

## **SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION**

### **Planning Applications Recommended For Approval**

<b><u>APPLICATION NO:</u></b> P2016/0494	<b><u>DATE:</u></b> 06/06/2016
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Retention and completion of football stand
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Briton Ferry Athletic Football Club, Old Road, Neath SA11 2BS
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Mr Stuart Williams
<b>TYPE:</b>	Full Plans
<b>WARD:</b>	Briton Ferry East

### **Background**

This application has been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor Colin Morgan on highway grounds, who notes the difficulties experienced by local residents in Old Road, Ormond Street, Tyla Road, Darren Road and Ynysmaerdy Road, accessing their homes on match days, and considers that an increase in ground capacity will exacerbate the present position.

### **Planning History:**

P2007/1616 – Multi use changing pavilion: approved 08/04/2008

### **Publicity and Responses**

The application was advertised by Site Notice displayed on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

To date one letter has been received on behalf of 11 local residents from 9 addresses in Old Road objecting on the following (summarised) grounds:-

- Trees have been cut down to enable base to be laid – new view a vast difference to existing view and does not blend in with surroundings
- No traffic management plan, and stand will result in more people attending games which will result in an increase in traffic to Old Road and more indiscriminate parking

- Existing parking problems with need to call 101 / PCSOs / traffic wardens. Problems occur not just Saturday afternoon but all day Sunday, training nights and nights when games are played 17.00 – 22.00
- Cwrt Sart school to close – currently used for parking
- Previously requested visitor parking – not agreed by Council
- Concern about future accidents

**Briton Ferry Community Council:** Objects to the proposal due to inadequate parking and highway access grounds.

**Pollution Control:** No objections

**Head Engineering and Transport (Highways):** No objections

**Head of Engineering and Transport (Drainage):** No objections

**National Resources Wales:** No response received therefore no observations to make

**Coal Authority:** No objections

### **Description of Site and its Surroundings:**

The application site consists of the Briton Ferry Athletic Football Club located at Old Road, Neath. The football pitch is located to the rear of the residential properties located on Old Road. In the immediate vicinity there are allotments and a cricket pitch to the south and a rugby pitch to the east. Vehicular access is off Old Road.

### **Brief description of proposal:**

The application seeks full planning permission for the retention and completion of a new football stand on the eastern side of the existing playing pitch. The submitted plans indicate that the finished development would have the following dimensions:

Width – 23.7m

Length – 2.9m

Maximum height – 3.0m

The structure will provide for up to 175 tiered tip-up seats and the roof will be finished in a grey cladding.

The applicant has provided supporting information in respect of the existing use and proposal which is summarised as follows:-

- We currently have two men's senior sides competing in the Welsh league every Saturday, we also provide a women's senior side who will be competing in the highest national level - the Women's Welsh Premier League with games played on a Sunday afternoon. We also provide an under 19's team as well as hosting minis (aged 6-8) on Sunday mornings from August-October then again from March-June. This is the same amount of use that we have had in the last 5 seasons.
- Since the club was formed in 2009 we have worked closely with the local residents and Cwrt Sart School to try and solve the parking issues that were raised when we first took over the ground.
- For the last two seasons we have used Cwrt Sart school to provide off road parking for all our bigger games and Sunday mornings.
- We have also worked closely with PCSO David Powell to make sure that if anyone does park illegally outside the ground that they are subsequently prosecuted.
- May the club also go on record to say we would fully support any resident parking claims that our neighbours have as this would solve a lot of the existing problems.
- With the closure of Cwrt Sart imminent we are keen to speak to our local council and the site development team to continue to try and provide an off road parking option for users of our facility.
- The current stand application that we have in place is not due to the volume of spectators increasing but purely due to Football Association of Wales guidelines and funding available for member clubs due to the national sides success of recent years.
- The only difference with the go ahead of the new stand is that spectators will now be able to sit to watch games rather than stand and we will have a designated disabled bay for up to ten disabled spectators.
- After years of applying and failing the club was delighted to finally be given the green light to improve the facility further not only for our teams but for the community as a whole.

- Our aim as always been to wholeheartedly provide the best facility possible for our communities first village and we would like to think that we play our part in not only promoting healthy living but also keeping vulnerable youngsters off the street by promoting grass-roots football.

### **Material Considerations:**

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application relate to the principle of development at this site taking into account the prevailing planning policies and its effect on visual and residential amenity as well as highway and pedestrian safety.

