

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P15/V1860/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	5.8.2015
<b>PARISH</b>	ABINGDON
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Robert Hall Vicky Jenkins
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Greenwich Leisure Limited
<b>SITE</b>	The White Horse Leisure & Tennis Centre Audlett Drive Abingdon, OX14 3PJ
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of a gym extension, remodelling of existing gym changing facilities, creation of external deck for existing creche, new main entrance structure, internal alterations and art installation.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	451215/197520
<b>OFFICER</b>	Hanna Zembrzycka-Kisiel

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## SUMMARY

- This application is presented to the planning committee, as the application site is within the ownership of the Vale of White Horse District Council.
- The application seeks planning permission for the proposed extension to the existing Gym and refurbishment of the existing facilities at the Vale of White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon.
- The recommendation is for approval, subject to conditions.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Leisure Centre building is located on the western edge of Abingdon. Vehicular access is obtained from Audlett Drive, to the north. The existing complex was constructed in approximately in 2000 and consists of a swimming pool, tennis courts, gym, changing rooms, showers and multi games area. The existing building is mainly single storey, but with different roof levels.
- 1.2 The application site is located within the Flood Zones 2 and 3. A location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing external deck to the front of the Gym and roof over it, and construct an external deck area and connect it to the existing Crèche, with a privacy screen to the front. The proposed extension is to be constructed on the northern elevation of the existing gym. The proposal has been designed in a circular form, to match the shape of the existing Gym, and is to be constructed from “Profilit Glass”.
- 2.2 The proposal also includes alterations to the main entrance and refurbishment of the existing facilities. The application plans are **attached** at Appendix 2.

### 3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

Abingdon Town Council	No objections
Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council)	No objection, subject to conditions
Thames Water Development Control	No objection, subject to informative
Health & Housing - Contaminated Land	No objection, subject to condition
Vale - Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)	No objections, subject to conditions
Neighbour Comments.  Two letters of objection have been received.	<p><u>The grounds for objections are:</u></p> <p>“No increase to the parking facilities has been proposed as part of this application”</p> <p><u>Additional comments:</u></p> <p>“Can the town centre bus go in to the leisure centre the no 42 and 43 which comes past Monday to Saturday, which the county council is looking at stopping because it see very little use”.</p>

#### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

##### 4.1 [P15/V1191/PEM](#) - Other Outcome (03/07/2015)

Proposed extension and refurbishment of existing facilities.

##### [P13/V2738/DC](#) - Approved (06/03/2014)

Provision of new car parking area for 99 vehicles with revised access arrangements. (revised scheme)

##### [P13/V2253/DC](#) - Other Outcome (04/12/2013)

Provision of new car parking area for 99 vehicles with revised access arrangements at White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon

##### [P11/V2553/DA](#) - Approved (07/12/2011)

Installation of solar panels on leisure centre roof

##### [P04/V0185/DA](#) - Approved (07/06/2004)

Provision of 60 additional car-parking spaces for staff parking and overflow parking.

##### [P01/V1327/A](#) - Approved (19/11/2001)

Display of new signage.

#### 5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

##### 5.1 **Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2011**

The development plan for this area comprises the adopted Vale of White Horse local plan 2011. The following local plan policies relevant to this application were ‘saved’ by

direction on 1 July 2009.

DC1 - Design  
DC5 - Access  
DC6 - Landscaping  
DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

**5.2 Emerging Local Plan 2031 – Part 1**

The draft local plan part 1 is not currently adopted policy. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF. At present it is officers' opinion that the emerging Local Plan housing policies carry limited weight for decision making. The relevant policies are as follows:-

Core Policy 37                      Design and local distinctiveness

**5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- Design Guide – March 2015

**5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012**

**5.5 National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG)**

**5.6 Neighbourhood Plan**

Abingdon does not have a neighbourhood plan currently

**5.7 Environmental Impact**

This proposal does not exceed 150 dwellings and the site area is under 5ha. Consequently the proposal is beneath the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and this proposal is not EIA development and there is no requirement under the Regulations to provide a screening opinion.

**5.8 Other Relevant Legislation**

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Localism Act (including New Homes Bonus)

**5.9 Human Rights Act**

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.

**5.10 Equalities**

In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The relevant planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. Principle of development
2. Design and impact upon the surrounding area
3. Residential Amenity
4. Highway Safety and Parking

6.2 **Principle of development**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. The local planning authority are supportive of the principle of providing enhanced leisure facilities for the community, subject to the detailed criteria.

6.3 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies has been submitted to the Secretary of state for independent examination. Therefore at this stage, the emerging plan holds little weight. However it is acknowledged that, as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan 2031 Part 1, a leisure and sports facilities study 2013-2031 was carried out by Nortoft Partnership Ltd. consultants. This contains a recommendation that the existing health and fitness facilities should be retained and expanded at the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre, including the accredited Inclusive Fitness gym.

6.4 **Design and impact upon the surrounding area**

Policies DC1 and DC6 require that development should be of a scale, layout and design that would not materially harm the form, structure or character of the existing building and the settlement. The adopted Council's design guide seeks that new development should generally reflect the scale of existing building and the surrounding area.

