

2017/0608

Reg Date 10/08/2017

Bisley

**LOCATION:** THE SPORTS GROUND, CHURCH LANE, BISLEY, WOKING, GU24 9EA

**PROPOSAL:** Erection of a two storey clubhouse building with the provision of 1 No. all-weather pitch, and 3 No all-weather multi use pitches (with surrounding fencing), floodlighting, car parking, reconfiguration of existing pitches, alterations to access road, landscaping and other associated works. (Additional information recv'd 21/8/17) (Amended & additional info rec'd 30/07/2018)

**TYPE:** Full Planning Application

**APPLICANT:** Mr D Paterson  
Bisley Community Sports and Recreation Club

**OFFICER:** Duncan Carty

**This application would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, however, it has been called in for determination by the Planning Applications Committee at the request of Cllr Mansfield because of the local interest and site history.**

## **RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE**

### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application relates to the erection of a two storey clubhouse building with the provision of 4 no all-weather pitches including a full-size football pitch and three smaller multi-sports pitches (with surrounding fencing), floodlighting and outdoor secure childrens' play area with reconfiguration; and, additional car parking with access from Church Lane following the demolition of existing clubhouse building. The application site relates to the Sports Ground site off Church Lane to the north east of the settlement of Bisley, located in the Green Belt.
- 1.2 The proposal would provide a materially larger building than the one it replaces and the facilities proposed within it would not all be appropriate to support the outdoor use. Moreover, the building would be harmful to Green Belt openness and conflict with the purposes of including land within it. As such, the proposal would be inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. The fencing and floodlighting would also be harmful. In addition, the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on ecology. There are no very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

### **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site relates to an existing sports facility in the Green Belt known as Lion Park. It is located on the north side of Church Lane with a narrow frontage on this highway, providing the access, with the site extending to the north behind residential properties on Church Lane and to the rear of properties in Cedar Grove to the west. This includes a narrower car park area alongside the existing site access, which dog-legs around the rear of the frontage property to the immediate east, Meadowcroft, with the pitches further to the north. The wider site includes a main pitch as well as a training

pitch with moveable goals. However, the application site does not include the existing main pitch and its associated accommodation (stands, dug out and changing rooms), to the west, but the training pitch and existing clubhouse building.

- 2.2 The site is bound predominantly by trees to the north, east and south boundaries of the pitch including woodland to the north boundary of the site and open fields beyond to the east boundary. Kista Dan, a residential property, with a large rear garden lies to the south adjacent to part of the training field, along with Foxglove Field, to its immediate east which has an agricultural/equestrian use.

### 3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 SU/07/0232 - Erection of a 225 seat public stand, a temporary cabin to accommodate officials' changing rooms, four floodlighting stanchions, hardstanding and safety fencing to main pitch and laying out and surfacing of parking areas. Refurbishment of existing buildings to provide two turnstiles, committee and officials' accommodation, refreshments and male and female toilet facilities (part retrospective).

*Refused permission in June 2007 and appeal dismissed in March 2008.*

- 3.2 ENF/07/0325 Breaches including the installation of floodlights.

*Appeal upheld in March 2008.*

- 3.3 SU/11/0881 Siting of eight temporary floodlights to a height of 6 metres for use between November and March (retrospective).

*Approved in March 2012.*

- 3.4 SU/12/0639 Erection of a single storey building with accommodation in the roof to form clubhouse and facilities building following the demolition of existing single storey clubhouse. Installation of 4 all-weather pitches, 4 tennis courts and 1 junior football pitch and 22 floodlights to a maximum height of 12 metres.

