in the UK, Germany, France, the Middle East, Australia, Canada, and the United States.
- 2.5 As with a tennis court the Padel Court is divided by a netting in two halves. It is played with balls and special racquets designed for Padel.
- 2.6 Played mostly as doubles on a smaller, enclosed court, padel emphasizes tactics over physical strength, making it accessible to players of all ages. The game is versatile, offering a challenge to experienced racket players while remaining approachable for newcomers.
- 2.7 Padel is widely renowned as the fastest growing sport in the world and has been touted to become an Olympic sport in 2032. Padel has been growing in popularity at a rapid rate in the UK over the past decade.

- 2.8 In 2019, the LTA formally adopted padel tennis into its operations. At the time there were 6,000 active padel tennis players in the UK and 125 courts. By 2022, this had increased to an incredible 89,000 players and 250 courts.
- 2.9 As of September 2024, the number reported by the LTA was at 129,000 and up to now there are 489 courts built in the UK (a 43% increase since the LTA adopted governance of the sport).
- 2.10 In the context of the booming popularity, demand continues to outstrip supply of padel courts. In the UK, courts are often located in larger cities where the opportunity is seen to be the greatest and not in smaller conurbations such as Eastleigh.
- 2.11 In the LTA's latest padel strategy, released in September 2024, they outlined their goal to grow padel courts from 350 to 1000 by 2026, showing their appetite to build the sport in the UK.
- 2.12 By contrast, as of January 2023, Spain had 15,300 courts and Sweden had 4,200, indicating just how much more there is to come in the UK. PwC in their latest padel global report said that 'the UK is on the brink of significant growth' in padel participation & court capacity.

3.0 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The application site lies within the curtilage of the existing Eastleigh Football Club site at the Silverlake Stadium which is south of the town of Eastleigh and the immediate surroundings are predominantly sports fields and facilities, the M27 motorway and Southampton Airport.
- 3.2 The site has a very low risk of flooding.
- 3.3 The site has two large car parks which provide parking for over 360 vehicles, and the provision of the new courts is unlikely to have an unacceptable impact on the operation and safety of the site's surrounding highway network.
- 3.4 A padel court has glass panel rebound walls and the game involves playing the ball off the rebound walls, resulting in impact noise.
- 3.5 According to the Lawn Tennis Association, Padel courts should not be located within 30m of a residential property.
- 3.6 We estimate that the nearest residential property is over 500m from the proposed location of the Padel courts and the noise generated from the padel courts will not impact the residential amenity at this location.
- 3.7 The proposal will create further space for intensive formal outdoor recreation and have the potential to provide social and health benefits to the local residents and users.
- 3.8 The proposal will improve participation in the use of recreational facilities through the introduction of a development which creates space for a sporting activity.
- 3.9 The courts will be available for use between 08:00am to 22:00pm every day and the floodlights will be controlled by passive infra red sensors that will switch off the lights as soon as the players leave the court. The lights will not be left on after 10pm in the evening.
- 3.10 The courts will not be available to book after 9pm.
- 3.11 Eastleigh Football club have floodlights to the adjacent artificial football pitches that are permanently on until 10pm most evenings of the week. The surrounding main roads and also lit at night by car headlights, street lights etc.

4.0 Design

Site Layout and Setting

- 4.1 The proposed site has been carefully designed to complement the existing sports zone, utilising unoccupied land, while harmonising with the surrounding landscape and maintaining sufficient distance from nearby residential properties.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that this development will have no detrimental impact on the local landscape, as it is situated within an already established sports area.

Considerate Construction Standards

- 4.3 Eastleigh Football Club proposes to deliver seven state-of-the-art, floodlit covered outdoor padel courts.
- 4.4 The padel courts will require a flat smooth surface which is well drained and stable.
- 4.5 The groundworks are anticipated to take eight to ten weeks.
- 4.6 The build will be consistent with the standards laid out by the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA). These standards have also been adopted by the LTA in their Padel Guidance Note.
- 4.7 During the build, trucks will need to be on site to deliver both hardcore and tarmac to the courts. The main traffic will be from trucks delivering materials for the build and to remove soil via the existing car park and main entrance.
- 4.8 The padel courts will include laying a hardcore sub-base along with a layer of porous tarmac, covered with an artificial playing surface.
- 4.9 A concrete ring beam will be laid to support 12mm tempered glass.

