



Supporting Planning Statement

Rabbit Ings Country Park

On behalf of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

March 2026

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Report title: Planning Statement

Prepared by: KW/RJ/EH

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For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Avison Young ('AY') on behalf of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council ('The Applicant'), in support of an application for full planning permission for the following development at Rabbit Ings Country Park, Lund Hill Lane, Royston, Barnsley (Easting 437574, Northing 411753):

"Full planning application for the erection of a new single storey community and sports pavilion, reconfiguration of parking, new landscaping and other associated works, following removal of an existing building and septic tank."

1.2 The application site is located within Rabbit Ings Country Park and extends to 0.034 ha. The site itself is entirely previously developed, comprising an existing surfaced car park, currently occupied by a modest single-storey pavilion building and associated septic tank. The site is within the Green Belt, albeit just outside the settlement boundary of Royston and is bound by vegetation and the wider Country Park.

1.3 The proposed development comprises a new single-storey community and sports pavilion of approximately 202 sqm (GIA) / 226 sqm (GEA), following removal of the existing pavilion of approximately 111sqm (GIA)/116 sqm (GEA), and associated septic tank. The new facility will provide:

- Two team changing rooms and three officials' changing rooms, with showers and toilets.
- A 55 sqm flexible classroom/community/events space, with capacity for educational uses, community uses by local groups and public hire, and host meetings.
- Ancillary spaces including office, plant, storage, WCs, cloaks, lobbies and kitchen.
- Dual entrance canopies to improve accessibility and legibility.

1.4 Externally, the proposal includes:

- Reconfigured car park layout to provide 80 standard and 4 disabled spaces.
- A coach drop-off bay adjacent to the pavilion.
- A cycle shelter to encourage sustainable travel with spaces for 20 bicycles.
- Removal of the existing planting beds and reconfiguration of kerbs to suit the new layout.

1.5 The intention is to provide a consolidated, modern facility which rationalises existing provision, reduces long-term maintenance costs, and enhances the Country Park as a community and recreational destination.

Supporting Information

1.6 This application is accompanied by a full suite of supporting plans and documents, the scope of which have been agreed with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council prior to submission. Discussions with Officers also highlighted certain key issues to be addressed as part of the application process.

1.7 The submission schedule listing all submitted plans and documents is included at **Appendix I**.

Structure of this Planning Statement

1.8 This Planning Statement is intended to address the relevant planning considerations and the case for development on the site. It considers the proposals in light of national and local planning policy, together with other material planning considerations, and is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** Provides a description of the application site and its surroundings;
- **Section 3:** Sets out the details of the application proposals;
- **Section 4:** Sets out the pre-application stakeholder and community consultation that has taken place;
- **Section 5:** Contains an overview of relevant local and national planning policies;
- **Section 6:** appraises the development proposals against the statutory Development Plan and other material considerations; and
- **Section 7:** Summarises the above sections and sets out conclusions about the planning merits of the scheme.

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 This section describes the site location, its surroundings and characteristics including known environmental constraints and relevant planning history.

The Site

- 2.2 The application site is located within Rabbit Ings Country Park, Lund Hill Lane, Royston, Barnsley (postcode S71 4BB) as denoted on the extract below:



- 2.3 The land is entirely previously developed, comprising an existing surfaced car park, with a modest single-storey pavilion building and associated septic tank located at the eastern extent of the site. Also included within the site is 90 car parking spaces, 4 accessible spaces, 1 coach bay and 20 cycle spaces as well as some minimal vegetation. The site is at the very western edge of the wider country park and extends to 0.034 ha. A copy of the Site Location Plan is contained at **Appendix II**.
- 2.4 The existing topography of the site is at a lower elevation than the road to the west, which increases its inclination as it travels northwards. Existing vegetation between the site and Lund Hill Lane, alongside the difference in topography allows the site to be well screened. The land continues to decline to the east of the site.
- 2.5 The existing building onsite is a prefabricated steel 'box' located at the eastern end of the existing car park. It is currently used by the rangers who host small groups of school visits and a local football team for changing room purposes up to twice a week, however it is under-sized, and no longer fit for purpose for either sports or community use; it has reached the end of its lifespan. The small space in the existing building is used as a classroom, which also doubles up as a site office. There are a steady number of visitors to the site and to the wider Rabbit Ings Country Park and volunteers visit the site to assist on an adhoc basis.

- 2.6 The northern boundary of the site comprises of shrubland and dense vegetation. Beyond this is an industrial site, which is used for the production and storage of pallets.
- 2.7 The eastern boundary of the site comprises of open grassland which is part of the wider Country Park. There are informal pathways throughout the park, beyond which are agricultural fields.
- 2.8 The southern boundary of the site is formed by a footpath (outside the red line boundary), beyond which are three playing fields within the wider Country Park. There is a further small pathway running north-south which connects the site to these fields.
- 2.9 To the south west of the site there is existing hardstanding which is surrounded by dense vegetation and woodland. Beyond this is a railway line, a public house and residential dwellings.
- 2.10 The western boundary of the site is formed by Lund Hill Lane which defines the settlement boundary for Royston. Beyond this is woodland.
- 2.11 The site is surrounded by areas of managed open space, woodland and grassland forming part of the wider Country Park, which was created on the former Monckton Colliery site. The car park provides the main visitor access point to the park and is directly served from Lund Hill Lane to the immediate west.
- 2.12 The site is located within the designated Green Belt, albeit adjacent to the settlement boundary of Royston. It is also located approximately 1 kilometre north of the settlement boundary of Barnsley and 1.1 kilometres west of the settlement boundary of Cudworth.

Site Accessibility

Private Car

- 2.13 Rabbit Ings Country Park is readily accessible by private car. Vehicular access to the site can be taken from Lund Hill Lane, which provides onward connection to Royston, Barnsley and the wider South Yorkshire area. The site benefits from an existing car park which is located at the main entrance of the Country Park. The car park includes a significant number of spaces, including designated accessible bays.

Public Transport – Bus

- 2.14 The Site can be accessed by public transport, with a number of local bus services operating within walking distance. The nearest bus stops to the site are located approximately a 6-minute walk away from the site on Midland Road and Cross Lane/ East End Crescent to the south east from the site. From these bus stops, there are regular services to Wakefield City Centre, Barnsley Town Centre and other surrounding settlements via the 59 and 59a services twice hourly.

Pedestrian Access

- 2.15 The Site benefits from several pedestrian access points, with the main entrance being located to the west of the car park, via Lund Hill Lane. There is a PROW running to the south of the site which connects Lund Hill Lane to the wider Country Park and onwards to Royston to the west and Shafton to the east. Throughout the park there is a network of public footways and informal paths, which connect the site to the surrounding area.

Cycle Access

- 2.16 The Site is also accessible by bicycle, with good quality cycle infrastructure provided within the immediate vicinity. The roads surrounding the Site are conducive to a cycling environment, with wide carriageways located on routes leading into Royston, along the B6428, and towards Ryhill and Havercroft.
- 2.17 Around 300m west of the Site is Barnsley Canal Tow Path which provides traffic free cycle access towards Cold Hiendley Reservoir to the north and Carlton to the south. In addition, there is an extensive network of footpaths within Rabbit Ings Country Park which are accessible to cyclists. This provides access to the surrounding residential areas such as Royston and Shafton.
- 2.18 Cycle parking spaces will also be provided as part of the development, which will encourage users of the Site to travel by a sustainable mode of transport.

Site Access – Conclusion

- 2.19 In summary, the application site is highly accessible by private car, public transportation, cycling and by walking. Given its location and evidently accessible nature, the application Site represents a suitable and sustainable location for the proposed development.

Environmental Constraints

- 2.20 A review of the Environment Agency's flood map confirms that the site is in Flood Zone 1, which means there is a low risk of flooding.
- 2.21 Whilst the wider park accommodates important habitats, there are no statutory nature designations on the site itself. The Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI lies approximately 100m to the south, and as such the site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
- 2.22 The site does not contain any designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefield or Conservation Areas.

Planning History

- 2.23 A search of the Council's online planning records identified the following previous planning application at the site:
- **Ref: 2006/1315** for boundary treatments including defensive earthworks and erection of security fencing and gates – Approved September 2006.
 - **Ref: 2008/1635** for Rabbit Ings regeneration scheme involving the importation of soil making materials, regarding and reclamation works to provide formal and informal recreation uses with sports pitches / changing facilities associated site access, car parks, informal open spaces with landscaping and biodiversity and extended footpath and cycle track network – Approved March 2009.

Summary

- 2.24 The application site is located within Rabbit Ings Country Park, Lund Hill Lane, Royston. The site itself is entirely previously developed, comprising an existing surfaced car park, currently occupied by a modest

single-storey pavilion building and associated septic tank. The site is at the very western edge of the wider Country Park site and extends to 0.034 ha.

- 2.25 The site is within the Green Belt, albeit just outside the settlement boundary of Royston. Overall, the Site benefits from strong accessibility by both private vehicle and sustainable transport modes and has limited environmental or heritage constraints.

3. Proposed Development

3.1 This section provides a summary description of the proposed development. The application proposals are described in detail within the accompanying Design and Access Statement and planning application drawings.

3.2 The planning application seeks 'full' permission for the following description of development:

"Full planning application for the erection of a new single storey community and sports pavilion, reconfiguration of parking, new landscaping and other associated works, following removal of an existing building and septic tank."

Specifics of the Development Proposals

3.3 Full planning permission is sought to construct a new single-storey community and sports pavilion of approximately 202 sqm (GIA) / 226 sqm (GEA), following removal of the existing pavilion of approximately 111sqm (GIA)/116 sqm (GEA), and associated septic tank.

3.4 The new facility will provide:

- Two team changing rooms and three officials' changing rooms, with showers and toilets.
- A 55 sqm flexible classroom/community/events space, with capacity for educational uses, community uses by local groups and public hire, and host meetings.
- Ancillary spaces including office, plant, storage, WCs, cloaks, lobbies and kitchen.
- Dual entrance canopies to improve accessibility and legibility.

3.5 Externally, the proposal includes:

- Reconfigured car park layout to provide 80 standard and 4 disabled spaces.
- A coach drop-off bay adjacent to the pavilion.
- A cycle shelter to encourage sustainable travel with spaces for 20 bicycles.
- Removal of the existing planting beds and reconfiguration of kerbs to suit the new layout.

3.6 The intention is to provide a consolidated, modern facility which rationalises existing provision, reduces long-term maintenance costs, and enhances the Country Park as a community and recreational destination.

Use

3.7 Following consultation with key stakeholders, it was agreed that a larger building than existing was required to meet the needs of the users. The development proposals seek to replace the existing visitor centre at the country park with a new and improved facility. In addition to being used by the local community as a meeting place for activities, groups and school trips, it is also anticipated the local football team will use the changing facilities when using the three pitches to the immediate south of the site up to twice a week for matches at the weekend and training mid-week during the summertime.

Layout

3.8 As shown in Figure 1 below and on the submitted Proposed Floor Plan (ref: A-DR-P06, the new pavilion building will be positioned in the north western corner of the site, orientated towards the reconfigured car parking area. This position reduces the visual impact on the surrounding Country Park.

