

Substantive response of the Local Highway Authority to a planning consultation received under The Development Management Order.



Response provided under the delegated authority of the Director of Growth, Environment & Transport.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning Application Number: 26/00305/FUL

Highway Reference Number: 2026/0305/04/H

Application Address: Ratby Sports Club Desford Lane Ratby Leicester Leicestershire LE6 0LE

Application Type: Full

Description of Application: Erection of two artificial grass pitches, a clubhouse, three padel courts, 500 person covered stand, tractor store, gated and turnstile access, steps and platform lift up to the site and parking facilities

GENERAL DETAILS

Planning Case Officer: Joseph Fleetwood HBBC

Applicant: Anthony Blanchard

County Councillor: Groby & Ratby ED - Cllr Ozzy O'Shea

Parish: Ratby

Road Classification: Class C

Substantive Response provided in accordance with article 22(5) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015:

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the application as submitted fully assesses the highway impact of the proposed development and further information is required as set out in this response. Without this information the Local Highway Authority is unable to provide final highway advice on this application.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Background

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on a full application for the erection of two artificial grass pitches, a clubhouse, three padel courts, 500 person covered stand, tractor store, gated and turnstile access, steps and platform lift up to the site and parking facilities at Ratby Sports Club, Desford Lane, Ratby.

The LHA has reviewed the following documents submitted by the Applicant in support of the proposals:

- Application Form
- Accompanying Highways Report dated March 2026 and authored by Edwards and Edwards Consultancy Ltd
- HSSP drawing number 9431_03_01 Rev. PL1 (Proposed Site Masterplan)
- Proposed visuals

The LHA visited the site on Thursday 7th May 2026.

Site Access

Access to the site is proposed off Desford Lane, a C classified road subject to the national speed limit. The Applicant has highlighted that as part of nearby application reference number 21/01295/OUT (225 dwellings, land off Desford Lane, Ratby), the Applicant for that development is required to reduce the speed limit to 40mph and install traffic calming features, as well as a footway/ cycleway. Furthermore:

“As a result of these measures, the 85th percentile speed of vehicles passing the access to the sports pitches will reduce significantly. Given that these works are programmed to start shortly, there was no point in arranging to carry out a speed survey”

The Applicant has stated that as part of the proposed development, the existing access would be improved by means of widening to 6.0m with an additional 0.5m margin on either side and a junction radii of 7.50m. The access would also be hard bound for the first 15.0m.

It is stated that visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 79 metres looking to the right (northeast) and 82 metres looking to the left (southwest) are currently available at the site access. The LHA accepts such splays are achievable at present. The Applicant states that as a result of footway works proposed as part of application 21/01295/OUT (225 dwellings, land off Desford Lane, Ratby), and using a topographical survey, it is likely the available visibility splay out of the sports ground access would improve from its current 79 metres to over 90 metres.

Notwithstanding HSSP drawing number 9431_03_01 Rev. PL1, A detailed site access drawing demonstrating all the above has not been submitted and is therefore required. The LHA wish to highlight that whilst the nearby residential development is required to implement a speed limit reduction, along with new pedestrian/ cycle links along Desford Lane, these have yet to be implemented. The LHA advise it cannot rely on a third-party scheme to deliver improvements to the surrounding road network because despite construction for that development being underway, there is still a possibility that development stops, and the highway improvements are never implemented.

Therefore the Applicant should provide their own evidence that the access would be safe and suitable to serve the development, including that appropriate visibility can be achieved.

Furthermore, [swept path analysis](#) of the largest anticipated vehicle to ingress/ egress the site in all directions, such as a coach, will be required in addition to the above. Improvements to the site access mean that an independent [Stage 1 Road Safety Audit](#) of the access proposals will be required, along with a Designer's Response to any problems raised. It should be noted that in the event the footway is constructed along Desford Lane, the proposed access does not demonstrate any pedestrian link into the site from that footway.

Following provision of all the above, the LHA will give further consideration of the site access proposals.

