

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site forms an established sports ground within the village of Seven Sisters, Neath. It currently hosts the local amateur rugby club, Seven Sisters RFC and comprises a rugby pitch with an associated spectator stand, advertising boards, clubhouse, means of enclosure and other ancillary buildings and items associated with the existing use.

The site is enclosed with weldmesh fencing, with established trees located along the south, east and west boundaries. An associated car park is located to the northern side of the pitch where a clubhouse/changing room/community building is sited. Access is gained directly off the main road to the north-west which forms the main highway through the village.

The ground is located adjacent to a residential area of the village and is bounded predominantly by residential properties and open agricultural land.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Full planning consent is sought for the erection of 4 no. floodlighting columns, to serve an existing grassed pitch at Seven Sisters Rugby Club.

It is proposed that the columns would be erected at regular intervals around the perimeter of the football pitch (two on each side of the touchline) and would be to a height of 15m, each supporting low energy LED floodlights.

In respect of the floodlights, each light would be fitted with integral spill louvres, to limit any adverse impacts towards the nearest residential and ecological receptors. Underground cabling is also proposed in order to service the lights with electricity.

The club's existing 1st team grass pitch currently has no fixed lighting infrastructure, with existing floodlighting only being located adjacent to the pitch.

The submitted information states that the proposed system will be a significant asset for the club, enabling extended training hours for the quickly growing adult and junior sections. It will also provide a high-quality rugby union and multisport training facility for the wider community, supporting increased participation and development across all age groups.

The proposed floodlights are of a Welsh Rugby Union standard and meet with their guidelines for matches and training. In this regard, for the proposed pitch, the design achieves a maintained minimum illuminance level of just over 100 lux, with a uniformity ratio of 0.50, fully compliant with WRU trainings standards.

These values are calculated using a maintenance factor of 0.95, which accounts for:

- Light reduction due to dirt accumulation on the floodlight lens
- Lamp lumen depreciation over time

This approach ensures that the pitch lighting consistently meets the minimum performance requirements necessary for safe and effective training.

The submitted information requests that the proposed lighting can be used during the following periods:

- Monday to Friday: 4:00 PM – 9:30 PM (September to April)
- Occasional Saturday use (winter only): 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

To ensure responsible operation:

- Lighting will be controlled via an automated 7-day / 24-hour timer
- This will eliminate human error and ensure operation is strictly within agreed timeframes

NEGOTIATIONS

The applicant was required to submit additional information to evidence lux spill and consideration of ecological sensitivities at the site at the request of the Councils Biodiversity Officers. Additional supporting data was provided by the applicant, and outstanding matters were remedied as part of the re-consultation comments.

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has the following relevant planning history:

- P2003/0950: Single Storey Extension to Rear of Clubhouse. Approved: 08.08.03

CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health (Lighting): No objection subject to conditions.

Biodiversity Officer (Ecology): No objection.

Head of Engineering & Transport (Highways): No objection.

Welsh Water: No objection

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA): Request more information

Environmental Health (Noise): No objection

Tree Officer: No objection, subject to conditions

Natural Resources Wales (NRW): No objection, subject to informative notes.

REPRESENTATIONS

Neighbouring properties were consulted and site notices were also displayed.

In response, to date 2 no. representations have been received from the same property. These comments are summarised as follows:

1. The severe and permanent impact it would have on our home and residential amenity.
2. visual intrusion and artificial light pollution.
3. Position immediately adjacent to and higher than our property
4. The calculations also demonstrate uncontrolled and uneven spill patterns beyond the site boundary.
5. Not provided any meaningful assessment of the impact on our property specifically
6. Existing floodlighting already present at the opposite end of the rugby ground currently causes noticeable and intrusive light spill affecting our property.
7. Changing the character of the environment in which we live.
8. If minded to approve the following should first be sought: a full independent residential lighting impact assessment / vertical illuminance levels at nearby residential windows are assessed; enforceable shielding and visor requirements are secured; fixed alignment controls are imposed; strict operational hours are conditioned; and post-installation compliance monitoring is secured through enforceable planning conditions.
9. remains no site-specific assessment of light levels at our property
10. The site is classified within Environmental Zone E3 , which requires strict control of light spill and glare. Based on the submitted evidence, it cannot reasonably be concluded that the proposal complies with these requirements.
11. hours of operation

