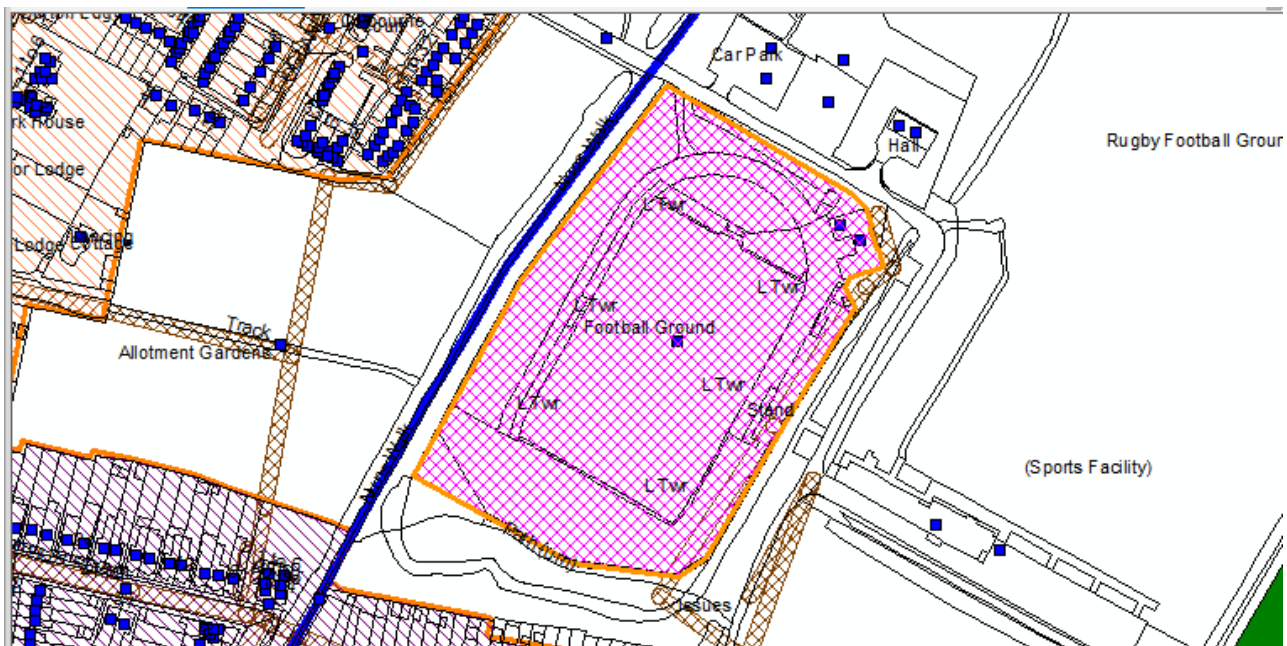


Case No: 23/01704/FUL
Proposal Description: Provision of an artificial grass pitch (AGP), floodlighting, new and relocated stands, storage container, vehicular access replacement, re-surfacing of the existing parking area and ancillary works (Amended Plans)
Address: The City Ground
Hillier Way
Winchester
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: St Bartholomew
Applicants Name: Mr C Drummond
Case Officer: Sean Quigley
Date Valid: 14 July 2023
Recommendation: Permit
Pre Application Advice Yes.



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Reasons for Recommendation.

The development is recommended for approval as the principle of development is in accordance with local plan policies which support appropriate development in the countryside (MTRA4); seek improvements in built recreation facilities in the district (CP7); and permit new leisure and recreational facilities outside settlement boundaries (including the expansion of existing facilities) (DM13).

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There are no material considerations, including the NPPF, which would justify determining the application other than in accordance with the development plan.

It is also noted that the council will support suitable proposals to improve facilities which enable residents and visitors to have good physical and mental health – this objective is identified in the Council Plan 2020-2025.

General Comments

The application is reported to Committee because of the number of objections received contrary to the Officer's recommendation.

Site Description

The site, which has an area of approximately 2Ha, lies to the northeast of central Winchester and is outside the settlement boundary. The site is defined as countryside in the local plan. Located to the south and west of Nun's Walk, the site comprises an existing grass football pitch with floodlights, spectator stands to the east, west and north, and a clubhouse to the northeast. The site is bounded by playing fields to the east and allotments to the west, a car-park and City of Winchester Squadron building is to the north and to the south is an area of parkland with wooded areas which separates the site from the established residential area further south which is a conservation area. Further north and east is the boundary South Downs National Park (approximately 130m north east at its closest). A public right of way, Allan King Way runs along the western boundary.

The application site is not subject to any specific protective environmental designations, though the River Itchen SSSI and SAC are close. There are no listed buildings nearby.

Proposal

The proposal is for the provision of an artificial grass pitch, floodlighting, new and relocated stands, storage container, vehicular access, the re-surfacing and formalisation of the existing parking area and ancillary works. The proposed hours of use are 08:00-22:00 Monday to Sunday.

The proposal has been amended by the applicant during the application process - the proposals for a hard-surfaced and extended parking area and access road have been removed and the design now proposes the resurfacing with gravel of the existing parking area in the northern part of the site.

