

Multi Play Area with floodlights at Newington Community Primary School, Ramsgate – TH/08/522.

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 24th June 2008.

Application by Newington Community Primary School and KCC Children, Families, Health and Education for Multi Play Area with floodlights on an existing playground area at Newington Junior Foundation School, Princess Margaret Avenue, Ramsgate (Ref:TH/08/522)

Recommendation: permission be granted subject to conditions

Local Member(s): Mrs. E Green, Mr. A Poole

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

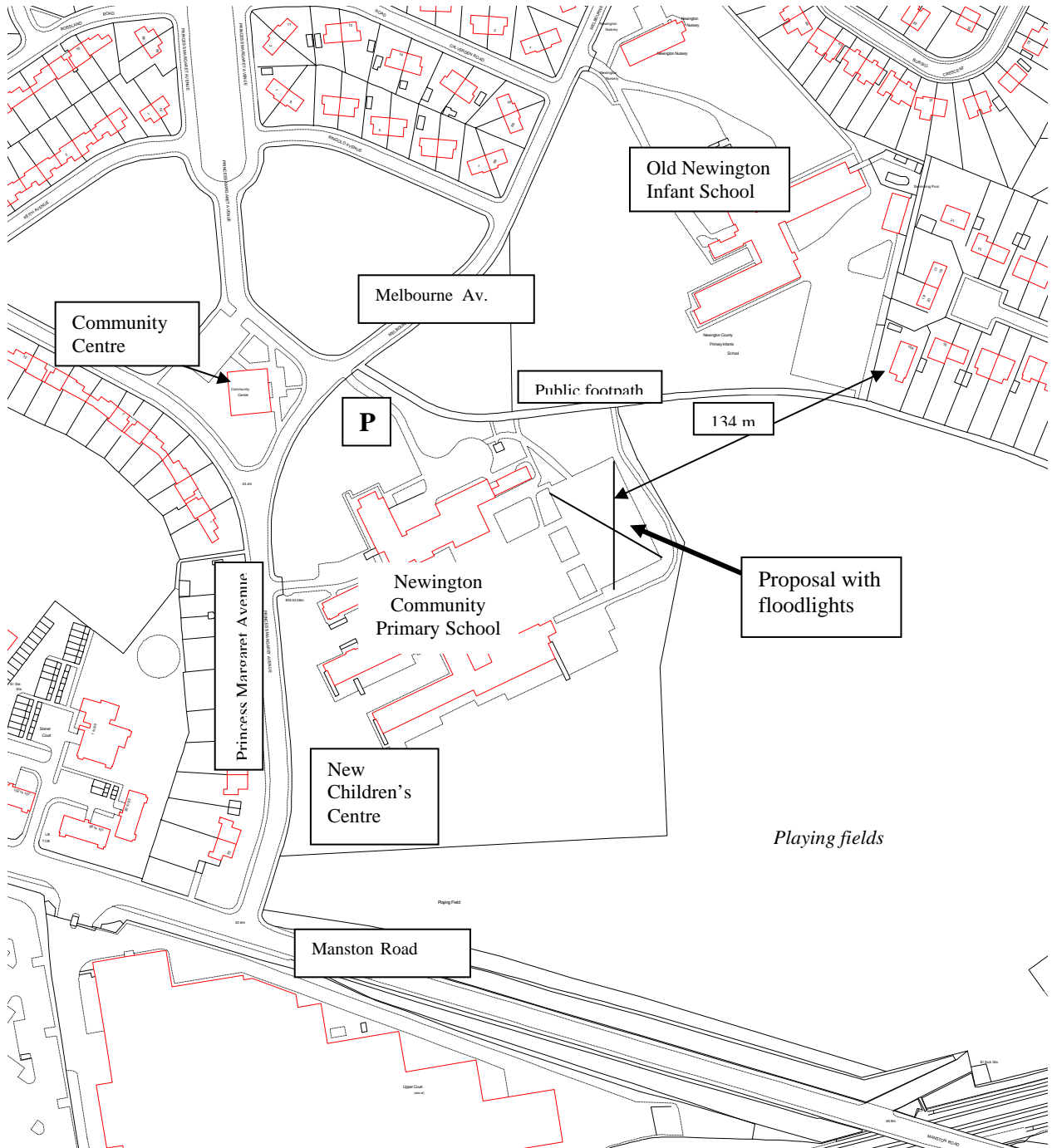
1. Newington Community Primary School is located in a residential area of Ramsgate, to the north of Manston Road (B2050) and to the east of Princess Margaret Avenue. From the north, the site adjoins the old Newington Infant School with a public footpath running between these two schools. From the east the school adjoins KCC owned playing fields. The vehicular access to the school is from Princess Margaret Avenue and Melbourne Avenue. There is also a pedestrian access from the public footpath from the north. In addition, the access from Melbourne Avenue is used by the Neighbourhood Policing Unit located within the school grounds. The proposed Multi Play Area would be located in the north east of the school site, close to the public footpath and the boundary with the old Infant School's playing field. The nearest residential property to the proposed Multi Play Area is approximately 134 metres, which is to the east across the playing field. A site plan is attached (see page D1.2).

