

Knowsley Council
Regeneration and Economic Development Directorate.
Delegated Planning Report

APPLICATION NO: 26/00139/FUL **CASE OFFICER:** Andrew Hunt

WARD: Stockbridge **PARISH:** N/A

LOCATION: Lord Derby Memorial Playing Fields, Knowsley Lane, Huyton,
Knowsley

PROPOSAL: ERECTION OF 6NO. FLOODLIGHTS, 2NO. 8-PERSON DUGOUTS,
50-PERSON COVERED SEATED STAND, 50-PERSON STANDING
SHELTER, NEW HARDSTANDING/WALKWAY AROUND PLAYING
FIELDS, TEMPORARY MATCHDAY, FENCING, 1NO. TICKETING
KIOSK, NEW 1800MM PERIMETER FENCING, RAISING EXISTING
FENCING TO 1800MM HIGH AND ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL
WORKS

Site Description

The application site is a large rectangular site to the west of George Hale Avenue and north of Knowsley Lane. It is currently used for sports and recreation uses as a football club with marked pitches, a club building, car park and informal grassed areas.

To the west are more pitches which are part of the club, with dwellings further to the west on the southern part of Knowsley Way. To the south are dwellings on the opposite side of Knowsley Lane and to east dwellings on the opposite side of George Hale Avenue. To the north and north west are trees and a recreation area with the M57 further to the north.

Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of 6no floodlights, 2 x no 8 person dugouts, 50 person covered seated stand, 50 person standing shelter, new hardstanding/walkway around playing fields, temporary matchday fencing, 1no ticketing kiosk, new 1800mm perimeter fencing, raising existing fencing to 1800mm high and associated external works.

- The 50 person seated stand would be 4 metres high, 3.6metres wide and 7.5 metres long.
- The 8 person dug outs would be 2.07 metres high, 1.3 metres wide and 4 metres long.
- The floodlights would be on a 15 metre high pole with a total height of 15.8 metres.
- The kiosk would be 2.6 metres high, 2.5 metres deep and 1.5 metres wide.
- There would also be a 50 person standing shelter which would consist of a new canopy on the existing sports building.

Consultations

Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions in relation to lighting and contaminated land.

Environmental Sustainability Services – No objection, a 19.43% net gain is shown. Conditions are required in relation to landscaping and BNG.

Highways – No response received.

Sport England - No objection, the application meets exception 2 of Playing Fields Policy and accords with Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Coal Authority – No objection.

United Utilities – No objection, subject to informative.

Cadent Gas - No objection, subject to informative.

Representations

The application has been publicised by letters sent to 27 neighbours and by site and press notices.

Two objections (from two different addresses) and 17 letters of support (from 15 different addresses), have been received consisting of the following main points:

Support

- This development will enable young persons to continue their football career with the club and allow the club to turn semi-professional.
- It will benefit the wider community.
- There will be no nuisance or noise issues.
- It will help men's mental health.
- Would boost finances of club and help club grow. #
- It would support healthier lifestyles.

Objection

- There are existing noise issues.
- Concerned about impacts of lighting.
- There is a lack of car parking in the area and cars park on the surrounding roads creating visibility issues and risk of accidents.
- Some person have blocked driveways.
- There is also congestion at the junction with Newark Close.
- The clubs should remain.
- The structures could be used for anti social behaviour.
- The club should remain non professional and the children should be encouraged into education rather than a small chance of playing professional

football.

Planning History

N/A

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

CS2 - Development Principles
CS7 - Transport Networks
CS8 - Green Infrastructure
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS21 - Greenspaces and Trees
CS24 - Managing Flood Risk
Policy SUE2a - (Sustainable Urban Extension – Knowsley Lane, Huyton
Overall Development Strategy)

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

ENV3 - Light Pollution

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.

ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Policy SUE2a (Sustainable Urban Extension – Knowsley Lane, Huyton Overall Development Strategy) states that:

“1) The comprehensive development of Land at Knowsley Lane, Huyton will be supported. The site is allocated for:

c) Public open space comprising outdoor sporting provision and associated amenity space in the western part of the site (see Policy CS21)”.

Part 2 of Core Strategy Policy CS21 (Greenspaces and Trees) states that

“2) New development which would result in the loss of urban greenspace, will not be permitted unless at least one of the following criteria are met:

d) The development is required to improve greenspace provision or for ancillary facilities to support sport or recreation; or”

National Planning Policy Framework para 104 states that:

“104. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”

The proposal would be for sports provision in connection with the existing use of the site, therefore the proposal would comply with part 1 c) of SUE2a and part 2 of CS21. The proposal also complies with NPPF para 104 as it would be for alternative sports provision, the benefits of which outweigh the loss. This is supported by Sport England who also consider the proposal compliant with NPPF para 104 and have no objection to the proposal.

