

Members' Site Visit

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: 19/0772/LA

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: Construct athletics track at existing sports field to include floodlighting, fencing and associated works.

LOCATION: Sports Ground (to east of Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School), Brynhoward Terrace, Oakdale

DATE OF SITE VISIT: 21st January 2020.

MEMBERS PRESENT: M Adams, A Whitcombe, R Whiting, J Ridgewell, A Hussey, R Saralis

The following points were raised by members, and the answers provided:

- Members questioned if the existing street lighting along the public right away along the eastern edge of the site were illuminated during the evening. Members of the public stated that they were switched off during the evening as the footpath acts as a safe route to school and is closed to the public outside of school related hours.
- Following on from the above comments, the level of lighting associated with the proposed flood lighting was queried. Maria Godfrey (Environmental Health) outlined that the amended lighting scheme was requested by the Environmental Health Department to require lighting levels to be at a level deemed acceptable in rural areas, and therefore a conservative approach to acceptable levels of lighting had been applied in this instance to protect the amenity of residents.
- Maria Godfrey also outlined that as the facility will be Local Authority owned and run by the Leisure Department, appropriate levels of control will be put in place to ensure noise is kept to an acceptable level, and that users of the facility would have to enter into service level agreements with the Leisure Department that would ensure appropriate controls were put in place.
- Maria Godfrey also stated that due to the size of the proposed track, i.e. 300m as opposed to 400m, the facility would not be able to hold large competitions. Furthermore that stewards would be employed for events to manage the operation of the facility.
- Cllr. Whitcome and Cllr. Ridgewell queried the height of the existing street lighting columns and asked how high the proposed floodlighting columns would be by way of comparison. Chris Boardman estimated that the existing columns were approximately 5 metres high, but that the flood lights would be sited at the base of the existing bank.
- Local Member Cllr. Roy Saralis raised the following queries/concerns:
 - the visual impact from the proposed flood lighting columns;
 - light pollution levels during winter month when it is dark in the evening;
 - that the noise impact would be significantly higher than the present use;

- concerns in terms of the impact of this noise and light on nearby residents;
- residents concerns regarding highway safety associated with the proposed temporary access off Brynhoward Terrace, and asked what measures would be put in place to ensure no mud/debris would be dragged onto the highway (given the issues over the past 18 months with the development at Oakdale Golf Course).
- Cllr. Saralis also asked members of the Planning Committee present at the site meeting to ensure that the impact on residents formed part of their decision making at the upcoming Planning Committee.
- Cllr. Whitcombe queried if the proposed flood lighting columns were the same height as those in place at Islwyn High School. The Case Officer Chris Boardman agreed to try and get this information to Cllr. Whitcombe prior to Planning Committee.
- Cllr. Ridgewell queried the likely seasonal usage of the propose facility, i.e. would it be more regularly or widely used during the summer than winter. Chris Boardman agreed to try and find out this information prior to Planning Committee.
- Cllr. Saralis stated that if approved the facility would likely attract more interest in athletics that could lead to more members and more demand. And that the impacts of a more regularly used facility should also be considered in terms of the impact on residents.
- Cllr. Ridgewell suggested that it would be helpful if a representative from the Leisure Department could be made available at Planning Committee to answer any queries Planning Committee members may have about the operation of the proposed facility.
- Cllr. Adams (Chairman of Planning Committee) reiterated the comments of Cllr. Ridgewell and requested that an officer from Leisure could attend Planning Committee.
- Cllr. Saralis queried how many different clubs will use the facility.
- Cllr. Saralis sought clarification in terms of where the sprint straight started and pointed out that this would be the point where a starter gun could in theory be fired and that it was in close proximity to existing residential properties.
- Cllr. Saralis queried if the track layout could be flipped whereby the print straight was located on the other side of the field away from the residents adjoining the site to the east.
- Cllr. Saralis relayed the concerns of residents that the updated obtrusive lighting survey indicated a 5 lux level cutting the corner of a property adjoining the site, and queried whether this was acceptable or not. Environmental Health agreed to look into this matter.
- Cllr. Whitcombe queried if the field was currently used outside of school hours for informal recreation. It was clarified that the site was inaccessible to the public outside of school hours as the right of way is locked outside of school times.
- Cllr. Saralis concluded by thanking members of the Planning Committee for attending the visits, and reiterated the concerns of residents, i.e. could the noise Impact be reduced by re-orientating the layout of the track?; queried whether there would be public address system; stated that the area is currently a quiet peaceful area and that the proposal would have a major impact on this; and finally that all of the matters raised should be carefully considered before a decision is made.
- Mark Noakes (Highways Department) provided further information relating to the proposed temporary construction access onto Brynhoward Terrace. He stated that

visibility and existing gradient within the site was an issue that would need to be carefully considered and controlled by way of the relevant requested planning condition. He also stated that a hard entrance apron would be a requirement to prevent debris being dragged onto the adjacent highway. He also stated that the temporary access would be manned with Stop/Go signs to control traffic around the access. And finally that the Local Authority would be in complete control of these works providing a further level of control.

- Cllr. Saralis welcomed the measures proposed by Mark Noakes, and outlined his concerns regarding the level of traffic along this section of road, the 20 mph speed limit, and the lack of a footpath.
- Cllr. Saralis also queried the likely construction time frame (period and likely season for construction) if permission were to be agreed. Chris Boardman agreed to find out this information.
- Cllr. Ridgewell queried if any objections had been received from Brynhoward Terrace. Chris Boardman responded outlining that he believed so but that the application had been properly advertised in accordance with the relevant legislation.