



PLANNING STATEMENT

BLACKLAND LAKES, PROPOSED PADEL FACILITY

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Client
Blackland Lakes Limited

Our reference
OP-15-25

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Opus Works Consultancy Limited on behalf of Blackland Lakes Limited ('the Applicant') in support of a proposed change of use at Blackland Lakes, Calne, Wiltshire.
- 1.2. The development proposals involve the redevelopment of the northwestern plot of land (Paddock 1), which is currently used by touring caravans or motor homes, to provide 4 No. padel tennis courts, alongside a small café, reception and a seating area all provided within the proposed built form. Car parking associated with the proposals is already in-situ and is not subject to change, albeit the planning drawings identify a formalised layout for the purposes of identifying sufficient parking capacity.
- 1.3. This submission has been designed with consideration of the application site's character and that of the surrounding area in order to create a coherent development in keeping with the wider surrounding context. This will ensure that the scheme provides a high-quality facility for use by the local community.
- 1.4. This Statement and supporting documents justify the appropriateness of the proposed development in land use planning terms when considered against the adopted planning policies at a national and local level, and against other material considerations.
- 1.5. This application is supported by the following suite of documents and plans:
 - Planning Application Forms and Certificates, prepared by PMG Architecture
 - Planning Drawings:
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 - Transport Statement, prepared by Cole Easdon
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Arbortrack
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by David Jarvis Associates
 - Ecological Impact Assessment, prepared by Halpin Robbins
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Calculator, prepared by Halpin Robbins
- 1.6. The remainder of this Planning Statement is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 outlines the site context and planning background
 - Section 3 details the relevant planning policy context
 - Section 4 sets out the development proposals
 - Section 5 assesses the scheme proposals against planning policy
 - Section 6 provides the conclusions

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. Blackland Lakes is an existing, recognised Leisure Facility set on 15 acres of land that provides six tree lined camping paddocks and three small lakes, two for coarse fishing and one as a nature reserve. There are also 110 pitches for Caravans, Campervans, Motorhomes and Tents, 76 with electricity and 15 hardstanding, fully serviced as well as Premium Pitches for touring all year round.
- 2.2. In addition to this, a Health Club, first opened in the 1990's and provides wide-ranging facilities, including a swimming pool and a gym to its substantial membership - <https://blacklandhealthclub.co.uk/facilities/>.

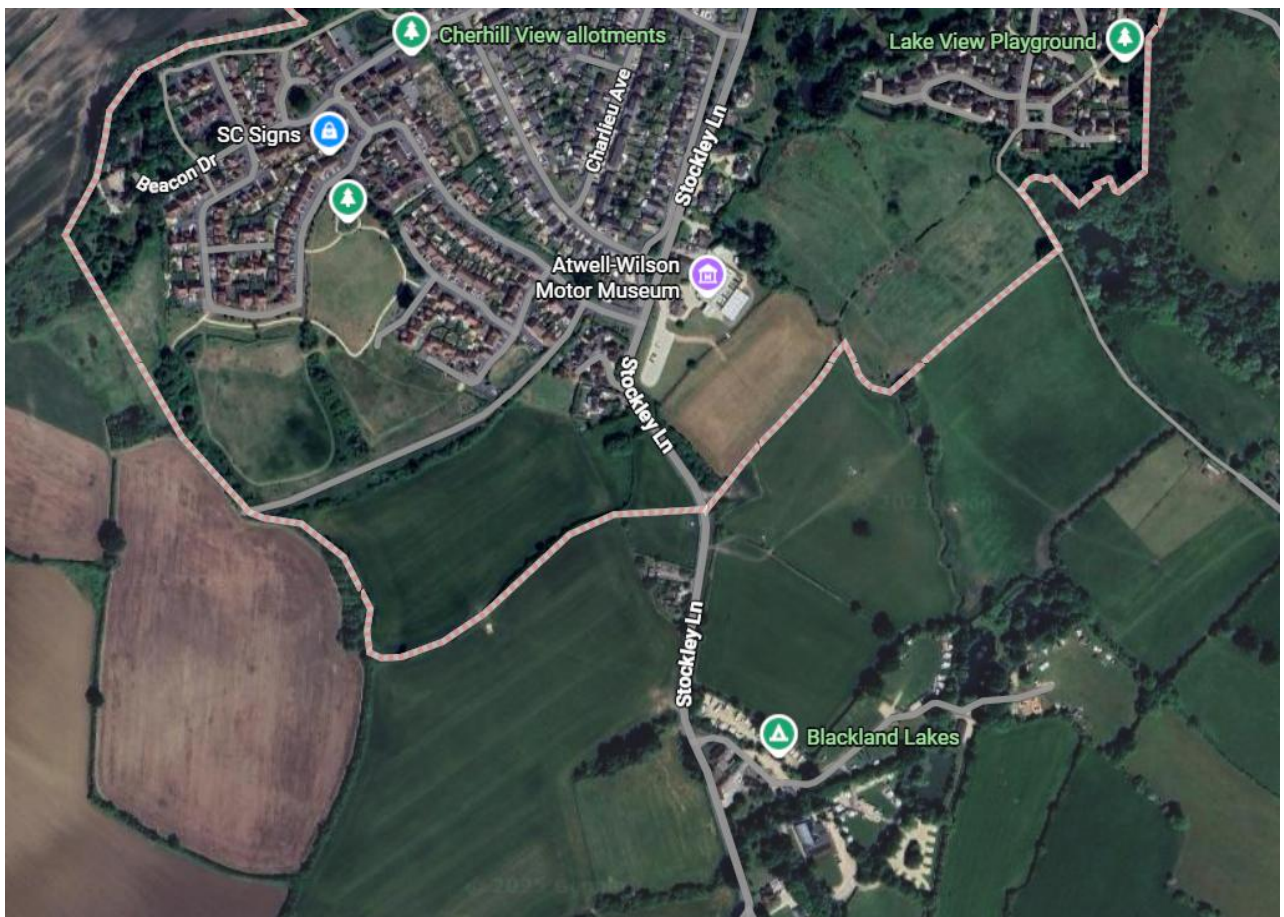


Figure 1 – Site Location

- 2.3. It is proposed to use some of the land currently utilised for motorhome pitches and storage and static caravan accommodation to locate the Padel courts. In this regard, the application site can be considered to be previously developed land (PDL).
- 2.4. The proposed site is located at the western edge of Blackland Lakes within a tree-lined location as identified below, which is situated to the southeast of the town of Calne, Wiltshire, approximately 2.6km to the southeast of the town centre and 400m from the edge of the built-up area.
- 2.5. The site is currently screened on all sides by a mixture of trees and hedging. Whilst it is intended to remove some of the trees to facilitate the new courts, it is also proposed to provide additional planting to help form a

more robust and high-quality screen around the site to ensure that the key views from the north and west where most publicly accessible views will be taken from are appropriately screened. Further details of proposed screening are set out later in this report.

