



Barnsley College Carrington Avenue

Open Space Assessment



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Open Space Assessment has been undertaken in support of a full planning application for residential development at Carrington Avenue, Barnsley. The outline planning application seeks permission to develop the site for 89 dwellings.

1.2 The application site comprises the existing playing field area sited to the north of the Honeywell Campus and is located in the North Neighbourhood area of Barnsley town. The site is approximately 2.6 ha in area and is defined in the east by the Huddersfield to Sheffield railway line and by Carrington Avenue to the west. The district to the west is characterised by two storey family housing. There is a significant change in levels between Carrington Avenue itself and the playing fields.

1.3 The site itself is grassed with hedging and a number of trees forming the boundary along the railway line to the east, and small number of trees located to the north west fronting on to Carrington Ave. There are 9 mature trees which are located in a rectangular area of space between properties fronting onto Honeywell Lane and forming a steep bank. The site is enclosed by metal fencing with the entrance being located at the south west corner close to the junction between Carrington Ave and Honeywell Lane. There is no general public access onto the site.

1.4 The land is identified as an Existing Community Facility on the saved UDP proposals map, it is also allocated on the Greenspace register under ref GS 874. The surrounding area is generally allocated as a Housing Policy Area.

1.5 The purpose of this assessment is firstly to consider the implications of the development of Green space for residential purposes and, secondly, to discuss the open space needs arising from the development.

1.6 Section 2 of the assessment will set out the relevant planning policies at both a national and local level. Section 3 will then consider the open space implications of the development of the site in light of these policies and other material considerations. Section 4 will discuss the open space needs arising from the future occupiers of the development, and Section 5 will draw together the conclusions.

SECTION 2 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

2.1 Paragraph 70 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that planning decisions do not lead to the loss of valued social, recreational and cultural facilities and services, particularly where it would reduce the communities ability to meets its day to day needs. With particular regard to open space, sport and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, paragraph 74 states that they should not be built on unless:

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

Relevant Local Policy

The Barnsley Core Strategy

2.2 The strategy sets out a number of Community ambitions and Objectives for the Borough

2.3 Ambition 1 - Our Communities are attractive, clean sustainable places to live
This will bring about improvements in the quality of life in our communities such as the cleanliness of the public realm and local physical environment (streets, highways, squares, parks and open spaces), the quality and quantity of housing stock and the wider environmental implications of waste and carbon emissions.

2.4 Ambition 3 - Barnsley offers varied and exciting cultural opportunities to all
We will improve the quality of life in our communities by improving the provision of facilities and amenities such as libraries and archives, community arts, sports venues and parks and open spaces.

2.5 Objective 3: To secure safe, healthy and inclusive communities and promote wellbeing by amongst others:

providing healthier lifestyle choices to contribute towards tackling obesity, encouraging walking and cycling and providing green spaces, parks and sports facilities facilitating the redevelopment and improvement of education buildings to improve educational attainment

2.6 The Core Strategy sets out relevant policies relating to Green Space and defines what is meant as Green Space.

2.7 Policy CSP 35 Green Space of the Core Strategy states

“We will work with partners to improve existing green space to meet the standards in our Green Space Strategy.

Green space refers to any land within or close to towns and village that is or could be used by people for recreation or by wildlife.

We will only allow development proposals that result in the loss of green space where:

an assessment shows that there is too much of that particular type of green space in the area which it serves and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough;

or

an appropriate replacement green space of at least an equivalent community benefit, accessibility and value is provided in the area which it serves;

or

the development is for small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of the green space

We will assess the need for green space against the standards in our Green Space Strategy”

2.8 (It should be noted that a fuller assessment of the provision and supply of playing pitches is set out in the Playing Pitch Assessment)

Barnsley’s Green Space Strategy 2006

2.9 The Green Space Strategy defines green space as being any land within or close to towns and village that has or could have demonstrable value for recreation or wildlife.

2.10 The Strategy confirms that the Council will only allow development proposals that result in the loss of green space where:

an assessment shows that there is too much of that particular type of green space in the area which it serves and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough;

or

an appropriate replacement green space of at least an equivalent community benefit, accessibility and value is provided in the area which it serves; or the development is for small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of the green space.

2.11 The Strategy confirms that Green Space is identified as being valuable for recreation, amenity, wildlife or biodiversity. This Assessment will therefore consider the benefits of the site against these three categories.

2.12 The Strategy goes on to say that the Authority will assess the need for green space for new development against the standards in its Green Space Strategy.

2.13 The Strategy requires that new development should meet the following standards;

- Be within 1,200m of an Outdoor Sports Facility,
- Within 800 metres of Natural and Semi Wild Area,
- Within 1000m of a Allotment,
- And within 400m of an Equipped Play Area
- Within 400m of a Local Neighbourhood Green Space.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Recreation

3.1 The main benefit that the site offers is that it provides formal recreational pitches for use of Barnsley College. This site will be compensated for by the provision of new mini pitches to meet the existing and future community needs for football as set out in the Barnsley Council Playing Pitch Strategy of 2011. The Playing Pitch Strategy states that in relation to the supply for the next ten years up to 2021 there is currently an existing and an anticipated surplus of adult football pitches for both the North Neighbourhood Area and for the Borough as a whole. A full assessment of the re-provision of the replacement pitches is set out within the Playing Pitch Assessment which supports this outline planning application.

