

7th October 2026

Kirklees Council
Planning Department.

FAO: Case Officer – Jillian Rann

By email to:
dc.admin@kirklees.gov.uk

RE: Planning Application Ref: 2026/62/92123/W – Stadium hotel and loss of leisure centre

We write in connection with the above planning application. Please accept this as a response on behalf of our club and its members in respect of the public consultation process. We confirm that we give consent for this letter to be published in full as part of the public records associated with the application.

When the existing leisure pool at the proposed development closed in December 2023, our club was perhaps the most significantly affected of all of its users. The existing stadium pool had been a home for the club since it was opened and the pool facility was perfectly suited to water polo.

Since that withdrawal, almost 3 years ago, the club has had to make use a local school pool which is not suitable because of its width (it does not meet the minimum regulation width) and has no fixed goals ("plastic pipe" goals are propped on the side). We have been unable to train properly because skills and drills that require width cannot be practised.

Critically, we have been unable to play any league home games (senior and junior) over that period because the current pool does not meet the minimum requirements for WP (width and goals).

These are issues that threaten the continued existence of our club, which was formed in 1919, and has been a community club, producing high quality water polo players (including international players) ever since. We are currently the only water polo club and water polo pathway in the whole of Kirklees. Without us, there will be no provision or pathway for the sport in Kirklees.

Our current and ongoing difficulties are recognised in the separate Consultation provided by Sport England (Consultee Response [id 1159097], see section headed "Swim England").

Until earlier this year, we remained in communication with the Stadium pool owners (previously KSDL) on the basis that there was a possibility that the pool would re-open. It became clear to us earlier this year that it was highly unlikely and we have recently been in discussions with Kirklees Active Leisure ("KAL"), seeking to establish whether we can secure pool time at the Huddersfield Leisure Centre. That pool is (we believe) the only pool in Kirklees which can provide us with a facility that would remove all of our current technical / compliance issues. Although other pools (Spen Valley and Batley) have been considered, after a detailed

consultation with members we are certain that a move to North Kirklees is not a viable or sustainable option for the club.

One of the barriers to KAL being in a position to allow us use of the Huddersfield Leisure Centre is that the large pool there has some physical features which require either upgrade or protection against damage from potential impact from water polo balls. That is likely to involve protective netting curtains to parts of the pool. In addition, new removable and regulation compliant goals would need to be procured.

Clearly those requirements require a capital expenditure. The club, in its current difficulties, is in no position to afford that expenditure. KAL itself is (as we understand all leisure operators to be) having to minimise its costs, which clearly would include expenditure on such equipment.

But without that expenditure, and with a permanent loss of the Stadium pool, there is no adequate facility for water polo in Kirklees in which our club can continue to train, play and survive.

We are aware that planning departments can place certain conditions on consent given for developments, such as Community Infrastructure Levies and the like, to ensure that the impacts of development are appropriately mitigated.

Given that the application here will result in the permanent loss of the only Central / South Kirklees located swimming pool currently suitable for water polo, and that some expenditure will clearly be necessary at another centre in order to ensure the survival of our club and the continued provision for water polo in Kirklees, we ask that an appropriate levy / condition be placed on any consent. We would hope that any levy / fund would then be available to ensure that proper facilities for our sport remain available in Kirklees.

Yours sincerely,
