

# WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	16 November 2011		
Application Number	11/00420/FUL		
Site Address	Chippenham RFC, Allington Fields, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 0YZ		
Proposal	Erection of Cricket Pavilion, Cricket Nets, Installation of Floodlighting and Extension to Kitchen and Changing Rooms in Existing Building		
Applicant	Linden Homes LLP		
Town/Parish Council	Chippenham		
Electoral Division	Kington	Unitary Member	Councillor Greenman
Grid Ref	389648 174129		
Type of application	FULL		
Case Officer	S T Smith	01249706633	simon.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk

### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application is submitted in parallel with application 11/00134/FUL for the redevelopment of the Westinghouse Sports Club site, Park Avenue, Chippenham. This application comprises proposals intended as a mitigation package of new and improved sports facilities so as to compensate for the loss of such facilities lost at the Westinghouse Site through redevelopment.

The application for the redevelopment of the Westinghouse Sports Club site is to be considered by the Committee. Because of its linkage, it is thought proper that this application be considered contemporaneously.

### 1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the imposition of planning conditions and all parties entering into a legal agreement under s106 of The Act.

The Chippenham Without Parish Council do not object to the application but raise the issue that the present access to the site can cause a road safety hazard – especially when special events are held at the ground.

Three (3) letters of objection have been received.

### 2. Main Issues

To consider the proposed development in the context of the sites relationship to the northern approach to Chippenham and adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 policies C3, NE15 and CF2. Specifically, to consider the following:

- Principle of development and policy context
- Loss of sporting facilities at Westinghouse Sports Ground
- Visual appearance in landscape

### 3. Site Description

The application site comprises of 10.7 hectares of land, and comprises the existing rugby club grounds, pitches and associated car parking. The site is located to the immediate West of the A350 West Cepen Way and opposite the Bumpers Farm industrial area. Road access to the rugby club is via Frogwell, approached from the Allington direction. Pedestrian access is possible from the Chippenham direction via the Frogwell footbridge.

In planning policy terms, the entire site is part of the open countryside.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
04/00054/FUL	Floodlighting installation consisting of four 18.0m static columns with 3 x 1500w floodlights per column	Permission 23/02/04

### 5. Proposal

The proposal is for the creation of a new cricket pavilion, cricket practice nets, extension to the existing rugby clubhouse (in the form of additional changing rooms and kitchen extension) and 12 no. new floodlights for new/re-orientated rugby pitches.

It should be noted that this application will need to be considered concurrently with a separately submitted application to redevelop the Westinghouse Sports Club site, Chippenham with 76 dwellings (11/00134/FUL refers). This application, in effect, comprises the compensatory sports facilities that would need to be created so as to mitigate against the loss of such facilities at the Westinghouse site.

It is, however, also possible for this application to be determined entirely independently of any decision to grant or refuse planning permission for the proposed Westinghouse redevelopment application (ie. a refusal to grant planning permission under concurrent application 11/00134/FUL should not automatically result in this application also being refused planning permission).

### 6. Consultations

Chippenham Town Council –

*“Regarding the proposal to erect a cricket pavilion at Allington Fields, you should have already received a letter which notes the Parish Council does not raise an objection. However we have received some views from members of the public who also raise no objections but point out that the present access to the ground can present a road safety hazard at certain times of the week especially when special events are held at the club and ground. They ask whether the Highways Department could be asked to comment on an access straight on to the dual carriageway? Local councillors certainly have witnessed grid lock on the current access and further development will tend to exacerbate this.”*

Highway Officer – No objections

Council Ecologist – Following submission of Phase I Ecological Survey and Reptile Survey, no objections subject to conditions.

County Archaeologist – “It looks like there is already drainage in and there is no significant disturbance planned. I do not have any further comments on the proposals.”

Sport England – (in respect of the application for the redevelopment of the Westinghouse Sports Club site)

- Following submission of further supporting evidence, it has been established that: (a) existing tennis clubs in Chippenham do have spare capacity to accommodate new members displaced from redevelopment of the application site plus any increased demand in the future; and (b) existing bowls clubs in the town would welcome new members displaced from the redevelopment of the application site – confirmed by England Bowls.
- That the proposed compensatory sports facilities at the Chippenham Rugby Club site are sufficient to make up for the loss of cricket facilities through redevelopment of the application site.

Environment Agency – No objections subject to imposition of suitable drainage conditions.