Relevant Planning History

00/00980/FUL - Erection of 6 no 15 metre high demountable floodlights - Permitted 20.12.00

05/00917/FUL - 4 No. ancillary buildings (RETROSPECTIVE) - Permitted 01.06.2005

05/02844/FUL - Placement of 2 no. ancillary mobile buildings on east side of ground (RETROSPECTIVE). Approved 20.02.2006

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05/01652/FUL - Use of land for car parking. Refused 03.10.2005

07/00092/FUL - Use of existing match day carpark for 65 weekday parking spaces.
Refused 20.04.2007

Consultation Responses

Service Lead for Community and Wellbeing – Natural Environment (Landscape)

Comments:

Issues relating to the artificial surface, lighting, trees, drainage, landscape impact, viewpoints and parking needs to be considered.

HCC Countryside Service

No objections

Hampshire County Council Ecology Officer

Comment:

Further information in relation to loss of biodiversity on site and impact of lighting on bats and riparian mammals is required.

Service Lead for Engineering, Transport and Special Maintenance (Drainage)

No objections

Service Lead for Public Protection – (Environmental Protection)

No objections.

Sport England

Supports the proposal

South Downs National Park Authority

Comment:

The application SDNPA would encourage a sensitive approach to lighting which protects the Dark Sky Reserve and wildlife.

Representations

10 objecting representations received from different addresses citing the following material planning reasons:

- increased noise, light and air pollution in the area affecting people and wildlife (contrary to LPP1 Policy DM13)
- disturbance during the construction phase
- the development is incompatible with the Council's target to become carbon neutral by increasing vehicular movements
- increased traffic will be dangerous for local children, cyclists, and animals and will go through a residential neighbourhood
- will negatively impact the biodiversity of the area
- the artificial pitch will increase flooding in the area
- the local roads are in poor condition and the additional traffic will make this worse
- the development will negatively impact the Public Right of Way

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- potential for increased anti-social behaviour and crime
- there has been a complete lack of community consultation and insufficient time to consider the planning application
- increased illegal/inconsiderate parking
- the application does not follow the pre-application advice
- the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy is out of date
- the rubber crumb which forms part of the playing surface will need to be periodically topped-up as it migrates from the pitch. This can be 1 to 2 tonnes per year.
- Some of the supporting documentation contains references to other locations

112 supporting representations received from different addresses citing the following material planning reasons:

- the pitch will be able to be used more, by a more diverse group of users, including the young, the old, men and women, boys and girls and disabled people, in all weathers
- Winchester lacks this facility and it will promote grass-roots football and the interests of future generations
- will raise the profile of the football club
- a great facility for young people in particular
- the football club will be able to complete more matches and training sessions reducing travel to facilities elsewhere
- the football club needs to compete with standard of facilities at contemporary's grounds
- the football club is a great asset to the community providing a supportive environment to young people in particular
- Winchester first team are playing at the highest ever level and the replacement pitch will support this progress
- the development will enable the club to cater for more women and girls and this should be supported
- the development will significantly increase the enjoyment of supporters of the club
- the development will enhance the club's role as a community hub
- will address the shortfall in the provision of facilities in the area
- the existing facilities and pitch are outdated and require modernisation
- will assist in combating child obesity
- the facilities will be able to be used by the university and Peter Symonds college
- the development will provided safe good quality parking for visitors
- the overall benefits of the development outweigh any negatives
- support for Winchester Football Club is at an all-time high and the proposed improvements will further increase numbers bring local economic benefits
- the development will address the shortfall in artificial pitches in the district
- the development will create significant additional income for the football club

Winchester Rugby Club - expressed support for the application and commended the improvements to the football club's facilities. Cited expansion of use to a wider range of participants; facilitates year-round use; highly sustainable location in this sporting and leisure zone; improved parking provision is also supported; possibility of dual use for rugby. Overall the benefits of the development significantly outweigh any dis benefits.

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Representations received to the amended proposal:

2 supporting representations received from different addresses citing the following material planning reasons:

- this is a tremendous opportunity for the City of Winchester to support a vital community activity which will have a significant positive impact on peoples mental health and the social capital of the city
- the artificial pitch and other facilities are long overdue and will be a massive asset to players and supporters.

Relevant Government Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Updated 5/9/23)

Section 2 (paras 7-10) - Achieving sustainable development with three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental

Para 11 – determining planning applications in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development

Para 47 - planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise

Para 92 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction; enable and support healthy lifestyles for example through the provision of..... sports facilities

Para 93 - To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should; plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as..... sports venues); take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

Para 98 – Provide access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

Para 100 - decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 21b-006-20190315 - How must decisions on applications for planning permission be made?

Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 37-002-20140306 - How do local planning authorities and developers assess the needs for sports and recreation facilities?

