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PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

Planning Statement

prepared in relation to:

**Heckmondwike Bowling Club
Green Avenue
Heckmondwike
West Yorkshire
WF16 9LD**

Submitted to Kirklees Council to accompany planning application for the conversion of one existing bowling green to an all-weather artificial sports surface.

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Date of Preparation of Schedule:	24/06/2026
Version	(One)

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared in support of a planning application for the conversion of one existing bowling green to an all-weather artificial sports surface at
Heckmondwike Bowling Club, Green Lane, Heckmondwike, WF16 9LD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Applicant

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club in support of a planning application for the conversion of one existing bowling green at Heckmondwike Bowling Club, Green Avenue, Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire, WF16 9LD, to an all-weather artificial sports surface.

The application has been prepared by Dartwood Property Solutions following discussions with the applicant and Heckmondwike Bowling Club.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The application site comprises Heckmondwike Bowling Club, an established recreational facility located on Green Avenue, Heckmondwike. The site has historically been used for outdoor bowling and incorporates two bowling greens together with a clubhouse, ancillary facilities, external amenity space and dedicated on-site parking.

The site occupies a sustainable location within the urban area of Heckmondwike and is surrounded predominantly by established residential development together with other recreational and community facilities.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is taken from Green Avenue and will remain unchanged as part of the proposed development.

1.3 Description of Development

- 1.3.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of one existing bowling green to an all-weather artificial sports surface to facilitate football and wider community recreational use.

The proposal has been carefully designed to retain the site's established recreational function whilst providing a modern all-weather sports facility capable of supporting increased participation throughout the year.

Importantly, the proposal does not include the construction of any new buildings, alterations to the existing clubhouse, changes to the existing access arrangements, parking provision, boundary treatments or floodlighting. The proposal therefore represents a relatively modest enhancement to an existing sporting facility rather than the redevelopment of the site.

1.4 Purpose of this Statement

- 1.4.1 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to assess the proposed development against relevant national and local planning policy and to demonstrate why planning permission should be granted.

The statement should be read alongside the accompanying Design and Access Statement, planning application drawings and supporting documentation submitted in support of the application.

In addition to assessing the proposal against the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Kirklees Local Plan, this statement demonstrates the wider community benefits arising from the proposal, including the enhancement and diversification of existing sporting provision, improved opportunities for participation in sport and recreation, and the long-term sustainability of recreational use at the site.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Existing Site; Heckmondwike Bowling Club

- 2.1.1 Heckmondwike Bowling Club is an established community sports facility comprising two outdoor bowling greens together with a clubhouse, ancillary storage buildings, external seating areas and associated hardstanding.

The site benefits from established pedestrian and vehicular access from Green Avenue together with an on-site car park providing approximately 42 parking spaces for members and visitors.

The application relates solely to one of the two existing bowling greens. The remaining bowling green will continue to operate as an outdoor bowling facility following completion of the proposed development.



View of bowling pitch, Heckmondwike Bowling Club facing north west

2.2 Existing Facilities

- 2.2.1 The existing clubhouse provides facilities for members and visitors including changing, kitchen and social accommodation.

The site also benefits from existing floodlighting, perimeter pathways, boundary treatments and established landscaping which serve the existing sporting use.

No alterations are proposed to these facilities as part of this application.

2.3 Surrounding Area

- 2.3.1 The site occupies a well-established recreational location within the urban area of Heckmondwike.

Residential properties are located to the north, east and south of the site, whilst recreational land associated with the adjoining sports pavilion and cricket ground lies to the west.

The bowling club forms an established component of the local community's sporting infrastructure and has operated from the site for many years.

2.4 Existing Access and Parking

- 2.4.1 Existing pedestrian and vehicular access to the site will remain unchanged.

The existing car park provides approximately 42 parking spaces and is considered sufficient to accommodate the proposed use.

No alterations are proposed to the existing highway arrangements, parking provision or internal circulation routes.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of one of the two existing bowling greens at Heckmondwike Bowling Club to an all-weather artificial sports surface. The proposal has been developed by White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club in partnership with Heckmondwike Bowling Club with the aim of broadening the sporting opportunities available at the site whilst securing its long-term recreational use.

The proposal has been carefully designed to make effective use of an existing sporting facility and represents a sustainable form of development within an established recreational site.

3.2 Scope of Development

- 3.2.1 The proposed development is limited to the conversion of one existing natural grass bowling green to an all-weather artificial sports surface suitable for football training and wider community recreational use.

