

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application for the installation of an enclosed cricket net at Adastra Park in Hassocks
- 1.2 The net facility would be used solely by members of Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club and expand their current training facilities. The development would not accommodate
- 1.3 The application is also supported by consultants' reports covering the following areas:-
 - PJC - Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan - September 2025
 - Phlorum LTD – Biodiversity Net Gain - February 2025
 - Evolved Acoustic - Noise Impact Assessment – November 2025

2. Site and Character appraisal

- 2.1 The application site comprises a small area of Adastra Park located centrally within the Villages of Hassocks and Keymer. Hassocks Parish Council has owned and maintained the park since it was gifted to the Parish by the late E.D. Stafford in memory of his son who was killed in Royal Flying Corps during the First World War, hence also bequeathing the name Adastra from the Royal Flying Corps motto.
- 2.2 The park comprises a large open space in Hassocks and includes the Garden of Remembrance, the Community and Cricket Pavilion, a cricket pitch, football pitches, bowling green, tennis courts, skate park, children's play areas, and adult fitness equipment.
- 2.3 The park is used by a wide number of organisations and local clubs, including the applicant Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club, who have resided at the park since approximately the 1920's.
- 2.4 The park extends to approximately 6.2ha of land, laid out with 2 distinct field areas (north and south). The application relates to a small portion of land located near the eastern boundary of the south field, approximately central to the field itself.
- 2.5 The primary playing activities of Keymer and Hassocks Cricket club take place in the south field, with the main cricket pitch and pavilion also located here. In addition, the club also has a small mower shed and some mobile net storage located immediately to the north of the pavilion.

3 The Applicant - Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club

- 3.1 Keymer & Hassocks Cricket Club is a long-established community sports club with origins dating back to 1896. Based at Adastra Park in Hassocks, the club has played a central role in local recreational life for well over a century, providing organised cricket for residents of all ages and abilities. It operates as a volunteer-led, inclusive organisation and maintains strong links with the local community.
- 3.2 The club supports a thriving membership that includes a large junior section of around 150 children, including a growing girls' programme and multiple youth teams spanning ages five to sixteen.
- 3.3 In addition, the club participates in 'All Stars' the official England Cricket Board (ECB) entry-level programme for children aged 5–8, provide an easy, welcoming entry point into cricket for young children, especially those who've never played before. The programme develops fundamental movement, coordination and team/social skills via sport — which benefit not only cricket, but physical activity and social confidence. The programme has resulted in the expansion of youth and specifically girls' participation.
- 3.4 Adult cricket remains an important part of the club's structure, with two competitive adult Saturday league sides and the club is planning to expand this back to 3 teams in the 2026 or 2027 season providing greater opportunities for more social or emerging players.
- 3.5 The current practice facilities and specifically practice nets fall well short of modern standards, with the use of a single mobile net which is placed on the main playing surface at the club. It is important to note that the Club is the only Mid- Sussex league club that does not have some form of permanent net and practice facility.
- 3.6 The club wishes to continue to invest in its facilities to meet modern standards and to accommodate increased demand, through a new permanent practice nets at Adastra Park. These improvements would support both player development and the long-term sustainability of cricket in the area bringing about youth and social development benefits to Hassocks and surrounding villages.

4 Application proposal

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the installation of an enclosed cricket net at Adastra Park in Hassocks.
- 4.2 The playing surface would be configured to have 2 lanes with a staggered formation measuring a total of 33m and 30m in length, with a total width of 7.3m. The whole facility would be contained within steel work fencing system of similar dimension, standing at a height of 4m.
- 4.3 The playing surface would be faced in a synthetic carpet, coloured green with a blue border. Each lane would have a shock absorber pad for the bowling area. Between the lanes would be a netting curtain system to divide the lanes with a white mesh which is secured by galvanised steel tubes.
- 4.4 The steelwork enclosure would be constructed of galvanised steel tube work fitted to a socket in green or black steel mesh and would also house an entrance door located at the northern end of the western facing side elevation.
- 4.5 The facility would not have any external lighting and would be exclusively used by members of Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club. The facility would be locked when not in use by the club.

