



## **Five Acres Briefing - November 2023 Update**

### **A sustainable regeneration opportunity**

Since taking control of the Five Acres site in early 2022, Forest of Dean District Council has been working with residents, businesses and partners to ensure that the project is built on time and in a sustainable manner. This has included demolition experts Armac, architects AHR, project and cost consultants Pick Everard and leading construction and property developer BAM.

The demolition of the site by Armac Demolition Group, including the removal of asbestos, was completed in October 2022. Using workers in the area, local contractors and equipment hire, Armac Group have spent over £170,000 of their Levelling Up funded contract in the Forest of Dean economy. This is a great example of the Council's Procurement & Contract Management Strategy (April 2023) in action, as the Council works to maximise the 'social value' achieved from every £1 spent.

After holding several engagement events with the local community, there have been amendments to the initial design, including re-orienting the proposed sports hall building on the site to improve access and movement through the buildings and to future proof for further development. Amends have also seen the relocation of the Cycle Hub building and Children's Active Play/Soft landscaping area in front of the Community Sports Hub to improve visibility and security for users, with cycle hoops also now included underneath the Hub's canopy at the front of the building.

The redevelopment of the Five Acres site forms part of the wider Levelling Up the Forest regeneration programme. The Council along with partners Hartpury University & College and Cinderford Town Council continue to work together to report progress to the Government. Government funding has also covered the cost of design and installation of 4 banner signs that are currently on display on the site boundary.

The Forest of Dean Levelling Up project is featured as one of the national Levelling Up case study projects. More detail on this can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/20-million-investment-for-sports-and-leisure-in-forest-of-dean>

## **Project programme**

The project at Five Acres will be completed in phases, with the initial phase focusing on dryside sport and leisure facilities through the re-purposing of the Speedwell building, constructing a new multi-purpose four court sports hall/performance space, party rooms/dressing rooms and separate changing rooms.

Installation of the new 3G pitch, designed to support both rugby and football use will be developed in phase 2 of the redevelopment. The site masterplan will also include space for new tennis courts and a hotel subject to future funding availability.

With the planning application for phase 1 submitted (more information below) the Council will now be working with partners and members of the Development Management Committee, with construction due to begin on site in the first quarter of 2024, with phase 1 of the work due to be completed in 2025.

Future construction work at Five Acres will be subject to funding availability and planning approval. Planning applications for each build phase will be submitted separately and announced in due course via the Council's news page and social media channels.

## **Planning Application**

In October 2023, the design team submitted a planning application (ref: P1435/23/FUL) in relation to the Five Acres redevelopment, including the refurbishment of Speedwell building into community facilities, plus the addition of a new build sports hall and atrium to create a leisure use that is flexible for a community hub and leisure centre. External works, including a new sports pavilion, cycle hub to securely park bicycles and e-bikes, soft landscaping and car parking. The car parking area will include space for disabled driver spaces and electric vehicle charging points. Further information on vehicle and cycle parking can be found in the External Plans and Layout section below.

Sustainability has been a key priority throughout the design process and as part of this, the team have been working to enable the whole site to be Net Zero in operation. The Council is working with the Design team and partners to decarbonise the site by stripping out the old gas boiler in the Speedwell building, replacing this with an electric heating/cooling system. This will be powered by on-site renewable energy generation from a solar photovoltaic array on the sports hall & atrium roofs, air source heat pumps will be installed to serve the existing & new buildings, and timber cladding will be added to the buildings to prevent heat from escaping in winter and to help keep them cool in summer.

Details of the planning application, as well as an invitation for residents and businesses to view and comment upon the plans was issued as a press release by the Council's Communications Team on 2nd November 2023 and on the Forest of Dean District Council's social media channels on the same day.

Link to Planning Application details on the Council's Planning Portal:

<https://publicaccess.fdean.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=S34Z2QHIG3T00>

## External plans and layout for Five Acres

The designs for the external facilities at Five Acres have been amended so that the Cycle Hub and Children’s Soft Play area are more visible to both users and spectators and is now positioned in front of the Community Sports Hub.

Further surveys and ground investigation work found a mine shaft and tree root protection zones to the northeastern boundary of the playing fields. As a result, the 3G pitch and pavilion have been moved to accommodate the 20-metre mine shaft exclusion zone that is needed to surround it. Due to a bat population the 3G pitch floodlights have been designed to minimise impact on bats and other wildlife in the area.

The 3G pitch is designed to support both rugby and football use. It has therefore been moved closer to the main building, with the proposed tennis courts now at the rear of the 3G pitch. The 3G pitch will be the subject of a separate planning application and construction phase which will be led by the Football Foundation.

