

NORTH AND EAST PLANS PANEL

THURSDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor J Akhtar in the Chair

Councillors N Sharpe, M Midgley,
B Anderson, E Flint, R. Stephenson,
D Jenkins, P Wray and T Smith

38 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

39 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

40 Late Items

There were no late items.

41 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interests were made at the meeting.

42 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Lamb. Cllr T Smith attended the meeting as his substitute. Apologies were also received from Cllr Bithell.

43 Minutes - 22nd September 2022

RESOLVED – To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2022 as a correct record.

44 20/08412/FU - Construction of a new community sports hub including 3No. floodlit artificial grass pitches and 1No. multi-use PlayZone enclosed by metal ballstop fencing, car parking and associated landscaping works are also proposed to connect the development to the wider Green Park, including a lit footpath link from the Redrow housing development to Austhorpe Primary School; external sub-station and bin store, on land off Thorpe Park Approach, Leeds, LS15

The report of the Chief Planning Officer set out an application for construction of a new community sports hub including 3No. floodlit artificial grass pitches and 1No. multi-use PlayZone enclosed by metal ballstop fencing, car parking and associated landscaping works are also proposed to connect the development to the wider Green Park, including a lit footpath link from the Redrow housing development to Austhorpe Primary School; external sub-station and bin store, on land off Thorpe Park Approach, Leeds, LS15

Slides, photographs and diagrams were shown throughout the presentation.

The Planning Officer presented the application providing the Panel with the following information:

- The application had been considered at North and East Plans Panel on 25th August 2022. A copy of the report was included at Appendix 1 and the minutes of that meeting were appended at Appendix 2. Members at that meeting had resolved to defer the matter for:
 - Further consultation by the applicant with the community.
 - Information to be provided in relation to parking, floodlighting and the wider impact of the lighting.
 - Lifespan of the pitches, including the impact on climate emergency of the material to be used.
 - Community use for the proposed facilities.
- Since the meeting in August the applicant had held a consultation and exhibition event on 11th October 2022, which had included presentation boards, plans, diagrams and visuals. Since the event further representations had been received in objection to the application.
- At the previous meeting objectors had raised concerns that visitors may not use the visitor car park and would park on Austhorpe Lane, Barrowby Lane, or other streets to the west of Green Park. In response to this the applicant had undertaken an assessment in relation to driving and walking times from these areas to the proposed car park and Hub (through which the pitches are accessed). It was their view that it would be difficult to find parking spaces and would require a longer walking distance to the Hub making it more inconvenient than using the proposed car park. It was also noted that some residents during the consultation had expressed concern about the potential to use the primary school drop off / pick up and parking area secured through a previous planning permission.
- Members were advised that conditions securing details of a traffic and parking monitoring plan and mitigation measures for Austhorpe Lane and vicinity, and a Parking Management Plan had been added.
- The applicant had tried to show the effect of the light spill. Lux levels had been provided for Members of the light spill and these were explained for Member's information. Members were informed that the proposed pitches would be cut into the plateaux and additional vegetation would be planted, which would help to obscure the view of the floodlights. It was acknowledged that the trees would need time to mature and grow.
- CGI's had also been provided in relation to lighting along with drone footage of similar floodlighting at the Bodington pitches facility. Members were to note that the Lighting Officer who had spoken at the previous Panel meeting had said that the lighting proposals did meet current best practice.
- In relation to the lifespan of the pitches and the spread of rubber crumb, the applicant was proposing special grills to capture the rubber crumb and trekboards to mitigate the spread from the pitch, and boot scrapers were to be provided also. Members were advised that the lifespan of the proposed 3G pitches would be 10 years, subject to usage and maintenance. At the end of life, the pitch was to be disposed of with a registered waste carrier.

- Members were informed that it is understood that there are specialist waste disposal carriers in Leeds and nationwide. Fundamentally, waste disposal must be carried out in accordance with current waste and pollution control legislation.
- Members were reminded – while such matters can be regarded as material planning considerations and given weight as appropriate – national guidance emphasises that planning decisions should (1) assume that other permitting and control regimes work effectively and (2) enable such regimes to operate, so not duplicating the role of those regimes.
- Members were advised that one of the revisions to the plans was for a playzone which would replace the previously proposed junior 9 aside pitch. The playzone could be used for a variety of sports including basketball, cricket, hockey, netball, tennis and wheelchair football. The playzone would have less land take, allowing for more trees to be retained, as well as allowing greater soft landscaping to be planted to give additional ecological benefits. The fencing around the playzone would be the same as for the other pitches with the same height and same materials.
- It was also noted that another revision to the plans was to have the children's play area close to the Hub.
- Members were informed that since the publication of the agenda a further 13 letters in objection had been received, the officer summarised the comments at the conclusion of the presentation.