### **Policy Context:**

The Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan was adopted by the Council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016, within which the following Policies are of relevance:-

Policy SC1 Settlement Limits

Policy BE1 Design

Policy TR2 Design and Access of New Development

### **Visual Amenity:**

The proposed football stand will be positioned adjacent to the playing pitch on the east touchline. The opposite touchline already benefits from a similar designed stand albeit at a much grander scale. Therefore, for the purposes of its immediate surroundings the development is in keeping with the character of the sports club.

With regard to the streetscene on Old Road, the positioning of the stand and its single-storey nature do not allow it to be visible. Therefore there is no impact on the character and appearance of the established streetscene.

The stand will be visible from the first floor rear windows of some of the properties on Old Road. The stand however, is a development which would be expected to be associated with a football ground and given its modest size in comparison to the pitch it is not considered to be an incongruous introduction to the landscape. In view of the aforementioned it is considered that the proposal would have no adverse impact on visual amenity.

## **Residential Amenity:**

The single storey nature of the proposal and the separation distances of approximately in excess of 100m ensure that there would be no adverse effect on residential amenity / neighbouring properties.

With regard to any additional impacts arising from the proposed new stand, it is noted that the purpose of the stand is not to boost attendance numbers at the ground but instead to offer improved amenity to the supporters of the club. Whereas prior to the construction of the stand, supporters occupying the eastern touchline would be standing, if this development is successful they would not be afforded the opportunity to sit down and be sheltered from adverse weather conditions. Therefore in terms of any potential increase in noise and disturbance, there is not considered to be any increase over and above what currently exists on site such that it would warrant refusal of the application on such grounds. This is a viewpoint that is shared by the Environmental Health department that has offered no adverse comments.

## **Highway Safety (e.g. Parking and Access):**

Councillor Morgan has expressed concern on highway grounds, stating that it has “become a nightmare” on match days for local residents to access and egress their homes, and that an increase in ground capacity will certainly exacerbate the present position. In this respect it is also noted that the objectors’ letter has referred to existing parking problems which they feel would be exacerbated by the proposed development (along with the closure of the Cwrt Sart school which is used for parking at present).

In response the applicant has noted that since the club was formed in 2009 they have worked closely with the local residents and Cwrt Sart School to try and solve the parking issues that were raised when they first took over the ground. They advise that for the last two seasons this includes use of Cwrt Sart school to provide off road parking for bigger games and Sunday mornings, and that they have worked closely with PCSO David Powell to make sure that if anyone does park illegally outside the ground that they are subsequently prosecuted.

In considering such matters, it is clear that the use of the ground by the Football Club has had some impact locally in terms of parking issues, and that there is potential for closure of Cwrt Sart school to add to

these. It is, however, essential to consider whether this development (as opposed to the existing use of the site) would result in any unacceptable impacts on the local area including parking and highway safety.

In this respect, the highway authority has assessed the proposal and raised no objection to the development, noting that the applicants are not seeking to increase the volume of spectators at the ground, but to provide a seated area for the supporters who attend at present. Therefore this application would not increase traffic volume.

They have also noted that the football ground has historically been accessed off the adopted highway off Old Road Briton Ferry, and that the Traffic Management Section has advised that over the years requests have been made for a Residents parking scheme, with associated Traffic Regulation Orders for Old Road. To date, however, the surveys carried out have not triggered the criteria for a Residents parking scheme to be implemented at this location. In view of this therefore, the highways department has advised that they would not require the applicants to implement such a scheme as it would not be supported by the Councils Traffic Management Section.

Nevertheless, the local concerns have been passed onto the Traffic Management Section, who has agreed to look into this pre-existing parking issue again, and will be undertaking their own investigation independent of the planning application. The closure of Cwrt Sart school, and any impact on parking as a result, is therefore a matter to be considered at that stage rather than as part of this application

Accordingly it is concluded that the development itself would not create or generate any additional use of the ground such that it would be unreasonable to refuse the application on such grounds, having regard also to the fact that this provides an enhanced local facility for a community club.

### **Conclusion:**

The proposed development will provide an enhancement to an existing community facility which would not adversely affect visual and residential amenity nor would it negatively impact on highway and pedestrian safety. The proposal therefore complies with Policies SC1, BE1 and TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions**

### **CONDITIONS**

#### Approved Plans

(1) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Block Plan
- Location Plan
- S9107

#### Reason

In the interest of clarity.

#### REASON FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The decision to grant 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 proposed development will provide an enhancement to an existing community facility which would not adversely affect visual and residential amenity nor would it negatively impact on highway and pedestrian safety. The proposal therefore complies with Policies SC1, BE1 and TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.