

Planning Statement

Stonecraft Paving Centre,
Desford Lane, Leicester, LE9 2BR

April 2026



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Planning Potential Ltd

London

Magdalen House
148 Tooley Street
London SE1 2TU
T: 020 7357 8000

Harrogate

Suite 16, 1 Cardale Park
Beckwith Head Road
Harrogate HG3 1RY
T: 01423 502 115

Bristol

Origin Workspace
40 Berkeley
Bristol BS8 1HP
T: 0117 214 1820

Newcastle

Alderman Fenwick’s House
98-100 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne
Tyne &Wear NE1 6SQ
T: 0191 8202 006

Report Author: Tamsin Penberthy

tamsin.penberthy@planningpotential.co.uk

Report Reviewer: Alastair Close

alastair.close@planningpotential.co.uk

Client: Pulse Padel Ltd.

Report Reference:

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1. Introduction

1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Planning Potential, on behalf of Pulse Padel, in support of a planning application for the provision of padel tennis courts at Stonecraft Paving Centre, Desford Lane, Leicester, LE9 2BR.

1.2. Specifically, planning permission is sought for the following –

“Erection of 4no. padel courts with external cover including steel mesh cage with glass end walls and removable cover.”

1.3. The application seeks planning permission to make efficient use of an underutilised area of hardstanding within an established commercial- industrial site, through the clearance of the identified parcel and the installation of four padel courts. The proposals comprise standard padel court enclosures with retractable high level covers, mesh cages and glass end walls, high-level lighting, and court cover.

1.4. The scheme has been prepared by Pulse Padel, specialist consultants and Stonecraft Paving Centre, and is designed to respond appropriately to the site's commercial context. The proposals represent a compatible and low-impact form of development which will diversify the use of the site, support sport and recreation, and bring an under-utilised area of hardstanding into active use.

1.5. The NPPF advises that, decision makers should work proactively to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of an area (Para. 38) and should place **significant weight** on the need to support economic growth and productivity, including both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (Para. 85).

1.6. The NPPF is clear that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which in respect of decision taking, means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (para. 11c). This Statement confirms that the proposals accord with relevant policies of the development plan and will deliver significant benefits, and therefore should be approved.