## **7. Publicity**

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation. Three (3) letters of objection have been received. Main issues raised:

- Westinghouse Cricket Club should remain where it is and not be moved to the rugby club site
- Object to this application because it is dependent upon the loss of the sports facilities at the Westinghouse recreation ground.
- Already suitable facilities at the Westinghouse site. Not enough mitigation as the redevelopment would result in loss in sports provision overall – including bowls green and four tennis courts.
- New facilities would be at edge of town and would be less accessible to people of all ages who do not have access to car.
- No safe pedestrian or vehicular infrastructure in place

## **8. Planning Considerations**

### Principle of development and policy context

The application is for the creation of new sports/leisure facilities, entirely contained within the boundaries of an existing sporting facility: the Chippenham Rugby Club. Policy CF2 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 is worded so as to allow for the principle of the improvement of existing leisure facilities; precisely the situation set out by this application.

The proposal does however continue to need to be considered against more detailed development control criteria set out by Policies C3 (development control core policy) and NE15 (landscape character of the countryside).

### Loss of sporting facilities at Westinghouse Sports Ground

Although in private ownership, the Westinghouse Sports Club site is, in planning terms, still considered a sports facility:- comprising pitches, playing field, courts and associated buildings. Not only that, it is a sports facility positioned in a centralised position in the town, geographically accessible by much of the population. Its closure in recent years does not dilute the significance of the site from a land use planning perspective and it is this loss through residential re-development which must be addressed by mitigation and compensation. The approach and concept of appropriate mitigation and compensation is set out in Policy CF2 of the adopted Local

Plan, national planning guidance in PPG17 as well as the national Playing Field Policy operated by Sport England.

The Westinghouse site provides facilities for the following activities: cricket pitch and related pavilion and changing facilities, bowling green, 4 no. tennis courts, clubhouse and car parking. The planning application to redevelop the Westinghouse site has been submitted complete with a proposed package measures to ensure re-development of the site would not strip the town of needed sporting facilities. That package comprises two components:

1. Survey and investigation to prove that existing tennis and bowls clubs in the town do have spare capacity and would welcome new members displaced from the Westinghouse site.
2. A proposed creation of new cricket pitch and associated facilities at the Chippenham Rugby Club site – also involving an extension to the rugby pavilion and floodlighting so as to allow the two sports to co-exist and be properly managed.

It is the second of the two components that is the subject of this application now under consideration and as such, should be considered concurrently with the application to redevelop the Westinghouse site.

Based upon the above, Sport England have signalled their satisfaction with the proposal and conclude that the replacement sporting facilities at the Rugby Club site would adequately make up for the loss of the application site as such. The Council's own Sports Development Manager has also confirmed that existing tennis and bowls provision in the town is sufficient and would not require replacement.

The adequacy of the replacement sporting facilities to compensate for those lost on the development site is fully debated under the associated application to redevelop the Westinghouse site. This application for new facilities at the rugby club site can, and should, be considered on its own merits.

Nevertheless, in the event of the Development Control Committee resolving to grant planning permission for the redevelopment of the Westinghouse Sports Club site, an agreement under s106 of The Act must be entered into by all parties to ensure delivery of the replacement sporting facilities at the Rugby Club site.

#### Visual appearance in landscape

Policy NE15 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 is applicable to all proposals for development in the countryside in the north of Wiltshire. It states:

**The landscape of North Wiltshire and its locally distinctive characteristics shall be conserved and enhanced, development will be permitted if it does not adversely affect the character of an area and features that contribute to local distinctiveness.**

**Development shall take into account:**

- i) **The setting of, and relationship between, settlement and buildings and the landscape.**
- ii) **The pattern of woodland, trees, field boundaries, other vegetation and features.**
- iii) **The special qualities of watercourses and waterbodies and their surroundings such as river valleys.**
- iv) **The topography of the area avoiding sensitive skylines, hills and not detracting from important views.**

## **The best and most versatile agricultural land shall be protected from non-agricultural development.**

Whilst the rugby club site is positioned in the open countryside, outside of the confines of Chippenham, it is nonetheless closely related to the A350 West Cepen Way and existing industrial buildings at Bumpers Farm industrial estate. Furthermore, several of the rugby pitches are floodlit and the A350 served by street lighting. Contextually, therefore, the rugby club site is already conspicuous in the wider landscape and is far better related to the built up town than the countryside beyond.

