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**2018/1149**

**Applicant:** Wombwell Main Community and Sports Association

**Description:** Proposed change of use to create junior training pitch including grading works.

**Site Address:** Wombwell Main Community and Sports Association, Windmill Road, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 8PW

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4 representations from local residents.

### **Site Description**

Wombwell Main Sports lies to the west of Wombwell, at the junction of Windmill Road and Hough Lane. The current facilities include a cricket oval and full size football pitch as well as a community centre / club house.

The application site comprises a 2.59ha field located to the west of existing sports grounds. It is currently unused and overgrown with scrub and small trees. There is housing (on Cowley Green) to the south east of the field with the land to the north comprising agricultural fields.

### **Proposed Development**

It is proposed to clear the site, regrade the land to create a level field and lay out a junior football pitch. The applicant has confirmed that the regrading works are cut and fill with no need to take soil off or bring new soil onto the site. The junior pitch will be grass.

The site will be secured with fencing similar to that currently around the perimeter of the existing sports ground. In addition, trees and shrubs will be planted around the perimeter.

### **History**

2016/0237 Erection of a detached building to form changing facilities and store (Amended Plans) – Approved 08/2016

### **Policy Context**

Planning decision should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the Core Strategy and the saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

The emerging Local Plan has now reached a very advanced stage with a consultation on main modification to the plan commencing in July 2018. The consultation follows confirmation from the Local Plan inspector that the plan is capable of being found sound. This by no means represents the Inspectors overall judgement, which will not be known until the final report is issued and the examination closes. However, it does mean increasing weight can be given to the policies contained within the document although, in accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, the extent of this will depend on:

- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given) and;
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

By virtue of the fact the policies have been tested at examination, they have been scrutinised in relation to their degree of consistency with the NPPF and it is therefore highly likely that they are sufficiently compliant. However, it will not be possible to conclude whether many of the objections have been resolved until the inspector has considered the responses to the consultation on modifications and the final report is published. The extent to which weight can be attributed to the Local Plan policies will therefore vary on a case by case basis taking into account the relevant policies and the significance of any unresolved objections.

#### Local Development Framework Core Strategy

CSP3 'Sustainable Drainage Systems'  
 CSP4 'Flood Risk'  
 CSP26 'New Development and Highway Improvement'  
 CSP29 'Design'  
 CSP33 'Green Infrastructure'  
 CSP 34 'Protection of Green Belt'  
 CSP35 'Green Space'  
 CSP40 'Pollution Control and Protection'

#### Saved UDP Policies

UDP notation: Green Belt Policy GS6 'Extent of Green Belt'

#### Publication version of the Draft Local Plan

Proposed allocation: Safeguarded Land/Greenspace/Nature Improvement Area

Policy GB6 - We will only grant planning permission on sites allocated as safeguarded land for development that is needed for the operation of existing uses, or alternative uses where the development will protect the open nature of the land, and will not affect the potential for future development of the site. The permanent development of safeguarded land will only be permitted following the adoption of a replacement Local Plan which proposes such development.

Policy GS1 Green Space - We will work with partners to improve existing green space to meet the standards in our Green Space Strategy.

#### NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs 143 -144 confirm that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that local planning authorities are required, when considering an application, to give substantial weight to any harm to the green belt. Paragraph 146 lists a number of forms of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes "material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds"

## **Consultations**

Drainage – No objections or conditions.

Trees – No objections subject to a condition requiring replacement tree planting around the boundary of the pitch.

Highways – No objections subject to conditions.

Regulatory Services – No objection subject to a condition restricting construction to working hours

## **Representations**

The application was advertised by neighbour notification letters and a site notice. 4 representations have been received which raise a number of concerns:

- There are car parking issues on the Cowley Green associated with the club;
- The construction works will create noise and dust problems for residents;
- Land is used by dog walkers;
- Access for construction vehicles will be via Windmill Lane which is already very busy and has lots of on street parking issues;
- Noise from the pitch and any lights will impact on residents directly adjacent to it;
- Loss of privacy;
- Concerns the pitch would be used for other purposes such as a car boot, fair etc as is already happening on the wider site;
- Will the trees and shrubs be replanted as the fencing and any lights would spoil residents outlook;

Of the four letters only 2 object outright with one not objecting subject to parking restrictions and one letter of support welcoming the investment in a community facility, but does still raise some concern about parking.

