

Planning application: PL/2020/02792/PPFL | Demolition of the existing and construction of a replacement clubhouse building, provision of a new all-weather pitch, reconfigured playing pitches and access improvements in connection with the Warwickshire Gaelic Athletic Association facility at Catherine-de-Barnes Lane in Solihull. | Land at Catherine De Barnes Lane Catherine De Barnes Solihull

Please accept this letter as the Hampton in Arden Parish Council response to the above planning application. This has been prepared in conjunction with representatives of Catherine de Barnes Residents Association.

Please note that the land occupied by WGAA straddles the boundary of the Hampton in Arden and Bickenhill & Marston Green Parishes. However, on the existing site the 'developed area' falls almost entirely in the MG&B Parish. Under this proposal the 'development area' has been relocated almost entirely into the Hampton Parish, and represents a substantial incursion into our Green Belt, which is already being severely damaged by the M42 Relief Road development which is driving this proposal.

We are currently minded to oppose this proposal as we have some concerns with various statements, exclusions and conclusions within the application which are detailed below:

1. Noise.

- The Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) is incomplete and the data that is included "is not representative" according to para 3.2.2 of the Planning Statement.
- The NIA also recommends taking steps to minimise any noise impact on the nearest residential property, Four Winds. This does not seem to have been taken into account in the proposal.

2. Landscape and Visual Impact

- Highways England, when it submitted its Development Consent Order (DCO) for approval to the Secretary of State, included *document 8.76 Warwickshire Gaelic Athletic Association Position Statement* with the submission. It stated that "while a Legacy scheme will involve pitches, car parking, and a club house nearer to Four Winds, the Legacy scheme will include an earth bund on the new southern boundary of the WGAA facility that can be planted to create environmental screening for Four Winds ". Representatives of the Parish Council have been present at meetings with Highways England (Mr. Jonathan Pizzey) when the bund arrangement has been agreed and are quite surprised **no mention** of it is made within the application. We would like to see this clarified.
- The size of the Legacy scheme proposal is significantly larger than the facility it replaces. The new facility at approx. 87500m² is 41% larger than the existing facility; the clubhouse now 845m² is 57% larger. The existing car park is capable of taking 70 cars but the new facility is able to takes upwards of 100 plus additional parking for up to four coaches. We can find no evidence of very special circumstances being put forward to justify the additional land take in the Green Belt. We feel this contrary to clause 145 of the NPPF (Feb.2019)
- We have some concern whether the Artificial Grass Pitch is a warranted improvement. We do not think a justification for this has been made.
- There appears to be no fencing detail within the application. We need to understand this from a security, visual impact and nuisance point of view.

3. Community Use

- Clause 3.2.6 of the Planning Statement makes reference to the new facility being made available for community use. However, we can find not trace of the details of any such arrangement within this application. We can confirm that neither the Parish Council nor The Residents Association have been consulted about such an arrangement and therefore remain to be convinced.
- There are no details relating to the use of the clubhouse (is it only open when games/practice is on?)

4. Damage to Green Belt

- Clause 4.2.3 of the Planning Statement says: - *Policy P17 relates to the Countryside and Green Belt. It states that the Council will safeguard the “best and most versatile” agricultural land in the Borough and encourage the use of the remaining land for farming. Development which affects the “best and most versatile” land will be permitted only if there is an overriding need for the development or new use, and there is insufficient lower grade land available, or the available lower grade land has an environmental significance that outweighs the agricultural considerations, or the use of lower grade land would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations.* The proposed reconfiguration relies on the use of prime agricultural land within the Green Belt. Previous configurations drawn up, but subsequently rejected by the WGAA, relied on the use of poorer quality land in the vicinity of the existing facility. The current facility goes against Policy P17 in the Solihull Local Plan (2013).

5. Design

- We feel that contrary to Clause 127 of the NPPF (Feb 2019).the design of the building, particularly the visual aspect from the highway, is poor.
- We can find no mention of actions to improve the sustainability of the building, such as solar panels etc. and cannot agree with the applicants statement made on Clause 5.4.6 *“In addition the subtle material palette selected will complement the building surrounds.....”*

6. Pipeline

- We are aware that part of the facility is planned to sit over the ESSO pipeline. We are not certain if special conditions apply to this situation but we can find no trace of any special conditions being included within the application.

7. Inaccuracies

- The statement in clause 2.1.4 concerning Heath End House being located nearby. This is incorrect as that residence was demolished in 2020 and is now a small works compound.

In conclusion we are minded to oppose this application as it currently stands and believe it needs to be referred back to the applicant for resubmission on grounds of

- Shortfalls in detail and plans
- Issues around Noise Levels
- Landscaping, Design and Visual Impact proposals
- Detail on justification of Community Use
- Damage to Green Belt in contravention of SMBC Policy P17
- Identified inaccuracies