EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
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19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

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Cycle hub in Dorking development

13 September 2023



A football academy, a 130-place children’s nursery, and a cycling hub, have all been approved in Dorking as the Pixham Lane masterplan steps up a gear.

The site had been seen as an opportunity for a new Dorking Wanderers FC stadium but that was kicked into the long grass when it became clear the club’s future was at Meadowbank.

Now, developers Stonegate Homes have been granted planning permission by Mole Valley councillors for three new community buildings as part of a grander vision for the site that could also feature a senior living home for about 200 people and 300 new homes.

The largest of the buildings approved last week is a 414 square metre nursery, which will be built over two floors, and have space for up to 130 children across four classrooms.

A new youth academy will be used by Dorking Wanderers Football Club and features classrooms for up to 40 students at any time.

The final building will become a cycling hub after the plans sailed through the Wednesday, September 6 meeting with only minor objections from councillors.

The council said it expected the hub to be a hit with cyclists as “a place to meet and relax, as well as a place to repair and purchase cycling equipment and accessories”.

Speaking at the meeting was Councillor **Simon Budd** who questioned the need for a nursery after two had closed within the past year, suggesting a lack of demand and that “we would be much better building and SEN school rather than a nursery school”.

The site is surrounded by Dorking railway station as well as a train line running north to London and south to Horsham.

The application site (measuring 0.68ha) lies to the south of Pixham Lane, just east of the A24 and north of Dorking; within the Built up Area. The site, which lies at the south-western corner of the overall ‘AVIVA site’, comprises car parking which served the former office use. The ground level is generally flat. The site is bounded to the south west by Dorking Railway Station and rail line running north to London and south to Horsham and beyond. To the south east is a public footpath whilst to the north is the remaining part of the Aviva campus. The site itself is in the Built-up Area; adjoining to the east is land designated Metropolitan Green Belt. It is broadly level throughout. Access to the site can be obtained from the eastern end of Lincoln Road.

Cllr **Rosemary Hobbs** said: “If anyone has visited this site and walked in from Lincoln Road, they’ll know this is a particularly unpleasant looking, very messy looking, area of Dorking. It will greatly enhance the appearance of that part of the town and I think it is a good use of the land. The nursery will presumably get some business from the number of residents in the properties on the site.”

Cllr **Chris Hunt** said: “The cycling hub, who can speak against that as a principle?”

The football academy, he said was also for sports, and a nursery would be used by new families moving into the area. He added – given the use of the site “I think its a good proposal”.

Mole Valley Borough Council is currently preparing its new long-term planning bible, the Local Plan, which sets out the types and levels of permitted development in the area.

The council said it has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and is currently under examination by an Inspector. The draft earmarks the site for 276 dwellings and at least three Gypsy and traveller pitches.

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