

PLANNING STATEMENT

Afan United Football Club, Aberavon, Neath Port Talbot

June 2024



PLANNING
LIMITED

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application, submitted on behalf of Afan United Football Club (the applicant), for the re-development of an existing multi-use games area ('MUGA') to a FIFA approved all-weather third-generation ('3G') pitch, spectator stand, changing rooms and clubhouse, sustainable drainage and associated works.
- 1.2 Established in 2020, Afan United FC have enjoyed successive back-to-back promotions and will be competing in the South Wales Alliance Football League Championship in the forthcoming 2024/25 season. In order to compete in the league, Afan United must at all times provide ground and dressing room facilities to meet the current criteria stipulated by the South Wales Football Association (SWFL). Currently, the club are hiring The Lido Ground (Afan Lido Football Club home ground adjacent the development site) on alternate weekends from Afan Lido FC to meet the criteria, which is an expensive outlay for the community club.
- 1.3 Following recent success Afan United are looking to establish their own home ground. The artificial pitch on the site is dated and unusable. Local grassed pitches do not meet the criteria set by SWFL and cannot be utilised to their full potential as poor weather over the winter months make the pitches unusable and/or results in damage the pitches, which is not recovered from until late spring or summer. The proposed 3G pitch would allow Afan United to have a permanent home that can accommodate the growth of the club, and a pitch that can be used by the wider community.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement and accompanying technical reports justify how the proposed scheme demonstrates the site's suitability to accommodate the proposed development. The full suite of documents submitted comprises:

DOCUMENT / DRAWING (REF. IF APPLICABLE)	PREPARED BY
Completed planning application forms (March 2024)	LRM Planning
Cover letter (March 2024)	LRM Planning
Planning statement (June 2024)	LRM Planning
Transport statement and travel plan (June 2024)	Miles White Transport
Football LED Upgrade (15.02.2024)	Signify
Topographical survey (22-1385.200AD.1.1)	Catling Land Survey
Land registry site plan (23-0969-A)	Neath Port Talbot CBC
Site location plan (PA100)	GO Concept Design
Existing site plan (PA101)	GO Concept Design
Proposed site plan (PA102-P02)	GO Concept Design

Proposed site plan zoomed (PA103)	GO Concept Design
Site sections (PA104)	GO Concept Design
Seat spectator stand (PA105)	GO Concept Design
Community hall and changing rooms (PA200)	GO Concept Design
Detailed section – changing room (PA202)	GO Concept Design
Detailed section – community hall (PA300)	GO Concept Design
Artist impression 01 (A001)	GO Concept Design
Artist impression 02 (A002)	GO Concept Design
Artist impression 03 (A003)	GO Concept Design
Artist impression 04 (A004)	GO Concept Design
Artist impression 05 (A005)	GO Concept Design

- 1.5 Together these documents provide an explanation of the proposal and how it represents an acceptable and appropriate use of the land.

2 Site description and context

- 2.1 The application site currently comprises a flood-lit disused synthetic Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), and associated parking. The site is located in the Sandfields Ward, 1.7km west of Port Talbot town centre, towards the southern end and inland of Aberavon beach, in the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot. The site occupies a rectangular footprint for the football field with a protruding rectangular area to the south for car parking. In total, it measures approximately 0.99ha, and has a north-east / south-west orientation.
- 2.2 The MUGA includes a football pitch, the use of which ceased in 2020 following the Covid-19 pandemic. The surface was not up to modern standards at that time, but has since deteriorated with moss growing sporadically across the playing surface. A strip of tarmacked area runs along the south-eastern, south-western and north-western boundaries of the pitch to provide pedestrian access for spectators. The strip along the south-eastern edge is wider for vehicular access, and also includes a shell of a former dugout. The car parking area is located to the south of the site which serves the bowls club as well as the application site. The car park has no formal demarcation of spaces, so is essentially a large area of tarmacadam. It is in a poor state of repair having been affected by construction vehicles associated with the construction of the residential development at the former Afan Lido / Aquadome site (planning application reference: P2021/0226).
- 2.3 The pitch is floodlit, with the existing floodlighting system including four 15m columns on each side of the artificial pitch (eight total) with metal halide lamps. The floodlight heads and all associated cabling / control gear and cabinets are in poor condition and no longer suitable for use. The eight columns have some superficial surface rust and the lowering mechanisms on several columns have worn-out and are no longer safe to lower, but the design of these columns renders them safe whilst in the raised vertical position.
- 2.4 The playing pitch is enclosed by metal mesh fencing to the north-west, north-east, and south-east, with twin-wire fence separating it from the car parking area to the south. The site boundary along the north-west, north-east, and south-east is beyond the pitch enclosure and is formed by concrete panel fencing. To the south-west, the car parking area is bound by concrete panel fencing separating it from Afan Lido football pitch. To the south of the car park is the security fencing of the construction site and to the north-west, and south-west of the playing field, is the Afan Lido indoor bowls club building, which is a dark brick building with metal sheet roof, with no openings aside from the entrance. The car park is open to the south-west, connecting to the access road leading past the neighbouring construction site to/from Princess Margaret Way.

