

Application Number:	P/FUL/2023/2025
Webpage:	Planning application: P/FUL/2023/02025 - dorsetforyou.com (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
Site address:	Scout Hall Granby Close Weymouth DT4 0SR
Proposal:	Replacement Scout Hall
Applicant name:	Mr Naylor
Case Officer:	Jo Langrish-Merritt
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Dunseith, Cllr Worth (Chickerell) Cllr Taylor, Cllr Hope (Westham)

1.0 Recommendation

The application relates to land that is in Dorset Council ownership and the application is therefore being reported to Committee in accordance with Dorset Council's Constitution.

2.0 Summary of recommendation:

Grant subject to conditions.

3.0 Reason for the recommendation:

The new scout hut will improve the current facilities on site and encourage further use. The site and building is already owned and well used by the Scouts. The site lies within an existing built- up residential area and in easy walking distance of Chickerell, Westham and the Charlestown areas and is served by public transport. As such the proposal is considered to be well located in a sustainable area and accessible to the local catchment. Although the proposed building would be larger than the existing it has been designed to provide upgraded facilities to cater for young people and adults with needs that are not currently in the existing building. The proposed building will have a more modern appearance than the existing but would not be out of keeping with the mixed character of the area. There would be no adverse impacts on residential amenity, highways or biodiversity as such the proposal is considered to be acceptable and would comply with Policy COM2, COM4, COM7, COM9, ENV12, ENV2, ENV10 and ENV16 of the West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) and Policy CNP 5 and CNP11 of the Chickerell Neighbourhood plan.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
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Principle of development	The site and building is already owned and well used by the Scouts. The site lies within an existing built- up residential area within easy walking distance of Chickerell, Westham and the Charlestown areas and is served by public transport. As such the proposal is considered to be well located in a sustainable area and accessible to the local catchment.
Impact on visual amenity	Although the proposed building would be larger than the existing it has been designed to provide upgraded facilities to cater for young people and adults with needs that are not met by the current building. The proposed building will have a more modern appearance than the existing but would not be out of keeping with the mixed character of the area
Impact on residential amenity	The building will have a larger footprint and would be higher than the existing but due to the separation distances to neighbouring properties this would not adversely impact on residential amenity.
Impact on biodiversity and trees	No adverse impacts.
Impact on highways	There are no proposed changes to access or parking arrangements. The access & parking to the site is already established and the existing scout hut has a long-established use.

5.0 Description of Site

The site spans two wards Chickerell and Westham. The site is a relatively spacious, level, triangular shaped plot located within a mainly residential, urban area. The current hall has been on the site since 1970s and is a single storey, sectional, concrete building surrounded by amenity area. Currently the building is approximately 162 sq meters and is split into an activity hall, group rooms, store, kitchen and toilets. The hall caters for a range of participants of various ages from the younger Beaver scouts through to older Explorer scouts. The organisation has outgrown these facilities and require a larger hall with an upgraded provision so the group can continue to grow and cater for young people and

adults. Information has been provided by the agent explaining the need for the larger building.

'The increase in floor space is required to provide adequate space for disabled access and use of building, disabled WC, and shower facilities are included. Additional break out space is to allow space for young people with neurodiversity issues spaces they can work in/break out to if they require quiet space.

The existing office space is cramped and unsuitable for interviews with Parent/carers, young people or new potential volunteers, larger office allows for these types of events to occur when youth members are using breakout spaces. The store at rear of building is increased in size to cope with the substantial amount of camping and activity equipment which the group has, not all of which can currently be accommodated in existing store'.

