



# Planning Committee

Matchborough Ward

1st December 2009

**2009/219/RC3 PROPOSED NEW FLOODLIT BMX TRACK, PERIMETER FENCING TO TRACK AND CLUBHOUSE FACILITY. ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING CHANGING ROOMS, STORAGE FACILITIES, SOCIAL ACTIVITY/CLUB SPACE & MINOR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION. DIVERSION OF FOOTPATH 619 AROUND BMX TRACK ENCLOSURE LAND AT ARROW VALLEY PARK, ICKNIELD STREET DRIVE  
 APPLICANT: MR K COOK, REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL  
 EXPIRY DATE: 15TH JANUARY 2010**

The author of this report is Ailith Rutt, Development Control Manager, who can be contacted on extension 3374 (e-mail: ailith.rutt@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

## Site Description

(See additional papers for Site Plan)

The site is accessed from Icknield Street Drive. The access road leads into the site, with a car park to the right (N) and the existing ancillary building to the left (S). The building is a single storey brick building with a pitched tiled roof and high level windows, used for changing. To the west of the building and car park is open grassed space currently used for football, with pitch markings and goal posts.

To the north of the site is the existing skate park, enclosed by grey palisade fencing and also served by the existing car parking area. To the south of the site is a public house and to the east of the site is the residential area of Matchborough.

## Proposal Description

The proposal includes several elements:

- A new BMX track comprising humps and turns
- Perimeter fencing 2.4m in height of green weldmesh design
- 6 Floodlighting columns 10m in height, adjacent to track within perimeter fencing
- Alterations to existing changing rooms to create secure cycle parking, office base for officials and updated changing/showering facilities. Two external doors would be lost.
- Diversion of public footpath around the enclosure to the west, rather than through as is its current location
- Alteration to car park layout to create 4 disabled parking spaces, retaining the overall provision of 82 spaces

The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, a planning statement, ecological assessment and green travel plan.

## **Relevant Key Policies**

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following websites:

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

[www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

## ***National Planning Policy***

PPS1 (& accompanying documents) Delivering sustainable development  
PPG13 Transport  
PPG17 Planning for open space, sport and recreation

## ***Regional Spatial Strategy***

QE1 Conserving and enhancing the environment  
QE4 Greenery, urban greenspace and public space  
T2 Reducing the need to travel

## ***Worcestershire Country Structure Plan***

CTC6 Green open space and corridors  
T3 Managing car use

## ***Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3***

CS2 Care for the environment  
CS8 Landscape character  
S1 Designing out crime  
BBE13 Qualities of good design  
CT2 Road hierarchy  
CT11 Road schemes  
R1 Primarily open space

The site lies within the defined Arrow Valley Park and is designated as Primarily Open Space

## **Relevant Site Planning History**

None relevant.

## **Public Consultation Responses**

### Responses in favour

- One letter of support received – appropriate use in this location

### Responses against

Three comments received raising the following points:

- Concern over noise disturbance to nearby properties
- Only pedal powered vehicles should be used and not motorised ones
- No announcements other than on competition days
- Should limit number of competitions held per annum
- Impact on wildlife on the site
- Light pollution to residential properties
- Loss of wider views across the Arrow Valley Park
- Loss of an important local amenity that is already well used
- Traffic and highway safety concerns
- Displacement of parking to residential areas
- Unsustainable location
- Inappropriate access for vehicles using a site of national significance
- Contrary to Policy CT2 – includes frontage development
- Inappropriate height of development in a residential area

## **Consultee Responses**

### ***County Highway Network Control***

No objection.

### ***Development Plans Team***

The principle of the development is considered to be compliant with policy, subject to various considerations, as the proposal would add to the diverse range of leisure and recreation opportunities at Arrow Valley Park, in line with LP3 policy. The loss of the playing pitch should only be accepted if there is alternative provision, and the proposed intensification of the access to the car park onto the district distributor road is also a matter for consideration against Policy CT2 of LP3.

### ***Environmental Health***

No comments received.

### ***Crime Risk Manager***

No objection.

## ***Worcestershire County Rights of Way Officer***

No objection subject to a condition to divert the footpath prior to commencement of development.

## ***Waste Management Officer***

Seeks provision of litter bins on site.

## **Procedural matters**

Members are reminded that lighting of itself is not development, and thus cannot be treated as a material consideration or controlled through the planning process. However, any supporting structures are subject to the usual planning rules and considerations. Therefore, the height and visual impact of the columns to support the floodlights proposed here are a material consideration.

The footpath diversion forms part of this application. This is effectively a separate application and will be dealt with as such. Once a recommendation has been made on it, a report will come to Members in this respect. It is entirely appropriate to deal with the two matters separately.

