

PROPOSED AGP INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

**AT
HALEWOOD LEISURE CENTRE
FOR
KNOWSLEY COUNCIL**



**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
NOVEMBER 2024**

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS AT HALEWOOD LEISURE CENTRE, HALEWOOD, LIVERPOOL

1 INTRODUCTION

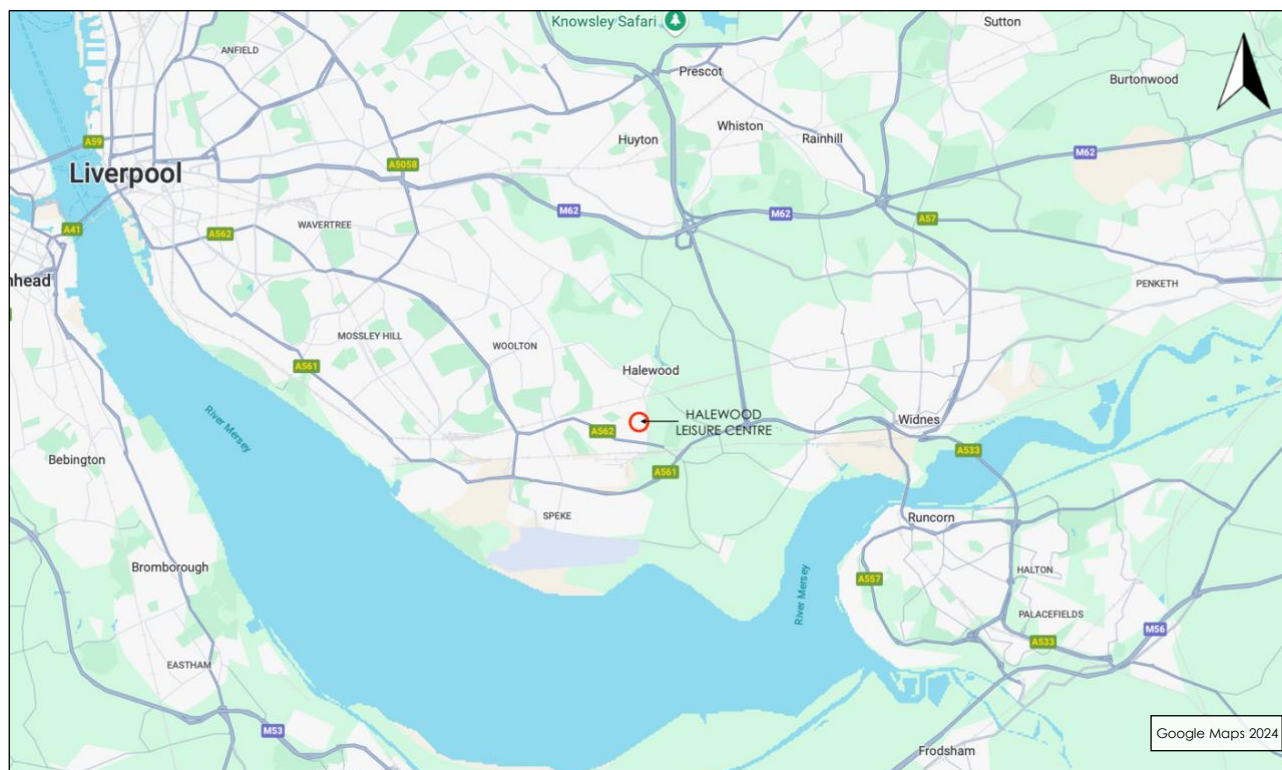
- 1.1. To provide all users with enhanced facilities, and to support Halewood Apollo FC's ambitions to progress through the FA National Leagues, Knowsley Council have committed funding to enable the further development of an existing full sized (100m x 64m) fenced and floodlit Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) at Halewood Leisure Centre.
- 1.2. The proposed improvements will provide improved training, playing and spectator facilities for all users of the AGP, as well as ensuring that Halewood Apollo FC's home ground meets FA Ground Grading requirements for a Step 6 club.
- 1.3. Halewood Leisure Centre is located off Baileys Lane, Halewood, Liverpool. The developments will be predominantly within the existing AGP perimeter and will include the addition of built structures that will enhance the end user experience and fulfil the requirements to meet FA Step 6 Ground Grading criteria. The main facilities at Halewood Leisure Centre will remain unaffected while the AGP infrastructure is being improved.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1. The scope of the proposed development at Halewood Leisure Centre and the subject of this planning application is the installation of new built infrastructure within and adjacent the existing AGP site envelope, including the addition of a turnstile entrance for matchday spectator access, the provision of covered spectator stands for 100 people, a spectator toilet block, and the extension of hardstanding to the southwestern length and eastern end of the AGP.
- 2.2. In addition, the proposals include the remodelling of player and match official pitch access from the Leisure Centre, relocation of an existing storage container, extension of the perimeter fence line at the southwestern and eastern ends of the AGP, the widening of goal storage recesses, and the addition of ball stop netting.
- 2.3. Finally, and as part of the same application, the development proposes the removal of an existing acoustic screen, to be replaced with a new, extended screen designed in accordance with the summary recommendations of a Noise Impact Assessment commissioned in support of this proposed development.
- 2.4. These proposals have been the subject of ongoing discussions with Knowsley Council, who are looking to improve the wider infrastructure at several sites in the borough with the use of Levelling Up funds.

3 LOCATION

- 3.1. Halewood Leisure Centre is approximately 7.5 miles south east of Liverpool, 3.5 miles west of Widnes and 0.75 miles south of Halewood town centre. The OS Grid Reference is SJ453852 X: 345324 Y: 385243; the leisure centre post code is L26 0TY.



