

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL - DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Committee: | Planning
Date: |
Address/Location: | Waterwells Sports Centre Stephenson Drive Quedgeley Gloucester
Application No: | 19/00402/FUL
Ward: | Quedgeley Fieldcourt
Expiry Date: | 05.09.2019
Applicant: | QUEDGELEY PARISH COUNCIL
Proposal: | Proposed floodlights to pitch one at Waterwells Sports Centre
Report by: | Paul Instone
Appendices: |

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Waterwells Sports Centre is located to the South of Naas Lane and to the West of Stephenson Drive in Quedgeley. The Sports Centre includes a full size football pitch surrounded by advertisement fencing, two mini football pitches and a synthetic turf pitch. The synthetic turf pitch is enclosed by metal fencing and served by floodlights. There is also a building containing changing rooms and a car park with approximately 40 spaces, both of which are accessed off Stephenson Drive.
- 1.2 The application site itself relates to the existing full size football pitch which is located to the west of the changing rooms building and the application proposes the installation of 4 no. 18 metre high floodlights. The applicant has advised that they would accept a planning condition restricting the use of the floodlights until 2200 each evening.
- 1.3 Waterwells Sports Centre is surrounded by commercial units to the south and east. To the north of the site is Naas Lane, which is a residential street. The residential properties on Naas Lane are principally located to the north of Naas Lane although there are three residential properties to the south of Naas Lane, the closest of which is located approximately 35 metres from the football pitch which is subject to this application.
- 1.4 The site is owned by the City Council and Quedgeley Parish Council have a licence to occupy. It is a well-established and well used sports area and is "home" to Quedgeley Wanderers Football Club.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application Number	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date
09/00277/FUL	Construction of 60m x 40m synthetic sports pitch, 4m high perimeter fencing, 6 floodlights and path to existing changing rooms.	G3Y	13.05.2009
11/01088/FUL	Extension to Sports Centre with hall, kitchen, changing and meeting rooms together with revised vehicular access from	G3Y	09.03.2012

	Stephensons Drive.		
12/00732/ADV	Display of non illuminated signage on wall fronting Stephenson Drive.	GFY	04.10.2012
19/00402/FUL	Proposed floodlights to pitch one at Waterwells Sports Centre		

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

3.1 The following planning guidance and policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

3.2 **National guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan

3.3 **Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (Adopted 11 December 2017)**

SD6 – Landscape

SD14 – Health and environmental quality

INF1 – Transport network

INF3 – Green Infrastructure

INF4 – Social and community Infrastructure

3.4 **City of Gloucester Local Plan (Adopted 14 September 1983)**

The statutory Development Plan for Gloucester includes the partially saved 1983 City of Gloucester Local Plan. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that ‘... *due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.*’ The majority of the policies in the 1983 Local Plan are out-of-date and superseded by later planning policy including the NPPF and the Joint Core Strategy. None of the saved policies are relevant to the consideration of this application.

Emerging Development Plan

3.5 **Gloucester City Plan**

The Gloucester City Plan (“City Plan”) will deliver the JCS at the local level and provide policies addressing local issues and opportunities in the City. The Pre-Submission version of the Gloucester City Plan (City Plan) was approved for publication and submission at the Council meeting held on 26 September 2019. On the basis of the stage of preparation that the plan has reached, and the consistency of its policies with the NPPF, the emerging policies of the plan can be afforded limited- moderate weight in accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, subject to the extent to which there are unresolved objections to each individual policy (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given).

Other Planning Policy Documents

3.6 **Gloucester Local Plan, Second Stage Deposit 2002**

Regard is also had to the 2002 Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan. This has been subjected to two comprehensive periods of public and stakeholder consultation and adopted by the Council for development control purposes. The “day-to-day” development management policies, which are not of a strategic nature and broadly accord with the policies contained in the NPPF, should be given some weight. There are no policies relevant to the consideration of this application.

3.7 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

All policies can be viewed at the relevant website address:- national policies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Gloucester City policies:

<http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/resident/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/Pages/current-planning-policy.aspx>

4.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 **Quedgeley Town Council** – No objection. The Parish have also provided a statement in response to objections summarised as follows:

- The existing all weather pitch was given planning permission in 2009, it has a planning restriction attached to it allowing use until 10pm on any day. This is strictly adhered to and at no time has the use of the pitch exceeded 10pm. The floodlights are fitted with an electronic timer which is set to turn off at the end of each session so it not left to manual handling.
- The design of the current application has no upward light pollution and keeps the sky dark even when the floodlights are on, therefore further reducing any disturbance that may have been created by schemes such as this of the past.
- The issue of parking is an ongoing problem in the whole of Quedgeley and one which Quedgeley Town Council often raise when responding to planning applications, but it must be made clear the problem is not restricted to when the field is in use by the football club but more often by the local community using the field for dog walking, using the play equipment and generally enjoying the facilities and therefore will not increase as a result of this application. When formal matches are scheduled, visiting teams are directed to the parking facilities available on site and will have little knowledge of the turning area at the end of a cul-de-sac.

