

**David Lloyd Reading, Thames
Valley Park Drive. Earley,
Wokingham RG6 1PT**

Planning Statement

David Lloyd Leisure Ltd

18 December 2025

LICHFIELDS

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of David Lloyd Leisure Limited, (David Lloyd) to accompany a planning application for the extension of the David Lloyd Reading (Thames Valley Park) Club, at 1 Thames Valley Park Drive, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 1PT.
- 1.2 The site falls wholly within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council.
- 1.3 The application seeks permission for:
- 1.4 *“Extension to the David Lloyd Club to form enhanced swimming facilities, Spa and Spa Garden and upper floor health and fitness areas and external Spa Garden”*

Scope of Application

- 1.5 An application was initially proposed for the wholesale redevelopment of the club and its relocation across the David Lloyd site and the land to the east of the Club. Positive feedback to this was received as part of engagement through the formal pre-application process in November 2024.
- 1.6 Since then, David Lloyd has determined that a better solution is the redevelopment / extension of the Club over that area presently occupied by the single storey ground floor swimming pool and that this is a more sustainable and achievable proposal.
- 1.7 The application is accompanied by the following forms, drawings and documents:
- Application form;
 - Drawing Package;
 - Design and Access Statement;
 - Flood Risk Assessment;

Report Structure

- 1.8 The supporting statement is structured as follows:
- Applicant Context (Section 2);
 - Site and Surrounding Area (Section 3);
 - Planning History (Section 4);
 - The Development (Section 5);
 - Planning Policy Context (Section 6);
 - Planning Policy Analysis (Section 7); and,
 - Conclusions (Section 8).