- 2.6. Access to the site is taken from Stockley Lane, which connects the A4 (Quemerford) in the north with the villages of Stockley and Heddington in the south.
- 2.7. Stockley Lane runs on a broadly north-south alignment over a length of 2.4km. The access into the Blackland Lakes site is located approximately 0.8km from the junction with Quemerford and 1.6km from the junction with Stockley Road (in Stockley village).
- 2.8. There are no formal footways along Stockley Lane within the vicinity of the site. A grass verge is present from the entrance into the site for approximately 350m northbound (to the edge of the Calne built up area). Footways are present from the junction with Roundway Rise (approximately 410m to the north of the site access). These run on the largely parallel Rookery Park to the west of Stockley Lane for 220m to the junction with The Rise. A footway is then provided along at least one side of Stockley Lane towards the junction with Quemerford.

3. **Planning Policy and Other Designations**

- 3.1. The Development Plan currently comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), adopted 2015 and the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 (CCNP2), adopted 2025. The Wiltshire Local Plan Review (WLPR) is significantly advanced and weight is given to the emerging policies within this document, as appropriate.
- 3.2. Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021), and other Supplementary Planning Documents are considered to be material considerations which attract significant weight to the decision of this application.
- 3.3. The following planning policies are considered of relevance to the proposed development.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.4. The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) defines three dimensions to sustainable development; these being economic, social, and environmental. In supporting these three areas of sustainable development, the Framework highlights the planning system's objectives: identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure and sufficient housing, whilst making effective use of land.
- 3.5. Paragraph 96 of the NPPF, within Section 8 entitled 'Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities' aims to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places that enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs, such as through the provision of sports facilities, amongst other facilities.
- 3.6. It is further stated that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision in use of shared spaces, community facilities (including sports venues) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities.
- 3.7. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that developments should enable inter alia 'the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings; sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as ...sports venues...'
- 3.8. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF has a specific section on design which states that good design should last for the lifetime of development, and not just in the short term. It goes on to state that development should be of a high quality and be visually attractive with good architecture and appropriate landscaping. They should also be sympathetic to local character whilst maintaining or establishing a strong sense of place.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.9. Review of the WCS, WLPR and CCNP2 identifies that the site is located in the Countryside, but benefits from recognition as an existing Community Facility.
- 3.10. All three documents recognise the benefits of economic growth and delivering resilient rural economies that benefit communities by providing a range of employment opportunities and services.
- 3.11. In particular, Strategic Objectives 4 and 6 of the WCS focus on '*helping to build resilient communities*' and '*ensuring that adequate infrastructure is in place to support our communities*'. Core Policy 49 of the WCS '*Protection of Rural Facilities and Services*' also provides tacit support for the proposals, given that the provision of Padel will further resilience in terms of the leisure offer at Blackland Lakes.
- 3.12. The CCNP2 is more supportive and cites a number of key issues and priorities regarding Community Facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area, as follows:
- '*Prioritise the protection of viable community facilities from closure;*
 - '*Seek investment for additional facilities to meet the needs of a growing community;*
 - '*Provide a schedule of prioritised new community facilities and infrastructure needs to inform investment from developers and Wiltshire Council;*
 - '*Ensure future housing development is balanced with the simultaneous provision of community facilities and*
 - '*contributions towards infrastructure improvements;*
 - '*Seek investment to increase facilities to meet the needs of those living with disabilities*'.
- 3.13. Further, criterion 5 of Policy Cf1, Community Facilities, states support for new leisure proposals subject to appropriate planning review – '*Proposals for the provision of new community facilities to meet evidenced local needs including those identified by a local community infrastructure priority list, will be supported where the development would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the local environment or residential amenity*'.
- 3.14. Review of planning and environmental designations identifies that the site is unencumbered in terms of flood risk, tree protection orders or nearby listed buildings and that nearest Public Rights of Way are unaffected by the location and nature of the proposals. The following figures identify all relevant policy maps in this regard.
- 3.15. In respect of drainage, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is no subject to surface water flooding. Closest listed buildings are a significant distance away at The Croft and Upper Provender Mill to the north and Blacklands Park Farmhouse to the south-east.

