

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 9

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st March 2021

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 201734

Address: Rivermead Leisure Complex, Richfield Avenue

Proposal: New replacement leisure centre including a 25m 8 lane competition pool and diving, with associated parking and landscaping, followed by demolition of existing centre.

Applicant: Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)

Deadline: 12th March 2021

Extended Deadline: 9th April 2021

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 11th June 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

As on main report, but with the following amendments:

Additional / Amended Conditions (strikethrough and bold):

- 1) TL1 - 3 yrs
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 4) C1 - Hours of Construction
- 5) C2 - Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved including Phasing Plan.
- 6) C3 - CMS as Specified - The measures within the approved Air Quality Assessment (Syntegra, November 2020) for the control of dust during construction shall be adhered to throughout the whole of the construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 7) C4 - No Bonfires
- 8) C04 - Submission and approval of a contamination assessment - for areas under the current leisure centre
- 9) C06 - Assessment of previously unidentified contamination
- 10) Land Gas - Remediation scheme to be submitted, approved and implemented prior to occupation.
- 11) Land Gas - Implementation of the remediation scheme in accordance with the approved timetable of works and a validation report to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.
- 12) No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground (EA wording)
- 13) Piling using penetrative methods shall not be carried out other than with the written consent of the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 14) N8 - Noise levels of plant/ equipment restricted
- 15) N21 - Hours of operation (external lighting)
- 16) ~~Details of lighting~~ **No development shall commence until a revised External Lighting Impact Statement and lighting schedule that ensure**

minimal light spillage onto the Rivermead Ditch has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The lighting shall thereafter be installed as per the approved plans.

- 17) In accordance with the FRA and that finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 39.22 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD)
- 18) SU5 - BREEAM Excellent - Design stage
- 19) SU6 - BREEAM Excellent - Built stage
- 20) SU7 - SUDS plan to be approved
- 21) SU8 - SUDS to be implemented
- 22) S1 - Detail of PV to be approved
- 23) DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 24) An annotated plan showing the proposed layout and access arrangements of No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until full details of the direction signage and markings within the car park area has been submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter maintained in good condition.
- 25) DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified prior to occupation
- 26) DC6 - Cycle Parking to be approved
- 27) DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof)
- 28) DD6 - Visibility splays to be provided as specified
- 29) DE6- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- 30) L2 - Hard and soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved
- 31) ~~L3 - Boundary Treatment~~
- 32) ~~L4 - Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan to be submitted and approved~~
- 33) ~~Bat survey before any demolition~~
- 33) L7- Arboricultural Method Statement and tree protection plan to be submitted and approved
- 34) Measures to include ten integral bird nesting and bat roosting features built into the walls of the new building to be submitted and approved in writing provide ~~bat and bird boxes~~ to be implemented prior to occupation
- 35) Vegetation clearance to avoid bird nesting season (March-August)
- 36) Hours of use - 6am to 11pm Mon to Sat, and 6am to 9.30pm on Sundays
- 37) The use of the existing leisure centre to cease prior to the occupation of the replacement leisure centre
- 38) Submission and approval of an Employment, Skills and Training Plan - construction and end user skills
- 39) Security Strategy to be submitted and approved prior to commencement above slab level.
- 40) Construction Environmental Management Plan to be submitted and approved prior to construction.
- 41) Prior to commencement the submission and approval of a Rivermead Ditch enhancement scheme and implementation thereafter.

1. AMENDED INFORMATION

Natural Environment (Trees)

- 1.1 Since the completion of the main committee report further planting and landscaping detail has been discussed with the Natural

Environment Officer. The Natural Environment Officer is generally satisfied subject to the inclusion of conditions for the submission and approval of final details.

- 1.2 **Planning Officer Note:** The Natural Environment Officer has recommended amendments to the conditions as included in the main report as referred to above (L3 and L4 would be addressed through condition L2).

Thames Valley Police - Crime Prevention & Design Advisor (TVP)

- 1.3 TVP provided the following comments: *“For the pools: One crime risk comes from the changing rooms themselves, - everything must be done to prevent individuals from slipping phones underneath cubicle partitions, filming individuals and children either getting dressed or getting undressed (voyeurism)”*. A condition requiring the submission and approval of a Security Strategy was recommended.

- 1.4 **Planning Officer note:** This is included in the amended recommendation above and complies with the requirements under Policy CC8.