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Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1). DS1 – Development Strategy and Principles

DS1 – Development Strategy and Principles
MTRA4 – Development in the Countryside
CP7 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation
CP8 - Economic Growth and Diversification
CP10 – Transport
CP13 – High Quality Design
CP16 – Biodiversity
CP17 – Flooding, Flood Risk and the Water Environment
CP19 – South Downs National Park
CP20

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations

DM1 - Location of New Development
DM10 - Essential Facilities and Services in the Countryside
DM13 - Leisure and Recreation in the Countryside
DM15 – Local Distinctiveness
DM16 – Site Design Criteria
DM17 – Site Development Principles
DM18 – Access and Parking
DM19 – Development and Pollution
DM21 – Contaminated Land
DM26 – Archaeology
DM27 – Development in Conservation Areas
DM29 – Heritage Assets

Supplementary Planning Document

National Design Guide 2019
High Quality Places 2015
Air Quality SPD September 2021
Residential Parking Standards (2009)

Other relevant documents

Climate Emergency Declaration Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2030
Biodiversity Action Plan 2021
Council Plan 2020-2025
The Winchester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2018

Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In Winchester District, planning applications are considered in the context of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2 (LPP1 and LPP2).

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An important part of the context for the consideration of this planning application is the existing football club facilities on the site which has operated for a significant number of years. The proposal under consideration is an application for improvements to, and an intensification of the use of the existing facility which is located on the edge of the built-up area of Winchester. The assessment of the application is the assessment of the impact of the proposed changes, not of the existing facility.

With regard to the principle of development, LPP1 Policies MTRA4 (Development in the Countryside), and CP7 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation) and LPP2 Policy DM13 (Leisure and Recreation in the Countryside) are most relevant.

Policy MTRA4 sets out the types of development which the Council will permit in the countryside. This includes the redevelopment of existing facilities in the countryside to meet an operational need, provided development is proportionate to nature and scale of the site, its setting and countryside location. It is considered that the proposals constitute a proportionate redevelopment of the existing facilities and are therefore in compliance with Policy MTRA4.

Policy CP7 indicates that the Council will seek improvements in the open space network and built recreational facilities within the district by encouraging new provision or by improving existing facilities. The proposal is an improvement to an existing facility and is therefore in accordance with Policy CP7.

Policy DM13 indicates that outside settlement boundaries (the application site is outside the settlement boundary) the expansion of established facilities and the use of land for leisure and recreational activities will be permitted where it accords with the development plan, subject to the proposal being suitable to its location. The proposal complies with Policy DM13.

Sport England are a key statutory consultee for this application and are in support of the proposals.

The Winchester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2018 (PPS) which covers the period to 2031, identifies a strategic need for 4 full-size 3G pitches in the Winchester District. The provision of the 3G pitch will also reduce the pressure on existing grass pitches in the area. The PPS also refers to the potential to deliver a 3G pitch at the City Ground. In terms of local need, the pitch will be used by Winchester City FC which supports a range of teams and other users. In addition, one of the significant benefits of the proposed AGP is that it will enable the pitch to be used in all weathers, significantly reducing the number of occasions when it is unplayable.

In conclusion, the principle of the proposed development is in accordance with the development plan and is acceptable.

Assessment under 2017 EIA Regulations

The development does not fall under Schedule I or Schedule II of the 2017 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

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A number of local plan policies seek to protect the character and appearance of the local environment - this includes LPP1 Policies CP13, CP20 and MTRA4, and LPP2 Policies DM13, DM15, DM16, DM17 and DM19.

The proposal will result in additional development which includes new boundary fencing, additional spectator stands, shipping-container style storage units, dugout seating and the formalisation and re-surfacing of the existing parking area in the north of the site. However, the proposed development is not of a significant scale and while there is public access to most of the land surrounding the ground, views into the site are limited due to the established tree and hedge cover on the site boundaries, and the change in level on the northern and western boundaries where the public rights of way are significantly below the level of the football ground. The most significant visual change will be in views into the northern part of the site through the main entrance on Hillier Way. Currently, this rough-gravel and grassed area provides informal parking for the site. It is proposed that this area is surfaced with new gravel, with spaces marked out. 1m high bollard lights will be placed around the edge of this area, and 2x 4m high lamp-post style lights will be positioned in the centre of this area. Whilst the formalised parking area will be visible from Hillier Way, the visual impact will not be significant, particularly as those views will be transitory with people travelling along that vehicular and pedestrian route.

As such, it is not considered that the development will have any materially harmful visual impact on the character or appearance of the area.

Lighting

The proposal also includes new floodlighting which will be provided in much the same format as the current arrangement - on six masts in the same position as the existing floodlights, spaced evenly around the perimeter of the pitch. The new lights will be LED luminaires rather than older-style high-intensity discharge lamps. The submitted Light Impact Statement indicates that the proposed LED lighting is more directed to the playing surface and does not over-illuminate the surrounding area such that people living in the area will not experience unacceptable impacts. 15m high floodlights have been adopted for this proposal to ensure minimal spill light, minimal back-light, and optimum uniformity over the field of play, all to ensure that the lighting;

- is directed fully downwards towards the field of play.
- avoids sky glow.
- achieves full cut-off as recommended by The British Astronomical Association's Campaign for Dark Skies.
- achieves good luminaire aiming

The Council notes that the lighting scheme has been designed within the guidance set out in the Bat Conservancy Trust/Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance note 08/18 "Bats and artificial lighting in the UK".

