

DELEGATED

Report to Planning Committee

10 December 2025

Report of Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth

25/1607/FUL

Arlington Park Sports Centre, Adderley Street, Stockton-on-Tees

Expiry Date: 13 October 2025

Extension of Time Date: 11 December 2025

Summary

Planning permission is sought for the provision of a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) to include the installation of floodlighting, associated enclosure and footpaths.

No letters of objection have been received following neighbour consultations. No objections have been raised by statutory consultees.

The application site relates to the development of designated playing fields; however, it is for the provision of improved sporting facilities thereby drawing support from Local Plan Policies.

The application has been assessed in full, and it is considered that the development would not result in any significant conflict with the policies of the Local Plan or relevant chapters of the NPPF and there are no technical reasons why the proposed scheme would be deemed unacceptable in planning terms in which to justify refusal of the application.

In accordance with the Councils scheme of delegation, the application is to be determined by Planning Committee as the application is Local Authority development with a total site area of over 500 square metres.

Recommendation(s)

That planning application 25/0777/LA be approved subject to the following conditions;

Time Limit

- 01 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: By virtue of the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Approved Plans

- 02 The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s);

Plan Reference Number

23-0106 01
23-0106 03P V2
23-0106 04
HLS8264 – Page 1
HLS8264 – Page 2

Date Received

01 August 2025
26 November 2025
01 August 2025
01 August 2025
01 August 2025

Reason: To define the consent.

Opening Hours

- 03 The development hereby permitted shall not operate outside of the hours of 08:00-21:00 (Monday – Sunday inclusive), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to comply with Policy SD8 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

External Lighting

- 04 The external lighting shall operate in accordance with the details contained within the submitted Design and Access Statement and approved plans, reference HLS8264 – Page 1 and HLS8264 – Page 2, dated 01 August 2025 and shall operate only between the hours of 08:00 and 21:00 Monday-Sunday, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The approved lighting scheme shall be implemented in full and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details. No additional external lighting shall be installed without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of nearby occupiers by preventing excessive light intrusion and disturbance, particularly during early morning and evening hours, in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Institute of Lighting Professionals' Guidance Note 01/20.

Construction Hours

- 05 In undertaking the development that is hereby approved:

No external construction works, works of demolition, deliveries, external running of plant and equipment shall take place other than between the hours of 0800 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1300 on Saturday.

No internal works audible outside the site boundary shall take place on the site other than between the hours of 0800 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1300 on Saturday.

No construction works or works of demolition whatsoever, including deliveries, external running of plant and equipment, internal works whether audible or not outside the site boundary, shall take place on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays.

For the purposes of this condition, construction works are defined as: The carrying out of any building, civil engineering or engineering construction work involving the use of plant and machinery including hand tools.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of existing residents from the development during construction works, in accordance with Policy SD8 and ENV7 of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan and Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative Reason for Planning Approval

Informative: Working Practices

The Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner and sought solutions to problems arising in dealing with the planning application by gaining additional information required to assess the scheme and by the identification and imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

Planning History

97/1751/P - Erection of 2.1 metre galvanised steel palisade fence – Approved 11th November 1997

97/2127/P - Erection of 2.1m high galvanised steel fence (revised scheme) - Approved 20th January 1998

25/0100/FUL Erection of a single storey community centre (Demolition of existing buildings) – Approved 17th March 2025

Site and Surroundings

1. The application site relates Arlington Park Sports Centre which is located within the Bowesfield area of Stockton. The site relates to an enclosed parcel of brownfield land, currently occupied by a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) which comprises a hard surfaced area, enclosed by fencing with 6no floodlighting columns.
2. To the north of the site is the youth community centre which is subject to a recent planning permission for a new community centre. Bowesfield Primary School lies to the northwest and directly to the east are commercial premises. There are surrounding residential properties to the south and north and St Cuthberts RC Primary School beyond to the northeast.
3. The site lies within the defined settlement limits of the main conurbation and is designated playing fields within the Stockton-on-Tee Local Plan.

