

Planning Committee Report – 24/1396/ECC

1.0 Application Information

Number: 24/1396/ECC

Applicant: Mr James Bogue, Exeter City Council

Proposal: Refurbishment of the existing Wonford Sports Centre and Community and Learning Centre, including the demolition of the existing gym, Phoenix Centre and Outdoor changing rooms and construction of a new hub and FA changing facilities. The new Hub will accommodate a cafe area, changing facilities, studio and gym.

Site Address: Wonford Community And Learning Centre
Burnthouse Lane

Registration Date: 2 December 2024

Link to Documents: <https://exeter.gov.uk/planning-services/permissions-and-applications/related-documents/?appref=24/1396/ECC>

Ward Member(s): Cllr Marina Asvachin, Cllr Jane Begley, Cllr Tony Wardle

Reason Application is going to Committee:

The Head of City Development considers the application to be a significant application that should be determined by the Planning Committee in accordance with the Exeter City Council Constitution.

2.0 Summary of recommendation

GRANT permission subject to conditions as set out in report.

3.0 Reason for the recommendation

The development conforms to the Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) with no harmful impact on its surroundings. As such, this application is recommended for approval.

4.0 Table of key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
The Principle of the Proposed Development	This proposal involves the regeneration of the existing use and is therefore acceptable in principle. Some parts of the site will be retained and refurbished, while others will be demolished and rebuilt with improved facilities. These changes do not

Issue	Conclusion
	alter the acceptability of the development in principle.
Scale, Design, Impact on Character and Appearance	The scale and massing are considered appropriate for this location, offering an improved appearance and character. The massing does not differ significantly from the existing situation. The materials proposed for the new-build elements are regarded as an enhancement to the overall appearance. Additionally, the design of the new-build sections, along with the internal layout, represents a significant improvement in terms of appearance, functionality and accessibility.
Impact on Amenity	The impact is considered to be negligible compared to the current situation. However, the effect on the amenity of surrounding properties has been assessed with regard to privacy, outlook, natural light, overshadowing, noise and lighting, and it is concluded that it will not result in any unacceptable harm.
Impact on Landscape and Heritage Assets	There is no impact on designated or non-designated landscape and heritage assets.
Economic Benefits	Due to the nature of this type of development, there are significant public health and social benefits, although there are no direct economic benefits. While the direct economic benefits may be limited, the project will generate employment opportunities during the construction phase and create a slight increase in jobs once operational, particularly with the addition of the new café.
Access and Parking	The existing vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian access to the site will remain largely unchanged in principle, with some improvements that do not significantly alter the general layout. There are no significant changes to the parking arrangements, and the number of car parking spaces will remain the same.

Issue	Conclusion
	<p>However, accessible parking spaces will be relocated closer to the entrance, sharing the improved pedestrian access from Burnthouse Lane. The existing vehicle access and parking arrangements are considered acceptable in principle, particularly as the development has sought to enhance the current situation.</p>
Impact on Trees and Biodiversity	<p>One small tree (category C2) is proposed for removal, but 11 new trees will be planted. Biodiversity enhancements will be provided through new habitats, soft landscaping and the installation of bird and bat boxes, achieving a substantial improvement in on-site biodiversity. The impact on trees and biodiversity is therefore considered acceptable.</p>
Flood Risk and Surface Water Management	<p>The site is at medium risk for surface water flooding (1%-3.3% chance each year). Surface water drainage from the development is proposed via attenuation tanks, which will connect to the existing South West Water (SWW) public sewer. The concerns raised by the Lead Local Flood Authority regarding SuDS and Surface Water Management can be addressed through a pre-commencement condition. The development is already connected to the public sewer, and the relatively small additional net internal floor area would not significantly impact the existing drainage system.</p>
Sustainable Construction and Energy Conservation	<p>The development will be constructed to a high sustainable standard. However, achieving BREEAM certification has been deemed unsuitable for this type of development, which integrates a new core building with older, refurbished halls. The overall lifetime carbon impact supports the retention and refurbishment of the larger halls, which will achieve significantly improved energy efficiency as part of the development.</p>

5.0 Description of site

The site for the Wonford Community and Learning Centre is located in St Loyes, with access via Burnthouse Lane. It is located within a residential area southeast of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Wonford). The site comprises the following:

