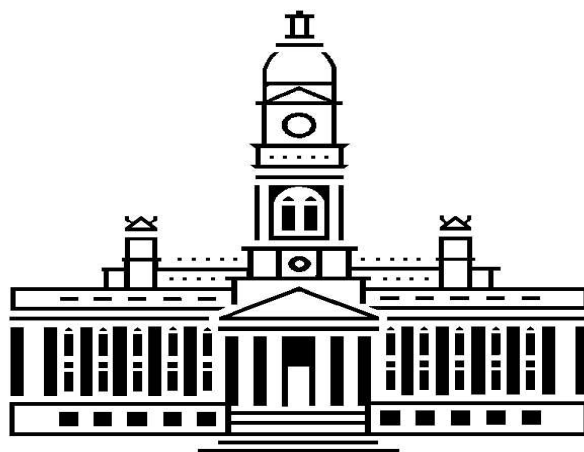


Environment Department
Planning Control
Policy Notes



B · O · L · T · O · N
M · E · T · R · O

16 Floodlighting

January 2005

Bolton Metro
Environment Department
Planning Control Policy Notes
Floodlighting

In December 1995, Bolton Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan (UDP). This plan has been subject to the process of a full review and the Second Deposit Version Unitary Development Plan will ultimately be adopted as a replacement. This UDP and its policies are prepared and incorporate current Government Planning guidance. The Adopted UDP is the sole statutory land use plan for the whole Borough and it provides the framework for development, planning control and conservation within Bolton. It gives a statement of the Council's policies and proposals for development and other uses of land.

The Council has reviewed its detailed policy advice to correspond with the UDP. This is contained in a series of Planning Control Policy Notes, of which this is one. The Notes are also referred to in the Second Deposit Version (Review) UDP. These supplementary guidance notes provide clear, concise and more detailed guidance on a number of key topic areas. These Supplementary Policy Notes, in order to carry appropriate weight within the planning system should be subject to public scrutiny which takes the form of extensive public consultation. Consultation will be undertaken following approval of a draft document and will be subsequently approved by the Council in a final format. All such policies are written to help all those who wish to understand the Council's detailed planning requirements and advice. The detailed text of the relevant adopted and emerging Development Plans are contained within Annex 1 to this Policy Note

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1.0 **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Note provides advice and guidance about appropriate measures to ensure a consistent approach to the use of sports pitches and floodlighting within schools/colleges around the Borough of Bolton.
- 1.2 The principle of increasing and improving the quality of sports facilities is supported and encouraged by national and local policy. **PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation** (revised 2002) states that open space, sport, and recreational land are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives. These include the promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion. To ensure effective planning for recreation PPG17 states that it is essential that the needs of local communities are known and that facilities should add to and enhance the range and quality of existing facilities.
- 1.3 National and local policy, however, also states that recreational uses such as outdoor sports pitches should avoid any significant loss of amenity to residents. The concerns raised by Environmental Health regarding these uses relate to the light and noise pollution associated with the use and floodlighting necessary to extend these facilities into the evenings and at weekends.

2.0 **Local Planning Policy**

- 2.1 This section sets out policies contained in Bolton's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (December 1995) and Bolton's Second Deposit Unitary Development Plan (January 2001) which are of particular relevance in the determination of proposals for the floodlighting of sports facilities in schools and colleges. The policies which have been underlined are considered to be the most specific in relation to the determination of applications for the floodlighting.
- 2.2 **Planning the Way Ahead - Bolton's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (December 1995).**
- 2.3 Policy **CE6 Incompatible Uses** states that:

The Council will allocate land and determine applications in a way that minimises conflict between adjoining land uses.

2.4 Policy **CE7 Pollution** states that:

Development which is likely to give rise to air, water, land or noise pollution, will be assessed against national guidelines and other material considerations and if unacceptable will not be permitted.

