

APPLICATION REPORT – FUL/355510/25
Planning Committee 15th April 2026

Registration Date 16th January 2026
Ward Coldhurst

Application Reference FUL/355510/25
Type of Application Full

Proposal 1) Creation of three open netball courts with associated acoustic and security fencing, 2) Changing room building (alternative location to that approved under application VAR/352459/24), 3) Introduction of terraced seating overlooking the recently completed Little Wembley training pitch, 4) Reconfiguration of the existing car/coach park with access from Hilbre Avenue and introduction of a pedestrian 'Bee Way' route, 5) New/replacement lighting within the car park and along the Bee Way, 6) Provision of bin and cycle stores, 7) Creation of a formalised ground crew compound, 8) Modification of concourse immediately in front Boundary Park stadium including relocation of 2 existing food concession stands, 9) Erection of a public art feature combining the OAFc owl and 'The Oldham Embryo'; 10) Reconfiguration of Boundary Drive turning head, and 11) associated hard and soft landscaping.

Location Boundary Park, Hilbre Avenue/ Furtherwood Road, Oldham OL1 2PB

Case Officer Graham Dickman
Applicant Sportstown Ltd
Agent Richard Gee

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is presented to Planning Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as it relates to a Major application on a site exceeding 1 hectare.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in this report, and that the Assistant Director Planning, Transport & Housing Delivery shall be authorised to issue the decision.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application relates to land forming part of the Boundary Park football stadium site.

3.2 This includes an area to the north of the main football ground which presently

comprises car parking areas and an undeveloped area on the western side which adjoins the recently redeveloped 'Little Wembley' training pitch.

- 3.3 The northern boundary of the site adjoins the rear gardens of houses on Downham Close and the main vehicular access from Hilbre Avenue. To the south-west is a cul-de-sac of residential properties on Boundary Drive and Johnstone Close. Further to the west are the Clayton Playing Fields.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal involves a number of elements forming part of a programme of sports-related initiatives at the site. These comprise:

a) The creation of three open netball courts with associated acoustic and security fencing

- 4.2 The courts will be primarily located on a presently unused area of the site alongside the eastern boundary of the 'Little Wembley' training pitch.

- 4.3 The applicant indicates that the provision of the improved netball facilities is supported by Oldham Netball Club and forms one of the four sport pathways of the 'SportsTown' vision for the site.

- 4.4 2.5 metre high acoustic fencing will be installed along the northern boundary separating the netball courts from the existing housing to the north, with the remainder of the courts surrounded by security fencing.

- 4.5 It is proposed that the courts will be in use between 9am and 9pm on Sunday to Friday and 9am until 6pm on Saturdays.

b) Changing room facility

- 4.6 This facility was originally proposed to be installed as part of the upgrade to 'Little Wembley' for the area now intended for the netball courts. The proposed alternative site for the building will be to the south of this area adjacent to the north-west corner of the main football ground.

- 4.7 The building will comprise a single-storey structure containing 4 team changing rooms, officials' changing rooms, a reception, and a kitchen serving a central area to be used for refreshment provision.

c) Terraced seating to Little Wembley

- 4.8 This will comprise an uncovered, raked area along the central section to the eastern side of the pitch for coaching staff and family members to observe training sessions.

d) Reconfiguration of the car and coach park

- 4.9 These works cover the western section of the existing car park. It will provide 80 car parking spaces, 7 of which will be accessible spaces and 11 with provision for EV charging, along with spaces for 6 coaches. New lighting will be provided.

- 4.10 12 standard parking spaces will be lost from this area to accommodate the coach parking and improved circulation. An additional 220 spaces will continue to be available on the adjoining car park, with further large areas of parking available on the eastern

side of the stadium.

4.11 In addition, 6 motorcycle spaces will be available.

e) Introduction of a pedestrianised 'Bee Way' route

4.12 This will provide a segregated 5 metre wide route through the site linking to existing public footpaths (27 CHADD to the west of the site, and 70 ROYT, 126 and 184 OLDH to the east of the site) and will provide a safe area for pedestrian access across the car park.

f) Provision of bin stores

4.13 The bin stores will be located towards the north-west corner of the stadium.

g) Provision of cycle stores

4.14 Increased cycle storage for 20 bicycles will be provided within the stadium concourse.

h) Creation of a ground crew compound.