Proposal

2. The planning application is to install eight 2.2kw floodlight luminaries bolted on six 8metre high steel columns. It is also proposed to resurface the existing hard surface 50 x 30 metres play area and to install 3m high weldmesh fence finished in dark green, RAL 6005 (see page D1.3).
3. The proposed Multi Play Area would be used by the pupils of the school during normal school hours for sports such as football, netball, basketball and/or hockey. During after school hours, between 16.30 and 21.00 weekdays the Multi Play Area would be available for hire to local sports groups. It is also proposed to use the facility between 10.00 and 17.00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. It is proposed to employ a coach to manage the running of the facility for two hours per day from 16.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday. The motivation behind the proposal is that there is no affordable sports facility for young people in the Newington Area and the development has the support of the local football club and Youth Inclusion Project team.

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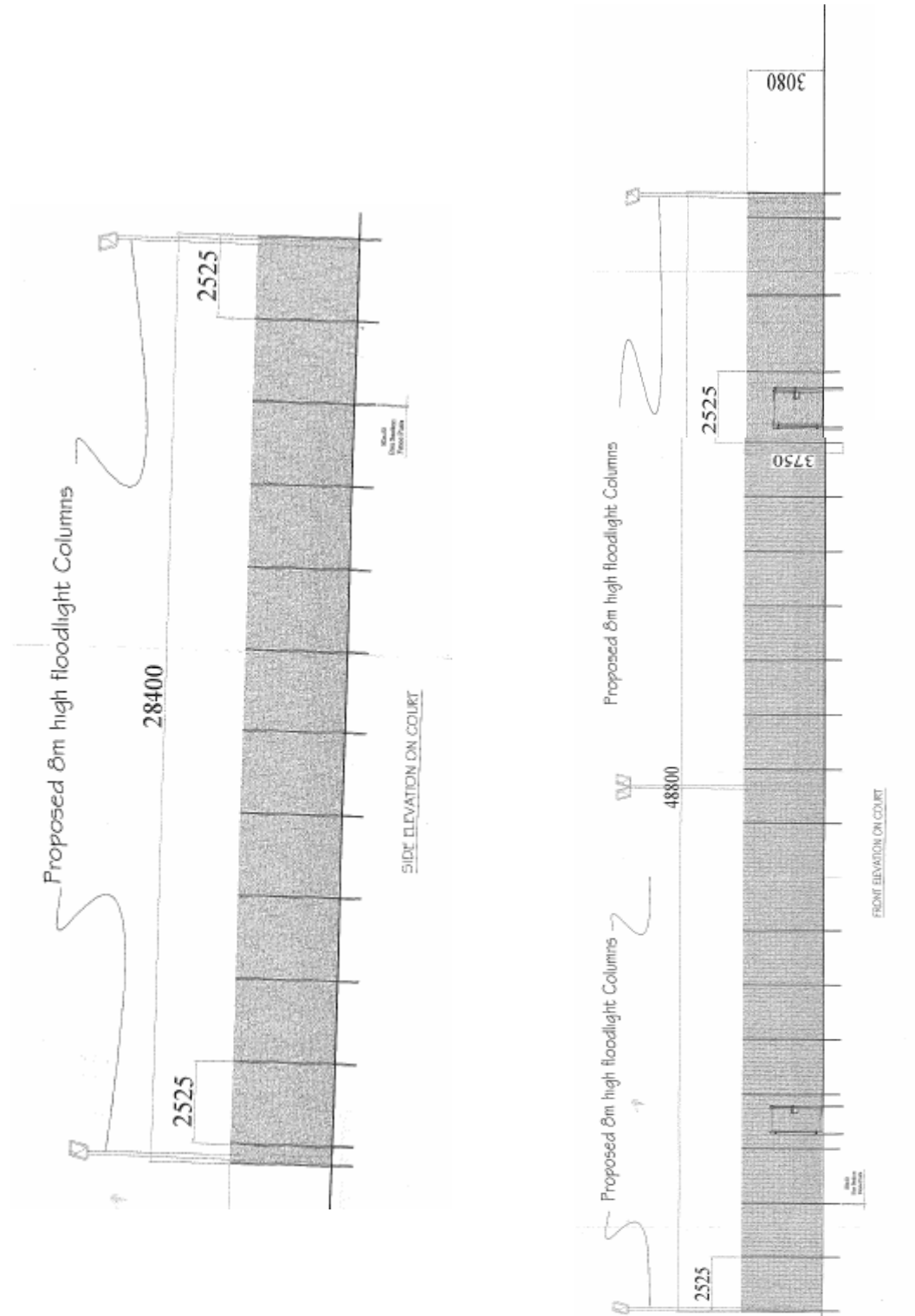
Site Plan