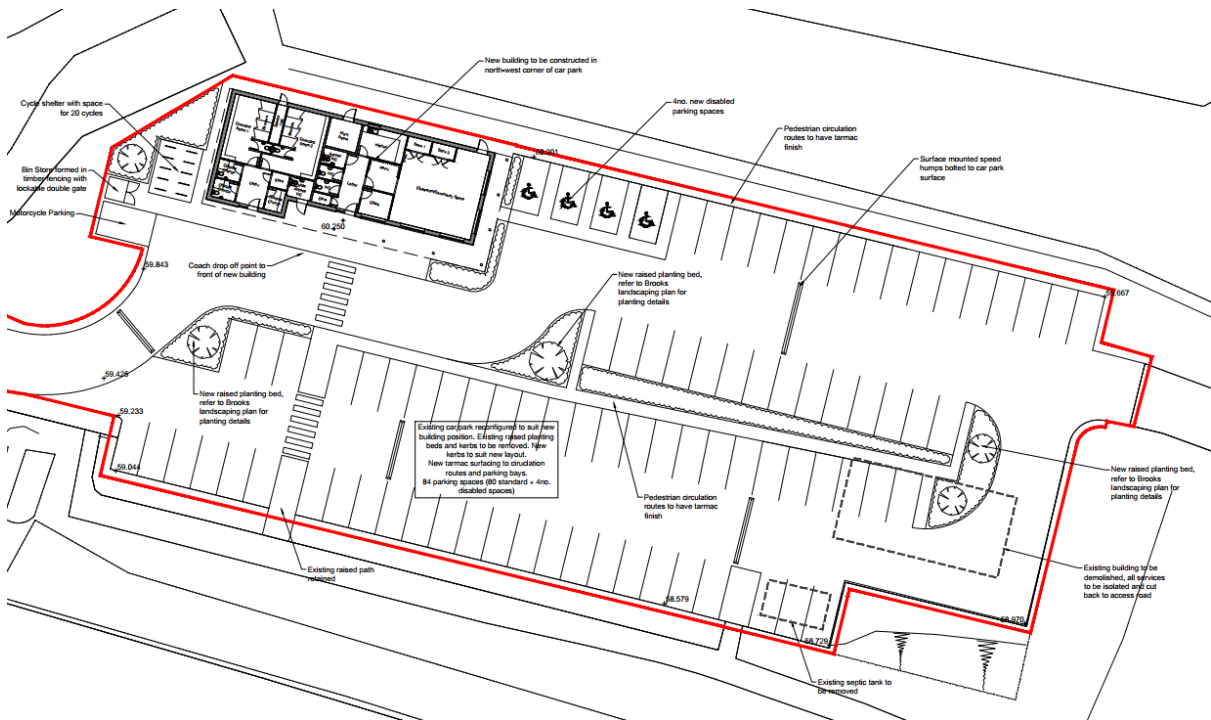
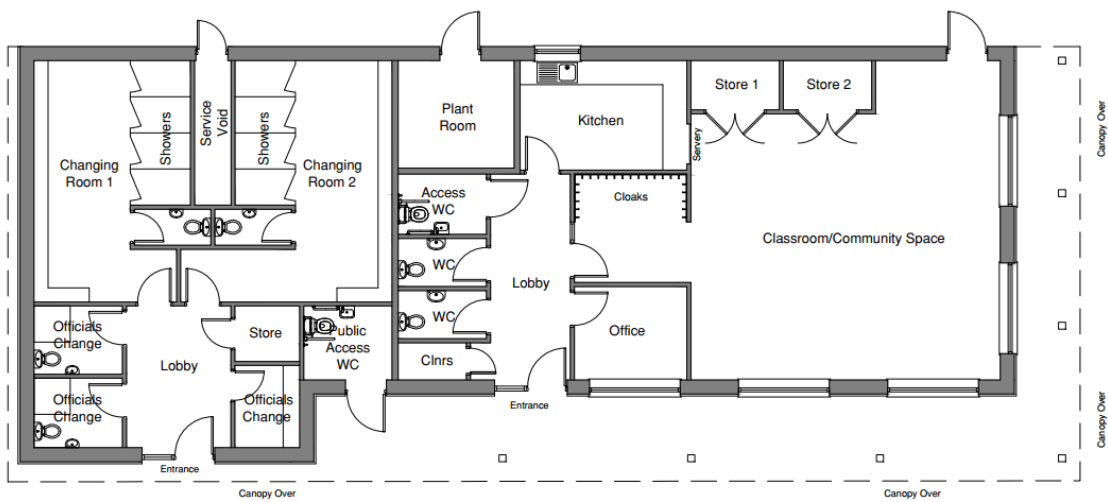


Figure 1: Proposed Site Plan

3.9 As shown in Figure 1, the building is arranged into two distinct area: the community area and a football area. The community facilities will include a lobby, classroom / community space, storage facilities, a cloakroom, kitchen, cleaners store, plant room, office and toilet facilities (including one accessible WC). The football area will comprise of 2 separate changing facilities, a service void, a storage area, three changing areas for officials, a public toilet facility and lobby area.



01 Proposed Plan
1:100

Figure 2: Proposed Floorplan

- 3.10 There are two separate entrances proposed to the new building, which provides separate access for the community and football users. This arrangement supports effective operational management and helps maintain clear separation between the two functions.
- 3.11 A dedicated external entrance is also provided for the public access WC. This ensures that the facility remains independent from both the community and football areas and can be used conveniently by visitors to Rabbit Ings Country Park.
- 3.12 The car park layout has been redesigned to suit the new building position and to minimise the loss of parking spaces. Car parking has been arranged to ensure convenient and inclusive access. Four accessible parking bays will be located immediately east of the building, with a total of 84 spaces provided across the car park. In addition, cycle parking is also proposed and will provide 20 spaces.
- 3.13 The orientation of the building allows its entrances to connect efficiently with existing pedestrian routes from Lund Hill Lane and the wider footpath network within Rabbit Ings Country Park. Clearly designated pedestrian routes have been included within the site layout to ensure the safe circulation of pedestrians within the car park. The pedestrian route from the building to the football pitches takes the shortest possible route and incorporates 2no. Zebra crossings with a path across the central raised island. Pedestrian safety will be further safeguarded by the introduction of a 5mph speed limit within the car park and speed bumps at regular intervals.
- 3.14 In summary, the layout maximises the usability of the site, ensures a rational and cohesive relationship with the surrounding park, and delivers an attractive frontage to the car park and adjacent public spaces.

Scale

- 3.15 The overall building height is consistent with the existing building on site and will remain as single storey, flat roof, limiting any visual impact on the site and surrounding area. As such, this provides an appropriate level to provide the necessary accommodation and reflecting the mass of the existing buildings without dominating the surrounding area or appearing out of context. The building will be 3.2m high at the front, falling to 2.9m at the rear.

Appearance

- 3.16 The building adopts a simple contemporary pavilion form using a natural material palette including timber cladding and muted metal roofing. This approach ensures the building responds appropriately to its parkland setting and minimises visual impact. The roof overhang on the south-west and south-east elevations to form a canopy, will provide shelter from the elements as well as solar shading, which will prevent excessive heat gain.
- 3.17 The front elevation (south-west) incorporates a deep roof overhang with a clear step in the building line between the two sides of the building. The flat roof will have a minimal fall from the front to the rear with pressed metal fascias and soffits to the perimeter.
- 3.18 The external walls to the front and side elevations will be clad in a horizontal cladding material with a timber grain effect. The rear elevation will be finished in a buff coloured facing brick. The same brick will also be used as an upstand to the base of the walls on the other 3 elevations. The classroom and office will have large windows to maximise daylight into the spaces and to also provide views out over the country park. Glazed aluminium doors will be provided to both parts of the building to tie in with the window designs. Due to the nature of the changing spaces, there will be no windows in this part of the building.

- 3.19 The pavilion has been designed to incorporate a range of sustainable design measures appropriate to a building of this scale. These include the use of energy efficient building fabric and insulation, LED lighting, and modern mechanical systems designed to minimise energy consumption. The site layout also retains and enhances areas of soft landscaping within the car park and incorporates sustainable drainage measures where appropriate. These measures help ensure the development responds positively to the Council's climate change objectives.
- 3.20 A comprehensive overview of the pavilion's design rationale is set out in detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Access

- 3.21 As the Proposed Site Plan shows, vehicular access to the site will be provided from the existing access point on Lund Hill Lane. No changes or enhancements to the existing vehicle access are required to accommodate the proposed development. Pedestrian and cycle access to the site will also utilise the existing access arrangements from Lund Hill Lane.
- 3.22 Designated pedestrian routes and crossing locations within the application site will provide safe routes for pedestrians and users of the facility to move through the car park.
- 3.23 A full assessment detailing the site's proposed vehicular access arrangements is provided within the supporting Transport Assessment prepared by Andrew Moseley Associates.

Landscaping

- 3.24 The proposal is supported by a high quality landscaping scheme (reference: DR-LLP-8646-01C) prepared by Brooks. Whilst there will be a loss of 4 low quality trees to accommodate the proposed development, the landscape proposals incorporate 10 no. replacement native species trees on site as well as the planting of 590 no. ornamental shrubs, 33 no. herbaceous plants and 63 no. grasses. These trees and other ornamental planting have been strategically placed to promote biodiversity and provide a natural sense of place. The landscape proposals are shown on the extract below:



Figure 3: Landscape proposals

- 3.25 Collectively, the new tree planting and landscape provisions offer compensation for the proposed tree removals as required and indicate how a varied selection of planting could fully reinstate lost canopy cover and individual tree stem quantities directly on site. Long-term, tree population enhancements are anticipated including expanded tree canopy coverage, improved biodiversity and better habitat linkages directly inside the red line application boundary.

Summary

- 3.26 Overall, the proposals have been designed in response to the technical assessments undertaken by the applicant's consultant team. The proposals represent a comprehensive and high-quality scheme developed in line with best practice guidance.

4. Pre-Application Consultation

- 4.1 This Section describes the pre-application consultation undertaken with BMBC Officers, technical consultees, Ward Councillors and the local community.

Consultation with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

- 4.2 Discussions between the Applicant and local planning authority (LPA) regarding the proposed development have taken place in advance of the planning application's submission. A pre-application meeting was held on 7th January 2026 which covered matters including the principle of development and Green Belt justification; technical matters; public consultation and submission requirements.
- 4.3 The pre-app meeting concluded that the LPA is broadly supportive of the proposals, confirming that the scheme can be justified as "not inappropriate development" in the Green Belt, in accordance with relevant national planning policies. The LPA provided feedback on the design approach, scale and location of the new building, which were deemed to be broadly acceptable. Officers also requested that the proposals use a natural material palette.
- 4.4 Overall, the meeting confirmed support in principle, with the main emphasis on providing the necessary planning policy justification, technical evidence and complete submission materials.

Community Consultation

Ward Councillors

- 4.5 The Applicant contacted local Ward Councillors to advise them of the proposals and upcoming consultation events. Councillor Caroline Makinson provided a response on behalf of Royston Ward Councillors expressing their full support. A copy of the response is provided at **Appendix III**. The following is worthy of note: *'We believe this development will help to address local priorities, support wellbeing, and contribute to a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood. We urge all relevant parties to give this proposal their utmost consideration and support, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our community.'*

Social Media Advert

- 4.6 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council posted on their official Facebook and Instagram pages about the proposals and the upcoming consultation events on Wednesday 3rd February. Figure 4 below provides an example of the details that were included.
- 4.7 On Instagram, the post generated 37 likes, 1 comment and 5 reposts. On Facebook, the post generated 337 likes, 126 comments and 24 reposts.

- 4.8 Feedback gathered from social media responses to the proposed community facility shows strong public interest and high engagement. Overall sentiment is generally positive, with many residents welcoming the investment and recognising potential benefits for the community in the new facility providing a social hub and opportunities for groups to use. Some concerns are raised about funding, priorities, and wider confidence in council decision-making. A full summary is provided in the community consultation summary report prepared by the Applicant and enclosed at **Appendix IV**.



Figure 4: Instagram Post

Public Consultation Event

- 4.9 A public consultation event where members of the public were invited to attend to view the proposals, took place on Thursday 5th February 4pm-7pm, Saturday 7th February 9.30am-12.30pm and Tuesday 10th February 2026 11am-2pm. A template of the feedback forms provided at the event and online are enclosed at **Appendix V**.
- 4.10 In total, 26 feedback forms were completed with 2 separate comments submitted. The engagement shows strong support for improving Rabbit Ings as a community destination, with modest,

well-designed facilities that help people enjoy the park more often, for longer, and in more inclusive ways. A summary of the comments received is provided at **Appendix IV**, a snapshot of some of the key feedback is provided below:

4.11 In response to the questions ‘what would make you visit Rabbit Ings Country Park more often, of the 26 feedback responses received, 62% of respondents suggested a café. In addition, the following was suggested:

- Public use toilets
- Community space for wellbeing groups, exercise etc
- Play area
- More activities for kids, including trails / events
- Walking / running routes displayed
- Food area
- Outdoor seating

4.12 In response to the question ‘what facilities are important to you’, 23 respondents answered ‘new community facilities’. The next most important was ‘better lighting (13 respondents) and then ‘new seating’ (10 respondents).

4.13 In response to the question ‘would improving the facilities at Rabbit Ings encourage you and your friends / family to visit the park?’ 24 respondents answered yes and 2 answered ‘other’.

4.14 In response to ‘overall are you supportive of the redevelopment proposals (on a scale of 1 (not supportive) to 5 (very supportive))’, 22 respondents answered 5, which is 85%.

4.15 In response to ‘how supportive are you of the proposed design and layout (1 – not supportive and 5 – very supportive), 54% (14) of respondents answered 5, 12% (3) answered 4, 19% (5) answered 3, 12% (3) answered 2 and 4% (1) answered 1.

4.16 The below table provides a response from the Applicant team to the main suggestions and queries raised by respondents during the consultation process:

Feedback	Applicant Response
The idea of a new community facility is welcomed and viewed as a positive investment.	Will continue to explore how the proposal can deliver clear community benefit and reflect local needs as plans are developed.
A café or coffee shop is important to the success of the facility.	A coffee concession has previously been provided in the car park and BMCB will continue to work with Landtrust to develop this further. There is also potential for pop up cafes run by community groups.