Court Design, Materials and Compliance

- 4.10 The footprint of the padel courts has been kept to a minimum, whilst satisfying the basic requirements of the LTA Padel Guidance Note, SAPCA Codes of Practice and Sports England.
- 4.11 Each court will have a synthetic turf surface and will be illuminated by integral floodlighting columns within the court frames.
- 4.12 The size of each padel court is 20m long and 10m wide.
- 4.13 The proposed padel courts will be outdoor courts with the entire space internally enclosed by a 4m high powder coated security fence.

Floodlighting Design and Impact

- 4.14 Floodlighting is required to enable evening use during darkness, and winter months, thereby maximising community access to the courts.
- 4.15 The applicant believes that it is essential to offer the public sports facilities that they can use before and after work and recreation grounds / sports facilities and lighting for winter use go hand in hand.
- 4.16 The selected floodlights and luminaires have been specified to be visually discreet, with a dark powder-coated finish to minimise visual impact.
- 4.17 Each court will feature 8 downward-facing LED floodlights (16 total), integrated directly into the court structure.
- 4.18 The floodlighting system is fully integrated with the digital booking platform, meaning the floodlights will only turn on during active bookings and automatically switch off when courts are not in use.
- 4.19 This ensures the artificial light levels are kept to an absolute minimum outside of active playing hours.

Security and Maintenance

- 4.20 The proposed padel courts will be enclosed by a 4m high gated fence. Site safety and security will be maintained by Eastleigh Football Club, with the following provisions highlighted:
- Installation of a 4m high security fence.
 - Entry to the courts will be via a gate controlled by a keypad.
 - Pre-existing CCTV.
- 4.21 The courts will be inspected and brushed each week, and sand replenishment will occur as required.

5.0 Accessibility

- 5.1 The facility will be fully accessible, featuring appropriate access paths, level surfacing, and wheelchair-friendly court access. The design is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
- 5.2 The introduction of padel facilities aims to offer access to a new and rapidly growing sport, utilising currently unoccupied land adjacent to the existing sports area.
- 5.3 The project is designed to encourage both new and existing users of the Silverlake Stadium and local residents in Hampshire to engage in padel, while adding value to the sports zone.

6.0 Car Parking and Vehicle Access

- 6.1 Active travel will be encouraged amongst all users and visitors.
- 6.2 Given that each court accommodates four players, we estimate footfall to be in the region of 28 to 56 people at peak times including those waiting to play and a small number of spectators.
- 6.3 This can comfortably be accommodated by the existing car parks.
- 6.4 The site is easily accessed via pedestrian and cycling routes, with cycle parking available on the site.
- 6.5 The proposed facility has regular bus services from Stoneham Lane and the Nr 2 bus operated by Blue Star buses runs between Southampton, Eastleigh and Fair Oaks.
- 6.6 The accessibility of the development by active travel, proximity to public transport, and local parking standards have been fully considered in the preparation of this proposal.

7.0 Social Impact and Community Benefit

- 7.1 Sport England in their 'Towards an Active Nation Strategy' actively encouraged the creation of outdoor spaces to get people outdoors and in a real-life activity as opposed to being indoors in a 'virtual' setting.
- 7.2 This padel facility promotes positive social interactions by being aimed at all ages, genders, abilities and is designed to be fully inclusive.

Summary of Local Benefits

- 7.3 Beyond policy compliance, this proposal offers a range of benefits for Eastleigh, Southampton and the wider Hampshire community, including:
- a. **Grow participation in sport in Hampshire:** Introduce an undersupplied, inclusive and highly desirable sport with both paid and free access opportunities.
 - b. **Improve local sports facilities:** Add to the Silverlake Stadium's existing sporting facilities to expand the recreational opportunities for Eastleigh and Southampton residents.
 - c. **Support Community Wellbeing:** Promote social and health initiatives, particularly for young people.

8.0 Canopies

- 8.1 There are two main types of structure used to cover padel courts, modular and clear span structures. Both types of structures come in a range of closed-sided or open-sided structures and can be used to cover padel courts at a more economical cost than a traditional building or an air inflated structure.
- 8.2 The modular type of structure shown in the photograph below is designed to cover padel courts individually; where more than one court is being covered, columns sit between courts, creating a singular larger structure.
- 8.3 The main advantage of this type of structure is that due to the relatively short span for the roof, the costs can often be kept lower and also the modular nature covering single court spans, allows the structure to be fitted into the tight confines of existing facilities.