6.5 The proposal will be visible in the context of the existing building and the surrounding area. The proposed extension is to be constructed on the northern elevation of the existing gym. The proposal has been designed in circular shape, to match the shape of the existing gym and is to be constructed from "Profilit Glass". The proposed glass would consist of glass panels in a 'U' shape with 6 and 7mm glass thickness and relatively narrow width ( 232mm, 262mm and 331mm). There is transparent/translucent effect as well as variety of colours available. The narrow widths of the proposed glass panels helps to achieve a smooth round surface on the proposed extension.

6.6 As it is outlined in the submitted Design and Access Statement "The Design Team focused on a standard colour with a slight green effect and transparent effect on 80% of the facade and frosted/translucent on approximately 20% of the façade where possible art/light installations could be displayed". The proposed light installation is considered in the Officers' opinion as an enhancement of the proposed design, and would enrich the overall appearance of the proposed extension.

6.7 The proposal's internal floor area of 291sqm represents just over 3% of the existing building area. The roof of the proposed extension will be environmentally active. It is proposed as a biodiversity green roof with mixed, low maintenance plants. The details of the proposed landscaping are to be conditioned.

6.8 It is considered in the Officers' opinion that the proposed contemporary design and materials would help given the extension a crisp and light weight appearance, which would complement the existing building. The scale of the proposed Gym extension is considered to be subservient to the scale of the existing complex.

- 6.9 It is also proposed to use the same glazing, but lowered in height, around the Crèche External Deck providing a privacy/safety screen for kids, which will also help to achieve the coherent appearance of the front façade of the existing complex.
- 6.10 As a part of the scheme it is proposed to alter the existing main entrance to the Leisure Centre. It is proposed to relocate one of the existing features on the building's façade ( Feature Wave Structure) to above the existing cycle store. The new main entrance will have a light construction creating a cover to the pedestrian walkway. The structure would be made out of steel with metal mesh/crate panels fixed to under-side of the roof beams. Final details and exact colour of the structure are yet to be determined, therefore this aspect of the proposal will be conditioned.
- 6.11 As such the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of the local plan policies DC1 and DC6, and the provisions of the NPPF, NPPG and the design guide.
- 6.12 **Residential Amenity**  
Policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 6.13 Given the location, of the existing complex and the proposed extension there would be no harmful impact on the amenities of the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light or loss of privacy.
- 6.14 As such the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of local plan policy DC9, and the provisions of the NPPF, NPPG and Residential Design Guide.
- 6.15 **Highways Safety**  
Policy DC5 requires safe access for developments and that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development safely. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states: *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”*
- 6.16 White Horse Leisure Centre site is easily accessible via several means of public as well as private transport. The existing parking arrangement is proposed to remain unchanged, and the site access would remain as existing.
- 6.17 The Oxfordshire County Council Highways Liaison Officer, has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections to the proposal subject to conditions.
- 6.18 The creation of an additional 99 parking spaces at the site approved under application P13/V2738/DC has been carried out, therefore the approved parking would serve the existing Leisure Centre as well as the proposal.
- 6.19 The Highways Officer's request to impose the requested conditions is noted, however given the scale of the proposal, it is unlikely the proposed development would result in a significantly harmful intensification of transport activity within the area. The proposal is also unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on the highway network. In addition given there is an existing car and cycle parking provision, as well as no alterations proposed to the existing access, it is not considered in the Officers' opinion that these conditions are reasonable or necessary.
- 6.20 As such the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of local plan policy DC5, and the provisions of the NPPF, NPPG and Residential Design Guide.

6.21 **Drainage and Contamination**

The Councils Contamination Land Officer and the Drainage Engineer have been consulted on the application, and have raised no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions.

6.22 The application site is located within the Flood Zones 2 and 3. In addition, the submitted Phase 1 Environmental Risk Assessment has identified the potential for residual contamination at the site and has recommended that a site investigation is undertaken to determine the risks to future users. It is therefore considered reasonable in the Officers' opinion to impose the requested drainage and contamination conditions.

6.23 **Other matters**

It has been questioned in the received letter, whether "the town centre bus could go in to the leisure centre, the no 42 and 43 which comes past Monday to Saturday, which the county council is looking at stopping because it see very little use".

6.24 This application is for an extension to the existing Gym and associated alterations and refurbishment to the existing facilities within the Leisure Centre, thus this matter does not form a material planning consideration and is not relevant to the consideration of this application.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The application is recommended for approval as the development would comply with the relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. The principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable, it would not harm the visual amenity and character of the area, or the amenities of neighbouring properties, and there is adequate and safe access and parking provision for the site. The proposal, therefore, complies with the provisions of the development plan, in particular policies DC1, DC5, DC6 and DC9, The development is also considered to comply with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Approved plans.**
2. **Materials in accordance with application.**
3. **Time limit.**
4. **Contamination.**
5. **Drainage.**
6. **Details of landscaping and the proposed entrance structure.**

**Informative:**

1. **Surface water drainage.**

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