*This proposal included a clubhouse building providing 930 square metres of accommodation (including a gym, changing rooms, toilets, bar/kitchen/clubroom, office/meeting room, tennis club dining room and tea room area, with reception, meeting room, store room, toilets, and office over) relating to a 812% increase in development on this site.*

*Refused in March 2013 for the following reasons:*

1. *The development is an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt in that it would be harmful to openness and would conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Furthermore the development proposed, by virtue of the extent of fencing and floodlighting, would be harmful to the rural character of the area. No very special circumstance have been demonstrated which would clearly outweigh the harm caused and as such the development is contrary to the objectives of Policy CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.*

2. *The development proposed would significantly increase the noise and disturbance experienced by those properties in proximity of the access road by virtue of the increased vehicle and pedestrian movements to and from the site, and in particular those which would occur late into the evening. This noise and disturbance would seriously adversely impact on the residential amenities currently enjoyed by the occupants of these properties. As such the development conflicts with the objectives of the relevant sections of Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and is contrary to the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.*
3. *It has not been demonstrated that the development would not have an adverse impact on protected species within or adjoining the site or result in the loss of significant habitats within the site. Accordingly the development conflicts with the objectives of Policy CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and it contrary to the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 06/2005.*

#### **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The current proposal is the erection of a two storey clubhouse building with the provision of 4 no all-weather pitches including a football pitch and three smaller multi-sports pitches (each with surrounding 4.25 metre high mesh fencing), floodlighting and outdoor secure childrens' play area with reconfiguration; and, additional car parking with access from Church Lane following the demolition of existing clubhouse building. The proposed clubhouse would be located on the south boundary of the main field close to the position of the existing clubhouse.
- 4.2 The clubhouse building, in its amended form, would provide at ground floor level male and female player and official changing rooms and toilets, separate toilets, reception and bar/café/kitchen areas, and office on the ground floor, with stair/lift access to first floor accommodation including a gym, committee room, womens' meeting room, learning room, store and circulation/viewing area (leading to an external viewing deck).
- 4.3 The proposed building would have a width of 28 metres (extending to 37.5 metres for the viewing deck) and a maximum depth of 15 metres with a crown roof to a maximum height of 6.1 metres, with its first floor accommodation within the roofspace. An extended external viewing deck, at first floor level, would be provided to the west flank. The proposed building would provide about 620 square metres of accommodation and 85 square metres of covered parking area (under part of the external viewing deck), amounting to 705 square metres, which is smaller by more than 200 square metres than the previously refused scheme (SU/12/0639).
- 4.4 The proposed building would replace the existing clubhouse building of 102 square metres and a first aid/physio room of 36 square metres amounting to 138 square metres of accommodation. These structures have an approximate maximum height of 4.4 and 4 metres, respectively. Additional accommodation including a gym and store buildings of about 71.5 square metres are to be retained.

- 4.5 The proposed smaller multi-use pitches would be arranged along the east boundary of the site with an artificial surface (2 no with 3G artificial grass and 1 no hard surface). These smaller pitches would be enclosed by 4.3 metre high fencing. The larger 3G artificial grass pitch would be centrally located between the new multi-use pitches and the existing main pitch on the wider site.
- 4.6 Additional car parking is to be provided with 81 marked car parking spaces located adjacent to the access road on the approach to the sports ground facilities, and new parking area to be provided close to the proposed clubhouse siting to also include 5 mini-bus spaces, with an additional overflow (unmarked) parking area provided on former tennis courts closer to the site entrance. Currently there are about 70 car parking spaces on the site.
- 4.7 In support of this application, the applicant has provided the following documents (relevant extracts from which will be relied upon in Section 7 of this report):
- Design and Access Statement;
  - Planning Statement;
  - Arboricultural Report and Tree Condition survey;
  - Needs Analysis;
  - Geophysical Survey;
  - Flood Risk assessment;
  - External Lighting report;
  - Traffic Impact Assessment;
  - Noise Impact Assessment; and
  - Ecological Appraisal.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- |     |                                     |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 5.1 | County Highway Authority            | No objections   |
| 5.2 | Senior Environmental Health Officer | No objections   |
| 5.3 | Arboricultural Officer              | No objections   |
| 5.4 | Archaeological Officer              | No comments received to date  |
| 5.5 | Surrey Wildlife Trust               | An objection is raised on lack of sufficient ecological information |
| 5.6 | Local Lead Flood Authority          | No comments received to date  |
| 5.7 | Sports England                      | No objections   |
| 5.8 | Bisley Parish Council               | An objection is raised on impact of proposed clubhouse building     |

