



Strategic Place Planning

Report of Handling by Development Management Manager

Site Address:	Football Ground, Denmore Road, Aberdeen
Application Description:	Installation of replacement of floodlights
Application Ref:	231489/DPP
Application Type:	Detailed Planning Permission
Application Date:	23 November 2023
Applicant:	Hall Russell United FC
Ward:	Bridge Of Don
Community Council:	Bridge Of Don

DECISION

Approve Conditionally

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site Description

The application site comprises the football grounds associated with the Hall Russell United Football Club within the Denmore Commercial Centre (Opportunity Site 75). The site is accessed from Denmore Road to the west and adjoins Ellon Road to the east, with a boundary treated with trees. To the north sits the football grounds associated with Hermes Football Club which is surrounded by pole and lattice mast lighting. To the south sits industrial units and to the west, beyond Demore Road, sits residential properties off Greenbrae Drive. The floodlights currently on the site are 6m in height.

Relevant Planning History

None

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Description of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the erection of four floodlights measuring 15.5m in height along the east and west sides of the existing football pitch, replacing the existing three floodlights on the pitch.

Amendments

None.

Supporting Documents

All drawings and supporting documents listed below can be viewed on the Council's website at – <https://publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=S4L352BZHX200>

- Lighting Impact Assessment Report

CONSULTATIONS

ACC – Environmental Health – No objection to the proposal. The lighting impact assessment meets the requirements of the service. A condition for the operational hours of the lighting has been applied to this permission.

Roads Development Management – No observations or objections.

Bridge of Don Community Council – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative Requirements

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that where making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the Development Plan; and, that any determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

National Planning Framework 4

- Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises)
- Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation)
- Policy 3 (Biodiversity)
- Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place)
- Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport)
- Policy 27 (City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2023)

- Policy VC8 (Town, District, Neighbourhood and Commercial Centres)
- Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments)
- Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking)
- Policy D2 (Amenity)

EVALUATION

Principle of Development

The application site is located in a Commercial Centre under Policy VC8 (Town, District, Neighbourhood and Commercial Centres) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) 2023.

This policy expects such centres to contribute to providing a range of uses serving local communities and be of a scale which is appropriate to that centre and expects development:

- 1: makes a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the centre;
- 2: will not undermine the principal function of the centre in which it is located;
- 3: caters for a catchment appropriate to the centre in which it is located;
- 4: creates or maintains an active street frontage and attractive shop frontage;
- 5: does not create overprovision and/or clustering of a particular use in the immediate vicinity which would undermine the character and amenity of the centre; and
- 6: does not conflict with the amenity of the neighbouring area/existing commercial uses

The proposed works would relate to the existing use of the football field and as such, would not undermine the function of the centre, impact on how the space caters for the local catchment or create an overprovision of any use. All other considerations will be assessed below.

Policy 27 (City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres) aims for centres which are vibrant, healthy, creative, enterprising, accessible and resilient places for people to live, learn, work, enjoy and visit. Development proposals that improve or enhance the vitality of centres will be supported.

The ALDP has also identified this as an opportunity site and expects any pitches lost to be replaced by new or upgraded pitches which are of comparable or greater benefit. As the pitch itself is not being replaced or upgraded, a flood risk assessment or ecological survey would not be required in this case. The impact of obtrusive light on residents and wildlife has been assessed within the Lighting Impact Assessment and an appropriate maximum allowance illuminance has been proposed for the identified environmental zone. This consideration has been outlined further below.

Play and Healthy Development

NPF4 Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport) expect improved play provisions to provide stimulating environments, provide a range of play experiences including opportunities to connect with nature, be inclusive, be suitable for different ages of children and young people, be easily and safely accessible by children and young people independently, including those with a disability, incorporate trees and/or other forms of greenery, form an integral part of the surrounding neighbourhood, be well overlooked for passive surveillance and be linked directly to other open spaces and play areas. Development proposals that include new or enhanced play or sport facilities will provide effective management and maintenance plans. NPF4 Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) further promotes improving women's safety and improving physical and mental health. ALDP Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments) expects developments are required to provide healthy environments, reduce environmental stresses, facilitate physical activity and promote physical and mental wellbeing.

The proposed works form small-scale improvements to introduce lighting to an existing playing field. As such, it would not undermine the use of the space as a play area or impact its operation and therefore does not require a management plan. The proposal would improve passive surveillance and be more safely accessible, upgrading the existing sports pitch, meeting the aims of NPF4 Policy 21 and Policy 14 and ALDP Policy WB1.

Siting and Appearance

Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) of NPF4 expects development to be designed to be consistent with the six qualities of successful places and to not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding area. To determine the effect of the proposal on the character of the

area it is necessary to assess it in the context of Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking) of the ALDP. This policy expects all development to ensure high standards of design, create sustainable and successful places and have a strong and distinctive sense of place.

The application site comprises an existing football pitch within Denmore Industrial Park, set back from Denmore Road behind a car park used by lorries and other large vehicles over a small mound of grass, with the football pitch sitting at a slightly lower ground level (by approximately 2m) to the road. The boundaries to the north, south and east are treated with high level trees and as such, there would be a minimal visual impact on the surrounding area from these views. This is apparent from the view of the existing lattice tower floodlighting at Hermes FC to the north which sits at a similar height to the trees when viewed from Ellon Road. As such, the main view of the floodlighting would be from Denmore Road with the current outlook from this view being of the car park and street lighting along the road with the trees sitting in the backdrop. The nearest floodlight would sit c. 70m from the Denmore Road. At a height of 15.5m, the lighting on the west side of the pitch would appear taller than the trees in the distance, however, given the existing industrial character of the area and the existing high level floodlight at Hermes FC which are similarly visible from Denmore Road to the north of Speedy Services, the introduction of this lighting is not considered to present harm to the visual character of the area. The nearest mast would also sit c. 115m from the nearest residential dwelling, but this would likely be screened by trees located on Denmore Road and would not appear visually prominent from these properties.