Photo 1 – Example of Modular Canopy Structure

- 8.4 To enable lob shots to be played, these modular structures are designed with a 6.0m eaves height, across a span of 11.0m, ensuring a minimum roof height along the centre line down the length of the court of nominally 8.0m, with the roof height falling to just over 6.0m along the perimeter of the padel enclosure.
- 8.5 The canopies will be installed by Fordingbridge PLC who are based in Arundel in West Sussex.
- 8.6 The sales director at Fordingbridge is Adam Collier, who wrote the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) Code of Practice for the Construction of Padel Courts.
- 8.7 The white fire-retardant Opal 60 fabric that Fordingbridge will supply on the canopies is a sustainable solution, ensuring no floodlights will be required during daylight hours.

- 8.8 Due to the way the membrane is woven, it ensures that sufficient natural daylight can pass through but not spill out of the structure.
- 8.9 The photograph below of the canopies at the West Worthing Club shows the impact on the light spill. The canopies to be constructed at Eastleigh Football Club will have side panels on all sides and the light spill will be contained and there will be no light spill into the night sky.



Photo 2 – Example of white membrane roofs showing no light spill above

- 8.10 Please note that the padel court lights are downward facing lights and this type of structure has obtained planning permission in over fifty locations throughout the UK for padel related projects.
- 8.11 In addition to over one thousand other canopy structure across the UK using the Opal 60 membrane.
- 8.12 If a thicker membrane or solid panel is used, then the light translucency significantly reduces, and the courts will have be illuminated using the floodlights much more often and during daylight hours on cloudy days.
- 8.13 The Opal 60 membrane has been used on the canopies at Holt Garden Centre as shown in the photograph below.



Photo 3 - White membrane roofs to Holt Garden Centre

- 8.14 The canopies shown above are located in an AONB in the countryside.
- 8.15 At the garden centre the canopy contains the light but during daytime lets the light in which means much less artificial lighting is required during the day.
- 8.16 The canopies will be nine metres high to enable lob shots to be played and will allow professional competitive play at a high level to be played on the courts and as recommended by the Lawn Tennis Association.

9.0 Lighting Impact

- 9.1 Floodlighting is essential to enable evening use during darkness, and winter months, thereby maximising community access to the courts.
- 9.2 The selected floodlights and luminaires will be specified to be visually discreet, with a dark powder-coated finish to minimise visual impact and preserve the character of the surrounding area.
- 9.3 Each court will feature eight energy-efficient, downward-facing LED luminaires, mounted directly onto the court structure (not-free standing), which reduces visual clutter and integrates the lighting seamlessly into the facility. This setup meets LTA best practice. Each column is 4 m inward from the edge.
- 9.4 This low-profile design eliminates the need for conventional lighting columns, further reducing visual intrusion.
- 9.5 Where three courts are positioned side-by-side, the centre courts will receive light spill from the adjacent courts and may appear to be overlit. However, it is necessary to ensure each court can meet the required lighting standard in isolation if other courts are switched off.
- 9.6 The floodlighting system will be fully integrated with a digital booking platform, meaning the floodlights will only turn on during active bookings and automatically switch off when courts are not in use. This ensures the artificial light levels are kept to an absolute minimum outside of active playing hours.
- 9.7 The layout includes a social area to the east side of the courts. Light spill from the padel courts will provide more than sufficient lighting for this purpose. Isolated lighting in the social area is not deemed to be required.
- 9.8 The main football pitch and adjacent artificial football pitches are already floodlit using 18m high columns; in contrast, the proposed padel lighting reaches only 6m in height, offering a far less visually prominent solution.
- 9.9 The site is surrounded by an extensively lit sports complex, comprising fully lit sports pitches that far exceed the size of the padel courts footprint and column heights. The site will sit within the context of the sports complex and also operate within the same operating hours.
- 9.10 Several sports pitches in the sports complex and surrounding areas are lit. Outside of the viewpoint lies several other lit sports pitches to the east and west and Southampton Airport. Consequently, the baseline environment in the immediate area around the site includes extensive lighting.
- 9.11 Street lighting is present along Stoneham Lane and the M27. The wider urban areas of Southampton and Eastleigh border the sports complex to the north and south. The local area within 500 m of the site is mostly sporting facilities.

