

Planning Development Management Committee

Report by Development Management Manager

Committee Date: 15 January 2026

Site Address:	Land At St Fittick's Park, Phase 1 Zone A, Aberdeen
Application Description:	Erection of an accessible entrance feature, path connections, social shelter, spectator seating, paved area and associated works
Application Ref:	250929/DPP
Application Type	Detailed Planning Permission
Application Date:	17 September 2025
Applicant:	ETZ Ltd
Ward:	Torry/Ferryhill
Community Council:	Torry



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RECOMMENDATION

Approve Conditionally

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site Description

The site includes areas of the Tullos playing fields extending from close to Girdleness Road in front of Tullos Primary School, around the grass pitch area and Cruyff Court pitch, as well as along the south side of the playing fields and extends to the edge of the site area of the Planning Permission in Principle for the Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) in the eastern area of St Fittick's Park. A small area of ground close to St Fittick's Church is also included, with the red line extending across the park to encompass that area and link to St Fittick's Road.

Relevant Planning History

- 190980/DPP - Resurfacing of existing pitch with associated drainage, replacement fencing and installation of ramp. Approved conditionally 25 July 2019.
- 231371/PPP - Proposed business / industrial development (Class 4/5/6); road infrastructure; active travel connections; landscaping and environmental works including drainage and other infrastructure. Approved conditionally 24 January 2025.
- 250231/DPP Installation of three shipping containers for ancillary sports equipment storage and community youth hub (Class 11). Approved conditionally 2 May 2025.
- 250429/MSC - Approval of matters specified in Conditions 4 (phasing - Zone A) and 41 (phasing - Zone C) in relation to Planning Permission in Principle (Ref: 231371/PPP) for the Proposed business / industrial development (Class 4/5/6); road infrastructure; active travel connections; landscaping and environmental works including drainage and other infrastructure. Approved conditionally 7 November 2025.
- 250440/MSC - Approval of matters specified in conditions 5c,d,e (design, layout, siting), 8(details of East Tullos Burn works), 9(biodiversity), 10(landscaping), 12(flood risk assessment), 16(CEMP), 20a,c,d,g,h (mitigations) and 21(archaeological works) of application ref. 231371/PPP for the realignment and enhancement of the East Tullos Burn, landscape works and biodiversity enhancement, path connections and associated mitigation works (Phase 1 of Zone A). Approved conditionally 10 November 2025.

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Description of Proposal

The application proposal includes several elements:

- **Accessible Entrance:**

A new entrance would be constructed in the northwest corner of the site, off Girdleness Road, featuring a ramp, steps, and terraced seating. This will connect to the existing entrance at Tullos Primary School into the playing fields and St Fittick's Park. The upper section of the ramp would have concrete seating blocks along the upper edge. The ramp and steps would lead onto a stretch of an existing asphalt path.

- **Path Connections:**

New paths will link Tullos Playing Fields with St Fittick's Park, these would be surfaced in asphalt up to the edge of the playing fields and in semi bound compacted gravel in the park. Benches will be installed along these paths. The application includes a path link onto St

Fittick's Road. The site boundary includes only areas outside the boundary of the land subject to Planning Permission in Principle 231371/PPP.

- **Social Shelter:**

The existing damaged shelter will be replaced with a new structure, with exact design to be agreed.

- **Spectator Seating:**

Terraced seating will be added next to the sports pitches, creating dedicated areas for spectators. A multi angled bench incorporating table tops in hardwood would be installed on the paved area near to the Cruyff Court.

- **Paved Area:**

A paved section will be built near the sports pitches to accommodate storage containers for local sports clubs. The containers themselves are not included in this application.

The application proposals are part of a wider package of mitigation measures relating to the Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) development and are part of the works included within Phase 1 approved under Application Ref. 250429/MSC. The lining of grass pitches adjacent to the Cruff Court are also part of mitigations and do not require planning permission. Existing benches, bins and cycle stands would be retained.

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=T1R590BZM4O00>

Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan

Site Investigation

Geotechnical Report

Reason for Referral to Committee

The application has been referred to the Planning Development Management Committee because:

- There is an objection from the Torry Community Council.
- There are more than six letters of objection.

Determination of the application therefore falls outwith the Scheme of Delegation.

CONSULTATIONS

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) Internal Consultees

- **ACC - Roads Development Management Team** – No objection; where paths tie in with adopted footways there would need to be discussion with the Roads Construction Consent

Team; no water from proposal would be permitted to discharge onto public road; site is in the outer city boundary and not in a Controlled Parking Zone.

