



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

15 AUGUST 2019

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 19/0512/08
(GH)
APPLICANT: Miss M Gibbs
DEVELOPMENT: Installation of 14 x flood lighting columns.
LOCATION: **CWM CLYDACH ATHLETIC GROUND, KING
GEORGE V MEMORIAL PARK, CAMBRIAN COURT
BUSINESS PAVILION TO END SOUTH, TONYPANDY**
DATE REGISTERED: 03/07/2019
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Tonypandy

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

REASONS:

The proposed floodlighting would enhance the quality and attractiveness of the existing facilities at the Athletic Ground, whilst promoting and enabling greater use during winter months and darker evenings.

On account of their scale, appearance and distance from the closest neighbouring dwellings, it is considered that the floodlights would neither be visually detrimental, nor harmful to the amenity of the closest residents.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The application has been submitted by the Council, on land within its ownership, and where the Council's interest is of more than a minor nature.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning consent is sought to construct 14 floodlighting columns at the Cwm Clydach Athletic Ground, Tonypandy.

It is proposed that the columns would be erected at regular intervals around the perimeter of the running track. Each galvanised steel column would be to a height of 18m and would support a grouping of 5 or 6 separate LED lights.

The details accompanying the application indicate that the floodlighting system would meet the technical requirements for an Athletics Class 1 system, with the intensity of the lighting being reduced to a Class 3 level for the purposes of training.

The applicant has stated that the local athletics, triathlon and running clubs support the proposal since the facility could be used all year and into the evening in the winter months.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application property comprises an athletic sports ground, which contains an oval running track, a marked football pitch and facilities for other sports such as long jump. The property benefits from changing room facilities and storage space within a building to the north-eastern corner of the site

The sports ground is located to the west of Tonypandy and south of Clydach Vale, and benefits from a direct vehicular access from the main road leading to Clydach Lake and The Pavilions.

The surrounding land to the south is open countryside, is wooded and rises in level away from the site; whilst that to the west accommodates a fenced and floodlit football ground. Conversely, the closest neighbouring properties are at Court Street/Fern Terrace at least 80m to the north, and 85m to the north-west at Jones Street and Railway Terrace.

PLANNING HISTORY

There are no recent or relevant applications on record with this site.

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by direct notification to forty-six neighbouring properties and notices were erected on site.

Two letters of objection have been received highlighting the following concerns:

- Light pollution from overspill
- Excessive number of floodlighting columns
- Floodlights at the Cambrian Blues pitch cause light pollution
- Providing lights to a Class 1 Athletics standard would be a misuse of Council funds
- Residents should not pay for this through tax
- The playing field should be left open for the general public
- Existing traffic and parking on the adjacent highway will be worsened

These issues are considered within the body of the report which follows.

CONSULTATION

Highways and Transportation - due to the location of the proposed flood lights, and it being adjacent to a 30mph road there is no cause for highway concern.

The Coal Authority - no objection, the application site does not fall within the defined Development High Risk Area.

Public Health and Protection - conditions are recommended in respect of noise, dust, waste and hours of operation. However, it is considered that these can be best addressed by an informative note to any consent.

No other consultation responses have been received within the statutory period.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies just outside and to the south and west of the settlement boundary for Tonypany

Policy AW5 - sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

Policy AW6 - requires development to involve a high quality design and to make a positive contribution to place making, including landscaping.

Policy AW10 - supports development proposals which are not detrimental to public health or the environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design and Placemaking

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications, regard should also be given to the requirements of National Planning Policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where National Planning Policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

The Welsh Government published Planning Policy Wales 10 on 5th December 2018, and the document aims to incorporate the objectives of the Well-being of Future generations Act into Town & Country Planning.