Proposal

4. Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) to include the installation of replacement floodlighting, associated enclosure and perimeter footpaths.
5. The MUGA will be slightly larger than the existing facility, measure 35.2m x 20.0m with an additional 3.6x x 1.0m goal recess to each end. The surface will comprise of a new sand dressed synthetic layer on top of the existing macadam surface and will contain specific Football and Cricket markings. The MUGA will be enclosed by 3.0m high perimeter fencing and will contain floodlighting to each corner of the MUGA, reduced from 6no to 4no, of the same height columns but improved LED lighting specification.
6. The public entrance to the site will be to the north where there is an area (approx. 21.6m x 10.3m) of hard surfacing proposed for use by spectators, which will include a range of ad hoc structures including benches, lockers, sports equipment, waste bins etc.

Consultations

7. Consultees were notified, and the following comments were received.
8. Environmental Health Unit
No objection subject to conditions in relation to lighting, noise assessment and hours of use.

Following discussions about the existing facility, EHO have omitted the requirement for the noise assessment and has agreed the hours of use of 08:00-21:00 Monday-Sunday

9. Sport England
No objection
10. SBC Flood Risk
The LLFA have no comments to make on the application
11. Highways
There are no highways objections to the proposals
12. Cleveland Police
I have spoken to the Neighbourhood officer; there are no issues and especially as its secure and access is managed by the Community Group, we cannot see any issues from an ASB perspective.

Publicity

13. A Site Notice was erected on 26th August 2025. Neighbours have been notified in writing of the proposals, and no comments have been received as a result of the consultation exercise.

Planning Policy Considerations

14. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plan is the Stockton on Tees Borough Council Local Plan 2019.
15. Section 143 of the Localism Act came into force on the 15 January 2012 and requires the Local Planning Authority to take local finance considerations into account, this section s70(2) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended requires in dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application and c) any other material considerations.
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National Planning Policy Framework

18. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic social and environmental objectives.

19. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which for decision making means;
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 96 Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

(b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas;

Paragraph 104 Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

(c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Paragraph 135 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁵¹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Strategic Development Strategy Policy 1 (SD1) - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

(1). In accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), when the Council considers development proposals it will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals for sustainable development can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

2. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or,
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Strategic Development Strategy Policy 5 (SD5) - Natural, Built and Historic Environment

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the environment alongside meeting the challenge of climate change the Council will:

1. Conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment through a variety of methods including:
 - a) Ensuring that development proposals adhere to the sustainable design principles identified within Policy SD8.
2. Meet the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change through a variety of methods including:
 - a. Directing development in accordance with Policies SD3 and SD4.
 - b. Delivering an effective and efficient sustainable transport network to deliver genuine alternatives to the private car.

Strategic Development Strategy Policy 8 (SD8) - Sustainable Design Principles

1. The Council will seek new development to be designed to the highest possible standard, taking into consideration the context of the surrounding area and the need to respond positively to the:
 - a. Quality, character and sensitivity of the surrounding public realm, heritage assets, and nearby buildings, in particular at prominent junctions, main roads and town centre gateways;
 - b. Landscape character of the area, including the contribution made by existing trees and landscaping;
 - c. Need to protect and enhance ecological and green infrastructure networks and assets;
 - d. Need to ensure that new development is appropriately laid out to ensure adequate separation between buildings and an attractive environment;
 - e. Privacy and amenity of all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - f. Existing transport network and the need to provide safe and satisfactory access and parking for all modes of transport;
 - g. Need to reinforce local distinctiveness and provide high quality and inclusive design solutions, and
 - h. Need for all development to be designed inclusively to ensure that buildings and spaces are accessible for all, including people with disabilities.
2. New development should contribute positively to making places better for people. They should be inclusive and establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit.
3. All proposals will be designed with public safety and the desire to reduce crime in mind, incorporating, where appropriate, advice from the Health and Safety Executive, Secured by Design, or any other appropriate design standards.

Transport and Infrastructure Policy 2 (TI2) - Community Infrastructure

1. There is a need to ensure that community infrastructure is delivered and protected to meet the needs of the growing population within the Borough. To ensure community infrastructure meets the education, cultural, social, leisure/recreation and health needs of all sections of the local community, the Council will:
 - a. Protect, maintain and improve existing community infrastructure where appropriate and practicable;
 - b. Work with partners to ensure existing deficiencies are addressed; and
 - c. Require the provision of new community infrastructure alongside new development in accordance with Policy SD7.
4. To ensure needs for community infrastructure are met, the Council will:
 - a. Support opportunities to widen the cultural, sport, recreation and leisure offer;

c. Encourage the multi-purpose use of facilities to provide a range of services and facilities within one accessible location;

