

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	24/00621/KMBC1	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Jo Sheridan
<u>WARD:</u>	Halewood South	<u>PARISH:</u>	Halewood Town Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Halewood Leisure Centre, Baileys Lane, Halewood		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO AN EXISTING ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH (AGP) TO INCLUDE RE-MODELLING OF PERIMETER FENCING; REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING METAL HALIDE LUMINAIRES WITH LED UNITS; REPLACEMENT AND EXTENSION OF AN EXISTING ACOUSTIC SCREEN; EXTENSION TO EXISTING AND ADDITION OF NEW HARDSTANDING; PROVISION OF COVERED SPECTATOR SEATING AND STANDING; PROVISION OF TURNSTILE BLOCK; PROVISION OF MODULAR TOILET BLOCK; PROVISION OF BALL STOP NETTING; PROVISION OF RETRACTABLE PLAYER TUNNEL; RE-LOCATION OF EXISTING STORAGE CONTAINER AND PROVISION OF BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ENHANCEMENTS		

Site Description

The site subject of the application is Halewood Leisure Centre, off Baileys Lane. The site is bounded to the south west and north by residential properties of Kempsey Way, Barncroft Road and Hornbeam Road respectively. To the east is Baileys Lane.

Access is via Baileys Lane and the site consists of the leisure centre, with an artificial pitch to the north of the centre and a car park to the south of the centre. The site also has basketball courts to the west of the car park and the remainder of the site is maintained grassland.

Proposal

The proposal seeks infrastructure improvements to an existing artificial grass pitch (AGP) to include:

- the re-modelling of perimeter fencing;
- the replacement of existing metal halide luminaires with led units;
- the replacement and extension of an existing acoustic screen;
- the extension to existing and addition of new hardstanding;
- the provision of covered spectator seating and standing; provision of turnstile block; provision of modular toilet block; provision of ball stop netting; provision of retractable player tunnel;
- the re-location of existing storage container and provision of biodiversity net gain enhancements.

The amendments are proposed to support the progression of the home football team within the league.

Consultations

Environmental Health: No objections subject to six conditions; one for the implementation of the recommendations of the noise report; one condition regarding lighting – compliance; one condition requiring the reporting of unexpected contamination; one condition regarding the importation of soil; one condition requiring

the submission of a construction management plan and a condition limiting the hours of construction.

LLFA/Drainage: No objections.

ESS – BNG: No objections subject to a condition requiring the onsite BNG is implemented.

Halewood Town Council: No comments received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by neighbour notification letter and by the erection of a site notice. One representation has been received in response to the publicity given to the application which was a letter of support. The letter of support did not comment further.

Planning History

24/00297/KMBC1: Erection of a sub station building. Granted 29/08/2024.

24/00569/PDS: Prior approval for the installation of roof mounted solar PV. Granted 18/11/2024.

25/00198/SO: Screening Opinion for proposed installation of a shared use pedestrian and cycle route with installation of pedestrian circulation routes, 3 mini pitches, lighting, floodlighting, CCTV, sustainable drainage works and reconfiguration and improvements to existing car and coach parking. Decision pending.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016):

CS1 Spatial Strategy for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

CS2 Development Principles

CS7 Transport Networks

CS8 Green Infrastructure
CS19 Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS21 Green Spaces and Trees

Saved Policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006):
H5 Development within Primarily Residential Areas

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

Principle of the development:

When considering development proposals, a positive approach will be taken which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. Planning applications that accord with this policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Plan policy CS8 states that Knowsley's existing green infrastructure and its beneficial functions will be protected, managed and/or enhanced to ensure an appropriate quantity and improved quality of locally important open spaces. Local Plan policy CS21 states that the Council will support improvements to existing and new areas of greenspace to achieve accessible, safe and secure locations for all members of the community to use and to achieve clean and well maintained facilities, equipment and open spaces.

The site is allocated as 'Existing Major Sporting Use' in the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy

The development proposals for the site, and the ancillary development to enable its continuing function as a sporting venue are considered to comply with Local Plan policies SD1, CS8 and CS21.

Development details:

Re-modelling of perimeter fencing and replacement and extension of the existing acoustic screen:

The existing acoustic fencing is to be rebuilt (3.5m high) and extended to the north and west of the playing pitch. Residential dwelling at Hornbeam Road are sited to the west of the site. Environmental Health commented on the application and raised no objections. It is stated that the noise levels will be similar to what is currently present. An environmental noise management plan is to be formulated for operational hours.

New hardstanding (see below) is to be installed to the south of the pitch to accommodate the proposed new and relocated structures. The proposal includes the removal of portions of the 4.5m high weldmesh fence and the erection of new 4.5m high mesh fencing around the new hardstanding. This is sited between the pitch and the leisure centre, away from any residential properties.

A railway sleeper retaining wall is proposed to the south between the leisure centre building and the playing pitch.

The proposed perimeter fencing would match what currently exists on site and would not lead to any issues regarding noise and residential amenity.

Extension to existing and addition of new hardstanding:

As stated above, new hardstanding is to be installed to the south of the pitch to accommodate the proposed new and relocated structures. This area lies between the pitch and the leisure centre, and no issues regarding amenity are raised.

