

PLANNING COMMITTEE

16th October 2025

Planning Application 25/00437/FUL

Installation of a 24m by 15m multi-use games area (MUGA) with 2m high fencing

**Access At Morton Stanley Park, Windmill Drive, Webheath, Redditch,
Worcestershire,**

**Applicant: Mr Tom Holloway
Ward: Webheath And Callow Hill**

(see additional papers for site plan)

The case officer of this application is Jonathan Pavey-Smith, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 881689 EXT 1689 Email: jonathan.pavey-smith@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

This application was deferred at the meeting of Planning Committee on 11th September 2025 for Officers to investigate the impact of the development on protected species, specifically the Brown Hairstreak Butterfly.

Following the 11th September Committee, additional information has been submitted regarding:

- A Biodiversity Net Gain Map.
- A Habitat Management Plan
- Updated BNG metrics
- An Ecological Audit of the Morton Stanley Park.
- Further information regarding the habitat of the protected species Brown Hairstreak Butterfly
- Further information regarding potential Anti-Social Behaviour and the benefits of the proposal for the park as a whole.

Site Description

The application site forms part of Morton Stanley Park, which is comprised of 95 acres of open space. The park was once a farm owned by William Morton Stanley who left the land in his will to the inhabitants of Redditch, to be used as a park. The park lies to the north of Callow Hill and is accessed off Windmill Drive to the east and Green Lane to the west. The site is allocated as Primarily Open Space (POS) under Policy 13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No4 (BoRLP4) The park is served by a car parking area; children play equipment and a recently installed café facility.

Proposal Description

The planning application relates to a proposed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) sited

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immediately to the north of the main pathway which runs from Windmill Drive out to the west and on to access Green Lane. The MUGA would comprise a tarmac base measuring 24 metres by 15 metres which would be painted with coloured lined markings so that it could be used for several sports and games. The rectangular games area would be enclosed by a steel fence system which would be just above 2 metres in height along its lengths and just above 3 metres in height along most of its width, overall, the facility measures 27m x 16m. There would be four basketball/netball hoops located on each side of the rectangular games area. There would also be four mini recessed goals, and two larger recessed goals incorporated into the steel fence system that forms the walls of the games area. The enclosed games area can be accessed by entrance gaps within the steel fencing, which includes an access for disabled persons. The information provided with the application states that the games area can be used for several sports and activities including football, basketball and mini tennis, and is suitable for a wide age range.

It should be noted that Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) allows for development comprising small buildings, works or equipment on land belonging to a local authority, and implemented by them, without the need for planning permission. As one of these limitations to this class prohibits buildings or equipment with a capacity over 200 cubic metres, and the capacity of the proposed MUGA would exceed this, the proposal requires express planning permission.

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
Policy 39: Built Environment
Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities
Policy 43: Leisure, Tourism and Abbey Stadium

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Planning History

21/00228/FUL	Proposed Café, toilets, additional car parking and ancillary works	Approved	19.04.2021
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Consultations

Sports England: The proposed development does not fall within either our statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Par. 003 Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306) and, therefore, Sport England has

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not provided a detailed response in this case but would wish to give the following advice to aid the assessment of this application.

If the proposal involves the loss of any sports facility, then full consideration should be given to whether the proposal meets Par. 104 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is in accordance with local policies to protect social infrastructure and meets any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place.

Leisure Services (Sports Provision/Facilities): The Leisure Services team fully supports this application. We are committed to continuously enhancing our facilities to encourage residents to enjoy the outdoors and lead active lifestyles in our public open spaces. The addition of new amenities is expected to attract more park visitors and promote longer dwell times.

The park currently features a children's play area (designed for those under 12), a skate park, and other play facilities aimed primarily at young teenagers. The proposed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is intended to complement these by providing a space suitable for a wider age range, helping to bridge the current gap in provision. The MUGA will accommodate multiple users simultaneously and support a range of activities for community enjoyment.