The Public Speaking Protocol had been followed with regard to speaking rights at the Panel meeting. However, Chair noted that the applicant and the agent were present at the meeting to provide answers to questions from Members if required. In response to questions from Members the Panel were provided with the following information from the applicant and the agent:

- The life expectancy of the artificial pitches was 10 years with maintenance, this was with proposed usage of 20 hours per week. Grass pitches with proposed usage of 3 hours per week would require maintenance and seeding where the grass became worn and time for the grass to grow. It was noted that 153 teams had signed up to use the facilities, each team would train for up to 1 hour, it would not be possible to meet the needs of all the teams on a grass pitch.
- The model for the Parklife proposal had been pursued to allow spare capacity for other clubs to play on the pitches. The applicant proposes to have sustainable sport provision throughout the city. The Parklife development would support a lot of training use, which would remove some of the use from the grass pitches around the city, which could then be used by other people.
- The applicant had gone out to all the clubs who had expressed an interest in using the facility. They were asked to identify their current training regime setting out the day and time they practice and play matches. This had informed the modelling undertaken to date vis-à-vis usage. Each club would be given an appropriate allocation creating a timetable for use for the development.

In response to questions from Members the Panel were provided with the following information from officers:

- Members were provided with the definition of sustainability in planning terms quoted from the National Planning Policy Framework.
- It was noted that a letter had been received which provided alternative materials to the proposed artificial grass. The alternatives had been put to the applicant although the officer was aware that the Football Foundation funding is reliant on the use of an all-weather astroturf (3G) surface. The applicant approached the table to confirm that funding would not be available from the identified source if this type of 3G pitch was not used at the facility.
- The Legal Officer advised the Panel that Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 denotes who can appeal a planning decision. It would be the applicant in this case and the applicant is the Council, separate in its role to the Council as the Local Planning Authority. Therefore, theoretically it could be the applicant who could appeal any decision made, but it was noted that this had never been done at Leeds in relation to a Council planning application. If not approved it would be likely that the application would be withdrawn, and the scheme revisited to bring forward in a different guise.
- In relation to parking provision at Austhorpe Primary School, it was noted that this was under a separate planning permission, which also included a link from the nearby Redrow housing development and to alleviate current on street parking. It had been suggested at the previous Panel meeting that visitor use of the school car park could help to address overspill parking. There was a strong view against this by some of the residents at the consultation event.
- It was noted that in relation to bio-diversity net gain this application had been treated as any other application and the application accords with current policy.

Members comments included:

- This application is a question of whether this is sustainable, and it would not be realistic to go forward without a funder. There was a need for children to be able to access all weather pitches especially in the poorest areas of the city. It was the view that the environmental concerns raised had not been addressed properly (albeit the proposals comply with planning policy) and the materials proposed were of concern, though their use and disposal are subject to other legislation and statutory bodies.
- In relation to bio-diversity net gain the Council could have chosen to voluntarily exceed the policy requirements. The Council should be taking the lead on this.
- There was a need to consider the benefits of sport for children and the need to make more provision. This proposal was one which would help to deliver the considerable wellbeing benefits for children that arise from sporting activities.
- Members requested a condition be incorporated such that there would be a complaints procedure / process available to address concerns of residents during construction.

The Chair said that the Panel and officers had listened to the concerns raised by the residents and officers had worked hard for a better scheme. The Panel had to consider that application before them and consider areas of the city who also need this type of facility. It was acknowledged that this was not perfect, but it was better than some areas had. Without a funder, it would not be possible to fund this type of facility. The Chair made mention of the development at Headingley Stadium in relation to lighting and said that it had not impacted residents as much as was feared. He thanked officers for their work on this scheme.

The Group Manager (Area Planning) said that a condition in relation to residents having the ability to raise a concern or a query during construction could be added.

RESOLVED – To defer and delegate to the Chief Planning Officer for approval, subject to the specified conditions set out in the submitted report, and the additional condition suggested by Members, and any amendments to or additional conditions that the Chief Planning Officer may consider appropriate.

45 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To note the next meeting of North and East Plans Panel as Thursday 15th December 2022 at 1.30pm at Civic Hall.