External design plans can be seen below and at the planning portal link above.



Vehicle parking at Five Acres will cater for both traditional vehicles and electric vehicles, as well as both cycle and e-bike parking. The table below outlines the parking spaces and their location on site:

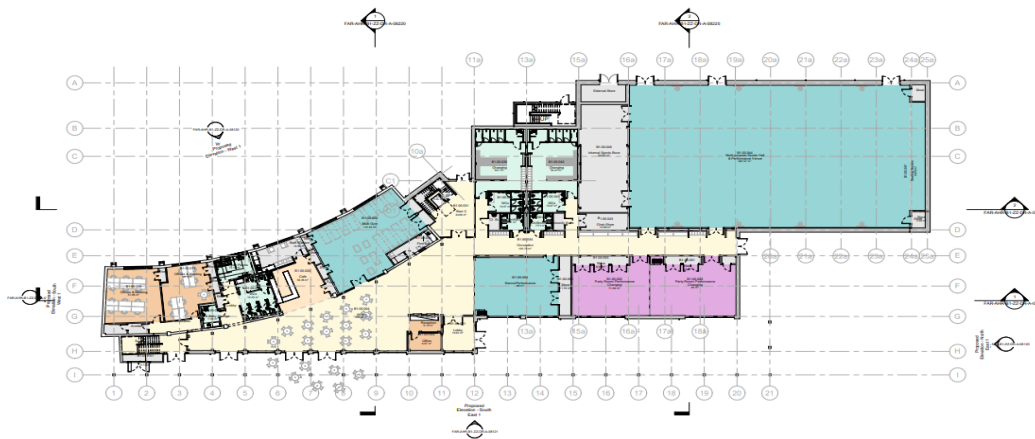
Location at Five Acres	Vehicle Type	Number of Spaces
Cycle Hub at School Section	Bicycle	32
	E-Bike	4
Cycle Hub at the new Leisure Centre	Bicycle	72
	E-Bike	12
Speedwell Building Car Parking	Car	26
	Disabled Car Parking	3
Five Acres Main Car Park	Car	150
	Disabled Car Parking	10 (with future infrastructure for 10 more)
	Electric Vehicle Charging Points	12 standard and 1 accessible point (with future infrastructure for 1 more)

### Building and internal design plans at Five Acres

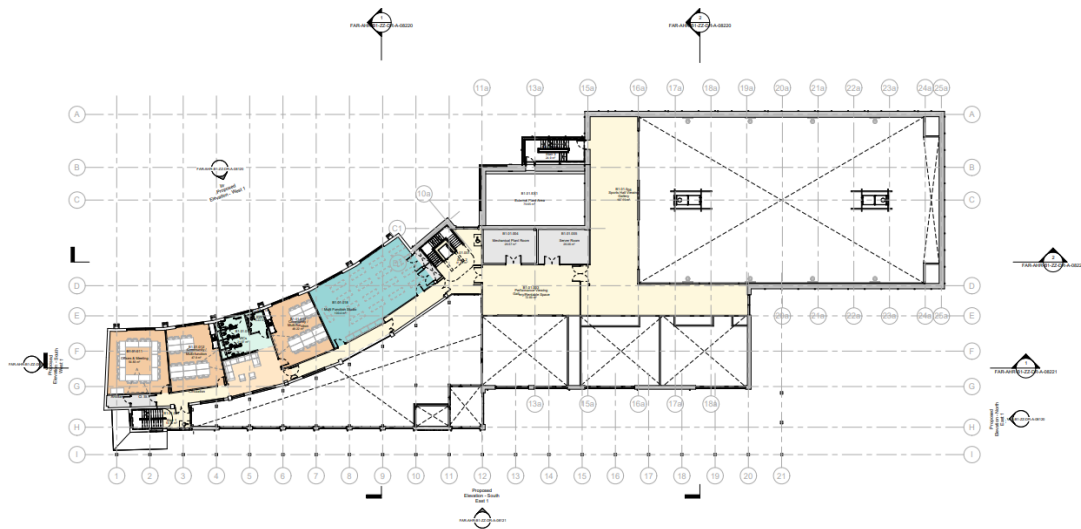
Design plans for the new Community Sports Hub are now available on the Council's Planning Portal.

Plans for the ground floor, level 1 and level 2 are available to view and detail sizing of the rooms, as well as space that has been marked for Hartpury University and College.

