

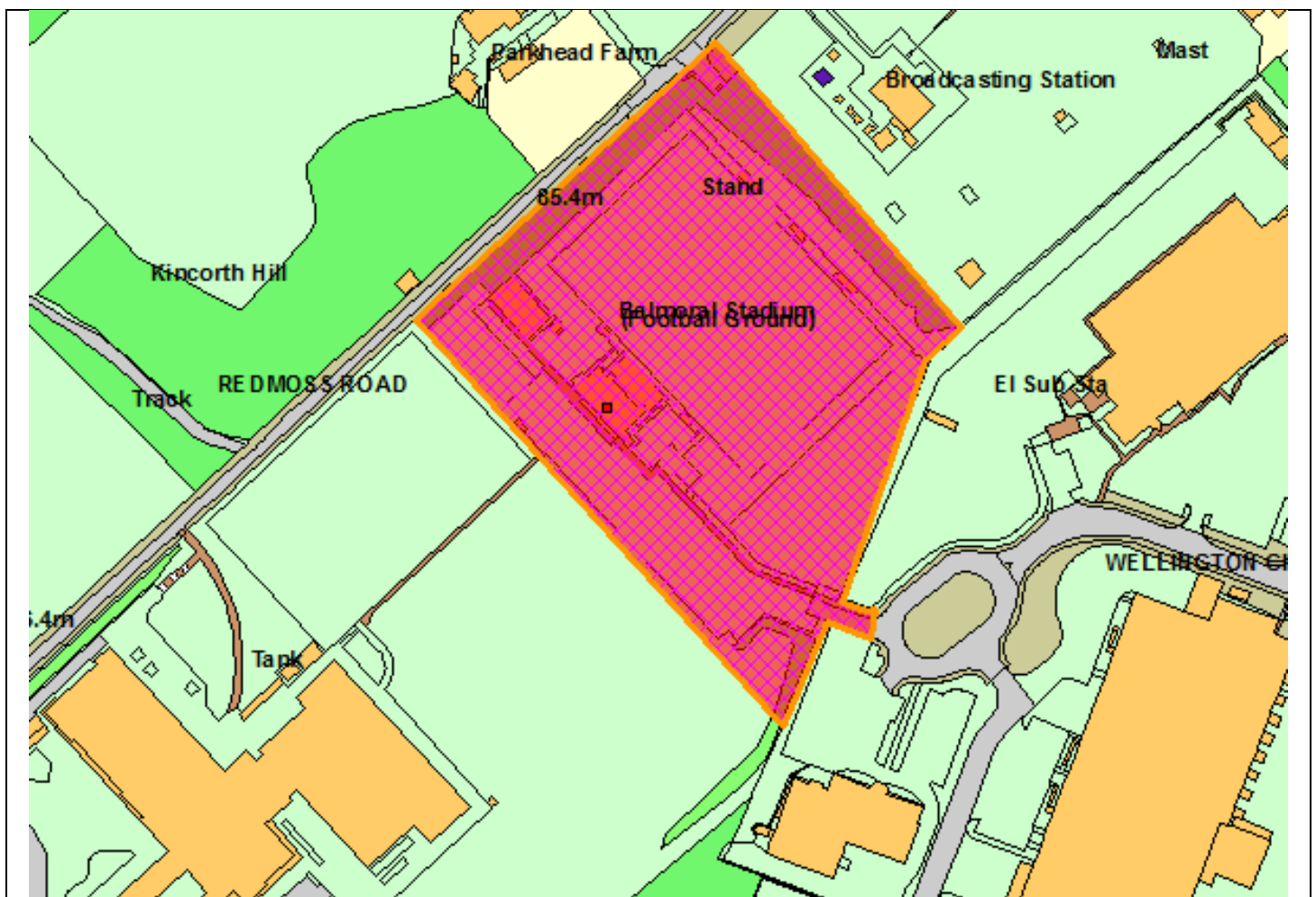


# Planning Development Management Committee

Report by Development Management Manager

**Committee Date: 21 February 2019**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Site Address:</b>            | Balmoral Stadium, Wellington Circle, Altens, Aberdeen<br>AB12 3JG   |
| <b>Application Description:</b> | Installation and extension of steel wall fence, access gate, footpath connection and installation of timber fence with all associated works |
| <b>Application Ref:</b>         | 182158/DPP  |
| <b>Application Type</b>         | Detailed Planning Permission  |
| <b>Application Date:</b>        | 8 January 2019  |
| <b>Applicant:</b>               | Cove Rangers FC   |
| <b>Ward:</b>                    | Kincorth/Nigg/Cove  |
| <b>Community Council:</b>       | Nigg  |
| <b>Case Officer:</b>            | Robert Forbes   |



