

DELEGATED REPORT

Report by Helen Pressley	Date of report: 20/06/2023	Ref: 69333/FUL
Registration: 21/02/2023	LDfC: 24/03/2023	Expiry Date: 18/04/2023
Site Visit: 03/03/2023	Site Notice: 03/03/2023	Press Date: N/A
Objections: 0	Con Area: N/A	Adv Type: PI
Reason for Delay: N/A		EIA: NA
		Dec Level: DEL
		Stat Class: MIOT

Proposal: Erection of 2no. storage units, 2 no. changing facility units and 1 no. welfare unit on a public recreation field for use associated with sports activities

Location: Seedfield Resource Centre, Parkinson Street, Bury, BL9 6NY

Description

The application relates to the playing fields that are associated with the former Seedfield School/Seedfield Resource Centre. Whilst the site is not protected recreation space within the UDP it is currently in use a recreation space and is frequently used by the Seedfield Football Club for training and matches.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of 2no. storage units, 2 no. changing facility units and 1 no. welfare unit within the south west area of the playing fields. The facilities would be accessed from a car park within the site boundary of application 69079 that is being considered alongside this application. The proposed units would be single storey in height, with flat roofs. A laurel hedge is proposed to the south and east boundaries.

This application should be reviewed in associated with applications 69079 and 69387.

Relevant Planning History

None

Publicity

Neighbour letters 21/02/2023
Site notice 03/03/2023

No representations received.

Following amendments to the plans and description of development further neighbour letters sent 19/05/2023.

No representations received.

Statutory/Non-Statutory Consultations

Traffic Section - Does not wish to restrict planning consent.

Planning Policy Manager - no response

Sport England - Raises no objections

Pre-start Conditions - Not relevant

Unitary Development Plan and Policies

OL1	Green Belt
OL1/2	New Buildings in the Green Belt
RT1	Existing Provision for Recreation in the Urban Area
RT1/1	Protection of Recreation Provision in the Urban Area
RT1/2	Improvement of Recreation Facilities
EN1/2	Townscape and Built Design
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
EN8/2	Woodland and Tree Planting

Issues and Analysis

The following report includes analysis of the merits of the application against the relevant policies of both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) together with other relevant material planning considerations. The policies of the UDP that have been used to assess this application are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and as such are material planning considerations. For simplicity, just the UDP Policy will be referred to in the report, unless there is a particular matter to highlight arising from the NPPF where it would otherwise be specifically mentioned.

Principle (Green Belt)

Paragraphs 147 and 148 state that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is by definition, harmful and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances (VSC). Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm in the Green Belt. VSC will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings would be inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Policy OL1/2 states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate development, unless it is for one of more of the following purposes: agriculture and forestry essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, provided that this would not result in a disproportionate additions over

and above the size of the original dwelling, or, in the case of replacement existing dwellings, the new dwelling is not materially larger than the one it replaces; limited infilling in existing villages.

The proposal would replace facilities that have been lost at the now derelict school. These facilities are considered to be appropriate facilities in connection with outdoor sport and recreation. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Principle (Recreation)

UDP PolicyRT1/1 - Protection of Recreation Provision in the Urban Area does not allow development that would result in the loss of existing and proposed public or private recreation facilities. UDP PolicyRT1/2 - Improvement of Recreation Facilities states that the Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for the appropriate improvement of existing recreational land and facilities in the Borough. The improvement of existing recreation facilities will allow greater use to be made of them and thus enable a larger demand to be satisfied.

Paragraph 99 of the NPPF considers that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields 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.

In addition to the above as the proposal impacts on a playing field a consultation with Sport England is a statutory requirement. Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of all/part of a playing field. Exceptions to this policy are contained within the Playing Fields Policy Document. Sport England's Playing Fields Policy exception 2 would be relevant in this instance. This exception is *"for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use."*

Whilst it is acknowledged that the changing and toilet facilities directly associated with these pitches are contained in an existing disused school building, Sport England considered these facilities could be used again in the future if the buildings were improved and retained. Therefore, the loss of these ancillary facilities needs to be mitigated against as they do have a prejudicial impact on the use of the playing field. In this respect the loss of a permanent building with changing, shower and toilets facilities is not equivalent to the mitigation now being offered for a proposed temporary/modular solution.

The containers are required principally to store sports equipment associated with the use of the playing fields for sports/football. The proposed changing facilities, and welfare block containing a kitchen and public toilets will re-provide the changing rooms and facilities that were previously used by the football club within the former Seedfield School that were lost in 2022, due to the former school buildings being condemned for public use on health and safety grounds. The proposed units have been sited in a position so that they are easily accessible from the car park proposed under application 69079 and so that they would not encroach on the pitches that have been laid out by the club.

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Paragraph 99 of the NPPF requires that playing fields are not built on unless one of the exceptions apply. A replacement playing field and permanent facilities would be required of equivalent or better quality and quantity to meet the Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 99. Sport England consider that any future planning applications for the redevelopment of the playing field would need to provide a permanent building with changing rooms as a replacement facility along with replacement

playing field of equivalent or better quality and quantity in a suitable location.

