

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00044/FUL	Nick Brookman	25 March 2025

DETERMINATION DATE
18 April 2025 (Extension of Time)

Address: Stoneyfield Park, Boundary Street, Rochdale, OL11 1QU

Proposal: Installation of a playzone facility on existing MUGA pitch together with associated extension, ball stop fencing and flood lighting.

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/A
	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: 16/04/2025

SITE

The application site relates to Stoneyfield Park which is located on the corner of Osborne Street and Boundary Street.

Newhey Road Playground which is located within Milnrow Memorial Park to the east of Newhey Road immediately adjacent to the Free Trade Tavern and south of the M62.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential with properties to the east and to the south. Land to the north appears to be in some form of storage use and land to the west comprises the remainder of the park which is a large grassed field.

As shown by the photograph below, the application site is an existing macadam surface multi use games area (MUGA) surrounded by ball stop fencing and other play equipment.



The application site is located within the Urban Area.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a football, netball and basketball play zone including the provision of a 2 layer porous macadam surface, an upgrade of fencing to twin bar panel fencing, a spectator area (2m wide tarmac strip outside of the cage), the upgrading of external lighting to LED floodlighting and ancillary equipment.

The fencing would be largely 3m high with fencing directly behind the goalposts to be 4m and the floodlighting would be 6m high and fixed to the boundary fencing. The lighting will come on when the facility is in use after dusk and would have an automatic cut off switch at 10pm every night.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Policy and Guidance

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SD1	Delivering sustainable development
DM1	General development requirements
SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C8	Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P3	Improving design of new development
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
G/3	Protection of Existing Recreational Open Space
G/8	Green Space Corridors

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-P7	Sport and Recreation

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None relevant.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

Highways have no objection to the proposed development.

Environmental Health (Noise)

Environmental Health have no objection to the proposed development.

Sport England

Sport England have confirmed that they raise no objection to the proposed development as it has been demonstrated that the proposal meets Exception 5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

The GMEU are satisfied with the BNG calculations provided and after the construction of the development, onsite biodiversity remediation and the 10% net gain requirement there is due to be a gain of 0.01 Area Habitat units (11.98%).

GMEU have not considered the onsite BNG to be significant and if approved the Biodiversity Gain Plan and Basis Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be completed to show how the biodiversity gain will be managed and approved by the LPA, before the standard BNG condition can be released.

LLFA

No comments received.

Tree Officer

The Councils Tree Officer Consultee has commented that *the plans indicate that a single semi-mature Cherry tree of reasonable quality adjacent to the existing MUGA may be affected by the works, although the Ecology reports show this tree as being retained. The tree is not worthy of TPO designation but its retention is desirable. To this end, I would advise that a Plan is prepared showing how this tree is to be protected during the course of any works. This Plan could be required by Condition. If for any reason it is considered not possible to successfully retain this tree, replanting should be required on a 2-for-1 basis.*

There would appear to be space within the site to accommodate new planting.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding neighbours on the 23rd January 2025 and a site notice was posted immediately adjacent to the existing play area on 27th January 2025. No comments were received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The principle of the proposed development subject to this application has already been established through the existing MUGA.

The application site is located within the defined urban area and is designated as existing recreational open space which Policy G/3 of the UDP seeks to protect. The recreational space in this instance is being protected.

Core Strategy Policy C8 (Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities) confirms that improving such facilities will help improve residents health and quality of life and make the borough a more desirable place to live, work and visit.

PfE Policy JP-P7 (Sport and Recreation) confirms that a network of high quality and accessible sports and recreation facilities will be protected and enhanced, supporting greater levels of activity for all ages including by *creating public realm that provides frequent opportunities for play and that all ages can enjoy together.*

From a National Policy perspective, NPPF Paragraph 96 sets out that:

'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*

- b) *are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) *enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.*

Paragraph 98 also sets out that *‘To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) *plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) *take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*
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NPPF Paragraph 103 states that *‘Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate’.*

NPPF Paragraph 104 sets out that *‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- 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 this instance the proposed development has been subject to a thorough consultation exercise and the application site was chosen as a site that would benefit from the construction of a PlayZone facility.

The PlayZone Programme has been developed to tackle inequalities in physical activity and access to high quality facilities in targeted areas by the Football Foundation providing funding towards community led spaces. The purpose of the PlayZone scheme is to invest in areas with the greatest need, with the aim of encouraging specific priority groups to be more active.