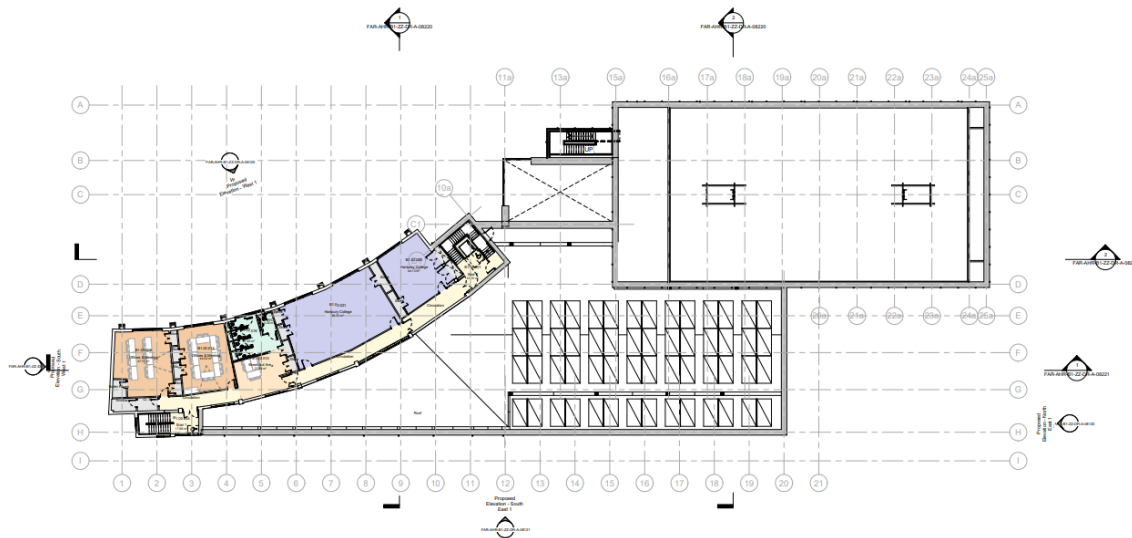
Ground Floor:



## Level 1:



## Level 2:



Forest of Dean District Council is looking for interested parties to occupy part of the new Community Sports Hub on the Five Acres site at Berry Hill which will be in phase I of the redevelopment.

As part of the acquisition of this site from Homes England, the Council is required to use the site for cultural, community, education, recreational and sporting uses and therefore we are looking for expressions of interest from these sectors, as well as a café operator for the ground floor.

For more information on rental opportunities, click here: <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/commercial-property-and-assets/>

### **Meet the contractor event**

Having been announced as the construction contractor in August 2023, BAM have outlined their commitment to working with local suppliers and contractors by holding a “Meet the Contractor event” that took place at Berry Hill Rugby Club on 25th October 2023.

The event was a great success with 26 local businesses and over 40 people attending and expressing their interest in helping with the development. BAM will now work with those local businesses and the Council to find preferred contractors to assist with the redevelopment at Five Acres.

BAM has been building in the UK since 1874, designing, building and maintaining sustainable buildings that enhance local communities. BAM is committed to adding social value and will work with local suppliers wherever possible, helping to bring a range of benefits to the Forest of Dean: local knowledge, local people, support for the local economy and a smaller carbon footprint.

More information on BAM’s appointment as the main contractor for the build: <https://news.fdean.gov.uk/news/progress-at-five-acres-continues-with-design-and-build-contractor-in-place>

### **Funding opportunities for sports and arts clubs**

Community Forum members who are part of a sports or arts club may be interested in finding out more about applying for grants and funding through various sources to help support their projects.

Applications for funding can be based on several different criteria and the latest opportunities will be updated on the Forest of Dean District Council website.

Further information on grants and where to apply can be found on the Forest of Dean District Council website: <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/communities-health-and-leisure/community-grants-and-funding/>

### **Community engagement events**

Forest of Dean District Council is committed to working with residents, businesses and organisations to deliver the new leisure, enterprise and education facility at Five Acres and have held several in-person engagement events and online question and answer sessions to gather the thoughts of Forest residents on the plans for the site.

The involvement of the local community is a key aspect of this project and the Council will be holding further engagement events in the near future, where residents will have the opportunity to meet members of the project team, including designers, construction contractor and the Regeneration team at Forest of Dean District Council and discuss the plans and progress made so far.

Further information as to these events, including dates and location will be made available on the Council's news page on the website and across the Forest of Dean District Council social media channels.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FODDC/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FoDDC>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/forestofdeandc/>

LinkedIn: <https://uk.linkedin.com/company/forest-of-dean-district-council>