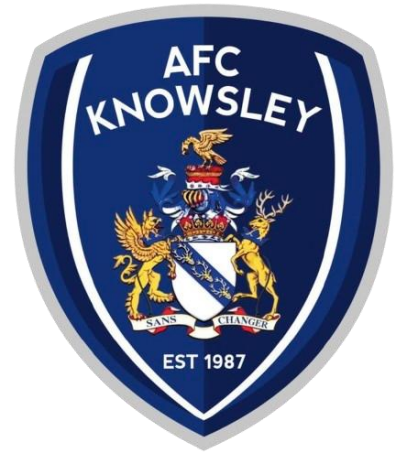


PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED PUBLIC STANDS, TICKET KIOSK, DUGOUTS,
FENCING IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSOCIATED MATCHDAY
INFRASTRUCTURE

AFC KNOWSLEY
LORD DERBY PAVILION
KNOWSLEY LANE
KNOWSLEY
L36 8JB



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application submitted by AFC Knowsley for the provision of spectator facilities and associated infrastructure at Lord Derby Pavilion, Knowsley Lane, Knowsley, L36 8JB.

1.2 The proposed development comprises:

- New 50-person covered seated stand;
- New 50-person standing shelter;
- Two 8-person team dugouts;
- Ticket kiosk;
- New and improved perimeter fencing;
- Associated hardstanding works;
- Floodlighting infrastructure and associated operational improvements.

1.3 This statement identifies the need for the development and assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policy.

2.0 SITE AND BACKGROUND

2.1 AFC Knowsley is a well-established community football club operating from Lord Derby Pavilion within Knowsley.

2.2 The club was founded in 1987 and has developed into one of the largest grassroots football organisations within the borough. Significant investment in recent years has delivered a modern pavilion, changing facilities, café and community space.

2.3 AFC Knowsley currently provides football opportunities for adult, junior, girls' and disability teams and supports in excess of 600 registered players.

2.4 The first team currently competes within the West Cheshire Football League and is seeking progression to Step 6 football within the Football Association National League System.

2.5 The site is an established sporting facility and the proposals represent improvements to support and enhance the existing use.

3.0 NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposals are required to enable AFC Knowsley to satisfy Football Association and Northwest Counties Football League ground grading requirements associated with progression to Step 6 football.

3.2 The development forms part of the club's long-term strategy to create a sustainable pathway from grassroots football through to senior football within Knowsley.

3.3 The proposed facilities will:

- Improve spectator safety and comfort;
- Enhance accessibility and circulation around the ground;
- Support progression within the football pyramid;
- Retain local sporting talent within the borough;
- Increase participation in organised sport;
- Improve the long-term sustainability of the club;
- Support local employment opportunities; and
- Strengthen the role of the site as a community asset.

3.4 Without these improvements the club would be unable to meet league infrastructure requirements necessary for advancement within the National League System.

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places significant weight on achieving sustainable development and supporting healthy, inclusive communities.

4.2 The NPPF encourages planning decisions that promote social interaction, community cohesion, health and wellbeing through access to recreation and sport.

4.3 National policy supports the retention, improvement and expansion of sports and recreational facilities where they contribute to community wellbeing and sustainable development.

4.4 The proposal directly aligns with these objectives through investment in an established community sports facility that promotes physical activity, youth development and social inclusion.

4.5 The proposals therefore accord with the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.0 KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN POLICY ASSESSMENT

5.1 The adopted Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) establishes a vision for attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods supported by excellent community facilities and opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

Strategic Objective – Healthy Communities

5.2 The proposals directly support the Local Plan objective of creating healthy communities through improved access to sport, recreation and physical activity.

5.3 AFC Knowsley provides a significant community resource and the proposed improvements will strengthen the long-term viability of the facility.

Strategic Objective – Community Facilities

5.4 The Core Strategy recognises the importance of community infrastructure including sports venues and recreational facilities.

5.5 The proposals represent investment in an existing sporting facility and will improve the quality and functionality of community infrastructure within the borough.

Policy CS15 – Quality of Design

5.6 Policy CS15 seeks high quality design that responds positively to local character, promotes accessibility and creates safe and inclusive environments.

5.7 The proposed structures are functional, modest in scale and appropriate within the context of an established sports ground.

5.8 The development will improve site organisation, spectator management and operational safety whilst maintaining the sporting character of the site.

5.9 The proposal is therefore consistent with the objectives of Policy CS15.

Sustainable Development Principles

5.10 The Core Strategy promotes sustainable development through the efficient use of existing infrastructure and the enhancement of community assets.

5.11 The proposal utilises an existing sports facility and existing access arrangements, avoiding the need for new standalone development elsewhere.

5.12 The development therefore represents an efficient and sustainable use of existing recreational land and infrastructure.

Accessibility and Movement

5.13 Existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements will remain in place.

5.14 The proposed hardstanding, spectator areas and improved circulation routes will enhance movement throughout the site and improve accessibility for all users.

5.15 The proposals are consistent with the Council's objectives relating to accessibility, inclusion and safe movement.

Economic and Social Benefits

5.16 The development will generate social, recreational and economic benefits through increased sporting participation, visitor activity and operational employment opportunities.

5.17 The proposals support wider local objectives relating to health improvement, community engagement and youth development.

6.0 PLANNING BALANCE

6.1 The principle of development is acceptable as the proposals are ancillary to an established sports facility and directly support its continued use.

6.2 The structures are modest in scale and entirely appropriate within the context of an existing football ground.

6.3 No significant adverse impacts upon neighbouring land uses, highway safety, visual amenity or site operation have been identified.

6.4 The proposals will deliver substantial public benefits through improved community sports infrastructure, enhanced accessibility and support for grassroots football development.

6.5 These benefits weigh strongly in favour of the development.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 AFC Knowsley provides an important sporting and community facility within the borough.

7.2 The proposed development is necessary to support the club's continued growth and progression within the Football Association league structure.

7.3 The proposals represent appropriate development within an established sporting venue and will deliver significant community, health, recreational and economic benefits.

7.4 The development accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, particularly in relation to healthy communities, community facilities, sustainable development, accessibility and quality design.

7.5 Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.