CONTEXT

- 2.5 In terms of wider context, the site lies in an area with a mix of residential and leisure uses. To the west are grey concrete post-war apartment blocks comprised pitched roofs with intervening areas for parking and amenity space. These are currently being refurbished and redeveloped, under application referenced P2020/0992 for the **“refurbishment of 72 existing flats and construction of an additional 55 flats with associated car parking, landscaping and infrastructure works”**. To the north are semi-detached and short-terraced dwellings on Moorland Road and Sunnybank Road. These have a pitched tiled roof and finished in roughcast render. To the south is The Lido Ground (Marston's Stadium), the home ground of Afan Lido Football Club. It is a flood-lit football pitch with 601-seat capacity. The main stand backs onto the application site, with a smaller stand and gantry opposite.
- 2.6 The construction site associated with the former Afan Lido / Aquadome site (ref: P2021/0226) extends to the south. Beyond the bowls club and flats to the south-west, lie Aberavon Leisure Centre, Reel Cinema and associated parking. They are located off Princess Margaret Way, along the promenade. Aberavon beach and the promenade are one of the main attractions within Port Talbot, attracting people from all over the county and further afield. Over the years there has been

expanding development of a number of uses, including cafes, play facilities, care homes and residential dwellings along the beach frontage. The promenade acts as a shared pedestrian and cycle route, with National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 887 running along the promenade and linking back up at both ends with NCN Route 4.

ACCESS

- 2.7 Princess Margaret Way runs along Aberavon Beach, from where the site is accessed via a roundabout. This roundabout leads to two roads (unnamed). The road leading northwest serves the Reel Cinema (Hollywood Park) and The Front restaurant. The road leading southeast provides access to the Cinnamon Kitchen restaurant, a public car park, Afan Lido Football Club, the bowls club and the application site. A second pedestrian access was historically available from Moorland Road to the north.
- 2.8 The closest bus stops on Moorland Road are within 120m of the edge of the site. These bus stops are served by the 82-bus service, which is operated by First Cymru between Sandfields and Port Talbot Bus Station. Buses operate every hour on Mondays to Saturdays. The nearest railway station is Port Talbot Parkway, 3.2km north-east, which is on the South Wales Main Line and within a 5-minute walk of the bus station, which is served by the 82-bus service.

FLOODING

- 2.9 The Development Advice Maps, hosted by Natural Resources Wales, demonstrate that the site is in Flood Zone A, which signifies areas not at risk from flooding. A revised Technical Advice Note 15, which governs development and flood risk is due to be published by Welsh Government at some point in 2024. This will be supported by the new Flood Map for Planning (FMfP), which includes climate change information. The site is located outside any flood zone within the FMfP, which denotes no flood risk constraints to development.

HERITAGE

- 2.10 In relation to heritage assets, the subject site is remote from anything of value. The site is not within a conservation area, nor does it contain or is near any listed buildings. There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or other heritage assets within the vicinity of the site which have the potential to be affected by the development proposals.

