**DELEGATED REPORT**

Report considered and agreed by Team Manager, Planning Policy & Development

Signed: *Sarah Iles* Date: 9 February 2024

Report considered and agreed by Principal Planner, Planning Policy & Development Management

Signed: *Mrs Pat Randall* Date: 19 January 2024

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

Proposal: **Variation of Condition 2 of planning approval WD/3474/CC to incorporate: reduction in the scale of the building, footprint, and height, changes to external materials, barn cladding and landscaping amendments**

Site Address: **Heathfield Youth Centre, High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 0UP**

Applicant: **Mr Liam Russell, LRA Retinue Limited**

Application No. **WD/3488/CC**

Key Issues: **(i) Visual impact (ii) Neighbouring Amenity (iii) Parking and Vehicular Access**

Contact Officer: **Matthew Kitchener - 01273 481833**

Local Member: **Councillor Anne Cross**

## RESOLUTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT:

**Under the powers delegated to me by the Governance Committee, I resolve to approve the proposal subject to the conditions set out in this recommendation.**

## CONSIDERATION OF RELEVANT PLANNING MATTERS

1. **The Site and Surroundings**

1.1 The application site is a youth centre located to the west of Heathfield town centre. The centre was constructed in the 1950’s and was extended in the 70’s. The two-storey building has grass landscaping to the southern High Street elevation and hard surface parking to the north and west sides and has a well planted boundary to the west with the adjoining property. Within the site against the northern boundary is a large barn structure that has mesh fencing elevations and contains an indoor football pitch and basketball hoops. To the north of the site is an area of ancient woodland, to the east is vehicular access to the adjacent Co-Op supermarket and to the centre itself. On the western boundary is a residential property which is screened from the youth centre by established tree planting and shrubs.

1.2 The youth centre is a two-storey and part single storey building constructed from brick with a pitched tiled roof and later flat roof addition. The building is owned by East Sussex County Council. The site is on a slope which falls away from the High Street towards the northern boundary and the ancient woodland beyond.

1. **The Proposal**

2.1 The proposal is to demolish the existing ageing youth centre and replace with a new purpose built sustainably constructed two storey youth centre building. This proposal is to reduce the size of the previously approved replacement youth centre slightly in order to value engineer the project. It is also proposed to clad the existing barn structure at the rear of the site to upgrade it and enable it to be utilised more regularly.

1. **Site History**

3.1 WD/3474/CC - Existing brick building is deemed unfit for purpose as a youth centre and it is proposed to be demolished and a new two-storey youth centre building to be built in its place that is fully-accessible, energy-efficient, spacious and future-proof. The existing steel-framed barn in the north of the site will be retained and given a update to the cladding to improve its usability as an external activity hall – Approved 2023

1. **Consultations and Representations**
   1. Wealden District Council – No objection.
   2. Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council – Support the application.

4.3 Other representations – None received.

1. **The Development Plan and other policies of relevance to this decision are:**

5.1 Wealden Local Plan 1998: Saved Policies GD1 (New Development), EN1 (Sustainable Development), EN3 (Renewable Energy), EN6 (High Weald AONB), EN28 (Facilities for Disabilities), EN27 (Layout and Design of Development) and EN29 (Light Pollution).

Policies in the Wealden Local Plan 1998 that are not replaced are considered ‘saved’ and remain of relevance until they are superseded by further Development Plan documents.

5.2 Wealden Core Strategy 2013: Policies WCS7 – (Effective Provision of Infrastructure), SPO13 (Good Design) and WCS14 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development).

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023: Paragraph 97 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should provide for “social, recreational and cultural facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities” and Paragraph 135 (b) supports developments that are “visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping”.

5.4 High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019: Objective S3 states that proposals should “enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design”.

1. **Considerations**

**Visual Impact**

6.1 The current Youth Centre is a single and part two-story brick-built building located on a sloping site set down from Heathfield High Street. The original flat roof single storey building was extended at the rear to form a two-storey element with a pitched roof. Further small-scale additions were constructed over the years and the existing building is now an unsightly mix of developments that has aged badly in terms of appearance and functionality of internal space. The building is surrounded to the east side and rear by hardstanding and at the rear of the site is a steel framed barn that is used as an internal play space for ball sports. The barn is clad with steel mesh. To the west side of the site is established planting that forms a boundary between the centre and the adjacent residential property. The site is adjacent to the High Weald National Landscape area and an area of Ancient Woodland which is adjacent to the northern boundary.