2.5 Policy **H3/3 Non-residential Uses in Residential Areas** states:

In predominantly residential areas, non-residential uses will normally only be allowed where they do not adversely affect the amenities enjoyed by the residents. Uses that generate excessive noise, smell, fumes, traffic or on-street parking problems will not normally be allowed in such areas. Where non-residential uses are allowed in residential areas, planning permissions will be subject to appropriate conditions to minimise the effect on residential amenity; e.g. limitations on noise levels, car parking and hours of operation.

2.6 Policies **CE10, CE11, and CE11/1** are concerned with control of development in the Green Belt.

CE11/1. The Council will not allow development within the Green Belt unless it falls within one or more of the following categories:

- a) development in connection with an outdoor recreation facility, together with ancillary buildings required in connection with that facility;**
- b) development in connection with cemeteries or institutions requiring large grounds;**
- c) development for mineral extraction in accordance with the policies for minerals;**
- d) small scale business, industrial or warehouse development in existing industrial estates;**
- e) changes of use of existing redundant buildings which possess architectural or historical merits;**
- f) limited infilling in settlements or ribbon developments that are within the Green Belt where it is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings.**

Development in any of the above categories will be acceptable only if it does not prejudice the purposes and the visual amenities of the Green Belt by reason of its scale, design and siting.

2.7 Policy **CE2 Conservation Areas** states that:

The Council will preserve or enhance the character of conservation areas.

Policy **CE2/1** relates to conservation areas and details three criterion in order to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas.

2.8 Policy **CP4 Community Facilities** states that:

The Council will encourage the provision of community facilities in appropriate locations, either in the communities they serve or in central places easily accessible by public transport, such as town centres.

2.9 Policy **T4/4 The Road Network** is concerned with the effects of new development on the flow of traffic and parking provision

T4/4 The Council will not normally allow development which would have an adverse impact on the road network. In assessing proposals the following will be taken into account:-

(a) road design

(b) parking

(c) vehicle servicing and access arrangements

2.10 **Bolton's Second Deposit Unitary Development Plan (January 2001).**

This is the emerging review plan for the Borough which although not yet adopted is being used for planning control purposes.

2.11 Policy **EM2 Incompatible Uses** states that:

The Council will not permit development that will result in unacceptable impacts on existing uses or likely future development by reason of noise, smell, safety, health, lighting, disturbance, traffic or other pollution.

2.12 Policy **EM3 Pollution** states that:

The Council will not permit development which would give rise to an unacceptable level of air, water, land, noise or light pollution.

2.13 Policy **CP4 Community Facilities** states that:

The Council will permit the development of health services and community facilities either close to or accessible to the communities they serve.

2.14 Policy **D7 Conservation Areas** states that:

The Council will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

This policy includes five criterion which detail guidelines in order to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas.

2.15 Policies **G1 and G2 – Green Belt** seek to maintain the openness of the Green Belt and support the purposes for which it was designated, by protecting the land from inappropriate development. Policy **G2** highlights the definition of developments which are considered to be appropriate, subject to scale, design and siting.

2.16 Policy **A6** states that:

The Council will require new developments to provide car parking based on the Council's maximum parking standards.

3.0 **Advice**

3.1 The main areas of concern relate to any noise and light pollution created as a result of floodlighting and the use of sports pitches. In addition, litter and anti-social behaviour can be considered as a potential by-product of these uses. These factors have a detrimental effect upon the surrounding area, particularly where there is a conflict between adjoining uses such as residential properties. Floodlighting should be sited and designed with these concerns in mind.

3.2 Environmental Health assume a key technical role in the decision making

process of applications of this nature. The Pollution Control Unit can provide advice to applicants prior to, or during the application process with regards to the potential disturbance created and any measures to minimise their effects.

- 3.3 The Council has a responsibility to consult local residents and other parties affected by proposals and representations received will be taken into account when determining applications. Applicants are encouraged to carry out their own consultations with local residents prior to submission.