- Sports hall and ancillary facilities
- Community Hall and Phoenix Centre (Youth Club)
- Outdoor changing facilities serving the Playing Fields (these facilities are not in use)
- Car park with 88 spaces

The site is surrounded as follows:

- **North:** Residential development. The nearest dwelling is approximately 40 metres from the existing building.
- **East:** Lidl supermarket and Well pharmacy. The parking area for Well pharmacy is directly adjacent to the site.
- **South:** Ludwell Valley Park. Running parallel with the southern site boundary is a pedestrian and cycle path, which forms part of the National Trail and Exeter Green Circle. Beyond this path lie the Playing Fields of Ludwell Valley Park.
- **West:** Residential development. The nearest dwelling is approximately 55 metres from the existing building.
- **Northwest:** Chestnut Children's Centre (Day Nursery), which is adjacent to the site.

Ludwell Valley Park is managed by Devon Wildlife Trust and forms part of the Valley Parks in the Exeter Local Plan First Review (saved Policy L1) and the Core Strategy (Policy CP16). It is designated as Landscape Setting under saved Policy LS1 and Policy CP16, and is included in Riverside and Ludwell Valley Park Masterplan.

The application site does not fall within a conservation area. The nearest conservation areas are located some distance away: west of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital site and to the north at Heavitree Park. There are no heritage assets on the application site itself. However, nearby heritage assets include Wonford Hospital, its gatehouse, and boundary walls, all of which are listed as Grade II. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and an area susceptible to surface water flooding (1 in 100 year).

6.0 Description of development

The proposal comprises the retention and refurbishment of the Sports Hall and Community Hall, the demolition of the central block (comprising the gym, Phoenix Centre, and outdoor changing facilities), and the construction of a café/hub, gym, studio, and ancillary facilities.

7.0 Supporting information provided by applicant

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Sustainability Strategy
- Energy Strategy
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Landscape Report
- Ecological Impact Assessment Report
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation
- SuDS and Drainage Strategy
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Geotechnical and geoenvironmental assessment
- Fire Engineering Statement

8.0 Relevant planning history

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date
07/0379/ECC	Alterations to glazed roof	PER	30.03.2007
06/2008/FUL	Alterations to replace entrance doors on north west elevation	PER	17.11.2006

9.0 List of constraints

- In an area susceptible to surface water flooding
- The site is in an area identified as having potential contamination
- Adjacent to Ludwell Valley Park/Landscape Setting Area
- Within Smoke Control Area

10.0 Consultations

Below is a summary of the consultee responses. All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the Council's website.

Sport England:

Sport England supports the proposed refurbishment of Wonford Sports Centre and Community and Learning Centre, recognising its role in enhancing community sports provision while maintaining its city-wide significance.

The proposal includes a new sports hub with improved facilities, including a refurbished sports hall, gym, and changing areas. Sport England welcomes the retention and enhancement of community sports facilities and the opportunity to provide a more inclusive, flexible space. Minor design refinements are encouraged, such as improvements to the changing rooms and shower facilities to better serve different user groups.

Consultation with National Governing Bodies for Sport has highlighted strong support for the scheme. The England and Wales Cricket Board and Devon Cricket Foundation welcome the prospect of improved indoor facilities, with interest in incorporating cricket nets. England Netball seeks to retain the existing walking netball programme, while the Football Foundation and Devon FA support the proposals but suggest minor adjustments to the layout of changing facilities for improved functionality and privacy.

Sport England does not object to the application, considering it to align with the National Planning Policy Framework by protecting and enhancing community sports provision.

Police Designing Out Crime Officer:

Devon and Cornwall Police acknowledge that the site has experienced high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in recent years. The integration of designing out crime principles in the scheme is welcomed, with further recommendations to enhance security and mitigate potential risks.

A key recommendation is the installation of an improved CCTV system covering key areas such as the car park, external building perimeter, MUGA, community garden, cycle parking, entrance, and internal communal areas. The system should be designed in coordination with lighting, comply with relevant British Standards, and be installed by accredited professionals.

Additional security measures are advised, including:

- Removal of potential climbing aids and mitigation of blank elevations to deter graffiti.
- Avoidance of recessed doorways and improved access control to restrict public access beyond community spaces.
- Implementation of vehicle mitigation measures to prevent unauthorised access.
- Defining the northern space with appropriate boundary treatment to deter misuse.
- Consideration of removing outdoor café seating when not in use to prevent unwanted congregation.

