

Committee: **Regulatory  
Planning Committee**

Date: **11 December 2024**

Report by: **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

Proposal: **Renovation and extension of Hollington Youth Hub, involving: demolition of previous extensions and detached garage; renovation and new windows to the original building; new entrance canopy to the front, and extensions to the side and rear, with associated landscaping and access improvements, external lighting and roof-mounted renewable energy equipment.**

Site Address: **Hollington Youth Centre, Wishing Tree Road North, St Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex, TN38 9LL**

Applicant: **Children's Services Department - Mr Colin Edgley**

Application No. **HS/3510/CC**

Key Issues: **1) Reason for the development  
2) Design and Scale  
3) Access and Parking  
4) Sustainability**

Contact Officer: **Miss Kiran Sajjan**

Local Member: **Councillor Phil Scott**

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## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. To grant planning permission subject to conditions as indicated in paragraph 8.1 of this report.**

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## **CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT.**

### **1. The Site and Surroundings**

1.1 Hollington Youth Hub (also known as Hollington Youth Centre) lies within the heart of Hollington, a residential suburb of Hastings and St Leonards. The existing building comprises of the pitched roof Victorian red brick structure of one and two storeys, and flat-roofed side and rear extensions added in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

1.2 The site is bounded by Hollington Community Centre to the east and a hard surfaced car parking area to the south-east which is shared by the community centre and youth hub. Both the community centre and car park are within the ownership of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) however they do not form part of the application site. To the south, the site is bounded by Wishing Tree Convenience Store. The youth hub fronts onto Wishing Tree Road North. Old Church Road runs east-west to the north of the site.

## **2. The Proposal**

2.1 Planning permission is sought to remodel the existing youth hub facility. The works include the demolition of the existing ad-hoc extensions to the main Victorian section of the youth hub and replacement with new extensions of a uniform architectural style. The total proposed additional gross external floorspace is 184 square metres. The garage outbuilding located to the north of the youth hub building would also be demolished as part of the works. A major part of the proposal consists of development extending the rear of the sports hall. Various internal reconfiguration works would be undertaken to improve the internal layout and allow for additional services such as a fitness suite.

2.2 The internal reconfigurations mean the existing sports hall would be reduced significantly requiring a rear extension to mitigate this loss. The existing sports hall currently measures 16.7m x 11.5m and the proposed sports hall measures 12.8m x 11.5m (approximate internal dimensions). Therefore, the length of the sports hall will reduce by approximately 3.9 metres as a result of the proposed alterations.

2.3 The sports hall extension would be finished in red metal cladding. Two additional single-storey extensions would flank the extended sports hall to the north and south. These extensions would be finished in red brick, to complement the brickwork of the original building.

2.4 The proposal also comprises a new covered entrance space, which will provide a clear point of entrance. The entrance space would take the form of a timber and glass structure. Moreover, over time, various windows within the original Victorian part of the building have been blocked up. The proposal would reinstate many of these windows.

2.5 Stepped access into the building will be removed and replaced with level access points and external lighting would be installed to aid accessibility and security.

2.6 The proposal includes the provision of photovoltaic panels on the section of flat roof above the extended sports hall. Air source heat pumps would also be installed.

## **3. Site History**

3.1 The planning history for the site relates to permissions issued by Hastings Borough Council. The relevant permissions are listed below:

HS/FA/81/00409 | Erection of single-storey extension – APPROVED 08.07.1981

HS/FA/75/00618 | Extension of use to include use for Playgroup at Hollington Youth Centre – APPROVED 19.11.1975

HS/72/01498 | Erection of extension to existing youth centre incorporating badminton hall, table tennis, etc with new vehicular access. APPROVED 01.12.1972

HS/65/00764 | Alterations and extensions to convert ESN School to Youth Centre. APPROVED 27.07.1965

#### **4. Consultations and Representations**

4.1 Hastings Borough Council – Raise no objections to the proposal as it will provide a positive change for the community. The proposal is considered to accord with the policies in the Hastings Local Plan. The Council's response incorporates comments from the Leisure Development Manager who acknowledges that the facility is dedicated to young people, rather than a formal sports venue and its design should be influenced by local demand.

4.2 NatureSpace - Wishes to make no comments as the proposed development is not considered to be relevant to the District Licensing Scheme and they consider there would be no likely impact on great crested newts or their habitats.

4.3 County Landscape Architect – Supports the application as the proposal will provide an opportunity to enhance the streetscape.

4.4 Highway Authority - Does not consider it necessary to provide formal comments, however suggests that the 'Minor Planning Application Guidance (2017)' document is consulted.

4.5 Flood Risk Management ESCC – Raise no objections.

4.6 Councillor Phil Scott, Local Member – Supports the proposal in principle, however raises the following issues: 1) lack of car parking; 2) poor condition of existing car park; 3) query regarding the location of contractor parking; and 4) reduction in sports hall size.