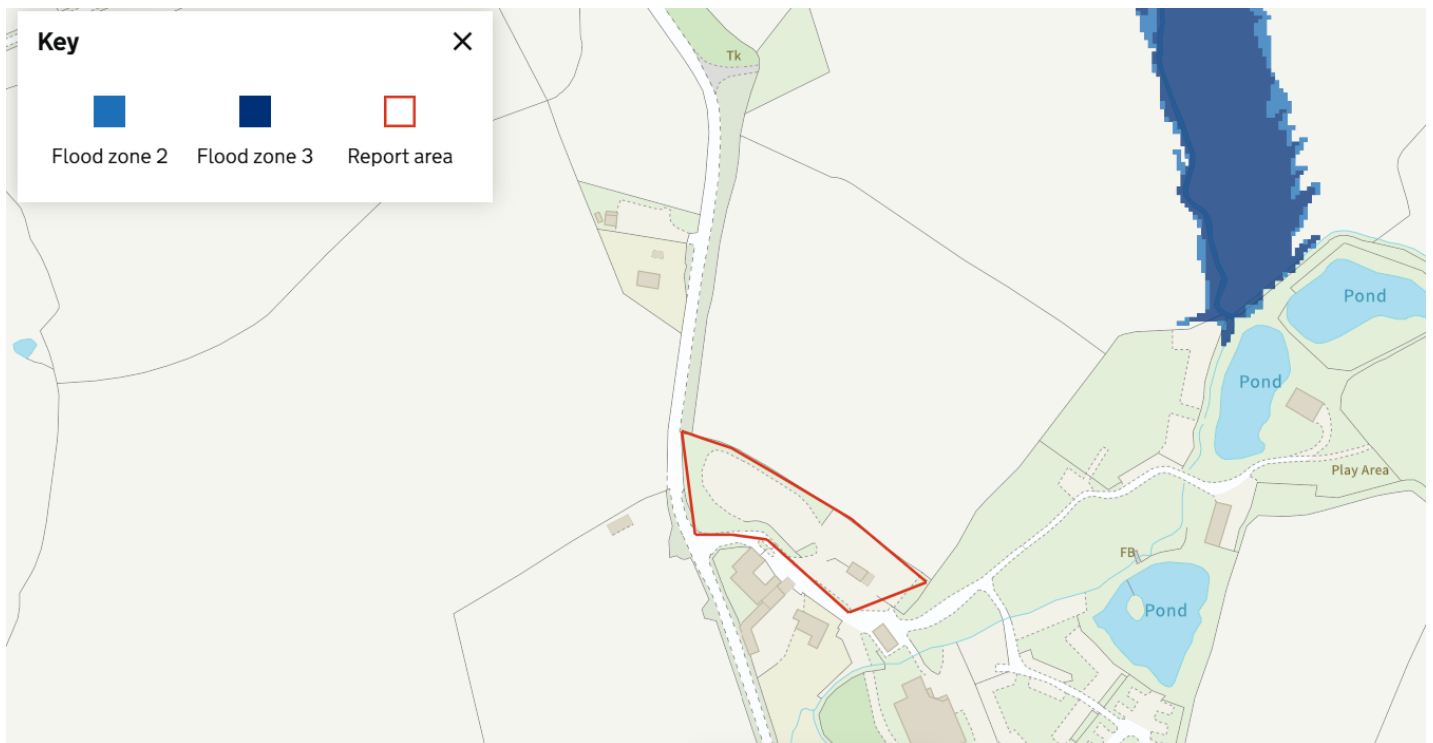


Figure 2 – Flood Zone Map

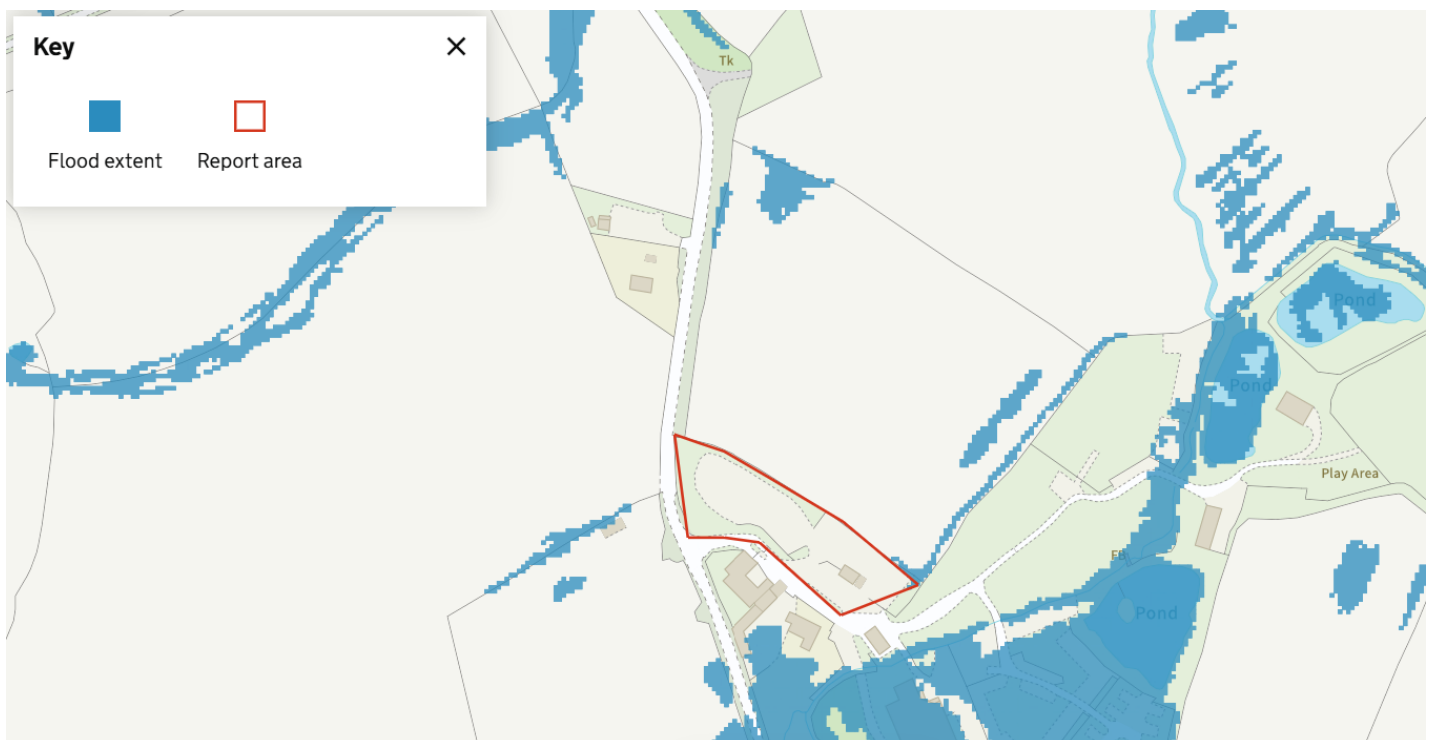


Figure 3 – Surface Water Map

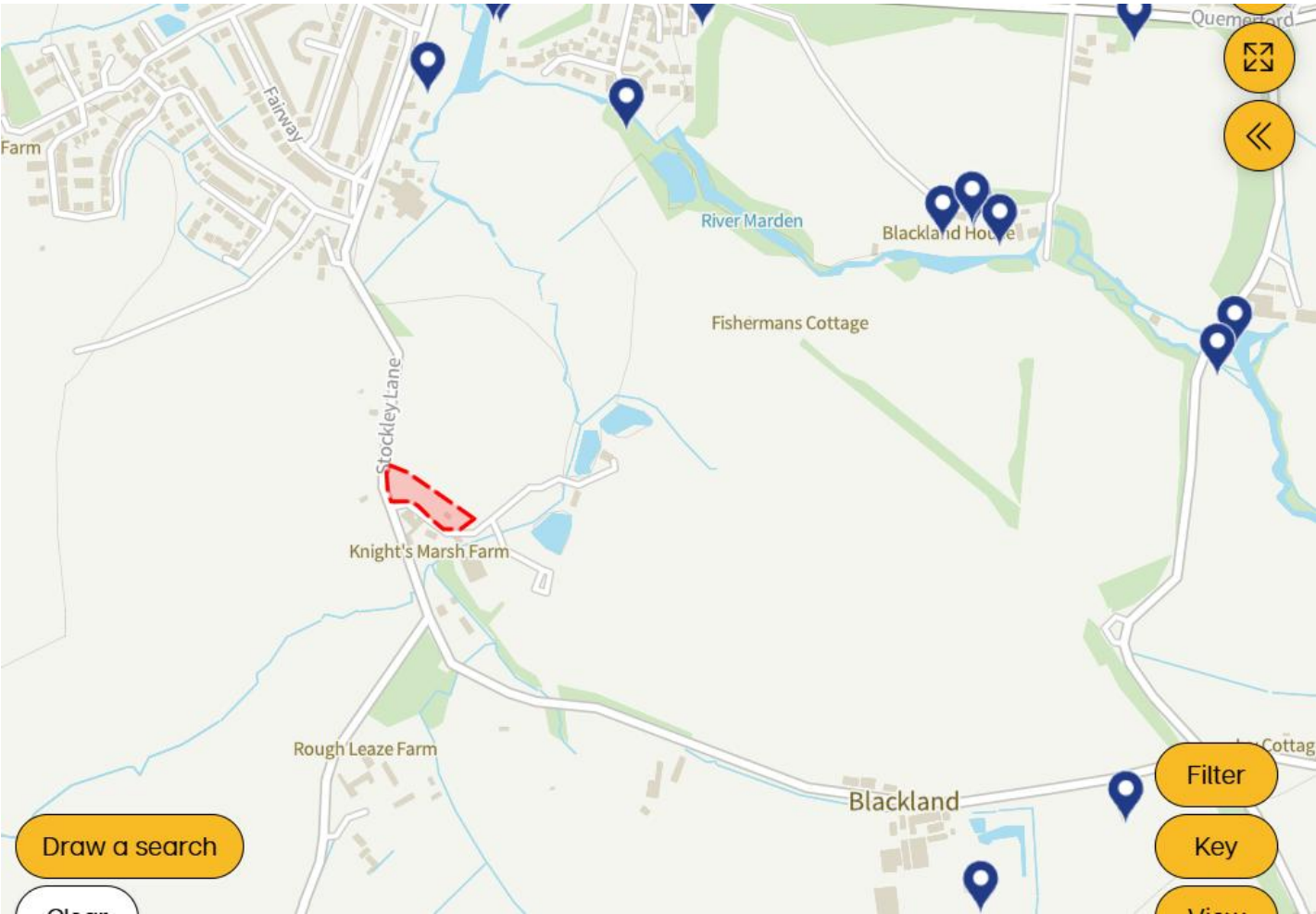


Figure 4 – Historic England, listed buildings search

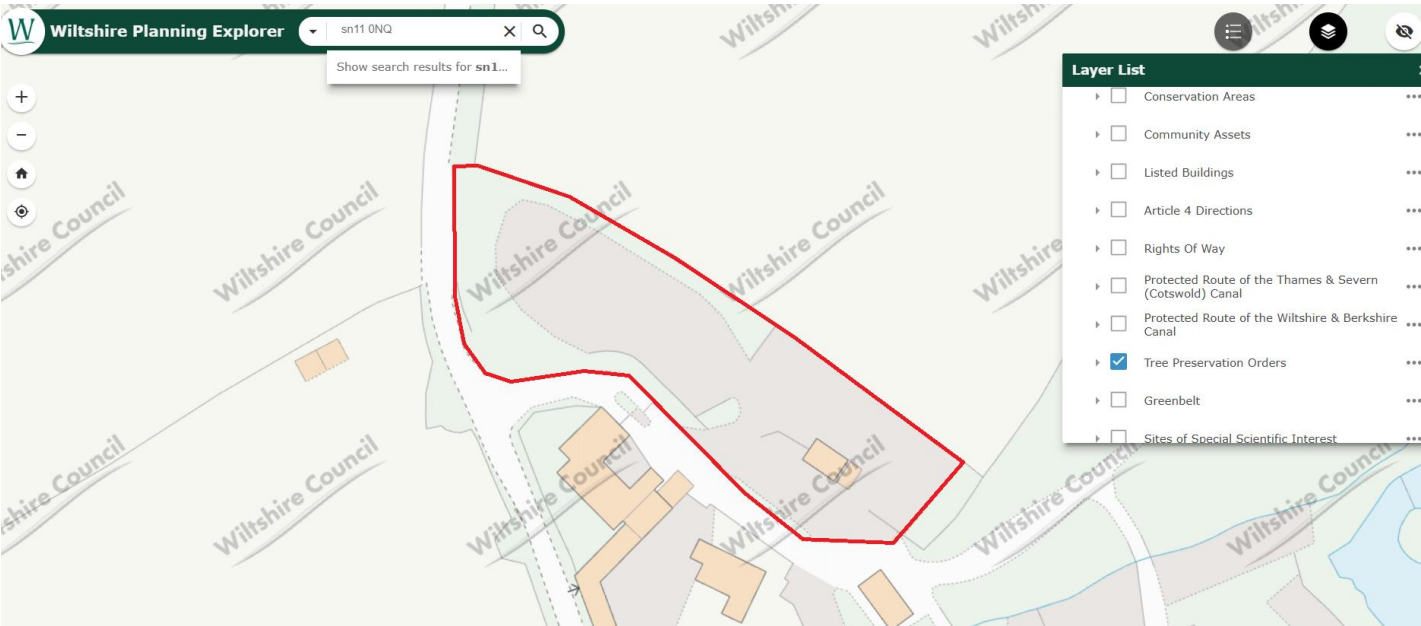


Figure 5 – Tree Preservation Order Map

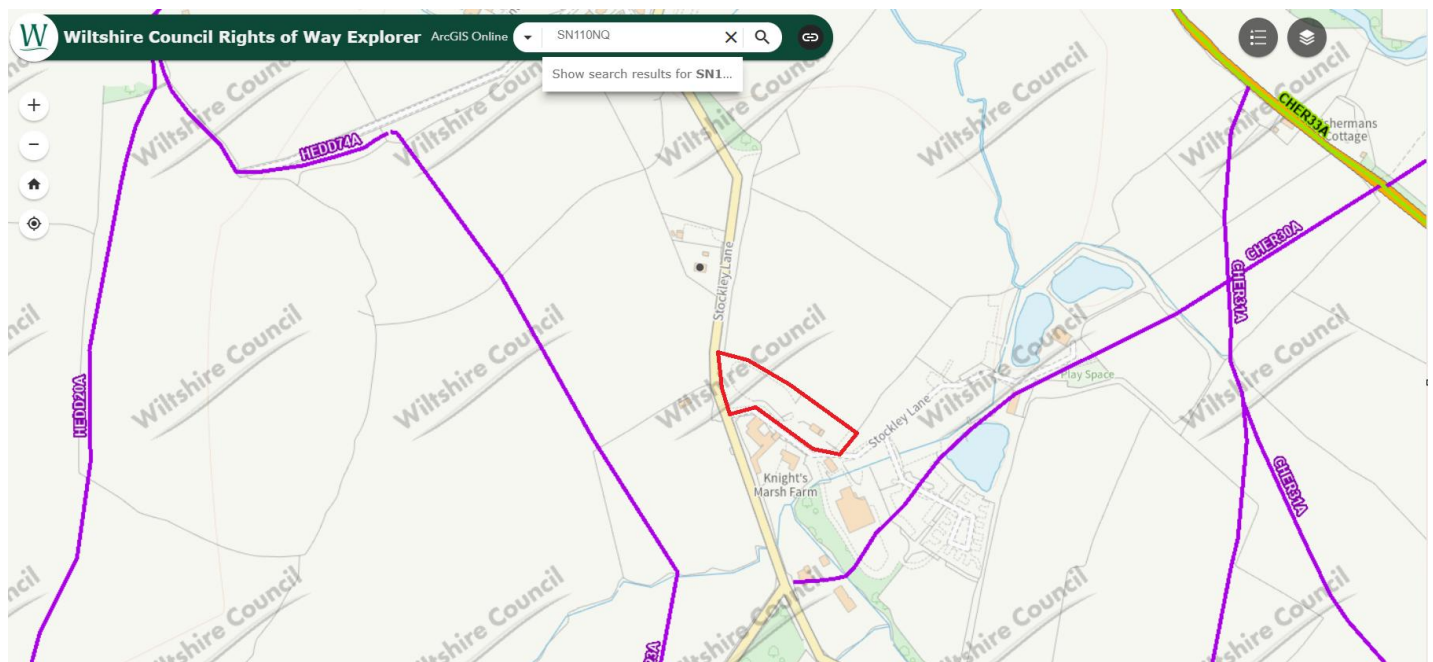


Figure 6 – Local PROW network

- 3.16. The development is situated in close proximity to Public Right of Way route CHER30A. This provides connections onto bridleway CHER33A / CALN68, which provides a pedestrian connection onto Quemerford.