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Elevations



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Light spill

Newington Junior School
Vers2

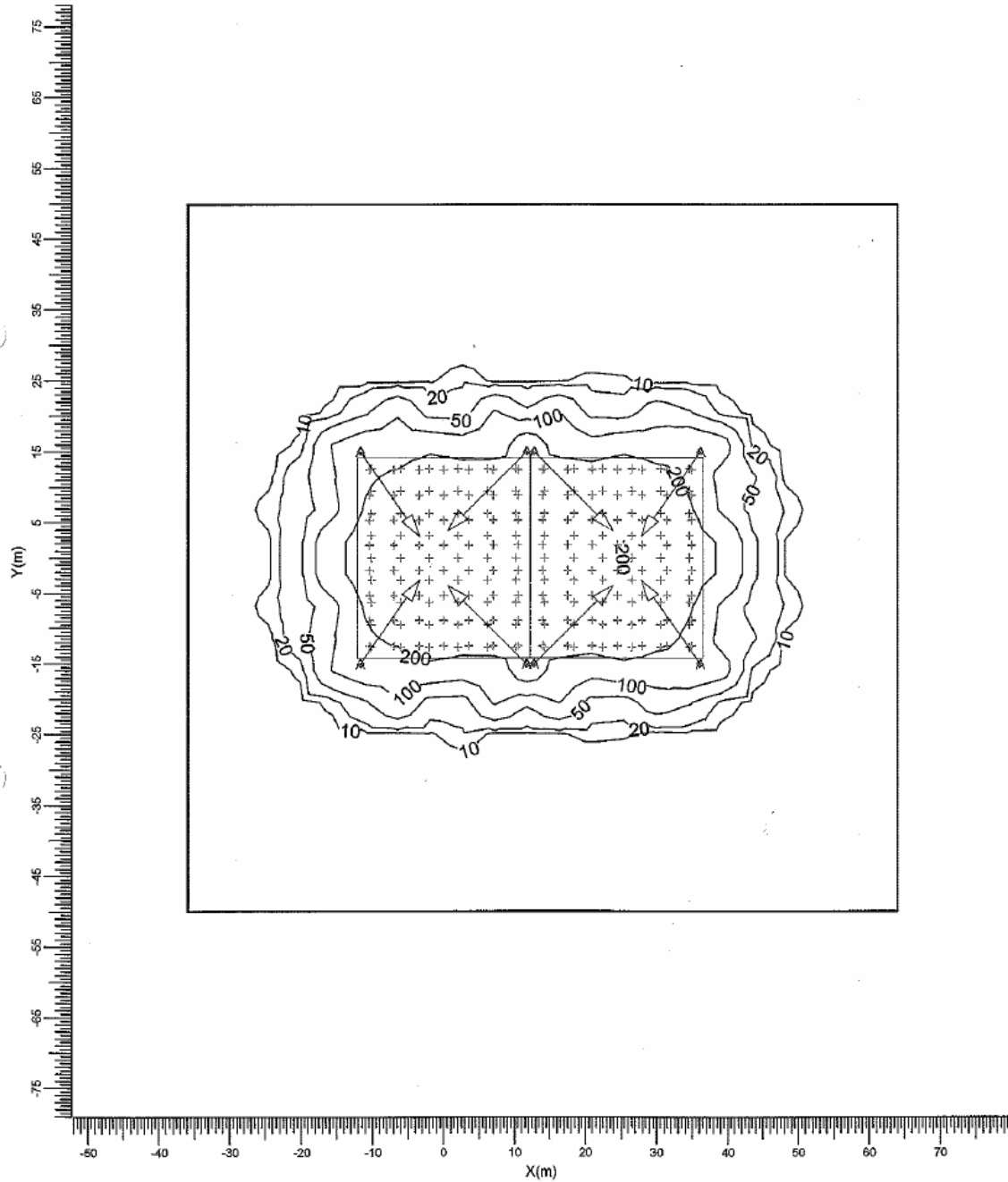
Multi Use Games Area

LTL Contracts
Date: 28-05-2008

3.2 Overspill: Iso Contour

All Lights On

Grid : Overspill at Z = 0.00 m
Calculation : Surface Illuminance (lux)



A ———▷ MVP507 WB/60

Average	Minimum	Min/Ave	Project maintenance factor	Scale
51.3	0.0	0.00	0.80	1:750

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Planning Policy

4. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:

(i) The Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006:

Policy SP1 Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's environment and ensure a sustainable pattern of development.