4 CURRENT USE

- 4.1. The existing AGP, completed in 2020 by specialist synthetic turf pitch contractors, sits immediately behind Halewood Leisure Centre, and is currently accessed from the centre via an exit door in the northern elevation of the building.
- 4.2. The site of the proposed improvements is home to Halewood Apollo FC who are regular users of the AGP. Whilst the improvements have been set against FA Ground Grading criteria in order to afford Halewood Apollo FC Step 6 status, these developments will benefit all end users of the AGP on non-matchdays.
- 4.3. The existing AGP is also used for a wide range of organised and casual sporting activities by the wider community, and all of these groups will have access to (and benefit from) the additional infrastructure proposed by this application.
- 4.4. The following aerial image shows the location of the existing AGP within the context of the Halewood Leisure centre site.



5 GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1. The Halewood Leisure Centre site is due south of Halewood town centre at the edge of a suburban residential neighbourhood. It is bordered to the north, west and south by residential properties, and to the east by Baileys Lane.
- 5.2. The main leisure centre building sits in the centre of the site, with a large car park immediately to the south. There is one vehicular access point, from Baileys Lane, with one additional gated pedestrian access off Barn Croft Road to the west of the site.
- 5.3. There is provision for recreational and organised activity outside the main leisure centre building, with a fenced multi use games area and two fenced, floodlit 5-side football cells.
- 5.4. The AGP sits to the north of of and is currently accessed via the main leisure centre building.
- 5.5. The following plans set out both the existing and proposed general arrangements at the AGP.