5 Planning History

- 5.1 The applicant undertook pre-application advice regarding the proposal with the Local Planning Authority in July 2025 (ref: DM25/1459). It was advised during the course of that pre-app that the works would not be permitted development under Part 12 of the GPDO and that an application for full planning permission would be required. As such, an application has been prepared.
- 5.2 It was advised that the proposal is acceptable in principle as it would enhance existing leisure facilities within an established recreational ground. That the design is modest and in keeping with the character of surrounding park structures. However, issues regarding potential noise impacts on nearby residents and tree protection would require further information and that a discovery condition for archaeology and meeting 10% net gain for biodiversity would be required.
- 5.3 There is no other substantive planning history relating to this part of Adastra Park or a net facility, but in addition other related history includes:
- 09/01506/FUL - Demolition of existing sports pavilion and redevelopment of site to provide a new ecological sports pavilion with washroom facilities – approved 31/07/2009
 - 0901506/NONMAT - Air source heat pump proposed to be installed on north elevation with acoustic dampener formed in sweet chestnut. – approved 28/02/2011

6 Policy Context

The Development Plan

- 6.1 The development plan for Mid Sussex currently comprises the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031, which was adopted by the Council on 28 March 2018 and sets out the strategic and development management policies for the District.
- 6.2 The District Council is undertaking a review of the District Plan and has progressed a replacement plan (District Plan 2021–2039) through the submission/Regulation 19 stage; on adoption the new plan will replace the existing 2014–2031 District Plan.
- 6.3 Where relevant, decision-makers should apply the adopted District Plan policies unless and until superseded by the emerging plan which will carry increasing weight as it progresses to adoption.
- 6.4 The policies summarised below are those of the adopted District Plan and are material to the determination of this application.

Policy DP26 – Character and Design

- 6.5 Policy DP26 requires all development (including extensions and replacement dwellings) to be of high-quality design and layout and to respond positively to the distinctive character of Mid Sussex towns, villages and countryside. Key requirements include:
- development should demonstrate high quality design and landscaping and contribute positively to public and private realms (active frontages, legibility and natural surveillance);
 - proposals should respond to the scale, pattern and character of surrounding buildings and landscape and protect valued townscapes, open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to local character;
 - developments must avoid significant harm to neighbouring amenity (privacy, outlook, daylight/sunlight) and should create pedestrian-friendly, accessible layouts with well-integrated parking and appropriate sustainability measures.

Policy DP29 – Noise, Air and Light Pollution

- 6.6 Policy DP29 seeks to protect the District's high quality and tranquillity by ensuring proposals do not give rise to unacceptable levels of noise, odour, air pollution or light glare. In summary:
- proposals likely to generate pollution impacts must be accompanied by proportionate assessment and mitigation (e.g. noise assessments, air quality assessments, odour/ventilation controls);

- development should avoid placing sensitive uses in locations where existing sources (e.g. sewage works, industrial plant, busy roads) would result in unacceptable harm to occupiers unless effective mitigation is secured (and, where necessary, delivery of improvements agreed with service providers);
- cumulative and long-term effects on amenity and environmental quality are material considerations.

Policy DP37 — Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

6.7 Policy DP37 protects existing trees, woodland and hedgerows and requires new development to incorporate and, where possible, enhance these features. Principal elements are:

- the Council will support protection and enhancement of trees, woodlands and hedgerows, with particular protection for ancient woodland and veteran trees;
- development that would damage or result in loss of trees/woodland/hedgerows that contribute to visual amenity, landscape character, history or biodiversity will not normally be permitted;
- proposals must incorporate important trees into site design, avoid damage to root systems, provide appropriate protection measures during construction, and seek opportunities for new planting (preferably native species) and retention of ecological corridors.

Policy DP38 — Biodiversity

6.8 Policy DP38 sets out the District's approach to conserving and enhancing biodiversity, requiring development to avoid adverse impacts on habitats and species and where possible to deliver net gains. In summary

- the Plan recognises valued landscapes and habitats across the District and requires that development identify and respond to ecological constraints and opportunities;
- proposals affecting designated or priority habitats/species must demonstrate avoidance, mitigation and (where appropriate) compensation measures in line with national legislation and guidance;
- developments should seek to enhance biodiversity on site (through habitat creation, linking green infrastructure and incorporating biodiversity features) and contribute to green infrastructure networks. The policy is implemented alongside statutory duties and the Council's evidence base (e.g. Ancient Woodland records and biodiversity opportunity mapping)