Overall, the proposal is for a sporting use, which is consistent with the existing use of the site and acceptable in principle. The proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy SUE2a, CS21 and NPPF para 104.

DESIGN

Policy CS19 (Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development) in the Core Strategy sets out several criteria that developments will be expected to conform to so that they enhance local distinctiveness and the identity and accessibility of new places. The NPPF identifies that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

The proposal would consist of sporting facilities and lighting poles, however the sporting facilities would be limited to no more than 4 metres high (the 50 seat stand) and all elements would be located away from neighbours around the main pitch. The 50 seat stand would be white with blue seats. The other elements would be smaller scale and would not result in harm to the character of the area. A condition will be added to ensure the new perimeter fencing is painted green to reduce the visual impact and sense of enclosure.

Overall, the proposal would not result in harm to the streetscene and the development is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS19.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Policy CS19 in the Core Strategy requires new developments to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings by avoiding unacceptable impacts on existing residents and future occupiers.

Policy ENV3 in the Unitary Development Plan states that:

“Development requiring external lighting must satisfy the following criteria:

- a) The lighting scheme proposed is the minimum required for security and working purposes to undertake the task;*
- b) There would be no unacceptable impact on visual amenity in the surrounding area;*
- c) The scheme will not have an unacceptable effect on road safety;*
- d) The scheme will not harm wildlife; and*
- e) There will be no unacceptable loss of residential amenity”*

Lighting

The application has been supported by a lighting assessment which includes a detailed lux level map. This has been reviewed by the council's environmental health team who have no objection subject to a condition to secure the light limitations in the submitted document.

It is anticipated that the floodlights will be used as follows between October and March:

- Every other Saturday between 2.30 to 5.30pm – 3.5 hours
- Every other Tuesday Evenings between 6pm to 10pm – 4 hours

It is recommended that a condition is attached to limit the hours that the floodlights can be used. Overall subject to conditions to limit the lighting impacts, there would be no harm to residential amenity from the proposal from lighting.

Light, outlook and privacy

The proposal would consist of sporting facilities and lighting poles, however the sporting facilities would be limited to no more than 4 metres high (the 50 seat stand) and all elements would be located away from neighbours around the main pitch. The 50 seat stand would face west towards to pitch and away from the dwellings on George Hale Avenue. The nearest neighbours would be 90 metres away from the structures and so there would be no harm to amenity from loss of light, outlook or privacy.

Overall, the development will not harm the amenity of neighbouring properties. The development complies with Core Strategy Policy CS19 and UDP policy ENV3.

HIGHWAYS

Part 2 of Core Strategy Policy CS7 (Transport Networks) states that:

“2) New development will be required to be:

- a) Located and designed to prioritise accessibility and sustainable modes of travel through a choice of walking, cycling, public transport, and incorporate access for private vehicles. Where deficiencies are identified, developer contributions will be required to improve the accessibility of the location;*
- b) Located and designed to ensure that larger scale proposals (attracting a lot of visitors, customers and/or employees) are located in the most accessible locations;*
- c) Where subject to a planning application, accompanied (except in the case of smaller scale proposals) by Transport Assessments and/or Travel Plans;*
- d) In compliance with adopted cycle, car, disabled and service vehicle parking standards for different types and scales of new development;*
- e) Inclusive of measures that will mitigate carbon emissions and improve air quality where appropriate; and*
- f) Consistent with safeguarding arrangements that secure the operational integrity and safety of Liverpool John Lennon Airport”.*

NPPF para 116 states that a development should only be refused on highways grounds if *“there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”.*

The proposal will not result in any changes to access or parking as these elements would remain the same. There are currently 42 parking spaces and 4 disabled parking spaces. As the site is located in the north of Huyton and is a local club (predominantly serving the immediate area), a large number of players and spectators would be expected to walk from elsewhere in Huyton to the site. In relation to the existing parking issues, the blocking of driveways to prevent access would be a police matter whilst the enforcement of the existing double yellow lines on Knowsley Lane would be a highways matter. There is no evidence that the proposal would result in a significant increase in on street parking within the area or would result in a material increase in risk of accidents.

There would be some intensification of the existing sporting use with the addition of a 50 seater stand, however, the level of increase in traffic and parking is not considered to be significant or result in unacceptable highways impacts.

Overall, there would not be significant harm to highway safety and the application complies with Core Strategy Policy CS7 and NPPF para 116.