4.2 **Highways Authority** – No objection

4.3 **Environmental Health** – No objection

4.4 **Initial Consultation Response**

Light: The lighting scheme and modelling suggests that the scheme will comply with relevant guidance as such we have no adverse comments to make in relation to the lighting scheme.

4.5 **Noise:** The installation of floodlighting is likely to lead to an intensification of use, sporting activities will be able to continue later into the evening. The needs of the applicant should be balanced carefully against the amenity of nearby residents. With careful management there is no reason why noise issues should limit the development.

4.6 **Subsequent Consultation Response**

Further to the initial consultation response officers requested that the applicant provide a Management Plan to demonstrate how potential noise issues would be managed. Environmental Health have reviewed the Management Plan and advised that procedures appear robust and go some way to controlling the potential impacts of light and noise. However, Environmental Health advised that ultimately the Planning Officer will have to balance the needs of the Football Club against the potential impact upon existing residents' amenity.

4.7 It is also advised that should the planning application for lights be approved, any disturbance caused by the intensification of use would be subject to Nuisance provisions within the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

5.0 **PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 Neighbouring properties were notified and press and site notices were published.

5.2 13 letters of objection raising the following issues:

- Residents already suffer noise & light pollution from the artificial football pitch on the site late evening/night matches and this application will exacerbate this issue
- Complaints have been made to the council about the length of time the existing lights are on which has been longer than 10pm on occasions.
- The privacy and quality of life of residents of the nearby dwellings will be hugely affected by the erection of floodlights that will shine directly on to the dwelling.
- The ability to use the pitch through the winter months when the boundary hedge to residential dwellings is at its least covered with leaves will increase light pollution and detrimental impact on amenity of residents
- The application site is supposed to be a public space and not entirely for use by Quedgeley Wanderers. The application will only encourage more training/evening matches and further discourage other members of the Quedgeley community from using the field.
- The football club should use purpose built facilities, with floodlights already installed, which are available elsewhere in the Quedgeley community, for their requirements.
- The proposal will result in increased litter and more anti social behaviour and bad language
- The proposal will devalue our properties and cause difficulties when selling homes
- The floodlights will increase traffic along Naas lane traffic along with inconsiderate parking causing issues for residents access properties and potentially restricted access for emergency vehicles
- Parking issues are not only due to players, but due to spectators and the average attendance is over 75 fans per match

3 letters of support have been received raising the following issues:

- All evening matches would start at 6 30pm and finish at 9 30pm
- The floodlights are of high quality and there would definitely no upward lighting or light pollution. Floodlighting technology has changed considerably over the years and is designed to concentrate light on the pitch, eliminating light pollution on the surrounding area.
- It is recognised that parking is a problem at Waterwells particularly on a Saturday morning when QWFC are using the grass pitches, Hardwicke Rangers on the artificial pitch and SupaStrikers in the sports hall. However, the QWFC manage this and all visiting teams and supporters are directed to the entrance in Stephenson Drive
- Parking issues for occur as people park in Naas Lane and Waterwells car park to walk their dogs.
- QWFC volunteers work hard in conjunction with QTC to maintain the facilities and grounds at Waterwells and they have received numerous positive and complimentary comments regarding the facilities which Quedgeley should be proud of.
- Adding floodlights to pitch one would enhance the facilities further.
- Making more use of the facilities will reduce some of the anti-social behaviour and senseless vandalism that takes place.
- Having floodlights on pitch 1 does not mean there will be more parking issues, it gives

opportunities to spread the load of Fixtures, matches, throughout other days of the year making it less traffic on Match days.

- 5.3 The full content of all correspondence on this application can be viewed on:
<http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/resident/planning-and-building-control/Pages/public-access.aspx>

6.0 OFFICER OPINION

Legislative background

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Local Planning Authority to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that in dealing with a planning application, the Local Planning Authority should have regard to the following:
- a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application;
 - b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application; and
 - c) any other material considerations.
- 6.3 The development plan consists of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the partially saved 1983 City of Gloucester Local Plan. However, as outlined earlier, the 1983 Local Plan is considered to be out-of-date.
- 6.4 It is considered that the main issues with regards to this application are as follows:

Principle

- 6.5 Section 8 of the NPPF recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 6.6 Policy INF3 of the JCS states that existing green infrastructure will be protected in a manner that reflects its contribution to ecosystem services, including landscape quality, recreation and play.
- 6.7 The proposed development would contribute to providing community facilities, enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles and planning decisions should plan positively for community facilities to support healthy lifestyles in accordance with the NPPF. On this basis, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable providing there are no material considerations which indicate otherwise.