These measures will support crime prevention while ensuring a safe and secure environment for users of the facility.

South West Water:

South West Water (SWW) advises that a public 1050mm surface water sewer and a 600mm combined sewer are located in the vicinity of the site. Any building work within 5 metres of the surface water sewer or 3.5 metres of the combined sewer requires prior approval from SWW. Applicants should consult SWW's Asset Protection Team for guidance on development near these assets.

Regarding surface water drainage, the applicant must demonstrate that surface runoff will be managed according to the drainage hierarchy, prioritising sustainable solutions

such as infiltration, water reuse, or discharge to a surface water body. Discharge to the combined sewer is not acceptable unless all other options have been demonstrated as unfeasible.

For highway runoff disposal, consultation with the Highway Authority is required.

Local Highway Authority (Devon County Council):

The Local Highway Authority has no significant concerns regarding this application, as it represents a like-for-like development with no proposed highway changes.

They note and support the comments from the Principal Officer – Urban Design and Landscape regarding the positioning of disabled parking closer to the building to minimise the need for crossings. However, as this relates to internal site layout rather than the public highway, it does not present a material highway impact.

The development provides parking that aligns broadly with the Sustainable Transport SPD, including bicycle parking. There may be an opportunity to enhance the scheme by incorporating facilities for general bike maintenance, such as maintenance stands and access to tyre pumps.

Waste Planning Authority (Devon County Council):

Recommend that a condition is attached to any consent to require the submission of a Waste Audit Statement (WAS) prior to the commencement of the development.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) (Devon County Council):

The LLFA objected to this planning application initially because they did not consider that it satisfactorily conformed to Policy CP12 (Flood Risk) of Exeter City Council's Core Strategy (2012), which requires all developments to mitigate against flood risk and utilise sustainable drainage systems, where feasible and practical. The applicant was therefore required to submit additional information in order to demonstrate that all aspects of the proposed surface water drainage management system have been considered.

Environmental Health (ECC):

Environmental Health recommend approval subject to conditions regarding CEMP, Noise and Contaminated Land. They requested initially additional information regarding noise prior to determination but are now satisfied planning conditions regarding noise would be sufficient.

Net Zero Team (ECC):

The Net Zero Team provided comments relating to cycle storage, electric charging points for vehicles and airtightness of retained buildings.

Urban Design and Landscape Officer (ECC):

The proposed partial demolition, reconstruction, and landscape revisions are generally well-resolved, with no significant concerns regarding the architectural and urban design approach. The scale, materials, and finishes are deemed acceptable.

Recommendations in the consultation reply include:

- i. That the DDA parking spaces could be re-located to improve safety and convenience, linked to a raised crossing table to enhance pedestrian priority and align with local sustainable transport policies.
- ii. Further details on external artificial lighting for crime prevention should be submitted for approval and secured by condition.
- iii. Additionally, the open grass perimeter north of main parking presents an opportunity for ecological enhancement through native planting.
- iv. Details for hard landscaping, integrated seating, and external fittings like bike stands and bollards will also require further submission.

It is recommended that conditions be applied to secure details on lighting, pedestrian access and landscaping.

Dorset Natural Environment Team (covering vacant Ecology and Biodiversity Officer post):

The submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (Devon Wildlife Trust, September 2024) follows industry best practice, and its findings on impacts and mitigation for designated sites and protected species are sound. All proposed mitigation measures, including lighting, should be secured by condition. Additional precautions for hedgehogs should be implemented where suitable habitat exists, including controlled vegetation removal, escape routes from hazards, and preventing entanglement in netting or litter.

The scheme can achieve the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) threshold through on-site habitat creation. As it relies entirely on on-site delivery, BNG should be secured via a Section 106 agreement for 30 years, with a Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan submitted for review under the pre-commencement condition.

Public and Green Spaces Team (ECC): No response.

South West Electricity Board: No response.

Wales and West Utilities: No response.

RSPB: No response.

Living Options Devon: No response.

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service: No response.

Exeter Cycling Campaign: No response.

Exeter Civic Society: No response.

11.0 Representations

No public representations received.

