

**WARDS AFFECTED:** Leen Valley

## **REPORT OF CHIEF PLANNER**

### **Sports Ground To West, Grassington Road Sports Ground**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

Application No: 17/01099/PFUL3 for planning permission

Application by: EillisWilliams Architects on behalf of The Girls' Day School Trust

Proposal: Construction of sports pavilion, 2 no. floodlit artificial pitches, car parking facilities, a coach drop off point and re-siting of portacabin

The application is brought to Committee because it has generated significant public interest

To meet the Council's Performance Targets this application should be determined by 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018, for which an extension of time has been agreed.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the conditions substantially in the form of those listed in the draft decision notice at the end of this report.

Power to determine the final details of the conditions to be delegated to the Chief Planner.

#### **3 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The application site is located on the west side of Grassington Road. It is 4.30 ha in area and is a primarily grassed playing field that provides sports facilities for Nottingham Girl's High School, with an element of community use. There is a vehicular access to the site at the southern end of the Grassington Road frontage leading to a small area of hardstanding. There are two small buildings on the site used as changing facilities and for storage. The site was previously the John Player sports ground. There is a line of trees along the site frontage to Grassington Road.

3.2 There are residential properties opposite the site on the east side of Grassington Road. To the south the site is bounded by the rear gardens of residential properties on Holbeck Road. To the west the site is bounded in part by an allotment site and in part by the David Lloyd sports club. To the north is the car parking area for the David Lloyd sports club.

3.3 The site is identified as part of the open space network in the Local Plan.

#### **4 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**

4.1 Planning permission is sought to significantly upgrade the sports facilities on the site. It is proposed to construct two floodlit artificial grass pitches (AGPs), a sports

pavilion, car park and a coach drop off/pick up point.

4.2 Pitch A (AGP) is proposed to be sited at the northern end of the Grassington Road frontage. This pitch would be primarily designed for hockey use but could also be used for other sports depending upon the final surface specification. In the application as originally submitted, Pitch B (AGP) was proposed to be approximately centrally located in the rear part of the site and orientated north - south. It has subsequently been re-orientated east - west and to be as close to the northern and western boundaries of the site as practicable. This pitch would be suitable for football, rugby and junior hockey. The AGPs would be enclosed by 5m high fencing with spectator areas within this. Each pitch would be floodlit with 6 x 13m high lighting columns. The remaining grassed area of the site could be marked out for football in the winter and used for rounders, cricket and athletics in the summer.

4.3 The proposed hours of use of the facilities are as follows:

Weekdays:

All sporting facilities (other than pitch B AGP) - 09.00 hours to 20.00 hours

Pitch B (AGP) - 09.00 hours to 21.00 hours

Weekends:

Saturdays - 09.00 hours to 18.00 hours

Sundays and Bank Holidays - 10.00 hours to 16.30 hours.

The pavilion would close 30 minutes after the end of the use of the pitches.

4.4 It is proposed that the school would use the sports facilities on Monday- Friday, during term time, between 09.00 hours and 15.45 hours. The sports department will be partly based on site. Fixtures with other schools are likely to include Wednesdays after school (up to 6pm) and Saturday mornings, once or twice per month. It is proposed that pupils be transported using minibuses and private cars, parking in the proposed on-site car park. It is also proposed that the facilities would be available for community use, generally between the hours of 17.00 hours to 20.00 hours on weekdays, 09.00 hours to 18.00 hours on Saturdays and 10.30 hours to 16.30 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays. As set out above the exception to this is pitch B (AGP) which would be available for use until 21.00 hours on weekdays.

4.5 The reason behind the proposed use of pitch B (AGP) until 21.00 hours is due to the requirements of the Football Foundation, who are proposing to fund this facility, and require the pitch would be available for community use 35 hours/week. A recently amended Statement of Community Use submitted with the planning application sets out that the likelihood is that the main user would be the Wollaton and Bramcote Football Club, who would base their mini teams (under 12 years of age) at Grassington Road and also use the facilities to launch a women's football initiative. The Statement also sets out that non-sporting organisations would have the opportunity to use the pavilion, outside of school times, for meetings and other events.

4.6 A new vehicular access is proposed at the northern end of the Grassington Road frontage which would provide vehicular access to the proposed car parking area. It is proposed to provide spaces for 71 vehicles, including two spaces suitable for mini bus car parking. The parking area would be located to the west of Pitch A,

alongside the David Lloyd sports club boundary. Cycle parking is proposed in the same area. The coach drop off/pick up area is proposed to be located on the Grassington Road frontage and has been designed to accommodate three coaches. A separate access point is also proposed for pedestrians.