REPORT

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or wellbeing) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation set out below, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

National Planning Policy:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. The development plan sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The following policies are of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

Policy 1 – Where Wales Will Grow

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 8 – Flooding

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) outlines the Welsh Government's commitment to the importance of 'places' and 'place-making', the importance of using previously developed land wherever possible in preference to greenfield sites, and the recognition of the health and wellbeing related benefits by creating a sense of place and improving social cohesion. PPW12 confirms that the environmental components of places are intrinsically linked to the quality of the built and natural environment and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work and play there. It emphasises the importance of creating sustainable communities and reducing reliance on the private car as part of a package of measures to reduce the country's carbon footprint and help tackle the climate emergency.

PPW12 is supported by a series of more detailed Technical Advice Notes (TANs), of which the following are of relevance: -

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion (2026)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)

Local Planning Policies

The Local Development Plan for the area comprises the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, which was adopted in January 2016, and within which the following policies are of relevance:

Strategic Policies

- **Policy SP1** Climate Change
- **Policy SP2** Health
- **Policy SP3** Sustainable Communities
- **Policy SP10** Open Space
- **Policy SP15** Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Policy SP16** Environmental Protection
- **Policy SP20** Transport Network
- **Policy SP21** Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Topic Based Policy

- **Policy SC1** Settlement limits
- **Policy SC2** Protection of Existing Community Facilities
- **Policy OS1** Open Space provision
- **Policy EN6** Important biodiversity and geodiversity sites.
- **Policy EN7** Important Natural Features
- **Policy EN8** Pollution and Land Stability
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New development
- **Policy BE1** Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application:

- Pollution (October 2016)
- Open Space & Greenspace (July 2017)
- Design (July 2017)
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018)

Issues

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to the principle of development, the impact of the proposal on the character and visual amenity of the area, the suitability of the proposed floodlighting heads and external materials, the effect of the development on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, parking, access and highway safety, biodiversity and green infrastructure considerations, and other material considerations, including compliance with national and local planning policy.

Principle of Development

The application site lies outside the defined settlement limits as identified by Policy SC1 of the LDP. Policy SC1 seeks to concentrate new development within defined settlement boundaries in order to promote sustainable patterns of growth and protect the countryside from inappropriate development. However, the policy framework also recognises that not all forms of development outside settlement limits are unacceptable in principle, particularly where proposals relate to existing uses, support community infrastructure, or are otherwise consistent with the Plan's strategic objectives. In this regard, Policies SP1, SP2 and SP3 are of direct relevance, alongside national policy set out in PPW12.

The application site forms part of a long-established and historic sports and recreational facility that serves the local community of Seven Sisters and the surrounding area. Although located beyond the defined settlement boundary, the site is positioned in close proximity to the urban edge / settlement fringe and has a clear functional and physical relationship with the settlement.

The sports ground represents an important area of formal open space and community infrastructure. As PPW12 makes clear, areas of open space are integral to the character, health and wellbeing of communities, and the loss of even small areas can have a disproportionate impact, particularly where alternative facilities are not readily accessible. National policy affords strong protection to sports pitches and recreational land, and emphasises that proposals affecting such facilities must be carefully scrutinised. Crucially, the current proposal does not involve the loss of open space or sports pitch provision. Instead, it comprises upgrades to floodlighting as directed by the Football Association

The proposed LED lighting and mounted stanchions, represent a modern addition designed to focus light precisely on the playing surface, with controlled beam angles and reduced light spill compared to traditional floodlighting. The development is not considered to result in unacceptable levels of glare, light intrusion or sky glow, and is therefore acceptable in principle.

While the proposal is technically located outside the defined settlement limits, it does not conflict with the underlying purpose of Policy SC1. In line with the broader aspirations of strategic policy (SP1, SP2 and SP3), the proposal is considered to comply with the objectives of these policies as well as the relevant provisions of PPW12 relating to open space, sport, health and wellbeing.