The proposed development is entirely aligned with the NPPF with particular reference to the provision of a better and more modern facility and playing surface which would promote social interaction, boost community participation in sport and ensure the existing recreational space is retained and protected for the benefit of the wider community.

The proposed development would provide a high quality space for sport and physical activity in the area and the project is driven by the Football Foundation under the Government’s Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

In summation, the proposed PlayZone is a safe, inclusive and accessible outdoor facility that would bring the community together through recreational forms of football, netball and basketball which is aligned with the purpose of sustainable development.

Accordingly, proposed development would comply with PfE, Policy the relevant Policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy, Saved Policy G/3 of the UDP, and the NPPF.

Design

Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council’s adopted Core Strategy requires development to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough’s identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. 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.

The proposed development would result in a slight increase in floor space to be created by the development to the west with fence to fence dimensions measures 30m x 20m with an additional 3.66m x 1m goal recess area at each end. An additional 2m wide macadam surface area would be provided to the east outside of the cage to provide a safe standing area for people not inside the facility. Access would be made via the existing park pathways to the east.

The proposed development would comprise the removal of the existing surface to allow for a new stone subbase layer to be regraded and levelled with a new 2 layer porous macadam layer surface to be installed. This surface and the development would be in keeping with the character of the existing MUGA. The modernisation of the existing recreational facility will produce a high quality sustainable construction that would be much more visually attractive and would be of a design that is entirely appropriate for this location.

The proposed fencing and floodlighting would sit lower than the current existing infrastructure and ball stop fencing which is considered to be a design betterment of the scheme.

Overall, subject to condition, the proposed development accords with the requirements of Policy DM1 and P3 of the Core Strategy 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 demonstrates to be impracticable.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding.

The application is accompanied by a Surface Water Strategy which sets out that the existing site is positively drained via 3 gullies located at the low points of the existing play area. Proposals are to drain the new playzone pitch to the existing surface water drain serving the site via the existing gullies. The proposed drained areas are presented on SEA drawing E02 which is presented in Appendix F. This drawing shows that the proposed drained area is 670m² and represents a small increase in the drained area of 185m².

The playzone will consist of a 25mm porous macadam surfacing along with a 40mm porous macadam base and a 250mm permeable type 3 subbase, which will allow water to infiltration through the pitch make up to a series of new lateral drains which will collect surface water before out falling into the existing surface water drainage.

Given the small increase in the drained area and the fact that the pitch make-up will naturally slow surface water through its make-up is not considered necessary to provide a flow restriction, the small increase in the drained area will not increase flood risk downstream.

The LLFA were consulted on this application but no comments were received. Nevertheless, the proposed development would not significantly alter the existing drainage of the site and nor would it increase flood risk elsewhere around the site.

For these reasons 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.

Highways and Access

Highways were consulted as part of this application and the proposed development scheme is not considered to have an adverse impact on highway safety, nor would it require additional car parking or generate a level of additional traffic which would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the immediate local highway network. Highways Services have raised no objections and the proposals comply with the requirements of CS Policies T1 and T2, Policy JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF.

Residential and Neighbouring Amenity

Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy requires that all development proposals are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents.

Development should not affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy and development should mitigate against any impacts due to noise, dust, light and odour pollution. Policy G9 also requires that sensitive new development such as housing, are not adversely affected by existing sources of pollution such as roads and certain types of industry.

The proposed development is a re-development of an existing recreational open space / sports facility which would not give rise to any existing privacy concerns owing to the distance between the proposed development and any nearby residential receptors. The development would not be being moved or re-located closer to any existing residential development.

The proposed floodlighting would be 6m tall with an average Lux of 120. The floodlighting design meets the requirements for light spillage detailed in the Institute of Lighting Professional's document Guidance Note 01/20 – Guidance note for the reduction of obtrusive Light, For the environmental zone in which the facility is located, in respect of Maximum Values of Vertical Illuminance on properties, the limits for the luminous intensity of bright luminaires, the Maximum values of upward light ratio, and maximum values of upward flux ratio of installation. The design of the floodlighting system has been undertaken with due consideration of the details contained in the Institute of Lighting Professional's document Guidance Note 08/18 – Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Which include:

- ☐ Avoidance of lighting on key bat habitats or features present.
- ☐ Apply mitigation methods to reduce lighting to agreed limits in other sensitive locations (section 3 of the ILP document).
- ☐ Where particular sites are identified as having features which may be used by bats then consideration has been given to reducing the colour temperature of the luminaires to 3000 Kelvin as recommended in the ILP Guidance Note.