2.0 David Lloyd Leisure

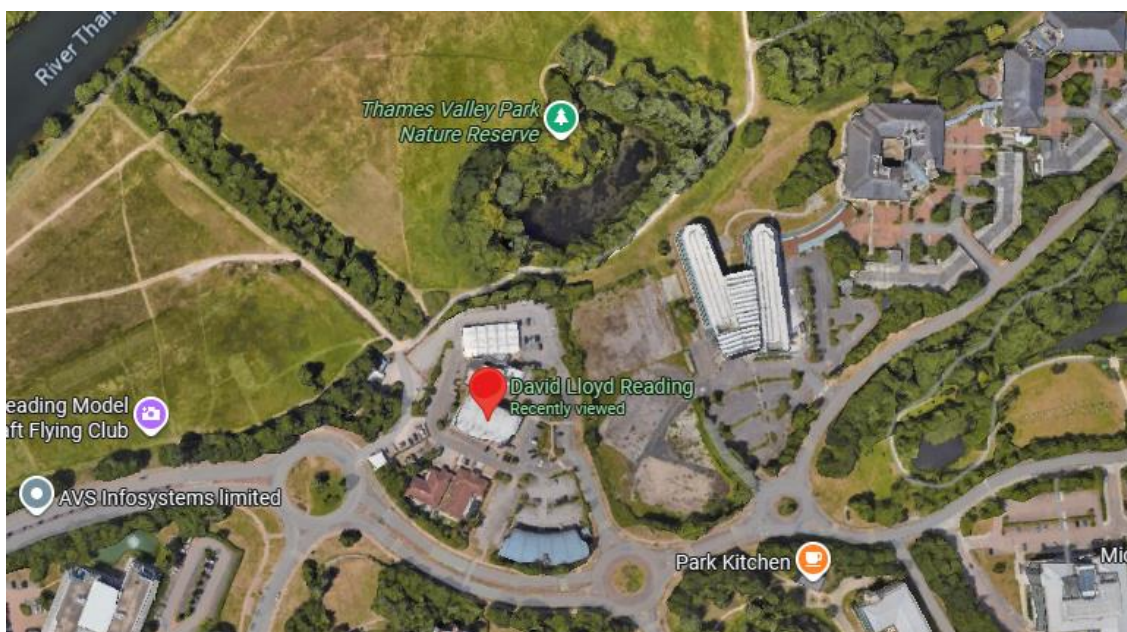
- 2.1 David Lloyd Leisure Ltd (David Lloyd) is Europe's premier health, racquets and fitness provider. The company has operated for over 40 years and owns 108 David Lloyd clubs in the UK and a further 29 across Europe. David Lloyd has ambitious growth plans both in the UK and Europe.
- 2.2 An important part of the business, as well as developing new Clubs, is the continuing investment in its existing clubs, to meet Member needs and expectations as health, fitness and wellbeing trends continue to evolve.
- 2.3 The business has 810,000 members (the majority of which are in the UK) and plays an important role in encouraging UK residents to lead active, healthy lifestyles, helping to reduce pressure on public health services.
- 2.4 25% of members are aged under 16, and 50% of all club attendees visit as a family group. There are 44-million-member visits in the UK each year, and the business delivers 800,000 fitness classes annually.
- 2.5 Active children are more likely to grow into active adults. Every week 160,000 classes are delivered across the UK for children aged 3 to 11 years with an attendance of 1.2 million.
- 2.6 Each week 25,500 children learn to swim and 16,000 to play tennis.
- 2.7 Each club is embedded within the local community, providing schools with access to facilities to learn to swim and supporting local charities and good causes. Members benefit from more than a gym or a racquets club; there are spaces to socialize, relax, and spend quality time with their families.
- 2.8 The design of clubs is very intentional, incorporating a wide variety of facilities with a focus on user experience whilst also considering the number of raw materials used in construction and the amount of energy needed during operation.
- 2.9 As well as a comprehensive choice of facilities and group-exercise classes there is a strong focus on creating inclusive communities and supporting emotional wellbeing of members & staff through social activities such as family discos, quiz nights & coffee mornings. Opportunities are created to enjoy shared interests beyond health & fitness (including book & chess clubs); and designating *'happy to chat'* tables in clubrooms to encourage interaction.
- 2.10 The COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the need for both physical and mental resilience and David Lloyd are at the forefront of development, both in fitness innovation across its Clubs, and mindful-wellness through group exercise classes and spas, and its family-focused provision.
- 2.11 David Lloyd Clubs is a significant employer in the health and fitness market, employing over 11,500 people. These include an expert health and fitness team of over 2,000 and more than 680 tennis professionals.
- 2.12 Pay exceeds the national living wage, and staff benefit from a range of employee benefits to help support the work-life balance and wellbeing of team members. These include flexible working, free family membership and access to 40 degree level apprenticeships.

- 2.13 58% of all permanent team members live within a 3-mile radius of their place of work, rising to 73% within a 5-mile radius.
- 2.14 Job roles are varied, with opportunities in Food & Beverage, Kids & Creche, Lifeguarding, Gym & Fitness, Reception, Sales & Administration and Leadership.
- 2.15 Each club supports a further 35 FTE jobs in UK businesses making up David Lloyd Clubs' supply chain.
- 2.16 In 2024 David Lloyd Clubs contributed a total of £2.7 million to support 1,200 different charities. This included £1.5 million raised through club fundraising with 76% benefitting local causes.

