

Planning Application: Report of Handling



Reference No. 23/0148/PP

Renfrewshire
Council

KEY INFORMATION

Ward: 11 Bishopton,
Bridge of Weir and
Langbank

Applicant: Gleddoch
Resorts Ltd

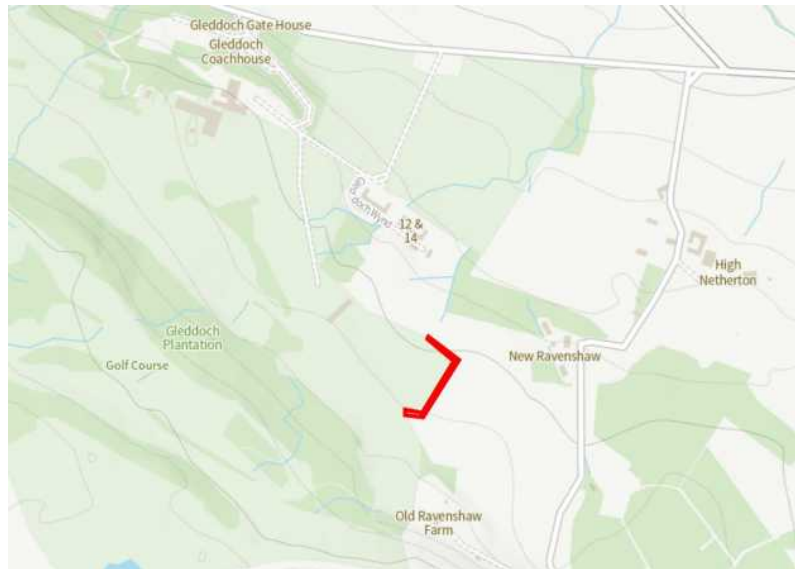
Registered: 22/03/2023

Report by Head of Economy & Development

PROSPECTIVE PROPOSAL: Erection of extension to
height of golf range netting

LOCATION: Golf Range Netting at Gleddoch Resort and
Golf Course

APPLICATION FOR: Full Planning Permission



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RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to
conditions

IDENTIFIED KEY ISSUES

- The application site is located within the Green Belt and is covered by National Planning framework 4 policy 8 and Local development Plan policy ENV1.
- There have been fifteen letters of representation.

Alasdair Morrison
Head of Economy &
Development

REPORT OF HANDLING FOR APPLICATION 23/0112/PP

SITE ADDRESS	Golf Range Netting at Gleddoch Resort and Golf Course
PROPOSAL	Erection of extension to height of golf range netting
RECOMMENDATION	Grant subject to conditions