- 4.7 The proposed pavilion would be located to the south off the car parking area, set back behind the retained grassed area, and again, adjacent to the boundary with the David Lloyd sports club. The pavilion would have a floor area of 400 sq m and would provide changing facilities, a multi purpose space and other ancillary facilities. It is proposed to be a flat roofed, single storey building which would primarily be brick with a deep band of cladding forming the roof edge. An area of full height glazing is proposed on the east and south elevations serving the multi-purpose space. Photovoltaics are proposed on the flat roof. The existing portacabin building currently used as changing facilities is to be re-located to the rear of the pavilion and used for storage.
- 4.8 The school is hoping to undertake the development in a single phase depending upon funding opportunities for the AGPs. If it does not prove possible to construct both AGPs at the same time, it is the intention to commence the development with a first phase comprising the construction of pitch A, the construction of the pavilion, the provision of the car and cycle parking and the construction of the pedestrian access. The coach drop off/pick up would be only provided when pitch B is constructed.
- 4.9 A Design and Access Statement, a Statement of Community Use, a Noise Assessment, a Floodlighting Assessment, a Transport Statement, a Flood Risk Assessment, a Sustainability Appraisal, an Ecological Appraisal, a Statement of Community Involvement and an Arboricultural Assessment were submitted with the planning application. Statements of School and Community Use has been updated during the life of the application.

## **5 CONSULTATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Adjoining occupiers consulted:**

- 5.1 55 residential properties on Grassington Road and Holbeck Road adjacent to/opposite the application site were notified of the application as originally submitted. The David Lloyd Centre were also notified and site and press notices posted/published. Following the receipt of a revised layout residents and nearby occupiers were re-consulted. A third consultation has now been undertaken following the receipt of drawings showing further changes to the layout which include the re-orientation of pitch B and the submission of updated Statements of School and Community Use which provides more detailed information about this aspect of the proposal. The expiry date for comments on the most recent consultation is 11.05.2108 and any further comments received will be reported in an Update sheet.
- 5.2 In response to the initial consultation two responses were received. The first was seeking clarification about the location of their property on Grassington Road in relation to the vehicular access and identifying possible concern about the impact of floodlighting and current on street parking (the property in question is not opposite the application site). The second respondent raised concerns about potential noise and disturbance in an area which is currently quiet. They also identified potential concerns in relation to the impact of the floodlights, crime and parking.

- 5.3 In response to the second consultation three individual comments and a petition signed by 44 local residents were received.
- 5.4 The individual comments raise the following concerns: current weekend football use causes problems to local residents; proposal would add to current noise levels; queries re frequency of use of the coach parking area; possible traffic congestion; times of use of pitches and floodlights; will there be roadworks on Grassington Road.
- 5.5 The petition recognises there is a lot of detailed information in the planning application but there are a number of areas where clarification is required. The overall concern is that the development could impact upon the lives of residents; have questions about road safety; could affect property prices and cannot see any positives for the local community.
- 5.6 The more detailed concerns relate to the following:
- the level of usage proposed and proposals for community use;
  - already experience problems of anti-social behaviour from the football team who currently use the pitch;
  - residents bought houses on basis of a sports ground opposite with a low level of usage and an intensively used facility would be far different;
  - concerned about likely level of noise when sports being played;
  - proposed extensive usage would mean more noise, more light and more traffic;
  - would exacerbate existing traffic and road safety problems;
  - concerned that proposed car park would not be fully used and the users of the facilities may find it more convenient to park on the street causing parking problems for local residents;
  - Council should stop any further tree removal;
  - query flooding risk and absence of thorough site survey;
  - would like community use element to be much clearer and wonder whether there is any scope for the immediate community to use the facilities on a free/subsidised basis.
- 5.7 In response to the petition the school organised a drop in session for local residents on 20.02.2018 and have subsequently submitted an amended Statement of Community Involvement and a document entitled Public Consultation Review, which responds to the key issues identified by those residents attending. These are summarised as:
- increased traffic movements as a result of the facility;
  - potential anti-social behaviour from users of the site;
  - increased risk of cars parking along Grassington Road;
  - increased number of coaches coming to the site;
  - additional entrances to the site creating further traffic movements and congestion;
  - project reducing property values;
  - demonstration of the availability of the facility for use by local residents;
  - number of hours the facility will be used.

**Additional consultation letters sent to:**

**Environmental Health and Safer Places:** Identified the potential for the use to

cause disturbance to local residents and recommend the need for a condition controlling the hours of use. Raise concerns about the location of the coach pick up and recommend this be re-located to avoid nuisance to local residents

**Highways:** No objection following the receipt of additional information subject to detailed conditions regarding access, construction management plan, travel plan and cycle parking.