Public toilets are essential and should be included as a minimum.	Will consider the inclusion of accessible toilet provision and how this could be delivered and maintained sustainably.
Concern about where the money will come from to fund the proposals	Will consider funding sources, affordability and long-term sustainability as part of the project's development and decision-making process.
This project should not take priority over basic services.	Will take account of these views alongside the council's wider investment priorities and statutory responsibilities.
Parking must not be lost or made more difficult.	The new development will improve existing parking with new surfaces, speed control measures, CCTV and security lighting.
Investment should feel fair across the site and surrounding areas.	Will consider how future investment in the surrounding areas can be addressed for future funding rounds.
Clarity on what will happen to existing buildings.	The current building will be demolished and the land made good.
Concerns about environmental and land-use impacts.	Will consider environmental impacts and relevant planning and land-use considerations as the project progresses.
Trust in council decision-making is low.	Will continue to communicate openly about the project and how feedback is being considered.

Summary

- 4.17 In advance of the submission of this planning application, the Applicants have undertaken comprehensive engagement with the LPA, local community, elected Members and other stakeholders that complies with local and national policy guidance.
- 4.18 Furthermore, the pre-application discussions with the LPA have enabled a clear understanding of the planning authority's position and key matters to be addressed as part of the planning application submission. This advice has been duly considered during the development of the proposed scheme.

5. Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 This section identifies the relevant adopted planning policy at the national and local level, and relevant material planning considerations, that the proposed development should be assessed against.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 On December 2024 the Government published a revised version of the NPPF (minor amendments made in February 2025). The most recent NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications and fully replaces all previous editions.
- 5.3 The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. It advises that proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to reiterate the Government's key objectives of facilitating economic growth and securing sustainable development. These overarching policies seek to deliver development in the most appropriate locations, thereby protecting and enhancing the environment.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 5.5 Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the need for the planning system to support economic growth in line with the Planning for Growth Ministerial Statement. Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of the policy for decision making. It states:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay; or

Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- *The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole"*

- 5.6 Paragraph 12 sets out that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Finally, Paragraph 12 is clear that Local Planning Authorities can take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

Protecting Green Belt land

- 5.7 Chapter 13 of the NPPF makes clear that it is the Government's continued intention to protect Green Belt Land and that development in these areas should be restricted.

- 5.8 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 5.9 There are five purposes of the Green Belt which are identified in Paragraph 143:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 5.10 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that when assessing planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Footnote 55 states that this is for cases other than development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate.
- 5.11 Paragraph 154 sets out the exceptions for development in the Green Belt which is not considered to be inappropriate (our emphasis added, underlined):
- a) *“buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
 - b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
 - c) *the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate.*
 - d) *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
 - e) *limited infilling in villages;*
 - f) *limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
 - g) *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*
 - h) *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
 - i. *mineral extraction;*
 - ii. *engineering operations;*

- iii. *local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- iv. *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
- v. *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
- vi. *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order."*

The Development Plan

- 5.12 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.13 The relevant adopted Development Plan for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council currently comprises the Barnsley Local Plan, which was adopted in on the 3rd of January 2019.
- 5.14 Other planning policy documents relevant to the proposal which could be deemed "material considerations" will also be taken into account in this Planning Statement, including the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and guidance (SPGs).

Barnsley Local Plan (2014-2033)

- 5.15 The Local Plan sets out the key elements of the planning framework for Barnsley, and the approach to its long-term physical development.
- 5.16 Based on the adopted Policy Map (see Figure 3 below) which supports Barnsley's Local Plan, the site is currently unallocated for any particular use. However, it is located within the Green Belt under Policy GB1 'Protection of the Green Belt' of the Local Plan.

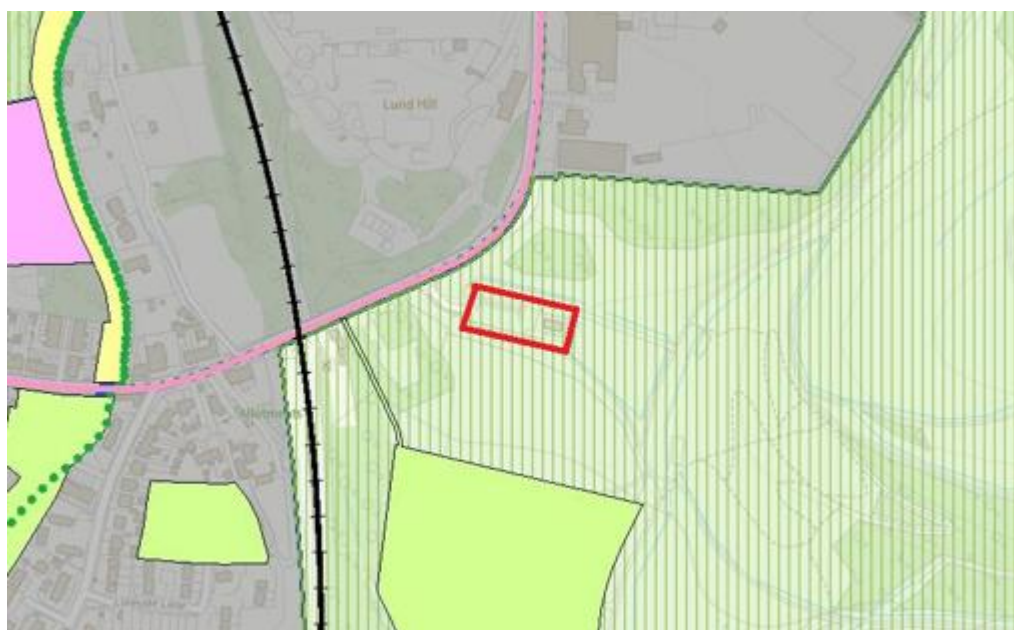


Figure 3: Extract from Barnsley Council's Local Plan Policy Map showing the site's designation as Green Belt.

- 5.17 The following policies from Barnsley's Local Plan are considered to be of most relevance to the proposals:

Policy GB1: Green Belt

- 5.18 This policy states that the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt are defined on the Policies Map. Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy.

Policy GB2: Replacement, Extension and Alteration of Existing Buildings in the Green Belt

- 5.19 This policy sets out what development is allowed on the Green Belt, providing it does not have a harmful impact on the appearance, character or openness of the Green Belt. The following uses are permitted:

- Replacement buildings where the new building is in the same use and is not materially larger than that which it replaces.
- Extension or alteration of a building where the total size of the proposed and previous extensions does not exceed the size of the original building.
- Dividing an existing house to form smaller units of accommodation.

- 5.20 In addition, all such development will be expected to:

- Be of a high standard of design and respect the character of the existing building and its surroundings, in its footprint, scale and massing, elevation design and materials; and
- Have no adverse effect on the amenity of local residents, the visual amenity of the area, or highway safety.

Policy I2 Educational and Community Facilities

- 5.21 The Council will support the provision of schools, educational facilities and other community facilities. New schools, educational and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, should be located centrally to the communities they serve, in places where they will be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Such uses will be protected from development unless it can be demonstrated that the sites and premises are no longer required by the existing or an alternative community facility.

Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 5.22 This policy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, they will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Policy GD1: General Development

- Policy GD1 sets out the general development management principles that apply to all development proposals. These include ensuring that development does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring uses, incorporates appropriate landscaping and design, and provides safe and suitable access arrangements.

Policy E5: Promoting Tourism and encouraging Cultural Provision

- 5.23 This policy states that the Council will promote tourism and encourage the growth and development of cultural provision by; encouraging the provision of a wide range of venues and opportunities for

cultural activity; safeguarding and sustaining existing provision; promoting existing cultural provision and tourism offers; and encouraging growth of the tourist business sector. Tourist related development in rural areas will be protected and encouraged to support and diversify the local economy subject to the requirements of Policy E6.

Policy T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel

- 5.24 This policy requires new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel and to be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Development should provide minimum parking standards for cycles and disabled users in accordance with the relevant Supplementary Planning Document. Where appropriate, proposals must be supported by a proportionate Transport Statement or Assessment and a Travel Plan or Travel Plan Statement in line with national guidance.

Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety

- 5.25 This policy states that new development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

5.26 **Policy D1: High Quality Design and Placemaking**

- Policy D1 requires development to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to its context. Proposals should contribute positively to local character and landscape, incorporate appropriate materials and layout, and create attractive, functional and safe environments.

5.27 **Policy LC1: Landscape Character Areas**

- 5.28 Development will be expected to retain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character area in which it is located (as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment of Barnsley Borough 2002 and any subsequent amendments). Development which would be harmful to the special qualities of the Peak District National Park will not be allowed.

- 5.29 The Site is located in Landscape Character Area D 'Settled Arable Slopes'. This area is largely characterised by its landform and land use patterns. The 2002 study identified a landscape in a state of flux and changing character as a result of new industrial estates and residential developments. The landscape was therefore considered to be in decline due to present day land use activity most apparent at rural-urban interface. Strength of character was therefore deemed moderate and landscape condition poor

D: SETTLED ARABLE SLOPES



Figure 4: Map showing location of Landscape Character Area D.

Policy GI1: Green Infrastructure

- 5.30 This policy commits Barnsley to protecting, enhancing and expanding an interconnected network of green and blue spaces that support attractive places to live, work and visit, meet community needs, improve quality of life and help address climate change. It aims to boost biodiversity, landscape character, recreation and tourism opportunities, while respecting local heritage and maximising social and economic benefits. The strategic network focuses on key corridors, including the River Dearne, River Dove, River Don, the Dearne Valley Green Heart and the Historic Landscape Corridor. Delivery will be achieved by safeguarding existing open space, creating new green spaces through development, and investing developer contributions, guided by Barnsley's Green Infrastructure Strategy aligned with wider regional strategies.

Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.31 Policy BIO1 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity across the borough. Development proposals should avoid adverse impacts on important habitats and species wherever possible and deliver biodiversity enhancements where appropriate.

5.32 Policy CC1: Climate Change

- Policy CC1 requires development proposals to demonstrate how they will mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. This includes encouraging sustainable design measures and efficient use of energy and resources.

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

- 5.33 Development will be expected to minimise resource and energy consumption through the inclusion of sustainable design and construction features, where this is technically feasible and viable. All non-residential development will be expected, to achieve a minimum standard of BREEAM 'Very Good' (or any future national equivalent). This should be supported by preliminary assessments at planning application stage.

Policy CC3: Flood Risk

- 5.34 Policy CC3 requires development to avoid areas of high flood risk where possible and to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere as a result of development.

Policy CC4: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 5.35 This policy states that all major development will be expected to use SuDS to manage surface water drainage, unless it can be demonstrated that all types of SuDS are inappropriate. The Council will also promote the use of SuDS on minor development.
- 5.36 Detailed planning applications must be supported by a detailed drainage plan and SuDS design statement, which should contain information on how the SuDS will operate, be managed and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Policy RE1 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

- 5.37 All developments will be expected to seek to incorporate initially appropriate design measures, and thereafter decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy sources in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and should at least achieve the appropriate carbon compliance targets as defined in the Building Regulations.

Policy Poll1: Pollution Control and Protection

- 5.38 Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

Emerging Local Plan

- 5.39 The Local Plan review was endorsed at a meeting of Full Council on 24 November 2022. The review concluded that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review.
- 5.40 A further review will take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, including fundamental changes to the Local Plan system, require it.

Other Material Planning Considerations**Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance****Parking SPD (2019)**

- 5.41 This SPD offers guidance to developers, architects, agents and landowners considering submitting a planning application. It supplements Local Plan Policy T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel by setting out the parking standards that the Council will apply to all new development.

Trees and Hedgerows SPD (2019)

- 5.42 This document offers guidance to landowners, architects, and builders on how to deal with existing trees and hedgerows on development sites.

Sustainable Travel SPD (2022)

- 5.43 The objective of this SPD is to ensure that the accessibility of new development via public transport, walking and cycling is acceptable in order to promote sustainable transport and active travel and where possible enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of the transport network to meet Barnsley MBC's economic, health and air quality aspirations.