Highway Safety

Based on available records to the LHA, there has been one recorded Personal Injury Collision (PIC) on Desford Lane from 500 south of the proposed access location to its junction with Station Road/ Main Street. This occurred approximately 75m southwest of the access location and was recorded as slight. The PIC occurred in September 2021 and involved two vehicles on a bend in

the road. The PIC has also been identified by the Applicant, and the LHA accepts that that the proposals are unlikely to exacerbate an existing highway safety concern given there are no patterns or cluster sites of PIC's in the area.

Notwithstanding this, the Applicant is still required to demonstrate that a safe and suitable access to the site could be achieved.

Trip Generation

Padel Courts

The Applicant has stated the proposed padel courts would introduce a new use on the site that will be likely to generate additional vehicle movements. The padel courts will be available for use throughout the day, seven days a week. The Applicant has stated that games of padel tend to last between 90 minutes and two hours. However for the purposes of calculating trip generation, the worst case scenario has been taken in that each court is booked out for an hour, with doubles games played on each court.

The Applicant has considered that prior to the courts opening, one to two members of staff will arrive as well as 12 players. Assuming the members of staff arrive in separate cars, by the players arrive with an assumed car occupancy rate of two persons per car (used for the purposes of calculating parking requirements) that will mean that eight cars will arrive just before the courts are first open. Then just before the first hour session finishes another 12 players will arrive in six cars in readiness to play in the second hour. During the second hour, the first set of 12 players will leave and before the start of the third hour 12 players will then arrive to get ready to play. This would continue until the courts close, with a worst-case scenario of 12 vehicles every hour.

The Applicant highlights that, games are likely to last at least 90 minutes or more and that not all courts may be booked for doubles games, some parents may also choose to play padel whilst their children play/ train on the football pitches. In addition, it is stated that given padel tennis is a leisure sport, the courts will be at their busiest during normal off-peak highway hours and weekends, so their impact at peak-hours on the road network is likely to be minimal.

The LHA accepts the Applicants trip generation analysis for the proposed padel courts.

Football Pitches/ Clubhouse/ Spectator Stands

The Applicant has stated that the proposal is to provide improved facilities for the existing users of the site, however it will reduce the number of pitches on the site from a total of five, down to two all-weather pitches, with 1 x 11-aside and 1 x 7-aside pitch. While there are less pitches, the football club do not anticipate a lower level of usage of the site. They expect the same amount of usage to carry on and therefore do not anticipate a reduction in trip movements because of having three fewer pitches. It is stated the pitches are used all day on Sundays from 9am until 4pm and on Saturday mornings as well as in the evenings in spring and summer for matches and training. Unlike the current pitches, the proposed pitches being all weather pitches would always be available for use.

Paragraph 3.4 of the Highways Report states:

“The provision of the clubhouse and spectator stands is intended to serve the existing users on the site and will not generate additional vehicle movements. In fact the provision of better facilities for parents could mean that rather than arrive to drop their children off then leave only to return to

collect their children, the improved facilities could mean that parents stay on site for the duration of the matches or training and therefore could result in less traffic movements at the site access.”.

The LHA note from the submitted 3D visual images of the site that the 500-seater stand would face a single 11 vs 11 football pitch. Furthermore, there are covered areas fronting the proposed clubhouse where spectators could stand and, potentially standing space surrounding the rest of the pitch.

Notwithstanding the Applicant stating that the proposals are to improve facilities for existing users of the site, the LHA considers the proposals are of a scale to hold a football match or event with at least 500 spectators, all of which could be paying to attend the site, with most of the spectators unrelated to the players. It is noted for example that turnstiles would be provided at the site, which would seem unnecessary for parents watching their children train at a weekend or in the evening. Furthermore, the LHA believe it would be unreasonable to restrict the use of the stand/ clubhouse for the use by friends/ family of those training or playing football at the site.

In addition to the above, it is unclear if whether the reduction in pitches and the introduction of all-weather facilities, however the level of use at the site remaining the same, would result in some training/ football sessions being re-scheduled for weekday evenings. In such circumstances, it would be beneficial for the Applicant to provide approximate timings for when the pitches would be in use, as whilst it is appreciated this would be unlikely to affect the weekday AM peak, it may be more likely to affect the PM peak.