3.0 Site and Surroundings

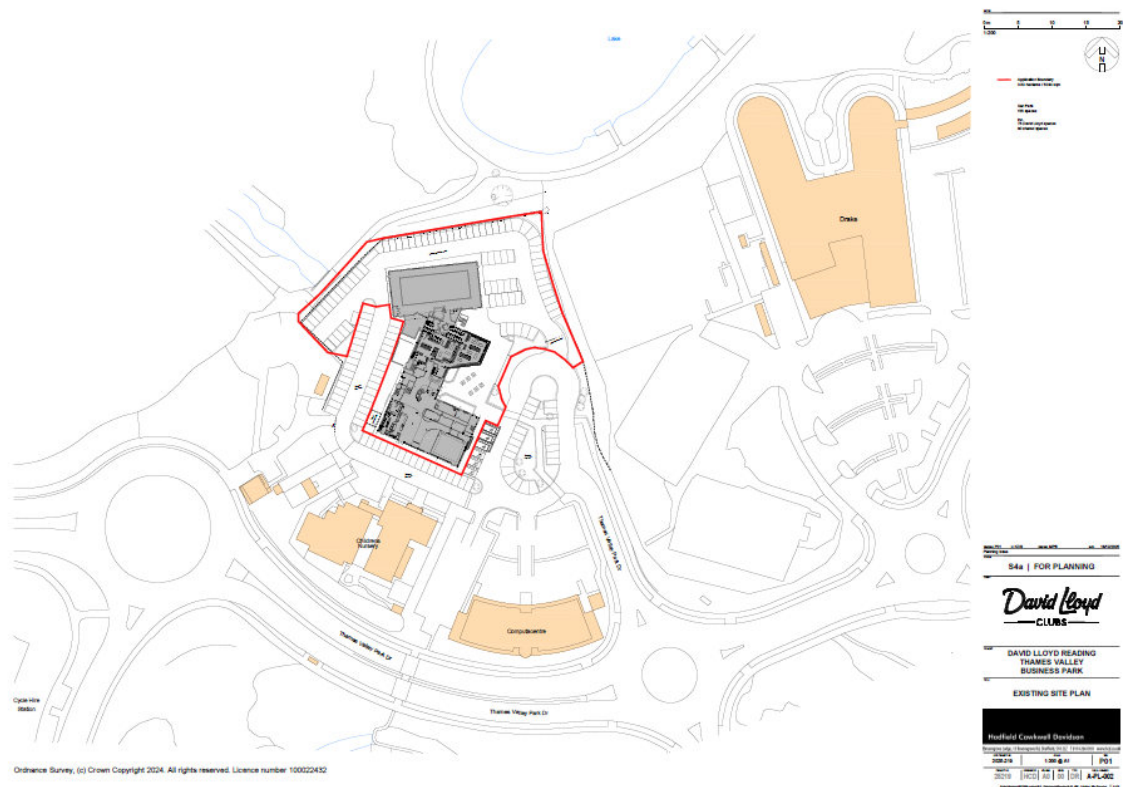
- 3.1 The site comprises the existing David Lloyd Reading (Thames Valley Park) club, ('the Club'), which is located wholly within the administrative boundary of Wokingham Borough Council.
- 3.2 The existing David Lloyd Sports Building is located at 1 Thames Valley Park Drive, Earley, Wokingham, RG8 1PT. The site is wholly within the Wokingham Borough Council administrative area, albeit it is close to Reading. The site is accessed via a roundabout to the immediate south and is comprised of a central sports centre building with car parking surroundings all of its elevations.
- 3.3 The access and site boundaries of the sports centre, as is reflective of the site's prevailing rural surroundings to the north and east, are densely lined mature vegetation; Thames Valley Park as a whole is consciously designed with dense areas of landscape buffers in and around each plot, particularly due to its immediate proximity to the Countryside, Thames Valley Nature Reserve and the River Thames sits to the north of the site.
- 3.4 The context of the site is set out in the image below

Site context: David Lloyd Reading (Valley Park)



- 3.5 The David Lloyd site itself is not listed nor has any heritage designations. The site is located within Flood Zone 2.
- 3.6 Although the David Lloyd is considered a less sensitive use, a Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the application which demonstrated that the development will not cause any increase in flood risk either within the site itself or to adjacent properties.
- 3.7 Moreover, through the Sequential Test, the report highlights the development cannot reasonably be provided in an alternative location at a lower level of Flood Risk, given that the proposals are for the redevelopment of one area of the existing club site.

- 3.8 The red line boundary of the site is set out below
Red line boundary of site (HCD architects)



- 3.9 The site's shows that the development can be contained wholly within the David Lloyd land ownership.