ECOLOGY AND TREES

- 2.11 The existing MUGA is an artificial surface surrounded by hardstanding and is of no ecological value. There are no trees located within the or adjacent to the site.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.12 There is no planning history relating to the site aside from the approval of the pitch, which is summarised in the table below.

PLANNING REFERENCE	PROPOSAL	DECISION
P1995/10151	Proposed floodlit synthetic playing field	Granted 06/11/1995

3 Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposal seeks to re-develop the existing artificial MUGA to a FIFA approved all-weather third-generation ('3G') pitch, spectator stand, changing rooms and clubhouse, sustainable drainage and associated works. The pitch will be enclosed by 5m high twin-wire fencing along all sides including pedestrian and maintenance access. This will also include a 2.5m high additional ball stop netting behind each goal, of minimal visual intrusion, creating a total height of 7.5m to prevent footballs leaving the pitch and potentially landing in neighbouring gardens. The pitch will have a north-east south-west alignment. It will measure 98m x 62m with 2m run off areas on all sides of the pitch, in line with the requirements of the Football Association of Wales (FAW) Tier 3 licencing criteria.
- 3.2 Goal storage areas will be provided on the hard standing to the east side of the site with two team dugouts located on the western side.
- 3.3 Given the lack of ancillary facilities available at the site, the proposal includes new changing and showering provision for players and officials with a separate community room. The new timber clad building, to be located adjacent to the 3G pitch along the south-eastern boundary, will incorporate:
- 2 no. changing rooms with requisite space for up to 20 players and coaches in each
 - 4 no. cubicle showers serving each changing room
 - 1 no. unisex toilet cubicle per changing room
 - 2 no. officials rooms each with cubicle shower and unisex toilet
 - Multi-purpose communal space with serving area
 - 4 no. unisex cubicle toilets for spectators and general public
 - 2 no. store rooms
 - 1 no. plant room
- 3.4 The building will measure one-storey in height with a mono-pitched roof. Each changing room will have a separate access and high-level windows. The changing rooms will be located either side of the community room which will be the focal point of the building in the centre. The community room will have full-length windows and double doors.
- 3.5 A new LED floodlighting system is proposed as part of the development with new fittings proposed on each of the eight columns. It will provide uniformed lighting to a minimum level of 250 lux across the entire playing surface enabling evening competitive matches to be played.
- 3.6 A 1.2m high rebound crowd barrier will be installed around the perimeter of the pitch for spectators. The club have also extended the area to be leased from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council on the western side of the site to enable cutting into the grassed bank adjacent to the pitch and construction of a retaining wall providing an additional space to install a stand for 100 seated spectators.

COMMUNITY USE

- 3.7 The usage requested by clubs and organisations includes both winter and summer bookings. The table below shows the clubs and organisations based in the immediate local community who have expressed a desire in using the 3G pitch, changing facilities and community space. The table further outlines the amount of time needed and the participants who would use the pitch during those timeslots. All use is based on the winter season unless otherwise stated:

FOOTBALL CLUBS / ASSOCIATIONS

ORGANISATION	PARTICIPANT NUMBERS	USAGE REQUIRED	TYPE OF USE
Bridgend & Port Talbot Junior Football League	32 clubs/4114 junior players	Saturday mornings (weekly) Midweek evenings	Small sided football hubs Matches
Baglan Dragons Football Club	110 youth and senior player	3-12 hours midweek evenings Midweek evenings and weekends	Training Matches
Baglan Boys and Girls Club	405 mini junior players (incl. 140 girls)	5-10 hours midweek evenings Weekends	Training Matches
Giants Grave Boys and Girls Club	126 mini junior players 79 senior players	Midweek evenings	Training
Wales Deaf Football Association	25 senior players	7 hours per month	Training Matches
Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales	140 U17 players 16 junior players	Weekly use from January to July	Trials Training Matches
Bryncoch Football Club	3 senior teams and 245 registered mini/juniors (20 girls) 68 seniors	Midweek evenings	Training

