

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/00770/FUL	Nick Brookman	21 October 2024

EXTENSION OF TIME

25 October 2024

Address: Bowlee Golf Driving Range, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4TH

Proposal: The redevelopment of and alterations to the existing driving range facility comprising the provision of first floor bays, an indoor golf facility, a new adventure golf facility, a ball servant enclosure, an extension to the existing car park, widening of the main entrance and associated landscaping works.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	N/A

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N/A
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	Y
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	Y

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: TH

DATE: 25.10.2024

SITE

The application relates to Bowlee Park Golf Driving Range which is accessed via Heywood Old Road. Set back from the public highway the site is relatively concealed by the existing site surroundings entailing vegetation, security fencing and neighbouring development.

The application site forms part of a wider designation of Protected Open Land and protected recreational open space which is also located within an existing Greenspace Corridor. It lies outside of the Defined Urban Area.

The site presently comprises the existing driving range building which consists of golf bays, shop, storage facilities, toilets and a bar along with associated infrastructure. The building itself is long and single storey, faced with timber cladding with a metal corrugated sheet roof. The driving range is stationed to the west of the application site with visitors forced to swing in a west to east facing direction. Given the nature of the use of the site, the application site is predominantly covered in low value grass and is surrounded to the northern and southern boundaries by safety netting to protect neighbouring land from wayward strikes.

The site currently benefits from a generous car park capacity which lies immediately adjacent to the west of the building with grassed areas further south of this. Metal palisade fencing bounds the site for security purposes.

In terms of neighbouring land uses, David Lloyd Gym is located to the north and land to the east comprises an area of trees and informal walking paths with a large residential area beyond the woodland. Land to the south is open agricultural fields with land to the west comprised of Bowlee Nursery Garden Centre and another commercial use occupied by Greater Manchester Construction Training.

There are informal paths that run along the northern and southern boundaries of the site linking with the woodland to the east where there are more recreational public footpaths beyond the application site boundaries.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of and alterations to the existing driving range facility comprising the provision of first floor bays, an indoor golf facility, a new adventure golf facility, a ball servant enclosure, an extension to the existing car park widening of the main entrance and associated landscaping works.

The proposed development would principally create a whole new first floor level to the existing driving range but it would also see the demolition of a northern fraction of the driving range to help facilitate the introduction of a new indoor adventure golf facility. The proposed development also incorporates an extension of the existing car park to provide 102 parking spaces with associated hard and soft landscaping.

The development would also provide the installation of a ball protection netting and columns ranging in height from 10-30 metres. The site entrance would be widened and new security gates would be installed.

The application proposes to introduce a strong landscape led approach to the development which includes enhancing the adjacent green corridor and introducing a wildflower meadow as well as the planting of new trees.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2023
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guide

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SP2	The Spatial Strategy for the borough
SD1	Delivering sustainable development
DM1	General development requirements
SO1	Delivering a more prosperous economy
E5	Encouraging the visitor economy
SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C6	Improving health and well being
C8	Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P1	Improving image
P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a greener environment
G1	Tackling and adapting to climate change
G2	Energy and new development
G5	Managing protected open land
G6	Enhancing green infrastructure
G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
G8	Managing water resources and flood risk
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility

Saved Policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1	Defined Urban Area
EM/7	Development and Flood Risk
EM/8	Protection of Surface and Ground Water

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-S2	Carbon and Energy
JP-S4	Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-G7	Trees and Woodland
JP-G8	A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
JP-P1	Sustainable Places

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

95/D32404 – Extension to golf driving range, construction of 40 bay driving range building and associated facilities and floodlighting of site – Approved 26 October 1995.

94/D30726 - Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for and existing use as a golf driving range – Approved 13 June 1994.

89/D24491 – Extension to golf driving range – Approved 22 February 1990.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

No objection.

United Utilities

No objection subject to condition.