## **Assessment**

### Principle of Development

The site is designated Green Belt in the UDP. It is shown on the greenspace register as part of the Wombwell Main Sports Ground but the site itself does not appear to have any formal sports use, is outside of the fenced sports ground area and appears to be overgrown and unused.

The NPPF indicates that material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sports or recreation) and engineering operations are not inappropriate in the Green

Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposal would therefore appear to be not inappropriate.

The site is proposed to be re-designated Safeguarded Land in the emerging Local Plan. The Local Plan designation attracts some weight because of the stage that the production of the local plan has reached (i.e. the examination of the plan has reached an advanced stage but we do not yet have an Inspectors report).

National policy and emerging Local Plan policy indicates that planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development. In addition, the emerging Local Plan policy states that 'we will only grant planning permission on sites allocated as safeguarded land for development that is needed for ... alternative uses where the development will protect the open nature of the land and will not affect the potential for future development of the site'.

Therefore, as the proposed is an engineering operation to level the site and will retain the open nature of the land, not affecting the potential for future development of the site, it is concluded that there is no conflict with Green Belt policy or the emerging Safeguarded Land Policy and as such the proposed is acceptable in principle.

#### Residential Amenity

The proposed pitch is located directly adjacent the rear gardens of properties on Pashley Croft and as such these properties will be the most affected by the development. The application is for a grass pitch to be used as a training pitch for junior members of the club. No hours of use have been provided but as no lighting is proposed it is reasonable to assume the pitch will not be used in evenings, limiting noise disturbance. Furthermore, the proposal is for a grass pitch to be used for training junior members. Grass pitches do not create as much noise disturbance as other surfaces and junior teams are accompanied by adult coaches who can control noise levels to a certain degree and to whom residents can complain (the applicant has confirmed that the club have spoken to residents and are happy to continue an open dialogue on this basis). Finally, as there is already a large playing pitch and cricket ground on the wider site, noise associated with the use of a playing field is already heard in this locality. Therefore, taking all the above into account the increase in noise disturbance is not anticipated to be significant.

Any overlooking or loss of privacy will be limited by the limited use of the pitch, distances and levels. In addition, tree planting is proposed around the boundary and will provide some screening. Overall the proposal is assessed as being acceptable in residential amenity terms.

#### Visual Amenity

The existing site is an area of land which has been allowed to become overgrown, being separate from the wider agricultural land and not used by the sports club. Nevertheless it has some visual amenity value with a number of self-seeded trees and shrubs on the site, albeit the tree officer has confirmed that none are particularly mature or worthy of retention. The visual impact of the development is limited by virtue of the fact that the sports pitch itself will not appear incongruous, arguably being a positive addition to the wider environment. It is also mitigated, in part, by the proposal to provide some replacement planting around the perimeter of the new pitch. Therefore, taking account of the wider benefits of providing additional sports provision in Wombwell, on a well-used facility; it is considered that the visual impact is acceptable.

## Highways

The applicant has supplied information confirming that there are 3 parking options available, Windmill Road car park, Windmill Road parking bays, Hough Lane car park. Existing parking issues have been raised by residents, however, the applicant has confirmed that the proposed development is to improve existing facilities rather than increase activity or membership. The Highways Officer has, therefore confirmed that there are no objections to the proposed development in a highway context subject to a condition requiring a construction method statement.

## Conclusion

In summary the proposed works are considered acceptable in land use planning terms given that they would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not prejudice long term future development options given the proposal to re-designate it Safeguarded Land in the Local Plan as part of a much wider area of land. Furthermore the land is on the Greenspace register. Given that the proposal would simply mean that the existing junior football team would train on the new pitch rather than the existing it is not expected to give rise to any significant residential amenity or highway safety issues once operational. The officer recommendation is therefore one of approval.

