

ADDRESS TO HARDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Thank you again for the opportunity to present to you this evening.

To confirm, I have been appointed by West Northamptonshire Council to assist in the co-ordination and the submission of the planning application for the proposed mountain bike park.

As you will be aware this site was previously used as a nine hole golf course as part of the Delapre Golf Centre but has not been in active use for approximately six years.

In planning terms, both the existing and proposed use of the land fall within the definition of outdoor sport and recreation and therefore there is no material change of use of the land involved in this proposal.

To confirm, the bike park will aim to provide a number of trails for mountain bikers of all ages and abilities at this location together with a skills area and the associated collection areas (5 in total). The Council are working with a Bike Park Designer who has developed other bike parks in the country.

The trails location have been dictated by the site parameters and existing contours on the site. The aim has been to minimise disruption to existing features. The multi user trail will be a minimum of 3m wide throughout in order to allow for riders to safely pass one another. The multi user trail will be accessible for all including disabled users and will enable riders to include a visit to the park as part of a wider route using existing cycle paths.

The remaining trails will extend 1.5m in width. The works required would retain the openness of the area and would not result in any significant harmful impact on the character of the site.

The park will be operated by Northamptonshire Sport and supported by a group of volunteers led by Tony. They are keen to work with the local community in the development of the scheme.

In addition, to the mountain bike trails, it is proposed that informal mowed paths will be provided to allow for permissive pedestrian access within the site. Clearly, those walking within the area will need to adhere to a number of measures including dogs on leads and no straying from the informal paths to avoid any conflict with the users of the bike park but also to minimise ecological effects.

In respect of the existing rights of way (KN4 and KN5), these will kept open including when works commence on the site and when the bike park is running. The trails will be designed to slow down cyclists and appropriate warning signs will be sited for both cyclists and users of the rights of way to ensure no conflict between the users.

To confirm, the trails will not be lit or require the installation of any tannoy or loudspeaker system.

Given the site's attributes of being well connected to existing cycle routes to both the town centre and the residential areas of Northampton, it will provide a destination along the existing national and local cycling network.

For those arriving to the bike park by car, they will have the opportunity to pre-book a car parking space via an online booking system at the Delapre Golf Course. It is proposed that, a total of 40 spaces will be available for Mondays to Fridays and a total of 60 spaces for weekend use. As part of our assessment, a car parking survey has been undertaken which confirms the availability of spaces to meet the required use. The booking system will be managed by Northamptonshire Sport.

The users of the proposed bike facility will have the opportunity to use the golf club existing facilities including the toilets and restaurant.

As Tony earlier has pointed out, this proposal presents an opportunity to provide a high quality facility for the future. We are all aware of the benefits to encourage greater participation in physical activity and this facility would make a positive contribution in this regard not only those who interested in off road cycling but creating a facility inclusive for all users and those wishing to take benefit of the informal walks around the site. The proposed bike park would provide therefore greater opportunities for outdoor recreation, contributing positively to the health and wellbeing needs of the local community.

As part of this proposal, the site will be the subject of a Habitat Management Plan which will cover a period of no less than 30 years to address and facilitate works to ensure that the biodiversity value of the site is maintained post development. The Plan will be resolved working closely with the County Ecologist and other relevant agencies and groups providing long term measures to safeguard the ecological features of this site.

In addition, the proposed works will be carried out in compliance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan together with Construction Ecological Management Plan to ensure that effects on the environment are both minimised and mitigated during the construction phase.

The project team is diverse covering a range of disciplines and technical areas to support the forthcoming planning application, including ecology, trees, transport and flood risk. Furthermore, we have undertaken pre-application engagement with the following bodies, the local Neighbourhood Police team, the Rights of Way Officer, Environmental Health, Planning and Highways to detail the proposals and to respond to points raised. This will all inform the planning application submission which will comprise a suite of technical reports which you will of course have the opportunity to review as part of the formal consultation process.