- 3.17. CHER30A also connects onto bridleway CHER29A, which also provides a connection onto Quemerford and also onto CALN21, which connects Quemerford with National Cycle Network Route 403 and towards Calne town centre. Stockley Lane is regarded as an advisory cycle route between Quemerford and the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum.
- 3.18. The nearest bus stop to the development is located on Fairway (Fairway bus stop), close to the junction with Stockley Lane, approximately 500m to the northwest of the site access. The bus stop features a bus flag and timetable information.
- 3.19. This bus stop is served by service 42 operated by Swindon's Bus Company. Bus services run in a loop from Quemerford to serve Stockley Lane, Fairway and The Rise, so service 42 serves the bus stop in both directions (towards Calne town centre and towards Avebury and Marlborough).

4. The Proposed Development

4.1. Blackland Lakes Campsite is set across 15 acres and comprises of 6 tree lined camping paddocks and three small lakes, two for coarse fishing and one as a nature reserve. There are 174 pitches for caravans, campervans, motorhomes and tents spread across six paddocks allocated as follows:

- 29 No. hardstanding tourist pitches (of which 15 are fully serviced premium pitches);
- 28 No. hardstanding seasonal pitches;
- 15 No. caravan storage pitches;
- 60 No. electric grass touring pitches; and
- 42 No. non-electric grass touring pitches.

