

## HOLME GRANGE SCHOOL

### Wokingham Without



### Community Involvement Statement

#### New Multi Use Games Area

#### & Associated Proposals

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## **Community Involvement Statement**

### **Holme Grange School Sports Facilities**

Holme Grange School (HGS) is looking to increase the range of sports that can be accommodated, reliably through the year and including evening use in the winter months.

The school is proposing to install a new synthetic-carpeted multi-use games area (MUGA or AGP, artificial grass pitch) to an area of relatively little-used facilities including a disused swimming pool, polytunnel and little-used tennis court, with an associated area of trees and shrubs. The new MUGA will be sized to accommodate a full 7-a-side soccer layout lengthways and two 5-a-side pitches crossways. The 55m x 37m overall size will also accommodate three tennis/netball courts, with the surface finish to be of an artificial carpet designed to accommodate all three sports.

Apart from increasing the capacity for the school and their pupils, the intention is to promote community use throughout the year with floodlighting installed to support this. The soccer and tennis facilities are expected to be fully used, based on the demand the school already has on their existing AGP.

This proposal offers an ideal opportunity to introduce a state-of-the-art Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) for the school's pupils and extend the number of community groups who currently use the outdoor facilities. HGS intend to extend the existing links to local sports groups and for these and pupils to play mini-hockey, walking football, bowls, cricket practice and perhaps 'new' sports such as pickleball and korfball.

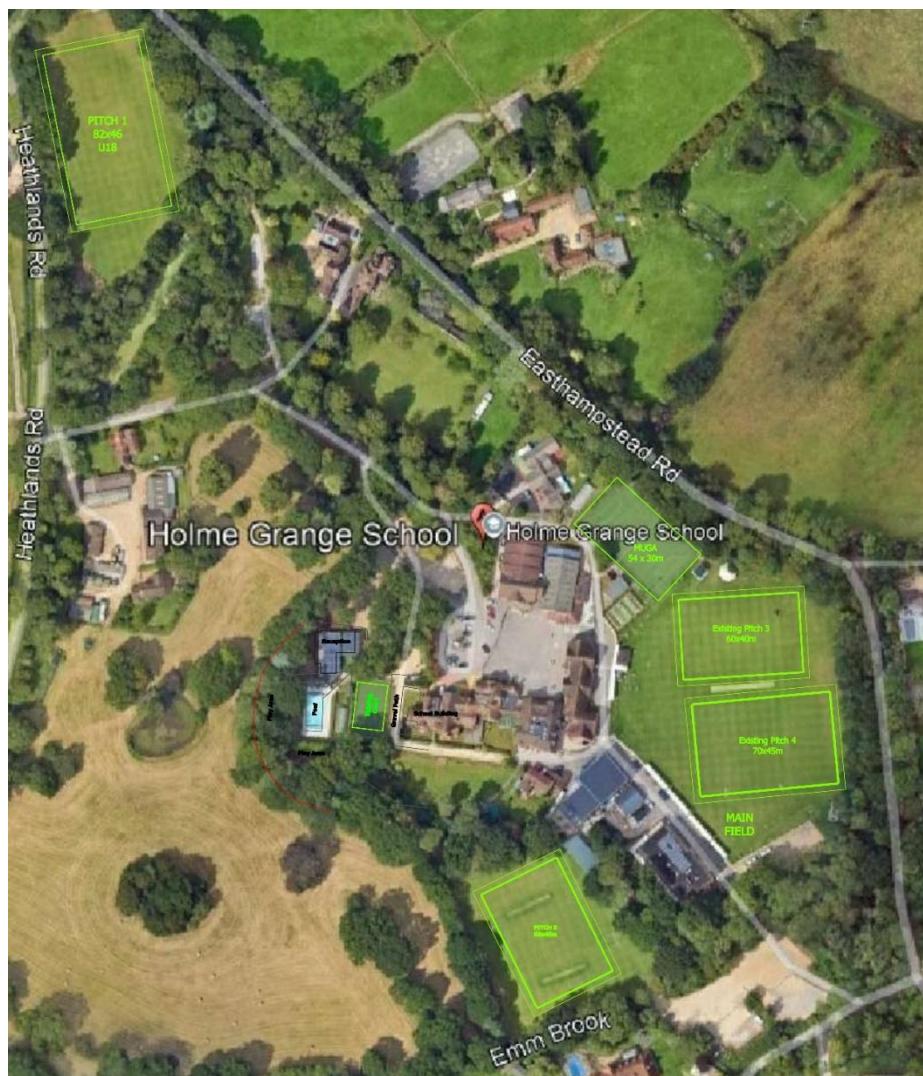
There is a shortfall of all-weather sports facilities locally. The local Playing Pitch Strategy document (PPS), currently in draft form, was presented to the Wokingham Town Council Executive in September 2024. This 'enabling document' suggests that the area requires a further 8 AGPs, also stating that:

*'The PPS action plan identifies that the modest needs for other sports can be delivered either by existing projects that are underway or by enhancements to existing facilities. Also to note that the PPS identifies locations and evidence of strategic need, other external agencies, organisations or clubs could use the PPS with Council support to lead on projects and initiatives to attract facilities into the Borough'.*

HGS consider that the proposed new MUGA/AGP with the community use intention associated with it is supporting this element of the PPS.



**Fig. 1 – The new MUGA is to be partly on the area of an existing disused swimming pool**



**Fig. 5 – School site with application area west of the main building with other outdoor sports facilities**

## Application Details

**Location:** Holme Grange School, Heathlands Rd, Wokingham Without, Wokingham, RG40 3AL

### Description of the Proposal:

Planning permission is sought for a multi-use games area (MUGA) of 55 x 37m approximate size, finished with a needle-punch synthetic carpet. The MUGA is to be fenced with a 4.2m high ball stop rebound fence, access gates and pathways from the adjacent school buildings. Existing floodlighting for the tennis court is to be upgraded.

The school has embarked on a strategic upgrading programme for the outdoor sports facilities, grass and artificial surfaces, beginning with new drainage installation on the main playing field to the east, used for cricket and soccer primarily. The existing MUGA/ATP is smaller than the standard size used for a three-court sub-layout option, so has restrictions on the capacity for maximising play.

The proposed MUGA is sized to accommodate a full 7-a-side soccer game or 2 to three 5-a-side courts which also accommodate three tennis and netball courts, using retractable dividing netting to separate areas. The MUGA is to have a needle-punch type of artificial grass carpet finish, suitable for certain sports that cannot properly be played on either the grass pitches or the existing MUGA. Installing a needle-punch type of sand dressed carpet will allow hockey to be played at school coaching level and also provide an all-weather surface for a wide range of sports, some new to the school offer:

- Soccer/Walking Football
- Netball/Tennis/Badminton/Softball
- Cricket practice
- Circuit training for all age groups
- Flat green bowls
- Pickleball, Korfball, junior sprint track, etc.

This proposal will contribute to the significant improvement of sporting facilities for the school and community and will result in considerable benefit to school pupils and local community clubs and groups through the provision of an enhanced sports facility. This project will initiate partnerships by working with local community groups and organisations to promote and encourage participation in all aspects of sport, leisure and cultural activities.

The school fully intend to extend the current community use to the new MUGA AGP. There is a need in the town and locality for facilities for a range of sports. This use includes the new MUGA AGP and the improved grass pitches for winter play.

As with the pupils, community users will benefit from the wider scope for sports that the MUGA synthetic carpet will afford.



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