- 9.12 The proposed padel courts have been carefully selected in a location well away from residential properties. The closest dwellings are located approximately 500m to the north of the site.
- 9.13 The site is already characterised by sports facilities, meaning the addition of the padel courts will not introduce any new or unfamiliar impact or cause any harm to local wildlife, in line with policy expectations.
- 9.14 Because the floodlights will operate only between 8:00am and 10:00pm this aligns with guidance from the Review of Lighting Proposals and Bat Mitigation (Feb 2018), which advises that artificial lighting should not be used beyond 10:00pm to safeguard bat activity.
- 9.15 The structures will be fitted with a semi-translucent canopy, which covers the roof and extends partly down the sides of the structure which will act as an effective blockage to light spill. The material obscures the luminaire, effectively eliminating the viewing angle that would cause glare issues to external receptors.
- 9.16 The effects of skyglow are not significant. The semi-translucent canopy will act as a diffuser regarding viewpoints towards the LED plate of the luminaires.
- 9.17 The lighting design will meet the lighting requirements set by the Lawn Tennis Association for a recreational use padel court.
- 9.18 Various best practices and embedded design mitigation measures will be included during the design process to control light and reduce levels of light spill.
- 9.19 As such, the proposed lighting is considered appropriate for its setting and will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

10.0 Noise Impact

- 10.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and "these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development." In respect of noise, Paragraph 198 of the NPPF states the following:

"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 life;*
- 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."*

- 10.2 We estimate that the nearest residential property is over 500m from the proposed location of the Padel courts and don't believe that the noise or light generated from the padel courts would negatively impact the residential amenity at this location.
- 10.3 The canopies will also assist with containing any noise.
- 10.4 Noise levels at the location will be dominated by road traffic and the existing site activities during football matches.
- 10.5 Predicted noise levels will also be well below the existing ambient noise levels and the change in noise level will be negligible.

11.0 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

- 11.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 places responsibility on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity in and around developments.
- 11.2 Section 40 of the NERC Act requires every public body to “have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.
- 11.3 Biodiversity, as covered by the Section 40 duty, is not confined to habitats and species of principal importance but refers to all species and habitats. However, the expectation is that public bodies would refer to the Section 41 list (of species and habitats) through compliance with the Section 40 duty.
- 11.4 The existing site is covered with tarmac hardstanding and is considered to be developed land with a sealed surface and is therefore considered to be unsuitable habitat.
- 11.5 The development will have no detrimental impact on the local landscape, as it is situated within an already established sports area.
- 11.6 The development will not impact a priority habitat and BNG should not apply to this application.
- 11.7 The existing sealed surface will be assigned a zero score in the statutory biodiversity metric, meaning that these surfaces are effectively exempted from the 10% net gain requirement.

12.0 Travel

- 12.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that a key tool to facilitate the use of sustainable transport modes is a Travel Plan and at paragraph 118 states: *“All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a vision-led transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.”*
- 12.2 On average, the padel courts are expected to attract 275 people per day, with weekends typically busier than weekdays and weekday evenings typically busier than daytime, subject also to seasonal variation.
- 12.3 If all seven courts are in use for doubles, then there would be 48 visitors arriving and departing each hour.
- 12.4 The Silverlake Stadium has a crowd capacity of 5,192 and the site and surrounding infrastructure is designed to accommodate this number of people arriving and leaving the site within a few hours of a football match taking place. Therefore, 48 visitors per hour should have no significant impact on the surrounding areas and car parking.
- 12.5 Whilst it is possible, it is considered unlikely that all seven courts would be fully booked for doubles across a whole day and that the potential 48 visitors per hour would all drive as single-occupants of one vehicle.
- 12.6 In practice there will be some reliance on other modes of travel as well as some driver plus passenger/s activity.
- 12.7 In terms of travel options, staff and visitors will be able to walk, cycle or travel by bus or car or by train to Southampton Parkway station.
- 12.8 The travel demands of the seven proposed padel courts will not be significant and is likely to be imperceptible to other road users.
- 12.9 Cycle parking is provided on site to encourage cycling.
- 12.10 There is a car park in front of the stadium which has over 270 spaces including accessible bays.
- 12.11 There is an additional area of parking offering the opportunity for up to 90 vehicles to the north east of the site.
- 12.12 The existing car parks provide enough capacity to meet the needs of the padel courts, noting that on football match days this will need to be reviewed and on busy match days and for matches that will attract a high attendance, the courts may have to be closed whilst the match is played and for a few hours either side of the kick off.
- 12.13 There are bus stops on Stoneham Lane within walking distance of the site.
- 12.14 There is a good network of footpaths and traffic-free routes in the area.