EDUCATION & YOUTH PROVISION

Ysgol Gynradd Tywyn	467 pupils 48 (ALN)	Weekdays Weekly	Curricular/Extra Curricular Activities Matches
St Joseph's School and Sixth Form	900 pupils	Weekdays Weekly	Curricular/Extra Curricular Activities Matches
Neath Port Talbot Youth Service	11-25 year olds	Weekdays	Youth activities

MULTISPORT ACTIVITIES

My Rounders	24 mixed adult teams 16 female only teams (600 in total)	2 Weekday Evenings (April to Sept) Sunday afternoon/evening (April to Sept)	Training Matches
Afan Rounders	18 women and girls	Weekday Evenings (April to Sept)	Training

The All Round Saints Rounders Team	18 women and girls	Weekday Evenings (April to Sept)	Training
Wales Rugby League	100 players across 9 teams including women's, mixed ability and wheelchair squads	60 hours in total (April to August)	Non-contact training
Aberavon Fighting Irish Rugby League Club	22 Under 17's players 22 Senior players	Weekday Evenings (April to August)	Non-contact training
Aberavon Green Stars Rugby Football Club	250 mini and junior players	Weekday Evenings (6-8 hours)	Non-contact training
Aberavon Harlequins Rugby Football Club	91 senior and junior players	Weekday Evenings (3 hours)	Non-contact training

- 3.8 Whilst the ultimate end users will be subject to according to any planning conditions in respect of hours of use, the above table makes it abundantly evident that there is a local demand for a facility of this nature and specification.

ACCESS AND PARKING

- 3.9 The car park will be accessed as it is at present, i.e., from the access road leading past the Afan Lido houses to/from Princess Margaret Way. This road is privately owned from the site boundary to the bend in the road to the southwest of the site (approximately 80m) and provides parking, access to the Afan Lido houses and the bowls club. Pedestrian access will be via the vehicular access, which is already used by pedestrian associated with the bowls club and Afan Lido FC.
- 3.10 The proposal seeks to regularise the existing car parking area and provide a total of 32 car parking spaces, including four mobility impaired spaces, as well as three motorcycle parking spaces. The proposal also includes six cycle stands close to the pitch and adjacent to the bowls club.

4 Pre-application engagement

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

- 4.1 A pre-application meeting was held with Senior Planning Officer Matthew Griffiths on Thursday 21st March 2024 at the application site. The meeting was attended by the applicants, as well as representatives of GO Concept Design and LRM Planning. The comments received were positive with the officer supporting the principle of the development.
- 4.2 In respect of the layout of the site, the officer confirmed that they had no concern as it reflects the existing arrangements. Amenity was discussed and the officer accepted that there is no change to the material use of the proposed site and that it is currently floodlit. It was suggested that proposal includes floodlighting details to demonstrate the impact of floodlights on neighbouring properties.
- 4.3 With regards to car parking and highway matters, the officer referred to the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), and suggested that a Transport Statement and Travel Plan were prepared to support any forthcoming planning application.
- 4.4 No ecological concerns were raised.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.5 Afan United have consulted with various community clubs and organisations within the locality and received 23 letters of intent from a wide range of sports teams and community organisations outlining the challenges they currently face in accessing facilities and confirming usage requirements for the new 3G pitch, changing facilities and community space.
- 4.6 The current challenges include, but are not limited to:
- Cancellation of fixtures and training
 - Grass pitches are waterlogged and not fit for purpose
 - Fit for future pitches which are affordable
 - Reliable and consistent access
 - Travel distances to facilities, particularly for children
 - Giving all players a fair and equitable chance of playing
 - Existing facilities reporting no availability, with all timeslots are already taken
 - Lack of artificial pitches meeting FAW Criteria
 - Finding a suitable venue for teams to train and play is a constant challenge
 - Lack of facilities and/or space results in children having to be turned away from sport
 - Training facilities are very limited in the locality
 - Access to nearby off field provision for coach
- 4.7 The club have also made applications for grant funding to develop the proposal to FAW, Sport Wales and the Welsh Government. The applications for grant funding are supported by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, with the Director of Services, Council Director, Funding Officers, Local Councillors and Leader of Council all voicing support for the proposed redevelopment of the site.

