

**Item B.1**                      **07/00976/FUL**                      **Permit Full Planning Permission**

**Case Officer**                      **Caron Taylor**

**Ward**                      **Chorley North West**

**Proposal**                      **Regulation 3 Application for the formation of lighting scheme to recreation ground, including sports floodlighting for bowling greens and tennis courts,**

**Location**                      **Coronation Recreation Ground Devonshire Road Chorley**

**Applicant**                      **Andy Brown**

**Proposal:**                      The application is a Regulation 3 application for the formation of a lighting scheme to Coronation Recreation Ground, including sports floodlighting for bowling greens and tennis courts.

**Background:**                      Coronation Recreation Ground is a public park, with Ashfield Road and Devonshire Road running down the west and east sides of the site respectively. The houses on Collison Avenue back onto the north side of the site and the houses on Regent Road back onto the south side.

A central path runs through the park east to west. To the north of this are two tennis courts and two bowling greens, with a further path against the rear of the houses on Collison Avenue. There is a children's playground in the southeast corner of the park with a path from the central entrance to the park sweeping round through some trees against the properties on Regent Road.

It is proposed to erect two forms of lighting, footpath lighting to both the perimeter footpaths and central footpath in a traditional heritage style, and sports floodlighting to the tennis and bowling greens.

**Planning History:**                      There is no planning history relevant to the current application.

**Planning Policy:**                      LT14: Public, Private, Educational and Institutional Playing Fields, Parks and Other Recreational Open Space.

**Representations:**                      At the time of writing the report six letters of objection have been received, and a further letter signed by ten residents (on behalf of twelve residents). Some of the comments made are not planning grounds that can be taken into account but other objections can be summarised as:

- The Council know from experience the problems with policing the park, resulting in the park gates having to be locked at night;
- Bowling greens are already used to play football on and although it is not the act of playing football or cycling, its that there is a growing element of society who given the opportunity will abuse and damage attractive well maintained areas;
- One of the floodlights is opposite their bedroom window resulting in deterioration to their quality of life. This window

is about the same distance from the floodlight as the tennis court it is designed to illuminate;

- Floodlights are not suitable in a small town park, they are for sports arenas and football grounds, they are very intrusive and are never placed in residential areas;
- People do not play tennis or bowls outside at night in this country, therefore it is not necessary to light this area;
- The number and scale of the proposed floodlights is out of all proportion to the size of the park and surrounding area;
- The impact on the residential amenity of local residents with loss of privacy, noise and disturbance would be substantial. Floodlighting of the park will attract lots of people at night into a small, totally unsupervised area causing both light and noise pollution;
- Floodlighting would create a beacon that would only escalate problems such as vandalism, litter and graffiti with little use being made for what the areas are intended;
- The impact on the character of the area would be immense and lighting is totally inappropriate;
- The site of one of the lights almost certainly mean that the existing tress near is would have to be removed, and there would be a detrimental effect on the conservation on the park;
- There is no need to light the park as there are plenty of safe, official footpaths and roads in the area;
- The people of Chorley will have to stand the cost of police for safety and the cost of electricity and extra staff;
- It will change the character of the area from families and children to older sports users, shouting;
- Birds will be frightened;
- The drug users and drunks currently leave when it gets dark, lighting will encourage them to stay longer, and older and younger people will feel threatened;
- Robberies have taken place in Collison Avenue accessed over the park wall. Lighting will make this easier and cause light pollution;
- Increased facilities will increase car parking in the nearby streets;
- Who will supervise the area?
- Views of a floodlit sports area will affect the enjoyment of people's property;
- The leisure centre should be used for such activities in the evenings;
- The lighting will use more energy which is not environmentally friendly;
- The recreation ground has been around for 90 years with only minor alteration, there is no need to start changing things so drastically.

**Consultations:** See main body of report

**Applicants Case:** Local to Coronation Recreation Ground there are no other safe places in which children can play. Without this site children are forced to play in the street. By lighting the site the useful life of the play area, open spaces and sports facilities can be extended each day. As the site is also extremely popular with dog walkers, both early in the morning and late at night, the proposal will if approved, have a major effect on the feelings of safety.