6.2 An application was approved in June 2023 (WD/3474/CC) to replace the existing youth centre building with a new building. Since this approval costings for the development have increased and it has now been decided to reduce the overall size of the building in order to reduce build costs. The footprint of the building has been reduced at the west and north elevation and the height of the main foyer has been slightly reduced making the building shorter in width and length and lower. The design and overall appearance will remain the same and the slight reduction in footprint of the building will allow additional planting to take place to further improve biodiversity in the area. Although the building is being slightly reduced in size this will not impact on the youth facilities being offered on site.

6.3 This amended proposal results in the building measuring 17m wide on average and 20m wide (at the entrance area which is the widest part) x 35m long with a total height of approximately 5.8m for the two-storey element towards the rear and 5m for the section nearest the main road. The new building sits upon the same footprint as the current centre and is sited 2m from the western boundary of the site where it adjoins the neighbouring residential property. The boundary between the youth centre and the adjoining dwelling is heavily planted with shrubs and trees to form an effective screening barrier between the two properties.

6.4 The proposed external material palette for the building is not changing from that previously approved. The only external alteration to materials is to the west elevation where the gold cladding will be replaced by brick cladding to match the brick on the rest of the building. The main body of the building will continue to be clad in a gold-coloured zinc material. This is a subdued gold/bronze colour rather than an overtly yellow gold colour in appearance. It is considered that the colour of the cladding, although not reflected in the local architectural vernacular of the High Street, will result in a bold and contemporary appearance to the building and the combination of the materials palette and the crisply designed lines of the new building will result in an enhancement to the appearance of the streetscene in this part of Heathfield. The choice of material and colour is considered to support the use of the building in appealing to young people as well as helping the appearance of a relatively unfussy building appear contemporary and stylish and will hopefully prove attractive to prospective users of the building and its facilities. The brick stock at the lower level and the individual panelled areas has been selected to reflect the existing brick stock of the local area. It is also proposed to rearrange the window design and placement on the east elevation however this will not impact on the overall design of the building or affect the amenity of the surrounding area due to the very minor nature of the alterations in terms of design and placement. It is considered that the high-quality appearance of the proposed materials and their reference to the High Weald National Landscape (previously AONB) colour study complies with Saved Policy EN27 and Policies SPO13 and WCS14 of the Wealden Local Plan and Objective S3 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and paragraph 130 (b) of the NPPF.

6.5 It is proposed to install ‘hit and miss’ timber cladding to the barn structure at the rear of the site in order to improve the useability of the indoor play space whilst not altering the footprint or physical envelope of the building. It was previously proposed to install metal cladding however this is now being amended to reduce costs and it is also considered that the timber cladding will enhance the appearance of the barn in its setting adjacent to the ancient woodland and High Weald. The works proposed to the barn are however wholly within the existing envelope of the structure and therefore it is not considered that there will be any negative impacts on either of those designations and indeed the use of perforated steel will result in a reduction in the amount of light “spill” from the barn when in use in the evenings. It is considered that these works will not negatively impact on the setting of the AONB or impact on the protected trees within the Ancient Woodland and therefore comply with the aims and objectives of the High Weald National Landscape (AONB) Management Plan and Saved Policy EN29 of the Wealden Local Plan.

**Neighbouring Amenity**

6.6 The nearest residential property to the development is directly on the west side of the property and shares a boundary with the centre. Due to the amended width of the building the west side elevation is now set back approximately 2 m from the boundary with the neighbouring property. The boundary between the two properties comprises of established tree and shrub planting which forms an effective screen between the two sites. This planting is proposed to be retained and enhanced as part of the development proposal. To protect the amenity of the occupants of the dwelling from overlooking there are no windows proposed at first floor level on the western elevation of the new building. The windows at ground floor would look out onto the planting as the application site is set down lower than the adjoining dwelling. No external lighting or other works are proposed on the west side of the centre. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan.