Tree Officer

Although the proposals will result in tree losses including one semi-mature Sycamore, a mixed group of semi-mature trees and part of a second mixed group, I would not regard the trees to be removed as of sufficiently high value as to merit special tree protection. I note that replacement tree and shrub planting is proposed as part of the scheme, and these measures are acceptable.

Ecology

No objection subject to condition.

Police

No objection.

LLFA

The LLFA have correctly pointed out that no drainage information has been submitted with this application and the application should be supported by an acceptable Drainage Strategy.

The LLFA have advised in the case of this application it is considered inappropriate to apply conditions to a proposal that is not acceptable in principle.

These comments are addressed further into this report.

Environmental Health Noise

No objection subject to condition.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice was posted on the 2nd September 2024. No representations were received in response to the proposed development.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The principle of the use of the site as a golf driving range is well established given its existing and historic use.

Nevertheless, the site is located within Protected Open Land as defined on the Proposals Map under Policy D/10 of the UDP. This designation relates to sites such as this which are located beyond the Defined Urban Area, but are outside of Green Belt. The aim of the policy is to limit development and to keep land largely open by allowing development that falls within one of the specified categories:

- 'a) development which would be acceptable were it in the Green Belt; or*
- b) limited infilling within an established pocket of housing or industry where this is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings; or*
- c) a limited extension to an existing building which:*
 - i. forms part of an existing source of employment; or*
 - ii. is necessary for the establishment of a new enterprise or business which satisfies other policies of the Plan; and*
 - iii. is sited within the existing curtilage of the business concerned, and will not adversely affect the character of the surrounding land and its openness.*

The policy goes on to state that if a new building is permitted, *'they should be sited to form a group with existing buildings. Where this is not possible, buildings, car parking areas and other new structures, should be sited where they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape'*. In this instance, the proposed development is an extension to an existing building which is sited within the existing curtilage of the business concerned.

The application site is also designated as open space whereby Policy G/3 (Protection of Existing Recreational Open Space) does not permit development for any other purpose unless one of the criteria contained within it is met.

The criteria are:

- a) The development is for a non-commercial community use within a park or other outdoor recreation area, is ancillary to the recreational use of the area, would not lead to a deficiency in recreational open space in relation to present or future needs, and does not harm the recreational, townscape or nature conservation value of the remaining open space;
- b) Alternative provision is made of at least the equivalent quantity and quality of recreational open space, in a satisfactory location and taking account of local environmental and traffic considerations; 120 Rochdale UDP 2006 Greenspace

- c) The development funds improvements to existing outdoor sports facilities within the site or on another site, commensurate with the open space being lost; and
- d) The development comprises a built recreational facility of greater benefit to the wider community than the open space being lost and does not result in a serious deficiency in open space in the area

In this instance it is considered that the most relevant criteria is (d). The proposed development comprises the redevelopment of an existing built recreational facility which would not result in a serious deficiency in open space. The development does not extend beyond the existing boundaries of the application site and it more or less builds upon the footprint of the existing building. It is acknowledged that the development does however provide an increase in massing and form but it is considered that the proposed development retains an acceptable amount of open space in this area whilst providing a much improved recreational facility of greater benefit to the wider community.

The site also lies within a green space corridor which Policy G8 of the UDP seeks to protect and this now links in with Policy G6 of the Council's CS. Part G/8 (C) relates to recreational facilities and states that they should be of a *'scale and nature appropriate to the location and should not lead to an unacceptable level of recreational activity having regard to visual amenity, nature conservation interests and the need to retain an informal or unspoilt character.'*

Development or activities should not conflict with existing uses or activities (e.g., grazing) and should not create disturbance for local residents'.

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF acknowledges that *'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development'.*

Given this site is located outside the designated urban area it is considered that paragraph 88 of the NPPF is also relevant insofar as *'Planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings'.*

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF also requires that *'Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport)'.*

Paragraph 89 also ends by setting out that *'The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist'.*

Paragraph 103 of the NPPF sets out that *'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on:'*

- a) *An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*

- b) *The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) *The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use’.*

In conformity with Policy D/10 of the UDP, the proposed development is a brownfield site and the development is sited in such a manner that it would form part of a cluster of existing buildings owing to neighbouring built development. The building itself and associated car parking areas and other new structures, would also be sited where on the whole, they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape and remain within the curtilage of the existing building.

