

Ecology response 18 10 24 for F/24/97885 PLACES LEISURE EASTLEIGH, PASSFIELD AVENUE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 9NL

The construction of four outdoor floodlit padel courts with access pathways and perimeter fencing on an existing natural grass recreation area (amended description – canopy removed).
Additional Notes: Re consultation following amended plans.

Rebecca Altman

18/10/24

The only changes I see to this proposal is the removal of the canopy and that the proposed area of additional tree planting is now clustered closer together, removing the trees to the west of the proposed court.

I note that the Tim Griffin (landscape consultant) agrees that yew hedging is not acceptable. It adds little to biodiversity with no resources for pollinators, has poisonous fruit, and will require extensive maintenance to achieve a consistent 2 m high x 1 m wide form. Birds are unlikely to nest in a hedge in this location. It will compete with the proposed group of trees to the north of the courts for water and sunlight.

No further information on Biodiversity Net Gain has been provided.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

21/8/24

The construction of four outdoor floodlit padel courts with open sided canopy, access pathways and perimeter fencing, on an existing natural grass recreational area.

I have reviewed the following documents:

DAS by Sports Facility Planning and Design Ltd (July 2024)

Planning Statement by Duncan Gibson Consultancy (July 2024)

FRA by UNDA (April 2024)

PEA by Arbtech (March 2024)

Biodiversity metric calculation

Lighting Design by Sports Facility Planning and Design Ltd (Feb 2024)

I raise a holding objection. The biodiversity net gain calculations must be re-examined as hedgerow habitat units cannot be substituted for area habitat units. There are details that must be clarified and presented consistently across the various documents.

Landscaping and Biodiversity Net Gain

The Landscape Design shows new hedges at the northern and southern ends of the courts with an *area of new native species tree planting* at the northern end, but the plants are shown

grouped very close together as they would be in an area of scrub. This area is shown as extending towards the west in the Proposed Layout and labelled as 15 Nr (number?) Native Species. Is this area proposed to be scrub (as shown in the biodiversity metric) or trees (as shown in the landscape design)?

The existing planting at the northern end of the proposed courts is described as both an existing area of scrub and existing introduced shrub (including the invasive *Cotoneaster horizontalis*) in the PEA. The proposal in the biodiversity metric calculation is to create mixed scrub and native hedgerow both in moderate condition in this area. The cotoneaster is proposed to be removed, which must be done before the start of works, so it does not get spread during the construction process.

Two yew hedges (2 m high and 1 m wide) are proposed at the northern and southern ends of the courts and shown in the Proposed Layout as hedges. The leaves and seeds of yew are poisonous to humans and animals. I do not recommend planting them in this area.

The PEA includes yew in the list of hedgerow plants. In the biodiversity metric the yew hedges are described as two ground based green walls. Is there a reason not to describe these ornamental hedges as hedges? They are recorded in the biodiversity metric as area habitat. Hedgerow units are distinct from area habitat units, so if yew hedges are being proposed, they need to be entered as hedgerow units not area habitat units. Green walls can be created in this area, however they should not be composed of hedging plants.

An accurate landscape planting plan with the planting specifications is required and can be conditioned. The area to the north should be labelled as trees or as scrub, but if trees are proposed then the biodiversity metric will need to be changed to reflect this.

I don't see any provisions for spectators or people waiting for their turn to play around the outside of these courts. If there are no specific provisions, spectators may be tempted to lean against the yew hedges which would compact the soil in their root protection areas and affect their growth.

Surface Water Drainage

A soakaway with debris and sediment traps is proposed. The entrance pathway is proposed to be permeable paving. All weather synthetic turf is proposed as the playing surface with perimeter drainage below the playing surface. The playing surface will be covered by the roof, so the surface water drainage system would only be designed for the rainwater collecting off the roof. If the playing surface extends outside of the roof, then weathering of this surface may result in plastic particles entering the environment, which would not be acceptable. A surface water drainage plan is required showing the location of the soakaway and downspouts from the roof. This can be conditioned. Maintenance instructions are included in the FRA.

Lighting

The lighting specifications should include the lighting colour temperature recommendations in Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting available on the Institute of Lighting

Professionals website. This states that *Light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats*

The lighting design specifies 4000 Kelvin colour temperature however the ILP guidance note (5.47) recommends warm white colour temperatures of 3000 K or less.

The lighting diagram shows light spill limited to the areas immediately adjacent to the structure, however this will include the green walls/yew hedges to the north and south and the native hedgerow planting to the north. There would be restrictions on lighting, until 9pm on weeknights and 8pm weekends, however it is already a well-lit car park, so an increase in lighting is not likely to make much difference to bats in this area. As mentioned in the PEA, the lighting would be used mostly in the winter months when bats would be mostly inactive anyway.

Precautionary working methods

The PEA lists precautionary working methods for badgers, hedgehogs and riparian animals, and recommends keeping the sward height of the grass at ~7 cm to make it unsuitable as habitat. These are all appropriate and shall be implemented.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist