
Sent: 17 April 2025 17:00
To: Planning
Subject: Planning application DC/23/0406
Attachments: Bellway Homes planning application.docx; Comments on the plans (1).pdf
Categories: Comments Received

Good afternoon,

Having considered the application from Bellway Homes for the proposed siting of houses and sports facilities, please see the attached documents myself and Ashington Football Club have raised with concern over the football pitches and sports pavilion.

Therefore I would strongly reject Bellways plans as they are not suitable. The current plans would be a tragic waste of time and money unless the issues are resolved as described in the documents attached.

You will be aware of recent new developments around the area and nationwide which permit developments to build all weather football pitches that meet FA standards in both size and quality. This appears to very much lack any sort of investment, quality or size that will permit an Adult sized 4G pitch with lighting to be built. In essence this would be a great waste and would not benefit the village other than providing green open space.

Please may I ask that you take the comments (attached) and would be very eager to further discuss this, should you wish.

Best regards

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Carl Smart
Chairman
Ashington Football Club

Sports Pitches and Facilities.

Pitches:

- The FA states an Adult sized Football Pitch should measure 110 yards (100.6m) in length and 70 yards (64m) in width. The submitted plans are less than this requirement.
- For two pitches to be placed side by side a run off area of 5m (minimum) should be provided for safety reasons between pitches.
- Sufficient space outside of the pitch sizes (above), to be provided to accommodate coaching and spectators on the side lines.
- It is essential that 4G (artificial grass) is used to maintain all year playing rather than grass. This as agreed in original plans.
- Good drainage and regular maintenance is required to prolong the playing surface.
- It is essential that the pitch has adequate flood lighting to enable further extended use for training purposes during winter months. Currently AFC spend in circa [REDACTED] P/A on winter training venues. This money is spent in local villages/town with 4G pitch venues that have lighting. Flood lights are imperative.
- The pitch area is recommended to be secured for non-authorized use i.e. gated or screened.

Storage and Facilities

- Storage areas for equipment i.e. goals, flags etc. will be required unless other solutions are in place for ease of movement.
- If surrounding area is Grass this will require upkeep. On site storage or access for Tractor (grass mowing) and approved equipment to maintain grass/ soil quality i.e. Verti-drainer, slicing attachments, Grass seed and soil for repair work to area.
- Sports Pavilion parking should be a minimum of 50 cars to accommodate safe off road parking.
- The sports pavilion must have suitable access for public toilets (spectators).
- A secured access for permitted persons to enter the facility is essential.
- Toilet and shower rooms for both Male and Female adults/children should be separated. If 2 pitches are planned, the changing room facilities should accommodate each for both sets of teams. Separate changing facilities must be provided for match officials i.e. Referees (2 x if 2 pitches).

MUGA (multi use game area)

- For clarification, this is not a football pitch. This is a courted multi use sports area that is small in size approx. 38x18m. A MUGA facility should not be deemed as a substitute for football, rather a multi sports environments for basketball and other sporting activities. However, access for Football training for the mini-league players is plausible but not for older age groups. This would also require lighting for all year use.

1. Parking
 - a. Insufficient parking. Two matches = 44 players plus spectators. Well over 50 cars. If matches are played back to back, this number can be doubled as new cars arrive before the old cars have left.
2. Pitches
 - a. Pitch sizes are below the minimum required for adult matches.
 - b. At least one full size (FA sanctioned) pitch needs to be 4G as agreed in the original plans.
 - c. The 4G pitch needs to be floodlit.
 - d. Installation of the 4G needs to be paid for by the developers.
 - e. Unless both pitches are 4G (paid for by the developers) will the developers deliver the grass pitch to the required standard; properly drained and constructed with the correct quality of soil and grass?
 - f. Unless both pitches are 4G, where will grass maintenance equipment be stored and how will tractors access the pitch?
3. Pavilion
 - a. There does not seem to be a separate exit/entry point on to the football pitches from the changing rooms. Pavilions usually have a clean and a dirty entrance.
 - b. Insufficient toilet space separate from the changing rooms. Spectators need toilet access that does not require them to enter the changing room area.
 - c. Two changing rooms is not sufficient. At least 4 are needed to cater for male and female players in both home and away teams. It is also insufficient to have only two changing rooms when a total of 4 teams are likely to be in action at the same time across the two pitches.
 - d. Kitchen has no outside 'hatch'. In order for the kitchen to be of any value during matches, customers need to be able buy food and drink without walking (with muddy boots) into the pavilion.