The proposed lighting has been designed as a slimline pole to minimise its massing as far as possible, having a similar appearance as street lighting which sits closer to the road and would therefore not look out of place when travelling along Denmore. As such, the proposed works have been appropriately designed and located to avoid having an adverse visual impact on the character of the surrounding area and would be in keeping with similar floodlighting at the neighbouring football pitch. The proposal would therefore accord with NPF4 Policies 14 and 27 and ALDP Policies VC8 and D1.

Residential Amenity

Policy D2 (Amenity) is aimed at ensuring that all development will result in acceptable levels of residential amenity for occupiers and neighbouring properties. The main impact of the replacement of floodlights for this existing sports pitch are in relation to light pollution. As part of the application, a Lighting Assessment by Kingfisher Lighting was submitted, undertaken in line with relevant guidance. This document categorises the environment into five different zones according to the degree of urbanisation and background illumination. The environmental zones range from '*Protected*' which would include 'dark skies' through to '*Urban*' which would include town and city centres. Within this range, the site and the immediate surrounding area was considered to fall in the category '*Suburban*' where medium district brightness applies. The report sets out that, if installed correctly, would meet environmental lighting standards and maintain the amenity of neighbouring properties, as well as mitigate any upward light. The proposed Flood Light Plan further shows compliance with obtrusive light testing against the nearest three houses on Greenbrae Avenue to the west. As such, it is considered that the proposed new lighting system would be appropriate in this regard, and would not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity subject to a condition, as set out above, restricting their hours of use.

Impact on wildlife

The lighting system has been designed to minimise any impacts on local wildlife. Upward light spill has been calculated at 0% with the individual light fittings having the ability to be angled exactly where the light is needed, i.e. onto the sports pitch. The lighting temperature would also be 5000K to be close to a comfortable and natural working environment. In addition, the floodlights will

generally be used during the winter months when some species would be in hibernation. Finally, the effects on wildlife have been considered in assessing the environmental zone in which the site sits in the Lighting Assessment.

Road Safety

Roads Development Management have identified no concerns with the proposed lighting in relation to Ellon Road or other roads through the estate.

Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises, Climate Mitigation and Biodiversity

Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises) of NPF4 requires planning authorities when considering all development proposals to give significant weight to encouraging, promoting and facilitating development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis. Similarly, Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation) of NPF4 encourages, promotes and facilitates development that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change. Policy 3 (Biodiversity) of NPF4 requires proposals for local development to include measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, proportionate to the nature and scale of development.

The nature of the development would be in tension with NPF4 due to the power required to operate them. However, as the lighting is required for upgrading the existing playing field, it would accord with NPF4 Policies 14 and 21 for promoting safe and active areas to promote physical and mental health. The proposal is also for the replacement of existing floodlighting on the site and would therefore add a minimal additional power requirement for the site. An appropriate Lighting Assessment has also been undertaken for the relevant identified environmental zone to avoid impacts on wildlife. Sufficient steps have therefore been taken to protect wildlife and minimise light pollution and on balance, the lighting would provide a positive contribution for the area in terms of active and safe play areas and would therefore be in compliance with NPF4.

DECISION

Approve Conditionally

REASON FOR DECISION

The location of the proposed lighting sits sufficiently away from Denmore Road and at a lower ground level to avoid presenting an adverse visual impact from public view. The lighting has also been designed to minimise its massing and be in keeping with other lighting on the football grounds to the north. As such, the proposal is compliant with Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) and Policy 27 (City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres) of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP).

The proposed floodlights are considered not to result in a significant adverse impact on residential amenity of surrounding properties caused by light as demonstrated from the Light Assessment Report and would not impact on road safety in accordance with Policy VC8 (Town, District, Neighbourhood and Commercial Centres) and Policy D2 (Amenity) of the ALDP

Consideration has been given to the positive impact of the proposal by increasing the useability of the existing pitch on encouraging healthy lifestyles and the positive impact this can have on the mental and physical well-being of participating children. The proposed works comprise replacement lighting and sufficient measures have been put in place to minimise harm to wildlife

and light pollution. Although the development would be in tension with Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises) and Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation) of NPF4, the proposed would accord with Policy 3 (Biodiversity), Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport) and Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) of NPF4 and Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments) of the ALDP and would therefore, on balance, accord with the aims of NPF4.

CONDITIONS

(01) DURATION OF PERMISSION

The development to which this notice relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years beginning with the date of this notice. If development has not begun at the expiration of the 3-year period, the planning permission lapses.

Reason - in accordance with section 58 (duration of planning permission) of the 1997 act.

(02) RESTRICTION ON HOURS

That the floodlights hereby approved shall only be in both use between 15:00 and 21:00 hours and only be used during hours of darkness.

Reason – in the interest of residential amenity

(03) INSTALLATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH DETAILS

That the development hereby approved shall be installed in accordance with the details as set out in the 'Hall Russell FC' lighting report prepared by Kingfisher Lighting; and associated drawing 51600 Rev B forming part of this application, and shall be retained as such.

Reason – in the interest of residential amenity