4.2. Blackland Lakes is open all year round and includes a private members health club with approximately 1,250 members.

4.3. It is proposed to re-develop the northwestern paddock (consisting of 13 No. hardstanding tourist pitches and 15 No. caravan storage pitches) to provide 4 No. padel tennis courts, a café / reception area and seating. All development is proposed to be contained within a barn-style structure to ensure a sensitive and appropriate addition within the countryside. In consideration of this, the proposed description of development is as follows:

'Change of use of Paddock 1 from touring pitches (occupied by touring caravans or motor homes) and caravan storage to Padel Tennis Facility comprising the erection of a barn structure to accommodate 4no Padel courts and ancillary cafe, reception and seating area'

4.4. In order to provide clarity on what padel tennis is, the Lawn Tennis Association's website provides the following definition:

'Padel is a form of tennis that is easy to play, fun and extremely sociable. It is played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court about a third of the size of a tennis court and can be played in groups of mixed ages and abilities, as it is not power dominant. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve underhand, and the walls are used as part of the game with the ball allowed to bounce off them.'

'One of the fastest growing sports across continental Europe, padel has gained increasing popularity over recent years, with over six million people currently playing in Spain.'

4.5. The structure measures 44.41m x 23.42m with an eaves height of 6m and an apex at 10m. It is proposed to construct primarily out of concrete with wooden cladding over this at higher levels to provide a softer, more appropriate rural look. The roof will be made from metal lined on the inside for acoustic performance. The image overleaf provides an illustration of what the courts and canopy would look like.

4.6. To enable the provision of 4.no courts, some tree and hedge removal is proposed, primarily along the northern

boundary of the site. Whilst the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment supporting this application does not stipulate a need for any mitigation planting, if considered appropriate the client can commit to the planting of further trees and hedging to the north of the site boundary on land owned by the applicant, alongside strengthening of existing screening on-site to the west and south through further planting. The potential location of this planting is shown below and it is proposed that this detail is reserved by planning condition to ensure that the extent and specification of planting is agreed with Officers at the appropriate juncture.



Figure 7 – Location of potential further tree and hedge planting



Figure 8 – Computer-generated image of proposed barn-style structure

- 4.7. The structure itself has been designed to be self-contained, requiring limited external lighting at the barn entrance. As set out above, use of robust materials in the barn walls and roofs and a double-door entrance has been provided to ensure that noise and light associated with the activities inside are fully mitigated – this is of importance to the applicant given the close proximity of holiday pitches to the proposed Padel facility.
- 4.8. It is proposed that the new facility will operate from 7am with the last booking at 9pm for a 10pm close. This approach replicates the offering at Basset Down near Swindon, which is one of only two Padel facilities currently operating in Wiltshire. The proposed hours also closely tie in with that related to the onsite Health Club. A maximum of three full-time equivalent staff will be based at the padel tennis court at any time. Staff will work on a rota basis. In some cases, staff already employed on site may work at the padel court during part of their shift.
- 4.9. Padel tennis is often played in doubles, meaning there could be up to 16 players on-site if all courts are booked out. More commonly, a lower proportion of courts will be booked out at any one time.
- 4.10. The courts will be booked out in 90-minute slots and will have a 30-minute gap between each slot, e.g. 08:00-09:30, then 10:00-11:30 and so on. This would result in a total of seven slots being available per day with the last slot being 20:00-21:30.
- 4.11. In addition to the courts being open for public use, it is envisaged that current health club members would use the proposed courts, potentially as an alternative to other exercise on the site. Holidaymakers staying on-site would also be permitted to make use of these on-site facilities.
- 4.12. Following pre-application discussions with the local Ward Member and Cherhill Parish Council, it is proposed to provide a flexible pricing structure to encourage use by under 18's wishing to play the sport during off-peak hours.
- 4.13. The existing site access off Stockley Lane will be retained. as it will also continue to serve the campsite and it is proposed to utilise the existing car park to the front of the site for use by Padel customers. Alongside this, it is proposed to provide 3no. covered, secure cycle spaces in line with the cycle parking standards for D2 use (assembly and leisure) as set out in WC's LTP3 Cycling Strategy (March 2014).

5. Planning Assessment

5.1. The following section of this Statement considers the appropriateness of the development proposals against the policies of the Development Plan and other material considerations as set out in Section 4.

5.2. The Statement considers the proposal with due regard to the following matters:

- Principle of Development;
- Highways Assessment; and
- Environmental Matters and Mitigation.

Principle of Development

5.3. The improved provision of sport and recreational facilities, which promote healthy communities is supported by the NPPF. Further, the site is recognised with CCNP2 as a community facility. It is therefore strongly contended that this development is considered sustainable and a welcome form of development.

5.4. The application site currently comprises an under-utilised area of PDL, which offers little in terms of visual benefit. The current state of this part of the site differs greatly from the rest of Blackland Lakes offer and the creation of a Padel facility will therefore enrich the site by enhancing the initial customer experience and the range of facilities available to on-site campers and leisure centre members.

5.5. Although there are no policies that are specifically directed towards the provision of padel tennis facilities, Policy CF1 of the CCNP2 and Policy 49 of the WCS encourage new the provision of improved community and sports facilities that benefit of co-location with other community and leisure uses, as is the case in terms of these proposals. When permitted, the development will provide a facility with a wider range of sports that has the potential to attract a more varied audience.

5.6. The proposed padel tennis courts and the structure in which they are contained will provide all-weather use to enable play throughout the year. The sport is considered highly inclusive, suitable for a range of abilities and fitness levels, and is fully supported by the Lawn Tennis Association, as it aids the development of tennis skills and can be considered a way for people to enter the sport. As noted earlier in this document, there will be a flexible pricing structure to encourage younger users, whilst it is also anticipated that the facilities will attract over 60's from Calne and the existing Health Club membership.

5.7. The development also allows for identified needs that are not met by existing facilities in the area to be satisfied. Whilst a growing sport, there are currently very few facilities for padel tennis within the country (at the time of writing there are 114 venues across Britain)¹. Within Wiltshire, the lack of facilities is even more stark

¹ <https://www.lta.org.uk/play-compete/getting-started/padel/>

– currently there are only two facilities in operation; one in Swindon and one in Corsham, both of which are c. 30 minutes' drive from the proposed site.