12.0 Relevant policies

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) – in particular sections:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG):

- Biodiversity net gain
- Climate change
- Design: processes and tools
- Determining a planning application
- Effective use of land
- Flood risk and coastal change
- Healthy and safe communities
- Land affected by contamination
- Light pollution
- Natural environment
- Noise
- Open space, sports and recreation facilities
- Use of planning conditions

National Design Guide (MHCLG, 2021)

Biodiversity duty: public authority duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity (Natural England and DEFRA, 13 October 2014)

Development Plan

Core Strategy (Adopted 21 February 2012)

CP 10 - Community Facilities
CP12 - Flood Risk
CP13 - Decentralised energy networks
CP15 - Sustainable Construction
CP 16 - Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity
CP 17 - Design and local distinctiveness

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011 (Adopted 31 March 2005) – Saved Policies

AP1 - Design and location of development
AP2 - Sequential approach
L1 - Valley Parks
L7- Local sporting facilities
L8- Indoor sport facilities
CS2- Community Health Services
CS5 - Education and training facilities for adults
CS6 - Community halls
T1 - Hierarchy of modes of transport
T2 - Accessibility criteria
T3 - Encouraging use of sustainable modes of transport
T9 - Access to building by people with disabilities
T10 - Car parking standards
LS1 – Landscape Setting
EN4 - Flood risk
EN5 - Noise
DG1 - Objectives of urban design
DG7 - Crime prevention and safety

Devon Waste Plan 2011 – 2031 (Adopted 11 December 2014) (Devon County Council)

W4 – Waste Prevention
W21 – Making Provision for Waste Management

Other Material Considerations

The Exeter Plan – Publication Plan: Regulation 19 (December 2024) (Not Adopted)

S1: Spatial strategy
S2: Liveable Exeter Principles (Strategic policy)
CC1: Net zero Exeter (Strategic policy)
CC5: Future development standards (Strategic policy)
CC6: Embodied carbon
CC7: Development that is adaptive and resilient to climate change
CC8: Flood risk (Strategic policy)

STC1: Sustainable movement (Strategic policy)
STC2: The transport hierarchy (Strategic policy)
STC3: Supporting active travel (Strategic policy)
NE1: Landscape setting areas (Strategic policy)
NE2: Valley Parks (Strategic policy)
NE3: Biodiversity (Strategic policy)
NE4: Green infrastructure (Strategic policy)
NE6: Urban greening factor
NE7: Urban tree canopy cover
D1: Design principles (Strategic policy)
D2: Designing-out crime
HW2: Environmental quality, pollution and contaminated land
IF3: Community facilities (Strategic policy)
IF4: Open space, play areas, allotments and sport

Exeter City Council Supplementary Planning Documents:

Trees in Relation to Development SPD

Devon County Council Supplementary Planning Documents:

Minerals and Waste – not just County Matters Part 1: Waste Management and Infrastructure SPD (July 2015)

Liveable Exeter Principles – A city-wide initiative of transformational change (2022)

Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan (Exeter City Futures, April 2020)

Riverside & Ludwell Valley Parks Masterplan 2016-2026 (April 2016)

13.0 Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property

The consideration of the application in accordance with Council procedures will ensure that views of all those interested are considered. All comments from interested parties have been considered and reported within this report in summary with full text available via the Council's website.

Any interference with property rights is in the public interest and in accordance with the Town and Country planning Act 1990 regime for controlling the development of land. This recommendation is based on the consideration of the proposal against adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

14.0 Public sector equalities duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it involves having due regard in particular to the need to:

- a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of other persons who do not share it;
- c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove OR minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has had due regard to the matters set out in section 149 of the equality Act 2010.

15.0 Financial Issues

The requirements to set out the financial benefits arising from a planning application is set out in s155 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. This requires that local planning authorities include financial benefits in each report which is:-

- a) made by an officer or agent of the authority for the purposes of a non-delegated determination of an application for planning permission; and
- b) contains a recommendation as to how the authority should determine the application in accordance with section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The information or financial benefits must include a list of local financial considerations or benefits of a development which officers consider are likely to be obtained by the authority if the development is carried out including their value if known and should include whether the officer considers these to be material or not material.

Material considerations

The development is expected to create a modest increase in employment (0.5 full-time equivalent). However, the regeneration is also likely to help retain existing jobs (6.5 full-time equivalent), in addition to providing opportunities for unpaid volunteers, which are common for this type of use.

Non material considerations

The adopted CIL charging schedule applies a levy on certain proposals that create additional new floor space over and above what is already on a site. This proposal is not CIL liable.