Mitigation Measures

- 3.4 There are a number of mitigation measures available to applicants, which should be considered in order to minimise the conflict between adjoining uses and the impact upon the surrounding area. The Council's policies which relate to incompatible uses and pollution, state that applications should be determined in a way that minimises conflict between adjoining land uses and reduces the amount of pollution created to an acceptable level. Conditions may be imposed to limit the impacts of proposed development. However, when imposing conditions, the Council will have regard to both Circular 11/95 and to the requirements of those operating the facility to ensure that mitigation measures are not onerous. This will depend upon a number of factors, including the proximity of conflicting uses and the distance and intensity to which pollution is experienced. In addition, in some cases it may be appropriate for soft landscaping to be provided to reduce the effects of both noise and lighting. The types of pollution associated with floodlighting and the use of sports pitches are highlighted in further detail below.

Light Pollution

- 3.5 The use of floodlighting can be extremely intrusive upon the surrounding area in terms of residential amenity and may also cause a distraction to passing motorists. Floodlighting will not be permitted if the level of intrusion and distraction is deemed to be unacceptable. The Council's Environmental Health Officers and Highway Engineers will be consulted on all such applications in order to provide technical advice. Various measures can be implemented in order to reduce this intrusion and light spillage, for example; the intensity of the glare and direction of the beam can be reduced through design. Applications should demonstrate the use of such measures which will reduce the effects of light pollution.

Noise Pollution

- 3.6 Noise pollution is a major concern regarding applications of this nature, particularly where the implementation of floodlighting enables the use of sports pitches out of school hours. Specific attention should be afforded to the potential impact of noise pollution upon residential properties in close proximity to sports pitches.
- 3.7 The noise generated from the use of sports pitches is not restricted to activities on the pitch, but also the arrival and departure of vehicles. There are measures available to mitigate the effect of noise pollution on the pitches, such as a restriction on baseboards and kickboards, or the provision of acoustic fencing. **It must be recognized that the fencing surrounding a facility has an effect on the appearance of the area in which it is situated and that high acoustic fencing, whilst beneficial in terms of noise reduction, may not be appropriate in all cases.** Advice should be sought from Environmental Health during the pre-application or application stage on such mitigation measures.

Litter and Anti-social Behaviour

- 3.8 The Council recognises that in order to minimise the impact of sports facilities for the surrounding area, they need to be managed effectively. A key factor in preventing any degradation of the surrounding area is for the organisers of the facilities to make users aware from the outset, that dropping litter and anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. The need to provide strategically placed litter bins should be raised at the application stage and litter which is found in and surrounding the facilities should be removed daily. Planning conditions should be attached to decisions in order to ensure that these issues can be enforced. In addition, early consultation with Greater Manchester Police should ensure that the facilities are designed to discourage potential anti-social behaviour.
- 3.9 The table below highlights the Council's advice for proposals within certain distances from residential properties. The suggested hours of use have been formulated in order to protect residential amenity from the noise and light pollution created.

Distance from Residential Properties (Metres)	Suggested Hours of Use
0 – 19	Seek alternative siting due to

	detrimental impact upon residential amenity.
20 – 34	09.00 and 21.00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 and 18.00 Saturdays and 09.00 and 17.00 Sundays for a temporary period of one year in order to monitor the impact upon residential properties nearby.
35 – 50	09.00 and 21.00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 and 18.00 Saturdays and 09.00 and 17.00 Sundays.

Visual Amenity

- 3.10 The Council recognises that the structures used to accommodate floodlighting may in themselves cause harm to the appearance of an area. In some cases, it may be appropriate to install floodlighting on existing structures or building although this will need be balanced against the needs of the facility and the effects of light pollution.

Parking

- 3.11 The Council recognizes that the installation of floodlighting to an existing sports facility will extend the use of such facilities into the evening. Sporting facilities create a demand for parking and the evening use may cause conflicts with local residents requirements for parking. The level of parking provision will be assessed in the determination of application and judged against the maximum standards contained in Planning Control Policy Note 1.