The improved access and parking facilities will also be illuminated, with 1.0m high bollard lighting and 4.0m high lamp posts located around new vehicular circulation areas and parking spaces. Condition 7 is attached requiring further details of this lighting to be submitted to ensure these lights are suitably designed to prevent unnecessary light spillage.

In considering the impact of the replacement lighting, the Council has had regard for relevant local plan policies including DM19 (Development and Pollution) which seeks to prevent light intrusion; the guidance contained in the NPPF that planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; and that the concerns expressed by the South Downs National Park Authority that the proposals take a sensitive approach to lighting which conforms to the Institute of Lighting Professionals for lighting in environmental zones, and tries to achieve zero upwards light spill.

The new floodlighting effectively mimics the existing but with modern lighting which reduces light spillage. Details of the smaller bollard lighting and lamp posts are required by condition to ensure these will not be intrusive. Overall, the proposed lighting is considered to be acceptable in the context of relevant local and national planning policies, the concerns of the SDNPA and local residents.

The originally submitted design included proposals for the loss of 3 high quality trees. However, the amended design does not involve the loss of any trees and therefore the site retains this important aspect of the site's character. The proposed re-surfaced parking area does encroach into the root protection areas of 3 trees on the northern boundary of the site there is however a technical solution for this involving the use of geocell matting. Condition 4 and 5 are recommended ensuring retained trees will be protected during the construction phase of the development.

In summary, consideration of the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area takes place in the context of the existing football club facilities. By reason of its scale and design the new development, including lighting, will not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the area. The development therefore complies with local plan policies CP13, DM15, DM16, DM17 and DM19.

Development affecting the South Downs National Park

The application site is located approximately 125m from the South Downs National Park. Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated 2021. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in national parks and that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.

This proposal is for improvements to an existing facility and the new lighting (which is the main concern in terms of potential impact on the National Park) only effectively replaces existing floodlights (or introduces lower new lighting for the parking area) and is an improvement in that it consists of less intrusive modern lighting. Therefore the development will not affect any land within the National Park and is in accordance with Section 11a of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Historic Environment

The proposed development is approximately 140m from a Grade II* listed building Abbotts Barton Farm House. The northern boundary of the Winchester Conservation Area is also approximately 40m south of the application site boundary. Consideration has been taken

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of the potential impact on these heritage assets. The following legislation and policies are taken into account in the assessment and determination of this planning application.

Relevant Legislation

The preservation of the special architectural/historic interest of the listed building and its setting (S.66 P(LBCA) Act 1990; Policy DM29 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2021) Section 16.

The preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area (S.72 P(LBCA) Act 1990; Policies DM27 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2021) Section 16.

Guidance

The consideration and assessment of due regard is required in relation to the relevant legislation and guidance.

As such due regard has been given to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990) which confirms that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Listed Building/Structure. Case law has established that where an authority finds that a development proposal would harm the setting of a listed building, it must give that harm “considerable importance and weight”.

The historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance further outlines the role of the Local Planning Authority in considering the effects of new development that are in the vicinity of or affect the setting of listing buildings and heritage assets. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset in considering the impact of a proposal on its significance (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Policy CP20 of WDLPP1 and Policy DM29 of WDLPP2 ensure that development preserves and enhances heritage assets and their settings.

In this case, because the Grade II* listed building is 140m from the site, and proposed development itself is contained within the existing football ground, there will be no impact on the listed building or its setting.

It is therefore considered that the proposals will not result in any harm to the significance of the setting and historic interest of the listed building, Section 16 para 199 of the NPPF (2021), S.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy CP20 of WDLPP1 and DM29 of WDLPP2 and the historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance.

The Winchester Conservation Area is also approximately 40m from the site and separated from it by an area of public open space comprising grassland and scrub vegetation. In these circumstances it is not considered that the additional development within the existing facility will have any material impact on the conservation area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal will preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area in accordance (S.72 P (LBCA) Act 1990; and preserve the character and historic interest of the Conservation Area in accordance with Policies DM27 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2021) Section 16.

The proposals will not have any impact upon archaeology or Non-Designated Heritage Assets including their setting.

Neighbouring Amenity

In themselves, the extent and nature of the physical changes to the ground will not have any material impact on the residential amenities of local residents. Whilst the increase in the intensity of use of the facility arising from the change in the pitch surface has the potential to cause some detriment to local residents, the information supporting the application indicates that rather than increase the peak number of participants and spectators at any time, the effect will be that the busy times will extend over a longer period. However, given that to date, periods of peak use have been successfully accommodated without undue impacts on the amenities of local residents, the Council's assessment is that whilst these periods will be more frequent, the impact will not be unacceptable.

Noise

The applicant has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment which concludes that the predicted noise level from use of the facility is below the criterion of 50 dB LAeq (1 hour) derived from the World Health Organisation (1999) as being the threshold for the onset of moderate community annoyance. The predicted maximum noise levels from voice, whistle and ball impact are within the criteria and is thus considered acceptable.

The predicted noise levels have been compared against the existing noise climate and the proposals result in a minor to moderate change in noise levels. This change is considered acceptable due to the absolute noise levels being within the WHO guidelines and the suitably low internal ambient noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive dwellings.