Sustainable Construction and Climate Change Adaptation SPD (2023)

- 5.44 This Supplementary Planning Document sets out the Council's approach to planning decisions in respect of sustainable construction and adapting to climate change. It sets out what the requirements for development are based on our existing Local Plan policies, existing planning practice guidance and national requirements. It also sets out where the Council would welcome and encourage higher standards and includes information and links to technical guidance.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPD (2024)

- 5.45 This SPD sets out the council's approach to planning decisions in respect of biodiversity and geodiversity and is designed to be used by those considering and applying for planning permission in the borough, to ensure biodiversity and geodiversity is adequately protected through the planning process. It provides practical advice and guidance on how to deliver proposals that comply with the NPPF and the Local Plan. Information and links to technical guidance is also included.
- 5.46 The Council believe that biodiversity and geodiversity should not be seen as a hindrance to development, rather as a way of adding value to well-conceived design proposals. When considered at early design stage, biodiversity enhancements can be achieved, providing net gains, alongside additional benefits such as increasing habitat availability for species, natural flood management, carbon sequestration and broader benefits for people provided by access to natural green spaces, including increased mental health which was observed widely during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Summary

- 5.47 This section has identified relevant Development Plan policies, national policy and other material considerations to be taken into account in the determination of this planning application.

6. Planning Assessment

6.1 Under Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, LPAs are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 Based on the nature of the proposed development, having regard to the statutory Development Plan for Barnsley and other material considerations, we consider the key matters in assessing the scheme are as follows:

1. Principle of Development;
2. Design;
3. Ecology, Trees and Landscaping;
4. Transport and Accessibility;
5. Drainage and Flood Risk; and
6. Scheme Benefits.

1) Principle of Development

6.3 The Site is located within the Green Belt. It comprises an existing surfaced car park which accommodates a small pavilion building and septic tank. The site therefore constitutes previously developed land.

6.4 Local Plan Policy GB1 (Green Belt) states that the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy and Policy GB2 (replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt) states that development is allowed in the Green Belt providing it does not have a harmful impact on the appearance, character or openness of the Green Belt. It further states that replacement buildings, where the new building is in the same use and is not materially larger than that which it replaces, would be permitted.

6.5 In addition, Policy GB2 expects all such development to:

- Be of a high standard of design and respect the character of the existing building and its surroundings, in its footprint, scale and massing, elevation design and materials; and
- Have no adverse effect on the amenity of local residents, the visual amenity of the area, or highway safety.

NPPF Exceptions to Inappropriate Development

6.6 In terms of national planning policy, the proposed development falls within recognised exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

6.7 The scheme falls within NPPF paragraph 154(g) which allows for:

'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential) whether redundant or in

continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.'

6.8 In addition, the proposed development is also not inappropriate by virtue of complying with NPPF paragraph 154(b), by providing facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Specifically, paragraph 154(b) states:

'the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;'

6.9 Based on both local and national policy, the proposed development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt given it is delivering a replacement building/ facilities on a site which is entirely previously developed, and of a scale, mass and character that would not give rise to "substantial harm" to the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with 154(g).

6.10 In addition, the proposal is delivering a replacement facility in exactly the same sport/ recreation and community use as the existing building whilst also preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not conflicting with the purposes of including land within it, in accordance with paragraph 154(b).

6.11 Accordingly, subject to the local authority taking the view that the proposed development would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, which is a very high harm threshold to exceed, then planning permission can be granted in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Impacts on Openness

6.12 In considering impacts on openness, the National Planning Policy Guidance states that when assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, there are a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment, including:

- *openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume*
- *the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness*
- *the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.¹*

6.13 Firstly, in terms of spatial openness the increase in size from the existing to the proposed is from 111sqm to 202sqm (GIA). Whilst this is clearly an increase in size, due to the relatively small nature of the building as a whole and the wider extent of the existing parkland, the proposed building is not considered to be a substantial increase. The building will be of the same scale as the existing building it is replacing, and the footprint, whilst larger, is not substantially greater in the context of the application site and impact on openness of the Green Belt setting.

6.14 "Substantial" harm is a high bar to exceed, and there is planning precedent elsewhere for significant development in the Green Belt without approaching the "substantial" threshold. In an Appeal at Maitland Lodge in Billericay (PINS ref: APP/V1505/W/22/3296116), the Inspector concluded that the erection of 47 no. dwellings on the land, which largely comprised open paddocks, would result in

¹ Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 64-013-20250225

'moderate' impact on openness only.' As such, the slight increase and re-orientation of the building, would clearly not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would be acceptable.

- 6.15 Secondly, in terms of the visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the location of the proposals to the north west of the site will provide improved screening from landscaping than its existing position. This is due to the existing topography of the site being at a lower elevation than the road to the west, which increases its inclination as it travels northwards. Existing vegetation between the site and Lund Hill Lane, alongside the difference in topography allows the site to be well screened.
- 6.16 Furthermore, the proposed location is more suitable as it is closer to the road and overall built form. The existing building to the south east of the site is located in a more open area of the car park, set further into the Country Park away from the road, where the visual setting is more sensitive. By locating the new building in the north-west corner, it could be argued the visual impact of the building on the Green Belt setting is actually reduced (or equivalent at worst).
- 6.17 In terms of the degree of activity to be created by the development, as a replacement building proposing the same uses as the existing (albeit within a more modern and fit for purposes facility), this is anticipated to be the same or very similar to activity associated with the current building. With regards to traffic generation, this is considered in further detail later in this Section.
- 6.18 Overall, the above assessment establishes the proposals will not have a materially greater impact on the visual and spatial aspects of the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, elements of design and amenity, whilst not discussed in this section, are addressed later in this Section and will demonstrate there will be a positive impact as a result of the proposals.

The Need for a Larger Building

- 6.19 The existing building onsite is currently used for organised school visits and a local football team for changing room purposes up to twice a week, however it is under-sized, and no longer fit for purpose for either sports or community use. With regards to the increased footprint of the proposed development, from an existing GIA size of 111sqm to the new size of 202 sqm, this is required in order to enable the building to be fit for purpose. The following issues associated with the existing building contribute to it not being fit for purpose:
- No officials changing space for home / away team or different genders;
 - No existing kitchen space;
 - Upgrade required to showers in existing changing rooms (extending to 21.7 sqm) and finishes to reduce mould / slippage;
 - Access only to disabled toilets for the public;
 - Unclear front / rear of the building and where the main entrance is;
 - Lack of signage and lack of lighting.
- 6.20 The Sport England document 'Clubhouse, Design Guidance Notes – 2016 Update', sets out guidance on clubhouses to ensure they are welcoming and functional. This document sets out the Sports National Governing Body ('NGB') recommendations for clubhouses as follows:
- Changing facilities for football should extend to at least 16 sqm;
 - Self-contained changing rooms for match officials should be provided;

- Each changing room requires a shower area which should be located as far as possible from changing room entrance and WC's in order to minimise water migrations and to separate mud and moisture;
- All changing areas must be designed so that they can be used comfortably by both able bodied and disabled people;
- Club rooms need to fulfil many different activities including the selling of food and drink. Club rooms require flexibility;
- Inclusion of equipment, food and drink and furniture stores as well as cleaner stores;
- Inclusion of staff office potentially;
- Inclusion of lighting, heating etc.

6.21 The proposed development, enables the following improvements to be made in order to create a fit for purpose and contemporary changing room and community space in keeping with Sport England recommendations:

- Separate changing entrance and separate community entrance;
- Three official changing spaces, both with their own shower and toilet facilities, extending to 3.7 sqm;
- Two separate team changing rooms (home / away) extending to 23.3sqm and 25.7 sqm including the accommodation of several showers and appropriate toilet facilities;
- Classroom / community space for flexible uses extending to 55sqm and with additional storage for furniture / equipment as well as a cleaner store;
- Community kitchen with serving hatch to community space extending to 11.3 sqm;
- Separate office extending to 6.5 sqm;
- External accessibly toilet (extending to 4 sqm) as well as internal accessible and none-accessible toilets for public use. (extending to 3.3 and 2.6 sqm);
- Circulation lobby space (extending to 10.6sqm in the community entrance and 9.1sqm in the football changing area) allowing separation between changing and community facilities;
- Main clubhouse entrance; and
- Improved lighting and signage.

6.22 Furthermore, the proposed development has been designed to fit the needs of the community and the existing football teams that will use it. In particular, the need for two official changing spaces alongside a useable community space.

6.23 Local Plan Policy I2 (Educational and Community Facilities) states the Council will support the provision of other community facilities (including meeting places, sports venues) and they should be located in places where they will be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, which has been demonstrated elsewhere within this statement, and as such the proposals should be supported.

Green Belt Summary

- 6.24 The proposed new pavilion is for the same community and sports use as the existing, is modest in scale, single-storey, and contained wholly within the car park envelope. The associated parking reconfiguration represents a rationalisation rather than encroachment into the wider countryside.
- 6.25 Points on appearance, character and openness will be addressed further in this section, however it should be noted that the proposals accord with Local Plan Policies GB1 and GB2 and comprises appropriate replacement buildings for sport and recreation and also accord with policies in the NPPF.
- 6.26 The development falls within two recognised exceptions to inappropriate Green Belt development; it can be argued it has no significantly greater impact on openness than the existing position; and the scheme delivers important community benefits in line with local and national policy. Furthermore, the environmental, economic, and social benefits this proposal will bring (summarised later in this section) should be positively considered in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.27 While this sub-section has assessed the principle of development of the replacement building as a whole the remainder of this Chapter assesses the technical impacts of the planning application.

2) Design and Built Environment

- 6.28 Local Plan Policy D1 (High Quality Design and Placemaking) relates to design and states development proposals should be of a high quality design and contribute to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment through the use of materials, landscaping and public realm.
- 6.29 The proposed pavilion has been designed as a simple, single-storey building that responds appropriately to its setting within the Country Park and will be positioned in the north western corner of the site, orientated towards the reconfigured car parking area. This position reduces the visual impact on the surrounding Country Park. The building will utilise a natural material palette and a low-profile form to minimise visual impact. The roof overhang on the south-west and south-east elevations to form a canopy, will provide shelter from the elements as well as solar shading, which will prevent excessive heat gain.
- 6.30 The external walls to the front and side elevations will be clad in a horizontal cladding material with a timber grain effect. The rear elevation will be finished in a buff coloured facing brick. The same brick will also be used as an upstand to the base of the walls on the other 3 elevations. The classroom and office will have large windows to maximise daylight into the spaces and to also provide views out over the country park. Glazed aluminium doors will be provided to both parts of the building to tie in with the window designs. Due to the nature of the changing spaces, there will be no windows in this part of the building.
- 6.31 In addition, Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) states that Development will be expected to minimise resource and energy consumption through the inclusion of sustainable design and construction features, where this is technically feasible and viable. The pavilion has been designed to incorporate a range of sustainable design measures appropriate to a building of this scale. These include the use of energy efficient building fabric and insulation, LED lighting, and modern mechanical systems designed to minimise energy consumption. The site layout also retains and enhances areas of soft landscaping within the car park and incorporates sustainable drainage measures where appropriate. These measures help ensure the development responds positively to the Council's climate change objectives.

- 6.32 Overall, in terms of design quality, the proposal represents a high-quality, energy efficient development which will improve the functionality of the building. The proposals have been thoughtfully designed to be visually in keeping with the character of the site and to be of limited visibility externally.

3) Transportation and Access

- 6.33 A Transport Statement has been prepared by Andrew Mosely Associates to support this application. It assesses the local highway network surrounding the site and concludes the site is well located for access to local, regional and strategic highway networks. In terms of accessibility, the site is also considered to be accessible to visitors by walking, cycling and using public transport.
- 6.34 The Transport Statement has assessed the level of access to the site via cycling. It is considered that there are numerous cycle routes within the facility of the site and all nearby areas are within a reasonable cycle distance. In addition, the proposed development will include the provision of a new cycle shelter, which is a betterment to the existing situation and will encourage visitors to cycle to / from the replacement facility.
- 6.35 The IHT's 'Guidelines for Planning for Public Transport in Developments' (IHT 1999) recommend that the maximum walking distance to bus routes should not exceed 400 metres.
- 6.36 The three nearest bus stops to the site are located on Lund Hill Lane within approximately 170m and 400m walking distance and can be accessed via the existing pedestrian footways along Lund Hill Lane. There are regular bus services towards Monk Bretton, Barnsley and Wakefield. Therefore, the site is considered to have a good level of accessibility by bus.
- 6.37 The Transport Statement has reviewed the Crashmap database and identifies that there are no existing highways safety concerns
- 6.38 The existing car park will be reconfigured to accommodate the new visitor centre in the north west corner of the site, including the provision of a new coach drop off point to the front of the building. This reconfiguration will result in the loss of 6 car parking spaces which is not considered significant in the context of the parking accumulation survey which demonstrates parking demand did not surpass 19%.
- 6.39 During the public consultation, the public raised concerns of pedestrian safety and building users having to cross the car park to get to the football pitches. Therefore, the pedestrian route from the building to the football pitches takes the shortest possible route and incorporates 2no. Zebra crossings with a path across the central raised island. Pedestrian safety will be further safeguarded by the introduction of a 5mph speed limit within the car park and speed bumps at regular intervals to mitigate this potential issue.
- 6.40 In summary, the Transport Statement concludes that the proposals would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor any severe cumulative impacts on the local road network, and as such are in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy T3 and T4 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

1) Ecology, Arboriculture and Landscaping

Ecology

- 6.41 This planning application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and BNG Assessment prepared by Brooks.