4.7 Local Representations - One letter of representation has been received from a resident of Old Church Road. The resident notes that whilst they support the development, they have some concerns regarding the number of windows on the northern elevation of the building resulting in the loss of privacy for occupiers of properties on Old Church Road. Concerns are also raised regarding staff and minibus on-street parking resulting in less parking for residents of the surrounding area.

Response from Councillor Paul Barnett, Hastings Borough Ward Councillor for Hollington: Raises objections on the following grounds: 1) Insufficient consultation has been carried out; 2) Loss of sports facilities due to the reduction of the size of the sports hall which may not be suitable for certain sports; 3) Lack of parking provision and 4) Roof design would not prevent people climbing onto the roof as has been the case at the neighbouring community centre building.

Response from Councillor John Cannan, Hastings Borough Ward Councillor for Wishing Tree: Councillor Cannan's response echoes concerns raised by Councillor Barnett.

## **5. The Development Plan policies of relevance to this decision are:**

5.1 The Hastings Planning Strategy 2014: Policy SC1 (Overall Strategy for Managing Change in a Sustainable Way).

5.2 The Hastings Development Management Plan 2015: Policies DM1 (Design Principles), DM3 (General Amenity), DM4 (General Access) and HC3 (Community Facilities).

5.3 East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan 2013: Policy WMP 3d (Minimising and Managing Waste During Construction, Demolition and Excavation).

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023:

The NPPF does not change the status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making but it does constitute guidance as a material consideration in determining planning applications. Part 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities), is of relevance to this proposal.

5.5 East Sussex County Council's Climate Emergency Plan 2023-2025

Although not part of the Development Plan, the Climate Emergency Plan states that the Council aims to become net zero as soon as possible through various pathways including improving the energy efficiency of buildings.

The objective of carbon neutrality is echoed in the Council Plan 2024/25.

## **6. Considerations**

### **Reason for the development**

6.1 Policy HC3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan has regard to community facilities and states that "proposals for the provision of community facilities will be granted planning permission provided that the development is acceptable in terms of location, design, access and impact on the locality, and is in general conformity with other policies of this Plan, such as DM1 and DM3"

6.2 The applicant has been successful in securing grant funding for improvements to the youth facility in Hollington. Various constraints and areas

for improvement have been identified in the existing facility which this proposal aims to address. The main issues identified include:

- Access into the building is problematic as there are a series of steps and ramps.
- The current internal configuration of the building requires users to travel through the sports hall to access each side of the building.
- There is no clear entrance to the building.
- The existing extensions are considered to detract from the original Victorian building.
- The existing facilities such as the music room, kitchen and art room are small which limits the number of users of the facility.

6.3 The purpose of the development is to benefit existing users of the facility and attract more visitors from the local area. The current youth centre facility is only able to support up to around 35 people, which include the centre users as well as the staff. At present, the centre is only able to work with approximately 80 young people every week. It is anticipated that the proposals will boost the capacity of the building and could have up to around 75 persons on the site at any one time, working with approximately 160 young people per week. The proposed internal reconfigurations and extensions aim to improve the functionality of the building by providing improvements to the layout and larger spaces to accommodate youth activities.

### **Design and Scale**

6.4 Policy SC1 of the Hastings Planning Strategy states that growth and change in the Borough will be managed by, *inter alia*, requiring high quality distinctive architecture and urban design which adds to local character and sense of place. Policy DM1 of the Hastings Development Management Plan states that all proposals must reach a good standard of design through, *inter alia*, protecting and enhancing local character, and that assessments of visual impact, including the height, scale and form of development, should be appropriate to the location. Policy DM3 of the Development Management Plan states that permission will be given for development where the use of the scale, form, height, mass, and density of any building or buildings, reduces or avoids any adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

6.5 The proposal aims to improve the appearance of the building by removing unsightly additions to the building. The existing extensions do not relate well to the historic design of the original building. Removing the existing extensions would provide an opportunity to make better use of the space available on site to extend the building in a way which is sympathetic to the design and appearance of the original Victorian building. Moreover, the proposed materials for the extensions relate well to the red brick of the original building and provide a more cohesive outlook within the streetscape.

6.6 The scale and mass of the extensions would not be out of character. The immediate surroundings of the site to the south, north and west are characterised by a mix of medium density housing of varying styles. To the east

is a relatively large-scale industrial style building which currently accommodates the Community Centre. The size, scale and height of nearby development is therefore diverse varying from small domestic to medium/large institutional. Within that context it is considered the scale of the proposal will not be out of character with neighbouring development. The proposed extensions will be single storey and set well below the ridge height of the existing building.