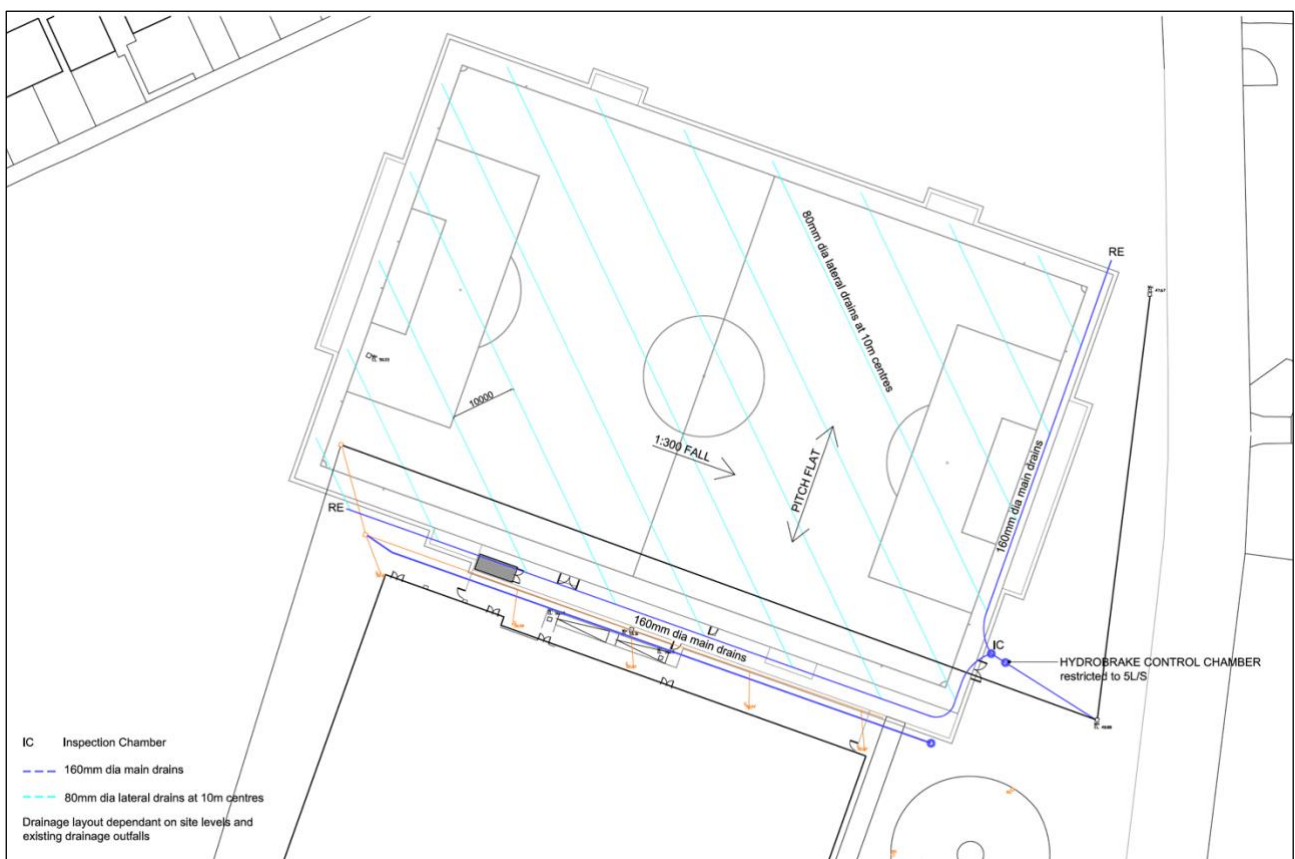


- 5.6. The AGP footprint will remain largely unchanged, save for the extension of the perimeter fence along its eastern end and to its southwestern corner.
- 5.7. The majority of the infrastructure improvements, including all built structures, will sit along the southern length of the hardstanding to the existing AGP, between the AGP itself and the northern elevation of the leisure centre. In summary, these built structures comprise the installation of:
- Steel framed single entry point turnstile block
 - M/F spectator toilet block
 - Covered standing to accommodate 50 persons
 - Covered seating to accommodate 50 persons
 - Remodelled player / match official access from the leisure centre to the AGP
 - Provision of 2no 8 person wheeled portable covered dugouts
 - The relocation of an existing storage container
- 5.8. The existing hardstanding along this southern length of the AGP will be extended to provide a new, level macadam surface that runs adjacent the entire southern length of the AGP.
- 5.9. The new hardstanding will incorporate the installation of appropriately dimensioned reinforced concrete bearing slabs to accommodate the proposed new built or relocated structures.
- 5.10. In addition, new hardstanding is to be installed along the eastern end of the AGP, which will provide two contiguous lengths of macadam surface along two complete sides adjacent the AGP.
- 5.11. The existing AGP is fenced on all sides with 4.5m high perimeter weldmesh. The proposals include for the removal and disposal of the portions of this enclosure which are to be extended to accommodate new hardstanding.
- 5.12. New, matching perimeter fencing will be installed to reinstate the AGP perimeter enclosure around the new and extended hardstanding.
- 5.13. The existing AGP has a 1.1m high crowd barrier installed between the edge of the run-off area of the AGP and the existing hardstanding along its southern length.
- 5.14. This crowd rail is to be extended to include the full southern length of the AGP, and a new run installed between the edge of the run-off area and the new proposed hardstanding along its eastern end.
- 5.15. New double leaf gates are to be installed in both the perimeter fence and the crowd rail to allow direct access to the AGP for maintenance machinery and emergency vehicles. These gates are to match the existing materials and colour of the existing weldmesh perimeter fence and crowd rail.
- 5.16. Access to the AGP is to be improved, both for ease of maintenance and emergency vehicle access, through the installation of additional double leaf gates within the 4.5m high perimeter weldmesh fence and the 1.1m high spectator barrier. These gates will be constructed from the same materials as the existing fences.

- 5.17. The existing access for players and match officials from the changing facilities in the leisure centre is also to be improved to bring in line with FA requirements for a Step 6 club.
- 5.18. This will include the remodelling of the access from the leisure centre (which houses team changing and match official rooms) to incorporate steps down to the AGP hardstanding in addition to the existing ramp, as well as the installation of a uPVC retractable entrance tunnel to afford player/match official segregation from spectators on matchdays.

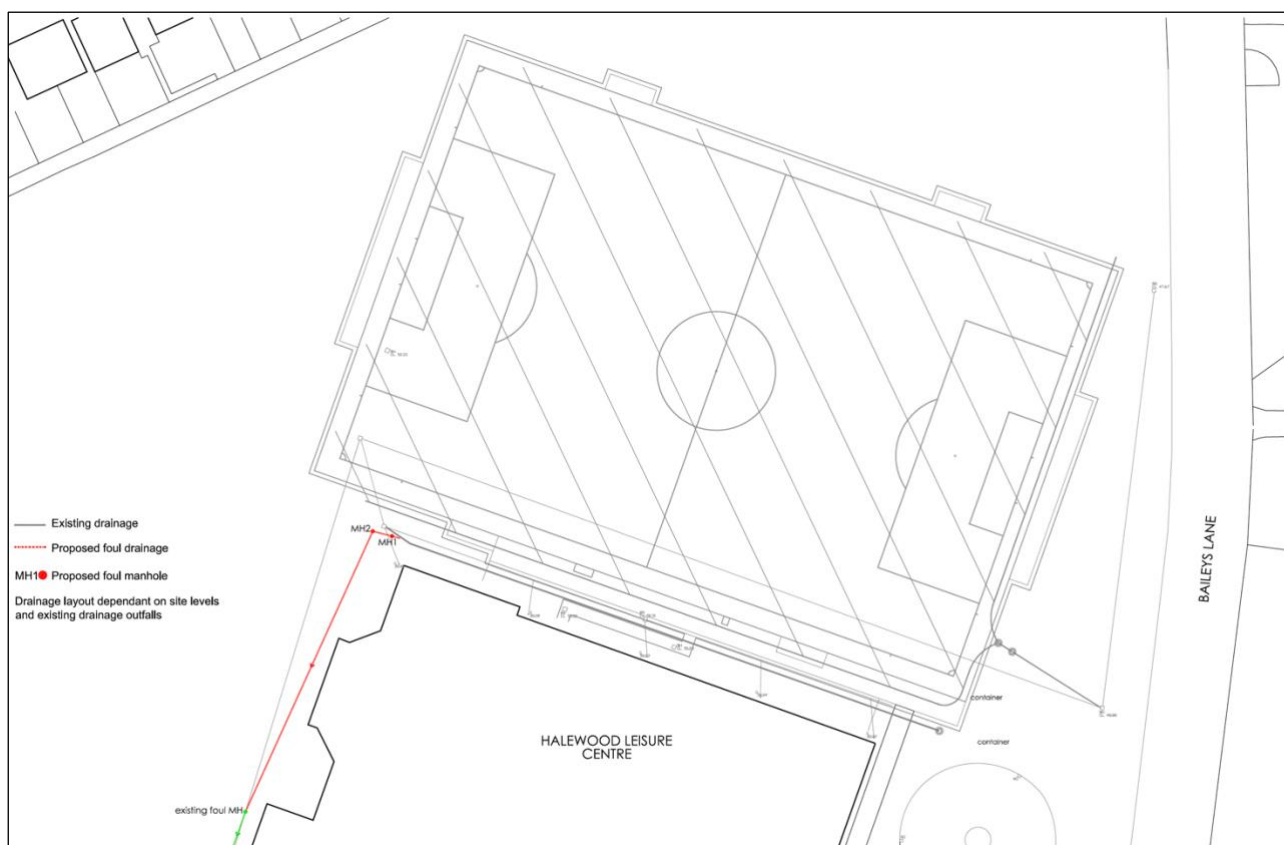
6 EXISTING DRAINAGE

- 6.1. A comprehensive drainage system was installed at the time of the original AGP development.
- 6.2. Lateral drains, running diagonally from north-west to south-east across the AGP feed into two main carrier drains which run north to south along the eastern end of the AGP within pitch run-off area, and from west to east along the southern length of the AGP underneath the existing hardstanding.
- 6.3. This AGP drainage system then connects into an inspection chamber adjacent the existing perimeter gate in the south eastern corner of the AGP, onward to a HydroBrake flow control chamber (set at 5l/s) before out-falling into an existing manhole approximately 8m to the south east.
- 6.4. In addition, a series of gullies in the spectator hardstanding running east to west alongside the southern length of the AGP feed into a second main carrier drain which then falls back to an existing manhole within the leisure centre site.
- 6.5. Existing gradients on the site of the AGP indicate a fall from north-west to south-east (along the length of the pitch) at 1:300, and are recorded as flat from north-east to south-west (across the pitch).
- 6.6. The existing drainage layout is shown on the following drawing.