- 6.42 The Ecology Statement identifies the site is located within influencing distance of the Pool Ings and Sandybridge Dyke unit of the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI and also lies upstream of Carlton March Local Nature Reserve, however given the site's size and scope of development proposals, direct and indirect impacts on either designation are considered unlikely. It is also located within the 200m SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI but due to the site's already developed nature and the scope of the proposals, Natural England are not required to be consulted. Furthermore, two Local Wildlife Sites (Bush Wood and Ellis Laithe) are located at least 650m north of the site and are separated by Lund Hill Lane and a chemical plant and so direct and indirect impacts are not anticipated.
- 6.43 In terms of further surveys, the appraisal undertaken identified that no further surveys were required to assess for certain species. Furthermore, no invasive non-native species were identified during the appraisal.
- 6.44 A Biodiversity Net Gain (calculation) has been undertaken in respect of the proposals. This is presented in the submitted Statutory Biodiversity Metric (ref: BM-8646-04) and BNG Assessment (ref: ER-8646-03b). The report concludes that there are no designated sites of features providing notable ecosystem services, which influence the scheme's deliverability of BNG. The site's baseline habitat units are comprised of:
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (very low distinctiveness)
 - Developed land, sealed surface (very low distinctiveness)
 - Ground level planters (low distinctiveness)
 - Introduced shrub (low distinctiveness)
 - Other neutral grassland (6A) (medium distinctiveness, poor condition)
 - Individual tress (9B) (medium distinctiveness, moderate condition)
 - Ditch (4A) (low distinctiveness, moderate condition)
- 6.45 The results of the BNG assessment are that the proposed development would result in a net change of 0.04 habitat units resulting in an overall biodiversity net gain of 16.55% of habitat units, clearly exceeding the requirement for this to be a 10% net gain. The assessment also indicates that there will be no net change in watercourse units.
- 6.46 To mitigate the loss of habitats on site, replacement tree and shrub planting have been included as part of the supporting Landscaping Plan (ref: DR-LLP-8646-01) and a total of 0.06 watercourse units will be secured off-site via a nearby Habitat Bank to achieve a +10% Biodiversity Net Gain across all units.
- 6.47 Therefore, it is considered that the supporting Preliminary Ecological Statement and submitted BNG assessment demonstrate that with the implementation of on-site planting as well as off-site mitigation, the proposals can be considered favourably in the context of Local Plan Policy BIO1.

Arboriculture and Landscaping

- 6.48 This planning application is also supported by an Arboricultural Report and Impact Assessment (ref: AWA7256) prepared by AWA Tree Consultants. The AIA provides details of existing trees, outlines the main tree related impacts in relation to the proposals, and identifies suitable compensation, mitigation provisions and retained tree protection measures. A total of 5 items of woody vegetation were surveyed, which comprised of 4 individual trees and 1 group of trees. Of these surveyed trees, all 5 were categorised as low value (Category C).

- 6.49 The survey found that there is little tree cover at the site and the trees present mainly consist of self-set or recently established saplings, young and semi-mature trees. Much of the site is comprised of existing hard standing or landscaping associated with the current car park.
- 6.50 In order to facilitate the development, 4 low-value trees will need to be removed as they are situated in the footprint of the development or their retention and protection throughout the development is not suitable. The trees to be removed are all lower value, retention category 'C'. T2 and T3 are semi-mature Willows and T4 and T5 are semi-mature Birch. All four of these trees are recently established or self-set saplings, that can easily be replaced and with little value. Due to the low value of the trees to be removed the removals will have only a negligible negative arboricultural impact. A summary of the tree impacts is outlined in the table below:

<i>Tree/ Group Ref</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Impact Type</i>	<i>Description of Impact</i>	<i>Impact Level</i>	<i>Mitigation / Solution</i>
T2 – T5	C (Low)	Direct - Removal	Within footprint of development area	Negligible	Mitigation planting

Table 1: Summary of Tree Impacts

- 6.51 The layout of the proposed development has been intentionally designed to minimise the encroachment into Root Protection Areas (RPAs), with only minor incursions into a trees' RPAs, which are not expected to significantly affect tree health. Mitigation measures, including protective fencing and 'no-dig' construction methods, are recommended where necessary.
- 6.52 In addition, the proposal is supported by a high quality landscaping scheme (reference: DR-LLP-8646-01C) prepared by Brooks. Whilst there will be a loss of 4 low quality trees to accommodate the proposed development, the landscape proposals incorporate 10 no. replacement native species trees on site as well as the planting of 590 no. ornamental shrubs, 33 no. herbaceous plants and 63 no. grasses. These trees and other ornamental planting have been strategically placed to promote biodiversity and provide a natural sense of place
- 6.53 Collectively, the new tree planting and landscape provisions offer compensation for the proposed tree removals as required and indicate how a varied selection of planting could fully reinstate lost canopy cover and individual tree stem quantities directly on site. Long-term, tree population enhancements are anticipated including expanded tree canopy coverage, improved biodiversity and better habitat linkages directly inside the red line application boundary.
- 6.54 The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy BIO1 and Barnsley Council's Trees and Hedgerows SPD which seeks to retain and protect existing trees and where necessary provide effective mitigation and compensation for their loss.

5) Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.55 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Shaun Tongue Engineering in support of the application.
- 6.56 The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning identifies that the site is located within Flood Zone 1. Therefore, the site is at low risk of fluvial flooding. In addition, the Environment Agency's surface water flooding map shows that the site is in a very low risk area for surface water flooding with no flood routes from third party land affecting the site.

6.57 In order to accommodate the possibilities of flooding from a catastrophic storm or blockage of the proposed drainage system, the following precautionary flood mitigation measures are recommended:

- The finished flood level of the proposed building should be raised above external levels by a minimum of 150mm, wherever possible. The new building should be designed without any basements and ground floors shall comprise solid concrete slabs or beam and block with screed construction.
- Incoming electricity supplies should be raised above ground floor level and ground floor electric sockets shall be served by loops from upper level.
- In the unlikely event of flooding of the site, it will be necessary to ensure there is a route for floodwater through the site without causing flooding of buildings.
- The proposed surface water drainage system should be designed to keep the “status quo” as closely as possible. i.e. Keep the discharge points and contributing areas as close to the current system as possible.
- Foul water should discharge to a septic tank or package treatment plant depending on the confirmed outfall type

6.58 It is therefore considered that the Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that adequate mitigation has been provided in line with the predicted flood risk and therefore the scheme will accord with Local Plan Policy CC3 as well as the requirements of the NPPF.

6) Scheme Benefits

6.59 Both local and national planning policies state that when considering proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.60 The demolition of the existing facility and replacement with a new purpose built pavilion comprising changing rooms and community space will bring a multitude of economic, social and environmental benefits to the local area. As such the proposal should be positively considered in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.61 A summary of the key environmental, social, and economic benefits of the scheme is included below:

Social Benefits

- Replacement of a run down and outdated facility with a modern, inclusive pavilion providing high quality facilities for use by the local community and visitors to the site.
- Greatly enhanced changing rooms to improve the comfort/ convenience for users and support greater sports participation.
- Creation of a high quality, flexible community/ events space serving educational, social and recreational needs. The space will be available for use by the local community, schools and groups.
- Enhanced visitor infrastructure (coach drop-off, cycle shelter, reconfigured parking) to enhance peoples’ experience of visiting Rabbit Ings Country Park generally.

Environmental Benefits

- The scheme is supported by a significant landscaping scheme incorporating onsite planting and improvements.
- The biodiversity net gain assessment confirms that the proposal will result in a 16.55% net gain of habitat units on-site, which is considerably in excess of 10%.
- The proposals will result in more visitors enjoying Rabbit Ings Country Park and benefitting from outdoor exercise.
- Inclusion of sheltered cycle parking will encourage users to cycle to the site.

Economic Benefits

- Significant up-front capital investment into the site by Barnsley Council to realise the redevelopment of the site.
- Generation of job creation during construction including spin-off additional employment opportunities associated with materials/ services suppliers and end-use service providers (i.e. landscaping, maintenance etc).

6.62 Overall, the proposal will clearly bring important economic, environmental and social benefits and as such should be positively considered in accordance with the principle in favour of sustainable development.

Overview

6.63 Overall, the proposed development represents appropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 154(b) and 154(g). The replacement pavilion is modest in scale, contained within the existing car park and would not result in substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

6.64 The principle of development is supported in accordance with adopted local Policies GB1 and GB2 in relation to the Green Belt. Furthermore, the social, environmental and economic benefits this proposal will bring should be positively considered in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.65 In addition to assessing the principle of development at the site, the proposal has been assessed in terms of local and national planning policy regarding the design quality, ecology, trees and landscaping, transport, flood risk and drainage. The appraisal demonstrates the proposal represents sustainable development and should be supported in terms of the social, environmental and economic benefits it will bring to Barnsley, and more specifically Royston.

6.66 The proposal would allow for a new and improved facility which would be of benefit to the community as well as the local football club, and has been sensitively designed in terms visual impact, and as demonstrated within the supporting reports, will not have any negative impacts in terms of impact on the Green Belt, transport, flood risk, ecology or trees.

The scheme will deliver significant community benefits through the provision of modern sports and community facilities, alongside ecological and landscape enhancements. The proposal therefore accords with the development plan and national planning policy and planning permission should be granted.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposed development comprises the replacement of an existing pavilion building with a modern single-storey community and sports facility within the existing car park at Rabbit Ings Country Park.
- 7.2 The proposal constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt under paragraphs 154(b) and 154(g) of the National Planning Policy Framework. The replacement building is modest in scale, remains single storey and is located entirely within the existing developed area of the car park. The proposal would therefore not result in substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.3 The development will provide improved facilities for local sports teams, schools and community groups, supporting the continued use of Rabbit Ings Country Park as an important recreational and community asset. The proposals will also deliver biodiversity enhancements and improved visitor infrastructure.
- 7.4 The scheme is consistent with the relevant policies of the Barnsley Local Plan and national planning policy. Overall, the proposal will clearly bring a multitude of economic, environmental and social benefits and as such should be positively considered in accordance with the principle in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.5 The proposal demonstrates a high quality, sustainable development which accords with all relevant local and national planning policies in relation to Green Belt. Taking all matters into account, the proposed development represents sustainable development and planning permission should therefore be granted.