The proposed development would support the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing recreational business and significant weight in this instance is attached by way of supporting local economic growth. For the reasons outlined above, the proposed expansion of the existing recreational site and facilities is acceptable in principle but further consideration is still required on impacts of the scale of the development with regards to harm on the designated open space and surrounding landscape and ensuring that the development is sensitive to its surroundings. These factors are considered in more detail below.

Design, Massing and Appearance

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that “*the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve*”. Paragraph 135 goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. This is largely reflected within Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council’s adopted Core Strategy, which requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which proposes that the bulk of the proposed driving range building is to be clad in a black standing seam metal with a fair faced blockwork walling. This is intended to create a rhythm and texture to break up the long driving range façade. It is acknowledged that the existing building is clad in a dark brown shaded of timber cladding.

Other materials comprise flat rain screen cladding panels with secret fittings, concealed gutters and rainwater goods, internal timber cladding, slot window glazing, automatic sliding double glazed doors, steel doors and PV solar panels.

It is accepted that the design of the proposed building is considered to be visually attractive and would function well in this setting. The proposed development utilises a simple materials palette and the use of the proposed black seam metal cladding would provide constructive and positive architecture amongst the character and appearance of the locality by providing a much more modern and contemporary appearance.

In terms of massing, the existing building is single storey and by virtue of its current smaller nature and existing appearance, it is discrete and insignificant in its setting. This is further exacerbated by the site being screened by dense trees to the north west and northern boundaries and on the access road leading off Heywood Old

Road. It is acknowledged that part of the existing building is to be demolished which allows the driving range building to be set further back from the northern boundary thereby increasing the openness in the northwest corner of the site. Whilst the primary purpose of the demolished area would be provide increased parking provision and be used for future car parking, the development of the north west corner of the site also sees the introduction of new tree and shrub planting.

The addition of a second storey across almost the entire existing footprint of the driving range would inevitably increase the overall massing and current arrangement on site. However, in this setting, neighbouring developments, with specific reference to David Lloyd's Gym has a much larger overall massing than the proposed development subject to this application. Therefore, in comparison to neighbouring development it is not considered that the proposed massing is unacceptable or would be overbearing in the context of the landscape.

The application site is set back from the main public highway (Heywood Old Road) and is located behind Bowlee Nursery Garden Centre. Owing to the benefit of a strong landscaping scheme which would significantly soften the presence of the proposed development, the massing and impact of the proposed development on the openness of this area is not considered to be destructive.

Whilst the north west area of the application is subject to the demolition of part of the existing building, part of this area is also subject to a proposed adventure golf facility which would be sited in a Rovero greenhouse building with a retractable roof. This structure is sited east of the driving range building and therefore it would be well screened by built development along with additional landscaping to its northern boundary providing additional concealment. As shown by the indicative imagery below, whilst constructed differently to the adjacent proposed driving range redevelopment, the proposed adventure golf facility would assimilate well with the Bowlee Nursey Garden Centre to the west with the building giving off the appearance of a greenhouse to remain unobtrusive in this setting.



Figure 1 – Indicative appearance of the proposed development.

As acknowledged previously, the site is located within Protected Open Land as defined on the Proposals Map under Policy D/10 of the UDP. Development on such designated land should be sited where they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape. As proposed, the development would see the provision of a 30 metre high safety net to both sides of the driving range with the netting on the southern boundary spanning almost the entire length of the application site whilst also

incorporating a much smaller length of safety netting on the northern side to protect the adventure golf facility. The proposed netting would be an obvious and noticeable feature in this landscape and open environment. However, given the combination of the existing built landscape and the existing natural landscape, the proposed safety netting would almost entirely only be observable from views from the south east looking north/north west.

As shown by the image below, the driving range currently benefits from an existing safety netting (albeit not of the same height as that proposed). Evidently, the proposed safety netting would be visible from residential properties on Dundraw Close, Rowrah Crescent and Pooley Close to the south west.



Undoubtedly, owing to the height of the proposed safety netting this would not be entirely sympathetic in this rural environment and it would evidently be seen from public vantage points. However, properties that would be within a direct line of sight of the netting are approximately 130-140m away and the proposed netting would not directly affect any residential properties by appearing overbearing. Similar to the existing safety netting shown above, the proposed netting would be constructed of more modern slim line supporting beams and posts with transparent netting allowing views through and outside the application site. A varied topography and existing belt of trees and vegetation would also assist in screening the safety netting to further soften its overall appearance in this landscape.

It is considered that the installation of the proposed 30m high netting is essential for safety and operational reasons associated with the use of the proposed development. Whilst there will be an accepted view of it across the surrounding landscape, it is not considered that the introduction of the safety netting would comprise such a harmful impact on the landscape that would warrant a refusal on design grounds. When assessed as a whole, the landscape in this area remains open which lends itself to the modern design of the proposed netting and the existing dense vegetation surrounding the area.

The application also proposes the introduction of a new Barbican sliding gate and fencing which is considered to be appropriately designed in this commercialised setting.

Overall, it has been demonstrated that in its totality, the proposed development is appropriate in scale, design and massing and it is not harmful to the visual amenity of the area or open nature of this landscape. Accordingly, the proposed development

accords with the requirements of Policy DM1 and P3 of the Core Strategy, UDP and the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed development is set back from the highway and there are trees along the north west and northern boundaries meaning the visual impact of the development is significantly reduced from those directions.

Despite the proposed increase in massing of the driving range, owing to the existing natural screening provided by the current mature vegetation surrounding the site, coupled with the implementation of the proposed strong landscaping scheme, the visual impact of the proposed development would be severely limited on neighbouring premises.

Whilst the outdoor golf adventure is to be located to the northern side of the site, this will also have limited visibility from the highway.

There are no immediate residential dwellings nearby to the site that would be negatively impacted by the development through loss of light or outlook.

However, it is considered necessary to attach a condition that would require the submission and written approval of the LPA in regard to the proposed introduction of any external lighting or flood lighting.

Accordingly, subject to condition, the development is not considered to impact on neighbouring amenity and the scheme is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy G9 and DM1.

Highways

Policy T2 of the CS requires development to comply with the Council's car parking standards and policy DM1 requires that development provides satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring and servicing arrangements, taking into account the proposed use and location.

Policy JP-C8 of PfE requires new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use to reduce the negative effects of car dependency and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments.

Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The Council's Highways team have been consulted and provided the following comments:

This development will not generate any significant volume of traffic.

Access to the site is adequate and shows improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.

There is no new highways proposed as a result of this development.

The proposed development although remote from any real population centre is located along public transport links and can be accessed by public transport.

The proposals show adequate parking for the new proposals.

We envisage no issues collecting refuse from this location.

We cannot identify any new road safety issues as a result of this proposal.

We have no objections to this proposal.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposed development would make satisfactory arrangements for vehicle access, manoeuvring and parking, and would facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian circulation to and from the site. The scheme is not considered to have an adverse impact on highway safety and would not generate a level of additional traffic which would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the immediate local highway network, or strategic routes. Highways Services have raised no objections and subject to the relevant conditions, the proposals comply with the requirements of CS Policies T1 and T2, Policy JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. CS Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE Policy JP-G9 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by the NPPF (paragraphs 180d and 185 b) to achieve demonstrable net gain for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications paragraph 186 of the NPPF sets out that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should also be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable.

The application site is not allocated for nature conservation under local planning policy and nor is the site subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations.

