

COMHAIRLE CONTAE ÁTHA CLIATH THEAS
SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



South Dublin County Council Meeting

12th July 2021

Part 8 Report

Synthetic Grass Sports Pitch at Sean Walsh Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Pursuant to the requirements of the relevant Planning Acts and Regulations, South Dublin County Council gave notice to construct the development of a Synthetic Grass Sports Pitch at Sean Walsh Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24 as set out below:

- The construction of a synthetic grass 3G all-weather sports pitch, approx. 92m X 52m.
- To be surrounded with a 5-metre-high weldmesh type fence with an additional 1.4m ball-stop fence on the northern side.
- 6 floodlighting columns to allow evening use.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras for monitoring by An Garda Síochána and South Dublin County Council.
- The planting of new trees in Sean Walsh Park.
- All necessary landscape works including storage areas, footpaths and planting.
- All ancillary works.

The proposal has undergone Appropriate Assessment Screening under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU. The Planning Authority has made a preliminary examination of the nature, size and location of the proposed development. The authority has concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and a determination has been made that an EIA is not required. Any person could, within 4-weeks from the date of publication of this notice, apply to An Bord Pleanála for a screening determination as to whether the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The plans and particulars of the proposed development were available for inspection online on the Council's Public Consultation Portal website (<http://consult.sdublincoco.ie>) during the period from 20th May 2021 to 2nd July 2021.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, persons wishing to inspect printed plans and particulars of the proposed development made an appointment by emailing planningdept@sdublincoco.ie or by phoning (01) 4149000. After making an appointment, printed plans and particulars were available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at County Hall, Tallaght, Dublin 24 during office hours from 20th May 2021 to 18th June 2021.

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the proposed development will be situated could be made in writing up to **5pm on 2nd July 2021** and were submitted either via:

Online Submissions: <http://consult.sdublincoco.ie>

or

Post to: A/Senior Executive Officer, Environment Water and Climate Change, South Dublin County Council, County Hall, Tallaght, Dublin 24 YNN5.

It should be noted that the Freedom of Information Act, 1997-2006 (as amended) applies to all records held by South Dublin County Council. South Dublin County Council's Personal Data Privacy Statements can be viewed at www.sdcc.ie and all personal data will be retained in line with statutory requirements.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this Chief Executive's Report is to present the outcome of the Part 8 consultation, to respond to submissions made during the consultation period and to make recommendations in relation to the proposed development where appropriate.

1.2 Structure of the Report

This report provides the following:

An introduction including details on the purpose of the report and an outline of the public consultation programme that was carried out.

- Description of Proposed Development
- List of Submissions received during the consultation period
- A summary of the issues raised in the submissions made during the consultation period and the Chief Executive's responses and recommendations
- Assessment as to whether or not the proposed development would be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- Recommendation as to whether or not the proposed development should be proceeded with as proposed, or as varied or modified as recommended in the report, or should not be proceeded with, as the case may be.

1.3 Outline of Public Consultation Programme

1.3.1 Non Statutory Consultation

The proposals were presented to the council members prior to public consultation period on the April County Council Meeting. A post-consultation report to the Area Committee was not made due to the timelines that require submission of the CE report to the full Council within 8 weeks of the end of the consultation period which requires presentation to the July Council Meeting.

1.3.2 Statutory Consultation

The proposed development and accompanying Appropriate Assessment report were placed on public display for the statutory period from the 20th May 2021 to 2nd July 2021.

Copies of the plans and particulars of the proposed scheme were available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the following locations:

- South Dublin County Council Offices, County Hall, Tallaght, Dublin 24 between the hours of 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and 9:00am - 4:30pm on Friday. Closed at weekends and bank holidays. **(Inspection and purchase)**
- The plans and particulars could be viewed on the Council's Public Consultation Portal website <http://consult.sdublincoco.ie>

Persons wishing to inspect drawings of the proposed development could contact the Planning Department by emailing planningdept@sdublincoco.ie or by phoning (01) 4149000. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, plans and particulars of the proposed development were available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy only by appointment at County Hall, Tallaght, Dublin 24 during normal working hours during the period from 20th May 2021 to 18th June 2021. The plans are available online on the Council's Public Consultation Portal website, <http://consult.sdublincoco.ie>

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the proposed development will be situated, could be made in writing up to 5pm on the and submitted either via:

Online Submissions: <http://consult.sdublincoco.ie>

or

Post to: Senior Executive Officer, Environment Water and Climate Change Department, South Dublin County Council, County Hall, Tallaght, Dublin 24 YNN5.

