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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>The Planning Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 November 2014</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Regeneration and Planning</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>14/0285/IC Plan 11/14</b>
			<b>Local Application Development</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>David Ashman</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712416</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>New multi use games areas on an existing blaes pitch with associated fencing, equipment container, floodlighting and drainage at St Ninian's Primary School, Staffa Street, Gourock</b>		

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The grounds of St. Ninian's Primary School in Gourock are bound to the north and west by Staffa Street, to the south by Kirn Drive and to the east by Drumshantie Road. The school buildings are concentrated within the western part of the grounds, with an extensive blaes pitch occupying approximately two thirds of the remainder of the site. There are 19 designated parking spaces within the grounds.

Beyond the school boundaries, across Staffa Street there is housing at Drumshantie Road there is a mix of housing, a gospel hall and a civic amenity facility, and across Kirn Drive there is a community centre and a recreational ground. Although the application site is itself mostly level the houses on Staffa Street are elevated above the blaes pitch level.



## PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought to construct a new multi-use games area measuring 36 metres by 54 metres on the western part of the blaes pitch, together with associated fencing, an equipment container, floodlighting and drainage. The pitch is to be a type 4 polymeric surface capable of being used for a range of sporting activities including tennis and 5 and 7-a-side football, netball, hockey and basketball. The existing blaes pitch is to be excavated and re-used on site to form a bund to the east of the pitch. The bund will then be covered with topsoil and grass seed.

The games area is to be surrounded by 3 metres high metal mesh fencing which extends to 4 metres where facing Staffa Street and Kirn Drive and floodlit from six 12 metres high columns. Access to the games area is proposed from Kirn Drive and from the parking area next to the school buildings via a grasscrete access path. A storage container, measuring 2.3 metres by 5.9 metres by 2.3 metres high is to be placed adjacent to the north-west boundary of the games area closest to Staffa Street. Drainage is to be installed below the pitch which will connect into existing drainage pipes crossing the site below ground level.

The facility is primarily intended for the use of the School but will also be available for booking through the Inverclyde Leisure booking office. It is anticipated that the pitch may be used at weekends and in the evenings outwith school hours.

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

### Policy RES1 - Safeguarding the Character and Amenity of Residential Areas

The character and amenity of residential areas, identified on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded and where practicable, enhanced. Proposals for new residential development will be assessed against and have to satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) compatibility with the character and amenity of the area;
- (b) details of proposals for landscaping;
- (c) proposals for the retention of existing landscape or townscape features of value on the site;
- (d) accordance with the Council's adopted roads guidance and Designing Streets, the Scottish Government's policy statement;
- (e) provision of adequate services; and
- (f) having regard to Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes.

### Policy RES6 - Non-Residential Development within Residential Areas

Proposals for uses other than residential development in residential areas, including schools, recreational and other community facilities will be acceptable subject to satisfying where appropriate, the following criteria:

- (a) compatibility with the character and amenity of the area;
- (b) impact on designated and locally valued open space;
- (c) impact of the volume, frequency and type of traffic likely to be generated;
- (d) infrastructure availability;
- (e) social and economic benefits; and
- (f) the cumulative impact of such a use or facilities on an area.

## CONSULTATIONS

**Head of Environmental and Commercial Services** - Off-road parking provision requires to be at a ratio of 1 space per 2 players. If this is not provided there should be no evening use of the MUGA as the additional traffic would cause congestion and obstructive parking in an area already subject

to high demand for on-road parking. The pitch will not have any detrimental impact on reported flooding at Drumshantie Road/George Road.

There are no concerns regarding floodlighting as the luminaires give good optical control and the general layout is a reasonable distance and at a lower level than nearby houses and should not impose undue light levels.

**Head of Safer and Inclusive Communities** – No objection subject to conditions relating to environmental site investigation, lighting control and hours of operation of the facility. An advisory note is suggested in respect of hours of construction work.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application was advertised in the Greenock Telegraph on 15th August 2014 as there are no premises on neighbouring land.