Residential amenity

- 6.8 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so planning decisions should mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts from noise and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity. Policy SD14 of the JCS requires that new development must cause no harm to local amenity including the amenity of neighbouring occupants.

- 6.9 Waterwells Sports Centre is surrounded by commercial units to the south and east. The residential properties on Naas Lane are principally to the north of Naas Lane although there are three residential properties to the south. The closest of these three dwellings is located approximately 35 metres from the football pitch. The three dwellings are arranged in a 'L' shape.
- 6.10 The nearest dwelling to the application site 'Reevers' is situated such that the 2 storey gable end of the property faces towards the football pitch. There are no windows in this north facing 2 storey elevation. However, the 'Reevers' also has a single storey rear extension which contains a number of windows which face north towards the football pitch. The back garden of the 'Reevers' is enclosed by a circa 1 metre high hedge and the private amenity area of the dwelling is visible from the football pitch, as is the rear garden of the adjacent dwelling.
- 6.11 The other dwelling within the cluster of 3 dwellings potentially most affected by the proposals is the dwelling known as 'Thoresby' to the south. The property is a one and a half storey chalet bungalow and the front elevation of the dwelling, which contains habitable room windows, is located approximately 60 metres from the football pitch. This elevation faces north towards the application site, albeit views are partially screened by the intervening dwellings.
- 6.12 In addition there are a number of dwellings located to the north of Naas Lane which are located approximately 20 metres from the football pitch, albeit there is a substantial hedgerow between the football pitch and the dwellings.
- 6.13 In terms of potential light pollution the proposed 18 metre high flood lights are LED luminaries which are angled to concentrate light upon the football pitch. The flood lights themselves would be set off the football pitch by circa 3.5 metres such that the floodlights are closer to the dwellings to the south than the football pitch.
- 6.14 The application is supported by a lighting scheme and light spill modelling. Environment Health have been consulted on the application and confirm that the modelling suggests that the scheme will comply with relevant guidance and as such Environmental Health have no adverse comments to make in relation to the lighting scheme. It is therefore considered that the proposed lighting would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of nearby residents.
- 6.15 However, it is also the case that the installation of floodlighting is likely to lead to an intensification of use as sporting activities will be able to continue later into the evening, which could give rise to a detrimental impact on residential amenity, particularly by reason of noise. In light of this officers requested that the application submit a Noise Management Plan (NMP) for the application proposals.

6.16 The NMP advises that:

- Floodlights are only used during winter months and therefore windows and doors of neighbouring properties will be closed and enjoyment of gardens etc. will not be impinged.
- Additional matches will not be played as a result of the provision of floodlights, the aim is to spread the matches throughout the playing season to protect the playing surface, but will be limited to approximately 8-10 games per season.
- The hours of operation will be limited from 6.45pm-10.00pm, this can easily be achieved by a time control device, so not left to manually handling and is currently the adopted management of the adjacent synthetic pitch and would be happy to see a planning condition attached to reflect this.
- Quedgeley Wanderers FC is a grass roots football club; and support is limited, the highest attendance this season was 172 but this was a local derby and most were spectating from the club house, the lowest attendance is 24 and therefore noise will be minimal. However, it is accepted any noise must be controlled and therefore all spectators will be directed to the side of the pitch nearest the sports building and not at the end of the pitch nearest the properties. At the end of the game all players, managers, coaches, supporters and officials etc. will be directed inside the building with windows and doors closed.
- All activities on the pitch will be in a controlled environment with officials, managers and coaches present, at no time will floodlights be permitted to be in use by unsupervised groups of youths or teams.
- Only one game will be played at any time and therefore it is envisaged all drop off and pick up can easily be accommodated within the onsite car parking provision.
- Quedgeley Wanderers FC is a Charter Standard Community Club, the highest award possible and have signed up to the Respect Campaign adopted by the Football Association and all bad behaviour is dealt with within the club. Any serious breaches will see the individual removed from the site and if necessary, membership of the club revoked. Reports of anti-social behaviour will be forwarded to the Football Association for further action by them if required.
- All officials follow FA guidelines in respect of noise and are aware of the need to ensure discipline is upheld by players and spectators'.
- Contact telephone numbers for officers of Quedgeley Wanderers FC are available on their website and any serious incidences can be reported to the Club or Quedgeley Town Council.