- **ACC - Schools Estates Team** – No comments received.
- **ACC - Structures, Flooding and Coastal Engineering** – No objection. Satisfied that infiltration rates would allow for surface water to be drained to a soakaway. Conditions should be attached requiring a trial pit on, or close to, the site with infiltration tests to inform size of soakaway. Path drainage details should also be conditioned.

External Consultees

- **Torry Community Council** – objects for the following reasons:
 - The playing fields next to Tullos Primary School flood and hold ground water, with numerous matches lost to poor pitch conditions. The pitch area is virtually at sea level and the green belt in this area is a flood plain. The application does not address these matters.
 - The application is presented as creating amenity to mitigate loss relating to an undefined industrial development in St Fittick's Park. It should be refused pending full consideration of the impact of a known end user and development.
 - Uncertainty over traffic management measures to Coast Road and St Fittick's Road are further reasons for refusal.
 - The park / flood plain hosts many habitats, high biodiversity, is a carbon-sink and air purifier, with trees planted by local people.

REPRESENTATIONS

14 representations have been received (14 objections). The matters raised can be summarised as follows –

Material Considerations

1. No evidence of comprehensive community consultation - application should be rejected until changes carry support of informal community not just relying on paid employees of various football institutions.
2. Lack of clarity over whether MUGA equipment would be replaced. Have users of MUGA pitches been consulted.
3. Application should be refused until maintenance obligations and responsibility for pitches are known.
4. Application must be assessed against details of end users and development, the details required by conditions on the planning permission in principle.
5. Inadequate drainage – as noted by ACC Flooding Team.
6. SEPA objects to development within the flood plain. This application aids the agenda of removing part of the Park.
7. Pursuing the development through fragmenting the planning application process is gaslighting and a continued abuse of the people of Torry.
8. The current application is premature and a PR exercise, with earlier applications yet to be approved (*note: these have now been approved by PDMC in November*).

Non-Material Considerations

9. There should be a public enquiry into Aberdeen City Council.
10. Work has already been put out to tender.
11. If playing fields needed re-lining why did Council not do it in-house, instead of adding another layer of bureaucracy.

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

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the long-term spatial strategy for Scotland and contains a comprehensive set of national planning policies that form part of the statutory development plan.

- Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises)
- Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation)
- Policy 3 (Biodiversity)
- Policy 8 (Green Belts)
- Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport)
- Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place)
- Policy 20 (Blue and Green Infrastructure)
- Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport)
- Policy 22 (Flood Risk and Water Management)
- Policy 23 (Health and Safety)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

- Policy H1 (Residential Areas)
- Policy NE2 (Green and Blue Infrastructure)
- Policy NE1 (Green Belt)
- Policy NE5 (Trees)
- Policy D4 (Landscape)
- Policy D5 (Landscape Design)
- Policy B1 (Business and Industrial Land)
- Policy B5 (Energy Transition Zones)
- Policy WB1 (Healthy Developments)
- Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking)
- Policy NE4 (Our Water Environment)

- Policy 23 (Health and Safety)
- Policy T2 (Sustainable Transport)

Aberdeen Planning Guidance

ETZ Masterplan

EVALUATION

Key Determining Factors

In terms of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP) zoning, the proposed steps, ramp and paths lie partly within a residential area where the main consideration is whether development is complementary to residential use. Paths also lie within Green Belt zoning and the relevant consideration is whether they fall within one of the exceptions of the general presumption against development. The suitability of the design, in terms of layout, materials, planting, biodiversity impact and drainage are also important issues for consideration.

The proposals are part of a wider project for development of land within the Energy Transition Zone which were granted planning permission in principle in January this year. The paths and stepped/ramped entrance feature provide part of the mitigation for works to the East Tullos Burn including creation of a sediment basin on land which was formerly a recreation ground. The proposed works seek to mitigate against the loss of the recreation ground east of the Nigg WWTP through the provision of enhanced facilities at the Tullos playing fields. The paths would provide improved access to the existing Cruyff Court and grass pitches which are to be lined (these are outside, but adjacent to, the application site). The adequacy of the current development as mitigation has been considered as part of previous planning applications and is not a matter for consideration here.

Residential Area

The issue for consideration is whether the proposal is complementary to residential use. The proposals are for paths, seating, a replacement youth shelter and associated ground engineering works. These would be used to enhance the recreational experience in the playing fields and park and are entirely appropriate within a residential area. The paths are not so close to homes that members of the public using the paths would create disturbance to residents..