## RECOMMENDATION

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### Approve Conditionally

## APPLICATION BACKGROUND

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### Site Description

The site comprises a recently developed football stadium, used by Cove Rangers (a Highland League club) and Aberdeen Football Club (for occasional reserve league / junior games) with associated / ancillary facilities (e.g. 110 car parking spaces, and landscaping). It lies around 4km south of the city centre. Access is via Wellington Circle which connects with Wellington Road via an industrial estate. There is a change in level of around 1m from Redmoss Road down to the main site level. There is recent tree planting along the verge of this road and on parts of the site.

Redmoss Road, which lies to the north of the site, provides the closest potential pedestrian access from the site to nearby residential parts of the city including Nigg / Kincorth and to the closest bus stop to the stadium entrance, located at the top of Abbotswell Crescent (approx. 750m walking distance away). The closest bus stops located on Wellington Road are around 850m walking distance from the public entrance to the ground via public roads within an industrial estate. Redmoss Road provides pedestrian / cycle access to Lochside School and is closed to motorised / through traffic, unlike Wellington Road which carries a high volume of industrial / HGV traffic.

### Relevant Planning History

| Application Number | Proposal   | Decision Date |
|--------------------|--|---------------|
| 180633             | Installation of modular building (supporters facility) | 15.06.18      |
| 160246             | Erection of football stadium                           | 18.08.16      |

Condition 1 of the above permission requires provision of a footpath connection to Redmoss Road. Condition 10 requires the implementation of an approved landscaping scheme for the site.

The stadium has been in operation since July 2018 without the required footpath link from Redmoss Road having been provided as required by condition 1 of the approval. Although a path link has recently been formed to/from Redmoss Road, this is in a revised position from that shown on the approved drawings and, crucially, public access to it is obstructed by an unauthorised fence and gate. The current application has been submitted following discussion with ACC officials, in attempt to regularise the breach of planning control which has taken place.

## APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

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### Description of Proposal

Planning permission is sought retrospectively for installation of a footpath connection to Redmoss Road in an amended position to that approved under permission 160246, at the western corner of the site, around 20m south west of the approved access position. Permission is also sought for the erection of associated 2.4m high steel fencing and gate along the north-western edge of the stadium facility close to Redmoss Road. Permission is also sought for the erection of a 2.1m high vertical timber slatted fence within the site along the north edge of the car park access.

### 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=PK32M0BZJL00>

Supporting statement

### **Reason for Referral to Committee**

The application has been referred to the Planning Development Management Committee because the local Community Council object to the application and the recommendation is approval.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

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**ACC - Land and Property Assets** – No response received.

**ACC - Roads Development Management Team** – No objection.

**Police Scotland** – No objection. Note that the path and gate adjacent Redmoss Road have been constructed and that overspill of car parking during match days may occur outwith the stadium, within the industrial estate. Advise that if the gate is used to access the stadium, this may encourage cars to park on Redmoss Road, which has the potential to cause traffic issues into the surrounding streets in and around Redmoss Road.

**Nigg Community Council (NCC)** – Objects on the basis that the pedestrian access onto Redmoss Road should be egress only for emergency use. Have serious concerns regarding traffic generation, indiscriminate parking within the local housing estate and obstruction of emergency vehicle access to Lochside School and the Kincorth Hill. “Residents Parking Only” signs should be installed along Redmoss Road.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

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An objection has been received from the occupier of Parkhead Farm. They have concerns regarding additional parking pressure on Redmoss Road causing obstruction to emergency vehicles / residents. They advise that vehicles currently park on double yellow lines at certain times.

