

1. INTRODUCTION

The Russell Foster Tyne and Wear Sports Foundation is a charitable organisation that provides football facilities for youngsters in the local community. It was founded in 1975 and information about it can be found on <http://www.rfyouthleagues.co.uk>.

The teams often have to travel to Peterlee, Durham or Gateshead to play because the League's other Sunderland sites do not have enough capacity. The League wants to construct 22 pitches as well as a changing pavilion, outdoor store and car parking. The facilities would only be used on Saturday and Sunday mornings between 9am to 1.35pm. Only 12 of the pitches would be used at any one time to allow the grass to recover.

This Non Technical Summary summarises the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Planning Application for the scheme was approved on 7th April 2005 by Sunderland City Council, subject to a number of planning conditions to safeguard public amenity. These conditions require various information to be supplied before the scheme can be built. The League is in the process of supplying this information to the Council.

The scheme includes approximately 5ha of tree felling, so the Forestry Commission must decide whether or not the planning application requires to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment, (EIA). Initially they decided one was not needed, however, after a judgement in the High Court of Justice, the Commission changed its' view. The findings of the EIA will allow the Commission to decide whether the scheme should go ahead or not.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Site Location

The site is west of Newbottle village in the parish of Houghton-le-Spring, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear and is approximately 9.3 hectares. Coaley Lane is to the south, Blind Lane to the west, Newbottle housing to the east and Success Road and housing area are to the north. It is approximately 1.2 km to the north west of Houghton le Spring, and approximately 3.6 km west of Sunderland.



The Southern half of the site is farmland and the Northern half is woodland. A public footpath runs east to west across the middle of the site.

3.2 Flora and Fauna

Following a desk study, ecological surveys were carried out in January 2006. These surveys were then updated in 2008. The surveys concluded that:

- Small areas of rough grassland *may* be used by hunting Barn Owl (a protected species) but no evidence was found.
- The site has populations of a small range of common bird species. Breeding bird surveys are in progress this year and these have confirmed the results of the bird risk assessment carried out in 2006.
- Desk studies produced no records of badger within 2km of the site and there are no signs of badger on the site.
- Local people suggested that there were Great Crested newts in one small pond north of the site. This has now been surveyed and there were no Great Crested Newts found.
- There are no man-made structures on the site that could provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats, though they do flyover it.
- There are no signs of the presence of otter, red squirrel, brown hare or water vole.

The project design ensures preservation of rough grassland as a habitat for small mammals and for Barn Owl. The design of the development retains woodland areas around the site margin and most of the hedgerows. The planting scheme includes native species. Vegetation clearance would not be carried out during the nesting season of birds.



4. CULTURAL AND HERITAGE

In October 2006 Durham University Archaeological services carried out a desk study followed by geophysical assessment, and trial trenching. The surveys found no evidence of archaeological deposits which would require preservation. The County Archaeologist has agreed that since no important features were discovered no mitigation measures are required other than the watching brief that requires an archaeologist to be present during soil stripping if necessary. A planning condition requires this to take place. The study also concluded that the development would not effect the setting of the listed buildings in the older part of Newbottle.

5. NOISE

A noise assessment was carried out to assess the noise from construction activities, the effect of additional road traffic when the site is operating, and the effect of noise from spectators. In order to do this, noise measurements were taken around the site. Then the possible future noise levels were modelled in accordance with CRTN (which is the governments standard approach), using the vehicle numbers predicted by the transport assessment. To assess the spectator noise, measurements were taken at the junior football pitches at Ford Quarry, which is a similar development to that proposed for Newbottle.

The assessment concluded that none of the effects would be significant and specifically that:

- The effect of the additional road traffic noise would only be slightly adverse.
- The impact of activity noise from the players and spectators would also be only slightly adverse

The Planning Authority imposed a planning condition to control construction activities so that public amenity would be safeguarded while the site was being built.