6.17 Environmental Health have reviewed the NMP and advise that procedures appear robust and go some way to controlling the potential impacts of light and noise. However, Environmental Health advised that ultimately the Planning Officer will have to balance the needs of the Football Club against the potential impact upon existing residents' amenity. It is also advised that should the planning application for lights be approved, any disturbance caused by the intensification of use would be subject to Nuisance provisions within the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

6.18 It is considered by officers that there is some potential for loss of amenity at residential receptors as a result of application, particularly in relation to noise arising from matches in the evening. This is a matter which weighs against the proposal. However, it is considered that the impact on amenity would be mitigated to an acceptable level by virtue of the provisions of the NMP including the restricted hours of use and restricting the use to supervised games and these mitigation measures can be secured by planning condition.

6.19 As such, subject to the imposition of conditions, on balance it is considered that the impact on amenity would be acceptable and that the proposed development does not conflict with the NPPF and policy SD14 of the JCS.

Traffic and transport

- 6.20 The NPPF requires that development proposals provide for safe and suitable access for all and that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Policy INF1 of the JCS requires safe and accessible connections to the transport network and Policy INF4 of the JCS states that's that social infrastructure should be centrally located to the population it serves and be easily accessible on foot and bicycle.
- 6.21 Waterwells Sports Centre is served by a car park with approximately 40 spaces which are accessed off Stephenson's Drive. There are also regular bus services in the vicinity of the site and the Centre is accessible via cycle lanes.
- 6.22 There have been a number of objections to this application from local residents relating to parking problems particularly on match days. Whilst the concerns of objectors are noted, given the parameters of use of the facility set out in the Noise Management Plan it is not considered that the proposals would give rise to an intensification of use during the evening hours which would cause a severe cumulative impact on the highway network, taking account that there are approximately 40 on site car parking spaces.
- 6.23 In this regard, the County Highways Authority have been consulted on the application and offer no objection.
- 6.24 As such, whilst the concerns of objectors are noted, it is considered that the proposal would not have a 'severe' impact on the safety or satisfactory operation of the highways network and would be in accordance with Policy INF1 of the JCS and the NPPF.

Landscape and visual impact

- 6.25 Policy SD6 of the JCS states that development will seek to protect landscape character for its own intrinsic beauty and for its benefit to economic, environmental and social well being. This reflects the wording of the NPPF in relation to the recognition of protecting the intrinsic beauty of the countryside.
- 6.26 The proposed development would introduce new floodlighting and columns onto the application site, however these would not be uncharacteristic of the wider facilities at Waterwells Sports Centre and given the context of this site would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the landscape.

Conclusion

- 6.27 It is concluded that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and that the proposed development would contribute to providing community facilities, enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. These social benefits weigh in favour of the proposal.
- 6.28 It is concluded that there is some potential for loss of amenity at residential receptors as a result of the application, particularly in relation to noise arising from matches in the evening. This is a matter which weighs against the proposal. However, it is considered that the impact on amenity would be mitigated to an acceptable level by virtue of the provisions of the NMP and these mitigation measures can be secured by planning condition.
- 6.29 There would be no undue impact in terms of local highway network and landscape impact.
- 6.30 Whilst there would be some impacts on the area as identified above, on balance, it is considered that the social benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm in this case and the proposal is recommended for permission.

7.0 **RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY GROWTH AND DELIVERY MANAGER**

7.1 That planning permission is GRANTED subject to the following conditions;

7.2 Condition 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 requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Condition 2

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans

- 197017C Equipment Layout Plan received 22nd July 2019
- Pole Configuration Drawing 197017PL 1of4 received 4th July 2019
- Pole Configuration Drawing 197017PL 2of4 received 4th July 2019
- Pole Configuration Drawing 197017PL 3of4 received 4th July 2019
- Pole Configuration Drawing 197017PL 3of4 received 4th July 2019

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

Condition 3

The floodlights hereby permitted shall only be in use between the hours of 0800 hours and 2200 hours on any day.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

Condition 4

The use of the football pitch when the floodlights hereby permitted are in use shall be fully in accordance with the provisions set out in the Noise Management Plan received on 5th December 2019.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

Note 1

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner in order to secure sustainable development which will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area by securing a Noise Management Plan for the application site.

Person to Contact: Paul Instone (396396)

Planning Application: | 19/00402/FUL

Address: | Waterwells Sports Centre
Stephenson Drive Quedgeley
Gloucester

Committee Date: |