on the Green Belt; floodlighting impact from light pollution on residential amenity and on the openness of the Green Belt; noise and disturbance from increased use and vehicular/pedestrian movements on residential amenity; and visibility splays appear to affect land and property not in the ownership or control of the applicant. There are also other concerns relating to the impact of highway and traffic safety from increased use on the adjoining and wider highway network. There are also other similar existing facilities in the local area which appear to be under-utilised

## 6.0 REPRESENTATION

At the time of preparation of this report 96 representations have been received, 55 in support and 41 raising an objection.

6.1 In respect of the representations raising an objection, the following issues are raised:

### Green Belt, character and need

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt [See *paragraph 7.3*]
- Impact of larger building in the Green Belt (for both original and amended schemes) [See *paragraphs 7.3 and 7.11*]
- Additional facilities to be provide for proposed building (conference centre, function room, crèche, gym, after school study rooms and dining areas) and proposed uses (womens' groups, and elderly and toddler groups) is beyond the remit of a sports club and against Green Belt policy [See *paragraphs 7.3 and 7.11*]
- For amended scheme - need for amount of changing rooms, toilets (ratio of accommodating 300 people) and first floor rooms e.g. women's meeting room and a learning room. [See *paragraphs 7.3 and 7.11*]
- Undercroft parking area could be later converted into rooms [See *paragraphs 7.3 and 7.11*]
- Conflict between sports field and Green Belt [See *paragraph 7.3*]
- Introduction of fencing would impact on the openness of the Green Belt [See *paragraph 7.3*]
- External lighting and the spread of light and sky glow would have an urbanising impact on this rural/Green Belt site [See *paragraph 7.3*]
- Proposal is an over-intensification of rural land [See *paragraph 7.3*]
- Loss of (8) major trees and other tree works prior to application submission but subsequent to details provided give a different impact on open countryside to east [See *paragraph 7.3*]
- Sufficient pitches available elsewhere [See *paragraphs 7.3, 7.5 and 7.11*]
- Need report does not mention Lloyd Roberts Centre in Bisley which has a fully equipped gymnasium and indoor sports/recreational activities together with rooms for events, meetings and conferences [See *paragraphs 7.3, 7.5 and 7.11*]

- Woking BC Hoe Valley Community Leisure facilities will be shortly opened providing more sports facilities (not reflected in needs report) [See paragraph 7.3]
- Impact on village life [See paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4]

#### Residential amenity

- Increased noise from traffic, particularly later in the evenings and at weekends, using access adjacent to rear gardens of properties in Church Lane and Cedar Grove on residential amenity of occupiers of these properties. Noise level survey presented for a Sunday evening is not valid [See paragraph 7.6]
- Increase in noise and disturbance – noise report indicated no noise generated between 23:00 and 07:00 hours thus acknowledging that cars and people will be arriving before and leaving after the proposed opening hours [See paragraph 7.6]
- Impact on encroachment to site boundaries [*Officer comment: There is no encroachment envisaged for this proposal. In addition, see paragraph 7.6*]
- Increased noise from club and cars in and out of site [See paragraph 7.6]
- Impact of floodlighting on residential amenity [See paragraph 7.6]
- Impact of noise and disturbance to residential properties from additional parking area [See paragraph 7.6]
- Increased use of outdoor pitches would generate increased levels of noise [See paragraph 7.6]
- Use of existing clubhouse for parties and resulting anti-social behaviour [*Officer comment: This would be a police matter*]
- Noise survey references the playing of amplified music which would lead to the operation of private parties for which license extensions, operating later hours (than currently proposed), may be applied for in the future [See paragraph 7.6]
- Loss of privacy from two storey building [See paragraph 7.6]
- Loss of privacy from open deck (at first floor level) [See paragraph 7.6]
- Impact on human rights (under the European Convention) to provide for a “peaceful enjoyment of property” [See Page 2 of the agenda]

