

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

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Planning Application 2015/326/FUL

Creation of a new external 3G Artificial Grass Pitch; perimeter ball-stop fencing; Installation of hard standing areas around the AGP for pedestrians, maintenance and emergency access; Provision of outdoor storage for maintenance equipment; Refurbishment of existing floodlights.

Valley Stadium, Bromsgrove Road, Batchley, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 4RN,

**Applicant: Mr Chris Swan
Expiry Date: 1st January 2016
Ward: CENTRAL**

(see additional papers for Site Plan)

The author of this report is Steven Edden, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 548474 Email: steve.edden@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The Valley Stadium is the home of Redditch Utd FC and is situated at the end of Holmwood Drive, which itself is accessed via Bromsgrove Road to the south. The site is currently occupied by a grass football pitch with associated concrete terraces along the north-east and south-eastern sides of the pitch. A grandstand is present to the north west of the site with associated changing rooms, club house and office space present along the north-western boundary behind the stand. To the north of the site lies Birchensale Middle School; to the west Terry's playing field; to the south allotments and to the east, further allotments and the residential development of Cedar Road.

Proposal Description

The application proposes the following works:

New Artificial Grass Pitch

It is proposed to replace (in its entirety) the existing grass football pitch at the Valley Stadium with a Third Generation (3G) Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP). The applicant states that this would provide increased usage in comparison to the existing grassed pitch for the benefit of Redditch Utd FC and the wider community. The extended use is possible because the proposed AGP is more durable in comparison to natural turf, especially during winter weather conditions. The proposed AGP also avoids close season maintenance works. In accordance with the Football Associations (FA) current technical guidance, the intention is to introduce multiple pitch markings to gain the maximum football developmental outcomes and economic benefit from the site footprint.

Perimeter Ball-Stop fencing

The type and quality of the fencing would be consistent with current FA technical guidance for fencing to enclosed AGP's. The fencing would be steel open mesh with a

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polyester powder coated finish in colour RAL6005 (Dark Green). The fencing would be 4.5 metres in height.

Hard Standing Areas

These would be located immediately beyond the AGP playing surface in grey / black porous asphalt.

Maintenance equipment and outdoor storage

A small steel storage container finished in a dark green colour would be located immediately beyond the north-east corner of the pitch. Two mobile classroom type buildings would be located to the immediate north of the existing club house which is located to the western side of the pitch.

Refurbishment of existing floodlights

The ground currently accommodates 8no. 15 metre high floodlighting columns (4 to the western pitch boundary and 4 to the eastern pitch boundary. These would remain insitu and no additional columns are proposed under this application. The floodlight ' housings' and lightbulbs themselves would be replaced. Your officers are informed that the columns currently accommodate 20 lights in total. Due to recent advancements in lighting technology, only 16 lights are now required (2 for each column) rather than the 20 which are currently in place. Extensive Technical details with respect to the floodlighting scheme have been submitted as part of this application.

Relevant Policies :

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

R1 Primarily Open Space
BBE13 Qualities of Good Design

Emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space
Policy: 39 Built Environment
Policy: 40 High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance
SPD Open Space Provision

Relevant Planning History

1998/333/FUL Replacement Of Existing Floodlights

Granted
05.10.1998

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Consultations

Highway Network Control

No objection

North Worcestershire Water Management

No objection

Area Environmental Health Officer

No Comments Received To Date

Sport England

No objection

Sports and Leisure Services Manager

I can confirm that we have been in discussions with the Club and FA around this scheme and supporting them for the past 12 months to bring this proposal forward.

As such we are very supportive of the plans that have been outlined and led to the planning application and would welcome this addition to the local sporting infrastructure.

As part of the work we have re run the Sport England Facility Planning Model for Astro Turf Pitches and this shows that there is sufficient demand for this pitch to be warranted and that its introduction will not impact on other providers unduly whilst supporting and enhancing the local facility mix.

At present, no other 3G pitches are located within the Redditch administrative boundary so clearly the benefits of this pitch which is designed for football use as a community facility are significant as it will increase the availability of quality training surfaces, allow greater match play at weekends and increase the availability of pitches in general, as required in the Councils Playing Pitch Strategy and key objectives for the Council.

I know the scheme is fully supported by the FA and local leagues and will increase the club ability of other opportunities to the wider community to participate in sport and physical activity with its associated benefits.

Within the community use agreement for the funding this wider community benefits have been detailed and a specific set of requirements agreed that will oversee these improvements and be monitored by the funding bodies.

Finally from a Sports Development perspective this is excellent news as it will strengthen the existing junior section that already hold the highest quality assurance possible for the Football Association and allow it to grow further to offer even more benefits to local people than it already does.

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Property Services Manager

No Comments Received To Date

Public Consultation Response

No responses received

Assessment of Proposal

The site is designated as being within an area of Primarily Open Space and as such, the proposals should be considered against the policies that relate to these designations in the local plans, both current and emerging.

In general terms, the proposals would meet with the aims and objectives of national and local policies by providing an improved sports facility.

Whilst the proposals would not provide new open space, existing open space would not be lost as a result. The application would therefore be in conformity with Policies R1 and Policy 13 of LP3 and the emerging LP4 respectively.

Your officers agree with the Sports and Leisure Services Manager comments in that the proposed development would represent an enhancement to the existing Valley Stadium by enabling sport to be played throughout the year unlike the present grass surface which can only be used during periods of good weather. The proposals would in particular satisfy the requirements of Section 8 of the NPPF (Promoting Healthy Communities) since the proposals would represent an enhanced sporting facility which would be available for use by the wider community and not just the football club. Promoting health and well-being is also one of the Councils Key Strategic Purposes.

Your officers would also agree with the views of the S&LSM in that approval of this application would increase the availability of quality training surfaces, allow greater match play at weekends and increase the availability of pitches in general, as required in the Councils Playing Pitch Strategy.

The nearest residential properties are located approximately 50 metres to the north-east of the site (those in Cedar Road). No representations have been received in objection to the application.

The design and general appearance of the proposals are considered to be acceptable having regard to context and their location.

Current parking areas on-site comprise 18 no. tarmac surfaced parking spaces to the immediate south of the clubhouse together with a large gravel surfaced area capable of accommodating 128 parking spaces in total. Your officers consider that this provision would accommodate expected vehicular traffic associated with the community use of the facility and would not duplicate peak demand currently experienced by Redditch Utd FC on match days.

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The applicant comments that green travel opportunities will continue to be promoted whenever possible and your officers would recommend the imposition of a planning condition to this effect should members be minded to grant permission. The site is already considered to be a sustainable location being within the Redditch Urban area and within walking distance of both the train and bus station.

Conclusion

Approval of the proposals would satisfy some of the Council's key strategic objectives / purposes by promoting health and well-being within the community. Your officers consider that the proposals would comply with the planning policy framework and have not identified any material harm by reason of highway safety or amenity which would make the application unacceptable and outweigh the considerable benefits approval of this application would bring.

RECOMMENDATION

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason :- In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans:

appropriate references to be inserted here

Reason: To accurately define the permission for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance in order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

- 3) The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the applicant has submitted to and approved in writing an Employment Travel Plan (ETP) that promotes sustainable forms of access to the site with the Local Planning Authority. The approved ETP shall be implemented and monitored in accordance with the regime contained within the ETP. The ETP thereafter shall be implemented and updated in agreement with the Local Planning Authority.

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Reason: To reduce vehicle movements and promote sustainable access in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

- 1) The local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with this planning application through pre-application advice and discussion.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the site falls within the ownership of Redditch Borough Council. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.