6.0 Description of Development

The proposal is to demolish the existing hall and erect a larger replacement hall. The hall would be located on the same plot and in the same position but would have a larger footprint. It would still be single storey but would be marginally taller than the previous due to the fully hipped roof. Internally there would be a large multifunction activity hall with 3 break out rooms, a large store, kitchen and showers and toilets. Externally the hall would be constructed with a natural stone plinth, rendered walls above and grey interlocking tiles with grey double-glazed windows and doors. In order to heat the building there would be an air source heat pump and PV panels.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

1/E/79/000599 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 07/01/1980

USE LAND FOR YOUTH FOOTBALL PITCHES

1/E/83/000505 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 30/11/1983

Erect 22 starter homes, 24 bungalows, 24 flats & meeting room. Construcestate roads.

1/E/85/000654 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 21/02/1986

Obtain relief from Condition 4 of P.A. No. 1/E/83/505

1/D/10/002082 - Decision: REF - Decision Date: 28/02/2011

Erection 8 dwellings with access road & associated parking

1/D/11/000614 - Decision: REF - Decision Date: 28/06/2011

5 dwellings with access road & associated parking

WP/18/00707/FUL - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 20/02/2019

Erect extension to provide wheelchair accessible WC and Shower Facilities

8.0 List of Constraints

Within Defined Development Boundary

Landscape Character Urban Area; Weymouth Urban Area

Neighbourhood Plan - Chickerell NP

Legal Agreements S106

Dorset Council Land

Natural England Designation - RAMSAR: Chesil Beach & the Fleet

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (5km buffer): Chesil & The Fleet

Radon: Class: Less than 1%

9.0 Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. Ward Members

Comments have been received from Cllr Dunseith, Cllr Hope and Cllr Fuhrman all supporting the application.

2. Weymouth Town Council

Support.

3. Chickerell Town Council

No comments received at time of writing the report.

4. Highways Officer

No comments received at time of writing the report.

5. Rights of Way

No comments received at time of writing the report.

6. Building Control

No comments received at time of writing the report.

7. Third Parties

No comments received at time of writing the report.

10.0 Relevant Policies

Policies

Adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan:

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- INT1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- ENV1 - Landscape, seascape & sites of other geological interest
- ENV2 - Wildlife and habitats
- ENV10 - The landscape and townscape setting
- ENV11 - The pattern of streets and spaces
- ENV 12 - The design and positioning of buildings
- ENV 16 - Amenity
- SUS2 - Distribution of development
- COM2- New and Improved community facilities
- COM4 - New or Improved recreational facilities
- COM7- Creating a safe & efficient transport network
- COM9- Parking provision

Neighbourhood Plans

Weymouth Neighbourhood plan- In preparation

Chickerell Neighbourhood plan

Policy CNP 5. Charlestown Local Centre and other valued community facilities

Development proposals to improve the provision of community facilities (including those listed below and shown on Map 6) will be supported, and every effort should be made to work with the local community and relevant authorities to investigate potential solutions to avoid any loss.

The site itself falls only partially within the Chickerell Parish and is not identified or listed in the Neighbourhood Plan as a community facility, however, the plan is clear in its aim that community facilities in general should be supported.

Policy CNP 11. General Design Principles

All applications for new development should demonstrate a high quality of design, including details and materials that are sympathetic to the character of the local area.....

Using a mix of materials, including use of local stone as part of this mix

Other Material Considerations

Emerging Local Plans:

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

Supplementary Planning Document/Guidance

Landscape Character Assessment 2009 (West Dorset)

Landscape Character Assessment (Weymouth & Portland)

Urban Design (2002)

DCC Parking Standards

West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Community Infrastructure Levies 2016

Interim strategy for mitigating the effects of recreational pressure on the Chesil Beach and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar – Dorset Council April 2020

National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4. Decision taking: Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 5 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes' outlines the government's objective in respect of land supply with subsection 'Rural housing' at paragraphs 78-79 reflecting the requirement for development in rural areas.
- Section 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy', paragraphs 84 and 85 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' promotes the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, through conversion of existing buildings, the erection of well-designed new buildings, and supports sustainable

tourism and leisure developments where identified needs are not met by existing rural service centres.

