

No.1	APPLICATION NO.	2018/1158/FUL
	LOCATION	Beacon Park Golf Centre Beacon Lane Dalton Wigan Lancashire WN8 7RU
	PROPOSAL	Variation of Condition No. 1 of planning permission 2016/0040/FUL to vary the location, site and cross section plans submitted with the original application to regularise the as built land levels, landscaping and development layout of the nine hole short course. Replacement of plan reference 1115.11 received by the Local Planning Authority on 13th July 2011 with plan references 1115.11 Rev B and 1115.21. Replacement of plan reference 1115.15 received by the Local Planning Authority on 13th July 2011 with plan reference 1115.X6 cross sections. Approval of new plan reference 1115.27 Par 3 Landscaping. All other plans to remain as per the decision notice.
	APPLICANT	SERCO Leisure Operating Limited
	WARD	Tanhouse
	PARISH	Unparished - Skelmersdale
	TARGET DATE	15th February 2019

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks to retrospectively regularise earthworks carried out to form a new short-course golf facility and proposes access and drainage improvements to a previously approved scheme. The existing and proposed works are considered acceptable in principle and detail in that they provide enhancements to the facilities to encourage outdoor sport and recreation whilst preserving the Green Belt and landscape qualities. No adverse impacts on nearby land uses or biodiversity interests in the locality are anticipated. The development is considered in accordance with the relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework and the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That conditional planning permission be **GRANTED**.

3.0 THE SITE

- 3.1 Beacon Park Golf Club is located between Beacon Lane to the east and Stannanought Road to the west. Immediately to the south of the golf course is Beacon Country Park. The site is located within the Green Belt and is also designated as a recreation facility and as a nature conservation site. Footpath 106 lies to the north of the works site.
- 3.2 The 9-hole course sits within the wider golf course context and is located west of Beacon Lane. The site is approx. 320 x 130 m with a general fall of land from north-east to south-west. The site has recently been subject to works under the terms of the 2011 and 2016 permissions and has been re-profiled to form the basis of the short-hole course but currently remains unused.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application seeks amendments to planning permission 2016/0040/FUL for variations in levels and layout on the 9-hole short course, the inclusion of drainage management

measures in the form of herringbone channels and swales, the provision of an access path and variations to landscape proposals.

- 4.2 The application seeks retention of increased levels on the site. This amounts to an estimated 16,000 m³ over the site giving an additional average level in the order of 0.4 m across the site, but variations appear to be less than this on the majority of the site with the bulk of additional material graded on the south-western slope of the site. In addition, the installation of gravel pathways providing access to either side of the first hole from the first tee is proposed and two herringbone drainage fields to manage surface water run-off.

5.0 PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

- 5.1 2018/1164/FUL - PENDING Remodelling of driving range at Beacon Park Golf Centre to create a Foot Golf course, remodelling of 1st hole green, 2nd hole tees, creation of mounding and re-profiling of ground adjacent to 1st fairway, remodelling of ground between 1st and 18th holes and associated landscaping.
- 5.2 2016/0040/FUL - GRANTED (22.02.2016) Variation of Condition No.7 imposed on planning permission 2011/0787/FUL to read: 'The development shall take place in accordance with the Coal Mining Risk Assessment Addendum Report produced by WSP dated November 2015'.
- 5.3 2013/1382/CON - REFUSED (27.02.2014) Approval of details reserved by condition no. 7 on planning permission 2011/0787/FUL relating to a coal mining risk assessment.
- 5.4 2011/0787/FUL - GRANTED (12.12.2011) Partial remodelling of existing golf course and driving range and creation of new nine hole short course.
Enforcement (former golf driving range)
- 5.5 E/2015/0223/BCN - Breach of planning condition no 1 imposed on planning permission 2016/0040/FUL (Depositing of waste material.)

6.0 OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES

- 6.1 LCC (Highways) (29.11.18) - The Highway Development Support Section has no objection in principle to this application and is of the opinion that the proposed development should have a negligible impact on highway capacity and highway safety within the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 6.2 Environment Agency (22.11.18) – No objections (outside remit); advisory requested.
- 6.3 The Coal Authority (07.12.18) – No objections subject to compliance or restatement of Condition 8 of the original permission.

7.0 OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

- 7.1 None received

8.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 8.1 The following information is submitted in support of the application:
Flood Risk Assessment
Arboricultural Survey
Biodiversity survey and report
Landscaping details

9.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG); the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD (WLLP); and, the Lancashire Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Local Plan provide the policy framework against which the development proposals will be assessed. The site is allocated as within the Green Belt, is a Nature Conservation Site, area of Landscape History Importance of county significance, an established countryside recreation site and a Mineral Safeguarding Area in the WLLP. The following policies are relevant in the determination of this planning application:

9.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Achieving well-designed places
Protecting Green Belt land
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

9.3 West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD

GN1 – Settlement Boundaries
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development
EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment
EN3 – Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Spaces

9.4 Supplementary Planning Document – Design Guide (Jan 2008)
Supplementary Planning Guidance – Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance (updated Aug 2007)

9.5 **Lancashire Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Local Plan**
Policy M2 Minerals Safeguarding

10.0 OBSERVATIONS OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Background

10.1 Works commenced on the Beacon Park site following the initial grant of planning permission for large scale remodelling of the golf course and adjacent land, including the importation of significant amounts of inert material. In August 2015 a complaint was received by the Council that the works were not being completed in accordance with the approved plans. Investigations found that material for the works had been brought on to this and other parts of the site however the majority of the works to the 18-hole golf course remained incomplete and three main areas were left with additional stockpiled material – the 9-hole course, the former driving range area and a linear strip between the first fairway and Elmers Green Lane. In accordance with adopted enforcement protocols, efforts have been directed at seeking resolution with the site operator to attempt to resolve any planning harm arising. This application relates to the 9-hole course area only.