## **SITE NOTICES**

The nature of the proposal did not require a site notice.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Nine objections have been received on the application. The points of objection may be summarised as follows:

- There is inadequate parking provision and there are concerns over impacts of on-street parking on residents.
- Based on present parking habits users of the pitch will not use the School parking facilities.
- There will be light overspill and glare from the floodlights.
- The development will result in noise disturbance to neighbours.
- Drumshantie Road and George Street flood outside the pitch area. Can this be addressed?
- The hours of operation will disturb residents. Can use be limited to 9pm?
- This would result in an overprovision of such facilities in the area.
- There are concerns over how the facility will operate, how the Council will control it and the potential for anti-social behaviour.
- The use of "crawl holes" which would allow 24 hour access.
- The storage container will encourage vandalism.
- A possible of lack of use of the facility may lead to the site becoming overgrown and an eyesore.
- A drop off/pick up facility should be provided on the pitch for School use.
- Could Staffa Street be made a one-way road to address congestion issues?
- The withdrawal of an earlier application and resubmission may confuse potential objectors.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The material considerations in determination of this application are the Inverclyde Local Development Plan, the consultation responses and the objections. The determining factor is whether this proposal may be implemented with an acceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents and road safety.

St. Ninian's School is set within a mainly residential area, as identified by Policy RES1 of the Local Development Plan. As a non-residential development the proposal has to be assessed in terms of its impact on the character and amenity the area. This may be considered through assessment of the relevant criteria in Policy RES6 which addresses non-residential development within a residential area.

Looking firstly at compatibility with the character and amenity of the area (criterion (a) of Policy RES6), the School is a well established use in this locality. The key consideration is the possible greater use of the pitch outwith normal hours and the consequent issues of noise, lighting and parking.

Traffic movements associated with the beginning and end of the school day already create a level of noise. Additional noise will come from possible evening and weekend use of the pitch in terms of vehicle movements, players and any spectators. I note that the Head of Safer and Inclusive Communities has not raised an objection in this respect although in other instances where a MUGA has been introduced within a residential area a condition has been attached to the planning permission restricting the hours of use. I consider that this will also be appropriate at this location.



On the matter of lighting, the adjacent houses are elevated relative to the pitch with the nearest being approximately 38 metres from the proposed floodlighting. This, combined with the design of the proposed floodlights will minimise glare and light overspill. Indeed, I note the comments by the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services that he has no concerns over the luminaires as a result of the distances, ground levels and optical control.

Examining traffic movements, I note that there is no objection from the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services. In view of the limited size of the pitch, the applicant considers that only up to 14 players use it at any one time. This requires 7 parking spaces on the basis of one space per 2 players. Allowing for changeover when double this number may be used, there will still be a surplus with 19 dedicated car parking spaces within the School grounds available for use outwith normal School hours. As residents indicate Staffa Street is the subject of significant on-street parking, there is no reason not to use these spaces. I also note that other than at parental dropping-off and picking-up times during the School day the part of Kirn Drive near to the proposed grasscrete access path is largely available for parking. I am therefore satisfied that overall there is more than sufficient off-street parking available to meet the demands of this facility. The limited number of players and hours of availability of the facility will also limit the volume and frequency of traffic likely to be generated. Comments by residents related to the provision of a pick-up/drop-off facility for School use and the introduction of a one-way system on Staffa Street are not matters that are specifically relevant to this application, and overall the road network and parking provision can accommodate this development without an unacceptable impact on road safety (criterion (c)).

In view of my conclusions over the issues of noise, lighting and parking I am satisfied that the proposed development will be compatible with the character and amenity of the area (criterion (a)).

No open space will be lost as a result of the proposed development (criterion (b)). Infrastructure, in the form of electrical and drainage connections are to be provided by the applicant, which will address issues of drainage. I note that the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services has no concerns on the impact on reported flooding in the vicinity (criterion (d)). On the matter of social

benefits, I consider sporting activities and the consequential health and recreational benefits that this brings are welcomed (criterion (e)).