Appendix I

Submitted Plan and Documents

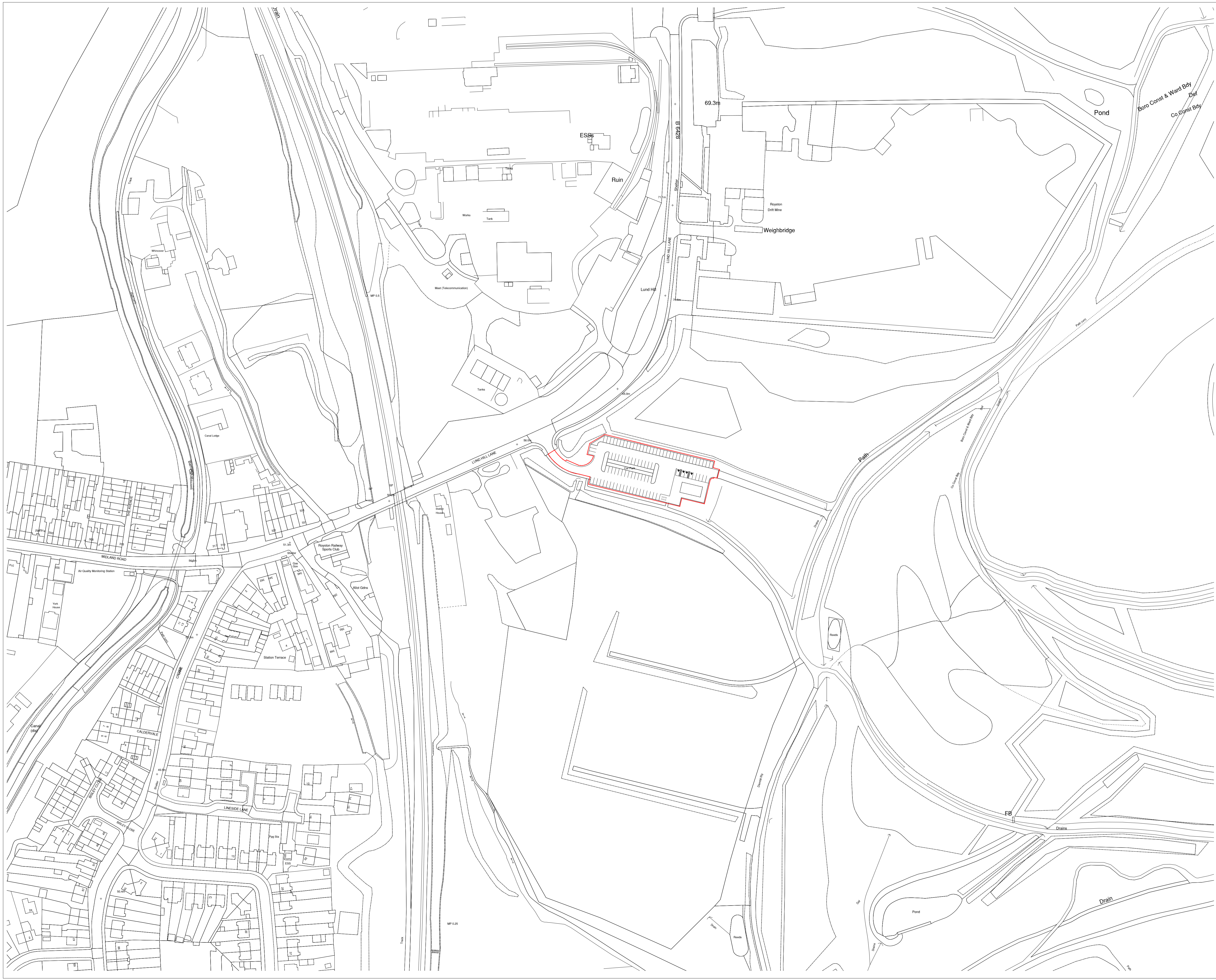
Rabbit Ings Submission Schedule

Document	Reference / Date	Author
Admin	Reference / Date	Author
Supporting Cover Letter	March 2026	Avison Young
Application Forms, Certificates & Notices	March 2026	Avison Young
Drawing Name	Dwg Ref.	Author
Site Location Plan	A-DR-P01 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Existing Site Plan	A-DR-P02 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Existing Plan	A-DR-P03 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Existing Elevations	A-DR-P04 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Proposed Site Plan	A-DR-P05 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Proposed Plan	A-DR-P06 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Proposed Elevations	A-DR-P07 P1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Topo (Sheet 1 and 2)	BNBC-RI12399-01	1 ST Horizon
Topo (Sheet 1 and 2)	BNBC-RI12399-02	1 ST Horizon
CGI's x3 (Entrance, Car Park 01, Car Park 02)	2026.01.29	
Report	Reference/Date	Author
Supporting Planning Statement	March 2026	Avison Young
Design and Access Statement	March 2026	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Landscape Proposals	DR-LLP-8646-01	Brooks Ecological
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	ER-8646-01A	Brooks Ecological
BNG Assessment	ER-8646-03B	Brooks Ecological
BNG Metric	BM-8646-04	Brooks Ecological
Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy (including Appendices A – F)	January 2026	Shaun Tonge Engineering
Phase I Desk Top Study	24-562	Arc Environmental

Phase II SI	24-562	Arc Environmental
Coal Mining Risk Assessment	24-562.01L	Arc Environmental
Transport Statement (including, car park survey)	300601 Rev 2	Andrew Moseley Associates
Arboricultural Survey and Impact Assessment	AWA7256	AWA Tree Consultants
Lighting Proposals	BMB-RI-DR-E-001 p1	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Appendix II

Site Location Plan

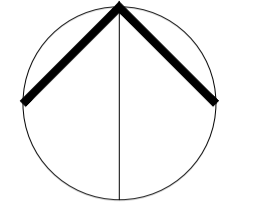


DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE BY CONTRACTOR. REPORT ANY DISCREPANCIES TO DRAWING AUTHOR AND PROPERTY SERVICES TEAM. DRAWING OR CONTENTS SHOULD NOT BE DUPLICATED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT.

DRAWING TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OTHER PROJECT DOCUMENTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DRAWINGS, SPECIFICATIONS, SCHEDULES

0m 12 25 37.5 75m
1:1250

NOTES
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Site Area (Red line boundary) = 0.03ha

P1	First Issue.	17/03/26	BST
Rev	Notes	Date	Issued By



SERVICE
Economic Regeneration

PROJECT
Rabbit Ings Pavilion

TITLE
Site Location Plan

PROJECT REF CAP-24/25-003	DRAWING REFERENCE P01	REV P1
SCALE 1:1250	DISCIPLINE ARCHITECTURE	SHEET SIZE A1
PURPOSE OF ISSUE PLANNING APPROVAL	Drawn BST	Checked

Appendix III

Councillor Support Letter

Councillor Caroline Makinson on behalf of Royston Ward Councillors

Date: 05/03/2026

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the local ward councillors for Royston, are writing to express our full support for the Rabbit Ings proposal to develop a new community facility in our area.

This initiative represents a significant opportunity to enhance the quality of life for residents of all ages, providing a welcoming space for educational, recreational, sports and social activities. The proposed facility will not only improve community cohesion but also foster a sense of pride and ownership among local people.

The need for such a facility has been voiced by many members of our community, and we are confident that Rabbit Ings' experience and commitment make them ideally placed to deliver a project of real benefit. We believe this development will help to address local priorities, support wellbeing, and contribute to a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood.

We urge all relevant parties to give this proposal their utmost consideration and support, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our community.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Caroline Makinson

Appendix IV

Community Consultation Report Summary



Royston Rabbit Ings

Community Engagement

5th to 17th February 2026



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Executive Summary

Community engagement was undertaken between 5th February, and 17th March 2026, face-to-face and online, to understand how residents, visitors and local groups use Royston and Rabbit Ings Country Park, what they value about the area, and how proposed improvements - particularly at Rabbit Ings - are perceived.

Face-to-face engagement sessions were held at Royston Library on 3 dates and at varying times to maximise accessibility.

In total, 26 surveys were completed and 2 separate comments submitted in response, the majority from members of the public.

Overall, feedback demonstrates strong pride in Royston, with respondents consistently highlighting a sense of community, access to green spaces, local facilities and Rabbit Ings Country Park as key strengths. Rabbit Ings is clearly viewed as a valued natural asset and a focal point for walking, wellbeing and community activity.

The most consistent and strongly expressed message throughout the engagement relates to the need for improved facilities at Rabbit Ings, particularly:

- A café or refreshment offer
- Accessible public toilets
- Space that supports community, wellbeing and dementia-friendly activities

These themes appear repeatedly across multiple questions, including what would encourage more frequent visits, what facilities are most important, and wider suggestions for change.

Respondents also raised the importance of:

- Maintaining the natural character of Rabbit Ings
- Ensuring safety, cleanliness and accessibility
- Supporting a wider range of users beyond organised sports, including walking groups, families, older residents, schools and mental health groups.

Support for the principle of redevelopment is evident, but a number of respondents expressed concern about scale, location and ecological impact, emphasising the need to balance improved facilities with environmental protection and heritage considerations.

In response to feedback, officers have identified areas that can be taken forward (such as community space hire, future dementia-friendly design considerations, and planned

activities including Parkrun), alongside constraints relating to funding, staffing capacity and site management.

This engagement provides a clear mandate to focus on Rabbit Ings as a destination for everyday community use, with modest but high-impact facilities that enable people to stay longer, visit more often, and use the park in inclusive and sustainable ways.

Findings

About Royston

1. What people value about Royston

Respondents consistently described Royston as a close-knit community with strong local identity. Frequently mentioned positives include:

- Rabbit Ings Country Park and surrounding green spaces, particularly for dog-walking, walking and spending time in nature.
- Access to green space and countryside – valued for wellbeing, recreation and everyday walking.
- Local facilities such as the library, leisure centre, shops and sports facilities which were seen as convenient and well used.
- Community spirit and friendliness with strong local pride.

Overall, the highlighted comments show that Royston is viewed as a **well-connected village with strong community identity**, where Rabbit Ings plays a central role in residents' quality of life and everyday activity.

2. What is important about the local area

Key priorities identified were:

- Safety and cleanliness of streets, parks and walking routes
- Well-maintained public spaces
- Access to local facilities without reliance on cars
- Green space, wildlife and heritage

Respondents highlighted the importance of feeling safe to walk, particularly for families, older residents and those with limited mobility.

3. Desired changes and improvements

While some respondents felt no changes were needed, many highlighted:

- The village centre feeling run down in places
- A need for investment in public realm and local shops
- Traffic, crossings, lighting and public transport connectivity
- Dog fouling, litter and general maintenance issues

Rabbit Ings was frequently referenced as an opportunity for improvement, particularly through better facilities and management.

About Rabbit Ings

4. Rabbit Ings Country Park – key themes

a) Facilities

The overwhelming priority is the provision of:

- A café or refreshment offer
- Accessible public toilets
- Informal community and social space

These were repeatedly cited as the main factors that would encourage people to visit more often and stay longer.

b) Community and wellbeing use

Respondents identified strong potential for:

- Walking and running groups
- Dementia-friendly activities
- Mental health and wellbeing groups
- Schools, scouts, guides and family activities

There was a clear message that facilities should support a broad range of users, not just sports clubs.

c) Environment and character

Many respondents stressed the importance of:

- Protecting wildlife and ecological features
- Ensuring new development is sensitive in scale and location
- Maintaining Rabbit Ings as a natural, peaceful space

Concerns were raised about proximity to designated ecological areas and long-term site management.

Summary

What we asked

We asked residents, visitors and community groups:

- What they value about Royston
- How they use Rabbit Ings Country Park
- What would encourage greater use of the park
- Their views on proposed improvements and facilities.

What you told us

You told us that:

- Royston has a strong sense of community and valued local facilities
- Rabbit Ings is one of the area's most important assets

- A café and public toilets are the single biggest improvements needed
- Facilities should support everyday community use, wellbeing and inclusivity
- The natural environment must be protected and respected.

What we are doing

In response, officers are:

- Continuing to work with Land Trust and partners on café and refreshment options
- Exploring how toilet access could be linked to opening times and staffing
- Confirming community space hire and future activities
- Considering dementia-friendly design as the building progresses
- Supporting planned initiatives such as Parkrun and holiday activities.

What we can't do yet

Some requests cannot currently be guaranteed due to:

- Funding limitations
- Staffing and maintenance capacity
- Risks of vandalism or misuse

However, alternative funding routes and partnerships may be explored where possible.

Overall message

The engagement shows strong support for improving Rabbit Ings as a community destination, with modest, well-designed facilities that help people enjoy the park more often, for longer, and in more inclusive ways.

You said	We heard
You welcome the idea of a new community facility and see it as a positive investment.	We will continue to explore how the proposal can deliver clear community benefit and reflect local needs as plans are developed.
A café or coffee shop is important to the success of the facility.	We will consider options for refreshment provision, including scale, operation and potential community or income-generating models.
Public toilets are essential and should be included as a minimum.	We will consider the inclusion of accessible toilet provision and how this could be delivered and maintained sustainably.
You are concerned about where the money will come from.	We will consider funding sources, affordability and long-term sustainability as part of the project's development and decision-making process.

You said	We heard
This project should not take priority over basic services.	We will take account of these views alongside the council's wider investment priorities and statutory responsibilities.
Parking must not be lost or made more difficult.	The new development will improve existing parking with new surfaces, speed control measures, CCTV and security lighting.
Investment should feel fair across the site and surrounding areas.	We will consider how future investment in the surrounding areas can be addressed for future funding rounds.
You want clarity on what will happen to existing buildings.	The current building will be demolished and the land made good.
You are worried about environmental and land-use impacts.	We will consider environmental impacts and relevant planning and land-use considerations as the project progresses.
Trust in council decision-making is low.	We will continue to communicate openly about the project and how feedback is being considered.

Appendix A: Public Engagement

Methodology:

Face to Face at Royston Library: Thursday 5th February 4pm to 7pm
 Saturday 7th February 9.30am to 12.30pm
 Tuesday 10th February 11am to 2pm

Online: [Exciting plans unveiled for new community facility at Rabbit Ings in Royston](#)

GDPR consent was obtained from all those who completed an engagement survey.