- 12.15 It is generally accepted that cycling is a sustainable mode of travel for journeys up to 8km in length. Eastleigh, Southampton, Chandlers Ford, Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Hedge End and Romsey are all within cycling distance.
- 12.16 The club will concentrate on encouraging staff and players by informing them of the benefits of travelling by alternative modes.
- 12.17 The location is accessible by a choice of transport modes, with a residential catchment within acceptable distances for both walking and cycling trips.
- 12.18 In the context of national and regional policy the introduction of seven padel courts is not a significant generator of travel demand and as such does not require a detailed assessment of transport impact, nor does it require a full Travel Plan.
- 12.19 No changes are proposed or considered necessary in terms of vehicle access or the provision of car parking and the overall effect of the proposal in transport terms is negligible.

13.0 Arbicultural Impact

- 13.1 The Proposed Development does not require the removal of trees to facilitate implementation.
- 13.2 The site location has been carefully selected to avoid any tree protection zones.

14.0 Flood Risk

- 14.1 The scheme is located within a Flood Zone 1 and is not considered by the Environmental Agency as an area at risk of flood. Given the proposal site is within Flood Zone 1, a flood risk assessment has not been included as part of this application.

15.0 Conclusion

- 15.1 In this proposal, it has been our intention to explain clearly that the proposed padel facility at Eastleigh Football Club will:
- 1) *Grow participation in sport in Eastleigh: Introducing an undersupplied, inclusive and highly desirable sport.*
 - 2) *Improve local sports facilities: Add to Eastleigh Football Club's existing sporting facilities to expand the recreational opportunities for Eastleigh residents.*
 - 3) *Promote social and wellbeing initiatives, particularly with younger residents.*
- 15.2 The proposed floodlighting will not adversely affect local wildlife or neighbouring amenity.
- 15.3 The selected floodlights and luminaires have been specified to be visually discreet, with a dark powder-coated finish to minimise visual impact.
- 15.4 Each court will feature eight energy-efficient, downward-facing LED luminaires, mounted directly onto the court structure (not-free standing), which reduces visual clutter and integrates the lighting seamlessly into the facility.
- 15.5 The floodlighting system is fully integrated with the digital booking platform (Playtomic), meaning the floodlights will only turn on during active bookings and automatically switch off when courts are not in use.
- 15.6 It is anticipated that this development will have no detrimental impact on the local landscape, as it is situated within an already established sports area.
- 15.7 There is a very high level of demand for Padel in Eastleigh and Southampton.
- 15.8 The proposed padel site is located within a sustainable location and Eastleigh Football Club already has good access by a range of sustainable travel options to the club from different locations in the town.
- 15.9 The nearest residential property is over 500m from the proposed location of the Padel courts and don't believe that the noise generated from the padel courts would negatively impact the residential amenity in the surrounding area.
- 15.10 The canopies will also assist with containing any noise.
- 15.11 Noise levels at the location will be dominated by road traffic and the existing site activities during football matches.
- 15.12 Predicted noise levels will also be well below the existing ambient noise levels and the change in noise level will be negligible.

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- 15.13 The existing site is covered with tarmac hardstanding and is considered to be developed land with a sealed surface and is therefore considered to be unsuitable habitat.
- 15.14 The development will have no detrimental impact on the local landscape, as it is situated within an already established sports area.
- 15.15 The development will not impact a priority habitat and BNG should not apply to this application.
- 15.16 The existing sealed surface will be assigned a zero score in the statutory biodiversity metric, meaning that these surfaces are effectively exempted from the 10% net gain requirement.
- 15.17 The Proposed Development does not require the removal of trees to facilitate implementation.
- 15.18 The proposed location avoids root protection zones to ensure no harm to mature trees.
- 15.19 The scheme is located within a Flood Zone 1 and is not considered by the Environmental Agency as an area at risk of flood.