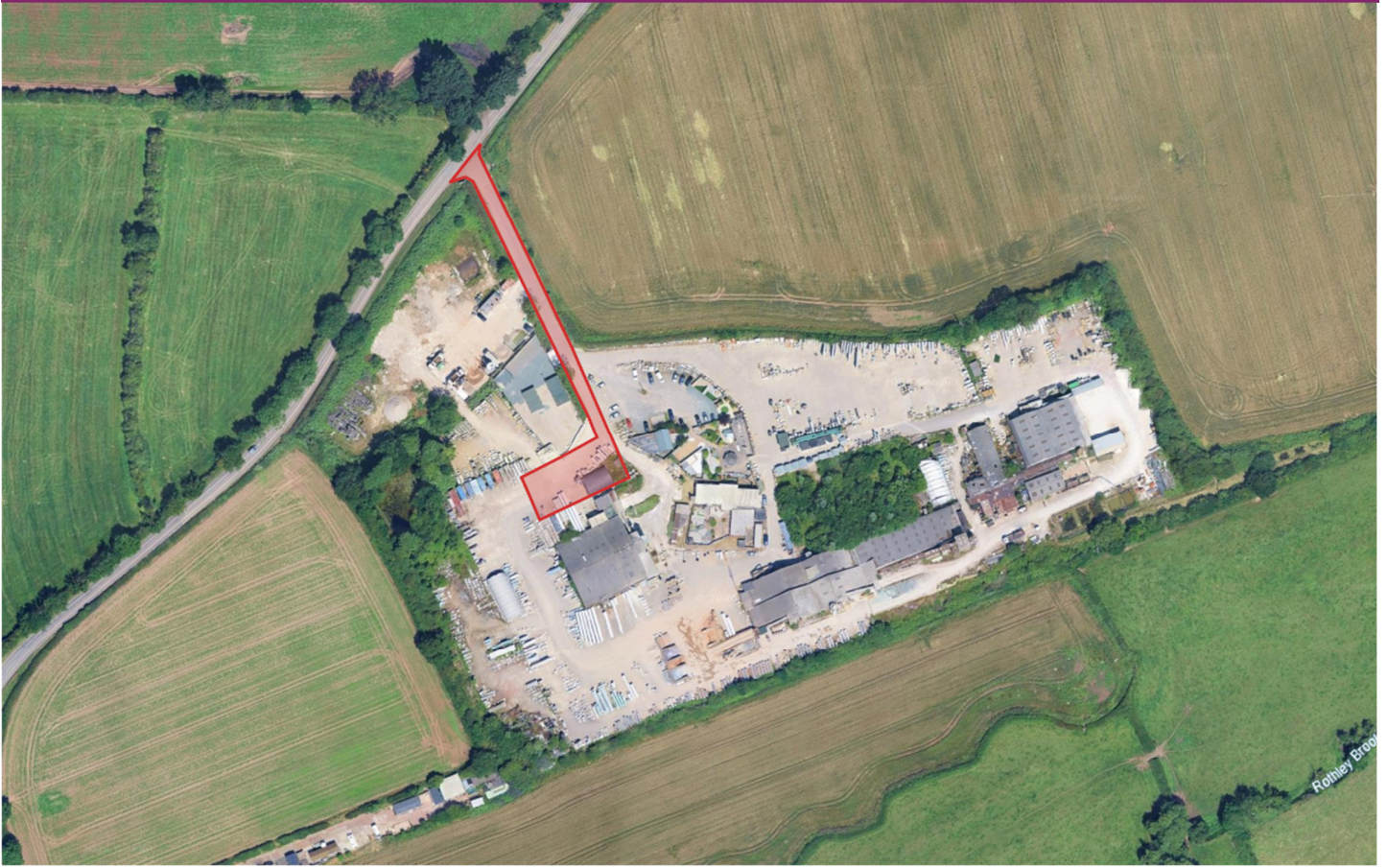
1.7. The structure of this Planning Statement is as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a site description and background to the application proposals, including a review of relevant planning history.
- **Section 3** sets out the application proposals and rationale.
- **Section 4** identifies the relevant planning policy and guidance against which these proposals are to be assessed, and considers the principle of development and assesses the proposals against relevant development plan policies.
- **Section 5** sets out the summary and benefits of the proposals.

2. Site Background & Context

- 2.1. The application site, identified at Figure 2.1, extends to approximately 0.01 ha (985 sqm), and is located within the curtilage land of Stonecraft Paving Centre, Leicester.

Figure 2.1: Site Location and Context Plan



Source: Google Earth 2024

- 2.2. The application site comprises a long-established industrial complex positioned on the eastern edge of the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough boundary. The site sits within a predominantly rural setting and forms part of a dispersed cluster of commercial uses along Desford Lane. It is located approximately 1.2km north-west of Kirby Muxloe and around 1km south-west of Ratby, placing it between the two settlements. Access is taken directly from Desford Lane via the existing vehicular entrance serving the complex.
- 2.3. The wider site contains numerous industrial buildings of varying scale and age, together with a staff and customer car park. Large areas of open hard-standing extend across the southern and western parts of the site, some of which are used for the storage of materials and equipment associated with the established operations.
- 2.4. Land adjoining the site to the east benefits from outline planning permission under reference 21/01295/OUT for the erection of up to 225 dwellings. It should be noted that the approved residential development is set back from the application site, as shown in Figure 2.2 below, with a landscaped green corridor and areas of open space providing clear physical separation between the site and any future dwellings. Importantly, the approved residential scheme will extend the built edge of Ratby eastwards, improving connectivity between the application site and the established settlement. In this context, the site forms part of a transitional area between the settlement edge, new residential development and existing commercial uses along Desford Lane. The proposals will act as an important amenity for both existing residents and future population.

Figure 2.2: Development Framework Plan – Application Ref. 21/01295/OUT



Source: CSA Environmental - Development Framework Plan Application Ref. 21/01295/OUT

- 2.5. The site is designated as an employment site (RAT35 – Alexandra Stone Works), and is identified as a Category B site under Policy DM19 of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan. The designation confirms the Council's intention for the land to remain in employment use and recognises its contribution to the local economic base.
- 2.6. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, where new development is generally considered acceptable from a flood-risk perspective.

Planning History

- 2.7. The wider Stonecraft Paving Centre site has been the subject of a number of historic planning permissions associated with its long-established industrial and commercial use by Alexandra Stone Company Ltd. These include, amongst others:
- **87/0756/4:** Change of use of land as delineated on the site plan from a field to a new car park for customers and employees together with a change of use of an existing car park to the creation of a compound (marked by a 2.4 metre high security fence on the boundary) for use as a retail outlet associated with goods produced at the factory and for larch top fences and plastic ponds. Approved September 1987.
 - **88/0992/4:** Construction of six aggregate storage bins with weatherproof covers for the production of concrete products. Approved September 1988.
 - **93/0535/4:** Industrial development (Classes B1 and B2) and the construction of a new access onto Desford Lane. Approved September 1993.
 - **96/00578/FUL:** The erection of a cement silo and alterations to the elevation of a building. Approved August 1996.
 - **07/01430/FUL:** Proposed industrial building and demolition of existing. Approved February 2011 (and extended in application 10/00797/EXT)
- 2.8. In addition to the above, a number of smaller-scale applications have been approved over time, all of which reinforce the established industrial and commercial character of the site.

About Pulse Padel

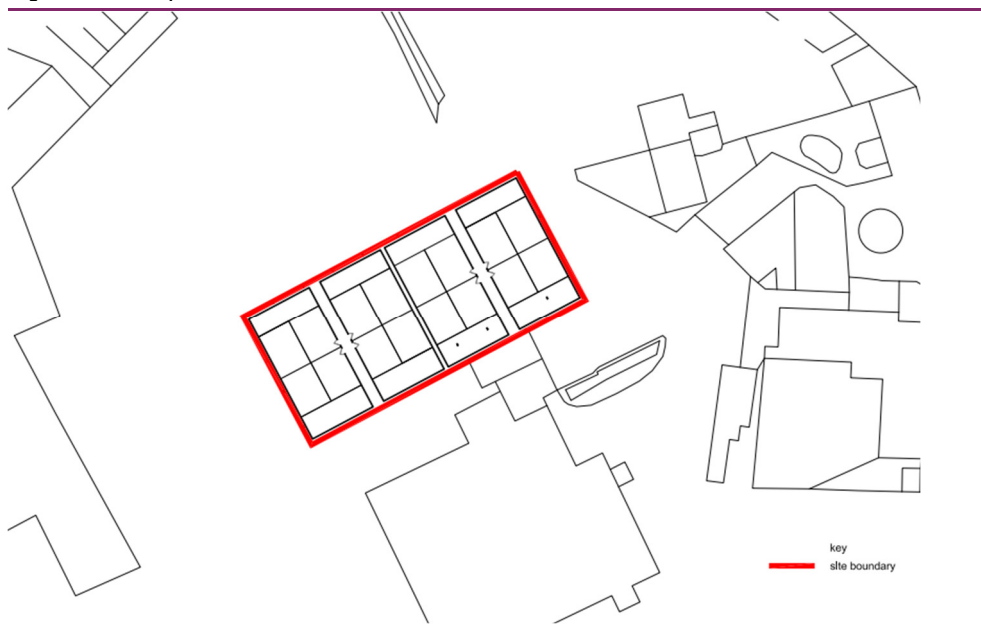
- 2.9. Pulse Padel is a growing UK-based operator dedicated to expanding access to padel, one of the fastest-growing sports in the UK. The organisation specialises in delivering high-quality padel facilities, coaching programmes, and community partnerships that make the sport accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
- 2.10. As a company, Pulse Padel provides fully managed padel court installations, venue activation, and ongoing programming designed to build a sustainable local player base. Their offer typically includes pay-and-play access, membership options, equipment hire, and on-site racket retail, ensuring that padel remains an inclusive and affordable recreational choice for local communities.
- 2.11. Pulse Padel places a strong emphasis on community benefit and participation growth, underpinned by structured engagement programmes and partnerships with schools, charities, sports clubs, and local businesses. These programmes include free or discounted sessions for local community groups, school involvement, targeted sessions for older adults, women-only groups, and broader coaching pathways from beginner to advanced levels.
- 2.12. The company's "Community Engagement Programme" model aims to raise awareness of padel, encourage sustained participation, and create long-term social value through inclusive activities, regular coaching, and a calendar of community events, open days, and competitions.
- 2.13. Pulse Padel also plays an important role in supporting wider sporting strategies by helping introduce padel to areas where demand is high but provision is limited. According to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), Britain reached 1,000 padel courts and participation exceeded 400,000 players earlier in 2025¹. Pulse Padel's delivery model aligns with this growth by providing local, accessible opportunities that respond to rising demand for modern racket sports.
- 2.14. Overall, Pulse Padel is committed to delivering high-quality, well-managed padel facilities that broaden sporting participation, enhance community wellbeing, and create sustainable, year-round recreational opportunities.