The assessment also concludes that the change in noise level is acceptable during the evening hours because the existing noise climate at that time includes noise from sports sessions at the Winchester Rugby Club, including shouting and whistles.

With regards to planning policy, it would be expected that the development would potentially be noticeable but not intrusive and would result in 'no observed adverse effect'. This is defined in National Planning Policy Guidance as 'Noise can be heard but does not cause any change in behaviour or attitude. Can slightly affect the acoustic character of the area but not such that there is a perceived change in the quality of life'.

In addition, the football club will implement a Noise Management Plan with the objective of mitigating sources of noise including footballs being kicked and hitting perimeter fencing and pitch barriers, voices/shouting/cheering during training sessions and

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matches, by players/officials/parents/spectator, visitors arriving leaving the ground including by motor vehicle. Mitigation measures will include supervision of youth teams, access to the pitch only for the period of hire, signage insisting on good behaviour, stop fencing is rigid steel open mesh generally containing a small aperture, fence mesh panels are insulated from fence posts using neoprene washers fitted to every fence post / mesh fixing point to aid noise reduction and acoustic attenuation by reducing rattle and vibration from football impact and nets will be in use during football games, training and activities and will be suitably maintained to ensure they contain ball strikes.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy DP17 of LPP2.

Sustainable Transport

Site Access

The development proposes to retain the existing sole access to the ground onto Hillier Way which links local road to the north through the established residential area. The Highway Authority expressed concerns regarding the movement of coaches, and other larger vehicles in and around the site, however the applicant has provided additional information which have satisfactorily resolved these concerns.

Parking Provision

The current parking arrangements at the football club comprise an area of informal parking in the north of the site and an informal area of overflow parking on the western part. In total this provides spaces for approximately 100 cars. The amended design proposes:

- that the area currently used for overflow parking (approximately 60 spaces) in the western part of the site will remain unchanged
- the resurfacing/replacement of the existing gravel and grass surfaces in the north of the site with a new gravel surface to provide 40 standard parking spaces, and 4 mini-bus parking spaces
- a hard-surfaced area to accommodate 4 parking spaces for disabled people – this will be a sub-base with a 90mm thick twin-course permeable asphalt for light duty traffic
- the marking out of gravel parking spaces with concrete edging strips – painted lines for the disabled spaces
- the provision of 1m high bollard lighting around the edge of the formal parking area and 2x 4m high lamp-post style lights in the centre of the parking area.
- no changes to the informal parking area in the west of the site
- an area for powered 2-wheeler parking
- covered cycle parking

The Traffic Impact Statement submitted in support of the application indicates that weekday parking demands range from 6 to 76 and weekend demands ranging from 26 to 119.

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Peak parking demands exceeding the overall parking capacity occur on Saturday between 10am and 12 noon and on Sunday at the same time. To mitigate this requirement for additional on-site parking during these times – a shortfall of 39 spaces – the existing grass overspill parking area on the western side of the site will continue to be used as necessary.

In considering the proposed parking provision, the Highway Authority accepts the applicant's conclusion that the majority of the increase in use of the facility will result from increased use throughout the year, including during periods of bad weather which cannot currently take place due to the pitch being unplayable. Whilst it is acknowledged that cumulative use will increase across the day/week, it is not expected that hourly use during the week will increase to an unsustainable amount as it will be limited by the size of the facility.

The applicant has submitted a Parking Coordination Plan which sets out current and ongoing arrangements for the coordination of traffic on match days in order to minimise the detrimental impacts of vehicles in and around the site.

Sustainable Access

The football ground is accessible by a range of sustainable means including walking and cycling. Nuns Walk, a public right of way, runs parallel with the site's western boundary and there are informal routes linking the surrounding residential areas and the wider public open space in this location. The application includes facilities for cycle parking and a Sustainable Travel Scheme which aims to increase bicycle use. The site is also accessible by bus – the SPRI service is relatively close and links to the town centre and close to the train station. The walkable distance to the bus stops, makes travel by public transport attractive. Winchester Rail Station is situated approximately 1km from the application site. Winchester Station provides further connections to Southampton, Eastleigh and Shawford and the proximity of the Rail Station, makes travel by rail attractive. In conclusion the application is considered to accord with LPP1 Policy CP10 in that the proposals make suitable arrangements to reduce demands on the transport network.

Trip Generation

The Highway Authority has assessed the Trip Generation and Parking Accumulation information submitted with the application and concluded that the majority increase in use will result from increased use throughout the year including during times of bad weather, which cannot currently take place due to the pitch being grass. The cumulative use will increase across the day/week but it is not expected that hourly use during the week will increase to an unsustainable amount as it will be limited by the size of the facility.

Sustainable Travel Scheme

The applicant has submitted a Sustainable Travel Scheme (STS) which has the objective of reducing travel-related impacts and to encourage sustainable methods of travel to the city ground. The aim is to achieve a 20% reduction in the frequency of car travel to and from the football ground within 5 years.