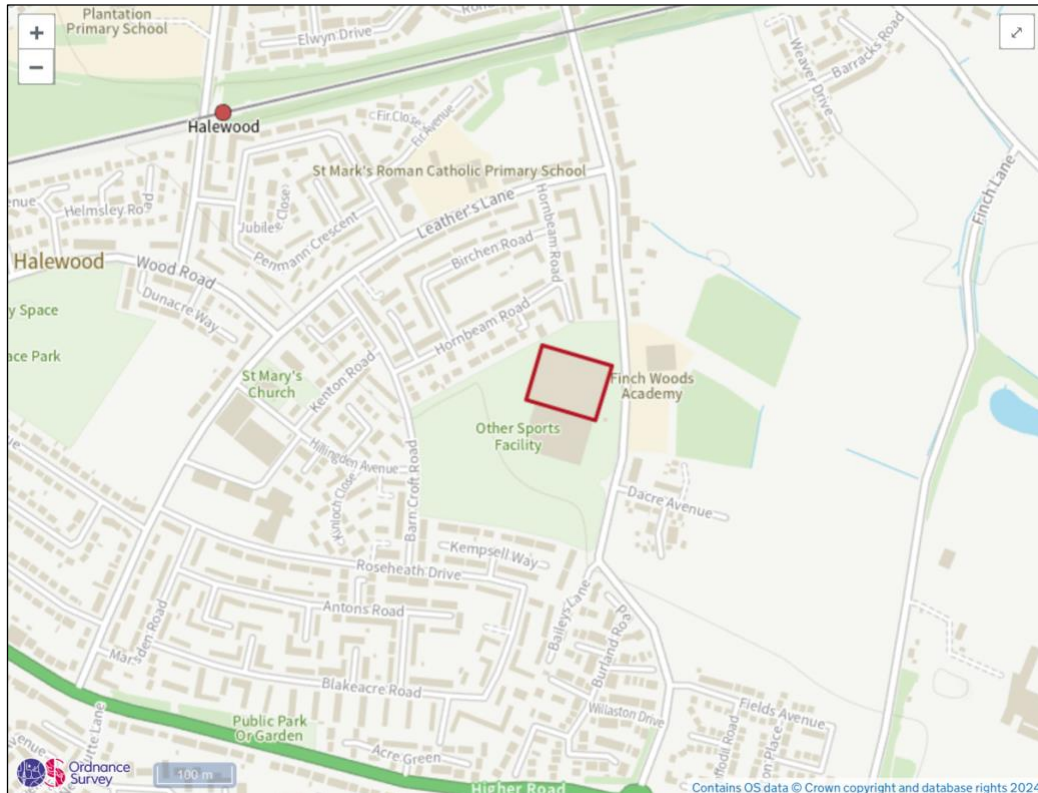
7 PROPOSED ADDITIONAL DRAINAGE

- 7.1. Two additional gullies are proposed to direct surface water from the extended spectator hardstanding in the south western corner of the AGP into the existing main carrier drain on site.
- 7.2. The proposed spectator WC block requires a waste water outlet. This route will be trenched and piped before connecting to an existing sewer to the west of the leisure centre extension.
- 7.3. The drawing below details the proposed route for waste water to an existing private drain on the leisure centre site.



8 FLOOD RISK

- 8.1. Environment Agency web-based plans for the site of the proposed development (extracts below) show that Halewood Leisure Centre and the existing AGP sit within Flood Zone 1 and is an area which is at a very low risk of flooding from local rivers. The surface water map also shows the site to be largely unaffected by surface water flooding.