6. Development on existing sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields will be resisted, unless:

- a. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the buildings or land as surplus to requirements; or
- b. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity in a suitable location; or
- c. The development is for an alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Material Planning Considerations

20. The key considerations of this application are:

- The Principle of Development.
- Visual Impact
- Amenity Impact
- Highway Implications
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Other Matters

Principle of Development

- 21. The site relates to an existing community facility and is designated playing field as identified in the Council's Adopted Local Plan. Local Planning Policy TI2 (4) (a) seeks to support opportunities to widen cultural, sport, recreation and leisure offer to ensure that community infrastructure is met.
- 22. Paragraph 96 of the National planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure that there is access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, recognising the importance for the health and well-being of communities.
- 23. Sport England have been consulted as part of the proposals and recognises the improvements to the facility despite the exclusion of some sporting provisions. On the whole, however, no objections have been raised to the new MUGA.
- 24. The proposed development would represent an enhancement of an existing community and sporting facilities within the perimeter of a designated playing field. It is considered that the proposed development accords with Local Planning Policies and the NPPF, the principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Visual Impact

- 25. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF promotes the creation of high-quality buildings and places. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. With paragraph 135 requiring that developments should not only maintain a strong sense of place but should improve the quality of the area. Developments should also be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 26. In addition, the Stockton on Tees Local Plan, encourages high standards of design through Policy SD8 which states that new development should be appropriate to the

context of the surrounding area and be of an appropriate style, proportion, and materials.

27. The site is an existing MUGA within a predominantly residential area in Stockton albeit with some mixed-uses in the locale, including an existing school to the northwest, and recently approved community centre directly to the north, together with commercial premises directly to the east. West of the site are the playing fields associated with Bowesfield Primary School.
28. The proposed development seeks to replace and refurbish the existing MUGA which comprises an enclosed hard surface with existing flood light provision. A new sand dressed, synthetic PlayZone surface will be laid with Football and Cricket markings, which will be enclosed by 3m high twin-bar panelled fencing, finished in 'moss green' with double rebound mesh to the bottom 1.2m. A macadam area to the north of the MUGA for use by spectators is also proposed, together with 4no flood lighting columns to each corner, which will retain the height of the existing floodlighting columns at 8m.
29. Based on the existing development, it is considered that the proposed MUGA and associated development would not have an adverse visual impact on the site or the wider, mixed-use area. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of design, scale and appearance and would comply with Policies SD5 and SD8 of the Stockton Local Plan and Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

Amenity Impact

30. In respect of the neighbouring properties, planning Policy SD8 seek to provide sufficient levels of privacy and amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, while guidance within the Householder Alterations and extensions SPD provides further clarity over the impacts that development can have on neighbouring occupiers.
31. Policy SD8 also states that proposals should be designed with public safety and the desire to reduce crime in mind, incorporating, where appropriate, advice from the Health and Safety Executive, Secured by Design, or any other appropriate design standards.
32. Chapter 12 of the NPPF seeks to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
33. As previously outlined, the site is in a mixed-use area with residential dwellings in close proximity. The site is an existing floodlit MUGA facility, which is still in use, therefore the refurbishment of the site for the continued use of sport should not have any further impact on adjacent land users or occupiers of adjacent residential properties providing the use does not intensify or create additional noise/lighting pollution.
34. The Environmental Health Officer has been consulted on the proposed development and accepts that the flood lighting design is an improvement on the existing lighting provision and ensures that overspill and glare will be kept within the recommended limits to prevent disruption to nearby residential properties. A condition however was advised to restrict the use of the facility to within the hours of 08:00 and 19:00 Monday to Friday. Furthermore, a Noise Assessment was recommended to establish whether a scheme would be required for the protection of the existing dwellings from noise disturbances from the pitches when in use.
35. The applicant contested the need for a Noise Assessment based on the existing use of the premises and that it would not result in an intensification in this respect. In terms of the hours of use, the applicant stated that the existing facility is used at times until

7:30pm by the youth club therefore there is a need for later opening times until 10pm, 9pm at a minimum, Monday to Sunday to allow flexibility in programming and to maximise the community benefit as evening use has typically been commonplace with this facility. The applicant has also confirmed that the new floodlighting will introduce new LED lighting system which offers significant improved directional control which will reduce glare and lower light spill compared to the existing fixtures.

