

Recreation and Estates Planning Statement: Seedfields Housing Development

This statement has been provided to link three separate planning applications in response to Sport England feedback on the proposed housing development at Seedfields, Bury.

1. Application No. 69387: 'Formation of car park and erection of boundary fence; Provision of stairs/steps down to football field (Arley Avenue Car Parking for Match and Club Officials)'.
2. Application No. 69079: 'Demolition of the Seedfield Centre, Bury and construction of 84 dwellings with associated parking of 42 spaces and landscaping'.
3. Application No. 69333: 'Two storage units within a fenced enclosure on a public recreation field for use associated with sports activities ref: 69333, which has been varied to include compliant welfare facilities.

The statement will outline appropriate and reasonable mitigations being taken in accordance with NPPF to justify execution of the exceptions policy (where applicable).

Application 1: Provision of Car Parking and Access for Match and Club Officials (planning ref 69387)

The Council has identified land its ownership on Arley Avenue to provide additional car parking for exclusive use by Seedfield Sports Club JFC, thereby regulating traffic flows in the wider area. The proposal, which has been discussed and agreed with the Club, provide:

- 14 dedicated spaces, including 1 accessible space
- secure parking for exclusive use by the club;
- inward-opening, lockable gates; and
- appropriate hard surfaced material and dropped curb.

Further detail on the gates, fencing and signage proposed has been provided on the revised site plan.

In response to concerns raised by the Football Foundation regarding safeguarding, Arley Avenue car park will be used by match officials and club representatives (adults) only, therefore reducing any risk related to accessing the pitch.

The updated site plan illustrates two access points to the pitch from Arley Avenue: an accessible pedestrian route at pitch level; and a new stepped access point from the northerly corner on to pitch side.

Sport England and Football Foundation are asked to note a third pitch-level pedestrian accessible pathway, which has been accommodated as part of the main Planning App: ref 69079.

Application 2: Demolition and Construction of New Homes (planning ref: 69079)

Upon receiving the Sport England objection on 27th January 2023, a revised site plan has been produced to accommodate an accessible car park for exclusive use by Seedfield Sports Club JFC on the site of the existing school car park. This will ensure no loss in parking provision because of the housing development. The car park will be secured by fencing, lockable gates and feature club signage. The main car park of 42 spaces will comprise 3 disabled spaces are to be provided as per Sport England requirements. The submitted drawing clearly identifies the location and number of these disability/accessible car parking spaces.

The car park will benefit from pitch level direct access to the pathway associated with the proposed storage and modular facility on match days (as requested by Football Foundation on 6th April) and is detailed on the revised site plan (planning application 69079).

Overall, the car parking provision of 56 spaces proposed for the club will comprise 42 spaces on the main Seedfields site, in compliance with the council's highways statutory safety guidance, and 14 on the aforementioned Arley Avenue site. It should be noted the entrance width of the car parks is deemed compliant, and safety and accessibility has been assessed by the Council's highways officer.

A review of fixtures for a typical Saturday has been undertaken and indicates that this provision will sufficiently accommodate the clubs parking needs, whilst also recognising that aside from match days, the land will remain vacant. This strikes a balance of accommodating the clubs needs and residential amenity.

It should be noted that the informal parking arrangement currently used by the club within the school grounds, is near the vacant and deteriorated buildings, which despite being closed and fenced off, remains a potential health and safety risk to the public. The new car park proposed will provide a safe space, with a direct and accessible route to the pitches.

Management of Parking

To ensure effective management of the car parks and safeguard use, a three-year lease with annual operational review and with the option of break clauses in favour of either party will be drafted. The operational maintenance will be undertaken by the council.

Following Football foundations feedback on 6th April, both car parks will ensure exclusive, safe, and secure access for the club, through the provision of:

- Lockable gates, with lawnmower gate access at pitch side
- Bespoke club signage.

Application 3: Provision of Storage and Welfare Facilities – Planning ref: 69333

A supplementary planning application has been varied to ensure the club has enhanced ancillary facilities, which will be available for permanent use as long as the club is situated there, following an initial objection from Sport England on 7th March 2023.

Engagement with the club's Chairman and representative has refined this proposal to include: two single 40ft containers for the secure storage of the club's equipment and kit; access to a new modular building providing welfare facilities; and the potential to offer light refreshments through a serving hatch.

In accordance with the Football Foundation design requirements, the new modular building will provide the following:

- Changing area x 2 (18m²) including 1 self-contained WC cubicles per changing room to accommodate home and away players.
- Two changing rooms (6m²) to accommodate match officials' (one could be repurposed for bag storage)
- Spectator WC x 4, including one accessible (separated from players WCs)
- Kitchen with external serving hatch
- Showers

The 2 x 40ft containers in addition to the modular building proposed under this planning application will provide betterment of the club's current situation, which reverted to being a pitch-only club in February 2022, due to the former school buildings being condemned for public use on health and safety grounds.

The above facility will be funded via S.106 monies.

The proposed location of the containers and modular building have been carefully considered to ensure:

- there is no encroachment on existing pitch areas or run-off areas;
- redundant space is used, which cannot otherwise provide quality play area;
- proximity and direct access to parking;
- siting aims to maximise natural surveillance (as per the Football Foundation's feedback on 6th April).

It should be noted that the proposed storage and modular building is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and the careful situation does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use, in accordance with Exception 2 of the playing fields policy and as seen on the site plan and aerial photograph attached.

Conclusion

In response to the objection on 13th March 2023 and further feedback on 6th April 2023 from the Football Foundation, a detailed site plan illustrating the proposed new carpark, modular building and storage containers has been provided, with a wider site plan showing access points from Arley Avenue. This has sought to balance the needs of the club and its supporters with existing and new residents.

Ball Trajectory Analysis

In response to Sport England objection on 7th March 2023, the existing ball strike trajectory analysis has been updated to cover the eventuality of use of the pitch by adults. The Ball Trajectory Analysis has assessed the site's use for adult and junior 11 v 11 football to ensure that the proposed mitigation measures are sufficient.

Noise Impact Assessment

In response to Sport England objection on 7th March 2023, a Noise Impact Assessment has been updated in view of concerns about potential noise and disturbance from the use of the playing field for future occupiers of the dwelling houses in accordance with paragraph 187 of the NPPF. This has now been completed and appended to the main planning application ref: 69079.

Social Value

Additional financial support has been requested by the club and agreed to by Hive Homes (the incoming housing developer) in the form of:

- £3,500 agreed with the club to replace damaged kit and equipment, which was contaminated by asbestos and water damage rendering the kit and equipment unfit for use.
- Branded club signage at the proposed car parking areas.
- Club/team sponsorship to raise the profile of the club amongst new and existing residents.

Summary

The Council acknowledge that the amenity provision of the club has been impacted by the condition and deterioration of the former school estate and that health and safety concerns have reduced the scope of club amenities to a pitch-side offer. Recognising the value that the club brings to the local community, the response outlined in this statement aims to ensure that the proposed demolition and redevelopment of the school buildings positively enhances and expands upon the club's provision. The loss of kit and equipment resulting from the disrepair and condition of the former school building has also been adequately compensated for via the proposed development.

The proposals included across the three applications therefore aim to provide safe and accessible parking, secure storage, and dedicated welfare and amenity provision for the club beyond their existing situation, whilst ensuring that the redevelopment of the former school buildings, allows for the creation of a new residential neighbourhood and potential to attract future players and supporters to the club.