Principle of Development

10.2 As a s.73 application (amendment) the general principle of development has previously been accepted and it is only the matters of the variations to the 2016 permission that are subject to review under the terms of this application. In Green Belt terms the majority of the works constitute engineering operations that are acceptable in principle if they protect the openness of the Green Belt and avoid conflict with the purposes of including land

within it. As with the initial assessment, the retention of additional material on the site will not conflict with either test – ultimately appearing as part of a semi-natural element of its landscape setting and retaining a rural characteristic substantially free from development. The introduction of short path lengths (approx. 155 m total) will give rise to some loss of openness, as will drainage works to a lesser extent. Neither will conflict with the reasons for including land in the Green Belt. The limited harm to the openness must be considered in the context of the general support for improved access and encouragement for opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation (NPPF para 141) and Policy EN3 in the WLLP. Given the limited area of works and context of the site adjacent to the main golf course (which includes similar pathways) I consider the proposals are acceptable in principle in the Green Belt.

Design and Appearance

- 10.3 The proposed development lies within areas classified as a landscape of historic importance of county significance because of the characteristics of ancient countryside coupled with significant industrial heritage. Policy GN3 states that proposals for development should maintain or enhance the distinctive character and visual quality of any Landscape Character Areas in which they are located.
- 10.4 The proposed footways will have a width of approx. 1.5 m and be finished in gravel to appear consistent with other pathways on and about the 18-hole course and are therefore consistent with the locality and acceptable in their context.
- 10.5 The retention of the additional material on the site gives a marginally greater sense of land profiling than that of the approved scheme and the managed landscape that is the 18-hole course. The landscape and visual amenity assessment undertaken at the time of the original 2011 application anticipated that *'levels will typically rise by several meters where new greens, tees and fairways are being pushed out from the existing slope, but in small areas new mounds will result in elevation changes of up to 5.5m'*. This substantially remains the case, although the western fringe of the site is perhaps more prominent by virtue of its greater incline; however, this area benefits from established tree screening and therefore its impact on the wider landscape is very limited from outside the site. The minor realignment of some of the holes will not have a material impact. I would generally agree with the submitted assessment that concludes that no significant adverse impact on fixed views from outside the site will arise. On that basis I am satisfied the development accords with Policy GN3 in the WLLP.

Ecology and Trees

- 10.6 Due to the substantial retrospective nature of the works there is not considered to be any significant additional adverse impacts on protected species or their habitats as a consequence of the proposals. It is notable that a small number of tree losses have occurred within an area prone to waterlogging within the short course area. Compensatory tree planting and the formation of swales are anticipated to maintain or improve the biodiversity of the site and therefore the requirements of Policies EN2 and GN3 in this respect are expected to be met. These enhancements will be secured by planning condition/s.

Highways Implications

- 10.7 The proposed development substantially reflects the as built development with only minor additional works anticipated. It is not anticipated that the proposal would result in the generation of any significant or abnormal traffic conditions and no adverse impacts on

highway safety or capacity are anticipated. No implications are expected for the continued use of Footpath 106 to the north.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 10.8 A Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the application and concludes that subject to suitable drainage measures to address any potential for higher surface water discharge from the site arising from the increased land levels, inclines and anticipated lower permeability of the imported material, the level of flood risk in the locality or elsewhere will not be elevated by the proposed development. As existing outlets for surface water are present on site final detail of holding swales and discharge flows will be reserved for planning conditions. Subject to no increases in surface water flow leaving the site the development will accord with the requirements of Policy GN3 in the WLLP.

11.0 **RECOMMEDATION**

- 11.1 Planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with details shown on the following plans:-
Plan references 1115.11 Rev. B; 1115.X6; 1115.21; and, 1115.27 received by the Local Planning Authority on 5 November 2018.
2. Prior to first use of the 9-hole course full details of the calculations demonstrating pre-development surface run-off rates, proposed swales and mechanisms to restrict surface water flow from the site (including their maintenance) to a level not exceeding the pre-development greenfield rate shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority; the approved surface water management drainage scheme shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details prior to first use of the course and be retained in working order for the duration of the development.
3. Within the first planting season following this decision the approved landscaping scheme shown on plan ref. 1115.27 shall be carried out. All trees and shrubs planted shall comply with BS. 3936 (Specification of Nursery Stock) and shall be planted in accordance with BS. 4428 (General Landscape Operations). All planting shall be maintained and dead or dying material shall be replaced for a period of seven years from the agreed date of planting.

Reasons

1. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure compliance with the provisions of Policies GN3 and EN2 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
2. To ensure that the site is properly drained in the interest of local amenity and that the development, therefore, complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
3. To compensate for tree losses and assimilate the proposed development into its surroundings and to ensure that the development complies with the provisions of Policy EN2 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

Reason for Approval

1. The Local Planning Authority has considered the proposed development in the context of the Development Plan including, in particular, the following Policy/Policies in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document:

GN1 - Settlement Boundaries

GN3 - Criteria for Sustainable Development

EN2 - Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment
EN3 - Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Spaces

together with Supplementary Planning Guidance and all relevant material considerations. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal complies with the relevant Policy criteria and is acceptable in the context of all relevant material considerations as set out in the Officer's Report. This report can be viewed or a copy provided on request to the Local Planning Authority.