## **Assessment of Proposal**

The key issues for consideration in this case are the visual impact of the proposal on the open space, any impact the proposed use might cause to neighbouring residential amenity, and highway safety impacts.

## **Principle**

There is a balance to be struck between maintaining the openness of areas of Primarily Open Space in the public interest and to facilitate diverse recreational opportunities, and the need to provide equipment and facilities in order that open space use can be maximised to provide the greatest public benefit.

The applicant has noted in their planning statement that the loss of the playing pitch can be overcome at alternative locations, and that the changing facilities on site would be shared between the Sunday league footballers who currently use it and the users of the new BMX track.

## **Visual impact**

The visual impact of the proposal is considered to have been kept to a minimum, in that the fencing chosen to surround the site is as low as is practicable but functional, and is of a design that allows views through due to the mesh effect, and has minimal visual impact due to its green finish.

Further, the landscaping works to create the track are 3m in height at their tallest point, and as such longer and wider views across the open space would still be achievable. The proposal does not include any landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the development, in order that the openness of the Park is retained, and this is welcomed.

It is therefore considered that the proposal succeeds in meeting the opposing needs of facility provision and maintains openness as much as would be possible. There are no elements of the proposal which lead to specific concerns regarding either of these policy aims, and thus the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its visual impacts.

The floodlighting columns proposed, at 10m in height, are considered to be visually intrusive and Officers are seeking their amendment to a lower height to be more in scale with the proposed development and reduce any light spill impacts. Further information in this regard will be reported on the Update paper.

### Residential amenity

The site is at a significant distance from residential properties, and the existing screening along Icknield Street Drive is to remain, such that the development would be well screened from view and unlikely to cause any harmful effects on surrounding residential amenity.

The proposal is for pedal cycles and not motorised scooters or motorcycles, and as such it is considered that the noise impacts of such a use would be minimal. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure such use, in order to protect any noise impact of the use on the surrounding residential amenities.

The proposed hours of operation are 0900 – 2230, 7 days per week, with the lights being turned off at 10pm. It is also recommended that this be controlled through the imposition of a condition to protect noise disturbance from vehicles leaving the site late at night.

### Highways and access

There are no concerns raised regarding the existing access and highway arrangements, and it is considered that there would be sufficient parking provision on the site relative to the adopted maximum standards. The proposal includes 82 spaces, and the addition of 4 disabled spaces within the car park area. The adopted local parking standards do not cater specifically for this type of use, and as such it is difficult to suggest a maximum parking level in line with the policy requirements. The requirements for public parks are minimal, at 1 space per 4ha, whilst for leisure centres and visitor centres they are worked out relative to the proposed floor area, which clearly is also not comparable here. However, in the interests of sustainability, not only maximum parking provision should be considered by also alternative methods of travel. The applicant has

demonstrated that the site is accessible by a range of methods of transport, and this is considered to be appropriate. The existing provision is already massively in excess of any standards that could be applied, and therefore it is not considered reasonable to require any further spaces on this occasion.

Comments have been raised regarding the intensification of use of the access to the car park, which exits onto a district distributor road. Such roads are designed for the moving of traffic between areas of Redditch, and not for access, as this results in users slowing to turn, causing backing up of traffic. However, this is an existing use and there are no alternative access routes for the site. Further, no concerns have been raised by the highways officer, and therefore this is considered to be acceptable in this case.

The green travel plan submitted in support of this application is considered to be acceptable, and as such, it is recommended that its implementation be required through the imposition of a condition.

### Changes to building

The changes proposed to the building are very minor in nature, with the only external alterations being the blocking up of two doors. Therefore, providing appropriate materials are used for this, it is not anticipated that there would be any significant harm caused by the proposed changes to the building, as they are ancillary to the proposed BMX use of the site.

### Sustainability

The proposal does not include the creation of any further hard surfacing, and as such it is not considered that the 'built form' proposed would have any negative impacts on sustainability.

From a travel perspective, the site is well served by public transport, and is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, located within the urban area of Redditch, such that it is considered to be an appropriate location for this type of development.

Additional information regarding the lighting details has been requested to ensure that energy consumption is at as low a level as possible.

### Other issues

The waste management officer has requested that bins be required to be provided on the site, however there are already some available on the site and it is therefore not considered necessary to require further provision, nor is there any planning policy framework which requires it.

## Conclusion

On balance, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with policy and not cause harm to amenity or safety, and as such it is considered to be acceptable.

## Recommendation

**That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and informatives as summarised below:**

1. Commence within three years
2. Don't start until ROW has been diverted formally
3. Use by pedal cycles only and not motorised vehicles of any sort
4. Use of track to cease at 10pm all year round, with site locked by 1030pm
5. Lighting details to be agreed prior to commencement on site
6. Implementation of green travel plan
7. Approved plan numbers.

## Informatives

PROW diversion application dealt with by different team who will communicate.