The application does not include:

- construction of any new buildings;
- alterations to the existing clubhouse;
- changes to existing vehicular or pedestrian access;
- alterations to the existing car park;
- replacement or alteration of existing floodlighting;
- changes to existing boundary treatments; or
- alterations to the overall layout of the site.

The remaining bowling green will continue to operate for outdoor bowls in its current form.

3.3 Development Summary

- 3.3.1 The proposal represents a modest enhancement to an established sporting facility by introducing an additional recreational use whilst retaining the site's existing sporting function.

The development has been specifically designed to utilise existing infrastructure already available at the site, including the clubhouse, parking facilities, access arrangements and floodlighting. As a result, the proposal maximises the efficient use of an existing community sports facility without the need for significant new development.

The proposal therefore represents an appropriate and proportionate form of development which enhances the site's recreational offer whilst maintaining its established character.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1.1 A review of the planning history has not identified any previous planning permissions which are considered material to the determination of this application.

The site has operated for many years as an established community sporting facility comprising bowling greens, clubhouse facilities and associated parking.

The current application does not seek to introduce a new recreational use to the site but instead proposes the diversification of the existing sporting facilities through the conversion of one of the existing bowling greens to an all-weather artificial sports surface.

The proposal should therefore be considered on its own planning merits, having regard to the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

5.0 Planning Policy Framework

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes the Government's objective of achieving sustainable development through the economic, social and environmental objectives of the planning system.

The Framework places significant emphasis upon supporting healthy and inclusive communities through the protection and enhancement of opportunities for sport and recreation. It also encourages the effective use of existing land and facilities whilst promoting developments that improve community infrastructure and support healthier lifestyles.

The proposal accords with these objectives by retaining the site's established recreational use whilst broadening the sporting opportunities available to the local community. The proposal makes effective use of an existing sporting facility without requiring additional built development or the loss of community infrastructure.

5.2 Kirklees Local Plan

- 5.2.1 The application site is identified within the adopted Kirklees Local Plan as Urban Green Space.

The proposal has therefore been prepared having particular regard to the relevant policies of the Local Plan, including those relating to recreational facilities, design quality and Urban Green Space.

The proposed development has been specifically designed to retain the site's recreational function whilst enhancing the range of sporting opportunities available. Existing buildings, parking provision, access arrangements, landscaping and floodlighting are all retained, resulting in a modest and proportionate form of development.

5.3 Urban Green Space

- 5.3.1 The purpose of the Urban Green Space designation is to safeguard land which performs an important recreational, environmental or community function.

The proposal does not seek to remove the recreational use of the site. Instead, it seeks to diversify and strengthen the sporting facilities available by introducing an all-weather artificial sports surface capable of supporting a broader range of recreational activities throughout the year.

The proposal therefore supports the continued recreational use of the site whilst improving its long-term sustainability for future generations.

6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 Principle of Development

- 6.1.1 The application site forms part of an established community sports facility which has operated for many years.

The proposal does not introduce a new use onto previously undeveloped land, nor does it involve the redevelopment of the site for non-recreational purposes. Instead, the proposal represents the enhancement and diversification of an existing sporting facility through the conversion of one existing bowling green to an all-weather artificial sports surface.

The principle of maintaining and enhancing recreational opportunities is therefore considered acceptable in planning terms.

6.2 Assessment against Policy LP61 – Urban Green Space

- 6.2.1 Policy LP61 seeks to safeguard Urban Green Space whilst recognising that development may be appropriate where it maintains or enhances the recreational function of the site and delivers wider community benefits.

The proposal is considered to comply with the objectives of Policy LP61 for the following reasons:

- The site will remain in recreational use following completion of the development.
- One existing bowling green will remain available for continued bowling activities.
- The proposal broadens the sporting opportunities available at the site through the introduction of an all-weather recreational facility.
- No built development is proposed.
- Existing parking, access arrangements, clubhouse facilities and floodlighting will all remain unchanged.
- The proposal supports the continued viability and long-term sustainability of an established community sports facility.
- The proposal will increase opportunities for participation in organised sport and informal recreation throughout the year.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the objectives of Policy LP61 and should be viewed as an enhancement to an existing recreational facility rather than the loss of recreational land.

The proposal should therefore be viewed as strengthening the overall sporting offer available at the site whilst supporting its continued long-term viability.

7.0 Evidence of Need and Community Benefits

7.1 Heckmondwike Bowling Club

- 7.1.1 Heckmondwike Bowling Club has served the local community for many years and remains an important recreational facility within the area. However, like many traditional sports clubs, it has experienced a significant decline in participation and associated income over recent years.