¹ British Padel in 2025 – LTA Padel Site (19 Dec 2025)

3. Application Proposals

- 3.1. This planning application seeks permission to make efficient use of an existing area of previously developed hardstanding within the Stonecraft Paving Centre, an established commercial / industrial site on Desford Lane. The proposals involve the clearance of the identified parcel and the installation of four padel tennis courts, together with associated enclosure, lighting and a removable cover. The development does not result in any encroachment onto undeveloped or agricultural land and sits comfortably within the commercial character of the wider site.
- 3.2. The current situation is characterised by an under-utilised area of hardstanding which forms part of the operational yard and access arrangements associated with the former stone works. The land does not perform an operational function and represents an opportunity for more active and productive use. Its reuse for modern outdoor sport is considered compatible with the established commercial setting and reflects an efficient use of previously developed land.
- 3.3. In summary, the proposed development comprises:
- The installation of four standard-sized padel courts with steel mesh cage enclosures with glass end walls;
 - High-level lighting to facilitate evening use;
 - Removable cover positioned over the courts; and
 - Associated surfacing and ancillary infrastructure.
- 3.4. The proposed development is illustrated on the submitted site plan and at Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Proposed Site Plan



Source: Patrick Stroud Designs

- 3.5. The proposed padel courts are of a standard size, measuring approximately 10m in width and 20m in length. The enclosing structures comprise glass panels and wire mesh designed to contain play within the court envelope, as illustrated on the submitted drawings. The cover structure is lightweight and removable in nature, as detailed within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 3.6. The proposals have been designed to integrate with the existing layout of the Stonecraft Paving Centre and to operate independently of the remaining commercial uses on site. No changes are proposed to the established site access arrangements, internal circulation routes or wider yard operations, and the development will not prejudice the ongoing functioning of the surrounding commercial activities.

4. Planning Assessment

- 4.1. Having set out the context of the site within its wider setting, this section assesses the acceptability of the proposals and their conformity with the local development plan and national guidance.
- 4.2. Planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 4.3. In respect of decision making, the NPPF is also clear at Paragraph 38 that:
- 4.4. *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.*
- 4.5. In terms of building a strong, competitive economy, NPPF Paragraph 85 states that:
- 4.6. *“Planning policies and decisions 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 of both business needs and wider opportunities for development”.*
- 4.7. The application site falls within the jurisdiction of Hinkley and Bosworth Council ('HBC') and so will be determined in line with the relevant policies of their Development Plan and any other material considerations. The Development Plan against which the application proposals should be assessed comprises:
- Core Strategy DPD (Adopted December 2009).
 - Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (Adopted July 2016).
- 4.8. The following comprise material considerations in assessing the development:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) and associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
 - Hinckley & Bosworth Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (February 2025).
 - Hinckley & Bosworth Sport and Recreation Facilities Framework 2020-2036 (Adopted January 2020).