For some time the site has played host to an unsavoury element once dusk falls. Alongside the juvenile nuisance and underage drinking that often goes undetected there have been numerous instances of substance and solvent abuse and drug dealing, so much so that the site was targeted as part of Operation Nimrod earlier in the year. These concerns are the driving force behind the Police being financial contributors to the scheme.

In keeping with the traditional nature of the recreation ground, and in particular its ironwork, all footpath lighting is being designed in a heritage style. These include black iron effect columns and lanterns. Column feet will feature a level of detail to give a traditional feel. To minimise levels of vandalism intricate features such as frogs legs connections and ladder arms have been designed out, which should make climbing or swinging from the columns more difficult.

Through discussions with the local Police Architectural Liaison Officer it has been proposed that the most appropriate timings for lighting would be as follows:

- Perimeter footpath lighting will come on when required and be switched off at 10pm;
- Footpath lighting serving the central footpath (through the trees) will remain on all night;
- Sports floodlighting will switch on at dusk and off at 9pm at the latest.

#### **Assessment:**

LT14 of the Local Plan covers Public, Private, Educational and Institutional Playing Fields, Parks and Other Recreational Open Space. This states that Ancillary development will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- a) it is in connection with and will enhance the recreational and/or amenity value of the open space;
- b) it is of a size and scale which does not detract from the character of the open space;
- c) it will not have a detrimental effect on any site of nature conservation value;
- d) the development will not affect land capable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, bowling green or tennis court including any safety margin and does not result in the loss of, or inability to make use of any playing pitch, bowling green or tennis court or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facility on the site.

In relation to this policy it is considered that the proposal will enhance the recreational and amenity value of the park by extending the time it can be used. The design of the lighting is in keeping with the park and enhances the current playing pitches.

Environmental Health originally asked for a risk assessment in terms of crime, but were not aware that the proposed scheme would be partly funded by the police. A map showing the lighting lux levels in relation to the residential properties has been provided which is considered acceptable, and confirmation of this is awaited from Environmental Health.

#### Neighbour Amenity

The main impact will be to the adjacent neighbours of the site. It is considered that the proposals will not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to these neighbours, but it would be appropriate to

apply a condition that the rear panel of each streetlight light facing the rear of the properties should be solid, rather than glass to reduce light spillage into rear gardens. The only light on the perimeter this cannot be achieved on is the lamp next to the shelters, which needs to be placed on the other side of the footpath.

Although it is accepted that the lighting scheme will extend the times that the park is used beyond the current times, the scheme has been a joint venture with the Police as there are problems with the current use of the park after dark, with no lighting. It is hoped that the more unsavoury activities currently taking place at the park will be discouraged by the lighting, while encouraging the legitimate use of the park, such as the courts and pitches. Conditions will be applied restricting the floodlighting to 9pm and the perimeter lighting to 10pm. The central footpath through the trees will remain on all night, but is less likely to cause problems as it is away from the houses.

**Conclusion:** The lighting scheme proposed is aimed to enhance the recreational value of the park for the local community by extending the time it can be used. It is also a response to problems that have been identified in relation to the current use of the park. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions requiring the rear panels of the footpath lighting to be solid to reduce the possibility of light pollution to nearby properties, and an hour's restriction requiring the perimeter footpath lighting to be switched off at 10pm and floodlights to be switched off by 9pm.

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission Conditions**

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

*Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

2. The lighting hereby permitted shall be restricted to the following times (columns as numbered on drawing no. 8520-D-01).

- Perimeter footpath lighting: between 08.00hrs and 22.00hrs (columns 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 14, 13, 12, 11, 20, 21)
- Footpath lighting serving the central footpath: no restriction (columns 15, 17, 18, 19, 3)
- Floodlighting to pitches: no illumination before 09.00hrs or after 21.00hrs.

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Policy Nos. EP20 and EP21A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

3. The lights hereby approved shall not exceed the lux levels as detailed on drawing no. 8520-D-01.

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Policy Nos. EP20 and EP21A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

4. The rear panel (defined as the panel of the lantern facing towards the nearest residential property) of the following footpath lighting column lanterns (as shown number on drawing 8520-D-01) shall be of opaque material: 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 12, 11, 01.

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Policy Nos. EP20 and EP21A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

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