- 5.8. Through provision of Padel tennis in Calne, the proposed development will assist in meeting growing demand for this form of sport in the area, whilst helping to support the existing Leisure Centre club by further increasing the sporting offer at this location.
- 5.9. Taking the above into consideration and the potential benefits of developing padel tennis in this location, including the provision of a high quality sports facility; an increased opportunity for participation in sport to increase the health and wellbeing of the local community; and providing a new facility where there is limited supply for a growing demand, it is very much considered that the principle of development in this location is acceptable and in full accordance with both national and local planning policies.

Highways Assessment

- 5.10. The planning proposals have been subject to a thorough Transport Assessment, which has concluded that the proposals do not result in unacceptable impact on highway safety and therefore should not be prevented or refused on highway grounds.
- 5.11. Car and cycle parking will be provided in accordance with WC's Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy respectively and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists using the facility.
- 5.12. Review of accident records over the most recent five-year period does not indicate any particular highway safety issue within the study area, with only one accident recorded within the vicinity of the site. Due to the relatively small extent of the development proposals in terms of additional trips generated, it is not considered that there will be an increase in the frequency of accidents to all users of the local highway network. Development vehicle trip generation is modest when compared to the existing permitted use of the site, with a predicted net reduction in the AM network peak hour period (08:00-09:00).
- 5.13. A parking accumulation exercise carried out for the proposed padel tennis facility shows that there will be sufficient car parking capacity to accommodate the expected peak demand scenario of all four-courts being used to their full capacity.

Environmental Matters and Mitigation

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 5.14. The site can be said to be only partially reflective of the wider Landscape Character Area in terms of its landscape features. Features such as hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees are pertinent to the site which ultimately contribute to the wider study area. The landscape value of the site was judged to be medium, based on these characteristics and its contribution to the LCA.

- 5.15. Additional key characteristics of LCA 11A include: “Scattered settlement of towns, small villages and farmsteads, many using vernacular materials of brick, half-timber, tiles and thatch”, suggesting that despite the loss of mature trees to accommodate the proposed scheme, appropriate use of building materials for the proposed scheme would potentially mitigate the loss of trees and further contribute to the character of the area. Notwithstanding this, as set out in Section 4, if considered appropriate the client has committed to submit a landscaping scheme post-consent to set out an appropriate planting regime to strengthen screening around the northern, western and southern borders of the site.
- 5.16. Furthermore, due to the current nature of the site being used as a caravan park, the site is therefore already developed upon and is not contributing to any vernacular typical of the LCA, subsequently the landscape character of the site is judged to have low susceptibility to change; in fact it is considered that improvements to on-site landscape and the provision of a traditional barn structure will enhance the current view.
- 5.17. The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise harm to landscape character and visual harm, using a best practice approach that responds to a recorded baseline within a defined study area.
- 5.18. The Proposed Development will likely result in a positive effect for change upon year 15 of completion. The effect on Landscape Character is likely to neutral overall through appropriate use of building materials and landscape mitigation.
- 5.19. The survey also concludes that intervisibility of the site throughout the study area is limited to only a select few visual receptors, those being: VP01, 02, 04, 05 and 06, these are all recorded at a distance ranging from 100-200 metres from the site. Limited intervisibility is mostly due to undulating topography and vegetative screening throughout the study area. The proposed scheme is likely to positively assimilate into the landscape from the limited locations where it can be seen.

Trees

- 5.20. A number of low-quality trees will be removed to allow or facilitate development, these are as set out in the Tree Protection Plan submitted with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and comprise the following trees: 1, G11 (partial), 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 37, 38, 47, 48, G49 (partial), G52 (partial) and 54.
- 5.21. The loss of these trees is considered by our Arborists to hold a low and acceptable impact and is also likely to have a minimal amenity impact on the surrounding area. In addition to the trees identified for removal to enable the Padel structure, it is also recommended that trees 4 and 5 are felled in accordance with arboricultural best practice, the details of which are set out in Appendix B of the AIA.
- 5.22. The following trees will be cut back for clearance off the Padel Tennis facility: 18, 26, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36, 45, 46, 51 and 55. These works are largely to low-quality hawthorn/landscape planting and will not compromise the screening function delivered by these trees.
- 5.23. It is concluded that the necessary tree removals do not compromise screening on the northern and southern flanks and have been kept to a minimum.

- 5.24. Existing hardstanding within the root protection areas (RPA) of trees 2, 15, 16, 18, 51, 53, 55, 59, 60 and 61 is not to be altered and will act as 'de facto' ground protection. This existing surfacing can be extended within the RPA of tree 59 (to replace soft ground) to accommodate parking bays-provided a 1m separation between this tree and any new hard standing is delivered. Details can be agreed via planning condition if considered necessary.
- 5.25. The great majority of site works will take place beyond the RPAs of retained trees and canopies.
- 5.26. Retained trees will be protected throughout the course of development by fencing to the specification recommended by BS5837:2012. Appendix C of the AIA sets out the specification of works in this regard.
- 5.27. Taking the above matters into account, it is considered that the works to trees are appropriate and the benefits associated with provision of 4no. courts, which can only be achieved through the proposed removals, outweigh the envisaged minor impacts. As noted elsewhere in this report, should it be considered necessary by the Local Planning Authority, the applicant is willing to provide on-site and off-site (adjacent) planting to further strengthen existing screening and to offset tree loss.

Ecology

- 5.28. An Ecological Impact Assessment of the development proposals has been undertaken, which has reviewed ecological features on site, before considering the potential effect of the development, significance of this in ecological terms without compensation and then proposed mitigation before concluding on any residual effects. In summary, it has been determined that development can progress without significant adverse impact to ecology, but subject to appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement. The following paragraphs summarise key issues for consideration.

Non-statutory designated sites

- 5.29. No impacts are predicted to non-statutory designated sites as a result of the proposed development. Consequently, no mitigation or compensation measures are required and no residual effects are anticipated.

Habitats

- 5.30. The proposals would result in the removal of approximately 70m of hedgerow, the removal or partial removal and pruning of several trees, and there is potential for damage to retained hedgerows and trees during construction. In the absence of mitigation, these impacts would result in a moderate adverse effect at the site level. Mitigation and compensation measures include replacement planting of the removed hedgerow, creation of an area of modified grassland, implementation of hedgerow and tree protection measures during construction, and ongoing habitat management through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has also been provided to support habitat enhancement.