SITE BOUNDARY



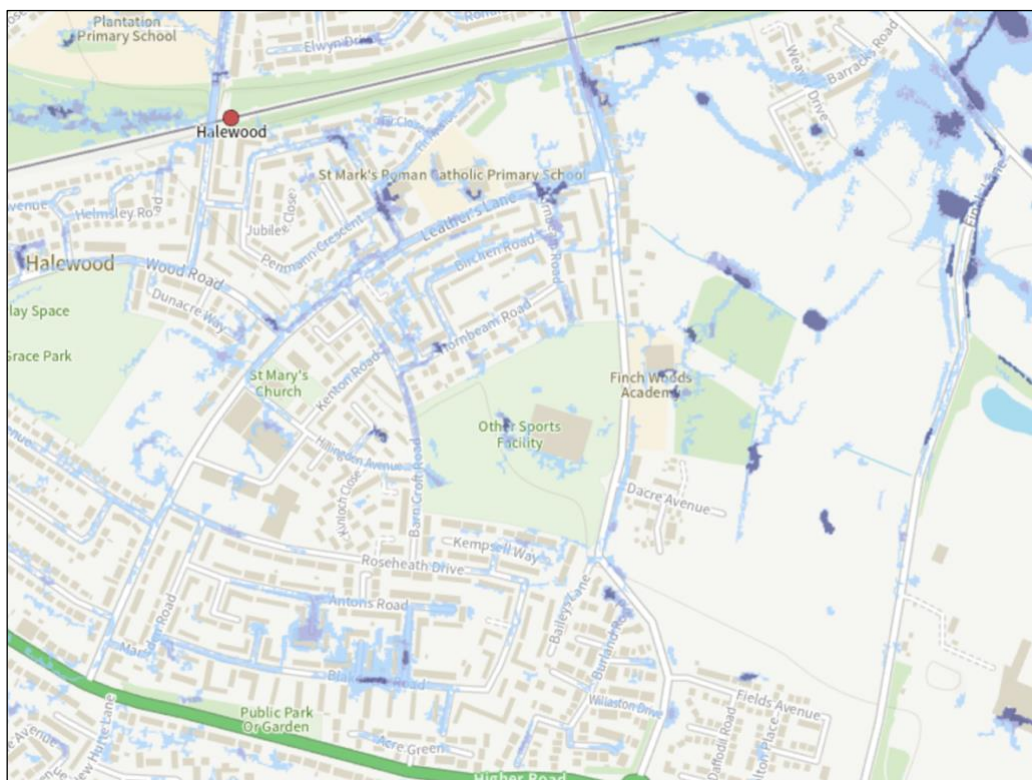
FZ1



FZ2



FZ3



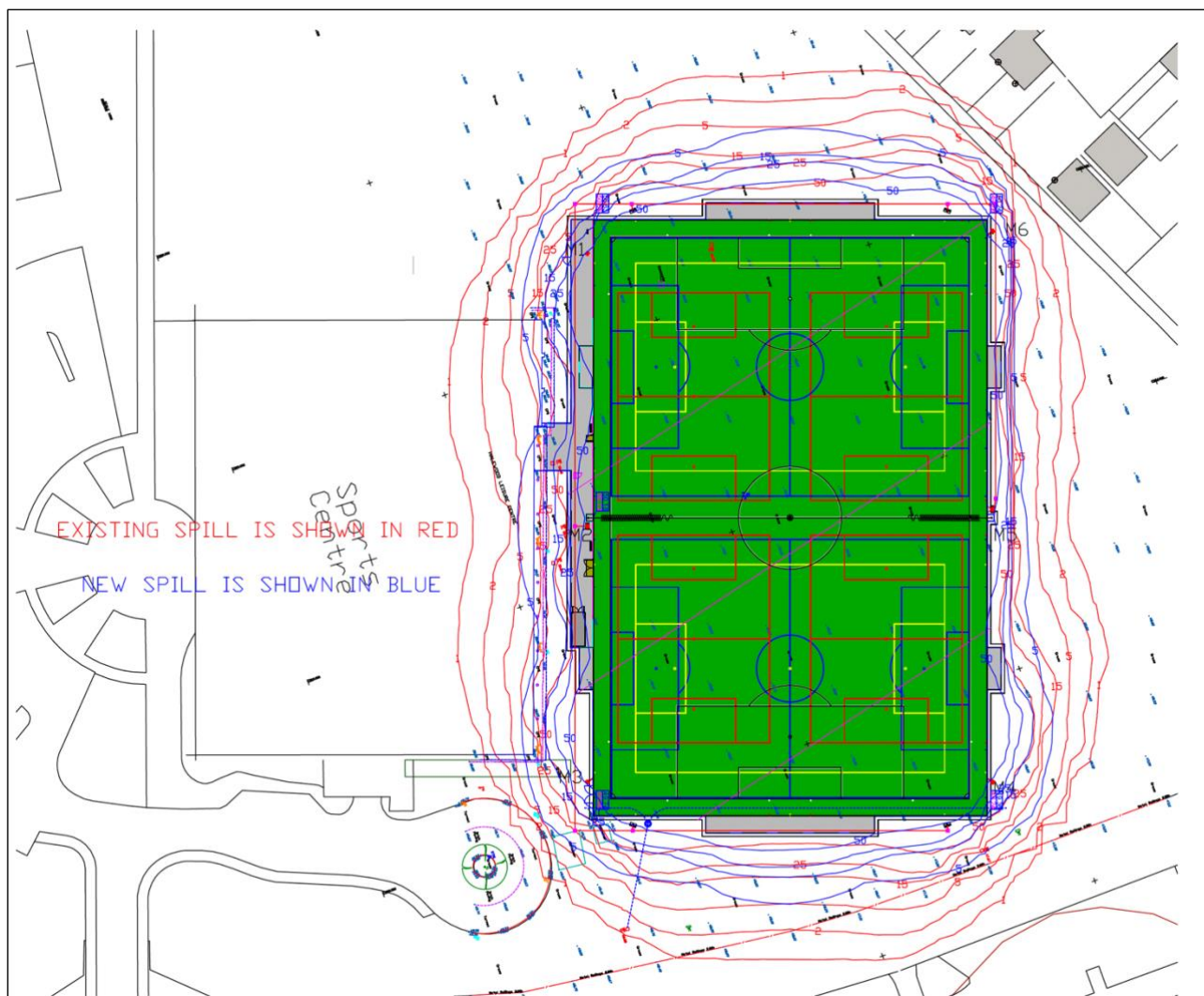
9 SERVICES

- 9.1. The proposals include for the provision of power to the new turnstile block, and power and water into the new spectator toilet block.
- 9.2. Service connections are to be made to provide a water connection to the spectator toilet block from the existing leisure centre supply.
- 9.3. All service connections will be trenched at the appropriate depth, and piped or ducted where appropriate.
- 9.4. Power for the turnstile block and the spectator toilet block is to be taken from the existing feeder pillar in the south east corner of the AGP; and connected, tested and commissioned by a suitably qualified person.
- 9.5. All cables will be armoured to suit electrical loadings and threaded through PVC ducts, with a minimum cover of 450mm. All cables will be surrounded with 150mm thickness of sand as wiring regulations require.
- 9.6. At 300mm below ground level, warning tape stating "DANGER – ELECTRIC CABLE BELOW" is to cover all cable ducting routes.
- 9.7. The system will be earthed in accordance with the current edition of the IEE Wiring Regulations, and carried out in accordance with good practice and the requirements of the IEE and the Electricity Supply Authority.