The LHA therefore advise that the site should be assessed under a worst-case scenario with a capacity crowd for a football match and include the following:

- Details as to when maximum capacity events would be held e.g. days of the week/ times/ frequency.
- Maximum capacity for both the 11 vs 11 and 7 vs 7 pitches (split into spectators including those in the 500-seater stand and any standing space, players, officials etc) and clarity as to whether the 7 vs 7 pitch would be in use at the same time as a maximum capacity 11 vs 11 crowd.
- Maximum capacity (staff/ customers) for the clubhouse. Clarity if customer capacity would be in addition to a maximum spectator capacity for the football pitches.
- Use of the padel courts should these be available during large events.
- The level of trips (e.g. arrivals and departures) anticipated for a maximum capacity crowd.

This could then be compared to the existing situation. The Applicant may wish to provide evidence of current traffic flows to/ from the site when at capacity, by means of an automatic traffic count at the site access, should they wish to offset existing trips from the proposed trip generation.

This would also be beneficial on the basis the Applicant states the proposed stand could reduce the number of arrivals and departures from the site due to parents staying on site during training/ football matches, rather than leaving and returning later.

Junction Capacity Assessments

Following updated trip generation analysis, the Applicant may be required to undertake junction capacity assessments should the proposal result in an additional 30 two-way trips (e.g. 15 arrivals and 15 departures) in either the AM or PM weekday peaks, or during a weekend peak, for example prior to and following a capacity crowd event.

Off-Site Implications

Whilst the Applicant has referred to the proposed footway/ cycleway, 40mph speed limit and off-site works proposed as part of application reference 21/01295/OUT, as detailed in the Site Access section further above, the LHA consider it is not possible to rely on these works being delivered by a third party. The works have yet to be constructed and in the event the footway/ cycleway is not delivered as part of that development for example, the LHA is unclear how pedestrians would access the site as this has not been demonstrated as part of the current application. The LHA must ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

Given the scale of the proposals and the proximity to Ratby village centre, the LHA consider it reasonable that some residents may wish to walk to the site. The Applicant is therefore required to detail on a drawing how pedestrians would safely access the site. This route will then need to be secured by the LHA by means of an appropriately worded condition in the event the LPA is mindful to advise approval of the application in the future.

Internal Layout

The Applicant states that at present the site does not have a hard surfaced and marked car park. Instead, parents park their cars on areas that are stoned or just on the grass. The Applicant states that within the areas currently used for car parking, those areas can accommodate approximately 54 car parking spaces, if they were to be marked out to Highway Authority guidelines, i.e. size of spaces and aisle widths. However, the existing car parking area is not marked out and does not include any accessible parking spaces, any coach parking/turning facilities or any cycle parking facilities.

The Applicant continues that the proposals would result in the existing number of pitches being reduced from five to two. In theory this would result in a lower demand for parking. However, the proposed new 11 a-side pitch would be able to be used for both five a-side and seven a-side matches. It is also the case that pitches would not be used just once per day but matches and/or training for different sides could take place one after another.

Table 29(d) of the LHDG states that for F2(c) Outdoor sport or recreation areas that for sports Grounds and clubs: car parking spaces required for the maximum use of the facility (staff plus customers plus visitors) are based on two people per car. In addition, some facilities (team sports) will require at least one coach space, more depending on demand.

The Applicant has considered for an 11 a side football pitch there is likely to be two teams of 11 players, with five subs each, a manager each, a referee and two assistant referees. Therefore the 11 a-side pitch would have a maximum usage of 37 persons at any one time. This would give a requirement for 19 spaces for an 11 a-side pitch.

On the same basis, a seven-a-side pitch would have a total of 29 persons, giving a requirement for 15 car parking spaces. The two pitches combined would therefore generate a requirement for 34 parking spaces.

The Applicant has stated that in practice, not only will there be players playing or training, but there would also be other players on site either getting ready to play or getting ready to leave having just played or trained. As such providing 34 spaces would not be sufficient to cater for the likely demand.

The Applicant states that the site holds a junior football tournament once a year, where there will be several teams playing, with teams arriving in the morning and then staying on site, at least until

they get eliminated from the tournament. On that day, there will be a much greater demand for parking and therefore to try to ensure that parking does not overspill out on to the public highway, the proposed level of parking has been designed to cater for that scenario.