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Metric. The submitted Ecological Appraisal has satisfied the LPA's Ecology consultee insofar as demonstrating that there will be no harm to either amphibians or bats but that potential signs of water vole presence have been recorded in a small area in the southern end of the application site.

It is considered that it ought to be possible to implement the proposed development without causing harm to water voles providing that:

- ☐ A 10m exclusion zone is established around the water vole burrows by erecting temporary fencing around the area, *and*;
- ☐ Reasonable Avoidance Measures are adopted for any work which may need to take place within the exclusion zone.

It is noted that Reasonable Avoidance Measures have been proposed in the Ecological Appraisal provided and the LPA's Ecology Consultee has confirmed that these measures are acceptable.

It is important to acknowledge that the existing grassland and pond to the south west of the application site is to be retained and undisturbed. Nevertheless, it is considered appropriate to secure the implementation of these measures by attached a suitably worded condition as included below.

Overall, through the implementation of a significant landscaping and ecological enhancement scheme, the proposed development will provide a Biodiversity Net Gain and will assist in this regard to the extent that the development provides an increase of 157.17% habitat units and 10.34% of hedgerow units. Conditions are included to secure the implementation of the proposed BNG as well the future management and maintenance of the proposed landscaping.

The LPA's Ecology Consultee raised concerns that the proposed 30m high safety netting could impact birds and bats who may fly into the netting and become stuck. Accordingly, ecological mitigation was proposed by the applicant and the LPA's Ecology Consultee has since confirmed that the proposed mitigation for possible harm to birds and bats caused by the proposed safety netting is acceptable. An appropriately worded condition is proposed to that affect.

Accordingly, subject to condition, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G6, PfE Policy JP-G9 and the NPPF.

Trees and Landscaping

Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains where possible, and contributing to the Government's commitment to halt decline. CS Policy G6 expects development proposals affecting green infrastructure to avoid the loss of existing features such as trees unless suitable alternative provision is made or they have limited value. As referred to above, CS Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

Whilst the proposed development would result in the removal of some trees and biodiversity (T1 and G5 as identified by the Arboricultural Impact Assessment) the proposed development will introduce a significant landscaping scheme which will assist in providing biodiversity benefits and enhancements reflecting the visual aesthetics of this area and landscape. This scheme will provide an increase and betterment on the existing tree scape on the application site and it will provide a minimum 2:1 replacement ratio in accordance with Policy G6.

The Council's Tree Consultee has commented that *"Although the proposals will result in tree losses including one semi-mature Sycamore, a mixed group of semi-mature trees and part of a second mixed group, I would not regard the trees to be removed as of sufficiently high value as to merit special tree protection. I note that replacement tree and shrub planting is proposed as part of the scheme, and these measures are acceptable"*.

Accordingly, subject to condition, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G6, PfE Policy JP-G9 and the NPPF.

Noise

CS Policy G9 seeks to reduce all forms of pollution by requiring development to not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in noise and other forms of pollution.

CS Policy G9 is equal to NPPF paragraph 180 which sets out that '*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution*'.

Paragraph 191 of the NPPF states that '*Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life'.

The existing site already benefits from use as a golf driving range and Environmental Health were consulted on this application who raised no objection subject to conditions. The conditions being a restriction on the hours of opening which would match current operating hours which are Monday-Friday 10:00-22:00, Saturday 09:30-20:00 and Sunday 09:30-17:00.

Environmental Health have also requested that noise arising from any activity and cumulatively from the venue will not exceed 37dB(A) when measured 1m from noise sensitive receptors.

Subject to condition the proposed development is acceptable from a noise perspective and adheres to CS Policy G9 and the NPPF.

Drainage

Policy G8 requires that new development does not lead to any increased form of flooding locally or further downstream, does not impede natural water and flood risk management, is not detrimental to existing or potential flood storage areas, contributes where possible to alleviating existing flood risk and is itself well protected from flood risk and ensures prudent use of water resources.