The proposed new cricket pavilion, nets, extension to the existing rugby club house, reorganisation of pitches and installation of additional floodlighting is considered to be of typical appearance and an entirely expected form of development on this site and would entail no substantive impact upon the landscape over and above that already associated with the existing rugby club facilities.

The 12 new floodlighting columns themselves are to be 12.0m in height and are intended to be of typical appearance. The specification of the floodlights is also typical of modern equipment so as to minimise light spillage and glare. The sites distance from any residential properties and existing lighting on and nearby the site renders excess light pollution unlikely.

### Access and highways issues

Concern has been raised by the Parish Council regarding the adequacy of the vehicular access to the rugby club, considered to be especially evident when there are special events being held. In order to assess how the surrounding highway network might cope with a potential increase in traffic accessing the site, the Council's Highway Officer has been consulted. He concludes that no objection should be raised to the proposal. In the absence of an expert view to the contrary, it is not considered reasonable to refuse planning permission on the grounds of highway safety.

## **9. Conclusion**

This proposal is for the enhancement of existing sports facilities at the existing Chippenham Rugby Club site. Regardless of how the associated planning application for the redevelopment of the Westinghouse Sports Club site is determined, this proposal will accord with planning policy which, in principle, seeks to allow the improvement of such existing facilities. The detail of the proposed improvements are considered to be entirely appropriate in the context of an established sports facility and would not have an adverse impact upon the wider landscape or any nearby residential properties.

## **10. Recommendation**

Subject to all parties entering into a legal agreement under Section 106 of The Act in respect of the following issue:

- To ensure mitigation package of replacement sporting facilities proposed are provided prior to the redevelopment taking place of the Westinghouse Sports Club site, if granted planning permission under application 11/00134/FUL.

Then:

Planning Permission be GRANTED for the following reason:

This proposal for the improvement of existing sporting facilities is considered to accord with Policy CF2 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and guidance contained in PPS17, which, in principle, seeks to allow the improvement of such existing facilities. The detail of the proposed improvements are considered to be entirely appropriate in the context of this established sports

facility and would not have an adverse impact upon the wider landscape or any nearby residential properties and would therefore also comply with the provisions of Policies C3 and NE15 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Prior to the commencement of development full and complete details of the proposed appearance and positioning of the floodlight columns shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the details so agreed.

REASON: So as to secure a satisfactory form of development reflective of the existing site and for the avoidance of doubt.

3. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority beforehand, any scrub and hedgerow removal shall be carried out outside of the breeding bird season (March – August inclusive). In the event that such vegetation removal is required during the breeding bird season, all relevant areas should first be subject to an inspection by a suitably experienced ecologist, the results of such an inspection shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before any removal takes place. IN the event that an active nest is recorded, such removal works shall be suspended until such time as the nest is no longer in use.

REASON: So as to ensure the development does not have an adverse impact upon the value of the site as a habitat for breeding birds.

4. Prior to the commencement of development full and complete details of the proposed floodlighting shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include a demonstration of the lighting levels across the site, and full measures to reduce light spill as far as is possible through best practice techniques.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and so as to ensure the proposed floodlighting does not result in a unnecessary level of light spillage, particularly so as to avoid an adverse impact upon ecology and semi-natural features including ponds, hedgerows and trees both within and surrounding the site.

5. The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the submitted plans and documents listed below. No variation from the approved plans should be made without the prior approval of the local planning authority. Amendments may require the submission of a further application.

#### Plans

Location plan 3416/001 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Existing block plan 3416/002 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Existing site plan 3416/003 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Existing floor plan 3416/004 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Existing elevations 3416/005 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed block plan 3416/010 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed site plan clubhouse and training pitch 3416/011 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed site plan – pitches, pavilion and flood lights 3416/012 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)

Proposed floor plans 3416/013 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed elevations 3416/014 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed floor plans and elevations 3416/015 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed cricket nets plans and elevations 3416/016 (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)

Planning Supporting Statement (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Design and Access Statement (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Design and Access Statement addendum (dated August 2011)  
Flood Risk Assessment (date stamped 25<sup>th</sup> March 2011)  
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (date stamped 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011)  
Phase 1 Ecological Survey (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Reptile Survey (date stamped 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011)  
Westinghouse Sports Ground Mitigation Package (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)  
Proposed floodlighting details (CB Associates) (date stamped 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011)

REASON: To ensure that the development is implemented as approved.



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SCALE:

19/10/2011

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