Green Belt

There are short sections of path proposed within the Green Belt. St Fittick's Park is designated as Green Belt in the ALDP. Policies relating to the Green Belt in both NPF4 and the ALDP include a general presumption against development. Recreational uses are included in the categories of development that are acceptable, providing there is a locational justification, the purpose of the green belt is not undermined, the proposal is of appropriate design in relation to the character of the green belt and is compatible with the landscape character; and, that there is no significant long-term impact on environmental quality.

Proposals within the green belt areas of the application site are solely for paths and benches. These link to other paths within the park, including core paths and the locational justification is self-evident. The width, surfacing and layout of the paths is considered appropriate, fits with existing paths and would not overly dominate the surrounding green area, so are considered to be in line with Green Belt policy.

Natural Environment

Green Space Network

The application site falls within the Green Space Network (GSN). The purpose of the network is set out in ALDP Policy NE2 – Green & Blue Infrastructure: as being for wildlife, biodiversity, ecological systems, access, recreation, landscape and townscape. This application is for detailed planning permission and as a standalone proposal the works would enhance the recreational and ecological value of the site by including areas of wildflower seeding, tree and shrub planting and an enhanced path network. Earlier applications have established the principle of these works being in mitigation for the moving of paths and use of part of the triangular recreational ground close to the railway for the sediment basin and realignment of the East Tullos Burn.

Biodiversity and Planting

Within the application site planting of trees such as downy birch, rowan, crab apple, maple, shrubs and bulbs, urban pollinator wildflower mix and amenity grassland, would take place within the area around the park entrance steps and ramp and the paved area adjacent the Cruyff Courts in particular. These areas are currently grassed and the proposed planting would provide additional habitats and therefore enhance biodiversity.

Trees

A number of mature trees exist outside the site but along the eastern boundary of the Tullos Primary School grounds. The upper levels of the path to the steps would be within the canopy spread of one of the trees. The existing retaining walls would remain, although the path would be elevated above the existing path level. In order to protect the tree, it is recommended that a condition be attached requiring details of tree protection fencing.

Path Network

Core Paths

Core Path 103 runs along Girdleness Road past Tullos School and the proposed entrance feature would be accessible from this. The proposal includes paths that would lead onto linkages with Core Path 108, this latter path crosses the park between Balnagask Circle near the existing MUGA pitch to Coast Road to the south of the Scottish Water Treatment Works. The short section of path adjacent to St Fittick's Road would fill a gap between the adopted road and the existing footpath to the west of St Fittick's Church. The proposals align with Policy NE2 – Green & Blue Infrastructure and T2 – Sustainable Transport by providing footpaths to encourage active travel and outdoor access.

Enhancing the local path network including links to Core Paths is included as mitigation and compensation within the Energy Transition Zone Masterplan.

Flooding and Drainage

The site does not include areas shown as flood plain on SEPA maps, although anecdotal evidence and third-party representations cite waterlogging on the pitches. The path immediately to the east of the pitches skirts a small area of surface water flood risk. The application site area does not include the grass pitch, and that is also not indicated as affected by surface water, whilst there are areas around the edge of the playing field that are indicated as such.

Following a request for further information, the applicant's agent submitted a Geotechnical site investigation report which was carried out in 2019 in relation to the Cruyff Court pitch. This included a trial pit in the area that is part of the current application and calculation of infiltration rates. It concluded that a soakaway would be suitable for surface water drainage from the pitch. Taking into account the conclusion of that report, the Flooding Team consider that infiltration rates in the vicinity of the application site paths would allow use of a soakaway for surface water drainage. A condition

is recommended that requires site investigation with trial pit and infiltration rates to be calculated in order to inform the sizing of a soakaway for the current application proposals.

It is considered that the measures above would ensure that no surface water would detrimentally affect areas outside the site.