The issue of cumulative impact resulting from the numbers of MUGA pitch facilities in the locality has been raised by some objectors. The applicant has advised, however, that this MUGA is intended primarily for school use. New build schools have access to similar facilities within their own grounds where possible. It is further pointed out that the other facilities in the vicinity have a third generation artificial turf, compared to the polymeric surfaced proposed in this application. The proposed surfacing facilitates a wider range of sports. On this basis I consider that the cumulative impact is acceptable (criterion (f)).



Overall I conclude that the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy RES6 and, consequently, Policy RES1. It remains to be considered, however, if there are other material considerations which suggest that the proposal is unacceptable notwithstanding compliance with the Local Development Plan. Primary among these are the remaining public objections not already addressed in the above assessment.

The Council will have control over the use of the facility as it will form an integral part of the School and there are no proposals for “crawl holes” giving out-of-hours access to the pitch. Public use will be controlled by letting arrangements under Inverclyde Leisure. While I note concerns over perceived anti-social behaviour, it is not appropriate to withhold planning permission solely to avoid potential breaches of law that are not inevitable. It follows that it is not necessarily the case that the proposed facility storage container will generate anti-social behaviour. As the proposed facility is required for School use it is unlikely that it will be left to deteriorate.

On a matter of procedure, the earlier application had to be withdrawn as there were matters which required correction. To ensure that neighbours were in full receipt of information, it was deemed appropriate that the application process recommence with neighbours being re-notified and enabling those wishing to comment. This process resulted in the 9 letters of representation being considered in this assessment.

In conclusion, I consider that an assessment of the material considerations conclude that the impact of this development on the amenity of neighbouring residents and road safety are such that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions.

## RECOMMENDATION

That the application be granted subject to the following conditions:

### Conditions

1. That the existing parking spaces within the school grounds shall be available to users of approved games outwith normal school hours.
2. That the use of the approved games area shall not take place outwith the hours of 8am to 9pm on Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 6pm at weekends.
3. That the floodlights hereby permitted shall be baffled in order that the threshold vertical luminance at the nearest property does not exceed 5 lux.
4. That the development shall not commence until an environmental investigation and risk assessment, including any necessary remediation strategy with timescale for implementation, of all pollutant linkages has been submitted to and approved, in writing by the Planning Authority. The investigations and assessment shall be site-specific and completed in accordance with acceptable codes of practice. The remediation strategy shall include verification/validation methodologies. This may be incorporated as part of a ground condition report and should include an appraisal of options.
5. That on completion of remediation and verification/validation works and prior to the site being occupied, the developer shall submit a Completion Report for approval, in writing, by the Planning Authority, confirming that the works have been carried out in accordance with the remediation strategy. This report shall demonstrate that no pollutant linkages remain or are likely to occur and include (but not be limited to) a collation of verification/validation certificates, analysis information, remediation lifespan, maintenance/aftercare information and details of imported/disposed/reused materials relevant to the site.
6. That the presence of any previously unrecorded contamination or variation to reported ground conditions that becomes evident during site works shall be brought to the attention of the Planning Authority within one week. Consequential amendments to the Remediation Strategy shall not be implemented unless it has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Planning Authority.
7. That the use of the development shall not commence until the applicant has submitted a completion report for approval, in writing by the Planning Authority detailing all fill or landscaping material imported onto the site. This report shall contain information of the materials source, volume, intended use and verification of chemical quality (including soil-leachate and organic content etc) with plans delineating placement and thickness.

### Reasons

1. To ensure the provision of adequate on site parking facilities.
2. To ensure that the use of the facility does not generate noise disturbance to nearby residents when ambient noise levels are lowest.
3. To ensure that the floodlights do not produce an unacceptable level of light pollution and disturbance to nearby residents.
4. To satisfactorily address potential contamination issued in the interests of environmental safety.

5. To provide verification that remediation has been carried out to the Planning Authority's satisfaction.
6. To ensure that all contamination issues are recorded and dealt with appropriately.
7. To protect receptors from the harmful effects of imported contamination.

Stuart Jamieson  
Head of Regeneration and Planning

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form and plans.
2. Inverclyde Local Development Plan.
3. Consultation replies.
4. Letters of representation.



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