

Covering Statement

Planning Application (Application number TBC) at Hayling Island Bowls Club, Station Road, Hayling Island, PO11 0HB.

This project, supported by funding from Sport England and Havant Borough Council, is to install a new artificial grass green and floodlights at the existing bowls club green at Hayling Bowls Club. This project aims to improve the provision and provide a sustainable playing surface for club members and residents to use, helping alleviate known health inequalities within the borough of Havant. It is the aim of the club to provide opportunities to the wider community, enabling access to high quality sporting facilities by various organisations operating in the borough. Including; schools, disabled groups and other local stakeholders.

The new playing surface will offer opportunities to play all year round, but to maximise these opportunities it is essential to provide floodlights to enable play to extend into the evening during autumn and winter months. It is not intended that use of the lights would extend beyond 22:00 hours. Therefore, this planning application specifically seeks to gain permission to install 4 No. floodlights to the new artificial surface, that will allow increased usage levels throughout the year.

The overall project is supported by recommendation 28 and 29 identified within the Havant Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy, adopted as an evidence base for the Havant Borough Council Local Plan. These recommendations highlight the need to protect these facilities for their purpose of lawn bowls, as well as the need to empower local community groups to take on ownership of facilities that they use.

The bowls green is used by Hayling Island bowls club and is open for use to the wider public on Monday and Friday afternoons. The club currently has an active membership of circa 100 members, who, when surveyed said that they would welcome the opportunity to bowl all year around and later into the evening. This project also offers a unique opportunity to bowl under floodlights, meaning that this will support the sustainability of the club and has the real potential to attract new members.

The principle reason for converting the existing grass bowls green to an artificial surface is one of sustainability. The grass green has deteriorated in quality, and maintenance, at a cost of £11,000 pa, has given rise to expensive membership fees which are not felt to represent good value for money. Older members of the club find bowling on the grass too onerous and the club is at risk of dwindling membership if it does not modernise, which

would further jeopardise its existence. The project has been successful in attracting £167,650 of external funding, the conditional funding provided by Sport England is contingent upon the installation of floodlights. Meaning that there is a risk that if planning approval is not given funding will be withdrawn, leaving the risk of losing significant levels of financial investment into sports facilities within Havant.

This project will see a first of its kind in the borough in providing floodlit bowls facilities for use by residents. A positive investment and opportunity to provide good quality facilities and support in tackling local health inequalities.