

SUFC 005 – PLANNING STATEMENT & ASSOCIATED VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS

DATE: 09/05/2021

SITE ADDRESS:

SUTTON UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB
GANDER GREEN LANE
SUTTON SM1 2EY

PROPOSAL:

ADDITION OF NEW 280 SEAT GRANDSTAND, NEW TURNSTILES AND REPLACEMENT GRASS FOR PITCH.

PREVIOUS ADVICE OBTAINED:

VERBAL ADVICE RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE REGARDING WHICH INFORMATION WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROCESS THESE APPLICATIONS.

PLANNING STATEMENT:

This application deals with three subjects: a) new grandstand, b) replacement turnstiles and c) new grass.

- a) The proposed new grandstand is part of a program of upgrades required by the English Football League as a result of Sutton United being a candidate for promotion into the EFL lowest tier for the next football season starting in August 2021. The EFL requires a higher proportion of seats in the ground compared with standing room and segregated home and away fans. Currently, Sutton United has a capacity of about 5000 supporters, mostly standing. Adding the new grandstand, reducing touchline standing and segregating fans will reduce capacity to just over 4000 supporters on match days with a higher proportion of seats.
- b) Replacement turnstiles are like-for-like. The old turnstiles are coming to the end of their useful life and the new ones incorporate electronic ticket readers to make access quicker and easier. This is an EFL requirement. From the outside, the new turnstiles look quite similar to the old ones, basically black metal boxes with doors.
- c) The new grass (natural, living) is to replace the old artificial grass and this is needed to meet current EFL guidelines. If the Club is not promoted at the end of this season, this part of the application will not take place. We understand from talking about this with a planning officer at Sutton, that replacing artificial grass with natural grass is not a planning consideration but we considered it wise to mention it anyway. If the Club is promoted and the grass is changed, it will reduce the usage of the ground to match days only and training will then need to take place elsewhere to reduce wear on the grass. This will mean far less usage of the ground, the lights and the pitch.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PLAN:

- a) The new 280 seat grandstand comes “flat-packed” and is completely modular. It is delivered on a trailer pulled behind a standard vehicle and is assembled on site. It is bolted to a pre-formed concrete slab set into the ground. Ground works would be carried out by excavator, excess spoils are likely to be left on site behind the proposed new grandstand. Concrete would be delivered by pre-mix lorry and poured straight into the ground on to a reinforcing steel bar frame. The whole process is very quick and simple not requiring significant construction works on site. The area around the new stand would have standard 2.4m hoarding whilst works are ongoing although works would be done during the summer football recess. Working hours would be 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturday, no works would be scheduled for Sunday. This project would not result in dust or emissions as no significant cutting is required during assembly. This project would not result in vibration or significant noise as the method of assembly is very basic. PPE would be used as required and in accordance with current government guidelines at that time. We do not have an exact program of works yet as this will only be issued once the new grandstand is ordered from the supplier.
- b) The new turnstiles are supplied “whole, fully assembled” and due to their manageable size are simply delivered by Hiab lorry and craned off on site directly into their new positions. No new foundations would be required for them and the old turnstiles are removed in the same way, by Hiab crane lorry. Hours of work would be the same as above and the whole operation would be completed in a day or two. Again, there would not be any significant dust, emissions, noise or vibration during the proposed works. Delivery date is not known at this time.
- c) The laying of the new grass and removal of the old artificial grass would be carried out by specialist contractor who would bring their own equipment to site and we would impose the same working hours and conditions as listed above.

CONSTRUCTION LOGISTICS PLAN:

Many of the points required by this section have been answered in the previous section so to avoid repetition, please read the previous section first and the remaining points will be covered here.

Access to site will be by the main Gander Green Lane road entrance and all construction vehicles will enter here and drive into the extensive car park area. Those that need access pitch-side will enter the main “exit” gate and drive to wherever they are required. As the construction works are relatively minor, the car park is more than sufficient to hold however many vehicles may turn up at any given time and no queuing on the street would occur. Any vehicles that do drive pitch-side will have their wheels washed down before leaving site to avoid mud being carried on to Gander Green Lane.

Loading and unloading of plant and materials will take place in the car park areas, well away from the public highway. During construction works, access will be managed at the site boundary to avoid clashes between construction vehicles and members of the public. Storage of plant and materials would be in one of the car parks which are not used by members of the public during the summer recess. Boundary hoarding would be erected at the main Gander Green Lane entrance and also around any areas where works are taking place. All other points have been answered in the previous section.

PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN:

This application involves a net reduction in the number of supporters able to attend the ground on match days due to the replacement of standing space with seats. On this basis, there are no current plans to change existing parking arrangements. At a later stage, when a future application to enlarge the ground capacity is made, a new parking management plan will be prepared at that time.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

This application does not propose to carry out any alterations that would have a significant negative impact on neighbours. Replacement turnstiles do not impact neighbours at all, a new 280 person seating area and new EFL rules will result in fewer supporters on match days meaning less noise for neighbours, if the Club is promoted and the artificial grass is replaced with real grass, the ground will no longer be used for training and therefore neighbours would experience far less activity and noise from the ground. On our other application, reference number DM2021/00746 for replacement of lighting, we engaged with a number of neighbours whose houses back on to the ground and the proposed new lighting is designed to produce less glare and less stray light than the current system.

TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT AND TRAVEL PLAN:

As this application is proposing a reduction in the number of visitors to site which should make travel arrangements easier on match days, the contents of this section are minimal. PTAL of the site is 2 but the rear of the site is on a boundary with PTAL zone 4. Currently, most journeys to and from site are Club management staff who park in the car park or use local bus or train services. On match days, some supporters park at the ground within capacity but most walk locally or take public transport. The proposal will reduce the overall number of supporters on match days reducing demand for parking and public transport. On non-match days, there will be no change to transportation and parking usage. No changes to current transport or parking strategy are proposed. In terms of supporters, it is planned to segregate home and away fans with home fans exiting the ground via the Gander Green main exit and away supporters exiting the ground via the Collingwood Park exit.

In the long term, if expansion of the ground is necessary, further applications will be submitted for additional seating and it is considered to move the away supporters to the Gander Green Lane side of the ground and open a new access point into Collingwood Park at that end of the ground. This would make it easier for away fans to access public transport to return home after a match. It is also considered a long-term objective to close off the car parks to supporters entirely in future in order to reduce vehicular congestion along Gander Green Lane on match days and encourage fans to walk or use public transport to get to the ground. This would also improve security and reduce the risks associated with mixing fans and vehicles.

WASTE MANAGEMENT, STORAGE AND COLLECTION STRATEGY:

Note that this application would result in a net decrease in usage of the ground by supporters and for training purposes. For this reason, no change is proposed to the current waste management strategy. Waste is currently kept indoors until collection days when it is brought out and given to refuse collectors. In future applications this is likely to change and a fuller Waste Management Plan will be developed at that time.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

As this application and associated works will result in fewer supporters on match days, fewer people training on non-match days and no reduction of privacy or enjoyment of amenity space of neighbours, it is considered that this application has met the criteria required by the planning department to approve it.

If any changes to the proposal are required and in order to avoid SUTTON UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB not being promoted on a technicality, we urge the planning department to engage with us and allow alteration to the proposal to be made during the application process if required, rather than by rejection and resubmission which would be catastrophic for the club.

Thank you.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

Mr Alex Locke, Director
Planning Consent UK Ltd
07718-808 708
0800-622 6612

permission@planningconsentUK.com
<https://www.planningconsentuk.com>