The scheme has the following objectives;

- Reduce single-occupancy car travel and the frequency of car travel;
- Ensure that all visitors are comprehensively informed of travel choices;

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- Ensure that collective transport arrangements have the least possible adverse environmental impact;
- Proactively encourage visitors to change travel habits to more sustainable modes of transport – active travel;
- Set appropriate targets that are regularly reviewed and amended as required following change;
- Monitor travel patterns and performance against targets of this Travel Plan;
- Ensure this Travel Plan is kept live and current.

In order to ensure that the STS is implemented effectively, the Football Club Propose to appoint an STS Coordinator before the new pitch is first used. The club, through the coordinator will be responsible for the management and implementation of the STS, undertake an annual travel survey, analyse survey data and update the scheme as required. The club will also be responsible for an annual progress report, the dissemination of information to key stakeholders and to act as a contact for information. Other specific measures will include the promotion of walking, cycling and the use of public transport; the management of on-site parking including the use of a dedicated team of stewards to ensure parking is used efficiently and effectively including pre-match liaison with the rugby club and travelling opposition supporters; the impact of parking on surrounding roads will be monitored and the results used to inform the future direction of the STS.

The Sustainable Travel Scheme is considered to be a positive benefit arising from the proposals and Condition 10 requires the scheme to be implemented before the new pitch is first used.

The site is within the area covered by the Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Table 2 of the SPD - "Impact Screening Thresholds for proposed developments in the SPD area" sets out the categories of development which trigger the requirement for an Air Quality Statement and/or an Air Quality Assessment. The proposed development does not fall within any of the categories of development identified in Table 2 and therefore there is no requirement in respect of the SPD.

In summary the Council considers that the development accords with Policies CP10 of LPP1 and DM18 of the LPP2.

The applicant's construction management plan has been amended to reflect comments from the Highway Authority. Condition 5 is proposed to be attached to the permission to require the plan to be fully implemented during the construction phase of the development. The proposal therefore complies with Policy DM19 of LPP2.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The site is close to the River Itchen which is both a Special Area of Conservation (a European nature conservation designation protecting high-quality conservation sites) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest - 400m and 150m respectively. Government guidance indicates that it must be decided whether the proposed development risks having a significant effect on the SAC, either on its own or in combination with other proposals. The guidance indicates that if the Council concludes that there is no likely significant effect on the SAC, then there is no need to undertake an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations. In this case, based on the distance from the SAC and the characteristics of the development, it is not likely to have a significant impact on the SAC, and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not required. Similarly, the site's distance from the SSSI means

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that the development will not have a significant impact on it. Any impacts arising from construction work will be controlled by the Construction Environment Management Plan to prevent any spillage or pollution or dust affecting the river (Condition 6)

The submitted Ecological Appraisal Report indicates that the site itself contains a number of habitats, predominantly amenity grassland (the pitch), but also includes improved grassland, dense scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, buildings and hardstanding. The ecological scoping survey recorded that the site was of limited floristic and invertebrate value, with no suitable aquatic value for Great Crested Newts (GCN) and other amphibians. The site is considered sub-optimal for reptiles due to the dominance of short mown grass though the area of dense scrub, longer grassland and ruderal vegetation were considered to offer some suitable refuge for common reptile species. The trees on the site provide nesting habitat for common bird species with the grassland offering some limited foraging.

The six buildings were subject to an external Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment which indicated that one brick-built building had moderate roosting suitability with the remaining structures having negligible suitability. The habitats on site were considered to be of moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats due to the presence of mature trees and proximity to the River Itchen.

A significant aspect of this development is the replacement of the existing grass pitch with an artificial surface. Artificial grass will not provide the environmental benefits that natural grass does, is not a sustainable material and has a limited lifespan (up to 20 years). However, these dis-benefits need to be weighed against the significant benefits which will result from the development. The principal benefit is that it will enable the facility to be used in much more effective and efficient way and will also increase playing and supporting participation rates and therefore reach a larger and more diverse community of users. Other benefits include enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles and recognising that opportunities for sport and physical activity are important for the physical and mental health and well-being of communities. The proposals also seek to mitigate the potential environmental impacts of the development through a number of mitigation and enhancement measures, which are:

- the implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) be implemented during the construction period (Condition 6).
- the trees on site adjacent to the areas of change will be protected throughout the construction phase with fencing erected in line with British Standards BS 5837
- a precautionary approach is recommended in order to prevent potential harm to GCN habitats in the unlikely scenario that they are encountered on site. It is therefore recommended that the works are undertaken under a non-licensed method statement, with the clearance of any potentially suitable habitat such as scrub or the removal of buildings / containers on site be supervised by a GCN licensed ecologist. In the unlikely event a GCN is encountered at any point during the works, all works on site must cease immediately and an ecologist contacted for further advice.
- although the likelihood of harming reptiles during the works is considered to be very low, contractors should remain vigilant at all times and contact RPS for

advice should any reptiles be encountered during the works. Any excavations should be ramped or covered overnight and checked each morning for animals.

- in relation to bats, during the construction phase, works should seek to protect trees from damage, increased noise, vibration and lighting. It is recommended that no night work is undertaken during construction in order to prevent disruption to foraging and commuting bats that may be utilising the habitats adjacent to the site.
- precautionary measures for badgers, including checking excavations and pipework in the mornings be implemented

Condition 10 is attached to the permission to secure these measures.

