

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is two areas of land located within the wider grounds of Harlequins Rugby Football Club. The first area (pentanque courts) is a 126m² rectangular area located to the northeast of the clubhouse and south of the stand and which until recently was used to site storage containers. The second area (playground) is a 120m² rectangular hardstanding area located to the northeast of the clubhouse and to the northwest of residences backing on the rugby club on Harlequin Road.

The site and surrounds are relatively flat and the application site is located within of the settlements boundary as defined by Policy SC1 of the NPTCBC LDP.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Planning consent is sought for the construction of a fenced children's play area comprising fixed play equipment, safety surfacing, associated groundworks and ancillary works. Consent is also sought for the installation of a petanque(boule) playing area.

The pentanque courts are proposed to be located between the clubhouse and the stand and measure 15m long by 8.4m wide. The courts will be raised 20cm from ground level and filled with crushed, compacted limestone to provide the playing surface.

The play area is proposed to be located to the northeast of the clubhouse and would consist of a 8.3m wide by 14.4m long area with a perimeter fence. Within the playground it is proposed to locate play equipment consisting of a multi-play unit (incorporating two slides, rope bridges and climbing ladders), a pair of swings, a gravity rider and two activity panels. The play equipment is irregular in shape and size with the maximum height of 2.8m for the multi-play unit and the top bar of the swings. The playground is proposed to be surfaced with Tiger Mulch surfacing. With regard to the perimeter fence no specific details have been provided though the applicant has confirmed that it would be below 2m in height and the intention is for it to be approximately waist height. Part 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 permits the erection of gate or fence up to 2m from ground level without the requirement for planning consent and its inclusion in the description is provided for clarity.

NEGOTIATIONS

The playground was relocated further back from the rear boundary of the properties on Harlequin Road following discussions prior to application submission.

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has the following relevant planning history:

P2024/0805 - Details to be agreed in association with condition 3 (floodlight details) of planning application P1990/7546 approved 3/4/1990 Approved 31/1/25

CONSULTATIONS

Drainage Section – No objection though SABs approval required

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) – No objection subject to condition

Natural Resources Wales – No objection

Play Sufficiency Officer – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

Three site notice were displayed adjacent to the site on 25/6/26

In response, to date no representations have been received regarding the proposal.

REPORT

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 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty. A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places

PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities. It encourages a wider, sustainable and problem solving outlook which focuses on integrating and addressing multiple issues rather than on an approach which is fragmented, un-coordinated and deals with issues in isolation. It provides an opportunity to remove any actual or perceived problems in current approaches and stimulate and support innovative and creative ideas as well as high standards of evidence and assessment to underpin the preparation of development plans and strategies and individual proposals. Monitoring and learning from development

outcomes so as to drive sustainable improvements in planning practice is also important.

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

- TAN 12 – Design
- TAN 15 – Development, flooding and coastal erosion.

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:

- **Policy SC1** Settlement Limits
- **Policy BE1** Design
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New Development
- **Policy EN6** Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites
- **Policy EN7** Important Natural Features
- **Policy EN8** Pollution and Land Stability
- **Policy OS2** Protection of Existing Open Space

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application: -

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

Issues

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this application relate to the impact on the visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring residents and highway safety.

Impact on Visual Amenity

With regard to the proposed pentanque courts the proposal has a low profile with a height of 20cm and with the existing boundary treatment would be largely for the most part hidden from a public vantage point. The courts would be constructed with a wooden timber sleeper perimeter with a crushed limestone surface.

The proposed play area is moderate in scale and its design with colourful materials is appropriate for its intended use as a play area and would be subordinate to the wider site. Existing boundary treatment, the clubhouse and the surrounding residential properties means the playground would be largely for the most part hidden from a public vantage point

In light of the aforementioned information, it is not considered that the proposed development would undermine the overall appearance and design nor would it detract from the character and appearance of the streetscene. As such, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Impact on Residential Amenity

With regard to proposed pentanque courts, the nearest residential properties are Nos. 6 to 9 Brwyna Avenue, located approximately 30m to 36m to the west on the opposite side of the road and with an intervening perimeter wall bounding the rugby club. Due to the limited height of the courts, screening and separation distance there would be no adverse overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing impacts of the courts on these properties.

With regard to the proposed play area, the nearest residential properties are Nos. 9 to 13 Harlequin Road. The nearest edge of the playground to the rear elevations of these dwellings is approximately 19m and to their rear boundaries 6 to 7m. The distance between the nearest raised platform of the multi-play unit at 1.4m high would be 24m from the rear elevation of the nearest dwelling and 20m from the rear windows of their conservatory. Given the orientation of this proposal to the northwest, the modest size and scale and the separation distance the proposal would not have an adverse overbearing or overshadowing impact on these properties. While the raised platform of the multi-play unit would increase the potential of overlooking of the rear windows of Harlequin Road, the separation distances would otherwise be acceptable and it should be noted that the use of the play equipment would be by small children and would be of a transitory nature to make use of the other equipment such as the slides.

In light of the aforementioned information, it is not considered that the proposed use would detrimentally impact upon the residential amenity of the surrounding properties. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies BE1 & EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Parking and Access Requirements and Impact on Highway Safety

Given that the proposal has not displaced any off-road parking and the site benefits from its own off road car park it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of highway and pedestrian safety. The development would therefore accord with Policy TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Contamination

The site is located in an area of potential land contamination and the authority's Environmental Health section was consulted with regard to this application. With regard to the pentanque courts, the officer offered no objections. With regard to the children's play area the officer noted that the site has a historic railway line running along the boundary of the proposed children's play area. However, the proposal

includes surface cover of the playground which should serve to break any pollutant linkage to potential historic contamination and as such Environmental Health do not have any objection subject to the installation and retention of suitable surface cover. It is recommended that should approval be granted a suitably worded condition be imposed on the consent to ensure this surfacing is installed and retained thereafter.

Play

A Play Sufficiency Assessment Officer of the authority commented on the application and offered no objection to the proposal though they did wish to co-ordinate with the applicant on ensuring that a nearby scheme due to be refurbished would offer differing equipment provision.

Flood Risk / Drainage

With regard to the site being within a defended flood zone 3 for rivers and defended zone 3 for seas, a flood consequences assessment was submitted alongside the planning application and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was consulted on the proposal. NRW offered no objection as the proposed play area and pentanque courts are not considered to be vulnerable development, and it is therefore not considered that the proposed hub would have a detrimental effect on any flooding issues in the area.

The authority's drainage section was also consulted regarding the proposal and offered no objection subject to an informative notifying the applicant that SABs approval would be required.

Biodiversity

As identified above, Policies EN6 and EN7 of the Local Development Plan will be of relevance insofar as there is a need to ensure any impacts on biodiversity/ natural features are appropriately assessed and, where applicable, mitigated.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 sets out that;

The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.

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 of PPW 12) has been applied.

A green infrastructure statement was submitted in support of this application and will provide a bird box affixed at canopy eaves height on the northeast elevation of the

clubhouse to complement an existing living wall and which will be secured by a suitably worded condition.

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, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. 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 form of development that would have no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents, visual amenity of the area or highway and pedestrian safety. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies BE1, EN6, EN7, EN8, OS2 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 and 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.