10 FLOODLIGHTING

- 10.1. The AGP is currently floodlit by 12no metal halide lamps, mounted on 6no galvanised steel columns.
- 10.2. The developments include proposals to **replace the existing metal halide lamps** with more energy-efficient, better focused LED Module units, complete with Back Light Control.
- 10.3. Details of the proposed floodlight lamp replacement, with horizontal and vertical spill lux level plots, are included with this application.
- 10.4. These computer-generated calculations show that a horizontal light level drop off to 5 lux is achieved before reaching the residential boundary nearest the AGP enclosure, and effectively zero at neighbouring residential facades.
- 10.5. Calculations for vertical light spill at 3m above ground levels for the replacement AGP floodlights will be between 0 and 1 lux at neighbouring residential facades.
- 10.6. This design exceeds the requirements of Environmental Zone E3 which is typically how the neighbourhood surrounding Halewood Leisure Centre would be described (i.e. a suburban location of 'medium district brightness') and where the vertical illuminance (or light at neighbouring windows) should not exceed 10 lux.
- 10.7. Furthermore, the proposed lamp replacement demonstrates an improvement on the existing light trespass scenario at the AGP site. This design provides the correct illuminance for a sports playing surface and rapidly limits horizontal light trespass beyond the AGP fence line. There is no upward light spill, with a calculated upward light ratio of 0.0.

- 10.8. Existing (in red) and proposed (in blue) horizontal spill calculations illustrate this reduction in light trespass (while maintaining the appropriate illuminance levels across the AGP) through the replacement of metal halide with LED units.



11 CONSULTATION

11.1. In developing this project, the Applicant has sought the views of a range of stakeholders, including representatives from

- Knowsley Council : Tom Webster, Sports Development Officer
- Halewood Apollo FC : Joe Stocks, Chairman
- Football Foundation : Liam Devlin, Delivery Manager (North)
- Football Foundation : Ben Costello, PLSF
- Liverpool County FA : Amy Horne
- North West Counties Football League : John Deal, Secretary & Treasurer

11.2. Through these processes, the Applicant has

- assessed the match-play needs for Halewood Apollo at Halewood Leisure Centre in the context of the FA Ground Grading requirements for Step 6
- highlighted that the proposals are to benefit all end users and will improve the playing, training and spectating experience at any time, at any level of competitive or recreational play
- involved the Council, the County FA, the Football Foundation, and other agencies in the proposed developments at Halewood Leisure Centre – all of whom have expressed support for the proposals
- located the proposed infrastructure improvements to make the best of the space available
- applied FA criteria as well as current best practice to all facility designs, including further design development to improve sight lines from standing and seated stands

11.3. The following pages set out the design and access aspects of the proposed development in line with the guidance prescribed by CABE.

DESIGN

12 USE

- 12.1. The purpose of this development is to upgrade existing infrastructure at Halewood Leisure Centre's AGP to provide improved facilities for all end users, and to ensure Halewood Apollo FC become compliant with the FA's Ground Grading criteria for Step 6 league competition.
- 12.2. These proposals will provide improved training, playing and spectator facilities for the wider community, offering a secure, enclosed space with covered stands, toilet block and dugouts.
- 12.3. The proposals occupy land already allocated to sporting and recreational use as a fenced, floodlit full size AGP; these proposals are not considered incompatible with, rather they are complimentary to, its present planning designation.
- 12.4. The Applicant does not seek any change to the agreed use and operation of the AGP under the terms of original planning approval.

13 AMOUNT

- 13.1. The proposals comprise infrastructure improvements to an existing, full sized fenced and floodlit AGP through provision of the following:
 - 2no 50 person capacity covered stands (one standing and one seated)
 - a stand-alone, single storey modular spectator WC unit
 - a new single storey manned turnstile block; 2no new wheeled, portable dugouts
 - the re-modelling of player/match official access (including the installation of a retractable uPVC tunnel)
 - the removal, replacement and extension of an existing acoustic screen
 - the addition of ball stop netting along both ends of the AGP
 - the relocation of an existing storage container to house pitch maintenance machinery
- 13.2. The existing AGP is enclosed by a 4.5m high weldmesh fence which is 106m in length and 70m (extending to 74m) in width, plus goal recesses. These proposals would increase the the overall length of this fenced enclosure to 109m x 74m in order to accommodate new hardstanding at its eastern end and to allow the extension of an existing 4m wide hardstanding strip which currently runs two thirds of its southern length.
- 13.3. The existing and proposed extensions to the hardstanding are (and will be) separated from the AGP by a 1.1m high weldmesh crowd rail.