In addition to the parking for the football pitches, the Applicant has stated there would be a requirement of 12 parking spaces for the 24 padel players who could be on site at one time. In addition, there would be a requirement for two staff car parking spaces. As such the padel courts would require a total of 14 parking car parking spaces to accord to parking standards.

The Applicant believes that if a total of 46 spaces was provided, this would be less than the number of spaces at the current site. In addition, given the likely use of the football pitches with sessions one after the other, such a low level of parking would likely result in parking overspilling onto the highway. As a result, 96 car parking spaces are proposed, with six further accessible spaces. Cycle parking and a coach parking space are also proposed.

The LHA advise that it considers the above a reasonable approach and accepts in principle the number of parking spaces proposed for the new football pitches and padel courts. The LHA can also confirm that the car park is designed in accordance with the [design principles for off-street parking](#) section of the LHDG.

The Applicant states that the clubhouse and changing rooms will cater for the existing persons on site and will not in themselves generate additional traffic. Currently the existing clubhouse and changing rooms/ toilets are located on another part of the site, on the northern side of the cricket pitch. These facilities are too far from the proposed junior pitches, hence the need for a new clubhouse and changing facilities for these pitches. Walking to the existing changing rooms/toilets involve walking over different grass pitches and the Football Association have advised that this can result in cross-contamination and said that this should be avoided. It would be beneficial for the Applicant to clarify whether the clubhouse would be available for private hire use and if so, how this would operate (e.g. outside of events/ training sessions etc or at the same time).

It is also stated the proposed covered spectator stand will not generate any additional parking demand and is expected to be used by parents and family members already on site. As detailed further above, the LHA considers the proposals are of a scale to hold a football match or event with at least 500 spectators, all of which could be paying to attend the site, with the majority of spectators unrelated to the players. Whilst it is acknowledged an event is stated to be held once a year at the site, it is unclear whether a 500 seater stand would be required to cater for a single event once a year. Given it is unclear how events would operate or the maximum capacity of the site, the LHA therefore advise parking is also considered for an event at the site, including an event should demonstrate the level of parking would be acceptable for a maximum capacity crowd, following confirmation of the maximum number of people that could be on-site at any one time.

Finally, the LHA note there is a football pitch to the west of the site outside the Applicants red line boundary, but within the blue line boundary of the site. Clarity is also required in respect of where vehicles currently park for this pitch, and where parking would occur in the future.

The LHA advise that whilst the level of parking provision for the proposed two football pitches and padel courts is considered acceptable in principle, further clarification is required in respect of parking for an event where a maximum capacity crowd is expected, and where parking takes place for the existing football pitch within the Applicants blue line boundary. Currently, the LHA therefore have concerns in respect of parking for a large capacity event and where parking would occur for the additional existing football pitch.

Transport Sustainability

The site is located close to the centre of Ratby and within walking distance of bus stops served by regular bus services between Ratby and Leicester. It is however unclear at present how anyone choosing to walk to the site could safely access the site on foot.

Closing

Based on the above, in summary, the following information should be submitted to the LPA for consideration by the LHA:

- A detailed site access drawing which demonstrates appropriate visibility splays for the speed of passing traffic and swept path analysis of the largest anticipated vehicle to use the site;
- A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit of the site access proposals and Designer's Response to any problems raised;
- Details of a safe and suitable pedestrian route to/ from the site connecting into Ratby;
- Clarity in respect of times/ days of the week training sessions/ football matches are anticipated to be held and when the football pitches would be in use;
- Clarity if the clubhouse would be available to hire and if so, what times;
- Further information with regards to how the site would operate with a capacity crowd, including total number of people on-site at any one time for each of the football pitches, clubhouse etc and whether the padel courts would be in use;
- A comparison of the number of trips which could be generated by the existing and proposed development, and a capacity exercise should and additional 30 two-way trips be generated in the AM or PM weekday peaks, or at the development peak at a weekend; and
- Further information in respect of whether the proposed level of parking within the site could cope with a capacity crowd, following confirmation of the total number of people the site could hold at any one time.

Date Received
20 April 2026

Case Officer
Ben Dutton

Reviewer
DH

Date issued
21 May 2026