4.15 This area will be located at the south-western corner of the site between 'Little Wembley', the new changing rooms and the rear of houses on Johnstone Close. The area will be enclosed by security fencing and will be used primarily to store lighting units used to assist with turf growth along with tractors used to ferry them to the pitch.

i) Modification to stadium concourse and relocation of food concession stands.

4.16 This will involve minor changes to the configuration of the food and drink concession stands which will be located adjacent to the main football ground.

j) Erection of a public art feature

4.17 This circular feature is located facing the site entrance on Hilbre Avenue. The wheel design is focussed on an industrial cog. It will be topped by the Oldham Owl. It has a height of 9 metres and a circumference of 8 metres, with a symbol celebrating the town's role as the birthplace of the world's first IVF birth at its centre.

k) Amendment to turning head on Boundary Drive

4.18 Boundary Drive is an unadopted road serving a residential cul-de-sac and the proposal will involve a reconfiguration to provide a gated link to the Beeway route. The gate is required to allow access for emergency services only and will be locked at all other times. There will be no public vehicular access to the football ground car park or through to Broadway.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The application has been assessed in the context of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

5.2 The proposal represents an Urban Development Project within paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations. The site area is above the applicable threshold of 1 hectare of urban development.

- 5.3 The site is not located within any impact distance of a 'sensitive area' as defined in the Regulations.
- 5.4 The proposed development involves the erection of supplementary sports development on a site which is located within Flood Zone 1, the development will not impinge on any national or local sites of ecological significance, and no significant highway impacts are anticipated.
- 5.5 Any significant environmental or amenity impacts are likely to be localised. Therefore, appropriate specialist reports to assess any anticipated impacts have been identified, and these accompany the application.
- 5.6 Consequently, it is considered that an Environmental Statement is not required.

6. PLANNING HISTORY

SONDPR/355124/25 - Prior approval for installation of a solar PV system to roof of Joe Royle Stand. Prior approval required and granted. 23 October 2025.

NMA/354600/25 – Non-material Amendment application in respect of the levels of the proposed replacement training pitch relating to app no. VAR/352459/24. Approved 30 June 2025.

VAR/352459/24 - Variation of condition 10 (hours of use) relating to application FUL/351570/23 to permit use between 09.00 and 18.00 hours on Saturdays and between 09.00 and 21.00 hours on all other days (previously approved hours between 09.00 and 21.00 hours on Monday to Friday, 10.00 and 18.00 hours on Saturday and 10.00 and 21.00 hours on Sunday). Approved 6 June 2024.

FUL/351570/23 - Replacement of existing grass training pitch known as Little Wembley (and floodlights, means of enclosure and ball-catch fencing) with a new multi-sports 3G pitch with associated earth works / engineering operations / retaining structure (to provide a flat surface), ball-catch fencing, security and acoustic fencing, 8 column sports lights, 10 cycle parking spaces, and the erection of an ancillary single storey building to accommodate changing rooms, classroom / office, toilets and refreshments area,, a bin store and associated hard and soft landscaping. Access via the existing access from Hilbre Avenue. Approved 21 December 2023.

PA/053017/07 - Outline application for mixed use redevelopment including demolition of existing and construction of new south and west stands, with a combined capacity of 6,200 seats and accommodation comprising spectator facilities, Hotel (west stand) and Fitness club (south stand), Residential apartments (553 Units) and key worker housing (140 Units), Ancillary retail/cafe units together with associated landscaping and external works. Approved 9 May 2008.

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 7.1 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan and related documentation took effect and became part of the statutory development plan on 21 March 2024.
- 7.2 The PfE Plan must now be considered in the determination of planning applications, alongside Oldham's Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development

Plan Document (Local Plan), adopted November 2011, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 7.3 The site is partly allocated within a Green Corridor and Link and partly unallocated on the Proposals Map associated with this document.
- 7.4 As such, the following policies are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

Places for Everyone

Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development;
 Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment;
 Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network;
 Policy JP-G7: Trees and Woodland;
 Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity;

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places;
 Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge;
 Policy JP-P6: Health;
 Policy JP-P7: Sport and Recreation;
 Policy JP-C6: Walking and Cycling; and,
 Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development.