Policy QL1 Seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality that responds positively to the local character. Development, which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, function or character of the area, will not be permitted.

Policy QL11 Provision will be made to accommodate additional requirements for local community services in response to growth in demand from the community as a whole. The services will be located where they are accessible by walking, cycling and by public transport.

Policy NR5 The quality of Kent's environment will be conserved and enhanced. Development should be planned and designed to avoid, or adequately mitigate, pollution impacts, including noise and levels of light intrusion.

(ii) Thanet District Adopted Local Plan 2006:

Policy D1 Sets out design principles for new developments, which should provide high quality and inclusive design, sustainability, layout and materials. New development should be compatible with neighbouring spaces and not lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity through overlooking, noise or light intrusion

Policy SR1 New sport facilities provided by Schools, particularly where available to the public, will be permitted provided the location of the proposal is within or adjoining urban areas; is ancillary to the outdoor use; and satisfactory arrangements are made for vehicular access and parking, and access by pedestrians and the disabled.

Policy SR3 Multiple use of existing facilities and new developments, which will create opportunities for recreational use by the public additional to the existing use of the facilities will be permitted.

Consultations

5. **Thanet District Council:** raises no objection to the proposal.

Divisional Transportation Manager: raises no objection to the proposal subject to a condition that the main school car parking facility would be available for users of the new floodlit playground.

The County Council's Lighting Advisor: raises no objection to the proposal and considers that the proposed floodlights would provide excellent concealment of the light source and notes that the light spill levels drop to 1 lux well within the confines of the site.

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Sport England: supports the proposal and recommends that a Community Use Scheme be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Local Members

6. The local County Members Mrs. E Green and Mr. A Poole were notified of the application on the 8th April 2008.

Publicity

7. The application was publicised by the posting of two site notices and the individual notification of 30 nearby properties.

Representations

8. 2 letters of representation were received in response to the proposal. The main planning issues raised by the neighbours can be summarised as follows:
- The existing lights on the school buildings are an intolerable imposition and the proposed floodlights would extend the periods of lighting pollution;
 - During the football season and during practice sessions held on the school playing field, cars are parked on both sides of Princess Margaret Avenue, which causes a massive access issue to the Newington Estate, especially for emergency vehicles;
 - Opening of the school grounds to the wider community would add to the already congested roads in the Newington Estate;
 - We do not need floodlights in Newington Estate as there are already some at Jackey Bakers recreational ground. That should be enough.

Discussion

Introduction

9. The application is required to be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan Policies, unless other material considerations are of overriding importance. Consideration should be given to the location and design of the development, and the impact it might have on local amenity and functioning of the settlement. Specifically, the level of light pollution and vehicular access arrangement should be considered. The above should be balanced against the benefits of these improvements to the sports facility in the area.
10. The Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policy QL1 of and the Thanet District Adopted Local Plan Policy D1 require new developments to be of high quality and well designed, be compatible with neighbouring spaces and not to lead to the loss of amenity through noise or light intrusion. Further, the Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policy QL11 and the Thanet District Adopted Local Plan Policies SR1 and SR3 encourage decision makers to make provision for community facilities ancillary to the existing uses and support making new school sports facilities accessible to the wider public. In my view, these Policies are of particular relevance to the site.

Location and visual impacts

11. The Newington Community Primary School is located in a residential area and aims to serve the local community. It is considered that the school is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and therefore improvements in community facilities at this location would be in accordance with the KMSP Policy QL11 and Thanet District Adopted Local Plan Policy SR1. Further, I note that the proposed Multi Play Area would be replacing the existing hard surface play area, which is next to the School's playing

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field and other KCC's playing fields. Therefore, such an improvement would be compatible with neighbouring uses and ancillary to the educational function of the whole site.