4.0 Planning History

Planning History

4.1 The site has a limited planning history:

- **Ref: 43045:** Reserved Matters for Approval 28578 for erection of local centre / Full application for a nursery building and swimming pool. **Approved 29/09/1994**
- **Ref: 961205:** Proposed Extension containing four squash courts, changing rooms and ancillary accommodation. **Approved 10/02/1997**

4.2 Although limited in nature, the above planning history illustrates that previous developments for sports and leisure uses have been supported, as has been further support for the continued development of sports and leisure uses at this location.

4.3 This is consistent with both the development plan / national guidance and also previous planning advice provided on what was ultimately a larger scheme to that being proposed through this planning application.

5.0 The Development

- 5.1 The planning application seeks a more modest development to that initially proposed at pre-application with Wokingham Council.
- 5.2 The revised proposals seek the development of the David Lloyd through the extension of the Club over those areas largely already occupied by the Club's pool to the north, which some limited extension to the building to the east.
- 5.3 The extension will facilitate a new indoor pool area and Spa at ground floor, with new exercise space and rooms for classes being constructed at first floor level. The ground floor spa will also be linked with a small external Spa Garden area to allow those visiting the spa to spend some time outdoors.
- 5.4 Overall, the site is kept within the existing building footprint to the north and to the west, with a modest extension to the footprint to the east, and the southern area being occupied by the Spa Garden. (see below).

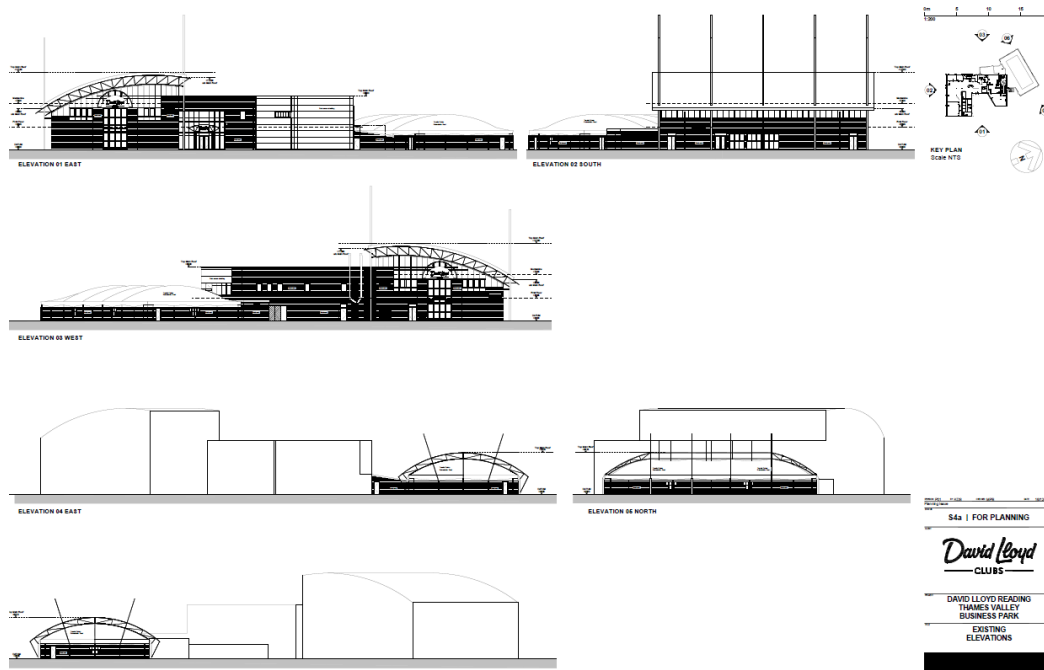
Existing

Proposed (showing Extension to Footprint East)

