South Tyneside Council

Reference:	250244
Location:	Boldon CA Sports Club Boldon Miners Welfare Ground New Road Boldon Colliery NE35 9AP
Ward:	Boldon Colliery
Description:	Change of use from unused urban land to high quality sports facility, the installation of an all-weather two lane cricket training net, an open steel frame carrying nylon nets standing 4m tall surrounded by a gated galvanised steel fence standing 2m tall.
Recommendation:	Grant Permission with Conditions
Case Officer:	Emma Thomas
Case Officer Contact No.:	0191 4247593 or 07741105284

Description of the Site

The application site is located to the North of an existing Sports facility within the grounds of Boldon CA Sports Club. The area is bounded by woodland to the north, a cricket pitch is located to the east and the clubhouse is located south east beyond the cricket pitch. There is an enclosed football pitch to the south.

Description of the Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use from unused urban land to a high quality sports facility which includes the installation of an all-weather two lane cricket training net, an open steel frame carrying nylon nets standing 4m tall surrounded by a gated galvanised steel fence standing 2m tall.

Relevant Planning History

Reference - ST/0313/24/FUL
Description - Installation of 50 seat covered spectator stand including concrete foundation.
Decision – Grant Permission with Conditions
Decision Date - 07/08/2024

Summary of Consultation Responses

The following responses were received in response to the statutory consultation period which ended on 12/03/2026.

Sport England

This proposal addresses the club's training facilities need without compromising the main pitch cricket pitch.

Sport England uses the opportunity afforded to it by planning application consultations to ensure new facilities are fit for purpose and wherever possible meet best practice set out in relevant design guidance. Sport England has therefore engaged with the ECB to seek its view on the design of the training net. It responded to advise;

'Club currently practices on the pitch so this will development will enable an option to hold practice sessions whilst games are going on the pitch and therefore increasing capacity. Improvement of training facilities across the area was highlighted in the recent PPS.

The orientation of the proposed development is slightly outside of the ECB's recommendations at 59 degrees. There appears to be the available space to correct this and we would recommend that the proposal is amended to meet the 55 degree orientation.'

This being the case, Sport England offers its support for this this application, as it is considered to meet Objective "Enhance - To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision" as set out above.

We would request that the applicant give consideration to the ECB's suggestion for minor reorientation of the facility.

The absence of an objection to this application, in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

Countryside -

Biodiversity Net Gain

The applicant is advised that the final South of Tyne and Wear Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is anticipated to be published mid-2026. This is pertinent to BNG calculations as the LNRS will dictate the Strategic Significance multiplier within the metric calculation.

Guidance states that if the LNRS is published during a live application or prior to discharge of the pre-commencement condition, then the post-development value may need to be updated: LNRS & Strategic Significance Multiplier Transition | Local Government Association. The Consultation Draft LNRS gives a good indication of the potential measures for the site, though may be subject to some changes before final publication – the draft can be viewed here: https://www.natureplan.org.uk/article/35469/Public-Consultation-Report

The strategic significance of baseline and post-development habitats adhere to current guidance and are acceptable.

The updated statutory biodiversity metric (Arbtech, 1st June 2026) is correct and acceptable.

The baseline and proposed condition assessment sheets (Arbtech, 1st June 2026) have been completed correctly and are acceptable.

The revised Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and supporting Statutory Biodiversity Metric have been reviewed. The updated assessment demonstrates a post-development biodiversity unit value of 0.90 habitat units compared to a baseline value of 0.81 habitat units, equating to a net gain of 10.61%, thereby meeting the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. The submitted metric indicates that all gains are to be delivered on-site through habitat enhancement and tree planting, with no reliance on off-site biodiversity units or statutory biodiversity credits.

The revised submission has addressed the concerns raised within the previous consultation response regarding the use of the appropriate grassland condition assessment methodology. The grassland habitats are now assessed using the correct condition assessment sheet for medium distinctiveness grassland habitats.

The proposed biodiversity gain is generated through the enhancement of a 0.033ha parcel of Other Neutral Grassland (Parcel G-E) from poor condition to good condition, together with the planting of five native trees. The submitted Habitat Management, Monitoring and Biodiversity Delivery Plan provides management prescriptions, monitoring proposals and long-term habitat management measures intended to establish and maintain this habitat enhancement over the required 30-year period. The Habitat Enhancement and Landscape Strategy also identifies the enhancement area, proposed tree planting, hedgerow planting and monitoring locations. This drawing is provided as Figure J4 in Appendix J of the HMMBDP, page 77.

Whilst achievement of the target habitat condition will ultimately depend upon the successful implementation and long-term management of the proposed enhancement measures, sufficient information has now been provided to demonstrate a mechanism through which the reported biodiversity gain could be achieved and maintained.