#### Parking and highway safety

- Impact on traffic and highway safety in Church Lane which is a narrow lane, including a blind bend, without pavements which is exacerbated by existing on-road parking and there is a range of other users (children (including push chairs), elderly, dog walkers, horse riders, mobility scooters, livestock, etc.) [See paragraph 7.7]
- Poor access for larger vehicles (despite the opposite situation indicated in supporting statements) – skip lorries, dust carts, fire engines and other emergency vehicles, delivery lorries, coaches, etc. – all required to build the clubhouse and sustain the business (i.e. both during construction and after) [See paragraph 7.7]
- Impact on currently dangerous access onto highway network [See paragraph 7.7]

- Impact of increased traffic on wider road network (e.g. A322 Guildford Road) [*See paragraph 7.7*]
- Increased accident risk [*See paragraph 7.7*]
- A pre-app proposal for improvements to access not brought forward [*Officer comment: The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Church Lane (and Warbury Lane to the east) is used as a rat-run and dangerous due to limited road width and 30mph speed limit is ignored with an accident waiting to happen [*See paragraph 7.7*]
- Wide catchment area expected for use and resulting impact on increased traffic on highway network [*See paragraph 7.7*]
- Increase in parking provision (from 51 to 88 spaces by amendment) [*See paragraph 7.7*]

### Ecology

- Ecological report is insufficient study provided in 2006 and does not provide any recent valid data on habitats and use of the area by protected species and proposal would result in the loss of grassland habitat by weather surfaces and buildings as well as increased noise, lighting and traffic [*See paragraph 7.8*]
- Introduction of fencing would impede the use of this natural corridor by wildlife [*See paragraph 7.8*]
- Loss of trees and other tree works undertaken prior to application submission during nesting season [*See paragraph 7.8*]
- Impact on protected species e.g. bats, hedgehogs, owls, deer, insects, reptiles [*See paragraph 7.8*]

### Other matters

- Previous lack of consultation and arrogance from the football club has created an air of distrust [*Officer comment: This is not a material planning consideration*]
- Suggestion from club that the proposal is a better option than a travellers' site [*Officer comment: The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Community benefits of proposal unclear [*See paragraph 7.4*]
- In order for clubhouse to be a commercial proposition, it will be extensively used at all times including uses not directly linked to sports use [*See paragraph 7.4*]
- Use of out of date images and surveys, errors, and incorrect transport link information, exaggerated existing building areas (e.g. using decked areas as part of existing built form) and car parking areas and inaccurate visibility splay details (including other private land) [*Officer comment: This is noted but would not be a reason, in itself, to not determine this application*]
- Some reports have not been updated to reflect the amended proposal [*Officer comment: This is noted but would not be a reason, in itself, to not determine this application*]

- Other sports accommodation is underused and a drain on financial resources [See paragraph 7.4]
- Development proposal is a speculative, commercial proposal and not an application for community facilities [Officer comment: *The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Damage to boundary fencing from vehicles using the access into the application site [Officer comment: *This is not a material planning consideration*]
- Proposal would become a large leisure centre [Officer comment: *The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Proposed clubhouse not appropriate as a village sports facility but a substantial licensed venue carefully disguised as community sports facilities [Officer comment: *The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Application is vexatious [Officer comment: *This is not a material planning consideration*]
- Accumulation of dropped rubbish/litter harming livestock on adjoining land and with rats feeding off the rubbish [Officer comment: *This is not a material planning consideration*]
- Impact on property value will not be taken into consideration due to lack of evidence [Officer comment: *This is not a material planning consideration*]
- Even more floodlighting would be provided than appeal scheme (SU/07/0232) [Officer comment: *The appeal proposal related to 24 lighting columns (including 8 no columns at 15 metres and 12 no columns at 7 metres; and 4 no stanchions at 15 metre heights) whilst the current proposal relates to 12 columns all at 12 metre height. See also paragraph 7.3*]
- Similar proposal (SU/12/0639) previously refused [Officer comment: *The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Amended scheme is no better than original [Officer comment: *The current proposal, in its amended form, is assessed on its own merits*]
- Lack of local need and support (e.g. Bisley Parish Council objection) [Officer comment: *The current proposal is assessed on its own merits*]
- Delays in handling this application and short period to respond to amended proposal [Officer comment: *This is not a material planning consideration*]