In summary, while the impacts of the development, including the artificial pitch are recognised, it is considered that the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, as well as the overall public benefit derived from the improved facilities, are sufficient to mitigate these impacts and the proposals are considered to be in accordance with Policy CP16 of the LPP1.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is considered to be low. The proposed artificial turf pitch will comprise a permeable construction including granular aggregate within the base and foundations, and will attenuate surface water before this water drains into the local watercourse. Surface water run-off from the pitch will be limited via a vortex flow control device to ensure that the rate of surface water run-off from the site does not increase as a result of the development. In accordance with the NPPF and NPPG, the site will be drained on a separate system with foul water draining to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way. There will be no new foul water discharge from the 3G ATP, although foul sewerage is relevant to the replacement prefabricated replacement toilet block which will maintain the same waste pipe connections currently being used.

The drainage and flood prevention proposals have been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) - Hampshire County Council, a statutory consultee. The LLFA have confirmed that the proposals are acceptable and therefore the proposal complies with Policy DM17 of the LPP2.

Equality

In determining this planning application, due regard has been given to the Equality Act 2010; Public Sector Equality Duty. Public bodies are required to think consciously about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. The weight given to the Equality Duty, compared to the other factors, will depend on how much that function affects discrimination, equality of opportunity and good relations, and the extent of any disadvantage that needs to be addressed. The Local Planning Authority has given due regard to this duty and the considerations do not outweigh any matters in the exercise of the Council's duty in this regard.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal is for a modest amount of additional built development, an intensification of the use of the site and the introduction of an artificial pitch which is less sustainable than

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the existing grass surface but the scheme is well designed and mitigated and the benefits outweigh these moderate impacts. The proposals will enable the facility to be used in much more effective and efficient way and will also increase playing and supporting participation rates and therefore reach a larger and more diverse community of users. Other benefits include supporting healthy lifestyles and recognising that opportunities for sport and physical activity are important for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of communities.

The proposals are in accordance with local plan policies including MTRA4 which supports the redevelopment of existing facilities in the countryside to meet an operation need; CP7 which supports improvements in built recreational facilities by encouraging new provision or by improving existing facilities; and DM13 which supports the expansion of established facilities and the use of land for leisure and recreational activities where it accords with the development plan. The proposals also accord with the development management policies which seek to ensure that development proposals respond positively to the character, appearance and variety of the local environment, namely DM13, DM15 and DM16.

The proposal is also in accordance with national planning policy as set out in the NPPF which encourages the provision of sports facilities, opportunities for social interaction, healthy lifestyles, social and cultural wellbeing for all sections of the community and access to a network of high-quality open spaces. The development will also assist in achieving the "Living Well" objectives of the Council Plan 2020-2025 which includes the provision of wide range of physical and cultural activities for all ages and abilities, enabling residents to enjoy recreational and cultural opportunities locally.

In conclusion, the benefits of the development are compelling, proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations of which would justify determining the application other than in accordance with the development plan. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents listed below unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority:

Location Plan - S22-252 / DWG / 0001 Rev 2
Proposed Site Plan - S22-252/DWG/0004 - Rev 5
Proposed Lighting Plan - S22-252/DWG/0007 - Rev 1
Proposed Construction Management Plan - S22-252/DWG/0008
Proposed Fencing Elevations - S22-252/DWG/0009
Proposed Lighting Elevations - S22-252/DWG/0009
Proposed Units Elevations - S22-252/DWG/0009

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Proposed Stands Elevations - S22-252/DWG/0009

3. Detailed proposals for the disposal of foul and surface water shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of the development hereby permitted. Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of foul and surface water drainage

4. Protective measures, including fencing and ground protection, in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment V2 (JSL4944_770) shall be installed prior to any demolition, construction or groundwork commencing on the site and shall be retained during construction. The Council's Tree Officer shall be informed once protective measures have been installed in order that they be inspected and deemed appropriate. Telephone Tree Officer - 01962 848360.

Details of the construction of the parking area which encroaches into the root protection areas of trees T2, T3 and T4 (Tree Constraints Plan - Drawing 700) are to be submitted to, approved and inspected by the Council's Tree Officer.

Reason: To ensure protection and long-term viability of retained trees and to minimise impact of construction activity.

5. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Construction Environmental Management Plan (July 2023) and operations shall adhere to this Management Plan throughout the construction period.

Reason: To ensure that all demolition and construction work does not cause materially harmful effects on nearby land, properties and businesses and to ensure the protection of ecology.

6. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan (S22-252/DWG/008 - Rev 01) and operations shall adhere to this Management Plan throughout the construction period.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that all construction work in relation to the application does not cause materially harmful effects on nearby land, properties and businesses.

7. The floodlights hereby approved shall be operated and maintained in accordance with the submitted Winchester City Football Club Light Impact Statement S22-252 JULY 2023. Prior to the first use of the re-surfaced car park, details of the design of the bollard and street lamps servicing the car park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details should be in accordance with Guidance Note 08/18 produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals. This information shall include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and luminaire profiles). The lighting shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to the variation.