Ecology

- 1.5 Ecology provided their comments as follows:

“The application site comprises the Rivermead Sports Centre which it is proposed to demolish and rebuild on the car park to the east.

The ecology report and bat survey reports (both by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP) conclude that there are a number of minor ecological constraints to the proposals including invasive species and nesting birds, and states that there is a small risk that bats may roost in the building in the future (it should be noted that the preliminary ecological appraisal report does not include all the land within the red line boundary, however I have visited the site and it does not change the overall assessment).

The landscaping plan reads: “Ecologist to confirm possible location of fox / badger set [sic] to position mound North of Demountable Pool” i.e. it appears that there may be a fox earth or a small badger sett in this area that may need to be excluded prior to works that could disturb it commencing. [Planning Officer note: Para. 7.1.10 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal states “...during the survey there no signs of activity by this species on site, which mostly provides very poor habitat, and therefore it is considered unlikely that badgers are found on site currently”]

These are all minor constraints and if the application is approved a condition should be set to ensure that a Construction Environmental Management Plan for Biodiversity is agreed and implemented.

The landscaping scheme is at present outline, full details should be secured via a planning condition.

The landscaping scheme refers to some minor (and not costly) modifications to the ditch including “Japanese knotweed - Ongoing maintenance / treatment regime to be commissioned”; “Initial Vegetation Maintenance” and “Existing London Planes - Not shown on the RBC Tree Survey”. As per our comments on the pre-applications this would have been a good opportunity to enhance this ditch by desilting, reprofiling the banks etc. This is not proposed and this lost opportunity will need to be weighed up in the planning balance. If permission is granted it is recommended that a condition be set to try to ensure that the ditch is enhanced within the context of the approved scheme.

The lighting plan shows light levels of more than 2.5 lux over much of the ditch. This will deter bats from commuting along the watercourse. The A2 fittings shown do not include a shield to stop backwards light spillage and the lighting assessment does not appear to have taken the ditch into consideration (for example there is a lighting column on the bridge). It is therefore recommended that if the application is approved either a revised lighting schedule is provided (before it is) or a condition is set to ensure that it is provided.

The proposals do not include any bird nesting or bat roosting features integral to the building and it is recommended that if the development is approved a condition is set to ensure that these are provided, and it is recommended that 10 such features would be a reasonable number for a development of this size.

In summary, subject to a revised lighting schedule being provided and the conditions below being set, there would be no ecology related reasons not to approve this application: CEMP; bird and bat boxes; Rivermead Ditch Enhancement scheme; and External Lighting Impact Statement and lighting schedule to ensure minimal light spillage onto the Rivermead Ditch.

- 1.6 **Planning Officer note:** Additional and amended conditions are included above.

Reading UK CIC

- 1.7 Reading UK confirmed that they would require an Employment Skills and Training Plan (ESP) for end user requirements as well as for construction skills.
- 1.8 **Planning Officer note:** The requirement for the submission of an ESP for end user has been included above.

Written Statements

- 1.9 Written statements have been submitted by those members of the public who are registered under 'public speaking' and are included in Appendix 1. below.

Conclusion

- 1.10 Having reviewed the additional information the officer overall recommendation is not altered, save for the amendments to the conditions as above.

Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN STATEMENTS

A) Nick Haskins, The Warren

Planning Rivermead Leisure Centre 201734 Date: 31st March 2021 - Planning Meeting Background: Firstly, I am very supportive of the proposal to redevelop the Rivermead Leisure Centre considering the current state of the Leisure Centre. Sport is part of the heritage of this particular area of Reading. It is just some of the details that need to be finalised.

Pop-up pool Planning Conditions These planning conditions should be non controversial as they were approved by the planning committee as conditions for the building of the Pop-Up pool at Rivermead. Residents would expect the following to apply for this construction: (I think that the EA has picked up on the incorrect flood risks in the first submission). Existing planning points from the temporary pool decision notice: I object to the replacement of the leisure centre unless the following decisions are retained: i) *The use of the land is for sport and leisure only (ie no concerts or films etc)* [Planning Permission 162323 note 16] ii) *No construction or demolition shall take place out of the hours of 08:00 to 18:00hrs Mon-Fri and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturday with no work taking place at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.* [Planning Permission 162323 note 7] iii) *That the finished floor level, flood resilience designs and flood warning systems are such that there is no increase in flood risk.* [Planning Permission 162323 note 11] iv) *The the landscaping includes a 10 year maintenance regime.* [Planning Permission 162323 note 13]

Comments: Colour If my reading of the replies to the planning application are correct: The residents opposite the Rivermead have said the building should be green and brown. The Warren Wattsapp Coordinator has said it said it should be green and brown. WADRA has said it should be green and brown. CADRA has said it should be green and brown. The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens, which has won the Green Flag award partly for its views out of Caversham Court, has said it should be green and brown. Palmer Park swimming pool will be green and brown. The existing building is green and brown. Why is it proposed that this building will be blue and white.

You need to understand that the land to the North is higher and so people will look down onto this building. There is no point to the planning process if the committee and RBC planning does not listen to those views of those that have responded to it. *Colour: The colour of the building should be Green and Brown when viewed from the North. A blue and white design might break up the bulk of the building in an urban landscape, however, when viewed from the North this building is in a very rural location along the river within an area of trees.*

[The report seems to fail to take into account that the building will be viewed from above when being looked at from the North in the direction of

the Southern, Eastern and Western elevations. The Warren is several metres higher than the land on the opposite bank. Upper Warren Rd and St Peter's Avenue are significantly higher than the land on the opposite bank. Thus the view onto the building is from above. As such the idea of breaking up the bulk of the buildings with blues and whites (as is used for high rise buildings in an urban setting when viewing buildings from below) is highly unlikely to be effective. Furthermore the previous planning permission for the temporary building insisted that the building should be RAL 2013 / 6007 / 7012 and is predominantly green. This building is being retained. It is highly odd to have two buildings in the same complex which are different colour.]

Knee Rails / Vehicular Access to Thames Prom I am Chair of NRSNF and have written to the police on many occasions regarding vehicles from the Rivermead Car Park driving and sometimes racing on the actual footpath of Thames Prom. I prepared a report highlighting this vehicles to Councillor Page and Councillor Skeats last year. These cars come from the Rivermead Car Park. This is a safety issue. Anyone unsure of the issues at this location should visit the site today. If metal knee rails are not used an alternative must be used to prevent vehicular access to Thames Prom. *Vehicular access to Thames Prom, timber knee rails are not sufficient: Timber knee rails seem inadequate. This should be metal with removable sections.*

Lack of Green Roof The building should have a green roof. There was a recent planning request for a leisure plot on the North side of the river. The applicant was told that the roof should really be a green roof. If that is true on the North Side, it should be True on the South Side. The council cannot expect other residents to use green roofs if it is not doing so itself. The council has declared a climate emergency. If it believes in that decision it should be requesting a Green Roof *Lack of Green Roof: There should be a green roof on the building. It is for use by the community and RBC has declared a climate emergency.*

Tree Survey Thank you for listening. Thank you for changing the Tree Survey. It is disappointing that the tree survey was incorrect. It is huge amount of work to check this on every application. It is also a huge amount of work to water the trees in this location. I am one of those that waters the new trees in this location. It is, therefore, very disappointing when those trees do not appear on surveys. Given that there is a tree strategy and and Climate Emergency applications should be presented with designs going around trees in general, rather than removing them as was the case both here and Palmer Park. [Tree Survey: A number of trees planted over the past 10 years on Thames Prom to the north of the current play area do not appear to have been recorded in the survey. These should be correctly recorded and protected as they provide valuable screening.] [Removal of mature trees: I object to the removal of any mature trees. There are 18 trees that look as if they will be felled, some just for bunds or footpaths. This is just not necessary, reposition the bunds and footpaths. Even with the trees that need to be felled for the car park, I am sure that some could be kept with a bit of redesign. With the temporary pool there were five

screening trees that were planted in the proximity to the Rivermead Centre. These have failed to take on numerous occasions. This is due to the difficult soil conditions and the need to water the trees. These trees have been on the RBC watering rota but it is insufficient and the trees have failed. Compare that to the ten plus trees that were planted nearer to the river which have been watered by volunteers. Those trees are all healthy other than one, which while still living is struggling a little. The difference has been that these trees watered by volunteers are in a location that can be accessed with water. To be clear I have carried over 1000 buckets of rain water to these trees alone. Anyone who is suggesting removing a mature tree should be prepared to do the same and to volunteer to carry 1000 buckets of water to ensure that the replacement trees prosper. If there are not such volunteers then can I please suggest that the mature trees are left alone. RBC has declared a climate emergency and has a plan to plant trees not remove them.]