PROPOSALS	<p>This application seeks planning permission for the erection of an extension to the height of a perimeter netting associated with the driving range at the Gleddoch Hotel.</p> <p>The driving range and netting was originally approved under application 18/0042/PP. The driving range is located approx. 400m to the south east of the hotel. The nearest residential properties are at Gleddoch Wynd 140m to the north, New Ravenshaw 175m to the east, and Old Ravenshaw Farm 170m to the south.</p> <p>The existing netting is positioned in a U shape along the eastern boundary of the range. The range is approx. 210m in length. The existing netting is between 10m and 12m in height above ground level.</p> <p>Since the range has commenced operations, it has become evident that the current netting is not of a sufficient height to prevent balls from entering the land to the east. It is noted that this matter is now the subject of an Improvement Notice served by the Business Regulation Team under Section 21 of the Health and Safety etc. Act 1974.</p> <p>To remedy this the operators now propose to increase the height of the fence by between 3m and 5m to create a fence that is a uniform height of 15m above ground level. The proposed netting and columns will match the appearance and specification of the existing netting and columns.</p> <p>It should be noted that the deficiencies in the current netting should not render the principle of the driving range unacceptable in planning terms. It is the responsibility of the operator to manage the driving range in accordance with all other legislation. The operators have considered several options to try and ensure balls are contained within the perimeter and have concluded that increasing the height of the fence is the best option, and have subsequently sought planning permission for this.</p> <p>This report relates to an application that would normally fall within the Council's scheme of delegation to be determined by an appointed officer. However, a request has been submitted by three members, within 21 days of the application appearing on the weekly list, that the matter be removed from the scheme of delegation for determination by the Board. It was considered that the potential impact of the</p>
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	development on the local community and local environment required it to be fully considered prior to any decision being made.
SITE HISTORY	Application No: 18/0042/PP Description: Erection of golf driving range with associated access, parking, landscaping, and boundary netting. Decision: Grant subject to conditions.
CONSULTATIONS	Communities & Housing Services (Environmental Protection Team) – Have requested that the applicant provide justification by way of calculations for the net heights chosen for the application.
REPRESENTATIONS	Fifteen letters of representation have been received which object to the proposed development. The points raised in the letters can be summarised as follows. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non compliance and fulfilment of the previous planning application, namely the driving range lighting. 2. Condition of the existing netting which the Hotel wish to add to. 3. Intervention of the Health and Safety Executive. 4. Disregard of neighbour concerns about danger to life and limb. 5. Disregard to neighbour concerns to the safety and welfare of livestock. 6. Impact on the existing bats, rookery, and other wildlife, biodiversity, and habitats in the area. 7. Range balls are being hit around the net in addition to over it. 8. Visual impact of the netting, and the development is out of keeping with the character of the area. 9. The proposal would erode the quality of the green network. 10. A full Environmental Impact Assessment and a bat survey are required. 11. Permission should not have been granted for the original application, and the area required for the range has been misjudged. 12. The range should be closed, or people restricted to using clubs that have a shorter range. 13. Impact of the lighting on road safety and the environment. 14. Balls from the range are collecting in Gleddoch Burn and impacting the environment.

	<p>15. The development is not compatible with neighbouring land use.</p> <p>16. Neighbouring properties were not notified.</p>
<p>DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES</p>	<p>Policy and Material Considerations</p> <p>Legislation requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the proposal must be assessed against the following:</p> <p>Development Plan</p> <p><u>National Planning Framework 4</u></p> <p>NPF4: Policy 3 – Biodiversity NPF4: Policy 8 – Green Belt NPF4: Policy 29 – Rural Development</p> <p><u>Renfrewshire Local Development Plan</u></p> <p>LDP 2021: Policy ENV1 – Green Belt LDP 2021: Policy ENV2 – Natural Heritage</p> <p><u>Supplementary Guidance</u></p> <p>Delivering the Environment Strategy</p> <p><u>Material Considerations</u></p>
<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p>	<p>Policies 8 and ENV1 state that the green belt aims to maintain the identity of settlements and facilitate compact urban growth, protect and enhance the landscape setting of an area, and protect and promote access opportunities to open space.</p> <p>Both policies set out acceptable forms of development within the green belt. This includes recreational uses compatible with a natural environment setting.</p> <p>The principle of the golf driving range was established through the approval of planning application 18/0042/PP. It is noted that the lighting condition attached to this application is still to be satisfactorily resolved. However, notwithstanding this it is not considered that the scope of the current application allows the principle of the driving range to be revisited.</p> <p>The previous application was approved in the knowledge that the driving range would require netting along the eastern edge of the range. Details of the netting were provided as part of the submission. It was concluded that the impact of the netting would not have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area.</p>

Whilst the driving range has been operating it has become apparent that the netting approved with the original application is not of a sufficient height to prevent balls from being hit into the adjoining fields. The applicants therefore propose to increase the height of the netting from between 10-12m to a uniform height of 15m. In determining the required height, the operators have provided data that shows the height of the compression balls used at the range at 225 yards (being the length of the driving range) is approx. 14m in the air. The height of 15m being proposed should therefore prevent balls from clearing the netting.

The principal consideration in the assessment of this application is therefore the acceptability of increasing the height of the existing fence to 15m.

There is no loss of agricultural land, wild land, or access to open space, and there is no requirement for any additional traffic or access infrastructure.

The development has no significant effects on water supply or water courses from any pollution risk.