## **Recommendation**

Grant subject to conditions:-

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.  
**Reason: In order to comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**
- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the plans (Nos: WFC/PTG/MAR18-02, WFC/PTG/MAR18-04A and WFC/PTG/MAR18-05) and specifications as approved unless required by any other conditions in this permission.  
**Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and in accordance with LDF Core Strategy Policy CSP 29, Design.**
- 3 No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall provide for:-
  - The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
  - Means of access for construction traffic;
  - Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
  - Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
  - Measures to prevent mud/debris being deposited on the public highway.**Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 29.**

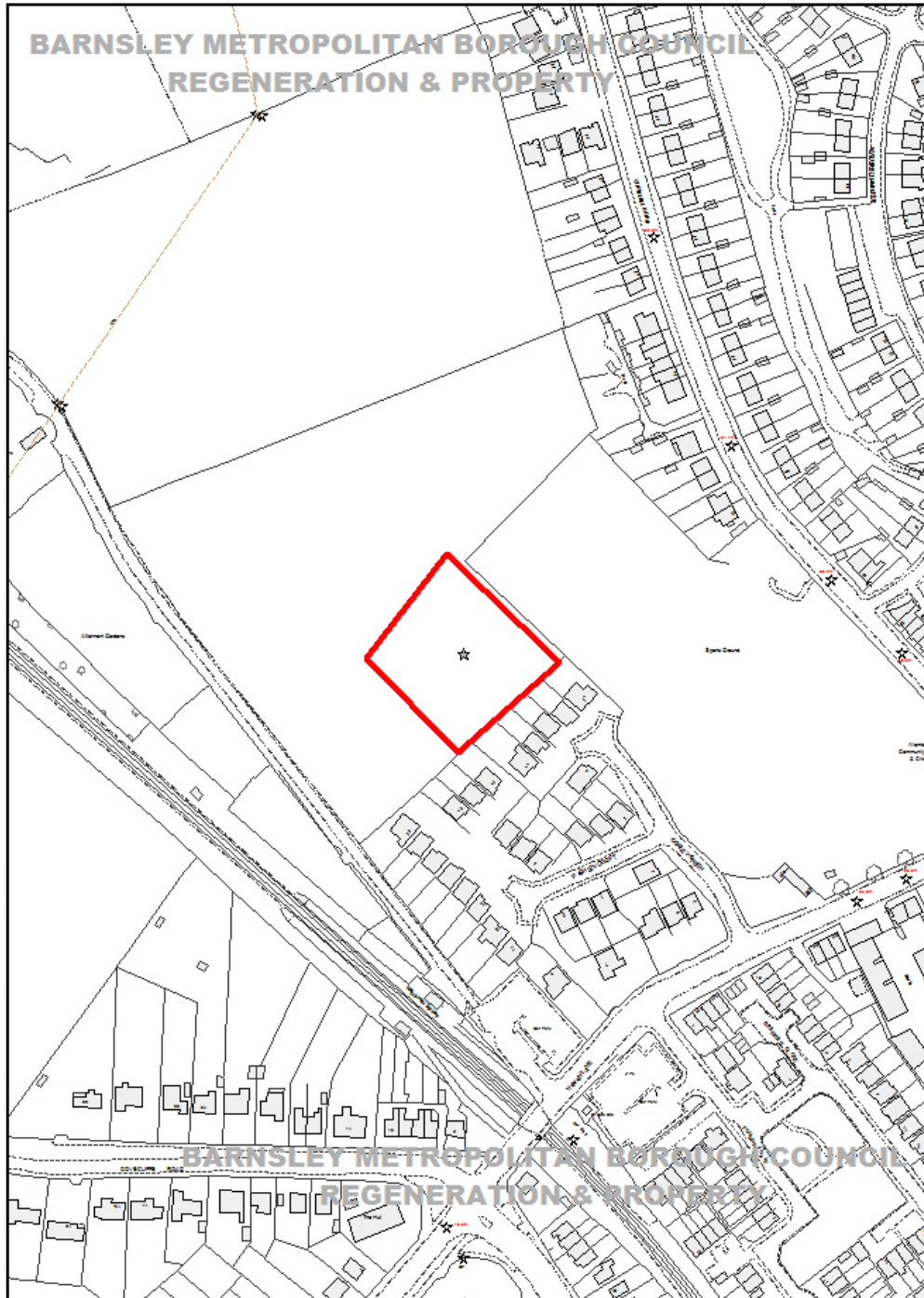
- 4 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, full details of the proposed landscaping works around the boundary of the site. The approved landscaping details shall be implemented within the first year of the use of the proposed development(s). Any trees or plants which die within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with other of similar size and species.

**Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 29.**

- 5 Construction or remediation work comprising the use of plant, machinery or equipment, or deliveries of materials shall only take place between the hours of 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1400 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

**Reason: In the interests of the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 40, Pollution Control and Protection.**

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