Working closely with the appointed contractor, HAGS, we have identified the most appropriate location for the new facility. The proposed site offers easy access from the main footpath and provides a fully hardstanding surface, both inside and around the area. Its proximity to the main car park, café, and play area ensures excellent natural surveillance and encourages a shared space where families can enjoy multiple amenities in one area.

There is a small group of trees nearby that the Parks team can thin or remove if necessary to further enhance visibility and safety. Since the installation of the café, incident reporting has improved significantly, thanks to strong communication between park users, the parks team, and café tenants. We anticipate this positive trend will continue as the park's facilities expand.

The current design includes a few seating options, with final placements to be confirmed prior to installation. [For clarity, this aspect of the scheme has now been omitted] Multiple access points to the MUGA including both goal ends and a side entrance will improve accessibility and offer clear exit routes if required. We believe this facility will be a valuable asset to the park and the wider community.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services: Regarding Noise - No Objections.

Tree Officer: No Objections

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West Mercia Police: I have looked on West Mercia policing systems and on Police UK and there is nothing of significance or concern in relation to ASB in the area.

Anti-Social Behaviour crimes reported:

- 2025 May x 2 and Jan x 1.
- 2024 August x 1 and July x 1.

Further Comments West Mercia Police: Thank you for the update in relation to the confirmation of the removal of additional seating and lighting for the proposed MUGA. Not including these within the planning application, I feel, is a positive step which may reduce ASB and criminality.

Community Safety Officer: This type of development can attract anti-social behaviour, and whilst this could be improved by good surveillance, the site does not offer alternative locations for the development where the situation would be improved. Although anti-social behaviour could be deterred to some extent by securing the facility, given that this is an open facility for the public to use, this would not be an option here either. Community Safety would suggest that positioning is considered and suggest the facility is positioned with the improved opportunities for natural surveillance closer to the existing café. No additional comments to make following receipt of additional information.

Worcester County Council Archaeology: The proposed development for 'Installation of a 24m by 15m multi-use games area (MUGA) with 2m high fencing' is situated directly adjacent to the site of a potential medieval farmstead 'Upper Grinsty Farm' (demolished in the 19th century) and the course of the probable medieval routeway Lackmans Lane (WSM50179).

A farmstead is located on the site of Upper Grinsty Farm on Blagrave's Map of Feckenham, dated 1591 (Copied in 1744 by John Doharty). Lackmans Lane is also named on the map, appearing as a substantial routeway linking Upper Grinsty Farm with traditional farmsteads Lower Grinsty Farm (labelled Grinsty on the 1840 tithe) and Greenlane Farm (labelled Green Lanes on the tithe) to the west, and Callow Hill Road. By the 1840 tithe Lackmans Lane is recorded as a footway. Both Lower Grinsty and Greenlane Farms appear to have been moated (WSM00775 and WSM00022).

There is high potential for Upper Grinsty Farm to have medieval origins. Earthworks of ridge and furrow are discernible on LiDAR on the opposite side of Lackmans Lane, an indicator of medieval farming (WSM41238 and WSM41239), while the Portable Antiquities Scheme records the discovery of a medieval coin on the western boundary of the 20th century park (WSM66061).

The proposed development area is directly adjacent to the site of a potential medieval farmstead and routeway, recorded on Blagrave's Map of Feckenham and therefore the application is judged to have moderate potential to impact heritage assets of local archaeological interest that would be significantly altered or lost through development. On

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this basis, should you be minded to grant planning permission for this scheme it is recommended that a programme of archaeological works should be secured and implemented by means of a suitably worded condition attached to any grant of planning permission. This would take the form of archaeological monitoring and recording (a watching brief) on groundworks.

‘Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted’. (NPPF Section 16, paragraph 218).

In order to comply with policy, we recommend that a programme of archaeological works should be secured and implemented by means of a suitably worded condition attached to any grant of planning permission.

Public Consultation Response

Site notice displayed expired 21.07.25

Twenty neighbour letters sent expired 20.07.25.