5 Planning policy framework

- 5.1 The planning policy context for the determination of this application is provided by national and local planning policy guidance. National guidance is set out within Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales, and the accompanying Technical Advice Notes. Local policy comprises the adopted Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan, and its supporting Supplementary Planning Guidance documents.

FUTURE WALES: THE NATIONAL PLAN 2040

- 5.2 Future Wales is Welsh Government's top-tier national development framework. It is a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system over the next two decades. The key priorities include sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

PLANNING POLICY WALES

- 5.3 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal national planning policy document which sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government (WG) against which development proposals should be assessed. The latest version is the twelfth edition, published in February 2024.
- 5.4 The main thrust of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Placemaking lies at the heart of PPW, with policy and development management decisions required to seek to deliver development that adheres to these principles.
- 5.5 Paragraph 3.22 states that ***“Planning authorities should develop and maintain places that support healthy, active lifestyles across all age and socio-economic groups.”***
- 5.6 PPW states that a Healthier Wales can be achieved through improving access to services, cultural opportunities, green spaces and recreation facilities to support people to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This contributes to creating the right conditions for better health, well-being and greater physical activity.
- 5.7 PPW appreciates the importance of community facilities and their contribution ***“to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places.”*** Further, PPW recognises that recreational spaces provide a place for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax often in the presence of nature, and they contribute to our quality of life.
- 5.8 PPW states that ***“planning authorities should provide a framework for well-located, good quality sport, recreational and leisure facilities, and develop clear policies for the provision, protection and enhancement of sport, recreation and leisure facilities.”***

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTES

- 5.9 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are of relevance in the consideration of these proposals.
- TAN 12 – Design (2016)
 - TAN 16 – Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)
 - TAN 18 – Transport (2007)

- 5.10 TAN 12 relates to Design and was updated in March 2016. It provides advice and information on a number of related areas including the definition of design for planning purposes; design considerations in planning decisions; and local planning authority design policy and advice.
- 5.11 TAN 16, Sport, Recreation and Open Space, published in January 2009 advises on the role of the planning system in making provision for sport and recreational facilities and informal open spaces, as well as protecting existing facilities and open spaces.
- 5.12 TAN 18, which was published in March 2007, deals with Transport matters, and advocates locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling; generally advocating development at sustainable sites.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 5.13 The Well-being of Future Generations Act imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with the sustainable development principles, and to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Its content is sought to be delivered through the planning system via the intertwining of the Act through PPW.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.14 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the site comprises the Neath Port Talbot Council Local Development Plan (2011-2026).
- 5.15 The site is within the settlement boundary as defined by the Neath Port Talbot Council Local Development Plan. This site is not subject to any designations. It can therefore be classed as 'white land', whereby the principle of development on this site is acceptable, subject to material planning considerations.
- 5.16 Policies with a prefix of SP (strategic policies) are overarching policies relating to development in the county borough. They are supported by topic-based policies which indicate how the overall strategy of the plan will be implemented. Policy SP1 (Climate Change) states that an emphasis will be on sustainable growth which benefits Neath Port Talbot as a whole. It outlines that this will be achieved by, *inter alia*:
- ***The efficiency and sustainability of the County Borough's settlements will be enhanced through developing more cohesive and efficient settlements and settlement patterns, and consequently more sustainable travel patterns; and***
 - ***Dependence on the private car and the need to travel in general will be reduced through promoting alternative means of transport and more efficient use of existing facilities, co-location and joint use of facilities."***
- 5.17 Policy SP2 (Health) states healthier, more active and safer lifestyles will be encouraged through the retention of a range of accessible leisure, recreational, health, retail, social, cultural and community facilities throughout the County Borough. Accessibility is also mentioned under SP2, as policies seek to improve accessibility between communities, encouraging active travel wherever possible. New developments are expected to be served by sustainable transport options.
- 5.18 Policy SP3 (Sustainable Communities) aims to deliver sustainable, healthy and cohesive communities. Linked to this is Policy SC1 (Settlement Limits) which requires that development within settlement limits is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. Policy SC2 (Protection of Existing Community Facilities) protects existing community facilities as they are identified as a vital part of the life of a community

and can help create cohesive communities where people are able to meet and participate in a range of activities, making a fundamental contribution to ensuring the sustainability of community.