In terms of impact on landscape character, the applicant has provided three visuals which show the current fence and how it will appear once the additional 5m height has been added. The visibility of the existing netting from the north, south and west of the site is restricted by woodland and the sloping land form. There is a belt of woodland to the south and south west of the site which screens the site. The land to the north slopes downhill and away from the site which again reduces the visibility of the netting from this angle. To the west the netting will be visible from within the golf course and the grounds of the hotel. However the undulating land form beyond the hotel grounds will again reduce visibility from wider vantage points.

It is noted that the existing netting is visible from vantage points to the east, namely the residential properties along Netherton Road and from higher ground such as Barscube Hill. Existing views from Netherton Road show that the existing netting is partly visible above the undulating grassland.

However as noted under application 18/0042/PP the netting is not a solid structure. The mesh size allows light to pass through the netting, reducing its visual impact. The associated steel columns, which are positioned at 32m intervals along the line of the fence, are also of a perforated design. The applicant has confirmed that the mesh size will match the existing netting. While the proposed development will increase the visibility of the netting from the east, it is not considered that this will have a significant detrimental impact on landscape character.

With respect to potential impact on species and habitats of nature conservation interest, concern has been raised over the impact of the

netting on birds and bats in the area. **Policy ENV2** requires development proposals to consider the potential impact on natural heritage.

The applicants have advised that there has not been any instances of birds or bats becoming stuck in the netting. The applicants have also provided a statement from an ecologist which advises that the netting is appropriate at this location, and that increasing the height of the netting to 15m will not have any significant effects upon the bat or bird population at the site or the surrounding area. The development is considered to comply with **policy ENV2**.

In view of the above assessment, it is concluded that the development will not undermine the role and function of the green belt or have a significant long term impact on the environmental quality of the green belt. The development is therefore considered to comply with policies **8 and ENV1**.

Policy 29 seeks to encourage rural economic activity whilst ensuring the distinctive character of rural areas and natural assets are safeguarded.

The operation of the driving range forms part of the wider function of Gleddoch Hotel as a recreation and tourism asset. The proposed development will facilitate the safe operation of the driving range, and will support the rural economy in this regard. It has been demonstrated above that character of the area and natural assets will not be detrimentally impacted to an unacceptable degree. The development is considered to comply with **policy 29**.

In response to the points raised in the letters of objection.

1 and 13. The status of the lighting condition attached to the previous application is noted in the foregoing assessment. However, this is a separate matter, and would not prevent assessment of the current application from taking place.

2. The condition of the netting is a matter for the operators of the driving range to manage.

3. It is acknowledged that the Councils business regulations team have served a notice on the driving range. The proposed development is seen as a method by which the notice can be resolved.

4 and 5. These concerns have not been disregarded by the Council or the operators. The Council have served a notice on the operators, and the operators have proposed a resolution through increasing the height of the netting.

6. This matter has been addressed in the foregoing assessment.

7 and 14. The land to the side of the driving range is owned by the

	<p>applicants. This is therefore a management issue.</p> <p>8, 9 and 15. These matters have been addressed in the foregoing assessment.</p> <p>10. The proposed development does not fall within schedule 1 or 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, and is not therefore an EIA development. A statement from an ecologist on the potential impact on birds and bats has been provided.</p> <p>11 and 12. The principle of a driving range at this location cannot be revisited within the scope of this application. The functionality of the range was not a material consideration in the assessment of the previous application. It is a matter for the operators to manage the range in accordance with all other relevant legislation.</p> <p>16. Notification has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the regulations.</p> <p>In view of the above, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan. There are no other material considerations. Planning permission should therefore be granted.</p>
RECOMMENDATION	Grant subject to conditions

Reason for Decision

The proposal accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and there were no material considerations which outweighed the presumption in favour of development according with the Development Plan.

Conditions

1. That the mesh size and material diameter of the netting to be installed at the driving range shall match the mesh size and diameter of the existing netting. The netting shall be maintained as such for the duration that the driving range is in use to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interests of visual amenity.