One letter of objection has been received which raises concerns that the proposed development would be subject to vandalism and would be misused after hours. It would also increase pressure for parking.

Assessment of Proposal

Morton Stanley Park is designated as Primarily Open Space (POS) on the proposals map and therefore Policy 13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4 (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. Loss of POS is resisted unless a number of considerations are met.

As outlined at the beginning of the report, additional information has been provided by the applicant in support of the proposal; this sets out that Morton Stanley is a destination park with a large amount of space for a variety of facilities. It is a green flag site representing high quality accessible spaces and is accredited through the keep Britain tidy scheme supported by the government. The addition of the café, which also house toilets, 3 years ago has increased usage of the site as this allows visitors to be able to stay longer and enjoy the park. In turn this adds increased usage of the existing facilities and the desire for the Leisure Team to add more facilities for residents to use. A MUGA would broaden the portfolio of facilities available to residents ranging from a skate park and riskier play elements to a cafe and football pitches, table tennis tables, chess table, walks and nature trails, so appealing to a variety of groups and for park visitors of all ages.

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The proposed MUGA offers, football, basketball and cricket facilities. It can be used end to end or from side to side with smaller sided goals and additional basketball hoops. Many children visit the site independently as well as those with parents. At the consultation event (held by Leisure services) every child was enthusiastic about the prospect of having a MUGA in the Park

The proposed MUGA is intended to complement the other facilities by providing a space suitable for a wider age range, helping to bridge the current gap in provision. The MUGA will accommodate multiple users simultaneously and support a range of activities for community enjoyment, from any age, but mostly geared towards older junior groups.

The proposed site offers easy access from the main footpath and provides a fully hardstanding surface, both inside and around the area. Its proximity to the main car park, café, and play area ensures excellent natural surveillance and encourages a shared space where families can enjoy multiple amenities in one area. This was considered the best position where minimal ground works are required to achieve a level playing surface whilst also being close enough to other facilities so not to be isolated or out of view.

The site can be used by all, and the hardstanding provides wheelchair access and encourages all abilities to gain access and provide an inclusive facility.

The applicant highlights that Mental health and Wellbeing are at the forefront of this proposal, with the cost of living there are opportunities to access such a facility, and which is free to use. All the park facilities are free. To be able to use a similar facility indoors would be far too expensive, which would also include a charge to use such a facility. The hardstanding would allow for year-round play within the MUGA.

The proposal is therefore considered to meet the aims of Policy 13 of the BoRLP4, and therefore the principle of development is supported. Furthermore Policy 43 of the BoRLP4 supports proposals relating to leisure facilities provided they are located within a sustainable location, which is accessible by a choice of transport.

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

Design and Safety

Policy 39 of the BoRLP4 requires development to contribute positively to the local character of the area. Further to this, Policy 40 of the BoRLP4 seeks development of a good design including that which contributes to both public and private spaces.

To achieve this, Policy 40 expects proposals to be of a high-quality design which reflects or complements the local surroundings, is of an appropriate siting and layout, is accessible, and encourages community safety.

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With regards to the above, the new MUGA would be sited close to the footpath so that it would be easily accessible during winter months. The MUGA would comprise of a coloured tarmac base and a high-quality steel enclosure made up of panels and posts. Some of the panels would be brightly coloured so that the facility is vibrant and attractive to users. The steel panel and post system would also provide a strong structure, which would make the facility vandalism proof and ensure that sports could be played safely. The vertical tubes which make up the panels would be positioned close together so that even small balls would not escape the MUGA. With regards to its siting, design and appearance, the proposed development is considered acceptable.

The Community Safety Officer has highlighted that this type of recreational development can attract anti-social behaviour issues. Whilst this is noted, it is not considered that any improvements or relocation of the proposal could be made through amendments and these concerns must be balanced against the benefits of the proposed community facility, which include a range of social benefits as well as benefits to health and wellbeing.

