

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

Afan United Football Club, Aberavon, Neath Port Talbot

Prepared by LRM Planning on behalf of Afan United FC

August 2024

INTRODUCTION

The latest version of Planning Policy Wales, edition 12, was published in February 2024. It sets out the planning policies of the Welsh Government to ensure that the planning system contributes to sustainable development. The latest version introduces a requirement for all planning applications to be accompanied by a green infrastructure statement.

Para 6.1.12 of PPW states that *“a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.”*

THE SITE

The application site currently comprises a flood-lit disused synthetic Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), and associated parking. The car park has no formal demarcation of spaces, so is essentially a large area of tarmacadam. 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. A narrow grass bank runs along the north-western edge of the site.

Thus, the site is predominantly made up of hardstanding, and is more or less absent of any existing landscape and green infrastructure features. In terms of wider context, the site lies in an area with a mix of residential and leisure uses.

DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

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 community space, sustainable drainage and associated works. It will also regularise the existing car parking area.

The proposed stand is to be constructed on primarily on the existing hard surfaced path with a small section of grass banking to be removed to accommodate the stand. There are no existing trees or landscape planting within the site, therefore the proposed development will have no impact on green infrastructure assets beyond the limited localised impact on the grass bank.

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS PROPOSED

PPW does require that all development demonstrates a net benefit to biodiversity and this includes proposals where the baseline position is devoid of value, such as this one. As such, enhancement is proposed as part of this application through the delivery of a bat box.

CONCLUSION

This Green Infrastructure Statement seeks to fulfil the requirements of Planning Policy Wales, insofar as it provides the required description of how the step-wise approach has been followed and Net Benefit for Biodiversity achieved. The existing green infrastructure and biodiversity value of the site is considered to be negligible, given that it comprises an artificial pitch, with a narrow grass banking, adjacent to a tarmacadam car parking area.

Net Benefit to Biodiversity is achievable through the installation of a bat box, thus, ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are minimised, mitigated and compensated for.

On this basis, the proposals are considered to fulfil the requirements of Planning Policy Wales in respect of the delivery of Net Benefit to Biodiversity and an overall positive outcome for green infrastructure.

LRM Planning
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