Reason: To protect the appearance of the area, the environment and local residents from

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light pollution.

8. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority development shall cease on site if, during any stage of the works, unexpected ground conditions or materials which suggest potential contamination are encountered. Works shall not recommence before a site assessment has been undertaken and details of the findings along with details of any remedial action required (including timing provision for implementation) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be completed other than in accordance with the approved details. NB - potentially contaminated ground conditions include infilled ground, visual evidence of contamination or materials with an unusual odour or appearance.

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of future occupants.

9. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Section 6 of the Ecological Appraisal Report Impact Assessment (ECO02974 B August 2023).

Reason: In order to protect the existing biodiversity of the site.

10. The measures contained with the submitted Winchester Sustainable Travel Scheme S22-025 Rev 02 30 10 2023 shall be implemented before the new artificial pitch is first used. The measures contained with the scheme shall be adhered to thereafter.

Reason: To reduce the use of private motor vehicles and encourage sustainable travel to and from the City Ground.

11. No vehicles (including builder's and contractor's), machinery, equipment, materials, spoil, scaffolding, or anything else associated with the construction, use or occupation of the development, shall be left on or near to Winchester Footpath 8 as to cause obstruction, hindrance or a hazard to users of the Public Right of Way at all times.

Reason: To ensure that Footpath 8, a Public Right of Way, is not obstructed by construction vehicles and to ensuring that the public retain the ability to use the footpath without impediment.

Informatives:

01. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (September 2023) Winchester City Council take a positive and creative approach to development proposals, working with applicants and agents to achieve the best solution. To this end WCC:

- offer a pre-application advice service and,
- update applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application, where possible suggesting alternative solutions.

02. This permission is granted for the following reasons:

The development is in accordance with the Policies and Proposals of the Development Plan set out below, and other material considerations do not have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.

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03. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy

DS1 – Development Strategy and Principles
MTRA4 – Development in the Countryside
CP6 – Local services and Facilities
CP7 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation
CP8 – Economic Growth and Diversification
CP10 - Transport
CP11 – Sustainable Low and Zero Carbon Built Development
CP13 – High Quality Design
CP15 – Green Infrastructure
CP16 – Biodiversity
CP17 – Flooding, Flood Risk and the Water Environment
CP19 – South Downs National Park
CP20 – Heritage and Landscape Character
CP21 – Infrastructure and Community Benefit

Local Plan Part 2: Development Management and Site Allocations (LPP2) (April 2017)

DM5 – Protecting Open Spaces
DM13 – Leisure and Recreation in the Countryside
DM15 – Local Distinctiveness
DM16- Site Design Criteria
DM17- Site Development Principles
DM18- Access and Parking
DM19 – Development and Pollution
DM20 – Development and Noise
DM21 – Contaminated Land
DM23 – Rural Character
DM26 – Archaeology
DM27 – Development in Conservation Areas
DM29 – Heritage Assets

National Planning Policy Framework (September 2023)

Planning Practice Guidance (2023)

Other documents

Vision for Winchester
Air Quality Action Plan
Winchester District Cycling Strategy
Walking Strategy for Winchester
Winchester Sport and Leisure Park Design Framework
Winchester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2018

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04. All building works including demolition, construction and machinery or plant operation should only be carried out between the hours of 0800 and 1800 hrs Monday to Friday and 0800 and 1300 hrs Saturday and at no time on Sundays or recognised public holidays. Where allegations of noise from such works are substantiated by the Environmental Protection Team, a Notice limiting the hours of operation under The Control of Pollution Act 1974 may be served.

05. During Construction, no materials should be burnt on site. Where allegations of statutory nuisance are substantiated by the Environmental Protection Team, an Abatement Notice may be served under The Environmental Protection Act 1990. The applicant is reminded that the emission of dark smoke through the burning of materials is a direct offence under The Clean Air Act 1993.

06. Please be respectful to your neighbours and the environment when carrying out your development. Ensure that the site is well organised, clean and tidy and that facilities, stored materials, vehicles and plant are located to minimise disruption. Please consider the impact on your neighbours by informing them of the works and minimising air, light and noise pollution and minimising the impact of deliveries, parking and working on public or private roads. Any damage to these areas should be remediated as soon as is practically possible.

For further advice on this please refer the Construction Code of Practice

<http://www.ccscheme.org.uk/index.php/ccs-ltd/what-is-the-ccs/code-of-considerate-practice>

07. The applicant is advised that one or more of the Conditions attached to this permission need to be formally discharged by the Local Planning Authority before works can commence on site. Details, plans or samples required by Conditions should be submitted to the Council at least 8 weeks in advance of the start date of works to give adequate time for these to be dealt with. If works commence on site before all of the pre-commencement conditions are discharged then this would constitute commencement of development without the benefit of planning permission and could result in Enforcement action being taken by the Council.

The submitted details should be clearly marked with the following information:

The name of the planning officer who dealt with application

The application case number

Your contact details

The appropriate fee.

Further information, application forms and guidance can be found on the Council's website - www.winchester.gov.uk