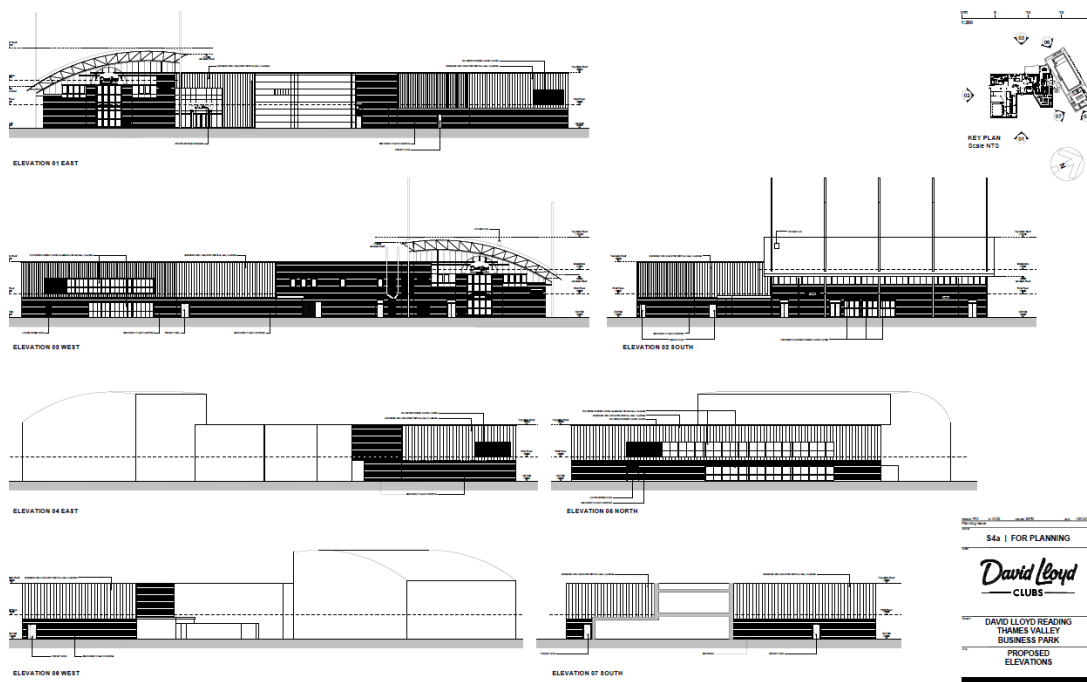


- 5.5 The principal change will be to the elevations to the building, illustrated in the extracts of Architectural plans below.

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



5.6 As can be seen from these, the principal elevations to the north and south, occupying that area of the former single storey swimming pool, will become 2 storeys in height.

5.7 The intention is that the large canopy / dome constructed over the swimming pool will be removed, and the development completed in a contemporary idiom, with a lower brick plinth supporting a clad and windowed first floor. Thi will allow, in turn, the users of the upper space a view across the car park to the Thames Valley Regional Park and River

Thames beyond. A small spa garden at ground floor will allow users of the new spa area external space for quiet reflection.

5.8 The intention is to replace what is presently, at best a functional building with a development which is sympathetic with the appearance and character of the local environment, and appropriate in scale, design, materials, and siting.

5.9 Moreover, the facilities fall within the existing club boundary and are heavily screened by vegetation on the site's boundaries, which will remain unaffected by the development.

6.0 Planning Policy Context

6.1 The section of the report outlines national, strategic and local planning policy and guidance of relevance to the development.

6.2 An assessment of the planning application against these policies is provided in Section 7.0.

Policy context

6.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.4 The statutory development plan for the site comprises;

- 1 The Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010); and
- 2 The Managing Development Delivery Plan (2014).

6.5 The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on Friday 28 February 2025. Hearing sessions took place during November 2025. However the Inspectors are yet to Report.

6.6 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2024) and Planning for Sport Guidance (2019) are also material considerations. A new draft NPPF was issued on the 16th December 2025. With an initial read of this document ahead of submission, the principal policies against which a development such as this is tested against remains unaltered in our view.