36. In response to the applicants' comments, Environmental Health have confirmed that they no longer require the Noise Assessment and following the submission of additional information which has confirmed that the use of the site will not be significantly intensified, EH have advised that any noise impact as a result of the proposed development would be negligible and that they agree to the opening hours of 08:00 – 21:00 Monday-Sunday.
37. Cleveland Police have also been consulted as part of the application to consider whether the development would have potential to exacerbate anti-social behaviour in the area. The Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) has reviewed the application in conjunction with the local Neighbourhood Officer and confirms that there are no known issues at the site as it is secure and access is suitably managed by the Community Group, therefore no objections have been raised in this respect.
38. Overall, given the existing use of the site and subject to condition to control opening hours which is deemed sufficient to address any residual impact in terms of noise and disturbances, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and would not result in an unacceptable impact on amenity. The proposal would therefore not conflict with Policy SD8 of the Local Plan and Part 12 of the NPPF.

Highway implications

39. Local Plan Policy SD8 states that new development should be designed to the highest possible standard, taking into consideration the context of the surrounding area and the need to respond positively to the existing transport network and the need to provide safe and satisfactory access and parking for all modes of transport.
40. Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out 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, following mitigation, would be severe.
41. The site is accessed via Bowesfield Lane to the east and Adderley Street to the north. There are pockets of parking within the vicinity, however, none of which are specifically allocated for the purposes of this facility. The site, however, is an existing MUGA likely to be utilised by the exiting local community and it is located in close proximity to Stockton Town Centre where a number of public transport options are available.
42. The Highways, Transport and Environment Manager raises no objections to the proposed development. As such, it is considered that there would be no detrimental impact on highway safety. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy SD8 of the Local Plan and Part 9 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

43. Stockton Local Plan Policy ENV4 advises that reducing and mitigating flood risk is an important issue for planning particularly as the effects of climate change are being realised. To ensure sustainable economic growth is achieved, it is essential that development (new and existing) is safe from flooding and incorporates approaches to

reduce risk. When addressing flood risk, it is important to consider all sources of flooding which include fluvial, surface water, sewer and groundwater flooding.

44. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and due to the scale of the development, the application is not required to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. In terms of surface water drainage, the existing surface is a semi-porous material with no formal drainage system. The proposals include the provision for surface water drainage in line with best practice for the refurbishment of existing hard-court areas. As such, it is considered that the development has been designed to minimise flood risk to the facility of the surrounding area.
45. Overall, it is considered that the development would not lead to an increase in flood risk on-site or off-site and would be acceptable from a flood risk and drainage perspective in accordance with Policies SD5 and ENV7 of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan and Part 14 of the NPPF.

Other Matters

46. The site comprises an existing MUGA facility which is a fully sealed surface and no areas of vegetation, therefore there will be no impact on existing ecological habitats. The flood lighting is an existing feature, nevertheless the revised proposals have been designed to conform with the Institute of Lighting Professional's document Guidance Note 08/18 – Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK therefore it would have negligible impact on bat foraging habitats. Taking into account the guidance within the NPPF and the characteristics of the site, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on ecological habitats.
47. With regards to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as described above, the site is a fully sealed surface with no areas of vegetation to be removed, therefore there would be no loss of priority habitat. The development would not decrease the biodiversity value of the site and is therefore exempt from the requirements of BNG.
48. In terms of Nutrient Neutrality, the proposed development would fall outside of the scope for consideration.

Conclusion

49. In view of the assessment above, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any significant conflict with the policies contained within the Stockton on Tees Local Plan or the relevant chapters of the NPPF and there are no technical reasons why the proposed scheme would be deemed unacceptable.
50. In planning terms, the proposed development is considered acceptable in all other regards and is therefore recommended for approval subject to those planning conditions set out in the report.

Financial Implications

No known implications other than the associated costs of implementation of the proposals/maintenance.

Environmental Implications

There will be no loss of vegetation or trees on site.

Legal Implications

None known

Community Safety Implications

The provisions of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Ward and Ward Councillors

WARD	Ropner
Ward Councillor	Councillor Shakeel Hussain
Ward Councillor	Councillor Sufi Mubeen

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance
Stockton on Tees Local Plan Adopted 2019
SPD2 – Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping - Dec 2009/2014

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