

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

24th May 2023

Planning Application 23/00321/FUL

Infrastructure Improvement Works

Arrow Valley Park, Battens Drive, Redditch, B98 0LJ

Applicant: Redditch Borough Council
Ward: Winyates Ward

(see additional papers for site plan)

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

Site Description

The application site forms part of Arrow Valley Country Park, which is located on the River Arrow and comprises 900 acres of open space and incorporates Arrow Valley Lake. The park was built by Redditch Development Corporation in the 1970's and lies to the west of Battens Drive and to the south of the Coventry Highway. It is the largest of Redditch's parks and comprises a visitor centre with a café, sailing club, BMX facility, play area and waymarked trails. A number of car parks serve the park.

Proposal Description

The proposals are for general infrastructure improvement works comprising the following:

- 1 Relocation of vehicular access serving the Battens Drive car parks
- 2 Widening of access road serving the Countryside Centre and other park facilities
- 3 Extension to existing car parks

The applicant comments that the proposals would improve access and egress to the hub of the park; represent an improvement in terms of traffic management having regards to existing and future footfall and would enable a better use of existing car parking by encouraging users to park safely. 139 car parking spaces currently exist at the park and 32 additional spaces are proposed under this application giving a (revised) total of 171 spaces across the park. As part of this suite of infrastructure works, a separate (advertisement consent) application has been submitted to replace the existing park entrance sign, with a new free-standing sign in a revised location (reference 23/00322/ADV).

Relevant Policies:

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space

Policy 16: Natural Environment

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Policy 39: Built Environment
Policy 43: Leisure, Tourism and Abbey Stadium

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Relevant Planning History

None specifically relevant to this application

Consultations

WCC Highways

No objections

Tree Officer

No objections

Public Consultation Response

No representations received

Assessment of Proposal

Arrow Valley Country Park is designated as Primarily Open Space (POS) on the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4 (BoRLP4) proposals map and therefore Policy 13 of the BoRLP4 is most relevant when considering the principle of new development. The main aim of this policy is to ensure that designated POS is protected, and where appropriate, enhanced to improve its quality, value, multifunctionality and accessibility.

In this case, a small amount of POS would be lost as a result of the access road widening proposal and by the provision of the additional car parking spaces. However, the aims of the project are to contribute towards providing visitors with an improved experience when using this much loved and well used park having regard to current and future demand and as such the proposals are considered to meet the aims of Policy 13.

Furthermore, Policy 43 of the BoRLP4 supports proposals relating to leisure facilities provided they are located within a sustainable location (such as Arrow Valley Park).

Whilst the principle of development is considered acceptable it is still considered necessary to consider other material planning considerations.

The re-sited car park entrance in the position as proposed is considered to satisfactorily deal with potential conflict of vehicle movements arising from the operation of the adjacent supermarket.

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The Council has secured funding from the adjacent Lidl store developer to facilitate this proposal following the granting of permission for the Lidl retail development under planning reference 18/01049/FUL.

The widening of the access road through to the visitor centre is considered to aid with improving access and egress for users accessing the park safely. Overall vehicular movements have increased in recent times with the improvement of amenities available such as the introduction of the Childrens Play Tower granted under planning permission 20/01299/FUL in January 2021.

The 32 additional spaces are considered to be required to meet current and future demand for spaces where at busy times, users are known to park on grass verges and in unsafe locations often blocking in other vehicles. Worcestershire County Council Highways Authority have been consulted and raise no objections to this application.

Regrettably it would be necessary to remove a number of existing trees to facilitate the works. The trees are delineated on the layout plans with the following references: T1 – Willow; T2 – Cherry; T3 – Cherry; T4 – Cherry; T5 – Cherry; T6 – Ash; T7 – Ash; T8 – Ash; T9 – Lime. Members will note that the Councils Tree Officer raises no objections to the application and is satisfied that the new car parking areas will not give rise to harm to more mature trees and their root systems, located in proximity to the parking areas.

Policy 39 of the BoRLP4 requires development to contribute positively to the local character of the area commenting that areas should be designed to ensure they make places better for people and in this respect the proposals are considered to be acceptable.

In view of location of the site, several hundred metres distant from the nearest neighbouring dwellings, the development is not considered to cause any adverse impact to residential amenity. There have been no third-party representations received as a result of public consultation.

In conclusion, the proposals subject to this application are considered to improve the user experience of this important and highly valued leisure facility for the community. Given that no technical concerns have been raised by consultees, and, being in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

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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 carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

P2232.105.1A
P2232.105.2A
P2232.105.3A
P2232.108.1
P2232.108.2
P2232.110
P2232.115

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

Procedural matters

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