**Parking and Vehicular Access**

6.7 There are no changes to the parking and vehicle access proposed and therefore it is considered that the proposal will not result in any parking and access concerns and complies with Saved Policy TR3 (Traffic Impact of New Development) of the Wealden Local Plan.

1. **Conclusions 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 It is considered that this amended proposal to reduce the size and scale of the previously approved building will result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would result in the enhancement in the provision of youth services in the surrounding area, the scheme would not negatively impact on the setting of the adjacent AONB and would not impact on vehicular parking provision and access at the site in accordance with Saved Policies EN27 (Design), EN28 (Access for the Disabled), and TR3 (Traffic Impact Of New Development) and Policies WCS7 (Effective Provision of Infrastructure), SPO13 (Good Design) and WCS14 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) of the Wealden Local Plan and Objective S3 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and would therefore accord with Paragraphs 97 and 135(b) of the NPPF.

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 plans.

1. **Recommendation**

8.1 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.

Landscaping and Ecology

3. The hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out as per the ‘Landscape Masterplan Strategy Heathfield Youth Centre, Heathfield – Drawing No: LLD2923-LAN-DWG-010 Rev 02'.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in the locality, and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

4. The building shall not be occupied until details of the planting scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Details of the planting scheme should be in accordance with the ‘Landscape Masterplan Strategy Heathfield Youth Centre, Heathfield – Drawing No: LLD2923-LAN-DWG-010 Rev 02'. The planting scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in the locality, and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

5. An Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted prior to works commencing on site demonstrating how trees and tree roots are to be protected during development in accordance with BS5837: 2012, Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in the locality, to protect the trees on site and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

6. The development shall take place in accordance with the previously approved ecological design strategy (EDS) dated 01/12/23, Reference No: 5495E/23/01. The EDS shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the measures considered necessary to compensate for the loss of habitats and enhance the site to provide a net gain for biodiversity as required by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

7. All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) (PJC, 10.03.2023, Ref: 5146E/23/01) and Bat Emergence Survey Report (PJC, 22 May 2023, Ref: 5209E/23/01) as already submitted with planning approval WD/3474/CC and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: To ensure that the measures considered necessary as part of the ecological impact assessment are carried out as specified, and to provide a net gain for biodiversity as required by paragraphs 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Construction and Operation

8. The zinc cladding to be used externally on the youth centre building shall be ‘Rheinzink-Prismo – Gold’ and the external brick cladding for the building shall be ‘Michelmersh Freshfield Lane, Selected Dark’ unless otherwise agreed 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 Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan.

9. The works to clad the barn shall not commence until details and/or samples of the material to be used for the cladding 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 Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan.

10. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Environment, use of the external activity areas and external lighting shall be limited to between the hours of 09:00 - 21:30 Monday-Sunday including Bank Holidays. The external security lighting shall be limited to operation between the hours of 21:30 – 09:00 and on a motion sensor system as per the ‘External Lighting Report P01/S2 – April 2023 – Document ref: J1111-TGL-HY-XX-RP-E-2301’ submitted with planning approval WD/3474/CC.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in the locality and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

11. All external lighting, including emergency lighting, shall be installed, maintained and operated as per the ‘External Lighting Report P01/S2 – April 2023 – Document ref: J1111-TGL-HY-XX-RP-E-2301’ submitted with planning approval WD/3474/CC.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in the locality and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

12. The air source heat pumps and associated plant shall be installed, operated and maintained as per the noise mitigation measures set out in the noise assessment ‘Acoustic South East – BS4142:2014+A1:2019 Assessment – Dated 03/04/2023 Ref: J3617 Issue 1’ submitted with planning approval WD/3474/CC and the rating level of the plant shall, at all times, not exceed the background noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receptor, as determined in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019’.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in the locality and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

13. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Environment, the air source heat pumps shall not be operated between the hours of 21:30 and 07:00 in order that the amenity of the occupiers of the adjoining property is not affected by any undue operational noise.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjacent residents and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

14. No openings shall be inserted at first floor on the west elevation of the building.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjacent residents and to comply with Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

15. The development shall not be occupied until the parking area has been provided in accordance with the approved plans which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and the area shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking of motor vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway

16. The proposed parking spaces shall measure at least 2.5m by 5m and the disabled space 3.6m X 5m. (add an extra 50cm where spaces abut walls).