**Sport England:** No objection following the receipt of additional and revised information which is considered to meet exception E5 of the adopted Sport England Playing Fields Policy, subject to conditions relating to the specification and management of the proposed AGPs and securing community use at the site.

**Biodiversity Officer:** No objection following additional survey work to ensure no adverse impact upon bats.

**Tree Officer:** No objection subject to conditions requiring the works to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan.

**Drainage:** No objection on the basis that the inclusion of permeable paving is taken forward and that the pitch drainage areas are confirmed in line with the rate of 5l/s.

## **6 RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 6.1 Paragraph 17 sets out the core planning principles, many of which apply to the proposed development. They include, amongst others, the requirements to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development; secure high quality design; support the transition to a low carbon future, taking full account of flood risk and encouraging the reuse of existing resources and the use of renewable resources; contribute to reducing pollution; and managing patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling and to focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.
- 6.2 Para 73 identifies the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and how this can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

### **Nottingham Local Plan (November 2005):**

Policy R1: Open Space Network.

Policy R5: Playing Fields and Sports Grounds

Policy NE3: Conservation of Species

Policy NE5: Trees

Policy NE10: Water quality and flood protection

Policy T3: Car, Cycle and Servicing Parking

### **Aligned Core Strategies**

Policy A: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 1: Climate change

Policy 10: Design and Enhancing Local Identity

Policy 12: Local Services and Healthy Lifestyles

Policy 16 Green infrastructure, parks and open space

Policy 17: Biodiversity

## **7. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

Main issues

- (i) Principle of the development;
- (ii) Impact upon nearby occupiers;
- (iii) Impact upon the streetscene;
- (iv) Highway impacts

**(i) Principle of the development (Local Plan policies R1 and R5 and Aligned Core Strategies policies 12 and 16)**

- 7.1 The application site is located within the open space network and it therefore needs to be considered in the context of policy R1 of the Local Plan. This proposal retains the site as a sports facility, which is compatible with the policy, but it is recognised that there would be some change to the character taking into account that the proposal involves two AGPs with floodlighting and a single storey building which would have some impact upon the landscape character of this part of the open space network. However, the proposal involves sport related development that is not in itself inappropriate within a playing field context. It is also considered, taking into account the specific local context in which the application site forms only part of the area designated as open space network, that the proposed development would not adversely affect the overall value of this part of the open space network. It is noted that approximately one third of the site remains grassed.
- 7.2 The development would be a clear qualitative improvement to the sports facilities and it is intended that in addition to use by the Girl's High School, the facilities will also be available for community use. There is currently limited community use by one football team and the proposals would provide the opportunity for this to be significantly extended and to provide wider community use. The community use element has been identified by local residents as a concern and this is considered further in sections (ii) and (iv) below. Local residents have also raised the issue of securing benefit to the immediate community from the development. In response, a Public Consultation Review document prepared by the school has confirmed that it intends to engage with local residents to enable hire of the multi-use area in the pavilion building, where it is envisaged that activities such as youth group meetings or sewing clubs could take place outside of school hours.
- 7.3 The City Council is currently working to produce a new Playing Pitch Strategy and this site has been highlighted as a key strategic priority that will help relieve pitch deficiencies and provide the catalyst for a chain of improvements on other sites

around the City. Sport England have confirmed that they are satisfied with the proposals and have not raised an objection to the application; the conditions they require secure the submission of a community use agreement and the specification and management of the proposed AGPs.

- 7.4 On the basis of the above it is considered policies R1 and R5 of the Local Plan and policies 12 and 16 of the Aligned Core Strategies are satisfied.