Policy JP-S4 (Flood Risk and the Water Environment) of PfE expects developments to manage surface water runoff through sustainable drainage systems and development should achieve greenfield run-off rates unless it is demonstrated to be impracticable.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding but the site is at risk of surface water flooding.

Whilst the entire site area is over 3ha in size (including the ball landing area), the actual developable area is less than 1ha in size and the application is not accompanied with a Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Strategy.

United Utilities (UU) have been consulted on this application and have requested conditions be attached to this permission which require the submission of a detailed sustainable surface water and foul water drainage scheme.

The LLFA provided comments at pre-application stage which considered that *'because the site is relatively remote and the parking areas are bordered with grass, there doesn't appear to be an issue with runoff nuisance to adjacent sites'*. The LLFA did however request that all parking areas should be constructed of permeable paving. Alternatively, soakaway drainage from non-permeable car parking could be provided and either would meet the modern standard requirements for sustainable drainage.

The LLFA have provided comments on this application which propose disparities with the comments provided by UU. In response to those comments Officers can confirm that each planning application is assessed uniquely on its own merits. In this instance, the application is not a Major application and the LLFA are therefore not a Statutory Consultee. Following correspondence with the applicant's agent and matter of fact that the proposed development relates to the redevelopment of an existing site, the proposed development would link in with the existing drainage and to that effect this application is recommended for approval on the premise that prior to the commencement of development, details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme are first submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Subject to the appropriately worded conditions below, the proposed development is acceptable and would be in accordance with Policy G8 of the Core Strategy and Policies JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Crime

Policy P3 of the CS requires all new developments to incorporate design measures that design out crime and ensure developments and spaces are safe to use and access. Similarly Policy DM1 requires all development proposals to minimise opportunities for crime against people or property.

The application is supported by a Crime Impact Statement (CIS) and Greater Manchester Police were consulted on this application. Greater Manchester Police have not objected to the proposed development and are satisfied from a policing perspective.

The application site is bounded by secure fencing and the proposed development also incorporates the provision of a Barbican Sliding Gate at the vehicular entrance/exit which provides strong security.

The development therefore satisfies CS policies P3 and DM1.

Energy

Core Strategy Policy G1 sets out measures to address climate change and emissions, whilst Policy G2 requires that new development adhere to the energy hierarchy.

Policy JP-S1 of PfE requires development to aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise

sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.

Places for Everyone policy JP-S2 sets out expectations for developments to minimise carbon emissions, following the energy hierarchy, and incorporating renewable energy and EV charging. JP-S2 has replaced existing policies within the Rochdale Core Strategy which related to these considerations.

Greater Manchester's vision is to be at the forefront of action on climate change and to make its fair contributions to international commitments by becoming a carbon neutral city region by 2038. To meet this target, PfE endorses the following commitments:

- ☐ Be carbon neutral by 2038
- ☐ Hold cumulative carbon dioxide emissions to without the carbon budget
- ☐ Initiate a programme of mitigation to reduce emissions including by:
 - o Significantly upscaling solar photovoltaic energy;
 - o Reducing heat demand in homes;
 - o Moving away from carbon intensive gas as the primary source of heat;
 - o Reducing heating and cooling demand for public and commercial buildings;
 - o Increasing biofuel use;
 - o Enable sustainable choices for travel and decarbonise transport;
 - o Significantly upscaling building retrofit; and
 - o Increase the delivery of nature-based solutions and biodiversity net gain.

The application is not accompanied by an Energy Statement but the submitted plans demonstrate that the proposed development will incorporate PV Panels on the west facing roof slope and these will be broken up in approximately 4 blocks along the entire roof pitch.

The proposal would be satisfactory in terms of the objectives of PfE policy JP-S2.

Conclusion

The proposed development as assessed above would be acceptable in terms of impacts on residential amenity, public health, highways safety and access arrangements, flood risk and drainage arrangements, ecology and biodiversity and would be acceptable in terms of design and landscaping.