Policy SP21 of the LDP seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the built environment, respect their context and do not have an unacceptable impact on visual quality or amenity. Policy BE1 requires development to demonstrate high-quality design that is appropriate in scale, form, massing and materials, and which safeguards the amenity of neighbouring land uses. These policies reflect the placemaking principles of PPW12, which emphasise that development should be visually appropriate, contextually responsive and should not give rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity.

In addition to those local planning policy considerations above, it is considered that National Planning Policy aligns with the above requirement, inasmuch as TAN 16 supports the improvement of recreational facilities, playing fields and open spaces where their condition places a constraint on their use, with the TAN noting the following:

Paragraph 3.7 states *“Playing fields and green open spaces have special significance for their recreational and amenity value and particularly in towns and cities, for their contribution to the urban environment and for supporting biodiversity. Playing fields and green spaces add interest and vitality to living and working environments.”*

Paragraph 3.8 states that *“Sometimes, the retention and enhancement of facilities may best be achieved through the redevelopment or rehabilitation of a small part of a site, particularly where this would be related to playing field use.”*

Paragraph 4.7 states that *“The provision of floodlighting at sport and outdoor recreational facilities can allow for more efficient use of such facilities through extended opening hours.”*

As such, it is considered the improvement of the facilities at the site, via the installation of floodlighting, is acceptable in principle. However, this would be subject to an assessment of a number of site-specific criteria set out below.

Impact on Visual Amenity

The application site comprises an established sports field with associated structures and, despite its enclosure by weldmesh fencing and other structures, it benefits from a relatively open aspect, particularly when viewed in the context of the surrounding land uses. The western boundary adjoins existing residential development, while the eastern boundary is defined by open agricultural land, reinforcing a transitional edge between built form and the wider countryside.

Concerns have been raised that the proposed development would result in visual intrusion and change the character of the area. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed floodlighting columns would extend higher than other structures within and

adjacent to the site, including those properties to the west boundary, and nearby street lighting columns, and would introduce a degree of visibility during hours of darkness, the columns themselves would be of a slender, lightweight design and positioned at intervals around the perimeter of the playing field.

Consequently, given their limited physical bulk and narrow profile, together with the separation distances to the nearest residential properties to the west, it is considered that the columns would not appear incongruous, nor would they give rise to visually intrusive features within the locality. Similarly, the light will be shielded to an acceptable degree from adjacent properties, ensuring their character will not be materially altered as a result of the development. Furthermore, the presence of open agricultural land and established trees to the east and west ensures that wider landscape views would not be materially harmed as these features would provide an element of screening to the development.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy BE1 (Design) of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, which requires development to be of a high-quality design that responds appropriately to its context, as well as Policy SP15 (Development in the Countryside), which seeks to ensure that development respects and protects the character of the rural landscape.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The nearest residential properties are located roughly parallel to the touchline of the rugby pitch along Dulais Road. The closest property is number 28 Dulais Road with its rear garden boundary abutting the rugby ground. The house itself is located approximately 25m away from the nearest proposed floodlight.

Residential properties to the west are to some degree physically and visually separated from the application site by the fact it is set approximately 6m higher than these properties. There is also an element of natural screening in the form of trees which contributes to limiting the impact of the lights to some degree.

Notwithstanding the above, concerns regarding potential uncontrolled and uneven light spill and its impact on residential amenity have been raised locally. These matters have carefully been considered through consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Officers.

The application site is an established recreational facility that has been used by Seven Sisters RFC and the local community for many years. As such, it is considered that residents in the surrounding area would have become accustomed to the activities associated with the use of the playing field during daylight hours.

However, the proposal seeks to enable use of the facility during hours of darkness, thereby intensifying the existing use of the site. It is therefore acknowledged that there is potential for impacts on residential amenity, which is a key material planning consideration, particularly in the context of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) which seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties.

So the issues are twofold – light spill and extended use.

Technical Advice Note 16 (Sport, Recreation and Open Space) is of relevance and advises that:

“When determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that the amenity of people living nearby is fully considered. Any permission granted may need to be subject to conditions, for example, limiting the hours during which the lights may be operated and/or the frequency of their use, or requiring the installation of downlighting. Modern lighting systems can greatly reduce glare and stray light and can be more energy efficient.”