In 2020 the club had approximately **150 members**. Current membership has reduced to **71 members**, of whom 26 are social members, representing a reduction of approximately **53%** in overall membership.

Competitive participation has reduced at an even greater rate. In 2020 the club fielded **16 competitive teams**. This has reduced to **5 teams in 2026**, representing a reduction of almost **70%**.

The reduction in participation has had a direct impact upon the club's financial position. Net bar revenue has fallen from **approximately £320 per week in 2020 to between £150 and £200 per week at present**. This decline in income has contributed to **persistent operating losses of approximately £6,000 per annum** over each of the last four Annual General Meetings.

The evidence demonstrates that the club is experiencing sustained financial and operational pressures. Without opportunities to diversify the site's sporting offer and improve its financial resilience, the long-term sustainability of this valued community sports facility is increasingly at risk.

The proposed development provides an opportunity to broaden participation in sport whilst supporting the continued operation of the bowling club. Importantly, one bowling green will be retained, ensuring bowling continues at the site whilst introducing an additional all-weather facility capable of attracting new users and increasing year-round activity.

7.2 White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club

- 7.2.1 White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club is an established grassroots football club currently operating 28 teams across 11 age groups, together with two girls' teams. The club provides regular football opportunities for approximately 180 young people each week and continues to experience demand for additional participation opportunities.

Training currently takes place on Saturday mornings for younger age groups (Under 6 to Under 10) and during weekday evenings for older teams. However, the club faces increasing difficulty in securing suitable all-weather training facilities locally, particularly during the winter months.

The club currently spends **approximately £15,000 each year hiring third-party all-weather facilities**. This represents a significant financial burden on a volunteer-led grassroots organisation and limits opportunities to reinvest funds directly into coaching, equipment and wider community participation.

The proposed development would provide a permanent, sustainable all-weather training facility capable of supporting **approximately 18 hours of organised sporting activity each week**.

In addition to existing football provision, White Rose Allstars intends to expand community participation through the introduction of disability football, walking football and wider **community five-a-side sessions**. These initiatives would broaden participation in sport whilst ensuring the facility provides benefits to a wide cross-section of the local community.

The proposal therefore responds to an identified local need for accessible all-weather sports provision whilst delivering significant social, health and community benefits.

7.3 Summary of Evidence

Evidence	Current Position
Heckmondwike Bowling Club	
Bowling Club Membership	150 members (2020) → 71 members (2026)
Competitive Bowling Teams	16 teams → 5 teams
Weekly Bar Revenue	£320 → £150–£200
Financial Position	Approx. £6,000 annual operating loss over the last four years
White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club	
White Rose Teams	28 teams
Weekly Participants	Approx. 180 players
Annual Hire Costs	Approx. £15,000
Additional Community Uses	Disability football, walking football, community 5-a-side

The evidence presented above demonstrates two clear and complementary needs. Firstly, Heckmondwike Bowling Club is experiencing sustained reductions in participation and income, placing increasing pressure on its long-term sustainability. Secondly, White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club has a demonstrable need for a permanent all-weather training facility to support its growing membership and wider community aspirations.

The proposed development directly addresses both needs whilst retaining the site's established recreational function.

7.4 Community Use

- 7.4.1 The proposed development will deliver significant benefits to the wider community by increasing access to high-quality sporting facilities throughout the year.

Whilst the facility will primarily support the activities of White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club, the applicant is committed to ensuring that the pitch is available for wider community use outside organised club activities.

The proposed all-weather surface will provide opportunities for a range of recreational activities including disability football, walking football and community five-a-side football. These activities will broaden participation in sport by creating opportunities for people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds to access a safe, accessible and modern sporting facility.

Unlike a traditional grass playing surface, the proposed artificial sports surface will provide a reliable, year-round facility capable of supporting regular community use during periods when natural grass pitches may be unavailable due to weather conditions.

The proposal therefore represents a valuable investment in local sporting infrastructure and will make a positive contribution towards increasing participation in organised sport and informal recreation within the local community.

7.5 Health and Wellbeing Benefits

- 7.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the important role that planning can play in supporting healthy communities through the provision of opportunities for sport, recreation and active lifestyles.

The proposed development will increase opportunities for physical activity by providing an accessible all-weather sports facility capable of supporting regular participation throughout the year. The facility will benefit approximately 180 players each week through existing football activities, whilst also creating opportunities for additional community participation through disability football, walking football and wider recreational use.

The proposal will encourage participation across a broad range of age groups, from young children through to adults, whilst promoting social inclusion by providing facilities capable of supporting new and emerging community initiatives.