The proposed development would incorporate renewable energy generation and it would enable the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing recreational business and significant weight in this instance is attached by way of the support to local economic growth. This conforms to paragraph 85 of the NPPF which states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

The proposed development comprises the redevelopment of an existing built recreational facility which would not result in a serious deficiency in open space in accordance with Policy G/3 (d).

The proposal would comprise sustainable development as when assessed as a whole, it complies with the development plan and accordingly the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. This permission relates to the following plans and documents (unless otherwise required by further conditions below) and the development shall be undertaken in accordance with these approved details, including all details of facing materials set out in the Design and Access Statement:

- Location Plan dated 09 August 2024
- Site Location and Block Plan Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0000 Rev P00
- Proposed Ground Floor Site Plan Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0004 Rev P05
- Proposed Plans Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0005 Rev P00
- Proposed Entrance and Ancillary Spaces Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0006 Rev P05
- Proposed First Floor and Ancillary Spaces Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0007 Rev P05
- Proposed Elevations Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0008 Rev P00
- Proposed Site-wide Elevations Drawing No BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0021 Rev P00.
- Landscape Proposals Drawing No 1001 dated 06.06.24
- 30m high fencing Reference DW11042302 Rev;
- Planning Statement Rev P00
- Amphibian Survey May/June 2024
- Bat Scoping Survey May 2024
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal May 2024
- Terrestrial Mammal Survey May 2024
- High Nets Ecological Monitoring Strategy 17 September 2024
- Noise Impact Assessment Reference 11286 dated 4 July 2024
- Crime Impact Statement Ref 2024/0190/CIS/01
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment Referenced TRE/BPDRM dated 23 June 2024
- Arboricultural Method Statement Referenced TRE/BPDRM dated 23 June 2024
- Baribcan Sliding Gate Details
- Design and Access Statement Part 1
- Design and Access Statement Part 2
- Design and Access Statement Part 3
- BNG Metric

Reason: To define the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme shall be submitted

to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage schemes must include:

- (i) An investigation of the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance (or any subsequent amendment thereof). This investigation shall include evidence of an assessment of ground conditions and the potential for infiltration of surface water in accordance with BRE365;
- (ii) A restricted rate of discharge of surface water agreed with the local planning authority (if it is agreed that infiltration is discounted by the investigations);
- (iii) Levels of the proposed drainage systems including proposed ground and finished floor levels in AOD; (iv) Incorporate mitigation measures to manage the risk of sewer surcharge where applicable; and (v) Foul and surface water shall drain on separate systems.

The approved schemes shall also be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards.

Prior to occupation of the proposed development, the drainage schemes shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution.

4. Prior to occupation of the development a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development shall be submitted to the local planning authority and agreed in writing. The sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan shall include as a minimum:

- (i) Arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, or, management and maintenance by a resident's management company; and
- (ii) Arrangements for inspection and ongoing maintenance of all elements of the sustainable drainage system to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. The development shall subsequently be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To ensure that management arrangements are in place for the sustainable drainage system in order.

5. Notwithstanding the details shown on the submitted plans, all proposed car parking spaces shall be constructed using permeable materials on a permeable base and provision shall be made to direct water from any other impermeable surface to a rain garden, grass or soakaway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, sustainable drainage and to prevent flooding.

6. In line with the existing hours of operation, the use hereby permitted shall only operate between 10:00am and 22:00pm on Mondays to Fridays, between 09:30am and 20:00pm on Saturdays and between 09:30am and 17:00pm on Sundays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area.

7. Noise arising from any activity and cumulatively from the venue (as applicable) will not exceed 37dB(A) when measured 1m from noise sensitive receptors.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area.

8. No works or development shall take place until the Reasonable Avoidance Measures set out within the submitted Terrestrial Mammal Survey have been implemented in full.

Reason: For the conservation of protected species (Water Vole) and to safeguard identified protected species which live within the site in accordance with Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

9. Prior to the commencement of any development, the proposed details recommended within the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement referenced TRE/BPDRM and dated 23 June 2024 shall be implemented in full and for the duration of the development.