6.2 In respect of the representations in support, the following comments are made:

- Proposed land transfer to improve site access not provided
- Desperate need for sports facilities in the area and must support sports development in the community
- Excellent addition for the local community as there are limited football facilities of this type (i.e. grassroots football)

- Allows many clubs to train and play weekly matches as the site, keeping such facilities local
- The provision of better facilities for children to keep active is essential. As Woking is growing, waiting lists to attend classes and sports lessons increase
- Users Woking FC and Woking Cougars are increasingly doing outstanding work across the local community and creating a base and improved facilities will only help them go from strength to strength. Training is on a hockey astro pitch (Woking Hockey) which is difficult for football use and at Winston Churchill School where demand outstrips availability
- Proposing vital facilities to provide training and playing space for children in the local area
- After sanctioning new housing in the area, adequate quality recreational facilities should be provided
- Sufficient parking at the site and well protected from surrounding areas by trees
- Should be supported for physical and mental health reasons (including fitness and obesity problems) and wider benefits to the NHS
- Supports the local teams and opportunities for future generations
- A vital community space which needs improving/refurbishing
- Provision of superior sports facilities to enable young people to participate in sport at all levels should outweigh minor inconvenience on local community
- Having a 4G pitch would allow play throughout the year
- Will benefit a large number of families in the community.

## **7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION**

7.1 This application relates to development within the Green Belt. As such, the proposal is to be considered against Policies CP1, CP2, CP11, CP14, DM9, DM11, DM15 and DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) (NPPF). In addition, advice within the Surrey Heath Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report May 2016 is also relevant to this proposal.

7.2 The main issues in the assessment of this application proposal are:

- Whether the development is appropriate in the Green Belt;
- Impact on playing pitch provision and need;
- Impact on local character and trees;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Impact on highway safety;

- Impact on ecology;
- Impact on drainage and flood risk;
- Impact on archaeology; and
- Very special circumstances.

### **7.3 Whether the development is appropriate in the Green Belt**

- 7.3.1 Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF indicates that development involving the construction of buildings in the Green Belt would be inappropriate except in a number of cases including the replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; and the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, including the safeguarding of the countryside.
- 7.3.2 Paragraph 146 also indicates that other forms of development, such as engineering operations, are also not inappropriate provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In this case, the provision of 3G artificial and a hard court surface would not be inappropriate development, having no greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.3.3 The proposed building would provide a building floorspace increase from 138 square metres to 705 square metres representing a 411% increase, with a correspondingly significant increase in the height, width, depth and mass of built form as well as the resulting spread of development. The proposed building would be considered to be materially larger than the existing buildings to be lost, which, by definition, is harmful. In addition, this quantum of built form would be harmful to openness.
- 7.3.4 The proposal includes facilities, such as changing facilities and associated facilities and a gym to support the outdoor sport use of the site. The proposal would also re-provide existing bar/café/kitchen facilities. However, additional accommodation is proposed including office and meeting room accommodation, as well as the viewing area, for which no justification has been provided. The appropriateness of these elements of the proposal in Green Belt terms has not been justified and therefore the proposed clubhouse building is considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt. Even if these facilities are shown to be appropriate, then the overall facility does not preserve openness and would not safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
- 7.3.5 The proposal would result in a significant change in the rural character and appearance of the site from one which is predominantly open, natural and undeveloped to a site with a semi-urban appearance. The fencing would have an enclosing effect and the floodlighting, whilst individually slim in profile, would cumulatively add to the sense of enclosure and harm provided by the fencing. Whilst the site is largely screened from Church Lane, the proposed floodlighting would be very apparent with the illumination visible from greater distances. These elements of the development would add additional harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would also not safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
- 7.3.6 The current proposal does not meet any of the exceptions under Paragraph 145 of the NPPF and is therefore considered to represent inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. The following paragraphs consider whether any other harm exists before considering whether there are "very special circumstances" which outweigh the identified harm.