FLOOD RISK

Part 1 of Policy CS24 (Managing Flood Risk) states that new development that may cause an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere will not be permitted.

The site is within flood zone 1 (lowest risk) for flood risk from rivers and the sea, and has a low risk of surface water flooding.

Whilst the site is above 1 hectare, the proposal would involve small scale built development such as stands and ancillary sporting infrastructure. The scale of development is such that there are no material flood risk impacts and as such a flood risk assessment is not required.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal will not lead to flood risk impacts. This is reinforced by the absence of any objection from United Utilities. Therefore, the proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy CS24.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The proposal has been supported by a biodiversity net gain assessment that demonstrates that there would be a 19.43% net gain that can be achieved on site. This has been received by the council's ecologist who accepts the results of the assessment and has no objection subject to conditions. The on-site gains are not classed as significant and the planting can be secured via the standard landscape condition with a standard biodiversity net gain condition also required.

CONCLUSION

The development is acceptable in principle and would not cause harm in relation to highway safety, design, flood risk or the amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposed development complies with policies included within the Core Strategy (2016), Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (saved policies 2009) and National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

- 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) Plans

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) BNG Gain Plan

No development approved by this permission shall commence until a Biodiversity Gain Plan for delivery and monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain, completed statutory Biodiversity Metric, baseline habitat map and proposed site plan have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These must accord with one another and must show proof of purchase and allocation of any offsite units or statutory credits being used to achieve mandatory 10% BNG.

Reason: In order to meet Biodiversity Net Gain and to ensure compliance with NPPF 2024.

4) Landscaping

Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved drawings, prior to the first use of the 50 seater stand, full details of landscaping works shall have been submitted to and been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The details shall relate to all land surfaces not built upon and shall include:

- a) planting plans, specifications and schedules, planting size, species and numbers/densities, trees to be retained and a scheme for the timing / phasing of work.
- b) existing plants / trees to be retained
- c) A detailed regime for the ongoing and longer term maintenance of all soft landscaping is also required to be submitted for approval.

The approved landscaping works shall be implemented within the first available planting season.

Any trees or shrubs planted or retained in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development.

5) Lighting Measures

Prior to the commencement of construction of any lighting, the obtrusive light limitations suggested in the Institution of Lighting Engineers Guidance Notes for Light Pollution must be met, as detailed within the Lighting Design, Wiseman Lighting, Drawing No. 0200-Rev C, Dated 10.12.25. All works which form part of the scheme shall be completed prior to operation of the floodlights and shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Reason: To prevent light intrusion on local dwellings.

6) Floodlight Hours

The floodlights hereby approved shall not be switched on outside the hours of 09:00 to 22:00.

Reason: In order to protect neighbouring residents from lighting at night.

7) Unexpected Contamination

Based on the information available we are not aware of any contamination on this site. However, the responsibility to properly address

contaminated land issues lies with the owner/developer of the site, irrespective of any involvement by this Authority. The applicant/developer is requested to contact the Council's Environmental Protection Unit (Tel: 0151 443 4712) as soon as is practicable should contamination be encountered during the development of the site.

If contaminated material is encountered the applicant/developer is required to dispose of the contaminated arisings appropriately. They should also be aware of their health and safety responsibilities to workers in respect of handling such materials. The developer should also ensure that no pathways are created by which any contamination may either migrate off-site or affect site users.

Reason: In order to prevent harm to human health from contamination.

8) Green Fencing

The 1.8 metre high perimeter fencing (shown in 26-311 P-202 REV 00) shall be painted Moss Green (RAL 6005) and retained as such hereafter.

Reason: In order to reduce the visual impact of the fencing.

<u>Signed Case Officer¹:</u>	<u>Andrew Hunt</u>
<u>Signed Authorising Officer²:</u>	<u>Jo Sheridan</u>
<u>Date:</u>	<u>13.07.2026</u>

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

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
09/07/2026	-	-	50 Seater stand colours
06/07/2026	-	-	Planting Plan
02/06/2026	P-002	01	Proposed Site Plan
02/06/2026	2026/AFCK/03	01	Proposed Block Plan
02/06/2026	P-202	01	Proposed Dug Out, Kiosk and Fence
02/06/2026	-	-	CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP)
26/03/2026	-	-	Location Plan
26/03/2026	2026/AFCK/04	-	Floodlight Elevations

26/03/2026	26-311 P-203	00	Proposed Stand Drawings
26/03/2026	26-311 P-201	00	Proposed Building Elevations

INFORMATIVES

- 1) United Utilities - See Letter