The floodlighting system will have the following switching features:

- ☐ The lighting will come on when the facility is in use after dusk.
- ☐ The lighting will have an automatic cut off switch at 10pm every night.

Environmental Health were consulted on the application and have not raised any objection. Subject to condition, the scheme is considered acceptable in terms of amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policies G9 and DM1.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees

Core Strategy 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. Core Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE Policy JP-G8 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 187d and 192 b) to achieve demonstrable net gain for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications paragraph 193 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.

As of 2nd April 2024, BNG of 10% for minor planning applications is mandatory for development in England under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In this instance the applicant has claimed the development to be self-build which falls within the exemptions listed under The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

With regards to trees, the application is accompanied by a Preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment which has identified that one individual tree and one hedgerow are located within the assessment area and were deemed to be within influencing distance of the application site. A condition will be attached to secure their protection.

In this instance the application proposes to extend outwards to the west thereby creating a slightly larger floor area than the existing development and this would impact upon an area of grassland. Accordingly the application proposes to increase BNG onsite which will be achieved by creating an area of more species rich grassland in good condition to the south west of the proposed development which would result in an 11.98% gain.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit were consulted on the proposed development and they have raised no objection and they have confirmed that the proposed BNG is a realistic achievement for the site.

Therefore, subject to condition, the proposed development is considered to acceptable and would comply with Policies G6 and G7 of the Core Strategy, PfE and the NPPF.

Coal Mining / Pollution

The application is supported by a desktop study which has reviewed the land history of the application site.

Coal Authority mapping data has shown that the site lies within a coal mining reporting area but outside of a development high risk area. Given there are no shallow recorded or unrecorded workings, coal seams, mine entries or opencast sites within 100m of the site boundary, the risk from coal mining related ground instability is considered to be low.

Accordingly, the scheme is considered acceptable in accordance with CS Policies G9 and the NPPF in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT, with conditions as set out below:

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:

- Location Plan 24-0572 01P Version 01
- Site Plan 24-0572 02P Version 02
- Development Layout 24-0572 03P Version 01
- Elevations 24-0572 04P Version 01
- Proposed Floodlighting Page 1: Pitch Levels Drawing HLS9404
- Proposed Floodlighting Page 2: Obtrusive Light Drawing HLS9404
- Design and Access Statement V1 dated 06/01/2025
- Surface Water Strategy R-00228-001-SDS-0 December 2024
- Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment RT-MME-181393-01
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal RT-MME-181393-04
- Biodiversity Statement and Metric Assessment RT-MME-181393-05
- Soiltechnics Desktop Study: Site Review

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these details hereby approved unless otherwise required by condition below.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. 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.

4. The proposed floodlighting shall be implemented precisely in accordance with the approved drawings and details set out within Proposed Floodlighting Page 1: Pitch Levels Drawing HLS9401 and Proposed Floodlighting Page 2: Obtrusive Light Drawing HLS9401. The floodlighting hereby approved shall be operational no later than 10pm or 22:00 hours Monday-Sunday.

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

5. During the construction period, the existing semi-mature Cherry Tree and other vegetation identified to be within the assessment area as set out within the submitted Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment RT-MME-181393-01, shall be retained and protected in accordance with British Standard BS 5837:2012 or any subsequent amendment to the British Standard.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and to safeguard the trees to be retained.

6. If for any reason during the course of development and construction the semi-mature Cherry Tree as identified within the submitted Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment RT-MME-181393-01 is not successfully retained, replanting will be required within the first planting season (October to March inclusive) following completion of the development, of a tree species and tree size first to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The proposed replanting will be required to be on a 2:1 basis within the application site.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and to safeguard the visual amenity of the area.

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 Borough 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 are considered to apply.

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 below:

The matters are:

- (a) 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;
- (b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- (e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- (f) 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.

Informative(s)

1. Under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) it is a criminal offence 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.
2. If any UK or European protected species 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.

Report Author Nick Brookman