3.2 The College has confirmed that the site is surplus to requirements on the basis that there are now new sports facilities and pitches at the both at the Honeywell and at the Fleets. There is no public access to the pitches at Carrington and therefore there will be no net loss of a sports facility to the wider community. In compensation for the loss of the fields at Carrington, it proposed that four new mini pitches will be created at The Fleets and on the Honeywell Campus to meet the objectives of the Barnsley Playing Pitch Strategy. The Strategy identified a shortage of mini pitches supported by quality ancillary facilities such as changing rooms and toilets. The new pitches will be sited adjacent to new changing room and teaching facilities at the Fleets. Users of the pitches at the Honeywell Campus will also be able to access the supporting range of sports facilities on site including the 3G artificial pitch, the Multi Use Games Area and the newly built indoor sport hall, which are all open to community use.

Amenity

3.3 The site through the existence of a soft landscaped area, currently offers a level of visual amenity to local residents within the vicinity of the site. Whilst the views of the field would inevitably be lost, the illustrative plans indicate that the vast majority of trees and hedging which bound the site can be retained. The creation of an area of open space to the northwest boundary and to the entrance of the site fronting Honeywell will soften the appearance of the development and ensure that the most important and mature trees will be retained. In addition an appropriate quality landscape scheme is proposed for the development which will enhance the appearance of the area. Other trees and hedging along the eastern boundary (with the exception of a small area which contained Japanese Knotweed) will also be protected and incorporated within the development to provide a buffer between the houses and the railway line. It is therefore considered that the impact upon the amenity of the area would be minimal.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

3.4 The site has been surveyed in order to assess its importance in relation to wildlife and biodiversity. The Phase 1 ecology survey found no protected species on site, but noted the area does have potential to support breeding birds and foraging and roosting bats. In relation to birds the ecologist has recommended that works should be carried out outside the nesting season and that bird boxes should be incorporated within the finished design of the development.

3.5 In relation to bats the ecologist has confirmed that the main impacts would occur as a result of the removal of any trees with the potential to support a roost and the loss of potential foraging/commuting habitat. However she noted that from the current illustrative scheme proposals, there will be minimal impact to hedgerows and trees on site. She recommended that

3.6 It is therefore concluded that providing appropriate conditions are imposed by the Local Authority the impact upon biodiversity and wildlife would be minimal.

SECTION 4 THE AVAILABILITY OF OPEN SPACE TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The development site itself is well served in terms of different types of Open Space. In terms of the provision of other district sports facilities within the vicinity, clearly there is the new 3G all weather pitch at the main Honeywell Lane campus. In addition the site is less than five minute walk from the site at the recently opened Fleets pitches and sports and changing facilities to the east which benefit from Community access.

4.2 In terms of Natural Green Space the site is within the 1200m Catchment area of the Green Way area which forms part of the Leeds City Strategic Regional Green Infrastructure. It also lies within the 800 metre catchment area of a designated Natural Green Area at the Fleets. The vast majority of the site is also within the 800 metre catchment area of a District Park which represents the nearest District Green Space. The development incorporates approximately 0.23 hectares of informal open space within the site to meet with the Council's standards for a Local Neighbourhood Green Space. The development would also be within a couple of minutes walk of the Smithies Lane allotments located on the other side of the rail line and easily meets the Green Space Strategy standard.

4.3 The site is not currently within the Catchment area of a Local Equipped Area for Play. However as part of the planning permission for residential development at the Honeywell site 2009/0609 a legal agreement required that the College create a new equipped play area at the entrance of the Honeywell campus site which would be laid out and equipped in accordance with the Council's Planning Guidance on Play Areas and NPFA (National Playing Field Association) standard for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP). The College has confirmed that the play park will also serve the development at Carrington and will be provided during the development of the application site. The play area would be located only 15 metres from the entrance to the Carrington site in accordance with the NPFA guidelines that advise that children should not have to walk more than 5 minutes to an equipped children's play area.

SECTION 5 CONCLUSION

5.1 This Assessment has shown that in providing mini pitches with quality supporting facilities at a suitable location, the area of Open Space lost as a result of the development would be replaced by equivalent and even better provision, in accordance with paragraph 74 of the NPPF.

5.2 The Assessment has demonstrated that the proposal accords with Ambitions 1 and 3 and Objective 3 and Policy CSP 35 – Green Space, of the Barnsley Core Strategy in providing homes in an attractive, sustainable location and by creating compensatory sports facilities of an improved quality that are open and accessible to the wider community.

5.3 The site would offer residential development that is currently, or will be accessible to all the various types of Green and Open Space set out within the Barnsley Green Space Strategy. Moreover this Assessment demonstrates that the impact of the development in terms of the three criteria within that Strategy of recreation, amenity and biodiversity would be acceptable.