By improving access to organised sport and recreational activity, the proposal will contribute positively towards physical health, mental wellbeing and social interaction, whilst strengthening community cohesion through shared use of an established local sporting facility.

7.6 Long-term Sustainability of the Site

- 7.6.1 The evidence presented within this Planning Statement demonstrates that Heckmondwike Bowling Club has experienced a sustained decline in membership, competitive participation and associated income over recent years.

This decline has resulted in ongoing financial pressures which threaten the long-term sustainability of the existing sporting facilities if no action is taken.

The proposed development provides a practical and sustainable solution by introducing a complementary recreational use capable of generating additional activity, increasing community participation and supporting the continued operation of the wider site.

Importantly, the proposal does not result in the loss of bowling from the site. One existing bowling green will remain in active use, ensuring that the club continues to provide bowling facilities whilst adapting to changing patterns of participation and demand.

The partnership between Heckmondwike Bowling Club and White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club represents an opportunity to secure the future of an established community sports facility through diversification rather than replacement. By making more effective use of the site's existing infrastructure, including the clubhouse, parking provision, access arrangements and floodlighting, the proposal supports the long-term viability of both organisations whilst safeguarding the site's recreational function for future generations.

It is therefore considered that the proposal represents a sustainable approach to managing a valued community asset, ensuring that the site continues to make a positive contribution to sport, recreation and community life within Heckmondwike for many years to come.

8.0 Planning Balance

8.1 Benefits of the Proposal

- 8.1.1 The proposed development delivers a range of significant planning benefits which are considered to substantially outweigh the limited physical changes associated with the proposal.

The principal benefits include:

- Retention of the site's established recreational use.
- Continued provision of bowling through the retention of one existing bowling green.
- Diversification of the sporting opportunities available to the local community.
- Provision of a year-round all-weather sports facility.
- Increased opportunities for participation in organised sport and informal recreation.
- Enhanced opportunities for disability football, walking football and wider community use.
- Improved long-term financial resilience for Heckmondwike Bowling Club.
- Reduced reliance on hiring off-site all-weather facilities by White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club.
- More effective use of existing community infrastructure, including the clubhouse, parking facilities, access arrangements and floodlighting.
- No requirement for new buildings or significant engineering works.

The proposal therefore represents an efficient and sustainable use of an existing community sports facility, ensuring that recreational use is retained whilst opportunities for participation are significantly broadened.

8.2 Overall Planning Balance

- 8.2.1 The proposal has been carefully designed to retain the established recreational function of the site whilst responding to changing patterns of participation and demand within the local community.

The evidence submitted in support of this application demonstrates that Heckmondwike Bowling Club has experienced significant reductions in membership, competitive participation and associated income, placing increasing pressure upon its long-term sustainability. At the same time, White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club has demonstrated a clear and evidenced need for additional all-weather sports provision to support its growing membership and wider community aspirations.

The proposal successfully responds to both of these needs by enabling complementary sporting activities to coexist on the same site. Importantly, the proposal does not involve the loss of the site's recreational function, nor does it introduce inappropriate built development. Instead, it enhances the overall sporting offer available to the community whilst safeguarding the future of an established community sports facility.

When considered as a whole, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development that accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Kirklees Local Plan. It is therefore respectfully concluded that planning permission should be granted.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.0.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the conversion of one existing bowling green at Heckmondwike Bowling Club to an all-weather artificial sports surface.

The proposal has been carefully designed to retain the site's established recreational function whilst broadening the sporting opportunities available to the local community. Importantly, one bowling green will remain in active use, ensuring that bowling continues to form an integral part of the site's future.

The evidence submitted demonstrates that Heckmondwike Bowling Club has experienced a sustained decline in membership, competitive participation and associated income, placing increasing pressure upon its long-term sustainability. At the same time, White Rose Allstars Junior Football Club has demonstrated a clear and evidenced need for additional all-weather sports provision to support its existing membership, future growth and wider community aspirations.

The proposed development provides a practical and sustainable solution by enabling complementary sporting activities to coexist within an established community sports facility. By making more effective use of existing infrastructure, the proposal secures wider community benefits without requiring new buildings, additional parking, alterations to existing access arrangements or changes to the site's overall recreational character.

The proposal is considered to represent sustainable development that accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Kirklees Local Plan. It retains the site's established recreational use, enhances opportunities for participation in sport and recreation and supports the long-term viability of an important community asset.

For the reasons set out within this Planning Statement, it is respectfully concluded that the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development, and it is therefore requested that Kirklees Council grants planning permission.

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Dated: 25th June 2026