The applicant acknowledges that anti-social behaviour has been an issue at some MUGA sites in the past. Working with community safety colleagues they have identified that providing shelter or seating adjacent to these facilities has caused the problems. Having removed the seating, or the rooves over the seating areas, has proved very effective in addressing these issues. The applicant reports that having undertaken this work that they have not received any reports of major issues at MUGA sites in the past 2 to 3 years and that the recent installation at Greenland's Playing fields has been successful and is very popular. It's noteworthy that there is no seating or shelter areas associated with the proposal at Morton Stanley.

The applicant also identifies that Parks staff work alongside Place Teams and carry out inspections of MUGA's in accordance with RoSPA recommendations. These include routine inspections (weekly/twice weekly and address minor issues like graffiti and litter) and operational inspections, looking at fixing and structures on a quarterly basis and annual inspections covering all aspects of the facility. Since 2022 and the installation of the café and the upgrade of the children's play area at Morton Stanley only minor issues have been raised, comparable with other parks across the borough. Furthermore, the applicant identifies how the facility can give young people a constructive outlet, help reduce boredom and provide a safer alternative to street play. The facility can be used in all weathers and is accessible to all the community, it has the potential to bringing people together for shared events and to develop community pride and engagement. Overall, any concerns about the potential for antisocial behaviour at the facility must be balanced against the range of social, health and wellbeing benefits associated with this community facility.

West Mercia Police have also stated that there is nothing of significance or concern in relation to ASB in the area. In 2025 there was 3 Anti-Social Behaviour incidents recorded in Morton Stanley Park and 2 in 2024. In addition, the Police state that the removal of additional seating and lighting for the proposed MUGA is a positive step which may reduce ASB and criminality.

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In the additional information, the applicant has also set out how the design specifications of the MUGA seeks to reduce vandalism and subsequent damage of the structure. For example, only round section steel is used and is finished with a smooth surface (to discourage climbing). The grade of steel used is structural grade, all fixings are finished with tamper proof fittings and robust impact testing is part of the specification of the MUGA to ensure a robust facility, furthermore noise dampening spacers are used between fixings to reduce associated noise transmission. In terms of visibility into the MUGA at times of reduced daylight, the applicant sets out that because the facility is formed from bars, as opposed to a mesh treatment, that visibility inside the facility remains good.

With regards to securing the facility, the applicant has stated that the MUGA is proposed to be an open facility for the public to use and it is not therefore intended that the MUGA would be locked. With regards to providing emergency contact details, this can be suggested to the applicant through an informative, however it is not considered that it would be reasonable to request this by planning condition. Notwithstanding these suggestions, it is noted that the MUGA would be sited within sight of the existing cafe building, the car park and the footpath network, allowing natural surveillance of the facility, which would assist in reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour occurring.

Residential Amenity

In view of location of the MUGA, which is approximately 250 metres from any neighbouring dwellings (nearest to the south on Morton Lane), the development is not considered to cause any significant harm to residential amenity. Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) have reviewed the proposal and have raised no objections with regards to noise and nuisances. It has been clarified that no lighting is proposed as part of the MUGA scheme.

Trees, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

There are no trees to be removed as part of the development proposal and the Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that the proposal raises no tree related issues. Furthermore, given that the trees would not be affected and as the area of land that the MUGA would be sited on is well maintained, short grass, the installation of the MUGA raises no concerns in relation to wider ecology matters.

Regarding protected species and specifically, the presence of the Brown Hairstreak Butterfly, after consulting with the Council's appointed Ecologist, it was confirmed that the habitat and breeding plant of the Brown Hairstreak Butterfly is the Blackthorn Shrub. It was requested that a survey of Blackthorn was taken at the park, this identifies that the blackthorn habitat areas are sited well away from the proposed site of the MUGA, largely around the outer margins of the park. Furthermore, the siting of the MUGA is on mown grassland and that habitat type only. As such it is unreasonable to request an ecological survey of the mown grassland as this is not the habitat for the identified protected species. The applicant is mindful of its duty to preserve the habitat of the protected species and works with a group of volunteers who conduct an annual visit and egg count

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at the park as part of the work undertaken by the West Midlands branch of the butterfly conservation group. Taking the above into consideration and as informed by the Council's appointed Ecologist, officers are satisfied that the habitat of the protected species will not be affected as part of the proposed development.