6.7 Policies within the Core Strategy (2010) and The Managing Development Delivery Plan (2014) that are relevant to the assessment of the application are considered to be as follows:

Core Strategy (2010)

- Policy CP15 (Core Employment area)
- Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development)
- Policy CP3 (Design)

Managing Development and Delivery (2014)

- TB11 (Development in Core Employment areas)
- CCo4 (Sustainable Design and Construction)

6.8 These policies are discussed in further detail in the following section.

7.0 Planning Policy Analysis

7.1 In terms of the overarching planning case for this application, the following considerations are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

- 1 Principle of development- Establishing the acceptability of sports and leisure development at this location;
- 2 Design: in having regard to the existing site and its surrounding, an assessment of the development proposals;
- 3 Amenity- any neighbouring residential dwellings or other receptors to ensure the development will not result in significant adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity with considerations for noise pollution.
- 4 Lighting and Ecology- Responding to ensure that lighting or any external influence does not have any adverse effect on ecological interests.
- 5 Flood risk- Establishing that that the development will not cause any increase in flood risk either within the site itself or to adjacent properties.
- 6 Transport: ensuring that the development does not result in a negative impact on

Principle of development

7.2 The development is fully enclosed within the existing DLL Club and provide an important facility which promotes outdoor sport and recreation within the Reading / Wokingham Borough Council area.

7.3 David Lloyd has undertaken this development in response to a need to make the Club both contemporary in term of its offer to Members, and in response to Members' needs.

7.4 Notably, post the COVID19 crisis there has been a focus on health and fitness and also mental health and wellbeing. The provision of enhanced facilities, including enhanced Spa area and small external Spa Garden, provides both active and passive participation for body and mind.

7.5 The site falls within development limits, and is located within the Thames Valley Science Park, designated a Core Employment Area under CP15 of the Core strategy.

7.6 Policy CP15 states that development for business, industry or warehousing will be permitted, including the expansion or intensification of existing employment uses provided it is within a Core Employment Area. Clearly in this case, the proposals are for an existing employer within the Park, and in turn are likely to generate additional employment development.

7.7 Policy CP15 also notes that proposed development should not lead to an overall net loss of floorspace in B Use within the borough. The development proposals also meet with this in keeping the development within the David Lloyd site.

7.8 The development is designed to meet the strong demand for enhanced facilities and this development enhances the use of an already developed site, making efficient use of land by replacing a poorly constructed pool to the rear of the site with a state of the art modern leisure facility.

7.9 Core Strategy Policy CP1 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments as soon as possible by including appropriate on-site renewable energy features. It is also to be noted that within paragraph 4.7 of the supporting text, in line with the rapidly changing climate situation, the Council is taking a flexible approach to the provision of on-site renewables and other sustainable forms of development dealt with in CP1. To this end, the development will achieve BREEAM 'Very Good', which, given the challenges in operational efficiency of running swimming pools and spas, is significant. David Lloyd also seeks to become a Carbon Neutral Business by 2030: an aspiration which has been independently audited as being achievable.

7.10 It is considered, against the backdrop of the sites position, the use of previously developed land and the sites location both within the Thames Valley Science Park and the limits of development a clear positive precedent is set under the Development Plan, and the NPPF24 for the acceptability of this development in principle.

Design

7.11 The Design and Access Statement produced by HCD Architects provides a summary of the evolution of the proposed scheme and its design ethos.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. In a similar vein, Policy CCo4 of the Managing Development and Delivery (2014) states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that seek to delivery high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments.

7.12 The extension will occupy an existing swimming pool area within the club, which is generally of poor maintenance and design.

7.13 The intention is to replace this with a high quality, modern 2 storey extension to the club, with the ground floor element on a brick plinth and upper elements to be a combination of high quality cladding and glass / fenestration to allow those using the upper floor exercise and class areas to view across the Thames Valley Park, and the River Thames beyond.

7.14 The club currently has a limited spa and gym offering and there have been considerable requests for these facilities from club members which this extension aims to address. Additionally, the club currently has no outdoor spa facilities for the summer months. It is proposed to build a two storey extension to house the refurbished pool hall, an extended gym and indoor spa with a connecting outdoor spa garden to address these requirements.