A total of 3 submissions were received by 5.00pm on the 2nd July 2021.

2. Proposed Development

2.1 Description of the Proposed Development

The details of the proposals are:

- The construction of a synthetic 3G all-weather sports pitch, approx. 92m X 52m.
- To be surrounded with a 5-metre-high weldmesh type fence with an additional 1.4m ball-stop fence on the northern side.
- 6 floodlighting columns to allow evening use.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras for monitoring by An Garda Síochána and South Dublin County Council.
- The planting of new trees in Sean Walsh Park.
- All ancillary works.

2.2 Plans and Details

Plans and details are available at the following link: <http://consult.sdublincoco.ie>

3. List of Submissions

3 submissions were received during the specified period of the public consultation in respect of the proposed development from the following:

Ursula McCabe Principal of Old Bawn Community School.

Mark Byrne Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Gerry Stockil Tallaght Community Council

4. Summary and Categorisation of Issues Raised and Chief Executives Response

URSULA MCCABE PRINCIPAL OF OLD BAWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

Summary and Categorisation of Issues Raised:

General welcome of proposals.

Notes the lack of green space or pitches within the school's own site and raises concern around maintaining access to adjacent open space, pitches and recreational facilities.

Notes previous use of existing grass pitch facility for sports days, training and PE classes and notes previous use of existing grass pitch for matches but notes this has not occurred in recent years due to condition of the pitch; welcomes upgrade in this respect and raises concerns that the development of the proposed synthetic grass pitch would leave the school without access to green space or suitable playing pitches.

Makes reference to previous correspondence citing agreements between various parties regarding use of facilities in Sean Walsh Park including Stadium and existing grass pitch and requests assurances regarding regular and agreed priority access to the new facility including a written agreement concerning the use of the facility between SDCC and Old Bawn Community School.

Raises concerns regarding noise from the facility.

Chief Executives Response

The welcome extended to the proposal is noted.

It is noted that the wider facilities within Sean Walsh Park; including green open space, access to the Dublin Mountains Way and other facilities remain available to the school. The existing access points from the school to Sean Walsh Park remain unchanged as part of these proposals; these access points will also provide access to the proposed Artificial Grass Pitch. It is further noted that there is a second grass pitch which exists to the south of the school; also within Sean Walsh Park and this is available for allocation to any clubs/ groups/ schools via the Council's annual pitch allocation system.

The Tallaght LAP identified Sean Walsh Park as the optimal location for an Artificial Grass Pitch. A further study of the area identified the current site location, layout and design as the most feasible one. It is noted that there are a number of complementary uses within the area but given its location within a town park where space is at a premium the Council remain open to reviewing the proposal in terms of design and position should any alternative opportunities arise or parameters change into the future. In the interim the proposal has been designed to maximise the pitch space available, the multi-functional nature of the intended sports use and ease of access by complementary users as much as possible. Further enhancement of same will be carried out, where possible, at the detailed design stage to ensure universal accessibility and ease of pedestrian and cycle access.

Comments regarding existing pitch usage is noted; the existing grass pitch is not of high quality and does not support increased match play. The provision of an All-Weather Pitch will facilitate increased match play and training use by a wide variety of users, justifying the significant public investment in same.

While the consideration of the operation of the proposed facility is outside the scope of the Part 8 process, it is noted that the Artificial Grass Pitch is being provided as part of the of the Sports Pitch Strategy which seeks to do the following:

Recommendations from SDCC's Sports Pitch Strategy

- Provide an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGPs) to increase provision, usage and provide for training need
- AGP's provide **increased pitch capacity** to meet increased population growth in higher density/ urban locations
- Position at **Strategic locations**, particularly at new planned development and high population areas; to **facilitate high use, late evening use and flood lighting**.
- Provide **all weather, year-round facilities**.
- Meet demand for **increased match play**
- Meet demand for **training provision** which is not currently being met.
- **Remove training pressure from grass pitches** with resultant higher standard of grass pitches.