**(ii) Impact upon nearby occupiers** (Aligned Core Strategies policy 10 and Local Plan policy NE9)

- 7.5 The playing fields are a very long-standing facility having initially been established as the sports facilities for John Player's employees in 1906, which also encompassed the site which is now occupied by the David Lloyd Leisure Club. At that time there was also a large pavilion and a smaller bowling pavilion on the site.
- 7.6 More recently the playing fields have been used by the Girl's High School a maximum of three times a week, with no restrictions on the hours of use. The proposal will undoubtedly intensify the use of the site which therefore has the potential to impact upon the amenity of nearby residents due to the increased level of activity, potential noise and light pollution. These are issues which nearby residents have identified in response to the second consultation on this application, including a petition signed by 44 residents of Grassington Road. Following this and the drop-in session organised by the school, further consideration has been given to the proposal and more detailed information has been provided about the proposed community use. As set out in para. 5.1 local residents have been re-consulted on the latest revision to the layout which re-orientates pitch B (AGP) and on the additional information about the proposed community use. Any further responses from nearby residents will be reported to the committee by means of an update report.
- 7.7 The impact of the intensification of the use as a result of the development has been carefully assessed and consideration given to possible means of mitigation. As part of this, pitch B (AGP) has been re-orientated to be east-west, rather than north-south as was originally proposed. The effect of this has been to increase the overall distance from the rear boundaries of the properties on Holbeck Road to the nearest floodlights proposed to serve pitch B (AGP) to approximately 58.5m, and approximately 70m from the rear of the dwellings. The minimum distance at the time of submission of the layout was 22m and the re-orientation of pitch B (AGP) is therefore considered to be a significant benefit for the residents of Holbeck Road. The area in between the Holbeck Road properties and pitch B (AGP) would be grass pitches but these would not be as well used as AGPs and could be laid out in this area currently without the need for planning permission.
- 7.8 The re-orientation does result in pitch B (AGP) being approximately 25m closer to the properties on Grassington Road. However, at the closest point the floodlights on pitch B (AGP) would be approximately 71 metres from the front elevations of the properties on Grassington Road. Pitch A (AGP) would be approximately 27.9 m from the front elevation of the properties on Grassington Road.
- 7.9 The floodlighting assessment has been assessed by Environmental Health who have not raised any concerns about the impact of the floodlighting upon nearby residents. A car park accommodating 71 vehicles is also proposed which is proposed to would be sited to the west of pitch A (AGP), adjacent to the boundary

with the David Lloyd Leisure Club and approximately 80 m from the Grassington Road residential properties. The car park will enable users to park within the site and would help alleviate the issues associated with on-street car parking which residents have identified.

7.10 It is recognised that the site would be used in a more intensive manner than currently is the case and that residents will undoubtedly experience some noise and disturbance as a result of the activities on the site, particularly when compared with the current relatively low level of use. However, the playing fields are currently under utilised and the proposals would represent a significant enhancement of this facility for sport and exercise, with a considerable degree of community use, the principle of which is welcomed. In conclusion regarding this issue and taking into account the existing use as a sports ground (currently without any planning restrictions), the distance that the AGP pitches would be from the adjacent residential properties, that the lighting would not result in any significant spillage from the site, the proposed hours of use and that the majority of the activity associated with the comings and goings would take place within the car park, that the proposals would not result in an unacceptable impact upon local residents. With regard to the hours of use, on weekdays it is proposed that the playing pitches (with the exception of pitch B (AGP) would not be used beyond 20.00 hours. Pitch B (AGP) is proposed to be used until 21.00 hours as without this the funding requirements of the Football Foundation cannot be met. The provision of this pitch would be the primary facility that provides the wider community use, helping to deliver improved sports facilities with the associated benefits this would bring to the health of citizens. On this basis its use until 21.00 hours is considered to be acceptable. Regarding the coach drop of/pick up area, again it is recognised that this would have some impact upon the residents of Grassington Road opposite, however, this would attract limited use and brings the considerable benefit of both coaches and additional on-street parking not needing to park directly on Grassington Road ,which would have a far greater impact on neighbouring residents.

7.11 Aligned Core Strategies policy 10 and Local Plan policy NE9 are therefore satisfied.

**(iii) Impact upon the streetscene** (Aligned Core Strategies policy 10)

7.12 The site is currently grassed and the proposed development, particularly the pitches and associated fencing and floodlighting, would undoubtedly change its current character. However, the Grassington Road frontage is edged by a good line of trees, most of which are proposed to be retained, and these would help to soften and screen the pitches. Additional tree planting and landscaping would re-inforce and enhance the existing tree line and help to further screen the AGPs and car parking.

7.13 The proposed pavilion is set back within the site and is a low profile, single storey building, with a backdrop of the tall conifers which enclose the David Lloyd Centre. It is a contemporary design and by necessity includes large areas where there is no fenestration. However, the entrance area and multi-use room do include substantial glazing which enliven the building. Aligned Core Strategies policy 10 is therefore satisfied.

**(iv) Highway impacts** (Local Plan policy T3)

7.14 Highways initially raised a number of detailed concerns about the proposals and



these have been addressed during the life of the application. Therefore, subject to a condition regarding the submission of details of the proposed access there are no objections to the proposal. Local residents have raised some concerns about traffic movements associated with the proposed development. However, it is considered that the proposed car park and coach drop off/pick up facility are the safest way to deal with this and removes the potential dangers associated with more vehicles parking on the street. Local Plan policy T3 is therefore satisfied.