6. TRANSPORT

The Traffic Assessment studies the effect on the road network of additional traffic and the capacity of the roads, the likelihood of accidents and whether parking is sufficient. In order to do this the existing vehicle flows on the road network were counted manually. Then a Government database called TRICS was used, together with traffic information from the League's site at Washington, to work out how much additional traffic would be generated by the development.



The study concluded that:

- Even at the busiest times when peak traffic flows are at maximum, the road network would operate well within capacity.
- During the study period no personal injury accidents were recorded on the road or roundabout linking to the proposed development and it is not likely that the scheme would increase this problem.
- Analysis shows that the 118 car parking spaces would provide enough capacity. Construction vehicle movements would be controlled by planning conditions to safeguard amenity. This would put measures in place to prevent mud being tracked onto the highway.

7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

A desk study was carried out followed by a site survey and analysis of the site to assess the visual impact of the development and its effects on landscape character and public open space.

The conclusions of the study are that there would be some moderate adverse temporary visual impacts during the construction phase on footpaths and properties, but this would diminish as the landscape planting matured during the operational phase, eventually becoming beneficial. There would not be a significant adverse impact upon landscape character receptors. Long distance views of landmarks such as Durham Cathedral and Penshaw Monument would be unaffected..

8. WATER RESOURCES

Planning conditions require that all surface water drainage from the site would be controlled by a piped system, and no water would discharge direct into any water courses. The drainage scheme would include interceptors so no silt or petrol/oils would reach water courses. Therefore surface water quality would be protected.

The site is not in a flood risk zone. Because there would be only a small increase in hard surfacing compared to the existing site uses (it will be mostly grass pitches), the rate of rainwater runoff from the site would remain broadly similar. Therefore, the development of the site would not increase downstream flooding.

9. LAND CONDITIONS

Ground conditions were investigated by Dunelm Geotechnical and Environmental Services by desk study and site investigation carried out in 2006. In 2008 further study and testing was carried out in consultation with Sunderland City Council. The studies assessed the geotechnical and ground contamination issues that could result from previous uses of the site.

They concluded that:

- There is a risk of shallow mining causing stability problems because there is a record of shallow coal seams, however there is no record of working. Should shallow mine workings be encountered in foundation construction they could be grouted and stabilised, so this matter could be satisfactorily addressed. The built development is a small part of the overall scheme.
- In 2006 the field area of the site was investigated for contaminants and none were found at levels likely to cause a problem. A further study was carried out in 2008 in the tree planted area of the site, because the previous results for this area were inconclusive. The 'source /pathway/ receptor' model was used to assess risk. The 2008 testing showed however, that organic contaminants

were not found at levels likely to cause a risk to human health considering the proposed use.

Notwithstanding this the planning conditions require a remediation scheme that involves testing of soils. It provides for the eventuality that if any contaminated material is discovered mitigation strategies would be put in place to ensure future users of the site would not come into contact with contaminated materials.

10. AIR QUALITY

10.1.1 The Government's Air Quality Strategy (AQS) published in 2000 sets standards for levels of air pollution and regulates the levels of pollutants including particles, benzene, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, lead sulphur dioxide, ozone, and some other organic compounds. The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) legislation in the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to conduct periodic reviews and assessments of air quality. The first stage of this has been carried out for Sunderland and so far the Council has not had to not declared the need for an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at or in the vicinity of the proposed site because the levels are not exceeding the standards. In fact AQMAs have not been declared anywhere in Sunderland City Council's jurisdiction. DEFRA's Technical Guidance in LAQM TG(03) states that outside of major conurbations, exceedances of air quality objectives are more likely where exposure occurs within 5m of the kerb, including roads with modest traffic flow of around 10,000-20,000 vehicles per day, in narrow congested town centre streets. It can be seen therefore that given the local conditions and the levels of traffic flow generated by the development it would not cause air quality problems.

Dust production during construction would be controlled by a construction management plan that is required by a planning condition. Carbon dioxide storage would be maintained at existing levels by planting of an equivalent area of new trees to those lost as a result of the development.