## **MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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### **Legislative Requirements**

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

### **National Planning Policy and Guidance**

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states, which regard to transport and planning (paragraphs 287 and 288) “planning permission should not be granted for significant travel-generating uses at locations which would increase reliance on the car and where:

- direct links to local facilities via walking and cycling networks are not available or cannot be made available;
- access to local facilities via transport networks would involve walking more than 400m; or
- the transport assessment does not identify satisfactory ways of meeting sustainable transport requirements.

Buildings and facilities should be accessible by foot and bicycle.

### **Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017 (ALDP)**

LR1: Land Release Policy  
OP59: Loirston  
OP61: Calder Park  
D1: Quality Placemaking by Design  
D2: Landscape  
T3: Sustainable and Active Travel

## **Supplementary Guidance and Technical Advice Notes**

Transport and Accessibility

### **Other material Considerations**

Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021 (LTS)  
Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017 (ATAP)  
Wellington Road Transport Study 2018 (WRTS)  
Loirston Development Framework

## **EVALUATION**

### **Principle of Development**

The proposal is directly associated with the authorised use of the site as a football stadium, which is identified as an appropriate use in terms of the OP61 designation within ALDP. As it has no impact on strategic housing or employment allocations there is therefore no need to assess the proposal relative to policy LR1. Provision of the footpath link accords with the sustainable travel objectives of SPP, ALDP policy T3, the LTS and ATAP.

### **Traffic / Safety**

Notwithstanding the concerns of certain consultees and the objector regarding potential indiscriminate parking on Redmoss Road, which are not shared by ACC Roads officers, there is a clear policy justification to seek adequate pedestrian access to the stadium for the public and to improve connectivity with local communities and to encourage use of non-car based transport modes in accordance with wider strategies and plans identified above. No evidence has been provided that use of Redmoss Road as a pedestrian access to the Stadium would result in a road or public safety hazard, or would result in obstruction of emergency vehicles. Indeed the eastern section of Redmoss Road is of significant width over most of its length (i.e. 7.2m) such that it could accommodate car parking without resulting in such obstruction. A section of Redmoss Road east of the vehicle barrier at Parkhead Farm has recently seen footpath upgrade works undertaken by the Council. As Redmoss Road is no longer a through road, it carries a low level of vehicle traffic. It is a designated safe route to school and is an attractive and appropriate route for pedestrians and cyclists attempting to access the stadium from adjacent housing areas or from the city centre.

It should be noted that matches at the stadium likely to generate attendance by the public (e.g. Cove Rangers' Highland League and Scottish Cup fixtures) normally take place outwith times when the adjacent school is in use (i.e. typically 3pm on Saturdays and midweek evenings), so that there would be no risk to the safety and security of pupils attending Lochside Academy due to the arrival/departure of supporters. The Supporting Statement from the applicant states that access to the stadium via the path connection with Redmoss Road will be controlled through the gate and "*will only be used on match days*". A condition can be imposed to control the details of such access. Given the current availability of car and coach parking within the stadium site and the adjacent industrial estate, and the relatively low level of spectator attendance for events compared to, for example, Pittodrie Stadium (generally around 300-500 people), significant overspill parking on Redmoss Road is unlikely to occur and the concerns/objections raised regarding this matter is not considered to warrant refusal of the application.

By enabling enhancement of access to the site by alternative transport modes, including increased bus patronage, the proposal accords with the objectives of both the LTS and ATAP. The WRTS process is currently ongoing and is not due to conclude until 2020. Its weight as a material consideration is therefore limited. In any event, by encouraging access by alternative transport modes and therefore reducing pressure for vehicle access to the site, the proposal results in likely reduced vehicle traffic on the Wellington Road corridor.

In the event that major new housing development is undertaken on additional land to the south west of the site (OP59), as envisaged by the approved Loirston Development Framework and in accordance with such planning permission, the proposed access would allow residents to gain pedestrian / cycle access to the ground without having to make an inconvenient detour along Wellington Road and through an industrial estate. Approval of the proposal would therefore serve to improve sustainable access and connectivity for future residents of that new community.