This includes the requirement to ensure that all trees to be retained are protected in accordance with British Standard BS 5837:2012 or any subsequent amendment to the British Standard.

Reason: To safeguard the trees to be retained and define the consent hereby approved.

10. The proposed measures set out within the High Nets Ecological Monitoring Strategy dated 17 September 2024 shall be implemented in full and carried out as stated.

Reason: To safeguard the protection of birds and bats in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Landscaping Proposal Drawing Treatment Plan drawing reference 1001 dated 06.06.2024. Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, the approved landscaping details shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained.

Any trees or shrubs planted or retained in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 10 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development and in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core, Policies JP-P1 and JP-G2 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

12. The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations within the Crime Impact Statement dated 1st July 2024.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of public safety and security in accordance with Policy JP-P5 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

13. Details of any external lighting to be installed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any such installation is carried out. The installation shall then be implemented precisely in accordance with these agreed details which shall then not be varied. Furthermore, no additional external lighting shall be installed without the express written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area and to minimise the possibility of inconvenience to the locality.

14. Prior to starting development on the construction of the proposed Hi-nets ball stop fencing, no works shall take place until full details of the materials to be used in the construction of the netting and supporting columns hereby permitted have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with policies DM1, P1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and NPPF.

15. Prior to the commencement of development, a Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal as prepared by Richard Parkinson and dated May 20th 2024 and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the requirements of The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 are fulfilled and in order to ensure the delivery of a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:

- (a) a non-technical summary;
- (b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the [HMMP];
- (c) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- (d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- (e) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority,

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To ensure that the requirements of The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 are fulfilled and in order to ensure the delivery of a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- (a) HMMP has been implemented; and
- (b) Habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement works set out in the HMMP have been completed.

Reason: To ensure that the requirements of The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 are fulfilled and in order to ensure the delivery of a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority,
- and;
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Rochdale Council.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

1. The application for planning permission was made before 12 February 2024.

2. The planning permission relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) applies.
3. The planning permission was granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and
 - (i) the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates was granted before 12 February 2024; or
 - (ii) the application for the original planning permission* to which the section 73 planning permission relates was made before 12 February 2024.
4. The permission which has been granted is for development which is exempt being:
 - 4.1 Development which is not 'major development' (within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) where:
 - i) the application for planning permission was made before 2 April 2024;
 - ii) planning permission is granted which has effect before 2 April 2024; or
 - iii) planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where the original permission to which the section 73 permission relates* was exempt by virtue of (i) or (ii).
 - 4.2 Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:
 - i) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
 - ii) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).
 - 4.3 Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.
 - 4.4 Development of a biodiversity gain site, meaning development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the Biodiversity Gain Planning condition which applies in relation to another development, (no account is to be taken of any facility for the

public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee).

4.5 Self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- i) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- ii) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares;
and
- iii) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

4.6 Development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high speed railway transport network (High Speed 2) comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

For the purposes of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a biodiversity gain plan is a plan which:

- (a) relates to development for which planning permission is granted,

and;
- (b) specifies the matters referred to in sub-paragraph 14(2) below:

The matters are:

- (f) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- (g) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (h) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (i) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- (j) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- (k) any such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

Procedure Statement

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.

Notes for the Applicant

ECOLOGY:

Bats can be mobile and cryptic in their habits, and can turn up in unexpected places. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to capture, injure or kill a bat, deliberately disturb a bat, or damage or destroy a bat roost. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If bats are encountered at any time during works, work must cease and advice sought from a suitably qualified person about how best to proceed.

Under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) it is a criminal offense for a person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst that nest is in use or being built. Additional care should be taken through the nesting season which runs from 1st March to 31st August inclusive. If any nesting bird is found or suspected which would be affected by the development, work should cease immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice at the expense of the applicant. Planning permission does not provide a defence against prosecution under the aforementioned act.

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