14 LOCATION

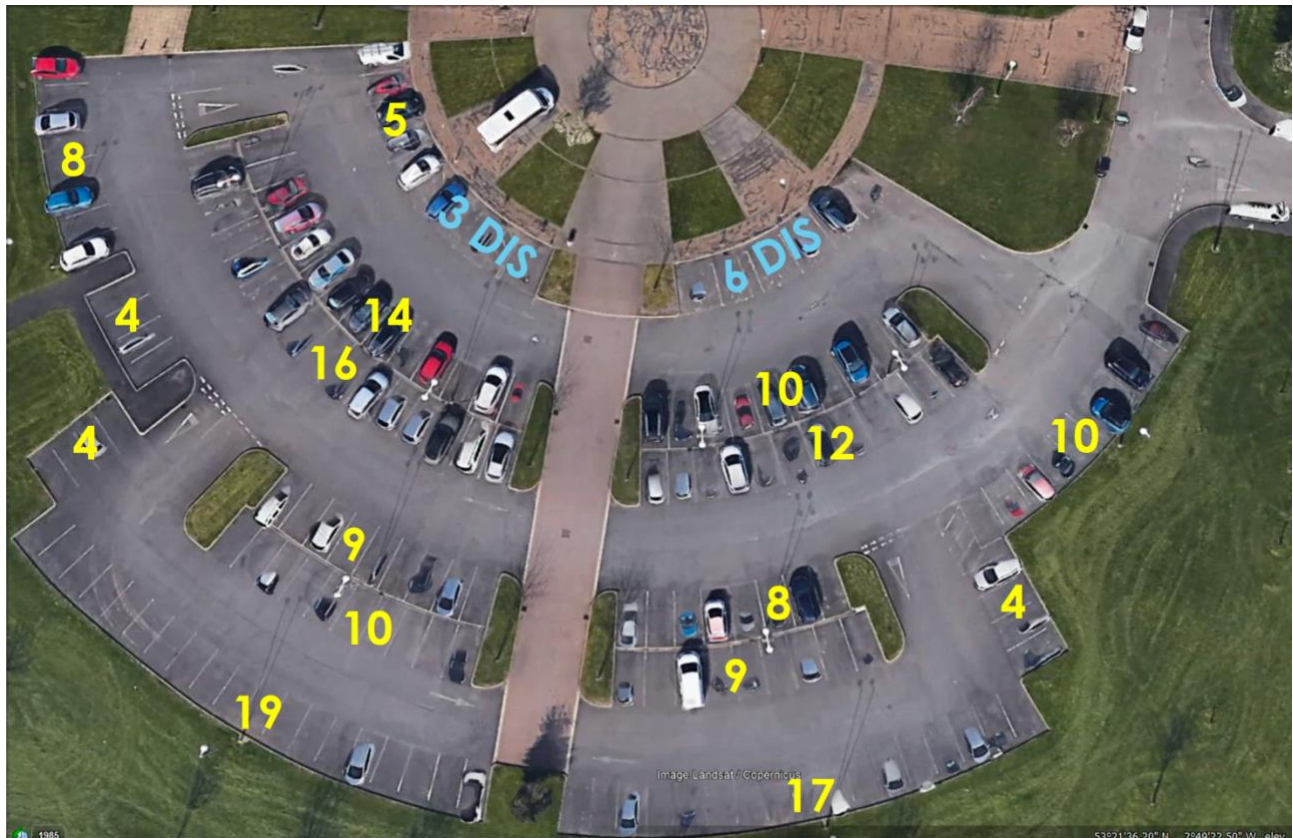
- 14.1. The proposed development is located wholly within the curtilage of the Halewood Leisure Centre site. The map below sets the AGP site in the context of both the wider leisure centre boundary and its surrounding residential neighbourhoods.



- 14.2. Hard surfaced access paths link the AGP to the leisure centre access and existing car parking.
- 14.3. The proposed improvements are designed to both compliment and augment the existing AGP arrangements, and occupy as limited an extended footprint as possible.

15 EXISTING ACCESS AND PARKING

- 15.1. The only vehicular access to Halewood Leisure Centre site is from the east off Baileys Lane where there is existing, comprehensive macadam parking provision for the leisure centre.



HALEWOOD LEISURE CENTRE - EXISTING CAR PARK NUMBERS

159 STANDARD SPACES + 9 SPACES FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

- 15.2. This existing highway access, via a short entry / exit road, leads into an existing metalled car park with provision for 168 vehicles.
- 15.3. The existing parking provision is sufficient for the current demands of the leisure centre and the AGP throughout the week and at weekends.
- 15.4. Given the AGP is already in use, and Halewood Apollo already play their home games on the AGP, any increase in visitor numbers to Halewood Leisure Centre is unlikely to lead to capacity issues. No previous Halewood Apollo FC home games have created a parking problem.
- 15.5. Nonetheless, a formal **Transport Statement** has been prepared which addresses in detail the use and any additional trip generation resultant of the AGP improvement proposals.
- 15.6. This Statement demonstrates that operational parking is already in place to accommodate peak demand for the site and that the proposals will not result in a 'severe residual cumulative impact' (the test set out in the NPPF); indeed they will be complimentary to the prevailing policy agenda.
- 15.7. The full Transport Statement is included as a supporting document with this application.

16 NOISE IMPACT

- 16.1. As part of the improvements to the AGP, these proposals look to replace an existing, dilapidated acoustic screen with a new and extended screen, designed in accordance with the recommendations of a **Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)** commissioned as part of the design development stage of these proposals.
- 16.2. The proposed acoustic screen is to be 3m high, constructed with timber which is to be close boarded with no gaps or cracks, to have a minimum surface density of 10kg/m², is 150m in length and forms a reflective sound barrier to the entire eastern end of the AGP as well as extending half way along its northern length.
- 16.3. This NIA measured existing background noise levels, as well as using data from when the AGP was in use, and assessed the impact on nearby residential facades against recognised criteria.
- 16.4. This assessment also modelled anticipated noise levels created by spectators in the proposed covered stands and incorporated this modelling into their recommendations.
- 16.5. In making their assessments, the criteria used by the acousticians took Sport England examples and criteria which were modelled on adult use. (The reality on this site is that the majority of users during weekday evenings will be local junior football clubs with teams ranging from under 8s through to under 16s.)
- 16.6. The Noise Impact Assessment report summary concludes by stating that, with the appropriate mitigation provided by the new and extended acoustic screen, the proposals meet the criteria published by Sport England, WHO and IEMA.

17 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 17.1. A **Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Metric and Summary Report** has been prepared for the area covered by the proposed development with recommendations.
- 17.2. The full report is included as a supporting document to this application.

18 APPEARANCE

- 18.1. The proposed **infrastructure improvements** to the existing AGP will match or be complimentary to the design aesthetics of the existing AGP and leisure centre.
- 18.2. The existing weldmesh **perimeter fence** is powder coated RAL 6005 (Moss Green). Where extensions to hardstanding are proposed, the existing fenced enclosure will be removed and matching new weldmesh installed in its place.
- 18.3. The fence includes personnel and maintenance access gates along with recesses for goal storage. Where additional gates are to be installed, they will match the existing in design and appearance.
- 18.4. Within the existing fenced perimeter boundary is another fence line at 1.1m high along the long elevation of the AGP and defining the hard-standing. This fence will be extended along the eastern end of the AGP where new hardstanding is to be installed and again will match existing design and appearance.
- 18.5. This fence line extends to 2.0m high behind and for 2.0m either side of the adjoining cross-pitch goal recesses. This 2.0m high fence line will be removed and a matching new fence line installed at the eastern end of the AGP where new hardstanding is to be installed.
- 18.6. Within the macadam hard-standing and supplied as part of the previous development, is a "20 foot" **storage container** (6.1m long x 2.4m wide x 2.4m high) painted Moss Green (RAL 6005) to match the fencing. This is used to house the specialist maintenance equipment provided for the aftercare of the 3G surface.
- 18.7. This storage container will be relocated to the south-western corner of the AGP as part of these proposals.
- 18.8. The proposed **turnstile unit**, **WC block** and **spectator stands** will use external materials and colours to match or complement those currently employed.
- 18.9. The following tables set out the proposed materials and finishes for proposed new built structures.