The proposal will generate business rates.

16.0 Planning assessment

The key issues are:

1. The Principle of the Proposed Development
2. Scale, Design, Impact on Character and Appearance
3. Impact on Amenity of Surrounding Land and Properties
4. Impact on Landscape and Heritage Assets
5. Economic Benefits
6. Access and Parking
7. Impact on Trees and Biodiversity
8. Flood Risk and Surface Water Management
9. Sustainable Construction and Energy Conservation

1. The Principle of the Proposed Development

This proposal involves the regeneration of the existing use and is, therefore, acceptable in principle. Some parts of the site will be retained and refurbished, while others will be demolished and rebuilt with improved facilities. These changes do not alter the acceptability of the development in principle.

2. Scale, Design, Impact on Character and Appearance

The scale and massing of the proposal are considered appropriate for this location, offering an improved appearance and character. The massing will be increased, but does not differ significantly from the existing situation as only the mid-section of the existing building will be demolished and rebuilt with an increased internal floor area of 250 sqm, compared with the existing floor area of 2246 sqm.

The materials proposed for the new-build elements are regarded as an enhancement to the overall appearance. Additionally, the design of the new-build sections, along with

the internal layout, represents a significant improvement in terms of appearance, functionality and accessibility.

Sport England recommended minor internal design refinements, which have been taken into account in the revised drawings.

The Police Designing Out Crime Officer welcomed the integration of designing out crime principles in the scheme, but also made recommendations to enhance its security and mitigate potential risks. The recommendations have been considered in the revised drawings. The recommendations are not essential to justify the approval of this development and have therefore not been included as planning conditions.

The Urban Design and Landscape Officer's view is that the design is generally well-resolved with no concerns regarding the architecture and urban design approach. As the external artificial lighting is proposed for crime prevention, it is important this aspect of the scheme is conditioned. The open grass perimeter north of the main parking area presents an opportunity for ecological enhancement through native planting. It is noted that the details for the hard landscaping required further submission, this includes for instance integrated seating and external fittings like bike stands and bollards. Therefore, it is recommended that these matters are secured by conditions.

The application has been revised to take into account the recommendations of consultees. Planning conditions for a detailed scheme for landscaping and lighting will also be added.

Overall, the design of the proposal is considered acceptable and to accord with the Council's design policies. It will improve the appearance of the building and its relationship to its surroundings, providing a far more welcoming health hub for the local community.

3. Impact on Amenity

The impact of the proposed development on the amenity of surrounding properties has been assessed with regard to privacy, outlook, natural light, overshadowing, noise and lighting. The impacts are considered to be negligible and it is concluded that it will not result in unacceptable harm.

Environmental Health has recommended planning conditions to secure a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to minimise construction impacts, noise mitigation and the remediation measures identified in the submitted Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Assessment. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to its impact on local amenity.

4. Impact on Landscape and Heritage Assets

The site is located adjacent to Ludwell Valley Park, which is also designated a Landscape Setting Area. The proposals will improve the appearance of the building when viewed from the park, including a large area of glazing providing views inside the building and the activity within. This will reactivate this edge, bringing life and vitality to the southern part of the site and the adjoining area of parkland. It is considered that this will enhance the character of Ludwell Valley Park and the Landscape Setting Area.

There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site, therefore the proposed development will not harm the setting of any heritage assets.

5. Economic Benefits

Due to the nature of this type of development, there are significant public health and social benefits, although there are no direct economic benefits. While the direct economic benefits may be limited, the project will generate employment opportunities during the construction phase and create a slight increase in jobs once operational, particularly with the addition of the new café.

6. Access and Parking

The existing vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian access to the site will remain largely unchanged, with some improvements that do not significantly alter the general layout. There are no significant changes to the parking arrangements, and the number of car parking spaces will remain the same. The existing vehicle access and parking arrangements are considered acceptable, particularly as the development has sought to enhance the current situation. Secure and strategically located near the main entrance and café terrace, the cycle storage will replace existing unregulated cycle parking, enhancing accessibility and benefiting visually impaired visitors. The development also improves pedestrian routes with appropriate crossings, dropped kerbs, and blister paving for better accessibility.

The Urban Design and Landscape Officer recommended that the disabled parking spaces should be re-located nearer to the main entrance and a raised table provided to enhance pedestrian priority and to improve safety and convenience, aligning with local sustainable transport policies. The application has been revised accordingly. The accessible parking spaces will therefore be relocated closer to the entrance, sharing the improved pedestrian access with a raised crossing table from Burnthouse Lane.