Core Strategy

Policy 2: Communities;
 Policy 9: Local Environment; and,
 Policy 21: Protecting Natural Environmental Assets.

8. CONSULTATIONS

Highways Officer	No objections
Environmental Health	No objections subject to various conditions in relation to hours of use of the netball courts, the maintenance compound, and the car park, for the provision of acoustic barriers, and for a ground condition assessment.
Environment Agency	No objections subject to a condition for dealing with any contamination identified as a result of works on site.
United Utilities	No objections subject to implementation in accordance with the submitted Drainage Strategy.
G M Ecology Unit	Concur with the findings of the ecological appraisal. The site will be subject to the statutory requirement for a post-decision Biodiversity Gain Plan.
Peak & Northern Footpaths Society	Note that rights of way run through or adjacent to the site and should not be obstructed during or after building works.

9. PUBLICITY AND THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the application has been advertised as a major development which affects a public right of way by neighbour notification letters, display of a site notice, and publication of a press notice.
- 9.2 In response, 2 objections have been received on the following (summarised) grounds:
- Disturbance from the additional number of users;
 - Increased traffic using a residential street;
 - Suggestion that the owner of the application site is in breach of a restrictive covenant; and,
 - Perception that permission will be given as funding has already been agreed.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

10. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 The application relates to the creation of additional sporting facilities at an established sports stadium site. The applicant has explained that these developments form a key phase in the creation of a state-of-the-art sporting, health and educational facility for which a £5 million Government Community Regeneration Fund grant has been obtained.
- 10.2 NPPF paragraph 96 promotes the provision of development which enables and supports healthy lives, including through the provision of sports facilities.
- 10.3 In addition, PfE Policy JP-P6 requires development to maximise its positive contribution to health and wellbeing and Policy JP-P7 indicates that a network of high quality and accessible sports and recreation facilities will be protected and enhanced, supporting greater levels of activity for all ages.
- 10.4 The proposed development will assist the achievement of those objectives, and therefore this represents a significant positive benefit of the development.
- 10.5 Any matters related to the presence of private covenants are not material considerations in the assessment of the planning application, nor is the fact that grant funding has been awarded to the wider Sports Town proposals.

11. AMENITY ISSUES

- 11.1 The stadium site is adjoined by residential properties to the north and south-west. Therefore, it is necessary to assess whether the developments will impact on the amenity of those residents, and if so, to ensure necessary mitigation is in place.
- 11.2 A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted which indicates calculations which show that noise from the proposed activities is expected to fall within the previously imposed planning conditions in relation to developments at the site. A Noise Management Plan is proposed which includes limiting activities outside daytime

houses (7am until 11pm).

- 11.3 The maximum proposed hours of use of the netball courts reflect those approved for the use of Little Wembley, running from 9am until 9pm on Sunday to Friday, and 9am until 6pm on Saturdays.
- 11.4 No specific floodlighting is proposed for the courts.
- 11.5 The proposed lighting to the car park will be designed to minimise light spill and glare to neighbouring residents with baffles to shield rear-facing aspects of the lights.
- 11.6 The Environmental Health Officer has recommended a number of conditions in respect of impacts associated with the development including maximum noise emission levels, plus hours of use of the netball courts and the maintenance compound.

12. HIGHWAYS ISSUES

- 12.1 NPPF paragraph 116 states that “*development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe*”.
- 12.2 A Transport Technical Note has been submitted with the application. The Highways Officer is satisfied that any increased levels of activity associated with the site can be satisfactorily accommodated through parking provision and traffic generation on the adjacent highways.

13. BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGY

- 13.1 PfE Policy JP-G2 and Local Plan Policy 6 require development to promote and enhance the borough’s Green Infrastructure Network. In this case, although the allocation cuts through the site, this strip has no existing ecological value in linking Clayton Playing Fields to the west with Plumpton Clough to the east.
- 13.2 Within the re-configured site, the proposed landscaping includes the introduction of new trees, hedging and ornamental and wildflower planting. This will be largely concentrated along the northern boundary and includes amendments to the landscaping approved under the ‘Little Wembley’ redevelopment.
- 13.3 Biodiversity Net Gain is required under the statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021).
- 13.4 This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. As a clear preference, this increase should be achieved through on-site biodiversity gains.
- 13.5 Based on the application site and indicative proposals, the development would be subject to the statutory BNG requirement. This will require a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted following the grant of planning permission. This must be approved before development commences.
- 13.6 GMEU has considered the application and, subject to minor amendments to the

biodiversity net gain assessment, has no objections to the proposals. It is noted that off-site credits will be required to meet the 10% uplift, and that the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan will need to be confirmed prior to the commencement of development

