

**CONSTRUCTION OF AN ALL WEATHER ARTIFICIAL FOOTBALL PITCH WITH FLOODLIGHTING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT THE CONNAUGHT SCHOOL, TONGHAM ROAD, ALDERSHOT, HAMPSHIRE, GU12 4AS**

***Councillor Neal was a depute and therefore did not take part in debate or voting on this item***

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment (Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding an application for an all weather football pitch at Connaught School.

The Committee were shown the location of the site on a plan and also with an aerial photo of the area and reminded that there had been a member site visit on 3 September 2012. At the site visit members had viewed the site, walked through the tree belt to Aldershot Park and viewed the existing floodlights on the rugby pitch. It was confirmed that since the site visit a further report was submitted concerning potential impact for bats, a European protected species. As a consequence the location of the pitch has been moved slightly away from the tree belt, this was to ensure minimal light spill onto the trees with potential for bat roosts. It has also been agreed that to protect the bats that no floodlighting would be used in June, July or August, the breeding period, and the type of lamps changed. These matters are included in the proposed conditions.

There would be minimal, to no impact on nearby houses and their gardens from the light spill from the floodlighting. No objections had been received from neighbouring residents regarding the proposed floodlighting.

The Committee received two deputations in support of the application. Chris Beckett from Connaught Leisure Centre spoke of the importance of the centre within the local community and that a new pitch would enable a wider range of activities to be available and also freeing up indoor space for other activities. Richard Scarborough, from Connaught School, told the Committee that the school was in a deprived area and sports education was particularly important as the school was a sports college. This education would be improved by providing high quality facilities and also the floodlighting would offer further opportunities in the winter. The new pitch would also benefit their local primary schools, as the facilities would be available to them, and improve links with Aldershot Football Club youth academy and raise the status of the school.

Councillor Neal addressed the Committee as a depute and Chairman of Connaught Leisure Centre in support of the application. Cllr Neal emphasised that the other floodlights on the rugby pitch viewed by members had been in the same area for around 10 years without complaint.

During questions of the deputees, the following points were clarified:

- The school would have use of the pitch up until 17:30, at which time the Community Centre would take over.
- The pitch would have an 8-10yr lifespan, and money would be put aside each year in a rollover fund for maintenance and replacement.
- Overflow parking was available on hard court areas within the school. These are tennis courts, and football/netball courts, which although available were rarely needed for parking.
- Two more staff would be on site at evenings and weekends to help manage the site

During questions of the officer, the officer confirmed that the rugby pitches were granted by Rushmoor Borough Council not the County Council, consequently their permitted hours of operation were determined by the Borough Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) Planning permission in respect to the construction of an all weather artificial football pitch with floodlighting and associated works at The Connaught School, Tongham Road, Aldershot, GU12 4AS (Application Number 12/00562/HCC) (Site Ref: RME003) was approved, subject to the conditions listed in Integral Appendix B

**Voting:**

Favour: 13

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1