Matters Raised in Representations

1. *No evidence of comprehensive community consultation* - The existing football pitches are not part of the application site, however, the proposals do include paths and spectator seating around the Cruyff and grass pitch areas. The applicant has submitted a supporting statement describing consultations with the Dennis Law Legacy Trust, stated as being the main users of the sports facilities at present. A Community Consultation report was submitted and this covers the project as a whole. It includes a survey of use of entry points to the park and preferred improvements to the park. Seating, footpaths and planting for wildlife were amongst the areas identified.
2. *Lack of clarity over whether MUGA equipment would be replaced. Have users of MUGA pitches been consulted.* - The earlier application for works to the East Tullos Burn (Ref. 250440/MSC) involved loss of part of the recreational ground by the railway where there is MUGA equipment. The mitigation for that loss is the pitches shown on the plans that accompany the current application, however, they are not part of the current application as they do not require planning permission. The drawings indicate that heavyweight freestanding goalposts would be provided. There is an existing MUGA pitch on the east side of Balnagask Circle within the northern section of the park, this would be unaffected by the ETZ proposals.
3. *Application should be refused until maintenance obligations and responsibility for pitches are known.* - The pitches are not part of the application.
4. *Application must be assess against details of end users and development, the details required by conditions on the planning permission in principle.* - The current application is a separate application for detailed planning permission and is not formally linked to the planning permission in principle. However, there is no requirement for end users to be known at this point, the matter is covered by a condition on the PPP and will require details of the end user(s) to be approved through a separate Matters Specified in Conditions application at the relevant point in the future.
5. *Inadequate drainage, as noted by ACC Flooding Team.* - Drainage is the subject of conditions and the Flooding Team are satisfied that ground conditions would allow the use of a soakaway as necessary.
6. *SEPA objects to development within the flood plain.* - The SEPA objection related to the PPP application. The ground within the current application is not a flood plain.
7. *Pursuing the development through fragmenting the planning application process is gaslighting and a continued abuse of the people of Torry.* - The planning process being pursued is in accordance with legislation and is regularly and similarly followed for large developments that are split into logical component parts.
8. *The current application is premature and a PR exercise, with earlier applications yet to be approved.* - Earlier applications for the works to the Burn and Phasing were approved at the November 2025 Planning Development Management Committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

9. *There should be a public enquiry into Aberdeen City Council.* - Any outstanding matters of concern should be submitted through the Council's complaints system and thereafter through the Ombudsman if necessary.
10. *Work has already been put out to tender.* - Tendering has no connection to the planning process and is at the developer's risk.
11. *If the playing fields need re-lining the Council should do it 'in-house'.* - The pitches are not part of the application. However, it is noted that maintenance is currently carried out by Aberdeen City Council and are a core output of the joint venture ACC / ETZ company.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve conditionally

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The application proposal for footpaths, steps and ramp would be complementary to the residential area and would have an insignificant impact on the landscape character of the Green Belt. The entrance steps and ramp, seating and paths would enhance access and recreational use of the park. The proposal would, therefore, comply with policies H1: Residential Areas, NE1: Green Belt, NE2: Green & Blue Infrastructure in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP) and policies 8: Green Belts, 20: Blue and Green Infrastructure in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

Proposed tree, shrub and seed planting and tree protection measures would enhance natural heritage within the area, providing improvements to biodiversity by increasing the quantity of these habitats within the area as well as the landscape character and visual amenity. The species selected are suitable for the site. The proposal therefore complies with Policy 3: Biodiversity in NPF4, D4: Landscape, D5: Landscape Design in the ALDP

There is sufficient information provided to appropriately condition the requirement for a trial pit at the site of the proposed soakaway with details of infiltration rates to indicate the size of soakaway and details of drainage measures. This would ensure that the proposal complies with Policy NE4: Water Environment in the ALDP and Policy 22: Flood Risk and Water Management in 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) TREE PROTECTION

That no development of the path adjoining the frontage of Tullos Primary School site, steps or ramp shall take place unless there has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the planning

authority, a layout plan and details of tree protection measures to the mature trees in the north east corner of the Primary School site.

Reason - In the interests of avoiding damage to trees.

(03) SITE INVESTIGATION AND DRAINAGE

That no development shall take place unless the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority:

- a) Infiltration rate at the site of the proposed soakaway based on a trial pit in that location, and details of proposed soakaway.
- b) Details of drainage arrangements / measures for areas of proposed new hardstanding.

The soakaway shall not, thereafter, be constructed other than in full accordance with the approved details

Reason - In the interests of ensuring that additional surface water does not adversely affect the surrounding area.

(04) SHELTER

That within 6 months of development commencing there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority details of the 'Twisted Youth' shelter noted on drawing number ETZ_SLR_AE_07_D_L_910307 Rev 00 or other such shelter of similar size and quality approved in writing by the planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in accordance with such details as so agreed.

Reason - In the interests of providing facilities for young people.