It is considered that this proposal meets the seven wellbeing of future generations goals inasmuch as they relate to the proposed development and that the site has been brought forward in a manner consistent with the five ways of working.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking as set down in Chapter 2 People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking, of PPW10 and is also consistent with the following inasmuch as they relate to the development

Chapter 1 (Managing New Development)
Chapter 2 (Maximising Well-Being and Sustainable Places through Placemaking)
Chapter 4 (Active and Social Places)

Other policy guidance considered:

PPW Technical Advice Note 12 - Design

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Main Issues:

Principle of the proposed development

The proposal seeks the installation of floodlights to enable all year and evening use of the existing athletics track and facilities at the Cwm Clydach Ground. Given that the recreational and sporting land use is already well-established, it is considered that in principle, the proposal is acceptable, subject to an assessment of the material concerns below.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The application site consists of established sports fields and other associated recreation facilities, although it is acknowledged that the proposed floodlight columns would project higher than any of the other structures within the site, and that the lighting would create some prominence within the hours of darkness.

By way of comparison, it is noted that the street lighting columns on the adjacent highway are 10m tall, thus those proposed to the track would be 8m taller than these. However the columns would add very little mass on account of their narrow width, and the rising level of the highway towards the west would help to screen some views towards the site.

Taking into account the recreational nature of both the site and the neighbouring football ground; that most of the surrounding dwellings are set back some distance away from the boundary of the site to the north and the backdrop to the south is a wooded bank, it is considered that the lighting would not appear incongruous and result in unacceptable visual harm to the street scene.

Impact on neighbouring occupiers

The site is already well established and used by the community and a number of clubs. It is likely that the nearest residents of the area would have become accustomed to the activities generated by the use of its facilities, including into the summer evenings, which provide health and social benefits to the local community.

However, this use has not been possible during darker autumn and winter evenings and, notwithstanding the adjacent floodlit football ground, it is recognised that the introduction of lighting at the application site would represent a significant change. As a consequence, any potential impacts upon the amenities of nearby residents should be considered as the key material concern.

Nonetheless the floodlights would be installed so as to face inwards and down towards the athletic track, and as noted above, the nearest dwellings would be at least 80m away from the site boundary.

Whilst it is expected that residents looking towards the site might consider that the lights would produce a degree of glare, the applicant has provided a plan plotting the lux levels for both athletics and football uses within the ground, which demonstrate only limited overspill onto adjacent land.

Therefore, noting that the highway network serving the site and closest dwellings is also lit, it is considered that this would not represent a degree of light pollution or detriment sufficient to warrant a recommendation of refusal.

Lastly the applicant has advised that the lights would be available for daily use, but not beyond 9.15pm – the extra quarter-hour for the purposes of allowing users to leave the facility safely before the lights are turned off. However, a condition is proposed to be appended to any consent to control this matter.

Other issues

Of the other concerns raised by objectors, current parking demand and congestion were cited as being problematic and would worsen if the site were open later in the winter months.

Members will have noted that the Council's Highways and Transportation Section has not objected to the proposal or recommended any conditions. The applicant has also stated that usage is expected to increase during the winter period from the local clubs, but that any football fixtures would not since they would continue to take place at the weekend. This would not be considered to be an unacceptable intensification of use that would cause detriment to highway safety.

In addition one of the representations from residents objected to the use of Council funds to enable the project, and whilst the concern is noted, this is not a matter germane to the determination of the application.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusion

Having taken account of all of the issues outlined above, the application proposal is considered to represent an appropriate balance between the need to provide enhanced sporting facilities, in this case the ability to use existing sports fields for longer hours during winter months, and maintaining the character of the application site and amenities of neighbouring residents. The application is therefore considered to comply with Policies AW5, AW6 and AW10 of the Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE BELOW CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents entitled:

- Proposed floodlighting HLS 05437
- Location of proposed floodlights
- Philips OptiVision LED gen3
- Data Sheet No. 1A

and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 15th May 2019, unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. Notwithstanding the development hereby approved, use of the floodlights, on any day of the week, shall not be permitted any later than 21:15hrs.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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