In assessing whether this current proposal meets exception 2 of Sport England's playing fields policy, facilities should be of an appropriate scale and comply with relevant Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport design guidance. They should also have no impact on the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use. The layout of the proposed units would still allow the five pitches to be marked out on the playing field as currently marked out on the site in April 2023. The siting of these facilities would not reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field. Located near to the car park would allow easy access to players and spectators.

Sport England have also consulted the Football Foundation who act as the sports advisor for football and its facilities. The Football Foundation is content with the club feedback which states that there is not a requirement for showers and changing facilities at the present time. A modular/container style building would provide a practical solution for the provision of toilets, which is considered a minimum operating standard for football. A provision of a minimum of 4 unisex toilets, of which at least one should be accessible/Equality Act compliant should be provided in an accessible location. The advice from the Football Foundation is that temporary facilities may be appropriate in this area of the playing field provided the internal layout of the building complies with their technical guidance. In this respect, any shower provision provided should be individual cubicles.

On consideration of everything set out above, Sport England confirmed that they consider that the proposed buildings would comply with exception 2 of their Playing Fields Policy and the requirements of Paragraph 99 of the NPPF. Given that the use of the buildings at the former Seedfield School has been lost, the proposal is considered to constitute an improvement to outdoor recreational facilities, and would allow the football club to retain use of the football fields by re-providing lost facilities. The proposal would therefore be acceptable in principle complying with UDP Policies RT1/1 - Protection of Recreation Provision in the Urban Area RT1/2 Improvement of Recreation Facilities.

Design and Layout

Policy EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design seeks to ensure that any proposals would not have an adverse impact on the particular character and townscape of an area.

The proposed containers are a type commonly used around recreation sites in order to provide storage. The proposed modular buildings are of a simple and unobtrusive design and the flat roof would limit visibility. The use of soft landscaping/a hedge to the south and west of the proposed buildings would provide a screen for the existing, and proposed residential properties and help the development to sit more comfortably within the locality. The north and west sides of the buildings have been left open to allow accessibility directly from the playing fields.

Given the context of the site, which is a playing field the proposed ancillary accommodation is considered to be acceptable and would comply with UDP Policy EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design.

Amenity

UDP Policy EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design requires proposals to consider their relationship to the surrounding area. There are no adopted aspect standards for relationships between proposed new structures, and existing residential properties however, Supplementary Planning Document 6 provides guidance on aspect standards between residential properties and as such, would be a reasonable guide in this case.

For clarity the following aspect standards would be applicable:

- 20 metres between directly facing habitable room windows;
- 13 metres between an existing habitable room window and a proposed two storey blank wall

- 6.5 metres between an existing habitable room window and a proposed single storey blank wall
- 7 metres between a proposed first floor habitable room window and a directly facing boundary with a neighbouring property.

The shipping containers are the closest element of the proposal to residential properties. At 2600mm in height this would equate to a single storey. The containers are located approximately 15 metres from the rear of No. 54 Woodward Close and 15.2 metres from the rear of No. 52 Woodward Close. As such the proposal would exceed the 6.5 metres required by SPD 6. It should also be noted that there is some degree of differences in levels between the proposal site, and the dwellings on Woodward Close.

Conclusion

Replacement facilities for Seedfield football club comprising 2no. storage units, 2 no. changing facility units and 1 no. welfare unit supported by Football Foundation and Sport England. The proposal would be located in the corner of the site appropriately scaled without detriment to residential or visual amenity. Elevations would be single storey in height and adequately screened by the proposed landscaping.

Whilst located within the Green Belt, the development is clearly necessary for outdoor sport/recreation and therefore compliant with Green Belt policy.

Statement in accordance with Article 35(2) Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2015

The Local Planning Authority worked positively and proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirement in Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Conditions and Reasons:

- 1 The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.
Reason. Required to be imposed by Section 91 Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2 This decision relates to drawings numbered GN 22616 a 01 Rev A, GN 22616 a 02 Rev A, GN 22616 a 03 and the development shall not be carried out except in accordance with the drawings hereby approved.
Reason. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of design pursuant to the policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan listed.
- 3 The laurel screen planting hereby approved and shown on drawings GN 22616 a 02 Rev A and GN 22616 a 03 shall be implemented not later than 12 months from the date the building(s) is first occupied. Any trees or shrubs removed, dying or becoming severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.
Reason. To secure the satisfactory development of the site and in the interests of visual amenity pursuant to Policies EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design and EN8/2 – Woodland and Tree Planting of the Bury Unitary Development Plan.

- 4 The drainage for the development hereby approved must be based on the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance and be designed in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015). The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to first occupation and thereafter maintained.

Reason. To promote sustainable development and reduce flood risk pursuant to Unitary Development Plan Policies EN5/1- New Development and Flood Risk , EN7/3 - Water Pollution and EN7/5 - Waste Water Management and chapter 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change of the NPPF.

<u>Case Officer</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Sign off Officer</u>	<u>Date</u>
HP	20/06/2023		