### **Detailed Design Matters**

The location and routing of the proposed path link would not result in any adverse landscape or visual impact, or adverse impact on identified natural heritage assets.

Although the path link would not be step free, and therefore would not be suitable for certain users (e.g. mobility impaired / cyclists), disabled access and parking is already available via the main entrance via Wellington Circle (7 spaces in total). Given the existence of this alternative main access route, it is considered unreasonable to require that the link to Redmoss Road is also DDA compliant.

The proposed new fencing is considered to be justified on security grounds. The steel fencing as installed is the same design as that previously approved to enclose the pitch. However, the section now proposed extends closer to Redmoss Road by around 7m. It is noted that the site is distant from some sensitive visual receptors (e.g. main approach roads / heritage assets / housing areas), however the steel fencing is somewhat industrial in appearance, somewhat at odds with the character of the adjacent countryside/green belt area to the north-west and is visible outwith the site. A degree of additional soft landscaping (e.g. hedging) is therefore considered to be necessary in order to soften its visual impact when seen from Redmoss Road, in accordance with the objective of policy D2. Subject to additional landscaping measure, the fencing would have an acceptable degree of visual impact, so that it would accord with the objectives of local plan policy D1.

### **Other matters raised in objections**

The request by Nigg Community Council for installation of "residents parking only" signs on Redmoss Road is not a material planning consideration and is a matter which is more appropriately considered separately by Roads officers. Similarly, the concern regarding alleged indiscriminate parking on the double yellow lines at the turning point on Redmoss Road, due to the existence of the secondary school is a matter which can be investigated separately as a parking enforcement matter by relevant Council officials.

### **Council Interest**

Although the Council has an interest in the development as owner of the site, as the proposal accords with the development plan and there is no substantial body of objection, there is no need to refer the application to the Scottish Government for scrutiny in advance of its determination.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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**Approve conditionally**

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

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Given the existing authorised use of the site, the National policy presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development, as set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), the sustainable travel objectives set out in Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021 and Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017 (ATAP), the lack of objection from ACC Roads officers on roads safety grounds, and that the pedestrian access from Redmoss Road would improve connectivity with local communities, encourage use of alternative transport modes, it is appropriate to approve the amended pedestrian access / egress. A condition can be imposed in order to regulate the details of its working (e.g. hours of operation / use by the public) in order to accord with the sustainable travel objectives of Aberdeen Local Development Plan policy T3 (Sustainable and Active Travel).

The proposed new fencing is considered to be justified on security grounds. Given the remoteness of the site relative to sensitive visual receptors (e.g. main approach roads / heritage assets / housing), and subject to implementation of landscaping measures on site it would have an acceptable degree of visual impact, so that it would accord with the objectives of Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design) and D2 (Landscape).

## **CONDITIONS**

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### 1. Public Access Strategy

That during all Cove Rangers FC competitive or friendly football matches played at the Balmoral Stadium, the footpath connection to Redmoss Road, as shown on drawing no. 11318-P(--)-022A shall be made available with continuous unobstructed access (i.e. the gate is kept open) for use by members of the public from at least 30 minutes prior to match kick-off times until at least 30 minutes following the end of matches, to be managed by Cove Rangers FC staff – in the interests of sustainable transportation, improved connectivity to and with local communities and enabling pedestrian accessibility from a wider catchment area, in accordance with the objectives of Scottish Planning Policy, policy T3 (Sustainable and Active Travel) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, the Aberdeen City Local Transport strategy 2016-2021 and the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017.

### 2. Landscaping

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority, the metal fencing hereby authorised (as shown in red on drawing no. 11318-P(--)-002 A) shall not remain on site beyond a period expiring on 31/12/19 unless a further scheme of landscaping for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority. This scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and landscaped areas on the land, together with the proposed areas of tree / shrub / hedge planting along the verge / boundary with Redmoss Road, including details of numbers, densities, locations, species, sizes and stage of maturity at planting. Such approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented in full by 31/12/2019 - In the interests of the visual amenity of the adjacent green belt area / green space network area and protection of the setting of Redmoss Road.

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