In total there were 26 responses to the survey:

● Local resident	21
● Member of a local group	2
● Working locally	2
● Other (please specify).....	1



About visiting, living or working in Royston

1. What do you like about visiting, living or working in Royston?

The walks around rabbit ings and surrounding canals
I like that the area is receiving support and is improving.
Not much
Close knit community
I live in Barugh Green but enjoy visiting the shops & rabbit ings
Sense of community and links to countryside
A few good places to walk with a dog
Rabbit Ings
Spending time in nature
I live in Royston and walk the dog round Rabbit Ings nature reserve every day.
Good community plenty of shops.
I don't know Royston very well, but I have always had connections to Royston in my childhood through guiding and the stack which was rabbit ings
Rabbit ings
Good connections to surrounding towns and villages by road and paths, grocery stores locally open long hours, a country park
Love visiting Rabbit Ings
Got everything you could need-Library, sport facilities/baths, supermarkets. Easy to commute to other towns & motorway. Green spaces. friendly people
It is my home and I'm proud of it!
The community spirit, shops, library, baths etc plenty of things to do
Rabbit Ings
Working in Royston, the people, fantastic services, excellent library

The community, amazing people, great facilities, we utilise the local library & leisure centre. Next to the countryside, trans Pennine trail, good schools, good community groups

Local sports clubs, Your Space, Library, Rabbit Ings

Library, Lots of parks, football fields, Rabbit Ings, Leisure centre, walks

Friendliness, sense of community, facilities i.e. plenty of shops, leisure centre, library

Living in Royston, I can see the area improving. It has a thriving centre, with some local shops that could do with more support to continue.

Lived in the village for 50 years best facilities- BPL Leisure Centre also Library

2. What is important to you about your area and why?

Community spirit

It is important to me and my family that we feel Royston is safe to roam and inviting to explore.

Facilities

Facilities and public spaces are well maintained

I want to visit a place that has a good standard of roads shops and facilities

Safety and family friendly

Safe to walk and park

The access to countryside, green spaces and wildlife that lives here too

Development of local area

Nice place to live. Lots of shops that serves the Royston community which is really handy on the door step and doesn't involve driving having the use of a vehicle etc. Good walks, natural surroundings (rural location) with some good walks.

Local walks that are safe.

Nature and heritage - remember the past

.

Community safety and clean streets and parks/green spaces - this make walking about (while I still can walk easily) for leisure/fitness/shopping a lot more pleasant and safe

Green Space

As above

Access to facilities and open spaces

Safe environment for grandchildren areas for activities also for grandchildren

Access and activities such as library, baths, rabbit ings

Community, Care for the area & residents, seeing our councillors' hands on and aware of area/Royston, amazing at Royston- Mapplewell please take note

Cleanliness, nice open spaces, parks, being able to walk to places

Community spirit, outdoor space/activities, security for children

Outdoor spaces, cleanliness, bins

As above

The access to local services and shops, the connectivity through public transport to the Town Centre and Wakefield.

Not answered

3. Is there anything new you would like to see or change in Royston?

No x 3

The village feels run down and in need of refresh. Broken window theory tells us that we need to look after what we can to avoid a spiral. Improvements in community events and community spirit would improve many issues.

Outdoor space

Local community groups - dementia friendly spaces

Elevating rabbit ings to include cafe and toilet facilities would bring more visitors to the area

Train station

Can't think of anything other than public toilet

The proposed community facilities at rabbit ings is a really good idea, could also make wildlife hides around the site for people to view wildlife discretely. Cafe is essential. Similar facilities to what is at Anglers park would encourage families to visit.

More investment in village, better shopping facilities

Personally, I feel that a cafe/coffee shop with toilets would be a great asset to Rabbit Ings and surrounding villages. Possibly alfresco dining during the summer months offering outdoor seating would be an advantage. It would not only create revenue for the local community but would help to draw in the public creating a great destination for ramblers, dog walkers' family days with refreshments on offer.

More bins at Rabbit ings

Keep working on the canals and looking after nature. In a busy world we need nice places to walk and explore. Get everyone off their phones.

Wider footpath near bridge on approach to Rabbit Ings, no longer bus services to Athersley, Havercroft, Ryhill

More public toilets, the park, Rabbit Ings (not normally open there): streets and pavements cleaned more often of dog mess, litter, fallen leaves (descending Church Street on right side was fairly hazardous this past few months with matted leaves - until cleared in past few weeks

Cafe Rabbit Ings

Adult gym in the park

Children's youth club

Rabbit Ings improvement

The roundabout and Midland Road I don't feel safe crossing the road with my children

Improved security/lighting round about area at Asda, safe crossings on roads

Dog poo!!! traffic

Improved facilities at Royston Park which I understand are underway

A regular market would be great, maybe a specialist one monthly? Increased public transport connectivity to surrounding villages (Cudworth, Mapplewell etc..)

Get rid of the "no go" area that is Milgate Street. Too many closed shops now

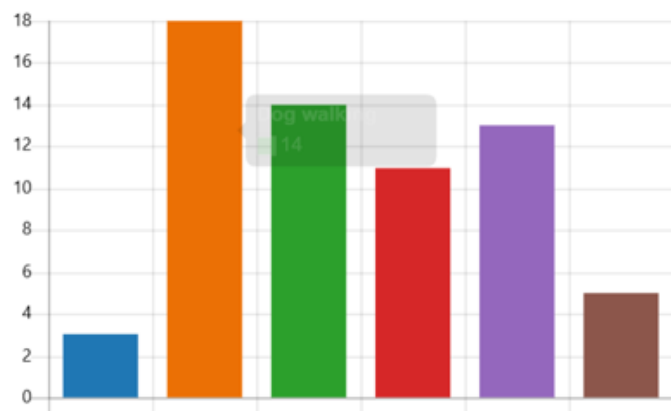
About Rabbit Ings

4. How often do you visit Rabbit Ings Country Park?

Daily	1
Weekly	10
Fortnightly	4
Monthly	9
Never	2



To play/watch football	3
Exercise	18
Dog walking	14
Meeting friends or family	11
Mental wellbeing	13
Other	5



5. What are your main reasons for visiting Rabbit Ings Country Park?

6. What would make you visit Rabbit Ings Country Park more often?

16 respondents (62%) answered cafe for this question.



A café, accessible toilets

A cafe and bicycle services. The cafe having public use toilets is essential for us.

Cafe, community space

If there were improved facilities that were accessible to the whole community and local support groups i.e., exercise, wellbeing groups, cafe, dementia friendly spaces

If there was a cafe with toilet facilities and additional dog poo bins

More facilities e.g. cafe, toilets, play area for kids

If there were toilets. A cafe or hot drinks place to sit and chat with friends or others in the community

Cafe

Cafe and toilet facilities

Been able to take my mum there for a spot of lunch and walk the dog at the same time.

Cafe, toilets.

Cafe, play area and open toilets. More activities for kids. Trails and events!

A coffee shop/cafe somewhere to get a drink before or after a walk

Accessible toilets for all kept clean. Also, from the end of Church Hill Road there is a footpath access at the South Western corner of the Playing fields area - via a tunnel, but the tunnel is an awful mess of human and animal excrement and litter etc. If this was kept clean, some signing into the park via the wooded existing paths, and, kept clean/looked after - this would be a valuable walking/jogging/running route into and out of the Country Park. A useful volunteer ongoing project?

Cafe

Public toilets refreshments

If you're going to build something new why not include a cafe like Anglers country park

Food area

McDonald's

More facilities for my dog e.g. outside tap for washing like Pugneys at Wakefield

A parkrun, a cafe, more children events in school holidays

Area for children to play, cafe, activities for children

Has been a while since we went but intend to visit soon

A cafe space, nothing big but somewhere to buy a drink and something small to eat. This could even be as a serving window with just outdoor seating.

Better facilities such as car parking, improved toilets. Changing facilities for sports teams

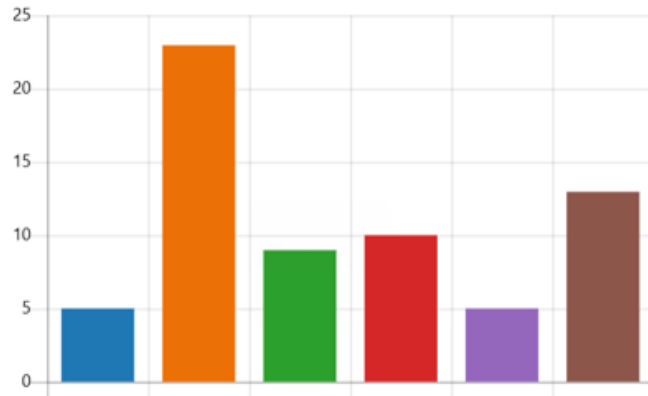
7. What aspects of the facilities at Rabbit Ings are most important to you?

Facilities for grass roots football	3
Education facilities for schools	7
School holiday activities/famil...	12
Events	18
Volunteering opportunities	2



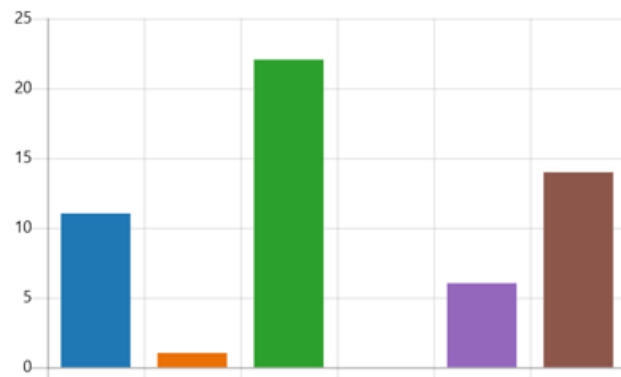
8. What facilities from the list below are important to you?

New changing facilities	5
New community facilities	23
Improved parking	9
New seating	10
New signage	5
Better lighting	13



9. What are your thoughts on the current facilities

The sports facilities are poor a...	11
The sports facilities are fine as...	1
The community facilities are p...	22
The community facilities are fi...	0
Parking facilities are poor and ...	6
Parking facilities are fine as th...	14



10. If you don't currently use the facilities at Rabbit Ings, please tell us why?

I have no reason to use them ...	1
The facilities I need are not av...	4
I wasn't aware the facilities wa...	7
I am unable to get to the site	0
Other	14



N.B other are N/a

11. Would improving the facilities at Rabbit Ings encourage you and your friends/family to visit?

● Yes	24
● No	0
● Other	2



12. Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

6 respondents (23%) answered cafe for this question.



No x 8

A cafe with public use toilets that are maintained would make the world of difference. It currently limits our desire to use Rabbit Ings and is a huge factor in choosing out of area places to visit.

Community kitchen & garden space

We would be happy to discuss any dementia friendly spaces or provide support and information at barnsley@alzheimers.org.uk

If there was a cafe with toilet facilities and additional dog poo bins

The site would definitely benefit from having at least 1 public toilet. When you have been for a walk or picnic children and elderly need the toilet.

Maybe something for young children

Better lighting, bins, café.

Make sure the indoor space is big enough. Maybe have lots of glass so brings nature in. A cafe would be very well used by visitors and make the place more walk group friendly. Get Jolly Good Communities to bring back events there. The open-air cinema was brilliant.

I suggest a coffee shop

Yes, toilets that are open to public at Rabbit Ings, and kept clean (probably mess and misuse is a reason for keeping them shut).

Yes, a cafe is needed for people walking, cycling in the Royston area

It is a beautiful natural space, lets encourage more people to take an interest in nature & educate themselves about their local community and natural environment, a cafe would help families stay longer and discover more

Outdoor cinema event was good

Looks amazing!

More poo bins

The parking at the site is fine, as a family we make no use of the sports facilities as no one plays football in the family. To visit more it would be somewhere to get a drink, something to eat and a toilet. This would attract visitors and increase revenue for the charity running it which would then be able to continue to invest.

13. Do you have suggestions of groups that could use the facilities?

No x 3

BLOGS on fb

It shouldn't be only sports facilities. That would be a huge, missed opportunity.

Mental health groups

I am a community dementia adviser with Alzheimers Society. It would be good to have dementia friendly groups that were suitable for people with dementia or young onset dementia

Walking groups / U3A

Kids sports groups, scouts

Walking groups, wellness and mental health improvement groups.

The public

Highlight how to book to use facilities

Ramblers pit stop!