Principle of Development

- 4.9. The NPPF recognises the important role that planning plays in supporting healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Paragraph 96 states that planning decisions should aim to create places which *“enable and support healthy lives... through the provision of safe and accessible... sports facilities”* and promote social interaction and community wellbeing.
- 4.10. This position is reinforced at the local level through the Hinckley & Bosworth Sport and Recreation Facilities Framework, which provides an up-to-date evidence base for sports provision across the Borough. The Framework explicitly recognises the growing demand for padel and confirms support to *“provide padel courts at suitable sites ... given its growing demand (separate to existing tennis courts) and seek to maximise activity.”* This establishes in-principle support for padel facilities where they can be appropriately accommodated within existing sites.
- 4.11. Further support is provided by the Hinckley & Bosworth Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy, which emphasises the importance of diversifying sports provision, maximising participation, and making effective use of existing developed sites. The Strategy recognises the role of newer and non-traditional sports in widening participation and delivering health and wellbeing benefits, particularly where proposals do not result in the loss of existing playing fields or outdoor sport assets.
- 4.12. Ratby is identified as a Key Rural Centre under Policy 7 and Policy 8 of the Core Strategy. Key Rural Centres are intended to support access to local services, employment, leisure and community facilities, reducing the need for residents to travel to higher-order centres. The site lies approximately 1km south-west of Ratby and sits between Ratby and Kirby Muxloe, within an area that is becoming increasingly connected through committed residential development to the east under application ref. 21/01295/OUT. In

- this context, the provision of accessible sport and recreation facilities in proximity to a Key Rural Centre is consistent with the spatial strategy for the area.
- 4.13. The application site is located within the curtilage of a long-established industrial-commercial complex designated as an employment site (RAT35 – Alexandra Stone Works) and categorised as a Category B site under Policy DM19. The proposals would be confined to areas of existing hardstanding within this established complex and would not undermine the primary employment function of the site. Rather, the development represents a compatible commercial use within an industrial-commercial destination, making efficient use of previously developed land.
- 4.14. Policy DM19 allows for positive consideration of alternative uses on Category B sites where there is a significant community benefit that outweighs the impact of losing the employment land. In this case, the proposals would not result in any meaningful loss of employment land, as they are confined to a redundant area of existing hardstanding that is not in active operational use and does not contribute to the site’s employment function. The primary use and continued viability of the wider employment site would therefore be fully retained. For the avoidance of doubt, and notwithstanding the absence of any material employment land loss, the proposals also deliver a clear and demonstrable community benefit.
- 4.15. As set out in Section 2, Pulse Padel’s delivery model places a strong emphasis on accessibility, affordability and inclusive participation. The proposed facility would provide affordable pay-and-play access, free sessions for local schools and charities, and a structured programme of coaching and targeted sessions, including provision for women, older age groups, teenagers and daytime social users. This approach is specifically designed to widen participation, support health and wellbeing, and create sustained community engagement in an emerging sport for which local provision is currently limited.
- 4.16. When considered in this context, the proposals would introduce a socially valuable recreational use within an established employment site, without undermining its primary function. The combination of minimal employment land impact and clear, evidenced community benefit means the development satisfies the criteria of Policy DM19, and is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 4.17. Figure 4.1 below illustrates the current provision of padel courts within the wider Leicester and Hinkey and Bosworth area and their distance from the application site. As shown, existing provision is limited, with the nearest operational facilities located about 20-40 km away. The proposed padel courts at the application site would therefore make an incredibly meaningful contribution to local provision, improving access to this emerging sport for residents of Ratby, Kirby Muxloe and surrounding areas. The site’s location also allows padel to be integrated into existing commercial activity, enabling participation to take place alongside everyday trips rather than requiring dedicated long-distance travel.

Figure 4.1: Provision of Padel Courts & Distance from Application Site



Planning Potential Research. Base Map Source: <https://www.thepadeldirectory.co.uk/find-padel-courts>

- 4.18. It is noted that planning application ref. 25/01137/FUL has been approved for padel courts at Hoo Hills Farm. However, the presence of a separate proposal elsewhere does not negate the role of the application site in contributing to a broader and more dispersed network of accessible sports facilities, particularly given the limited existing provision and the growing popularity of padel.
- 4.19. In this context, the proposals align with both national and local objectives to support healthy lifestyles, increase participation in sport and recreation, and ensure that facilities are accessible to local communities. Having regard to the site's established commercial context, proximity to a Key Rural Centre, and the policy support for diversified sports provision, the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

Design Considerations

- 4.20. A Design and Access Statement prepared by Patrick Stroud Designs accompanies the application, and provides detail and provides detail on the siting, layout and appearance of the proposed courts, demonstrating how the design responds to the character and operational context of the existing employment site.
- 4.21. The development would be accommodated entirely within an established industrial-commercial complex at Stonecraft Paving Centre and would be confined to an area of existing hardstanding. As such, the proposals would not introduce built form into an undeveloped or sensitive landscape, nor would they appear incongruous within their context.