4.0 **Community Use**

- 4.1 Many schools/colleges have sports pitch facilities which they hope to open out of school hours to provide facilities for the local community and ensure the viability of pitches. Whilst there is a financial incentive for the

school/college involved to provide this facility, there is also a wider social benefit which supports community cohesion in line with national and local planning guidance. In addition, in some cases there is a Central Government requirement to provide an amount of community use in order to be eligible for Government funding.

- 4.2 Planning applications which propose the use of sports facilities beyond school hours must include a reasoned justification as to the need for the installation of floodlighting, the hours of use **and the potential benefits to the community**. This is necessary particularly where the use would cause conflict with residential properties in close proximity and would be contrary to recommendations from Environmental Health.

5.0 **Development in the Green Belt**

- 5.1 Proposals for sports pitches with associated floodlighting in schools/colleges may occur within the Green Belt. UDP policies **CE11**, **CE11/1** and SDVUDP policy **G2** seek to restrict inappropriate development which would prejudice the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 5.2 Development in connection with an outdoor recreation facility is deemed to be appropriate development within the Green Belt, however proposals will only be acceptable if they do not prejudice the purposes and visual amenities of the Green Belt by reason of scale, design and siting. Proposals for outdoor sports pitches should be assessed upon their visual impact, specifically in terms of the number and height of floodlighting columns, fencing and the area of hardstanding proposed. Developments involving a large number of visually intrusive floodlighting columns, high fencing and extensive areas of hardstanding will have an urbanising effect upon the Green Belt, and will be refused.
- 5.3 The presence of existing screening around the application site is important in the assessment of the impact of such proposals, as their positioning will be crucial in order to help to minimise impact. It may be necessary to request further screening, **or to condition the retention of existing screening**, where it would not harm the openness of the Green Belt.

6.0 **Development in Conservation Areas**

6.1 Proposals for sports pitches with associated floodlighting in schools/colleges may

occur within a conservation area. UDP policies **CE2, CE2/1** and SDVUDP policy **D7** seeks to ensure that all new development preserves or enhances the appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.2 The siting, design and scale of floodlights will be assessed in terms of the effect upon the character of the conservation area. Applications will be refused should they have a significantly detrimental impact upon the Conservation Area. Appropriate measures must be implemented in order to minimise any detrimental effects and preserve the character of the Conservation Area.

7.0 Wildlife

7.1 The Council recognises that wildlife may also be affected by proposals for sports facilities. The intensification of activity, lighting and noise may be detrimental to wildlife, particularly in Green Belt locations which are more rural in nature. It is crucial that in areas where wildlife may be present, such as within or adjacent to wildlife corridors, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Sites of Biological Importance, advice should be sought regarding the principle of the development and any measures which may be necessary to prevent disturbance prior to the submission of an application. Advice should be sought from bodies such as English Nature, The Wildlife Trust and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 A series of questions have been formulated which applicants must address prior to the application process in order to clarify the need for the proposal and any potential limitations. These are listed below:-

- 1. Are any residential properties affected by the proposal and what do you consider the impact to be? If properties are affected, what mitigation measures do you propose?**
- 2. What need is there for these sports facilities? (e.g. will the proposal benefit from a grant, will the school sports status be**

improved to any recommended levels, is there a shortage of community sports facilities in the vicinity?).

3. **Is there a minimum requirement for the hours of usage of the pitch? If so, please stipulate.**
4. **Will the use of the sports pitch be available for the wider community?**
5. **If the proposed sports facility will be available for community use, what provision will be made for its use out of school/college hours (e.g. parking, security etc)?**

8.2 It is imperative that applicants realise the potentially contentious nature of proposals of this kind. The provision of justification is vital in order to analyse the need and potential impact of proposals upon the amenity of the surrounding area. It is also crucial that applicants seek advice from Environmental Health and Greater Manchester Police with regards to mitigation measures.