The proposed approach to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with the statutory requirements of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Biodiversity Gain Plan process.

Recommendation
No ecological objection is raised in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain. The statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan process will apply and the applicant will be required to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan for approval prior to commencement of development.

The Ecology Team recommends that, should planning permission be granted, a suitably worded planning condition is imposed to secure the implementation, monitoring, maintenance and review of the submitted Habitat Management, Monitoring and Biodiversity Delivery Plan. This is necessary to ensure that the proposed biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures are delivered in full and achieve the intended ecological outcomes throughout the lifetime of the development.

Given the small-scale nature of the on-site biodiversity delivery proposed, the Ecology Team does not consider it necessary to secure a Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee in this instance.

Summary of Representations

None received

Relevant planning policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan comprises the Council's adopted South Tyneside Local Plan 2023-2040. Relevant policies are listed below:

- Policy SP1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 1 - Promoting Healthy Communities
- Policy SP3 - Spatial Strategy for sustainable development
- Policy 33 – Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Ecological Networks
- Policy 35 - Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain
- Policy 47 - Design Principles
- Policy SP23 - Sports Provision and Playing Pitches

National planning policy is also a material consideration in determining this planning application. Relevant national policy comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

The following national guidance is also relevant to this planning application:

- Sport England Playing Field Policy

Assessment

The key issues in the assessment of this planning application are as follows:

- Principle of the Development and Impact on Playing Field
- Visual amenity
- Residential amenity
- Highways safety
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Principle of the Development and impact Playing Field

The proposal is for the change of use of unused urban land to high quality sports facility, which includes the installation of an all-weather two lane cricket training net, an open steel frame carrying nylon nets standing 4m tall surrounded by a gated galvanised steel fence standing 2m tall.

The proposed cricket facility would be positioned north of the existing football pitch which is an area of designated open space within wider Boldon Community Association area site.

Local Plan Policy SP23 (Sports Provision and Playing Pitches) states that high quality and accessible sporting facilities that meet the current and future sporting needs of the Borough will be delivered by supporting improvements to pitch quality and infrastructure at playing pitch sites where it would contribute to improving the quality of playing pitch provision and accessibility of the site for all users in the Borough and enhancing indoor sport and leisure provision to meet the needs of the community.

The installation of the proposed cricket nets would support the existing sporting provision on the site in accordance with the objectives of the policies of the Local Plan and the NPPF which states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, for example through the provision of sports facilities. The proposals would also help to deliver Sport England's 'Enhance' planning objective to enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision, which is also a material planning consideration.

Sport England were consulted on the application and have confirmed that they do not object to the proposal and that the proposals meet exception 2 of Sport England Playing Field Policies. Exception 2 states; '*The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use*.'

They also recommended that the orientation of the proposed development be amended, as it is slightly outside of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)'s recommendations at 59 degrees. They stated that there appears to be sufficient space to adjust this, and recommended amending the proposal to meet the 55-degree orientation. The applicant was advised of the Sport England recommendation by email, however asked for the application to proceed as is, as the alignment of the proposed practice facility has already been considered. It is considered that the proposed orientation, which would be marginally different that as recommended by the ECB, would be acceptable in this regard.

Taking this into account, it is considered that the installation of the proposed cricket facility would be acceptable and the proposal would be in accordance with, Local Plan Policy 23, as well as the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Visual Amenity

Local Plan Policy 47 requires development to be well designed.

The maximum height of the proposed fencing would be 4m and would be visible from the public domain to the west and south of the application site, however this would be over a long distance. A tree belt runs along the north western boundary restricting the view from Cotswold Lane. Given the scale of the proposal, and the lightweight construction, it is considered that it would have no harmful impacts and would convey sensitive consideration to their surroundings having regard to their scale, proportion and use of materials. A condition is recommended to control that the development be constructed in accordance with details specified in the application. It is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy 47.

Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy 47 requires a development to be acceptable in relation to any impact on residential amenity.

The proposal would be located to the north of an existing sports pitch over 140m from the neighbours to the south east of the application site. The proposal would not include any lighting as part of the development and given the existing use of the site, it is not considered that the proposal would create significant additional noise or disturbance to be considered harmful to neighbouring amenity. It is considered that the proposal would accord with Local Plan Policy 47.

Parking

Within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 6 'Parking Standards', there is no specific type of development which directly relates to this proposal. The closest type of development is under Use Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) which provides maximum parking and minimum cycle standards for stadia development. However, the proposal would not be for a new stadium, but to enhance the existing cricket facility within the grounds of an existing Community Association. Furthermore, the nets would be used for practice which currently takes place on the pitch and as such there would be no significant additional comings or goings as a result of the development.