- 6.9 Taken together, DP26, DP29, DP37 and DP38 require proposals to demonstrate high-quality, context-sensitive design that protects neighbouring amenity and environmental quality, retains and integrates key natural assets (trees, hedgerows, habitats), addresses potential pollution impacts through proportionate assessment and mitigation, and delivers enhancements to biodiversity and green infrastructure where practicable. The application is accompanied by [insert list of relevant supporting documents here —Design and Access Statement, Noise Assessment, Arboricultural Assessment and Biodiversity Net gain Assessment that address the tests and requirements set out by these policies.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (hereto after referred to as the ‘framework’) is the Government’s overarching planning policy for England and constitutes a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 6.11 At the heart of the NPPF is the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” and that the planning system should pursue three core objectives together- economic, social and environmental.
- Environmental objective: to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
 - Social objective: to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient range of homes, services and open spaces is available to meet present and future needs; fostering safe, inclusive and accessible places that promote social interaction; and creating environments which support health, well-being and community cohesion.
 - Economic objective: to contribute to a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land and infrastructure is available to support growth and innovation; supporting local businesses, employment opportunities and investment; and enabling development that generates long-term prosperity while making efficient use of land and resources.
- 6.12 The framework emphasises that planning should help deliver healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Places should encourage social interaction, be safe and accessible, and support people’s health, well-being and quality of life. Importantly, it states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is essential for the health and well-being of communities, and that such provision can also bring wider benefits including to nature, biodiversity and climate resilience

- 6.13 Local planning policies (and planning decisions) should therefore be underpinned by robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. These assessments should consider both quantitative and qualitative provision, and help to identify deficits or surpluses.
- 6.14 The Framework imposes a presumption against building over existing open space, sports or recreational land (including playing fields and now explicitly including “formal play spaces”), unless one of the following applies:
- An assessment demonstrates that the open space or facility is surplus to requirements; or
 - Equivalent or better provision (in terms of quantity and quality) is to be provided in a suitable location; or
 - The development is for alternative sports or recreational provision — if the benefits of that new provision clearly outweigh the loss of the existing use.

7 Planning Assessment

- 7.1 This is a development proposal that follows on from a pre-application submission DM/25/1459 in July 2025.

Principle of Development

- 7.2 Policy DP24 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states that development that provides new and/or enhanced leisure facilities will be supported.
- 7.3 Given the nature of the proposal and its location within an existing recreational ground the proposal is considered to support the existing leisure facility and enhance it by providing an improvement of the existing facilities. This was confirmed in the Council advice to the applicant dated 25/07/2025.

Character and Design

- 7.4 Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development to respect the character and scale of surrounding buildings and landscape, achieve a high standard of design and layout, and safeguard open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute positively to the local area. This approach is reinforced within the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD
- 7.5 While the proposal does not represent a traditional architectural form and is of a functional appearance, it is considered an appropriate type of development within the context of the existing recreational uses within the park. The park already accommodates a variety of structures and facilities, including a skate park, several single-storey buildings, tennis courts and an existing cricket net. The proposed facility would be positioned close to the site boundary, ensuring it remains relatively discreet in its setting. Its scale would be modest and limited to a single storey.
- 7.6 Given these considerations, it responds appropriately to the character and scale of nearby development and the wider landscape and considered complies with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and accompanying guidance.

Neighbouring amenities

- 7.7 Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires that new development does not result in significant harm to the amenities of nearby occupiers. Policy DP29 provides complementary guidance on the management of noise, ensuring that development is appropriately designed and located to minimise adverse noise effects

- 7.8 The proposed cricket training facility would be positioned along the eastern boundary of the site, in relatively proximity to existing residential properties. The boundary currently consists of a hedgerow approximately 1.8 metres in height. Although the park's established recreational use already generates a degree of background noise, it was recognised that a reconfigured cricket net in this location could potentially increase the frequency of noise experienced by neighbouring residents.
- 7.9 To address this, the applicant has commissioned and submitted a comprehensive Acoustic Assessment. The findings confirm that noise levels associated with the proposed facility would remain within acceptable limits and would not result in significant adverse impacts on nearby occupiers. The assessment highlights that the modest scale of the proposal, existing ambient noise within the park, and the natural acoustic screening provided by boundary vegetation all contribute to ensuring that any noise effects are minimal.
- 7.10 The Acoustic Assessment has been provided to the Council and will be reviewed by the Environmental Protection Team as part of their statutory consultation. The applicant is fully committed to working collaboratively with the Council and would welcome discussions on any additional conditions or operational controls that the authority considers necessary to further safeguard residential amenity. On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies DP26 and DP29 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Trees