**Other matters** (Local Plan policies NE5 and NE10)

- 7.15 Drainage: The Flood Risk Assessment has been assessed by Drainage and it is considered that the proposals are satisfactory subject to the use of permeable paving and a 5l/s surface water run-off rate on the AGPs. These matters can be secured by condition.
- 7.16 Trees: Five trees are proposed to be removed on the Grassington Road frontage to enable the construction of the new vehicular access point, the coach drop off/pick-up area and the pedestrian access point. The other trees on the frontage are to be retained. A condition requiring that the works are undertaken in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan is proposed to ensure the retained trees are protected during the construction period. There is also a landscaping condition requiring appropriate replacement tree and other planting.
- 7.17 Local Plan policies NE5 and NE10 are therefore satisfied.
- 7.18 Local residents have also referred to aspects of the behaviour/language of football clubs/players who have used the site. This is not a planning consideration but the school have advised that all users of the site will be required to sign up to a charter regarding their behaviour, which is also a requirement of the Football Association. The school have also advised that contact details will be available to enable instances of anti-social behaviour to be easily reported.

**8. SUSTAINABILITY / BIODIVERSITY** (Local Plan policy NE3 and Aligned Core Strategies policies 1 and 17)

- 8.1 The proposed sports pavilion is to be designed to exceed the Building Regulations requirements with regard to the conservation of fuel and power through the choice of materials and method of construction. It is, for example, proposed to use renewable air to air heat pump technology in rooms requiring heating and cooling, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery efficient heating and lighting controls. It is also proposed to located photovoltaic panels on the roof.
- 8.2 A Travel Plan is required by condition to encourage sustainable modes of travel to the site. As part of this, secure cycle parking for a minimum of 16 cycles is proposed. There are also bus services on Grassington Road, Aspley Lane and Middleton Boulevard.
- 8.3 The Biodiversity Officer has confirmed that the Ecological Appraisal submitted with the application, as updated by additional survey work in relation to bats, is satisfactory.
- 8.4 Local Plan policy NE3 and Aligned Core Strategies policies 1 and 17 are therefore satisfied.

**9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The issues raised in this report are primarily ones of planning judgement. Should legal considerations arise these will be addressed at the meeting.

**11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**12 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

None.

**13 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Healthy Nottingham: The development will encourage participation in leisure and sport and will promote activities associated with a healthy lifestyle.

**14 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**15 VALUE FOR MONEY**

None.

**16 List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information**

1. Application No: 17/01099/PFUL3 - link to online case file:  
<http://publicaccess.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OQ17EKLYKMQ00>
2. Email from Biodiversity Officer dated 24.01.2018
3. Email from Tree Officer 03.10.2017
4. Comments from Environmental Health and Safer Places dated 04.10.2017 and 08.12.2017
5. Comments from Highways dated 18.12.2017 and 16.01.2017
6. Comments from Sport England dated 07.12.2018 and 25.01.2018
7. Email from Drainage dated 06.12.2017
8. Petition from local residents dated 18.01.2018
9. Comments from local residents 12.06.2017, 14.06.2017, 19.12.2017, 20.12.2017 (x2)

**17 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

Nottingham Local Plan (November 2005)  
Aligned Core Strategies (September 2014)

**Contact Officer:**

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### Development of Open Space

R1: Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the parks and open spaces and the green links between them forming the Open Space Network as shown on the Proposals Map. Planning applications will therefore be considered against the following criteria:

- a) whether the land is underused and undervalued, and is not required for open space use within the Network;
- b) whether the development would have a detrimental effect on the open space, environmental, landscape character, or wildlife value of the Network as a whole;
- c) whether the development will enhance the Network, particularly in areas of open space deficiency, and help to achieve the City Council's aims for the open space resource;
- d) whether the land is a small part of a major open space and would not result in the loss of integrity of the open space or be detrimental to its function as part of the Open Space Network
- e) whether the proposal would involve partial development of a smaller open space as an amenity locally or as part of the overall Open Space Network.

### Playing Fields and Sports Grounds

R5: Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of existing playing fields and sports grounds including those at educational establishments unless:

- a) there is no existing or future need for the facility and development does not adversely affect the overall quality of provision;
- b) equivalent or improved alternative provision can be made in a suitable location;
- c) the proposed development only affects land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch and does not result in the loss of, or inability to make use of any playing pitch;
- d) the site's contribution to the visual amenity of the surrounding area or to the Open Space Network is not unacceptably harmed; and
- e) the site's role as part of a wildlife corridor or reserve is not unacceptably diminished