12. The proposed Multi Play Area would be located at the back of the school buildings away from the residential properties on Princess Margaret Avenue. From the north and north-east the site is screened by shrubs and trees, and borders with the neighbouring playing fields of the old Infant School. The columns would be galvanised tubular steel, which would blend in with the sky. On the other hand, at the lower level the 3 metre weldmesh fence would be finished in green to blend in with trees and other planting. The visual impact of the fence would be minimised by its open design, which comprise pairs of 8mm diameter wires at 200mm vertical centres sandwiching a single 6mm diameter vertical wires at 50mm horizontal centres. Consequently, I consider that the development would not have any significant visual impact on the immediate and long distance views.
13. In terms of the intensified use of the site, I note that the existing hard surface play area is already used by pupils during the school hours. The proposal is to open the facility to the wider community, which would help the School to meet the objective of the Government's Extended School's policy. This would also be in accordance with the Thanet District Adopted Local Plan Policies SR1 and SR3, which encourage schools to provide new sports facilities, particularly where these are made available to the public.

Highways

14. Further, support for the improvements in the new sports facilities depend on satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access and parking as well as pedestrian access. Local residents have expressed concern over the potential increased demand for car parking associated with this application. It is considered that there would not be any change in demand for car parking during school hours as there would not be any change to the current use. There is, however, a potential for some additional journeys to the site after the normal school hours. Then again, the majority of people could access the site on foot, or by bicycle as the Multi Play Area aims primarily to serve the local community. To minimise any potential road inconvenience associated with this development, the applicant proposes to make the main school carpark of 36 spaces, including 2 disabled people spaces, available for the Multi Play Area users. In the opinion of the Divisional Transportation Manager, the number of available spaces is more than adequate for out of hours activities generated by the Multi Play Area. In my view, the arrangements for vehicular access and parking meet the requirements of Thanet District Adopted Local Plan Policy SR1.

Light pollution

15. Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policy NR5 requires that development to be planned and designed to avoid pollution impacts, including light intrusion. The proposal includes installation of eight 2.2kw floodlight luminaries bolted on six 8 metre high steel columns. A detailed lighting scheme has been submitted with this application, and from the light spill levels supplied it can be read that the lighting level varies between 177 and 356 lux within the Multi Play Area. However, the lux levels drop rapidly beyond the boundary of the Multi Play Area and within 30m from the light source the light spill falls to 1 lux. Considering that the nearest residential property is approximately 134 m away from the Multi Play Area it is most unlikely that there would be any risk of light intrusion by virtue of light spill. In terms of potential light glare the County Council's Lighting Advisor considers that the proposed floodlights would provide an excellent concealment of the light source. The Institute of Lighting Engineers guidance for lighting in urban areas (Zone E3) recommends no light falling on the neighbouring properties exceeding 10 lux.

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In this case, the light spill levels would drop to 1 lux well within the confines of the site (see page D1.4 and D1.2).

16. Overall, I consider that the development would be in accordance with the Policy QL1 and NR5 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 and Thanet District Adopted Local Plan Policy D1, which require all developments to protect the amenity of their local surroundings and not lead to unacceptable light pollution.

Hours of use

17. During the consultation, residents have raised concerns that in their view there is a close connection between the installation of the floodlighting and the future increase in traffic and light intrusion. These issues have been discussed above. However, these issues are also related to the hours of use of the facility which could be controlled to some degree. The applicant proposes to use the Multi Play Area 8.00 and 21.00 Mondays to Fridays and 10.00 and 17.00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays throughout the year. The reason for the indicated hours is that there is no other affordable facility for young people in the Newington Area. Considering that the facility would be located in a residential area I would recommend that the use of the facility to be restricted to Mondays to Saturdays only during the hours requested by the applicant. I consider that in the interest of the residential amenity the use of the Multi Play Area should not be allowed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Conclusion

18. In summary, I am of the opinion that the new facility would greatly enhance the provision of sports facilities in the local community without compromising the amenity of local residents. Consequently, I consider that the proposed development would be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies. Therefore, I recommend that permission is granted subject to appropriate conditions.

Recommendation

19. I recommend that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT to conditions, covering:
- Standard time restriction for hours of operation;
 - All spaces within the existing school car park should be available during the operation of the Multi Play Area;
 - Hours of use of the Multi Play Area 8.00 - 21.00 Mondays to Fridays and 10.00 -17.00 Saturdays, with no use on Sundays and Bank Holidays;
 - Prior to the commencement of the use of the facility, a Community Use Scheme shall be submitted and approved by the County Planning Authority;
 - No trees, shrubs and hedges shall be removed
 - The development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details.

Case Officer –Anna Michalska-Dober	01622 696979
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Background documents –See section heading