6.7 The neighbour representation received raises some concerns about loss of privacy due to the increase in window openings on the northern elevation of the building. Some of the openings are historic and have been blocked up over the years. It is considered that reinstating the windows would positively contribute to the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area. Additional windows are proposed to the single storey extension of the northern elevation, these would be to provide natural light to the art room and music room. It is considered that there is sufficient intervening distance between the youth facility and the properties on Old Church Road to avoid overlooking. The only new additional windows situated above ground floor level are the proposed high-level windows to serve the sports hall, and therefore there will be no harmful impact on privacy.

#### *Lighting*

6.8 A combination of wall-mounted downlights and zero upward light lanterns will be used to illuminate the external seating areas and pedestrian access pathways. Wall-mounted downlights will focus light downward, reducing glare and preventing light spill into neighbouring properties, while the zero upward light lanterns will ensure compliance with dark sky guidelines, minimising light pollution. A motion sensor floodlight would be installed at the rear of the building for security purposes. It is considered that any adverse impact from the proposed external lighting would be negligible, particularly as the motion sensor lighting would be calibrated to only remain on for a duration of 2 minutes after activation.

6.9 Overall, the design of the proposal would improve the outlook of the youth centre within its exposed location on the junction of Wishing Tree Road North and Old Church Road. It is therefore considered to accord with Policy SC1 of the Hastings Planning Strategy and Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan.

#### *Rooftop plant*

6.10 Four pieces of rooftop plant are proposed on the roof of the sports hall. The plant comprises of 2 condensers and 2 heat pump units. A noise assessment has been submitted in support of the application which concludes that noise levels from the plant are modelled to be below the current background noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receptors, as well as below the levels recommended in BS8233:2014 as suitable for sleeping, so are unlikely to have an impact that requires mitigation. However, the report advises the installation of anti-vibration mounts which is recommended as a condition.

The noise impact from the plant would be minor and is considered to be acceptable.

### *Reduction of sports hall*

6.11 The design proposes a café and seating area at the front of the building, which will be inviting to visitors upon arrival and will provide additional amenity. However, in order to accommodate this amenity space a reduction in the sports hall space is necessary.

6.12 The existing sports hall is too small to cater for any formal sports, other than Judo and Table Tennis. The proposed sports hall will continue to meet the Sport England minimum dimensions for Judo and Table Tennis. Therefore, the proposed reduction in the length of the sports hall will not result in the loss of any formal sports provision. The sports hall will continue to be used for the same youth activities as currently provided, including martial arts classes, table tennis, dance classes, informal football, basketball and other ball sports such as handball.

6.13 The proposed development would provide an improved sports space by ensuring the users of the building no longer have to use the sports hall as a thoroughfare to access other spaces within the building. On balance, whilst there would be a reduction in the size of the sports hall, which is regrettable, the proposed smaller sports hall is considered to be sufficient for the uses offered by the youth hub.

### **Access and Parking**

6.14 Policy DM4 of the Hastings Development Management Plan states that, *inter alia*, planning permission will be granted where safe access into (and within) the development for all users is provided, public transport provision, pedestrian and cycle access are promoted and enhanced and good accessibility is provided for all, especially for people with a physical or sensory impairment.

6.15 There is an existing driveway at the northern corner of the youth hub building at the junction of Wishing Tree Road North and Old Church Road, which is currently used for minibus parking. The proposal is to remove this parking space and incorporate this area into the landscaping scheme, which will remove the future movement on and off the existing parking bay on the corner of an existing highway junction, making it safer overall. The applicant has confirmed that the minibus which is used for a mobile outreach programme would be relocated to another East Sussex facility and is no longer required at Hollington Youth Hub. However, if there is a continued need for a minibus parking space at the site, this can be relocated to the existing parking area on the retained land to the rear of the application site.

6.16 The proposed development will not result in the loss of any visitor parking spaces, and staff and visitors can continue to use the adjacent ESCC car park to the rear of the site and shared with the Community Centre. Staff and

visitors can also continue to park on-street, close to the youth hub, where there are no parking restrictions. Moreover, the site is located close to public transport links. During pre-application consultations with the public, the applicant identified that the most common mode of transport for existing users of the facility was walking or cycling. A cycle shelter will be provided as part of the proposed works and the development will result in improved pedestrian access to the site to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

### *Construction parking*

6.17 It is anticipated that construction vehicles and equipment will be brought to the site via the adjacent ESCC car park or delivered to the front of the building on Wishing Tree Road North, and that contractors' vehicles will park either in the adjacent ESCC car park or on-street. A condition is recommended to secure the details relating to the construction period within a Construction Management Plan.

6.18 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to any adverse impact to the surrounding highway network. The proposal accords with the provisions of Policy DM4 of the Hastings Development Management Plan.

### **Sustainability**

6.19 East Sussex County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and pledged to become a carbon neutral Authority by 2050.