- Section 11 'Making effective use of land'
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 126 – 136 advise that:

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'

Para 92. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

11.0 Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

12.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The building has been designed to provide upgraded facilities to cater for young people and adults with needs not currently met by the existing building. The building would be larger with more circulation space, including wider corridors and door ways to allow for ease of movement, double doors provide access to the external amenity area from the activity hall. The layout of the building allows easy progression through with similar rooms grouped together which can also be easily accessed from the larger activity hall. Step free access is provided to all external doors for ease of use by all building occupants and visitors.

13.0 Financial benefits

Material considerations:

Employment created during the construction phase

Increased spending in local shops and facilities from people visiting the facilities

Non material considerations:

None relevant

14.0 Climate Implications

The site is in a sustainable location within an existing well established residential area. It is therefore likely a number of visitors will walk or use public transport to access the site. The building itself has been designed to include moderate levels of glazing while maintaining a highly insulated building fabric. The building would be heated using an Air Source Heat Pump for the radiators and the hot water would also come from the air source heat pump into radiators. 12no Solar panels would also be provided on the western roof slope.

15.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of development

15.1 Policies COM2 and COM4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015) support the addition or improvement of local community/recreational buildings subject to criteria including being well sited to serve the community and that the new facility will not result in a significant increase in one off purpose trips. The site and building is already owned and well used by the Scouts. The site lies within an existing built- up residential area and falls on the boundary of the Chickerell and Westham wards. The site is within easy walking distance of Chickerell, Westham and the Charlestown areas and is served by public transport. As such the proposal is considered to be well located in a sustainable area and accessible to the local catchment.

15.2 Policy CNP 5 of the Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan aims to support the provision of new facilities and prevent facilities being lost. The new scout hut will improve the current facilities on site and encourage further future use. There are a number of other scout units in the Weymouth and Portland area, however this unit is well established, and the proposal would not affect the number of participants or visitors to other scout units. Therefore, given its location in an existing residential area its connectivity to and established routes the wider area and the public transport serving it, overall, it is considered to be well sited to serve the community.

Impact on visual amenity

15.3 The hall would be located on the same plot and in the same position but would have a larger footprint than the existing scout hut. The proposal would have a significantly larger footprint to allow for additional internal circulation space and facilities. Although the replacement building will be larger than the existing given the generous size of the plot there will still be ample amenity space around the building to allow for outdoor activities and to prevent the development from feeling cramped.

15.4 Whilst the replacement building would still be single storey it would be higher than the existing. The overall height, however, has been kept to a minimum as the roof will be fully hipped.

15.5 The site is located in an area with a mixed character. The majority of residential development is single storey and two storey properties with some more modern flat development and industrial units to the northwest. In terms of materials the principal material would be brick with some rendered properties including the recent Fire Station development. The current scout building is utilitarian, concrete sectional building. In terms of finish of the proposed replacement building it will have a natural stone plinth with white rendered walls and interlocking tiles. Given the mix of materials in the area this is considered to be acceptable and would sit well with the residential development and reflect the modern character of the nearby Fire station building. **Policy CNP 11 General Design Principles of the Chickerell Neighbourhood plan** seeks to ensure that *‘new development should demonstrate a high quality of design, including details and materials that are sympathetic to the character of the local area.....*

Using a mix of materials, including use of local stone as part of this mix’

The proposed materials include a stone plinth and would reference new development in the area through the use of render. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the Chickerell Neighbourhood plan policy.

15.6 As such, overall the impact on visual amenity is considered acceptable in accordance with policies ENV12 and ENV16 of the adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015).

Impact on residential amenity

15.7 The proposed building would be larger than the existing however there would still be sufficient space around the building and it would maintain a single storey appearance.

Given its distance from neighbouring properties, the proposed building will not result in being overbearing. In terms of overlooking the main entrance would remain to the south as existing. Additional windows are proposed in the eastern elevation which would overlook an existing parking area. The single storey properties beyond this parking area all have blank gable elevations. No windows are proposed in the north elevation. The west elevation overlooks the existing amenity space. As such the impact through additional overlooking or loss of privacy is considered to be minimal.

15.8 The increase in numbers attending on a regular basis would increase, but not significantly. The daytime use of the building would be restricted to school holidays and around 24 days per annum with young people being brought by minibus to minimise disruption. The operation hours in the evenings will not alter significantly with most activity between 17:30-21:00. Whilst use of the access may intensify with better premises which could then impact on neighbouring amenity through access issues, this level of traffic could occur in any event and is not considered to be so detrimental as to warrant refusal.

Impact on biodiversity and trees

15.9 The siting of the replacement would be in the same position as the existing as such the established planting to the west of the site would be retained. Some additional planting has been proposed on the road facing boundary. This would increase the potential habitats for birds and insects.

15.10 A bat survey of the existing building has been completed. During the survey no evidence of bat occupation was identified and overall, the building was assessed to provide bats with negligible roosting suitability.

15.11 No evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey, and overall, the dwelling provides little to no nesting potential for birds.

15.12 The site falls within the RAMSAR Chesil and Fleet. Natural England have advised that development which results in an increase in population within 5km of the Chesil Beach and the Fleet European site may contribute to an unacceptable increase in recreational pressures on the features of the designated area. However, the proposal would be for a new scout's hall to replace the existing. The scheme has no dormitory or overnight accommodation. As such, the proposal would not result in further phosphates or recreational pressure affecting the RAMSAR Chesil and Fleet and the scheme would comply with policies ENV2 and ENV10 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015).

Highways

15.13 There are no proposed changes to access or parking arrangements. The access & parking to the site is already established and the existing scout hut has a long-established use. The potential use during daytime would be around 24 days per annum, mainly in School holidays between 10.00 and 16.00, and with young people brought to the location in minibus, causing minimal or no disruption to traffic or neighbours.

15.14 The hours operating hours will not substantially alter so most activity will occur between 17.30 and 21.00. and most visitors/parents park at Granby Close, Cobham or Radipole Lane as currently exist.

15.15 Whilst younger members are likely to be required to be dropped off and collected older members are encouraged where possible to walk/cycle rather than travel by car. Therefore although the use of the access, turning and parking area could intensify, the same could occur even without a replacement building on this site.

16. Conclusions

The new scout hut will improve the current facilities on site and encourage further use. The site and building is already owned and well used by the Scouts. The site lies within an existing built- up residential area and in easy walking distance of Chickerell, Westham and the Charlestown areas and is served by public transport. As such the proposal is considered to be well located in a sustainable area and accessible to the local catchment. Although the proposed building would be larger than the existing it has been designed to provide upgraded facilities to cater for young people and adults with needs not met by the current building. The proposed building will have a more modern appearance than the existing but would not be out of keeping with the mixed character of the area. There would be no adverse impacts on residential amenity, highways or biodiversity as such the proposal is considered to be acceptable and would comply with Policy COM2, COM4, COM7, COM9, ENV12, ENV2, ENV10 and ENV16 of the West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) and Policy CNP 5 and CNP11 of the Chickerell Neighbourhood plan.

17.0 Recommendation

Grant subject to conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

16/237/001 Rev B Location and Site plan

16/237/002 Rev A Proposed floor plans and elevations

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The external materials to be used for the wall(s) and roof(s) shall be as shown on the Proposed elevations drawing no.16/237/002. Thereafter, the building shall be retained as such.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance of the development.

4. The soft landscaping works detailed on approved drawing 16/237/001 Rev A must be carried out in full during the first planting season (November to March) following commencement of the development or within a timescale to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping shall be maintained in accordance with the agreed details and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory landscaping of the site and enhance the biodiversity, visual amenity and character of the area.

5. No external lighting shall be installed until details of the lighting scheme have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the lighting scheme shall be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To protect visual amenities and avoid nuisance to adjoining properties.

Informatives:

1. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.