WC Block	
External	Description
Walls	▪ steel with flat panel insulated cladding
Roof	▪ insulated double skin steel finished roof covering [polyester powder coated grey]
Doors	▪ steel entrance doors [powder coated 'anthracite'] with deadlocks
Internal	Description
Walls	▪ vinyl faced ply wood
Floor	▪ 18mm particle board covered with 2mm sealed vinyl
Ceilings	▪ Insulated steel
Sanitary Ware	▪ vitreous china WCs, hand wash basins and urinals
Heating	▪ tubular heaters
Ventilation	▪ mechanically vented : extractor fans
Fixtures	▪ fluorescent ceiling mounted light

Spectator Stands	
External	Description
Walls	▪ steel framed stand structure, galvanised and zinc coated
Roof	▪ coloured profile galvanised zinc coated steel cladding to roof
Floor	▪ galvanised and zinc coated steel terrace floor
Fixtures	▪ tip up plastic seats on steel frame

Turnstile Unit	
External	Description
Walls	▪ steel framed structure
Roof	▪ corrugated steel roof
Door	▪ steel entrance door [powder coated 'anthracite'] with deadlock
Internal	Description
Walls	▪ service hatch with grilled steel window
Entrance	▪ mechanised revolving arm turnstile unit
Floor	▪ steel frame mounted on concrete bearing slab
Fixtures	▪ overhead light and power sockets to wall

19 EXISTING VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

- 19.1. The site is easily accessed from the local community and is within walking and cycling distance for many.
- 19.2. There is a single vehicular access point to the leisure centre, which is off Baileys Lane via a short access road and bound by a double leaf gate.
- 19.3. In addition, there are three pedestrian access points to the leisure centre. Two pedestrian access points are off Baileys Lane either side of the vehicular access route and allow access to the site from the east, either by walking down Baileys Lane from Halewood town centre which is to the north, or up Baileys Lane from the residential housing estate which lies to the south.
- 19.4. Pedestrian access on the western boundary, from Barn Croft Road, is supported by a gated footpath which benefits from street lighting along its length. Barn Croft Road itself allows access from the residential neighbourhood to the west and is bound by footways and streetlighting on both sides.
- 19.5. The accompanying **Transport Statement** sets out in greater detail the active and sustainable modes of travel, alternative and public transport links to the Halewood Leisure Centre site, as well as modelling trip generation associated with these proposals in the context of the leisure centre's existing car parking provision.
- 19.6. The existing car park provision consists of formally marked out, macadam surfaced spaces off an access road from Baileys Lane that can accommodate 168 cars, including 9 accessible parking bays.

20 EXISTING INCLUSIVE ACCESS

- 20.1. The existing car park includes 9 marked and signed accessible spaces dedicated for disabled users.
- 20.2. Less able visitors and wheelchair users are able to reach the AGP directly from this parking area via drop-kerbs and new hard surfaced paths (as part of wider improvements to the leisure centre) connecting the car park with the external access point to the AGP.

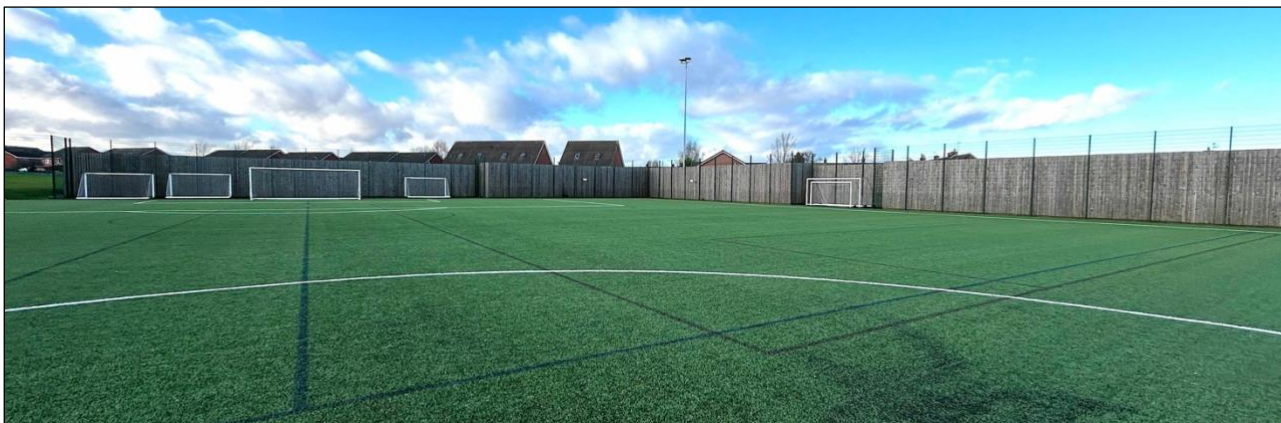
PHOTOGRAPHS



Looking south back across the existing AGP towards the northern elevation of Halewood Leisure Centre



1.1m high crowd barrier and 4.5m high weldmesh fence, looking along the southern length of the AGP hardstanding



Looking north-west from the AGP towards the existing acoustic screen which wraps around the perimeter weldmesh fence



Looking south-west from the AGP towards the north-eastern corner of the Halewood Leisure Centre



Looking along the eastern end of the AGP – showing AGP run off, hardstanding and weldmesh perimeter fence