14. DRAINAGE AND GROUND CONDITIONS

- 14.1 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and proposed Drainage Strategy. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 at the lowest risk of flooding.
- 14.2 United Utilities has indicated that the proposed Drainage Strategy is acceptable.
- 14.3 The submitted Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment has been considered by the Environmental Health Officer.
- 14.4 Having regard to the available information and the results of previous reports, a full contaminated land assessment, including an assessment of the presence of landfill gas, will be required as a condition of any approval.

15. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 15.1 The proposal represents an additional step in the provision of an improved range of sporting facilities at the site with the associated health benefits from increased sports participation which would be afforded.
- 15.2 Subject to the recommended conditions, it is considered that the activities can be accommodated without detriment to the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 15.3 It is therefore recommended that the application is approved subject to the conditions set out below.

16. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1. The development must be begun not later than the expiry of THREE years beginning with the date of this permission. REASON - To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2. The development hereby approved shall be fully implemented in accordance with the Approved Details Schedule list on this decision notice. REASON - For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.
- 3. No development shall commence unless and until a site investigation and assessment into landfill gas risk and ground contamination has been carried out and the consultant's written report and recommendation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Written approval from the Local Planning Authority will be required for any necessary programmed remedial measures and, on receipt of a satisfactory completion report, to discharge the condition. REASON - Prior approval of such details is necessary as they are fundamental to the initial site preparation works and in order to protect public safety as the site is located within 250 metres of a former landfill site having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

4. The drainage for the development hereby approved, shall be carried out in accordance with principles set out in the submitted Foul & Surface Water Drainage Design strategy 5292,- Dated 18/12/2025 which was prepared by EDGE. For the avoidance of doubt, no surface water will be permitted to drain directly or indirectly into the public sewer. Prior to occupation of the proposed development, the drainage schemes shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development. REASON - To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to prevent an undue increase in surface water run-off and to reduce the risk of flooding having regard to Policy JP-S4 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.
5. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a scheme in the form of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details for the methods to be employed to control and monitor noise, dust and vibration impacts. The approved scheme shall be implemented to the full written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority before the construction works are commenced, which shall be maintained for the duration of the construction works. REASON - Prior approval of such details is necessary since they are fundamental to the initial site preparation works and to safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
6. The use of the netball courts shall only take place between 09.00 and 18.00 hours on Saturdays and between 09.00 and 21.00 hours on all other days. REASON - In order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
7. The use of the netball courts shall not commence until the acoustic fencing indicated on the approved plans has been installed in full. The fencing shall be retained at all times thereafter whilst the courts remain in use. REASON - In order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
8. The 1 hour LAeq from the use of the netball courts when measured in free field conditions at 1.5 metres from the ground at any residential property shall not exceed 50dBA. REASON - In order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
9. The use of the ground crew compound will be limited to between 07:00 and 19:00 hours on Monday to Saturday and between 09:00 and 19:00 on Sundays and Public Holidays, except when there is a match on at the main ground when the compound can be used up to 1.5 hours after the final whistle. REASON - In order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
10. The use of the car park shall be limited, except in emergencies, to between 07.00 and 23.00 hours on any day, and the car parking lighting shall be operated between 07.00 and 23.10 hours on any day. REASON - In order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.
11. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the

approved plans Ref: AT.25.12994.1000 Rev 06, AT.25.12994.2000 Rev 05, AT.25.12994.3000 Rev 05, AT.25.12994.3002 Rev 05, and AT.25.12994.3003 Rev 04 prior to the first use of the netball courts or in accordance with the programme agreed with the local planning authority. Thereafter any trees or shrubs which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size, number and species to comply with the approved plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. REASON - To ensure that the landscaping scheme is carried out and protected in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the future appearance of the area having regard to Policies 9 and 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.

SITE LOCATION PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)

