

Development of Sports Facilities at Birchall Playing Fields.

Design and Access Statement.

1. Relevant Documentation.

- Access to and Use of Buildings – The Building Regulations 2000, Part M, 2004 edition.
- “Access for Disabled People” – Sport England.
- Pavilions and Clubhouses – Sport England.
- The Building Regulations 2000.

2. Site and Area Appraisal.

2.1 Physical.

The site at Birchall Playing Fields is typical of many local authority owned and controlled football sites. It is around 30 acres in size and sits between the golf course to the south, the Britannia Building Society offices to the north, a disused railway line to the west and Cheddleton Rd to the east. The site consists of the following: -

- Full sized Red-gras running track, with central grass football pitch and floodlights.
- 2 cricket squares (used to be 3, but one is disused).
- 10 further football pitches of varying size.
- 111 car parking spaces.
- Changing Pavilion.

The nearest housing on Cheddleton Rd is predominantly large, good quality detached residences, of brick with slate or tiled roofs.

Public Transport is easily available on Cheddleton Rd and the site is easily accessible from the many public footpaths that run around the area. It is only 0.8 miles to the centre of Leek.

2.2 Social.

The development and upgrading of this sporting facility could affect people in the locality in the following ways: -

- By providing a facility that will further improve health and fitness via sport.
- Providing support facilities that will sustain the football use of the site in the long term.
- Providing better practice facilities for local community groups.
- To provide an improved community facility that can be embraced by the local community. The partner football clubs have an equal opportunity policy and will welcome new members and users to the facility regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or disability.

- Whilst employment opportunities are limited, the football clubs will also provide an outlet for new volunteers.
- The proposed refurbished changing pavilion will provide the opportunity for the partner football clubs to better sustain themselves through food sales and the ability to attract and retain new players and members.
- The new changing provision has been designed to meet Sport England and FA criteria and will allow better access for female and disabled users.
- The improvement in lighting and car parking will eradicate areas for vandals and miscreants to congregate. The refurbished clubhouse will be secure by design, with security lighting, CCTV monitoring and roller shutters built into the cavity walls over all doors and windows.

2.3 Economic.

Initially, the construction work is expected to be offered through traditional tender to local construction companies, providing work and employment for local people during the construction phase.

In the longer term, the management of the facility, including letting of the artificial grass pitch and other sporting facilities will be managed by Parkwood Leisure, creating employment for 1 or 2 members of staff.

2.4 Planning Policy.

The site is already used as a multi-pitch playing fields. The existing changing pavilion, whilst on the whole in reasonably good structural condition, does not meet standards in terms of layout, with communal showers and toilets. It would be impossible to have mixed gender or mixed age groups using this facility at the same time. It is therefore proposed to substantially alter the internal arrangement of the changing accommodation, to provide compliant accommodation. The external envelope of the building will largely stay the same, but with some changes to the roof layout in particular.

The inclusion of the Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) will comply with planning policy and the floodlight spill scheme shows that measurable light spillage is restricted to 30m maximum from the fence of the ATP. The nearest neighbouring property is 35m away (41m to the house wall) and so at this distance, light from the floodlights would not register on a lux metre.

The only other addition to the site is a small shelter adjacent to the running track, to provide shelter to users and parents of athletes from inclement weather. This is relatively small in size and is not really overlooked by neighbouring properties.

We do not feel that any of the elements of the planning application conflict with planning policy.

2.5 Consultation and Evaluation.

In drawing up the project to develop the sport facilities, consultation has been widespread and involved the following bodies: -

- The Football Association
- Leek Town FC
- CSOB FC
- Leek Hockey Club
- Leek Show
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Parkwood Leisure Ltd
- Staffordshire Moorlands School Sports Partnership
- Sport Across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent
- Staffordshire FA
- Public Consultation 7th December at Brough Park Leisure Centre. Overwhelming support for the proposed new facilities.
- Sport England
- UK Athletics

3. Evaluation of the Appraisal.

3.1 Use.

The football provision on the site will wholly accommodate the various teams of CSOB FC, who presently play at local authority owned pitches all over the town. CSOB will effectively take on a large element of the use of the site, with the upgraded support facility being their new “home”. The new changing pavilion will be a purpose designed changing facility with small kitchen and servery area. It will be used primarily to support the coaching and playing of football by club members and associate members. The user profile will be made up of both genders, and the age range of sporting users will run from children aged 6 and over, up to adults in their 60’s and beyond. The pavilion serves as a changing facility for the grass football pitches, the cricket pitches, the ATP and the running track. The changing accommodation is provided to meet Sport England guidance and whilst wheelchair users can easily access the changing areas, a specific disabled changing area is also included in the design. This building meets all necessary DDA criteria.

3.2 Layout and Scale.

The new football changing facility has been designed to meet the criteria of Sport England and the Football Association. It also meets part M of building regulations and has all necessary clear opening widths, level thresholds, etc. A new ramp is be added to the north side of the clubhouse.

Changing rooms have been designed to provide ample seating for players whilst getting changed with en-suite showering and toilet accommodation. This will enable to the clubs and other users to satisfy all child protection issues.

The pavilion is sited close to the car park, where there are allocated disabled car parking bays.

3.3 Landscaping and Appearance.

The existing clubhouse facility is constructed of brick and render with tile roof. The alterations will use matching brick and part render with matching tiles on new roof sections.

The design and architectural treatment of the building was approached to reflect a sporting building. The roof features, for example, are a traditional feature seen on many pavilions in this country and add character to both the front and rear elevations.

Security by design is a key element and we have included electronic roller shutters built into the cavity wall for all doors and windows. The building will also be fitted with a monitored security and fire alarm. CCTV will also be accommodated.

The new Astroturf pitch will have a new green powder coated weldmesh fence around it at 5m in high. We have provided examples of the fence and also a full floodlight scheme.

4. Access.

4.1 Policy.

The principles and policy considered in terms of immediate access in this application are drawn primarily from sporting literature, namely "Access for Disabled People" and "Pavilions and Clubhouses" both Sport England guidance notes. Also Part M of the building regulations.

The pavilion meets all requirements in terms of providing access to all users, as does the leisure centre.

4.2 Consultation.

Consultation regarding access to the development is covered in section 2.5. The bodies consulted, particular the governing bodies, confirm that access arrangements for this facility have been properly provided.

4.3 Specific Issues.

Specific issues that might affect access to the site and building are as follows: -

- Proximity of public transport. Public transport is available on the nearby Cheddleton Rd. Footpath access is afforded down Cheddleton Rd and also along the disused railway.
- Site location in relation to the users of the site. There is a huge catchment of residential properties within a short distance of this facility. This site is ideally located for car transport from most parts of the town.
- Building location in relation to the facilities on the site. As mentioned, the changing facility is already in situ - we are merely upgrading it.
- Accessibility to the building for all users, including disabled users. There are disabled car parking bays on the car park. Footpath access is available up the access road to the front door of the clubhouse. The clubhouse has clear door opening widths to meet part M of building regulations.

4.4 Access from the existing transport network.

As previously mentioned, public transport presently serves the site well. The site is well served by interconnecting footpaths and users can safely walk from surrounding residential areas.

4.5 Main points of Access.

The main point of access is from Cheddleton Rd.

4.6. Maintaining Equal Access.

The access points to the site will be maintained throughout the life of the site. The access arrangements required in the building itself will be constructed as part of the project and will remain in place for the life of the building.