The club benefits from access to off-street parking (of approximately 40 spaces) and there is also public parking to the west of the application site. On this basis it is considered that the proposal would not generate car parking problems that would cause congestion on the highway to the detriment of highway safety.

It would therefore accord with Local Plan Policy 47.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

From the 2nd of April 2024, the requirements of Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, as inserted into Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, apply to all planning applications unless falling under one of the listed exemptions. This application was valid from the 21.11.2024 and so is legally required to deliver biodiversity net gains of at least 10%.

NPPF Paragraph N2 3 advises that development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decision-makers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt.

The application is supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) and a completed version of DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric.

The Countryside team were consulted on this application and in terms of Ecology, they advised that an Ecological Impact Assessment or Preliminary Ecological Appraisal would not be required, considering the scale and nature of the scheme.

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment report and a Habitat Management, Monitoring and Biodiversity Delivery Plan (HMMBDP) have been submitted as part of this application.

In terms of BNG, the baseline and condition assessment sheets are acceptable, as are pre- and post-development plans. The statutory biodiversity metric submitted is correct and acceptable.

Biodiversity Net Gain calculations using The Statutory Metric demonstrates a post-development biodiversity unit value of 0.90 habitat units compared to a baseline value of 0.81 habitat units, equating to a net gain of 10.61%, thereby meeting the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. The submitted metric indicates that all gains are to be delivered on-site through habitat enhancement and tree planting, with no reliance on off-site biodiversity units or statutory biodiversity credits.

The proposed approach to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with the statutory requirements of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Biodiversity Gain Plan process.

The Countryside Team have asked that a condition be included to secure the implementation, monitoring, maintenance and review of the submitted Habitat Management, Monitoring and Biodiversity Delivery Plan, which is necessary to ensure that the proposed biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures are delivered in full and achieve the intended ecological outcomes throughout the lifetime of the development. This has been included.

The Countryside Team have concluded that given the small-scale nature of the on-site biodiversity delivery proposed, they do not consider it necessary to secure a Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee in this instance.

Subject to the suggested planning conditions, the proposal would accord with Local Plan Policies 33 and 35, and the NPPF (with regards to ecology / biodiversity).

Conclusion

In deciding whether to grant planning permission the Council must have due regard to the 3 equality aims contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty). A preliminary assessment of the potential equality impacts of any grant of planning permission in this case has been undertaken. There are no apparent equality impacts of the proposed development which give rise to the need to undertake a more detailed equality impact assessment.

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

The development would enhance an existing community facility, the physical form of the development, being modest in height and that it would be viewed in the context of the wider site, would ensure that there would be no harmful impact. The proposal would not cause neighbour amenity issues or highways safety concerns.

As a result, it is considered that the proposed development complies with all relevant local and national planning policy and guidance. Consequently, this application is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Grant Permission with Conditions

Conditions

1 The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to ensure that the development is carried out within a reasonable time.

2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan(s) as detailed below

- Drg. No. BCA-01-002 Rev A - Proposed Works Boundary – Received 02/04/2025
- Drg. No. A-03 - Proposed Assembly Plan – Received 02/04/2025
- Drg. No. A 01 - Proposed Elevations and Plans– Received 02/04/2025
- Drg No A-02 - Proposed Photograph Images – Received 02/04/2025
- Drg. No. BCA-01-003 Rev A - Site Layout Plan and Site Location Plan– Received 02/04/2025

Any minor material changes to the approved plans will require a formal planning application under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary this condition and substitute alternative plans.

In order to provide a procedure to seek approval of proposed minor material change which is not substantially different from that which has been approved.

3 The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be as per set out on the application form (received 02/04/2025) and as listed in the plans as listed in Condition 2.

To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Local Plan Policy 47.

4 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the measures and timetables contained within the Habitat Management, Monitoring and Biodiversity Delivery Plan received 10.08.2026.

In the interests of biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measure and in accordance with Local Plan Policies 33 and 35.

Informatives

1 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

2 **Biodiversity Gain Plan Requirement**

This development is subject to the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements set out in Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Planning permission is deemed to be subject to a statutory pre-commencement condition requiring the submission to, and approval by, the Local Planning Authority of a Biodiversity Gain Plan demonstrating a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must demonstrate how the development will achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, calculated using the statutory Biodiversity Metric, and must include:

- The pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- The post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- Any off-site biodiversity gains allocated to the development (including evidence of registration where applicable);
- Any statutory biodiversity credits purchased (where reliance is placed upon them).

Development must not commence until the Biodiversity Gain Plan has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Case officer: Emma Thomas
Signed: *E.Thomas*
Date: 22/09/2026

Authorised Signatory: Seán Gallagher
Date: 22/09/2026