In this case, the proposed floodlighting would comprise a modern system designed to minimise impacts, including inward-facing luminaires, downward projection onto the playing surface, and the use of louvres to control light overspill. This approach is considered appropriate, as uncontrolled light spill would be detrimental to both residential amenity and the functional quality of the pitch.

The objections received from a neighbouring resident in respect of light pollution and the fact that the site is located within ‘Environmental Zone E3’ are acknowledged. Whilst it is accepted that some degree of glare may be perceptible, particularly when viewed from lower-lying receptors to the east, the submitted illuminance data indicates that light spillage would be suitably controlled. The assessment demonstrates that impacts to nearby properties, including those to the west, would be limited, and whilst some spill is predicted towards properties to the west, this would largely be confined to rear garden areas. Importantly, the data confirms that light levels at neighbouring receptors, when recorded from within the home, would not exceed 10 lux. A property-by-property analysis is not generally required unless there is evidence of site-specific impacts that would justify a more detailed assessment.

Concerns have also been raised in respect of the existing floodlighting present on the application site and its impact on adjacent properties. In this regard, it is recommended that a condition be imposed requiring the removal of all existing floodlighting on the site, whether temporary or permanent, prior to the first use of the proposed floodlighting scheme. This is considered necessary in the interests of ensuring that the lighting environment assessed and approved through this application is fully representative of the operational scenario on site, to have regard for those concerns raised locally in respect of the existing lighting on site and to protect local amenity and biodiversity. The applicant has confirmed in writing that they are content for existing floodlighting to be removed.

The submitted Lighting Impact/Light Spill Assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the proposed floodlighting alone and does not take into account any contribution from existing lighting currently present on the site. As such, the retention of any existing floodlighting alongside the proposed scheme could result in a cumulative level of illumination that has not been assessed and could lead to unacceptable levels of light spill, glare and associated amenity impacts beyond those identified within the application.

Requiring the removal of all existing floodlighting prior to the installation and use of the proposed scheme will ensure that lighting levels remain within those assessed

and deemed acceptable by the Local Planning Authority, thereby safeguarding the amenity of nearby receptors and ensuring compliance with adopted lighting and environmental policies.

In respect of those comments that if the LPA are minded to approve a full independent residential lighting impact assessment / vertical illuminance levels at nearby residential windows are assessed; enforceable shielding and visor requirements are secured; fixed alignment controls are imposed; strict operational hours are conditioned; and post-installation compliance monitoring is secured through enforceable planning conditions.

In this context, Environmental Health has confirmed no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of a planning conditions to secure appropriate control over the flood lights. This condition will ensure that:

- *Light into neighbouring residential windows generated from the floodlights shall not exceed 5 Ev (lux) (vertical illuminance in lux).*
- *Each floodlight must be aligned to ensure that the upper limit of the main beam does not exceed 70 degrees from its downward vertical.*
- *The floodlighting has been designed and operated to have full horizontal cut-off and such that the Upward Waste Light Ratio does not exceed 2.5%.*

This consultation response recognises that, when appropriately designed and controlled, the proposed floodlighting can be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable harm to merit the refusal of this application on these grounds. The council's Biodiversity Section also have no objection to the suggested condition.

Given the proximity of the rugby pitch to neighbouring residential properties and in response to those concerns raised locally, careful consideration has also been given to the proposed hours of operation for the floodlighting in order to minimise potential impacts on residential amenity, including light disturbance and noise associated with evening use that will be able to occur as a result of the development.

It is noted that the applicant's submission requests a cut off time for the floodlight use of 9.30pm. However, in this instance, a proposed restriction of floodlighting use to no later than 9pm is considered reasonable and necessary in the interests of residential amenity.

Although artificial lighting is often required to facilitate evening sports use, its operation into later hours can give rise to material adverse impacts, particularly in terms of light intrusion, glare, and general disturbance during sensitive evening periods. A 9pm cut-off strikes an appropriate balance between enabling community sport and safeguarding the living conditions of nearby residents.