Consideration of the operation of the proposed facility is outside the scope of the Part 8 process; as the Part 8 process assesses issues in relation to the proper planning and sustainable development of the facility. However, it must be noted that the Astro Pitch programme is designed to facilitate as much use as possible by a variety of clubs, groups, schools etc. The plan is for managed access which will facilitate multi-sports and multi-club / group use. Future operational proposals will be designed to facilitate same. With regard to any pre-agreed legally-binding arrangements, the council will assess these when developing the operational stage of the facility and incorporate them into the operation of the facility as required. SDCC will facilitate further discussions with Old Bawn Community School in this regard.

Council's agreed Sports Pitch Strategy recommends the implementation of an Astro programme. This programme specifically caters for increased match play and training need across all clubs and communities. Astros are not limited by capacity (unlike grass pitches) and it is intended that games will be played at a very high level of frequency. In addition, up to 40 hours of training per week can also be accommodated.

Given the location close to the N81 and Tallaght Stadium it is not envisaged there will be a large increase in ambient noise in the area. Use of Artificial Grass Pitches tends to be concentrated more to late afternoon and evening use so impact to the school will be reduced. In addition; the location of the proposed pitch; with a large grass mound between the school and the facility and the design of the pitch (not enclosed by walls / open to the air) will mitigate concerns in this regard. However, the concern is noted and SDCC will review the design of the pitch at the detailed design stage to ensure any impacts to adjacent uses can be mitigated. In addition, SDCC will examine opportunities for increased planting (in liaison with the school) to decrease any further impacts.

Chief Executives Recommendation:

It is recommended that no variation or modification be made to the proposed development.

MARK BYRNE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IRELAND.

Summary and Categorisation of Issues Raised:

Notes need to ensure signage and lighting structures do not cause traffic hazard; especially inappropriate illumination and moving images.

Recommends that the Council ensures appropriate levels of mitigation for lighting structures are identified and provided for with regard to provisions of Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines to ensure no impact on the N81 national road.

Chief Executives Response:

The preliminary design stage included liaison on the Public Lighting Section of SDCC and incorporation of recommendations in that regard. The detailed design stage for the scheme will examine the lighting proposals further and incorporate any mitigation measures as required in relation to the pitch and lighting including provisions in relation to Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines to ensure no impact on the N81 national road.

Chief Executives Recommendation:

It is recommended that no variation or modification be made to the proposed development.

GERRY STOCKIL TALLAGHT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Summary and Categorisation of Issues Raised:

Welcomes the proposal as a well-used facility, in a good location, near an existing landmark sports facility, all located in Sean Walsh Park.

Requests a changing places facility be provided as part of the project

Requests addition of an improved land bridge to the park to allow users of the facility to more easily visit the Square

Requests the addition of a café facility

Requests the inclusion of a viewing tower project as part of the plan

Requests pathway lighting around the main stretches of pathway around the pitch.

Supports the concerns of Old Bawn Community School.

Asks that consideration be made to ensure FIFA Quality pro mark be applied to the development and the use of sustainable materials.

Requests that Big Belly Bins be included in the area.

Chief Executives Response

The welcome of the proposals is noted.

The provision of changing facilities, improved land bridge, café facilities, viewing tower project is outside the scope of the current Part 8 and not a requirement of same.

The requirement of lighting access routes to the facility will be assessed at the detailed design stage; though at the preliminary stage it was assessed that there is sufficient existing lighting from adjacent facilities; including from the adjacent N81 to facilitate access to the facility during its hours of operation.

Noted; please see CE response to submission by Old Bawn Community School above.

Notes, sustainable materials will be used where possible.

Big Belly Bins are being considered as part of a wider county consideration and are outside the scope of the current Part 8.

Chief Executives Recommendation:

It is recommended that no variation or modification be made to the proposed development.

5. Proper planning and sustainable development

Context for the Project

National plans, including National Development Plan, Project 2040 Building Irelands Future, National Planning Framework, SDCC County Development Plan, Tallaght Local Area Plan.

In November 2018, Government launched the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) to deliver the flagship element of Project 2040.

SDCC's application was successful in receiving URDF funding for projects in Tallaght's Core Urban Centre to help deliver Project 2040.