Woman, men's groups

Jolly Good Communities will support volunteers to deliver events

Other local sports clubs other than footballers for training use, a Parkrun (could get very popular and would need careful risk assessing

Schools, scouts, walking groups

Parkrun

McDonalds

Running club, cafe area

Walking groups, running groups, schools, children, crafts

Local running groups, schools, scouts, guides

Parkside Primary

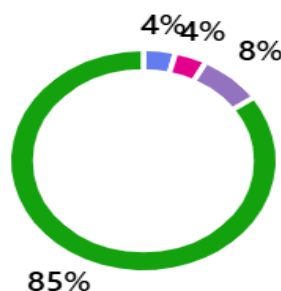
Home educators- Would be great to be able to use the new classroom

Check the Royston Group on Facebook it's vibrant, up to date, proactive

14. Overall are you supportive of the redevelopment proposals?

(Select from 1 – not supportive to 5 – very supportive)

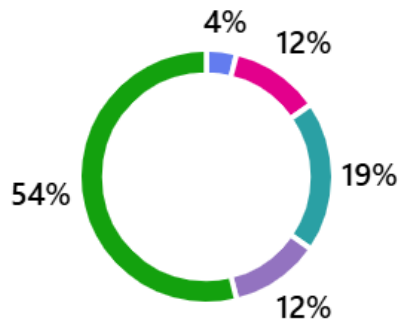
● 1	1
● 2	1
● 3	0
● 4	2
● 5	22



15. How supportive are you of the proposed design and layout?

(Select from 1 – not supportive to 5 – very supportive)

● 1	1
● 2	3
● 3	5
● 4	3
● 5	14



16. Additional comments from attendees not completing survey

Principal Towns was first aims were to improve the local economies around the borough and help High Streets thrive. The first proposal I was involved in was for industrial units on the old Royston Drift mine yard. Always allocated as an employment area and designated Urban Fabric within the local plan. This must be 9 or even 10 years ago, thwarted by planners who don't know Royston or the history of the site. The latest proposal is again being driven by planners building up expectations that will not meet the aspirations of the wider community.

From the comments already posted the community are requesting, a Cafe, Public Toilets, a Community Facility/Asset. They want Rabbit Ings to be a Destination Walk. As the popularity of Rabbit Ings and Monckton Playing Fields increase there will be a need for better facilities, I do not believe the proposed facilities offer that.

As for its location you will be asking sports people to cross the main vehicle entrance into the site.

There are 2 Senior Football pitches on site as well as Junior, the facilities proposed will not serve these. Apologies but as you can see, I am rather passionate about the site having been involved with it since 1995.

The building is too big and too close to SSSI. It impacts on owls hunting flight paths on the bank. Additionally, there are Great Crested Newts in the ditches along the back and far right of the proposed building.

Money would be better spent maintaining the outdoor classroom which is completely over grown.

Needs a sluice gate on the lake.

Council should take over running the site and employ Rangers as current ones only on site few hours per week.

Land Trust have stopped events such as the outdoor cinema taking place on the site.

Appendix B: Social Media Engagement

Summary

Overview

Feedback gathered from social media responses to the proposed multi-purpose community facility shows strong public interest and high engagement. Overall sentiment is mixed but generally positive, with many residents welcoming the investment and recognising potential benefits for the community. However, this support is accompanied by concerns about funding, priorities, and wider confidence in council decision-making.

What people support

A community facility in principle with many describing the proposal as “great”, “fantastic” or “long overdue”. There is a clear sense that a new facility could become something the community is proud of and bring more people into the area.

The most consistent positive request is for a café or refreshment offer. Residents see this as:

- A social hub for walkers, families, football teams and volunteers
 - A practical support for events and everyday park use
 - A way to generate income for community groups or the facility itself
- Several comments link a café to wider economic benefits for surrounding villages.

Accessible public toilets are repeatedly described as essential. This is often framed as a minimum expectation, particularly for:

- Walkers and park users
- Sunday football and events
- Families, older residents and people with health needs

Toilets are frequently mentioned alongside the café as core infrastructure.

Key concerns raised

A dominant concern is where the money will come from. Comments question:

- Whether the council can afford the capital cost
- How ongoing running and maintenance costs will be met
- How the project sits alongside the council’s wider financial position

Design, location and impact Specific practical concerns include:

- Loss of parking or whether parking will remain free
 - Car park layout and bay sizes
 - Perceived uneven investment between different entrances or areas
 - Uncertainty about what will happen to existing buildings
- A small number of comments raise environmental or land-use objections

B1: Barnsley Council 3 February 2026 @ 16:45

[Barnsley Council has unveiled plans for... - Barnsley Council | Facebook](#)

Reactions:

Likes	Loves	Cares	Dislikes	Shares
289	45	2	0	22

125 comments

- Hope it has a kitchen so community group's could provide takeaway drinks hot and cold (@ a reasonable cost) to walkers and those out litter picking on rabbit inns. Would be a fabulous asset, as well as raising funds for the groups and or centre as a whole. Cheers
- Would be nice if it could have cafe/coffee shop on site with seating area maybe alfresco dining in the summer months.
- This would create revenue for surrounding villages and barnsley community
- A cafe would be a massive bonus and could house toilets too.
- Nice to see that the Royston ward and landtrust have finally stopped butting heads and do what we at SAFG United suggested over 5 years ago! Create a facility for the community to be proud of and bring more people to the area! Pleased, but annoying when we pushed and pushed for this for years and the Land Trust resisted! Will be up to see it when it's open - great decision by all and defo a well done to John Hopenshaw for his desire to see it as well! Maybe now the Monk Cup could finally return to where it once ran from?
- This should be built on the old coke plant site and rabbit inns extended onto that side of the road rather than the constant threat of yet more houses Royston doesn't need.
- Can it have public toilets please
- Little cafe for warm drinks would be great
- Concrete city!
- Toilets for when we are to attend Sunday football would be a bonus
- More moving the Rockingham Memorial Wheel??
- Wonder how much this will actually cost????!! 🤔
- Other political parties can spend money when they have a majority or at least a casting vote at cabinet.
- It's as if they believe that every decision THEY make showcases them as being something special.
- Toilets and cafe would be a bonus.
- What about all pot holes in Barnsley like
- This was proposed 5 years ago?
- And toilets, please 🙏
- XX, we all need to do another walk round here when it's lighter anorl
- Where's the money coming from to fund this 🤔
- Pot holes? 🤔 Nah.. silly suggestion
- Will the car park remain free ?
- Fantastic 🍀🍀
- XX scouts group maybe?
- Is this similar to what's planned for Carlton Park [Barnsley Council](#) ??
- isnt rabbit rings actually in Wakefield

- the mine and coking plant definitely were
- It does indeed.
- Is parkrun starting now then?
- Sounds good.
- How about repairing roads first
- Sounds great especially if a little cafe gets up and running x
- A bit of investment into swimming pool at Royston would not go a miss. Elections are getting closer nice try.
- Tell this to the Huddersfield council
- Sort the roads out be a good idea
- MO might be a good venue 👍
- All new car park bays should be made wider for modern day cars.
- PA are scouts still looking
- Be great if we could have a playground up there too. Encourage more families like anglers and pugneys x
- I hope to god your not taking more parking away i don't think I could cope with the comments 😞😞😞
- Just 4 Got Thurnscoe were is it
- When are sorting all the roads out with massive holes in them 🤪
- New road Staincross pot hole capital!!!
- What happens to the existing building.



-
- yep get a contractor from Birmingham to do it then local firms to put it right .plonkets
- Looks great 👍 Shame entrance from Shafton end looks like a dump & no money spent on it .It should have same amazing entrance as Royston entrance
- Will people have to pay to use this like the one they have built at Hoyland Common? We already had Rockingham but the council want to build on this.
- Principal towns <https://share.google/QcV3tqGkSfNy96Jmk>
- Sooner have a train station, Jarvis said we were having one 10 yr ago.
- Bigfoot on Rabbit Ings this morning, will this future work disturb the Bigfoot family ?
- We're now at the point where the council can "unveil" all the plans it wants because, after May, the curent regime is unlikely to be around to put those plans in motion. It's no different to "not a penny on council tax". Not a penny indeed, my CT has gone up £300. The town needs it's pot holes filled and new and improved community housing before it needs facilities such as this which not only cost money to build but also have ongoing running costs which the council can ill afford. Our town is over £500,000,000 (that's over half a billion) in debt, remember that.
- Wow if only Barnsley main, Dearne Valley park area had facilities like toilets
- Where's the money coming from?

- I,ll give it a week before the local morons burn it to the ground
- When do u think u might want to do something for the disable venable people who needs day centres etc. to go to
- Great facility 👍
- Here we go again more dept for Barnsley get the Town put right like it used to be it's a disgrace, all that money spent on that bridge in town, its appalling last week the steps were covered in dirty tarmac running down it looked a disgrace lifts always breaking I think someone should be held responsible for the towns wastage of Barnsley people's money???
- Good for Royston...It's shame to the Council though that they will NOT do anything for the Shafton Green area. We end up with nothing, again! Cannot even get the Green repaired that some a*****es damaged???
- **Barnsley Council** are just beyond a joke after reading and seeing what they have been doing over the years and not much or very little has been done you suggest things but yet its in one ear out the other then you have local MP that visits your street or your town to hear what residents say still nothing get rid of the lot and run your village how your can do what's best for your town again Barnsley council are a laughable joke

B2: Barnsley Council North East Area Team

[Barnsley Council... - Barnsley Council North East Area Team | Facebook](#)

Likes	Loves	Cares	Dislikes	Shares
32	7	0	1	11

8 comments

- A cafe/coffee shop would beneficial and a great asset to the local villages to create not only socialisation but will bring in revenue to the local surrounding villages and the Barnsley community.
- Excellent, though a café would be a nice addition 👍
- A little cafe/coffee shop would be great
- I think this is a great idea! More investments like this please
- Think this will be brilliant for the Royston area
- Great news

B3: Barnsley Council Instagram

Likes	Reposts	Comments
37	5	1

1 comment

- It's nice when the Council invest in things that make a difference

Appendix C: Local Press

C1: Barnsley Chronicle 06/02/2026

[Major investment plan for country park | Barnsley Chronicle](#)



Image: Local ward Councillors

Coun Robin Franklin, cabinet spokesperson for regeneration and culture, said: “Rabbit Ings is a beautiful, well-loved spot and an important asset for Royston.

“This proposal represents a major investment that will give local people access to better facilities, support our grassroots sports teams, and create new opportunities for learning, health and community activity.

C2: [wearebarnsley 04/02/2026](#)

[Have your say on major investment plans for country park | We Are Barnsley](#)

Appendix V

Example Feedback Form

Rabbit Ings Country Park

Community Engagement



Barnsley – the place
of possibilities.



BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

We're developing plans as part of our Principal Towns and Local Centres Programme. The Principal Towns and Local Centres Programme is all about supporting our high streets and town centres to flourish which includes development of open and welcoming public and green spaces and development of amenities and facilities for community use.

Site – Rabbit Ings Country Park

Insert images/Description

Your feedback will help us understand local perspectives, including how these changes may impact your daily lives and what matters most to you as a community.

1. Your information and privacy

Your personal information is just that – personal. We promise to treat it with the highest standards of security and confidentiality at all times and in compliance with relevant legislation.

Read Barnsley Council's privacy notice on our website at barnsley.gov.uk/services/information-and-privacy/your-privacy.

- I consent to the council processing my personal data for the purposes detailed above

About you

2. Which of the following best describes you

- Local Resident
- Member of a Local Group
- Working Locally
- Other (please specify).....

Quality of Place (Royston)

3. What do you like about visiting, living or working in Royston?

4. What is important to you about your area and why?

5. Is there anything new you would like to see or change in Royston?

Thinking of Rabbit Ings specifically

6. How often do you visit Rabbit Ings Country Park?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Never

7. What are your main reasons for visiting Rabbit Ings Country Park? (Select all that apply)

- Exercise
- Dog Walking
- Meeting friends or family
- Mental wellbeing

8. What would make you visit Rabbit Ings Country Park more often?

9. What aspects of the Facilities at Rabbit Ings Country Park are most important to you?

- Facilities for grass roots football
- Education facilities for schools
- School Holiday activities/Family days
- Events
- Volunteering opportunities

10. Do you have any comments on how the plans could better support the community's needs?

**11. Overall are you supportive of the redevelopment proposals?
(Select from 1 - not supportive to 5 - very supportive)**

1 2 3 4 5

**12. How supportive are you of the proposed design and layout?
(Select from 1 - not supportive to 5 - very supportive)**

1 2 3 4 5

13. Do you have suggestions of groups that could make use of the facilities?

14. Would you like to share any further comments or thoughts?

Enquiries

Ed Harvey

Ed.Harvey@avisonyoung.com

Rachel Jones

Rachel.Jones@avisonyoung.com

Kate Wilson

kate.wilson@avisonyoung.com

Visit us online

avisonyoung.com