- 5.19 Policy SP10 (Open Space) seeks to address inequalities in open space provision where possible through the planning system, by retaining and enhancing existing provision and requiring new development to make provision for open space where there is a need. The term 'open space' refers to publicly accessible recreational space and includes playing fields and sports pitches. It identifies that open space gives the opportunity for more active lifestyles and, together with improving walking and cycling routes, helps to create a more active environment. This is supported by Policy OS1 (Open Space Provision) which states that all opportunities to increase participation in healthy recreational activities will be taken.
- 5.20 SP20 (Transport Network) requires development proposals to be designed to provide safe and efficient access and promote sustainable transport. Developments also require appropriate parking provision. SP20 links to SP2 in that new development proposals should be accessible by a variety of means, not just private car, in the interest of creating sustainable communities. Walking, cycling and public transport play an important role in reducing the number of shorter journeys taken by car and contribute towards an aim of the Plan, to provide a sustainable more integrated transport network.
- 5.21 Policy SC1 relates to settlement limits and states that development within settlement limits that is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy will be acceptable in principle.
- 5.22 Policy BE1 (Design) is under SP21 (Built Environment and Historic Heritage) and emphasises the importance that new development achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces. It sets out a series of criteria that are sought to be achieved on new development proposals. This includes considerations of character, context, materials, highway safety, local features, security, transport connectivity, use of resources, drainage and layout
- 5.23 The relevant policies in consideration of this proposal are listed as follows:

POLICY	RELATING TO
STRATEGIC POLICIES	
SP2	Sustainability
SP3	Sustainable Communities
SP4	Infrastructure
SP10	Open Space
SP16	Environmental Protection
SP19	Waste Management
SP20	Transport Network

SP21	Built Environment and Historic Heritage
Topic Based Policies	
SC1	Settlement Limits
SC2	Protection of Existing Community Facilities
I1	Infrastructure Requirements
OS1	Open Space Provision
OS2	Protection of Existing Open Space
EN8	Pollution and Land Stability
W3	Waste Management in New Development
TR1	Design and Access of New Development
BE1	Design

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG)

5.24 In addition to the above policies, the following SPG are also relevant to this application:

- Open Space and Greenspace (July 2017);
- Planning Obligations (October 2016);
- Design (July 2017); and
- Car Parking Standards (October 2016).

6 Appraisal

OVERVIEW

- 6.1 This section of the Planning Statement identifies the main issues relevant to the determination of the application and assesses the scheme against pertinent considerations.
- The **principle** of development of this site in land use policy terms.
 - The design of the proposed development including its impact on local **character** and **amenity**.
 - **Highway** impact of the proposed development.
 - Other material considerations, including **ecology, trees** and **drainage**.

PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 6.2 The site lies in a sustainable location in Port Talbot, well within the settlement boundary. The proposal will continue the existing use of the site as a playing pitch available for the community. Therefore, in land use policy terms, the principle of the proposed development is established.
- 6.3 Compliance with Planning Policy Wales is demonstrated, which seeks to ensure that generators of travel demands are sited within existing urban areas that can be accessed by a range of sustainable transport modes. PPW also advocates the provision of adequate and efficient infrastructure in the interests of social and environmental sustainability, which encourages desirable ways of living and learning.
- 6.4 The proposed re-development of the sports pitch also ties in with the PPW assessment of the significance of community facilities in improving health, well-being and quality of life, which in tandem align with the overarching national sustainable placemaking outcomes. The proposal meets the placemaking objectives by delivering a healthier Wales where the mental and physical well-being of the population is maximised, and where choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood. It also delivers a more equal Wales enabling people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
- 6.5 The proposal complies with LDP policies, including SP3 (Sustainable Communities) and SC2 (Protection of Existing Community Facilities) as without investment, the facility will continue to deteriorate, remain unusable, and ultimately become redundant and wasted land. Football teams, other sports clubs and community organisations will continue to be unserved by outdoor sports provision in the Port Talbot area where current demand has long since outstripped the existing supply. This is likely to become more acute if the lack of quality sports provision continues in the longer term. Market forces would dictate the situation, leading to increased costs for hiring facilities meaning access will be even more out of reach for local people.
- 6.6 The redevelopment will support the wider community by developing facilities that meet their needs and satisfy future demand, maximising partnership opportunities. It will also develop facilities that are environmentally responsible, sustainable and cost-effective, encouraging more participation in sports in line with policy LDP policy SP2 (Health).
- 6.7 The provisions of policy SP10 (Open Space) and OS1 (Open Space Provision) are also met as the proposed development will increase outdoor sports provisions for the local and regional community. It will enhance the existing facilities providing opportunities for a more active lifestyle.
- 6.8 Accordingly, as evidenced by the support the applicant has received from the Authority during pre-application discussions, the principle of the development is firmly established.

IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND AMENITY

- 6.9 The design, by GO Concept Designs, has sought to provide a design that it is befitting of the needs of the club and the site location, and corresponds to its context, resulting in the creation of a scheme that takes into consideration the wider setting.
- 6.10 The proposed 3G pitch will be located in place of an existing artificial MUGA with replacement fencing of improved specification proposed to be erected around the pitch. This will have a minimal aesthetic impact as it will likely comprise of metal linked fencing, ordinarily in a dark green colour for pitches of this type. For the potential negligible visual impact arising, the benefit of the fencing will be in the prevention of footballs being kicked off the pitches entering neighbouring gardens. The proposals therefore demonstrate compliance with LDP policies BE1.
- 6.11 The proposed changing room and community building are necessary in order to provide dedicated changing and amenity facilities for Afan United FC. It would vastly improve upon the existing facilities and better cater for the various teams that would utilise the pitch across an array of age groups.
- 6.12 The character of the application site is indisputably a sports pitch. The proposed building and stand are totally appropriate in this context. The proposed building and stand are typical of sports facilities throughout the area and the country, being of functional design providing the necessary supporting accommodation to the sports pitches. This will not have a significant impact on the site as a whole.
- 6.13 The stand and community rooms are sited either side of the pitch in the least visually prominent parts of the site. The proposed designs have been carefully considered and developed to ensure the siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatments have no adverse effect on the local and surrounding area.
- 6.14 The proposal includes floodlighting for the 3G pitch. A contour lux plan has therefore been prepared which illustrates the extent of any direct lighting. This accompanies the application, showing that no residential properties will be affected. The proposed development will therefore not unduly prejudice the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers in accordance with SP16 and EN8.
- 6.15 The area to be developed for the 3G sports pitch is the existing location of the artificial pitch, so any noise emitted will be directly comparable to the current lawful use of the site. It is concluded that there will be minimal change in noise levels expected from this pitch. Additionally, there is an existing clubhouse at Afan Lido FC within very similar distances to local residents. Afan United FC have confirmed the proposed Community Hall will not have a bar licence and that it is intended to be used for community meetings / events. As such, no further mitigation is considered necessary to control noise emissions from the proposed 3G pitch. The proposals thereby accord with LDP policy EN8.

HIGHWAY

- 6.16 The site lies in sustainable location with convenient and regular public transport links to access the site, and also offers walking and cycling routes to those within the development who are able to benefit from these. Given that a large number of Afan United players and other potential users live within close proximity of the site, there is expected to be significant volumes of travel by foot to the pitch.
- 6.17 Cycle parking is provided in an easily accessible stands for users of the development. Six cycle stands are proposed close to the pitch and adjacent to the bowls club. These stands will provide 12 cycle parking spaces, contributing towards reducing the car parking demand and encouraging active travel. Parking Standards SPG requires that one cycle space is required for every 10 staff (long term) and one space per 100 seats (short term) for Stadia use. Therefore, the level of cycle parking proposed is acceptable.