7.15 The extension is designed to tie in with the existing building, and is set at a similar height to the existing two storey element of the club. The internal layout has been planned in an efficient manner to minimise the proposed developed floor area.

7.16 Because of the size of the proposed extension it has been considered important to break up the volume to visually bring the building down to a more human scale. A key tool for breaking down the volume of a building is material choice and variation.

- 7.17 To achieve this, the external finishes chosen for the proposed extension have been selected to compliment the materials found in the existing building.
- 7.18 These include vertical metal cladding panels, brickwork and large areas of glazed curtain walling. These are used selectively a foil to 'break up' the exterior, rather than leaving large flat surfaces.
- 7.19 Materials on the existing building are to be refreshed to improve the overall appearance of the club and new cladding will be added to the entrance elevation to match the proposed cladding on the new extension.
- 7.20 For external areas, such as the spa garden, timber and other natural materials are used.

Amenity

- 7.21 The building is set at a considerable distance to both residential and business uses. The only external areas of development proposed is the spa garden, which is intended for quiet reflection, linked with the internal Spa being proposed, and will be wholly enclosed by timber fencing.
- 7.22 It is clear from the above that noise mitigation measures should not be required and that the proposals will have no impact on residential or employment amenity.

Lighting and Ecology

- 7.23 The proposals will not involve floodlighting, with only subtle 'mood lighting' of the building, and spa garden area. These can be appropriately conditioned.
- 7.24 In doing so, this will prevent any light impact on the Thames Valley Park to the north of the site, and other sensitive ecological which exist to the north.
- 7.25 The wider site, including the significant landscaping and tree belt which exists to the north, east and west will be unaffected by the development.

Flood Risk

- 7.26 The development will be subject to a full drainage strategy prepared by Willis and Hazel, as David Lloyd's flooding consultants.
- 7.27 This will fully assess that sites position within Flood Zone 2.
- 7.28 It is pertinent that the development will take place over both previously developed and presently impermeable land: this offers the opportunity to improve on the existing surface water runoff for the site and will allow the provision of some attenuation to allow a slower rate of run off
- 7.29 The Flood Risk Assessment will, in turn, demonstrate that the development will not cause any increase in flood risk either within the site itself or to adjacent properties. Moreover, through the Sequential Test, the report highlights the development cannot reasonably be provided elsewhere, notwithstanding that a David Lloyd Club is a lower risk category of use.

Transport

- 7.30 The development will require the loss of 18 car parking spaces and this is considered as part of the supporting Transport Assessment, which is also suggesting the site be the subject of a Grent Travel Plan to maximise the opportunities to visit the site by means of transport other than the private car.

Consultation / Statement of Community Involvement

- 7.31 The has so far been limited public consultation, but the development is for a private Club, and is in response to modernising the Club to meet the contemporary needs of the members.
- 7.32 Elsewhere in the David Lloyd portfolio the provision of enhanced facilities has been warmly welcomed and it is expected that an equally positive response will be received once the proposals are announced.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of David Lloyd Leisure Limited, (David Lloyd) to accompany a planning application for the extension of the David Lloyd Reading (Thames Valley Park) Club, at 1 Thames Valley Park Drive, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 1PT.
- 8.2 The site falls wholly within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council.
- 8.3 The application seeks permission for:
- 8.4 *“Extension to the David Lloyd Club to form enhanced swimming facilities, Spa and Spa Garden and upper floor health and fitness areas and external Spa Garden”*
- 8.5 The site has been previously the subject of detailed discussions with the Council albeit related to a wider development of the site and adjacent land. These were supported.
- 8.6 The revised proposals seek a more modest response, in providing a 2 storey extension over that area largely occupied by the swimming pool to the north of the club, with the extension of the footprint to the east. In doing so this preserves more sensitive locations closer to Thames Valley Park, and allows the retention of significant and mature tree and landscape belts.
- 8.7 

Lichfields

December 2025