Amenity

- 4.22. The application site is located within an established industrial-commercial complex, where a degree of operational activity, vehicle movement and external lighting is an accepted and characteristic part of the environment. In this context, the introduction of a small-scale sport and recreation use would not be out of keeping with the site's established baseline conditions.
- 4.23. The proposed residential properties in outline application ref. 21/01295/OUT will be physically separated from the application site by over 300m considerable distance, intervening commercial uses and a landscaped green corridor therefore the proposals would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity in accordance with Policy DM10. LTA guidance² suggests that noise attenuation is typically required when a padel court is within 30m of a noise sensitive property. As the site is 10 x that distance and given the existing character of the site so there is limited, if any, potential for noise disturbance.
- 4.24. Overall, the proposed development would not result in unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, disturbance or lighting, when assessed in the context of the site's industrial-commercial setting and the separation from nearby residential uses. The proposals therefore accord with Policy DM7 (Preventing Pollution and Flooding) and Policy DM10 (Development and Design) of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.

Highways

- 4.25. Padel courts are characterised by low intensity use, with a maximum of four players per court at any one time and sessions typically arranged in advance. The resulting vehicle movements are modest and are often spread across the day.
- 4.26. The application site is situated between Ratby and Kirby Muxloe and benefits from existing access arrangements associated with the Stonecraft Paving Centre. The proposals would utilise the existing site access and internal circulation arrangements, and no alterations to the highway network are required. The Transport Note confirms that there is no requirement for additional parking provision and that the development would not result in unacceptable pressure on on-site parking or surrounding roads.
- 4.27. The proposed development would therefore not give rise to highway concerns and therefore accord with Policy DM17 (Highways and Transportation) of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 4.28. The application site comprises an area of existing hardstanding within an established industrial-commercial complex. The site contains no vegetation, habitats or ecological features of biodiversity value, and the proposals would not affect any natural or semi-natural features.

² LTA Guidance Note: Making a Planning Application: <https://www.lta.org.uk/4ad13d/siteassets/about-lta/file/planning-guidance.pdf>

- 4.29. Given the nature of the site and the limited extent of works, the proposals would fall below the de minimis threshold for biodiversity net gain and are therefore exempt from statutory BNG requirements. The development is accordingly compliant with Policy DM6 (Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest), which seeks to protect ecological assets and secure enhancements where appropriate.

Summary

- 4.30. In summary, the proposals represent an appropriate and proportionate form of development within an established industrial-commercial site. The scheme accords with the relevant policies of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan, responds positively to the site's operational context, and is supported by proportionate technical evidence in respect of highways, lighting and amenity. The development would deliver a modern and accessible sporting facility with very limited impacts, make efficient use of existing hardstanding, and would not result in harm to residential amenity, highway safety or biodiversity. On this basis, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle and policy-compliant.

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1. This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed development accords with national and local planning policy and represents an appropriate form of development within an established industrial-commercial site. The proposals have been carefully designed to make efficient use of existing hardstanding land and to deliver a modern sporting facility in a location where operational activity is already expected and accepted.
- 5.2. The principle of development is supported by the NPPF and the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan, which seek to promote healthy, inclusive communities and encourage participation in sport and recreation. The provision of padel courts at this location responds to limited existing provision in the area and supports opportunities for local participation, while remaining compatible with the site's existing commercial use and employment function.
- 5.3. The submitted technical evidence confirms that the proposals would not give rise to unacceptable impacts in respect of highway safety, residential amenity or visual impact. The low-intensity nature of padel use, the separation from sensitive receptors, and the containment of lighting within the site boundary ensure that the development would operate without harm to surrounding land uses.
- 5.4. Taken as a whole, the evidence demonstrates that the proposed development would deliver a clear recreational and community benefit with minimal environmental or amenity impact. The scheme is proportionate, well-designed and policy-compliant, making effective use of an existing employment site to deliver accessible sport and physical activity. On this basis, the proposals are considered acceptable in planning terms and should be granted planning permission.