- 7.11 Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure that development does not damage or result in the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute—whether individually or collectively—to the visual amenity or character of the area. Where development is proposed within 15 metres of existing trees, either on-site or adjacent to the site, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) are required to identify potential impacts and to establish appropriate protection measures throughout the construction and operational phases.
- 7.12 In accordance with these requirements, the applicant has commissioned and submitted a detailed Tree Survey, AIA and AMS to accompany the planning application. These documents confirm that the proposal can be delivered without adverse impact on the health, stability or long-term retention of the surrounding trees and hedgerows. The assessments set out clear protection measures, including the establishment of root protection areas, construction exclusion zones and monitoring procedures to ensure compliance throughout the development's implementation.

- 7.13 The applicant is committed to ensuring that the existing arboricultural features are fully safeguarded and would welcome the imposition of appropriate planning conditions securing adherence to the submitted AIA and AMS, along with any further monitoring or controls the Council's Tree Officer considers necessary. On this basis, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.
- 7.14 Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure that development protects existing biodiversity and avoids net loss. The policy requires that appropriate measures are taken to avoid or reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species, and that any unavoidable impacts are offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures, with compensation only considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.15 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a key component of national planning policy and requires development to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before. It delivers this by enhancing or creating habitats associated with development, without altering existing statutory protections for important habitats and species. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reinforces this objective, particularly at paragraph 186(d), which encourages opportunities to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity within development design. Applicants are also expected to follow the mitigation hierarchy as set out in NPPF paragraph 186(a), ensuring that avoidance, mitigation and enhancement are prioritised before compensation is considered.
- 7.16 Since April 2024, non-major developments in England (subject to limited exemptions) must achieve a minimum 10% BNG in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. Biodiversity units are calculated using the statutory Biodiversity Metric, which provides a transparent and standardised method for assessing changes in habitat value and informing site design, layout and long-term management.
- 7.17 To address these policy requirements, the applicant has undertaken and submitted a comprehensive Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. This assessment includes a full habitat survey, baseline biodiversity unit calculations and a proposed habitat enhancement strategy. The results confirm that the development will deliver at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity on site, achieved through targeted habitat creation, enhancement and long-term management measures.
- 7.18 The applicant is fully committed to securing the proposed BNG and would welcome the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and monitoring requirements to ensure the successful delivery, management and maintenance of the enhanced habitats.
- 7.19 On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Environment Act 2021 BNG requirements, and the biodiversity enhancement objectives of the NPPF.

Archaeology

- 7.20 The applicant acknowledges that the site lies within a West Sussex County Council Archaeological Notification Area relating to the potential alignment of a Roman Road. In line with the advice received during pre-application discussions, no intrusive archaeological assessment has been undertaken at this stage. The applicant fully accepts the imposition of a standard archaeological discovery condition, should planning permission be granted, and is committed to complying with any requirements arising from such a condition. This approach ensures that any unexpected archaeological finds can be appropriately managed, recorded and preserved in accordance with relevant guidance and best practice.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The proposed enclosed cricket net represents a modest, well-considered enhancement to the existing sporting facilities at Adastra Park and will deliver clear recreational, community and environmental benefits. The development responds positively to its context, respects the character of the park, and has been designed to avoid adverse effects on neighbouring amenity, trees or biodiversity. Comprehensive supporting assessments—including acoustic, arboricultural and biodiversity surveys—demonstrate that any potential impacts can be appropriately mitigated, and the scheme meets all relevant requirements of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 8.2 The proposal directly supports the continued growth and sustainability of Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club, a long-established community organisation providing valuable opportunities for sport, health and social engagement across all age groups. The new practice facility will significantly improve the quality, safety and capacity of the club's training provision, thereby strengthening access to sport within the local area in accordance with national and local policy aims.
- 8.3 In summary, the development constitutes a sustainable, policy-compliant and locally beneficial enhancement to an existing recreational asset. The applicant has demonstrated a clear commitment to environmental protection, community wellbeing and high-quality design. For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that the application be approved.