The following are the URDF Funded Projects selected for funding:

- New Innovation Square,
- Innovation Centre,
- Upgrade and regeneration of Chamber Square and associated pedestrian link

- Tallaght Stadium 4th Stand,
- Tallaght Mobility Hub,
- Belgard Link Roads
- Astro Pitch for Sean Walsh Park

County Development Plan 2016-2022

The lands are zoned – South Dublin County Council Development Plan *Zoning Objective 'OS': 'To preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities'* The zoning of the site supports park development and the criteria as applicable from the Development Plan supports the design proposed. The proposed development complies with the relevant Development Plan policies.

The development plan policies that affect the site directly - To preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities Zoning Objective 'OS'- are the following:

ECONOMIC AND TOURISM (ET) Policy 7 Leisure Activities

It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the development of leisure activities in the County.

ET7 Objective 2:

To promote the development of outdoor leisure activities on lands that are designated with Zoning Objective Open Space 'OS' (to preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities).

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE(CI) Policy 12 Open Spaces

It is the policy of the Council that a hierarchical network of high quality open space is available to those who live, work and visit the County, providing for both passive and active recreation, and that the resource offered by public open spaces, parks and playing fields is maximised through effective management.

CI12 Objective 1:

To support a hierarchy of open space and recreational facilities based on settlement size and catchment.

CI12 Objective 3:

To develop parks and open/green spaces that cater for the diverse needs of the County's population, in particular different age groups and abilities, through the facilitation of both active and passive recreational activities and universal access.

CI12 Objective 4:

To support and facilitate the development of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and playspaces in larger parks to cater for all age groups and abilities.

This proposed development of the site would not affect the character of the adjoining lands and is consistent with the County Development Plan. The design seeks to reinforce existing land use. The proposals as submitted for Part 8 Public Consultation are in compliance with the County Development Plan Policy and Objectives as outlined above.

Policy for Recreational Facilities in Tallaght LAP 2020

It is policy of the Council to support and facilitate the expansion of Tallaght Stadium and encourage a wide range of uses and events including the development of all-weather playing facilities and expansion of recreational facilities in Tallaght Town Centre (Objective CF 7).

Playing pitches constitute a major proportion of the facilities available. However, increased levels of rainfall and future predicted rainfall means that grass based pitches are unusable for an increasing amount of time each year. This situation has affected Tallaght, where many pitches have been unplayable for almost 6 months at a time. The development of all-weather facilities with floodlighting for year round and night time use would be a valuable addition to the amenities available in the area. The location of such facilities should take into account the impact of floodlighting on wildlife and residential amenities.

Objectives of Tallaght Local Area Plan 2020 Town Park:

Enhanced, multi-purpose high quality urban park with high levels of accessibility to surrounding areas and strong connections with the larger green infrastructure of the Plan area.

TP1: Consolidate and enhance amenity function of Sean Walsh Park.

TP2: Balanced provision of active and passive recreation.

TP6: Provision of all-weather playing pitches.

TP10: That any consideration of the siting of astro-pitches in Seán Walsh Park shall be subject to an Ecological Impact Assessment having regard, in particular, to the wetland area in the west of the park.

SDCC's Sports Pitch Strategy

Recommendations from SDCC's Sports Pitch Strategy

Provide an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGPs) to increase provision, usage and provide for training need

- AGP's provide **increased pitch capacity** to meet increased population growth in higher density/ urban locations
- Position at **Strategic locations**, particularly at new planned development and high population areas; to **facilitate high use, late evening use and flood lighting**.
- provide **all weather, year-round facilities**.
- meet demand for **increased match play**
- meet demand for **training provision** which is not currently being met.
- **remove training pressure from grass pitches** with resultant higher standard of grass pitches.

6. Recommendation

Having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed project, it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016 – 2022 and the objectives of the Tallaght Local Area Plan (2020).

Following consideration of the submissions, the Chief Executive is of the view that the issues raised by way of the submissions can be satisfactorily addressed at the detailed design stage, operational stages and as outlined in the foregoing report.

It is recommended that, as the proposal is in conformity with proper planning and sustainable development, that the Council proceed with the Part 8 proposal for the development of a Synthetic Grass Sports Pitch at Sean Walsh Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24.