The Net Zero Team recommended electric charging points for vehicles. This was already proposed in the Design and Access Statement: one double electric charging point will be provided for two cars, including one serving a disabled parking space. This provision will be secured by a planning condition.

Overall, the proposed development, as revised, is considered acceptable with regard to access and parking matters, subject to the imposition of the conditions discussed.

7. Impact on Trees and Biodiversity

One small tree (category C2) is proposed for removal, but 11 new trees will be planted. Biodiversity enhancements will be provided through new habitats, soft landscaping, and the installation of bird and bat boxes, achieving a substantial improvement in on-site biodiversity. The impact on trees and biodiversity is therefore considered acceptable as more than 10% biodiversity net gain will be achieved. As the development relies entirely on on-site delivery, BNG should be secured via a Section 106 agreement for 30 years, with a Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan submitted for review under the pre-commencement condition.

As suggested by the Council's ecology advisors, additional biodiversity measures are achievable, including for hedgehogs, which can be secured by condition.

With reference to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, this development has been screened in respect of the need for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and given the nature and scale of the development it has been concluded that the proposal does not require an AA.

8. Flood Risk and Surface Water Management

Saved Policy EN4 does not permit development if it would be at risk of flooding. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and the proposed development is classified as 'less vulnerable' (see PPG). 'Less vulnerable' uses are acceptable in Flood Zone 1, therefore the proposal accords with saved Policy EN4.

Policy CP12 requires all development proposals to mitigate against flood risk utilising SuDS where feasible and practical. The site is at medium risk for surface water flooding (1%-3.3% chance each year). Surface water drainage from the development is proposed via attenuation tanks, which will connect to the existing South West Water (SWW) public sewer.

The concerns raised by the Lead Local Flood Authority regarding SuDS and Surface Water Management can be addressed through a pre-commencement condition. The development is already connected to the public sewer, and the relatively small additional net internal floor area will not significantly impact the existing drainage system.

The Geotechnical Report has shown that traditional SuDS measures relying on infiltration are not feasible. The limited site, which is predominantly built-up or covered with impermeable surfaces, restricts the possibility of implementing a major open water solution. Instead, the development proposes attenuation tanks before discharging into

the public sewer, improving the current drainage situation and providing better runoff management than the existing conditions.

It is deemed that this development cannot be redesigned to achieve greenfield runoff rates. However, with pre-commencement conditions relating to SuDS and Surface Water Management, the development will comply with saved Policy EN4 and Policy CP12.

9. Sustainable Construction and Energy Conservation

Policy CP15 requires development proposals to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction methods will be incorporated. The development will be constructed to a high sustainable standard. However, achieving BREEAM certification has been deemed unsuitable for this type of development, which integrates a new core building with older, refurbished halls. The overall lifetime carbon impact supports the retention and refurbishment of the larger halls, which will achieve significantly improved energy efficiency as part of the development.

The Net Zero Team has recommended that the airtightness of the retained buildings should be improved. The proposed thermal strategy however treats the new extension as an independent building, designed to achieve a high level of energy performance. Although the existing hall's envelope will not be upgraded for insulation and airtightness, energy efficiency improvements have been considered. External doors and windows will be replaced to meet current U-value standards. While the design strategy includes future upgrades to the mechanical ventilation and heating systems, only the replacement of external doors and windows is included in this application.

The proposed arrangements in the submitted Energy & Sustainability Strategy and its Appendices, are deemed sufficient to make the development compliant with Policy CP15, given only part of the development will be new built and the scheme offers significant improvement of the energy performance and carbon emission reduction compared with the existing arrangement. The proposed arrangements in the Energy & Sustainability Strategy will be secured by a planning condition.

17.0 Conclusion

Applications for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the development plan (NPPF para 2), although decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF para 11). However, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making (NPPF para 12).

The development is considered to accord with the Development Plan as a whole and the NPPF, with no harmful impacts to its surroundings. It will enhance the quality of the health facilities on offer to the local community and have a positive impact on the

character and appearance of the area. As such, this application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions discussed above.

18.0 Recommendation

Grant permission with the following conditions:

(Details to be provided on the Additional Information Update Sheet before Planning Committee)