- 6.18 With regards to car parking, the Parking Standards SPG requires one commercial vehicle space for operational purposes and a maximum of 10 car parking spaces for the non-operational elements, i.e., the spectator stand. On the basis that there will be 22 participants (i.e., two teams of 11 players), this equates to an additional requirement for a maximum of 11 spaces. The proposed car park provides 32 spaces and therefore above the SPG requirement. Whilst it is acknowledged that the parking standards identify a maximum number of spaces, it is believed that an over-provision in this location could be helpful to cater for parking associated with other facilities in the area should they be required, e.g., bowls club, Afan Lido FC etc.
- 6.19 The proposed access and parking arrangements demonstrate an accordance with LDP policy SP20 and TR2. Further, dependence on the private car will be reduced due to the proximity of the site to bus stops and within walking distance to a number of amenities. Together, these promote alternative means of transport in line with PPW and LDP policy.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.20 **Ecology and trees** – The proposed development will have minimal ecological impact due to the site having no ecological value as an artificial pitch and no trees will be impacted by the proposed development. Therefore, the environmental qualities of the site are unaffected by the proposal and precautionary methods followed during construction.
- 6.21 **Drainage** – Sustainable drainage proposals are advancing and will be subject to a separate application via Sustainable Drainage Approving Body (SAB) approval, in relation to which a preapplication advice request will be submitted. The site is in Flood Zone A, which indicates land at little or no risk of flooding, therefore there are no issues from a flooding perspective.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement is produced in support of proposals for the re-development of an existing artificial MUGA to provide new sports facilities including a 3G pitch, spectator stand, changing room facilities and community room, car parking arrangements, sustainable drainage, and other associated works.
- 7.2 The principle of the development is established through the proposed 3G pitch being proposed in the place of an existing dilapidated artificial MUGA on the site, making use of previously developed land in a sustainable location. Enhanced provision for community users will be resulting through provision of a FIFA standard new all-weather sports pitch, designed and built to contemporary standards, and in replacement of the current outmoded astroturf pitch. The community hall will further add to the improvement of facilities for the local area.
- 7.3 The siting of the pitch has considered amenity impact upon neighbours, noise impact and light impact, with the assessment concluding that the replacement 3G pitch in place of the existing artificial MUGA, in the same location, will not lead to any adverse impact in these regards. A drainage solution has been reached and there are no flooding concerns relating to the site.
- 7.4 There are no identified constraints in respect of ecology or trees.
- 7.5 Highways impact has been assessed within the accompanying Transport Statement, which concludes that the proposed will not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network. This is determined in recognition that the majority of users will travel to and from the site by active modes of travel, and the proposed car parking facility will be more than adequate to cater for the anticipated levels of demand. A Travel Plan has also been formulated to promote access to the site by active and sustainable modes of transport, thereby reducing reliance on single occupancy private car usage.
- 7.6 The proposals have been subject to positive pre-application discussions between the applicant and the Local Authority.
- 7.7 Wellbeing goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA) are adhered to through this application in that there would be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the application being approved and development being carried out. PPW brings the objectives of the Act into clear focus in a planning context, and it is demonstrated through the planning policy analysis undertaken in this Statement that compliance with PPW, and thus the WFGA, is achieved.
- 7.8 In conclusion, the proposal offers much-needed sports facilities for the community. The new pitch will increase the availability for outdoor sports teams to train and play all year round, which is not possible with the dilapidated artificial pitch, and alternative grassed pitches in the area. On this basis, it is respectfully recommended that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council put this application forward for approval.

LRM Planning
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CARDIFF OFFICE

22 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ
02920 349737

admin@lrmp planning.com
lrmp planning.com

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EXETER OFFICE

Winslade Manor, Manor Drive, Clyst St Mary,
Exeter EX5 1FY, 01392 690060



Registered Office: Nyewood Court, Brookers Road, Billingshurst RH14 9RZ
Registered in England and Wales No 08618388 VAT Reg No 196 5837 49



RTPI
Chartered Town Planner