Provision of covered spectator seating and standing; provision of turnstile block; provision of modular toilet block; provision of ball stop netting; provision of retractable player tunnel; re-location of existing storage container and provision of biodiversity net gain enhancements:

The above proposals (with the exception of the ball stop netting) would be sited to the south of the site on the increased area of hardstanding between the pitch and the leisure centre. The proposed structures are what you would expect to see at an established sporting facility. The proposal would enhance the football facilities of the home team but also for every other team and community team that utilise the pitches. No issues regarding amenity would be raised.

Replacement of existing metal halide luminaires with led units:

The proposal includes the replacement of the existing metal halide lamps with more energy efficient LED units. Lux levels submitted with the planning application illustrate that the light levels drop off to 5 lux before reaching the residential boundary. Environmental Health reviewed the information submitted and accepted the levels and advise a condition is attached to ensure that the steps necessary to minimise light intrusion to local dwellings are completed prior to the use of the lamps.

The proposal seeks to enhance an existing facility, which is used for football. The proposal seeks to increase the acoustic fencing that already exists on site to protect residential properties from noise. The proposal therefore complies with Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy policies SD1 'Sustainable development,' CS2 'Development Principles' and CS19 'Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development.'

Biodiversity Net Gain:

A biodiversity net gain baseline metric and summary report were submitted with the application. A tree planting schedule to help to achieve the 10% uplift for BNG was also submitted which illustrated the provision of 11 native trees (birch, rowan and field maple). The information was reviewed by the Council's ecologist who confirmed that the required 10% target can be achieved. The onsite BNG within the landscape plan is not considered to be significant enhancement and the plan and its implementation can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition or as an approved document. Biodiversity net gain is a pre-commencement planning condition therefore a Biodiversity gain plan must be submitted to the LPA prior to development commencing.

Coal Risk:

The site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development Low Risk Area, which means that standing advice applies. This will be included on the decision notice as an informative.

Other issues:

Environmental Health sought the imposition of a condition of the importation of soil. The applicant has confirmed that no soil is to be imported and as such, the proposal is not required.

Conclusion

The proposed development would enhance the use of Halewood Leisure playing pitches by providing extended acoustic fencing and enhanced player and spectator facilities. The proposal would comply with Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy policies SD1 Sustainable Development, CS1 Spatial Strategy for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, CS2 Development Principles, CS7 Transport Networks, CS8 Green Infrastructure and CS19 Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development.

Recommendation

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, a biodiversity gain plan must be submitted to the local planning authority. The plan must include the following:
(a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat,
(b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat,
(c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat,
(d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development,
(e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development, and
(f) such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.
The plan will be informed by a landscaping scheme. Development cannot commence until the biodiversity net gain plan has been approved by the local planning authority (see informative)

Reason: To comply with the Environment Act 2021.

4. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings the recommendations as per the noise report, included with the application, by Apexacoustics, report No. 12212.1, 3rd April 2025, Revision F shall be implemented. Documentary evidence of the works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory development of the site and in the interests of protecting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and to

comply with saved Policies H5, and ENV2 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006 and Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy, adopted January 2016.

5. All works which form part of the scheme submitted as part of the application, which includes the steps necessary to minimise light intrusion to local dwellings shall be completed prior to operation and shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residents and to comply with Saved Policy H5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006.

6. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development on the part of the site affected must be halted and a risk assessment carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where unacceptable risks are found remediation and verification schemes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall be implemented prior to the development (or relevant phase of development) being brought into use.

Reason: In the interests of safety, to prevent pollution of the environment and to comply with Saved Policy ENV5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006.

7. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be commenced until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority that details the means of mitigation of construction effects. This shall include but not be limited to the following: -
 - a. Methods for the mitigation of noise and vibration from installation works, and also from the operation of any temporary power generation or pumping plant which will operate overnight;
 - b. Methods for dust control and suppression;
 - c. Details of wheel washing facilities including location and type direction of vehicles to and from the site and process of accessing facilities;
 - d. The areas for the storage of plant and materials;
 - e. Location of site compound;
 - f. No works shall take place outside the hours of:
 - i. 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)
 - ii. 0800 to 1300 Saturday.

All site works shall then proceed only in accordance with the approved management plan unless otherwise agreed in writing beforehand with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residents and to comply with Saved Policy H5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006.

Informatives:

1. The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining

feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242.

Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at: Mining Remediation Authority - GOV.UK

Standing Advice valid from 1st January 2025 until 31st December 2026

2. Biodiversity net gain is a pre-commencement planning condition therefore a Biodiversity gain plan must be submitted to the LPA prior to development commencing. A biodiversity gain plan template can be found on the government website ([Biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK](#))

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
17/01/2025	205-104-1000		Location Plan
17/01/2025	205-104-1001		Existing Site Plan
29/11/2024	205-104-1003		Proposed Site Plan
17/01/2025	205-104-3012		Proposed Tree Planting Schedule
29/11/2024	205-104-1004		Proposed AGP Plan and Elevations
29/11/2024	205-104-1005		Proposed AGP Hardstanding and Setting-Out Plan
29/11/2024	205-104-1006		Proposed Site Structures
29/11/2024	205-104-1007		Proposed Acoustic Screen
29/11/2024	205-104-1008		Proposed Sleeper Retaining Wall
29/11/2024	205-104-1009		Proposed Site Drainage Plan
18/02/2025	HLS731	Rev 8	Proposed Floodlighting
20/11/2024			Floodlight Lamp Replacement Report
03/04/2025	12212.1	Rev F	Noise Impact Assessment

Signed Case Officer¹:

Jo Sheridan

Signed Authorising Officer²:



Date:

30.04.2025

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

Appendix 1 – Site Photographs