Reason: To provide adequate space for the parking of vehicles and to ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

17. The development shall not be occupied until a cycle parking area has been provided in accordance with the approved plans which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and the area[s] shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking of cycles.

Reason: In order that the development site is accessible by non-car modes and to meet the objectives of sustainable development.

18. The building shall not be occupied until details and/or samples of the signage and branding for 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 Saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden District Local Plan 1998.

19. One year after occupation a ‘post-occupancy testing and evaluation’ of the building’s energy performance should submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

Reason: To ensure that the building is working as planned and to identify any issues that may need rectifying to improve the buildings performance and to comply with Saved Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Wealden Local Plan and Objective 4.5 of the ESCC Council Plan 22/23.

20. Prior to demolition of the existing building a 'Site Waste Management Plan' shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport. Demolition shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate method for dealing with waste materials from the existing building to be demolished, in accordance with Policy WMP3A of the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2013.

Drainage

21. No works onsite shall take place until details of surface water drainage, which shall follow the principles of sustainable drainage as far as practicable, have been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority including the following elements:

a. Detailed drainage drawings and calculations shall be submitted based upon an agreed drainage strategy which shall confirm that surface water runoff from the proposed development shall be limited to greenfield runoff rates (if not discharged to ground) and surface water attenuation up to and including storms with a 1% (plus climate change) annual exceedance probability [AEP] shall be stored without flooding onsite or downstream. Evidence of this (in the form hydraulic calculations) shall be submitted with the detailed drainage drawings.

b. The details of any outfall connection to a public sewer should be provided as part of the detailed design including approval from the Statutory Sewage Undertaker.

c. The detailed design of any shallow soakage and attenuation systems should be informed by findings of groundwater monitoring between autumn and spring together with infiltration testing at the design depth and location of the proposed soakway. The design should leave at least 1m unsaturated zone between the base of the soakaways and the highest recorded groundwater level. For tanked attenuation systems, details of measures which will be taken to manage the impacts of high groundwater on the hydraulic capacity and structural integrity should be provided.

d. The detailed design of any deepbore soakage and attenuation systems should be informed by findings of groundwater monitoring between autumn and spring together with infiltration testing in the location and depth of the proposed soakaway. The design should leave at least 10m unsaturated zone between the base of the soakaways and the highest recorded groundwater level. Robust pollution prevention based upon multiple treatment stages shall be provided upstream of the soakway.

e. The detailed design should include information on how surface water flows exceeding the capacity of the surface water drainage features will be managed safely.

f. A maintenance and management plan for the entire drainage system shall clearly state who will be responsible for owning and managing all aspects of the shared surface water drainage system and confirm how these responsibility arrangements will remain in place through the lifetime of the development.

g. Measures to manage flood risk, both on and off the site, during the construction phase shall be provided as part of the temporary works design.

Reason: To prevent water pollution and ensure appropriate drainage of the site.

22. Prior to occupation of the development, evidence (including photographs) shall be submitted showing that the drainage system has been constructed as per the final agreed detailed drainage designs and approved in witing by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

Reason: To prevent water pollution and ensure appropriate drainage of the site.

**Informative**

1. It is advised that the applicant contacts the Flood Risk Management Team prior to submitting drainage details to discharge the condition in order that their requirements can be addressed in the details to be submitted to discharge the drainage condition.

Schedule of Approved Plans and Documents

5495E/23/01 - Ecological Design Strategy, LLD2923-LAN-REP-001 - Landscape Design Strategy, LLD2923-LAN-DWG-010 Rev 02 - Landscape Masterplan Strategy, DR-A-1110 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan, DR-A-1100 - Proposed Lower Floor Plan, DR-A-1127 - Roof Plan, DR-A-2010 - Elevation West and North, DR-A-2020 - Elevations South and East, DR-A-2030 - Barn Elevation, J1111-TGL-HY-XX-RP-BP-4801-S2-P02 - Daylight Modelling Report, J1111-TGL-HY-XX-RP-MEP-4801-ST-P03 - Stage 4 Overheating Risk Assessment, DR-A-0100 - Site and Block Plan, Design and Access Statement

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Date: 9 February 2024

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Electronic case file WD/3488/CC