The period after 21:00 is generally recognised as a transition toward more sensitive evening hours, when occupants reasonably expect reduced disturbance and lower levels of artificial illumination. Extending the use of high-intensity floodlighting to 21:30 would prolong activity and light spill into this more sensitive timeframe, increasing the likelihood of unacceptable adverse effects.

Floodlighting inherently facilitates continued use of the pitch, including associated noise from players, whistles, and spectators. A 21:00 cut-off helps ensure that such

activity tapers off at a reasonable hour, whereas extending to 21:30 would prolong these impacts later into the evening.

The applicant has been made aware of the intention to reduce operating hours and has confirmed that they are content with the 9pm cut off time for floodlight use.

It is recommended that the use of the floodlights be restricted to the following hours:

Monday to Friday: 4:00pm – 9pm

Saturday use: 2:00pm – 6:00pm

These restrictions closely align with those requested by the applicant and are considered necessary and proportionate to ensure that evening illumination does not result in undue harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers, particularly in terms of extended activity into late evening periods. The proposed hours strikes a balance between enabling the reasonable use of the sporting facility and safeguarding residential amenity in accordance with local and national planning policy.

A planning condition is therefore recommended to secure these operating hours in the interests of protecting neighbouring amenity and would ensure compliance with Policies of the Neath Port Talbot LDP, as well as national guidance set out in TAN 16.

The recommended mitigation aligns with the principles of PPW12 which seeks to prevent and mitigate environmental pollution, including light pollution, particularly where it may affect residential amenity, biodiversity or the intrinsic qualities of the natural environment.

Therefore, with the application of a suitably worded condition, the scheme complies with the objectives of LDP policies SP16, EN8 and BE1.

Parking and Access Requirements and Impact on Highway Safety

The application does not propose any physical alterations to the existing vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements serving Seven Sisters Rugby Club. Access to the site remains unchanged from Dulais Road via the established entrance and car parking area associated with the clubhouse.

The development relates solely to the floodlighting system and would not materially increase pitch capacity, intensity of use beyond established levels, or the size of the facility. As such, the proposal is not expected to generate additional vehicle movements over and above those already associated with the lawful and long-established use of the football pitch.

The Council's Highway Authority was consulted on the application and has confirmed no objection to the proposal. It is therefore concluded that the proposal would have no adverse impact on parking provision, site access, or the safety and free flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network in accordance with LDP Policies SP20 and TR2.

Biodiversity / Ecology

Strategic Policy SP15 of the LDP, together with Policies EN6 and EN7, require development proposals to protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity, ecological networks and green infrastructure assets. Development should avoid adverse impacts on habitats and species, maintain ecological connectivity and deliver mitigation or enhancement where impacts cannot be fully avoided.

At the national level, PPW12 places a clear duty on planning authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity, ensuring development results in no net loss and, where possible, secures a net benefit. These requirements give statutory effect to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which requires public bodies to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience. This direction is further reinforced by Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (Policy 9) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).

The application site forms part of an established sports ground and comprises previously developed land associated with formal recreational use. While the wider area contains ecologically sensitive features, including woodland and vegetation and a SAC the proposed development is strictly limited to the formation of a flood lighting system.

The applicant has provided a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) which does not indicate that trees, hedgerows or priority habitats would be lost or affected and recommends native planting, bat and bird boxes and enhanced management of peripheral grassland as enhancement measures.

Lighting Impact:

The applicant has submitted lighting Information to consider the potential effects of the proposed floodlighting on biodiversity. Artificial lighting can, if poorly designed, adversely affect nocturnal and crepuscular species through light spill, glare and sky glow. Species potentially sensitive to light disturbance include bats, invertebrates and riparian fauna associated with woodland edges and watercourses. These considerations have therefore been carefully assessed in accordance with PPW12, the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and TAN 5.

While initial concerns were raised in respect of the extent of light spill on adjacent vegetation, this was addressed with a new lighting plan. This new plan would not disrupt species movement or diminish habitat functionality and has been assessed as acceptable by the council's ecologist. The proposed floodlighting has been sensitively designed to minimise ecological impacts and responds appropriately to the environmental context of the site.