Regarding Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), subject to some limited exceptions, BNG is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains or protections.

This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat and this applies in the case of this application. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

The habitat lost because of the development is modified grassland and the submitted metric (September 2025) shows a baseline position and the subsequent post development position. Onsite BNG uplift is not feasible due to the limited extent of the red line application site. The applicant has therefore stated that they wish to achieve the 10% uplift via an 'offsite' biodiversity gain. This will need to be controlled through a legal agreement, and the recommendation is drafted accordingly. The applicant has shown through the additional information that this will be achieved via a clay-based wildflower mix (Heavy Clay Soils Wildflower Meadow Seed BS5M 80/20) and 5 wild service trees to be planted in a grass area adjacent to the MUGA. Overall, the development is therefore acceptable regarding BNG.

Archaeology

The proposed development for 'Installation of a 24m by 15m multi-use games area (MUGA) with 2m high fencing' is situated directly adjacent to the site of a potential medieval farmstead 'Upper Grinsty Farm' (demolished in the 19th century) and the course of the probable medieval routeway Lackmans Lane (WSM50179).

Archaeology have stated no objection to the scheme subject to conditions relating to a Written Scheme of Investigation prior to the commencement of development.

Public Consultation

One letter of objection has been received from a neighbour who lives on Fairburne Gardens. The letter raised concerns with regards to the potential of the proposal attracting anti-social behaviour, vandalism and increased parking pressure. As considered above, whilst it is possible that anti-social behaviour takes place at the site in the future, this should be weighed against the social, health and wellbeing benefits of providing a recreational facility in the area. The construction of the MUGA is strong and has been designed to prevent crack and breaks and to be resistant to vandalism.

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Regarding the parking it is deemed unlikely that the MUGA will lead to any additional parking issues at Morton Stanley Park given the nature of the facility and compared to the facilities currently at the site (café and play area). It is likely that the park will be busy during children's holidays with or without the MUGA.

Conclusion

The multi-use games area subject to this application would enhance and improve an existing area of POS, which provides a valued leisure facility for the local community, this would be in accordance with Policy 13 of the BoRLPNo4. Additional information is included in this report to demonstrate the wider benefits associated with such facilities and to show how anti-social behaviour has been addressed at other sites. Given that the proposed development would attract a wide range of users, the proposal scores highly in relation to the social aspect of sustainable development.

The siting, design and appearance of the development is considered acceptable and again additional information has been included in this report to demonstrate the robust nature of the facility. Given that no technical concerns have been raised by consultees, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and therefore it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be DELEGATED to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services to GRANT planning permission subject to: -

- a) The satisfactory completion of a S106 planning obligation ensuring that:**
- A suitable Biodiversity Net Gain Plan is submitted and implemented**
 - suitable management and monitoring of the Biodiversity Net Gain Plan**
 - S106 monitoring fee/s are paid to the Borough Council**

and

- b) The conditions as listed below:**

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.

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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:

Layout Plan Q-33171-Q7Y9-C-1 Dated 23/06/2025
Elevations Q-33171-Q7Y9-ELEVATIONS Dated 23/06/2025
Site Layout: Q-33171-Q7Y9-PP-A1 Dated 23/06/2025

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

3) Prior to its first use, the frame of the multi-use games area hereby approved shall be finished in powder coated paint in colour RAL 6005 green.

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the frame is damage resistant.

4) No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
- b. The programme for post investigation assessment.
- c. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
- d. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
- e. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
- f. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (4) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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Informative

The applicant is advised to erect signage on or near the site which provides emergency contact details.

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.