Following implementation of these measures, the residual effect is predicted to be negligible – currently off-site planting is proposed for BNG enhancement, but the opportunity to plant on land directly adjacent to the site (to the north) has also been raised and if considered appropriate by the Council's Ecologist can be secured to assist not only with BNG requirements, but to enhance overall planting in and around the site.

Flora and invertebrates

- 5.31. No direct impacts to flora and invertebrates are anticipated as a result of the proposals. While no significant adverse effects are expected in the absence of mitigation, enhancements are proposed to provide biodiversity benefits. These include planting a diverse mix of native trees, shrubs and flowering species, and the installation of bee and insect bricks within the new building. As a result of these enhancement measures, the residual effect is expected to be positive.

Amphibians (including great crested newt)

- 5.32. Potential impacts include the removal of a section of hedgerow and the risk of damage to retained hedgerows during construction, which could affect common amphibian species using the site for shelter or movement. Without mitigation, this would represent a moderate adverse effect at the site level. Mitigation measures include delivery of a pre-construction ecological toolbox talk, installation of protective fencing to safeguard hedgerows, appropriate storage of materials and waste, careful dismantling of any brash or rubble piles, provision of escape routes from trenches, and clear procedures to halt works and seek ecological advice should great crested newts be encountered. With these measures in place, the residual effect is predicted to be negligible.

Reptiles

- 5.33. The removal of hedgerow sections and potential damage to retained hedgerows during construction could affect reptiles using boundary habitats. In the absence of mitigation, this would result in a moderate adverse effect at the site level. Mitigation measures include a pre-works toolbox talk, protection of hedgerows with fencing, controlled storage of materials, and provision of escape routes from any open trenches. Following implementation, the residual effect is expected to be negligible.

Birds

- 5.34. Potential impacts include the removal and disturbance of hedgerows and trees, potential damage to retained vegetation during construction, and the relocation of existing buildings, all of which could affect nesting and foraging birds. Without mitigation, these impacts would be moderately adverse at the site level. Mitigation and compensation measures include undertaking vegetation clearance outside the bird nesting season (or ecological checks where this is not possible), protecting retained hedgerows and trees, installing five bird nest boxes on buildings and/or trees, replacing removed hedgerow sections with native planting, and inspecting

existing buildings prior to relocation to ensure no active nests are present. With these measures in place, the residual effect is predicted to be positive due to the provision of additional nesting opportunities and enhanced habitat.

Badgers

- 5.35. Construction activities could result in temporary disturbance or harm to badgers moving through the site, leading to a minor adverse effect at the site level in the absence of mitigation. Proposed mitigation includes providing escape routes from trenches and installing fencing in a manner that allows badgers to pass through safely. With these measures implemented, the residual effect is expected to be negligible.

Bats

- 5.36. Potential impacts include removal and disturbance of hedgerows and trees used as commuting and foraging routes, damage to retained vegetation during construction, disturbance from artificial lighting, and the relocation of existing buildings. In the absence of mitigation, these impacts would result in a moderate adverse effect at the local level. Mitigation and enhancement measures include replacement of removed hedgerows, protection of retained trees and hedgerows, implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy to maintain dark corridors, use of bat-safe roofing membranes, installation of two bat boxes on mature trees, and inspection of buildings prior to relocation. Following implementation of these measures, the residual effect is predicted to be positive.

Other notable mammals (hedgehog)

- 5.37. Construction activities may pose a temporary risk to hedgehogs moving through the site, resulting in a minor adverse effect at the site level in the absence of mitigation. Proposed mitigation includes providing escape routes from trenches and open excavations. With these measures in place, the residual effect is expected to be negligible.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.38. Overall, there is an estimated decrease in biodiversity units of -56.39% for area habitats and -33.62% for linear hedgerow units, as a consequence of having to remove some hedgerows and trees to accommodate the development. It is not possible to increase biodiversity on site and therefore trading rules are not satisfied. Currently, it is proposed that biodiversity net gain (BNG) will be achieved by purchasing credits through a habitat bank. However, there is also an option to plant on land directly to the north of the padel court area, which would allow for delivery of required BNG closer to source and which would also provide greater screening to the development. Advice from the Council's Ecologist is sought in this regard.

6. **Conclusions**

- 6.1. This application seeks consent for the redevelopment of the northwestern plot of land (Paddock 1), which is currently used by touring caravans or motor homes, to provide 4 No. padel tennis courts, alongside a small café, reception and a seating area all provided within the proposed built form. Car parking associated with the proposals is already in-situ and is not subject to change, albeit the planning drawings identify a formalised layout for the purpose of identifying sufficient parking capacity.
- 6.2. The proposals comprise a sensitively-designed structure that is of an appropriate scale and which has been carefully sited within a well-screened, previously-developed area of the Blackland Lakes complex. Any views of the structure proposed will be taken in context of the wider site, structures and paraphernalia that currently exist.
- 6.3. The proposed development will bring a series of social and health benefits to the wider community and will expand upon the existing leisure offer at Blackland Lakes. The development will also provide much needed facilities within this part of Wiltshire, which currently do not exist and for which it is expected that significant demand exists, in line with the surge in demand for Padel Tennis evidenced nationally.
- 6.4. The principle of development is clear and is supportable in context of WCS Policy 49 and CCNP2 Policy CF1. In addition, the proposal will deliver upon the national objective set out in the NPPF in respect of creating a facility that will further assist the promotion of healthy communities.
- 6.5. As evidenced in the supporting documents, the proposals will not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the countryside, trees, ecology or the local highway network. The proposals have considered all potential impacts and have proposed mitigation where appropriate.
- 6.6. It is strongly contended that the proposal complies with relevant National and local Development Plan policies, all of which provide support for the creation of enhanced leisure facilities as proposed. Further, as demonstrated in this report, there are no material considerations to be taken in the planning balance that outweigh the policy position. It is therefore respectfully requested that this application is granted without delay.