The Council's Countryside and Wildlife Team has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposal. The Biodiversity Officer has not confirmed that additional ecological surveys are required. A condition will be imposed ensuring that biodiversity enhancement be secured in accordance with the submitted Green Infrastructure Statement.

With the application of a suitably worded planning condition to secure biodiversity enhancements as outlined within the approved GIS, the development is considered

to comply with SP15, Policies EN6 and EN7, and the biodiversity objectives of national planning policy.

Trees:

The application is supported by a basic tree survey and a document titled *BS5837 Tree Survey & Constraints Plan*, which identify tree species, diameter at 1.5m (DBH), condition, BS5837 classification, and assign Root Protection Areas (RPAs). While this information is noted, it lacks sufficient detail in some respects. Notwithstanding this, the Council's Arboricultural Officer raises no objection in principle to the proposed development.

However, given the potentially high arboricultural risk associated with the proposals, further information and safeguards are required. These can be secured through the imposition of appropriately worded planning conditions.

The submitted details acknowledge that works may take place within the RPAs of existing trees. However, the application does not identify the precise locations or extent of any such incursions. This information is essential and must be established prior to the commencement of development to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be designed and implemented.

In light of the likely RPA incursions, it is considered necessary for an Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan to be prepared and adhered to. Furthermore, their implementation should be overseen by suitably qualified and competent arboricultural supervision to ensure that tree protection measures are effectively maintained throughout the construction process.

Subject to the imposition of a planning conditions requiring further details of the trees and how they will be protected, it is considered that the development can provide adequate protection for existing trees and their rooting areas. Any potential adverse effects arising from the development would therefore be limited to an acceptable level.

Flood risk / drainage

Flood risk considerations have been assessed in accordance with Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion (March 2026), which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. TAN 15 is supported by the Wales Flood Map, comprising the Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) and Flood Risk Assessment Wales (FRAW), which together identify flood risk from rivers, the sea, surface water and small watercourses.

Sections 10 and 11 of TAN 15 set out the policy framework for managing flood risk, including ensuring that development is appropriate to its flood zone classification, that flood risks are understood and managed, and that development remains safe over its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

As identified on the FMfP the application site is identified as lying within: Flood Zone 3 (Surface Water and Small Watercourses).

Although, the proposal relates solely to the installation of floodlighting columns and associated infrastructure, which is considered to be less vulnerable development, a basic Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) has been provided,

The development is minor in scale, with a negligible physical footprint limited to column bases, and does not involve significant ground raising, built floor space, or material obstruction of overland flow routes. As such, it would not materially affect floodplain storage, flow paths, or increase flood risk elsewhere. Furthermore, the proposal does not introduce new receptors or increase the vulnerability of the site to flooding.

Given the nature, scale and ancillary function of the development, and having regard to the proportionate approach advocated by TAN 15, it is considered that despite the deficiencies in the Flood Consequences Assessment provided, in this instance the proposal is acceptable in respect of flood risk.

The proposal also raises no material drainage issues that would justify consultation with the Council's Drainage Officer. It involves only the installation of lighting columns and associated infrastructure, with no significant groundworks, significant changes in levels, or creation of impermeable surfaces that would affect surface water runoff or existing drainage systems. As such, it does not meet the thresholds for drainage consultation and would not materially benefit from specialist input.

OTHER MATTERS

Concerns raised locally have been addressed fully within the residential and visual amenity sections of the main body of this report.

CONCLUSION

The decision to recommend planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan comprises Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011 - 2026), adopted January 2016.

It is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate and proportionate form of development, comprising new floodlighting infrastructure within a long-established and valued community sports and recreational facility. The development would have no unacceptable impact on the character or visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, highway safety, biodiversity, drainage or flood risk.

Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policies SP3, SP16, SP20, SP21, SC1, BE1, EN6, EN7, EN8 and TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

It is further considered that the decision complies with Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, in particular Policy 9, and supports the Council's well-being objectives

and the sustainable development principle in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

On balance, and having regard to all relevant local and national planning policies and material considerations, it is concluded that planning permission should be GRANTED, subject to the conditions and informative notes set out in the report.