

**Hartham Leisure Centre: Reference 3/20/1814/FUL
Response on behalf of the Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan (BNAP)**

1. Hartham Leisure Centre is within the Bengoe Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Regulation 16 consultation closed on the 10 September 2020 and the Plan is currently at the examination stage.
2. On the 15 October 2019, a Neighbourhood Plan response was submitted to planning application 3/19/1882/FUL and, on the 21 November 2019, to amended drawings for the Leisure Centre.

External Design

3. The 2019 Neighbourhood Plan responses (based on draft policies in the BNAP Regulation 14 Draft Submission) raised concerns about the impact of the proposed external design on the surrounding landscape. A recommendation was made that alternative exterior design options were considered.
4. In February 2020, the BNAP Regulation 15 Submission Draft was published. Draft Policy HBB1: Local Business Development states that development proposals should:
 - be designed to be in keeping with and complement the surrounding landscape and nearby buildings
 - enhance and complement the appearance and aesthetics of the existing building/s

We consider the revised external design of the proposed two-storey extension, with its curved roof on the south elevation and some lighter timber-effect cladding, to be an improvement on the 2019 designs. The addition of a living wall on the south elevation, 'wrap-around' green corridor on the west elevation and raised boardwalk between the trees on the north elevation, would help to blend the extension in with the surrounding landscape.

Sustainability and biodiversity

5. We welcome the greater focus on a sustainable strategy within the 2020 proposals, including the aim to achieve an 'Excellent' BREEAM accreditation
6. In our responses to the 2019 proposals, we recommended that the volume of trees replaced should be greater than those removed. We note that 10 individual trees and 1 group of trees (volume unclear) would be removed and that this loss would be mitigated through the planting of an additional 21 trees.
7. We welcome the proposals to include bird and bat boxes as well as bee hotels in the landscape design. Page 54 of the Design and Access Statement says that options for including nesting for swifts will be investigated. We recommend that these are included if feasible.

Community Facilities

8. In our response to the 2019 proposals, we recommended the inclusion of a climbing/bouldering wall. We note that the business case for this, as well as badminton courts and cricket nets, concluded that these facilities could not be provided. BNAP draft Policy HBC2: Enhanced Community Facilities, supports the provision of enhanced youth facilities and draft Policy HBB1: Local Business Development says that development proposals should '*demonstrate sustainable options for long -term business use*'. Whilst the proposed soft play area for young children, and increased studio space are very welcome, we recommend that every opportunity is sought to provide enhanced facilities for older children and teenagers, within the Leisure Centre, and the surrounding area linked to the Centre.
9. We welcome the proposals to refurbish the pool hall and wet and dry changing facilities (including accessible changing), and the plans to extend the pool spectator area.

Parking

10. In our response to the 2019 proposals, we recommended that cycle parking provision included some covered parking. We welcome the proposal to install an additional 32 cycle parking spaces, some of which would be covered.
11. We note that accessible parking to the front of the Leisure Centre would be extended from 4 to 6 bays and that 3 coach parking bays would be retained. We also note that the removal of 9 parking bays and reconfiguring and resurfacing of the front car park, would facilitate pedestrian access.

Construction Schedule

12. With construction scheduled to commence in April 2021 (subject to planning consent), it's essential that works are completed on time, with minimal interruption to the provision of community facilities.

Community Steering Group Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan