

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st March 2021

Ward: Park

App No.: 201735

Address: Palmer Park

Proposal: Leisure centre extension to include a 25m 6 lane pool, fitness suite, cafe, activity room, parking spaces and landscaping, and the refurbishment of the existing grandstand to include demolition of the existing entrance lobby, internal works and roof works.

Applicant: Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)

Deadline: 12th March 2021

Extended Deadline: 9th April 2021

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 11th June 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

As in the main report, but with the following amendments (in bold and struck through):

Delegate the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to **GRANT** Planning Permission subject to the satisfactory completion by 9 April 2021 to a S106 agreement (unilateral undertaking) to secure:

A contribution of £6,000 towards an upgrade to the London Road/ Liverpool Road junction crossing comprising improvements to the technology to improve performance ~~the improvement of crossing facilities on London Road in the vicinity of Palmer Park~~, payment prior to the **occupation** implementation of the development.

If the S106 agreement is not completed by 9 April 2021, delegate to officers to REFUSE planning permission, unless an extension by the HPDRS is agreed.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) TL1 - 3 yrs
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 4) C1 - Hours of Construction
- 5) C2 - Construction and Environmental Management Statement to be submitted and approved including Phasing Plan.
- 6) C4 - No Bonfires
- 7) N8 - Noise levels of plant/ equipment restricted
- 8) N21 - Hours of operation (external lighting)
- 9) Hours of use - 07:00-22:30 (M-Thursday); 07:00-21:30 (Friday) and 09:00-18:00 (weekends)
- 10) Submission, approval and implementation of a Piling Method Statement

- ~~11) Contamination Land remediation to be undertaken in accordance with report~~
- 12) CO6 - Unidentified contamination
- 13) SU5- 'Excellent' BREEAM - Design stage
- 14) SU6 - 'Excellent' BREEAM - Built stage
- 15) SU7 - SUDS plan to be approved
- 16) SU8 - SUDS to be implemented
- 17) S1 - Detail of PV to be approved
- 18) DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 19) DC6 - Cycle Parking to be approved
- 20) DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof)
- 21) DD8 - Car Parking Management Plan
- 22) DE6- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- ~~23) Delivery of enhanced crossing prior to occupation~~
- 23) L2 - Hard and soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved
- ~~24) L4- Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan to be submitted and approved~~
- 24) L7 - Arboricultural Method Statement and tree protection plan to be submitted and approved
- 25) Measures to provide **ten integral bird nesting and bat roosting features built into the walls of the new building**, ~~bat and bird boxes~~ to be submitted and approved prior to commencement (excluding demolition)
- 26) Details of lighting including to protect wildlife
- 27) Bollard Lighting Levels
- 28) No floodlighting
- 29) Vegetation clearance to avoid bird nesting season (March-August)
- ~~30) Bat survey before any demolition~~
- ~~31) No development until a programme of archaeological work has been submitted and approved.~~
- 30) Submission and approval of an Employment, Skills and Training Plan - construction and end user phases.
- 31) **Security Strategy to be submitted and approved prior to commencement above slab level.**

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 1) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 2) IF6 - Building Regulations
- 3) IF2 - Pre-Commencement Conditions
- 4) I11 - CIL Not Chargeable
- 5) IF4 - S106
- 6) IF3 - Highways
- 7) I29 - Access Construction
- 8) IF7 - Complaints about Construction
- 9) Thames Water informatives
- 10) IF1 - Positive and Proactive

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. It has been confirmed by the Officer that the applicant has demonstrated an appropriate level of landscaping, including tree planting to meet Reading Borough Local Plan Policy and the Council's Tree Strategy aims.

- 1.2 **Planning Officer Note:** the conditions as originally recommended are retained save for removal of the condition requiring the submission of a Landscape Management Plan, as this is suitably addressed as part of the standard landscaping 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.

Archaeology

- 1.5 Following the trial trenching which took place in week commencing 15th March 2021 Berkshire Archaeology have provided the following further comments:

"I have been through the report produced by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on the trial trenching exercise carried out recently at Palmer Park. TVAS were in contact with Berkshire Archaeology during the works and have completed the programme of trenching in accordance with the agreed method. No assets of archaeological interest were identified during the evaluation, and the report is all in order.

With regard to future requirements, we would not recommend that any further archaeological intervention would be necessary, in line with policy requirements, and suggest that a condition relating to archaeology is not now needed, should planning consent be granted."

- 1.6 **Planning Officer note:** The original report included a condition (no. 33) for the submission and approval of a programme of archaeological work. This is no longer required, so is deleted from the list of recommended conditions.

Ecology

1.7 Ecology provided their comments as follows:

“The ecological assessment submitted with the application (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Ref: R2298/b - August 2019) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the proposals are unlikely to affect protected species, priority habitats and sites of importance for nature conservation. However, the vegetation may be used by nesting birds and a condition should be set to ensure that it is not carried out during the nesting season or if it is then a pre-clearance bird survey undertaken.”

“The proposals include a lighting plan which shows that the tree lines will remain largely unlit and as such the proposals are unlikely to affect commuting and foraging bats.

A Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculation has been undertaken. This shows that the development is likely to result in a net gain in Habitat Units of 4.11% and Hedgerow Units of 25.21%. This would comply with current planning policy on this matter although the upgrading of the woodland within the calculator from moderate to fairly-good condition as a result of the installation of three bird and bat boxes is a questionable assumption.

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 the conditions below the proposals would comply with ecology related planning policy.

Condition: *All trees, hedges and shrubs or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until the nest is no longer in use.*

Reason: *To ensure that nesting birds are not adversely affected by the proposed development as per policy EN12.*

Condition: *Prior to commencement of development (other than demolition), details of biodiversity enhancements, to include ten integral bird nesting and bat roosting features built into the walls of the new building shall be submitted and approved in writing by the council. The features shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the plans.*

Reason: To incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments as per paragraph 175 of the NPPF and policy EN12 in the local plan.”

- 1.8 **Planning Officer note:** The recommended conditions as set out in the main report are retained save for an amendment to renumbered condition 25 and deletion of the requirement for a bat survey prior to demolition.

Reading UK CIC

- 1.9 Reading UK confirmed that they would require an Employment Skills and Training Plan (ESP) for end user requirements as well as for construction skills.

- 1.10 **Planning Officer note:** The requirement for the submission of an ESP for end user has been included above.

Views

- 1.11 Further imagery as been provided to show the proposed scheme within a number of views and is included in Appendix 1. below.

Amended Plan

- 1.12 An amended Proposed Section drawing (1789-SBA-PP-ZZ-A-1001 Rev P1, rec 30/3/21) has been submitted, which reflects the proposed changes to the roof of the exiting Stadium building, and is included in Appendix 2. below.

Written Statements

- 1.13 Written statements have been submitted by those members of the public who are registered under ‘public speaking’ and are included in Appendix 3. below.

Conclusion

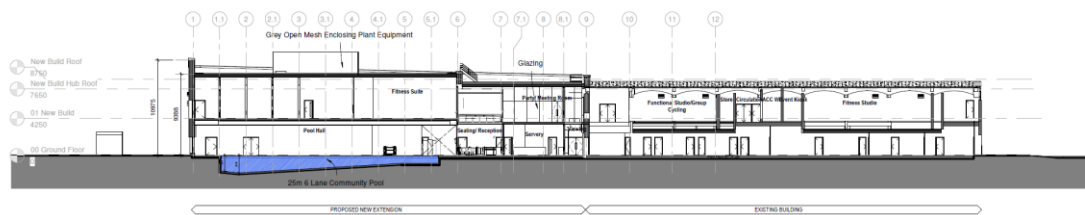
- 1.14 Having reviewed the additional information the officer overall recommendation is not altered, save for the amendments to the S106 heads of terms, and deleted, altered and additional conditions as above.

Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: CGIS SUPERIMPOSED WITHIN VIEWS



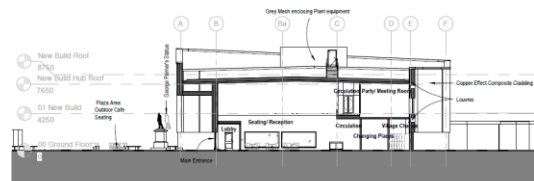
APPENDIX 2: AMENDED PROPOSED SECTIONS



Proposed Section A
1 : 200



Proposed Section B
1 : 200



Proposed Section C
1 : 200

APPENDIX 3: WRITTEN STATEMENTS

A) John Hall - Palmer Park Bowling Club

PALMER PARK BOWLING CLUB
(Est. 1910)

(Season April to October)

Since 1908 the bowls green and Club have been part of Palmer Park and due to the financial restraints suffered by RBC over the years we have proceeded to maintain, extend and improve the buildings and green at no cost to RBC. We have added to the wellbeing of the Park during the last 112 years.

Planning Application 201735 - RBC and Greenwich Leisure Ltd.

The proposed 6 lane pool and facilities will be a good addition/ attraction to the park but will cause major problems for existing park users especially ourselves and even our SURVIVAL!

The main Issues being lack of Parking Spaces and Parking Charges.

The planning application by reducing the number of available parking spaces highlights an already acute problem of lack of spaces experienced on numerous occasions on evenings and weekends during the season. We have in the past lost fixtures due to visiting clubs being frustrated by lack of parking.

There appears to be no guarantee in the application that the proposed overflow parking will be available as soon as the main parking area is full! This makes it difficult for established club to operate.

During local discussions our suggested proposal to allow limited PPBC & visitor parking adjacent to the Lodge to create more parking spaces was rejected.

A key feature of the club's survival is to maintain home and away fixtures with other clubs. During a normal season we could average 4/5 games with visiting teams each week.

Unlike other users of the park who can complete their activities under 3 hours, a game of bowls sometimes can take 4 or 5 hours. Therefore Parking Charges and free periods are extremely important to us. Visiting teams do not expect to pay for parking and are unlikely to start. A problem for us to manage. We acknowledge the coaches and volunteers intention.

The previous proposed 3 hour free period would be extremely helpful and manageable to us.

Clubs Finance - Like most clubs apart from annual subscriptions we rely on match fees, fund raising, raffles, bar takings and visiting clubs for our income. VISITING CLUBS ARE VITAL TO OUR FUNDING to enable us and our members to function and play our part as a leisure facility in PALMER PARK.

We do not want the lack of visiting teams our V.I.Ps to become our R.I.P.

Obviously, it is in PPBC interest to help to manage the parking as our future is at stake!

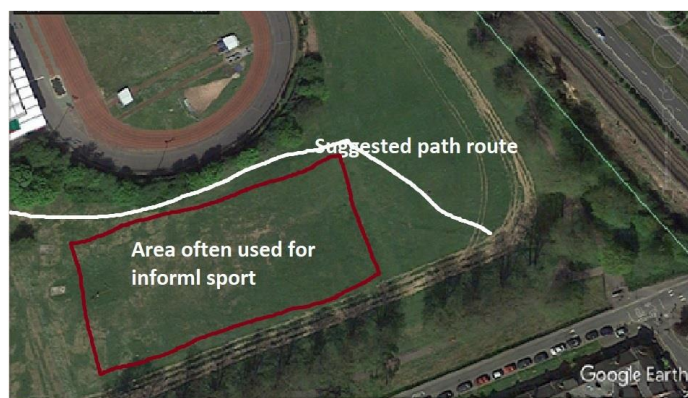
B) Chris Darby - 34 Palmer Park Avenue

Many thanks for your letter in response to my concern. This may be best explained visually and concerns the possible trajectory of a permanent path (marked in white) from the gate at the south-eastern edge (Palmer Park Avenue, bridge end) of the park towards the stadium.



If I have understood the plans correctly (and I may be mistaken), the natural trajectory of such a path would be a straight line towards the car park end of the stadium. My concern is that if this was a permanent path, as distinct from the current natural trajectory of anyone travelling in that direction, it would have a significant impact on the 'Area often used for informal sport' and bounded by a bank on most sides. The area would undoubtedly continue to be used for that purpose but would now have a permanent hazard within it, likely to cause accident or injury.

IF there is to be a permanent path (and I remain unconvinced of the need), I would ask that it skirts the 'Area often used for informal sport' and takes a longer route following the bottom of the banked area nearest the stadium track.



I hope this explanation is clear enough and am willing to speak in support of this. I am providing you with both a docx and pdf version of this document. In any case, I intend to observe and hear the meeting.

C) Mr. S. Stenning - Palmer Park Bowls Club

I am a member of Palmer Park Bowls club writing this letter concerning the parking at palmer park after the new pool is built.

An increase of parking by some 13 spaces is laughable and will cause a massive headache if as on some weekends there are athletics meetings swimming galas and all the other activities happening in the park i.e.: cricket, Bowls, Childrens activities and the numerous amounts of men and children's football teams all turning up at one time.

This does not include the library the church meetings that use the parking facilities at the Palmer park avenue entrance and the play park and cafe which attract a lot of people in the summer.

I can only see this as people trying to park and people losing their patience at trying to attend facilities for themselves and their families.

It is ok saying there is an overflow car park which lets people park on the grass but in adverse weather which we do get, this would be a nightmare on the grass and will definitely force people in to the surrounding streets to park.

Also, the fact that the council have delayed the parking charge option only fills me with suspicion that as soon as this goes ahead the charge will be brought in, it is almost scandalous.

I should imagine that Robert Palmer who designated the park to the people, would be spinning in his grave if he knew there was a money-making scheme being put on the people who he gave the park to.

I am quite sure that the bowls club was one of the first schemes to be up and running when the park was designated to the people and charging for our opposition to park would be an embarrassment and yet another charge for mostly pensioners to pay to be able to exercise and enjoy a pastime that they enjoy in a council park.

Can you guarantee that a charge will not be happening as in all other bowls clubs in Reading there is adequate free parking, in Henley there are tickets handed out as to say you can park in the adjacent car park for bowlers only.

Will there be any schemes for people who use certain facilities two or three times every week??? as not to be charged i.e., permits.

Where will people park when the building work is in progress???

I am in favour of the pool in the area as Arthur hills was closed down and in poor condition many years ago and nothing replaced it and i understand improvements are good and needed but not if it causes problems within the area.

The area called the Heart space in my opinion will become an area that is currently occupied between the bowls area and the Astro turf football courts where youngsters meet and hang around for most of the evening doing things they should not be doing, it will take it away from the benches outside the bowls green which is a good thing and it will hopefully stop us having to breathe in the smell of the substances they are using.

Although that could be a reason why we were promoted last season and played exceptionally well.

My last and final comment is this could have been easily resolved with many more car parking spaces being made available in the palmer park avenue side of the park and towards the back of the parking slots that you are planning.

I do hope you take everything I have said into consideration.

Regards Mr S Stenning,

Ex - Alfred Sutton boys school pupil who used to live in the area and found my way back to the park through bowls, who has fond memories of palmer park as man and boy and long may they continue.