6.20 Solar panels would be installed on the flat roof of the sports hall. Views of the panels would be restricted, with only some potential glimpsed views from the upper floors of neighbouring development. By way of design, glare from the panels would not cause adverse effects as sunlight would be absorbed not reflected. Other measures proposed to improve the efficiency of the building include the installation of air source heat pumps, the removal of gas and replacement with electric for all heat and power to the building, single glazed and draughty windows are to be replaced with new high-efficiency windows and all lighting will be replaced with LED low wattage lighting and much of the building will have motion-sensor lighting to reduce electricity usage.

6.21 These measures would contribute towards the County Council's zero carbon ambitions and have a positive impact on the environment.

## **7. Conclusion and reasons for approval**

7.1 In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 Planning permission is sought to extend the existing Hollington Youth Centre to improve the facility and offer a better level of service to young people



in the locality. The design and scale of the extension would improve the outlook of the facility and offer a design suitable for the use of the building without adversely affecting the amenity of the locality or occupiers of neighbouring properties. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy SC1 of the Hastings Planning Strategy 2014 and Policies DM1, DM3, DM4 and HC3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015. The proposal is supported by the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

7.3 In determining this planning application, the County Council has worked with the applicant and agent in a positive and proactive manner. The Council has also sought views from consultees and neighbours and has considered these in preparing the recommendation. This approach has been taken positively and proactively in accordance with the requirement in the NPPF, and as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

7.4 There are no other material considerations, and the decision should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 To recommend the Planning Committee to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed in the Schedule of Approved Plans and Documents.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Construction

3. No development shall take place, including any ground works or works of demolition, until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to in full throughout the entire construction period. The Plan shall provide details of but not be restricted to the following matters:

- the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction,
- the method of access and egress and routing of vehicles during construction,
- the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors,

- the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste,
- the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development,
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding,
- the provision and utilisation of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders),
- details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area in accordance with Policy DM4 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015.

4. Prior to any groundworks a 'Site Waste Management Plan' including measures to minimise waste arisings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Thereafter, the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure appropriate methods for dealing with waste materials are adopted, in accordance with Policy WMP3A of the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2013.

#### Landscape

5. Prior to the development being brought into use, a detailed planting scheme and management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. The planting shall include details of numbers, spacing and species for all planted areas.

The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure the proposed planting scheme is suitable for the location.

6. Prior to the development being brought into use, details of all hard landscape materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

The approved details shall thereafter be implemented in full and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015 and to ensure the materials are appropriate for the site and location.

#### Noise

7. The four individual pieces of rooftop plant hereby approved, as listed in section 2.3 of the 'Acoustic South East BS4142:2014-A1:2019 Assessment – Plant Assessment' dated 01/10/2024, shall not be operational at any time other than between the hours of 0600 to 2100 Monday to Sunday (inclusive), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015.

8. The four individual pieces of rooftop plant hereby approved, as listed in section 2.3 of the 'Acoustic South East BS4142:2014-A1:2019 Assessment – Plant Assessment' dated 01/10/2024, shall be installed and maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions. All rooftop plant shall be fitted with anti-vibration mounts, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015.

9. The noise rating level from the operation of the plant will, at all times, not exceed the background noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive receptors, as measured in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019'.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015.

#### Other

10. Development shall not commence above ground level until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate appearance of the development in the area in accordance with Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015.

11. All external lighting shall be switched off between the hours of 22:00 and 07:30, except for motion sensor security lights, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015.

## INFORMATIVE

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless: (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan. The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be East Sussex County Council. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Based on the information available this permission does not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed is relevant.

### Schedule of Approved Plans and Documents

Planning Statement, Transport Statement, Noise Impact Assessment, Energy Statement, External Lighting Report, Site Location Plan , Proposed Site Plan , External Lighting Plan Ground Floor, Roof Level Lighting Layout, External Lighting Spec Sheet Ex2 Rear Car Park, External Lighting Spec Sheet Ex3 Below Entrance Canopy, Existing Ground Floor Plan 02224 PI 200, Existing First Floor Plan 02224 PI 201, Existing Elevations 02224 PI 300, Existing And Proposed Street Elevations 02224 PI 326, Existing And Proposed Site Sections 02224 PI 400, Existing And Proposed Site Sections 02224 PI 401, Existing And Proposed Site Sections 02224 PI 402, Demolition Plan Ground Floor 02224 PI 203, Demolition Plan First Floor 02224 PI 204, Proposed Ground Floor Plan 02224 PI 225, Proposed First Floor Plan 02224 PI 226, Proposed Elevations 02224 PI 325, Proposed External Works Plan 02224 PI 220, Proposed Street Elevations Showing New Ramp 02224 PI 327, Design And Access Statement Rev A, Planning Addendum - Sports Hall Facility

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Date: 2 December 2024

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Application File HS/3510/CC

The Development Plan