## **7.4 Impact on playing pitch provision and need**

- 7.4.1 Policy DM15 of the CSDMP indicates that existing formal recreation facilities (including sports facilities) will be protected unless it can be demonstrated that appropriate replacement facilities are to be provided. In this case, the grass football training pitch(es), are to be replaced with a synthetic football pitch and 3 multi-use pitches (including 2 synthetic and 1 hard court pitches). Sports England has supported this proposal indicating that there is a demonstrated need for such accommodation in this area.
- 7.4.2 The applicant has provided a needs report which concludes that there is a local demands for synthetic pitches in the area and that this proposal would assist with reducing with this deficit. The Surrey Heath Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report May 2016 also indicates that there is an oversupply of grass pitches but an undersupply of synthetic (3G) pitches in the Borough with a priority being the creation of further 3G pitch provision. Since the publication of this study, further sports accommodation has been provided in the Woking Borough. However, the study relates to the sports needs within this Borough and there remains a deficit of such accommodation in the Borough. The current proposal would assist in addressing this deficit and no objections are therefore raised on these grounds with the current proposal complying with Policy DM15 of the CSDMP.

## **7.5 Impact on local character and trees**

- 7.5.1 Policy DM9 of the CSDMP indicates that development should respect and enhance the local and natural character of the environment. Policy CP2 of the CSDMP indicates that development should respect and enhance the quality of the natural and rural environment. The proposal would provide a larger building on this site, which would have a more limited urbanising effect. However, in this location, setback and not in view from the public domain, no harm to the wider streetscene is envisaged.
- 7.5.2 The wider proposal would have an urbanising impact on this rural location. Whilst the floodlighting would be designed so that there is no direct glare from the lighting, it is clear that the provision of floodlighting would be clearly visible from some distance from the site affecting its rural character. The provision of fencing around the smaller pitches would also have an urbanising effect but any resulting harm to the rural character of the area would be more limited. The proposed pitches whilst, and urbanising feature, would be less visible from outside the site and the harm, therefore, would be very limited.
- 7.5.3 The floodlighting would be visible from Oldhouse Lane and Public Footpath No. 134, located east of the application site and running from Oldhouse Lane (and Scotts Grove Road beyond) to Church Lane. Whilst it is noted that the proposal represents a reduction in the number of floodlights overall, when compared with the earlier refused proposals, it remains that the floodlighting would have an adverse impact upon the rural character of the area, failing to comply with Policy DM9 of the CSDMP.

## **7.6 Impact on residential amenity**

- 7.6.1 Policy DM9 of the CSDMP indicates that development should respect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses. The proposed building would be located close to the rear boundary of a residential property, Kista Dan, with a large rear garden and an adjoining equestrian/agricultural land known as Foxgrove Field. The rear boundary is partly tree'd and, with the no windows proposed at first floor in the rear elevation, i.e. facing this boundary, the impact on this property is therefore more limited. The external deck could result in a loss of privacy but this could be controlled by the

provisions of screen(s) by condition, in the rear elevation, if minded to approve this application. As such, the size and siting of the proposed building would not have adverse impact on residential amenity.

- 7.6.2 The proposal would lead to increased noise and disturbance from the increased use of the playing fields and the clubhouse building; and from the vehicular and other movements from the access and parking, located close to the rear boundaries of properties in Cedar Close. These properties typically have rear garden lengths of 8 and 15 metres (but with some extending up to around 30 metres) and some with minimal rear boundary treatments (e.g. low wire mesh fencing). The properties fronting Church Lane have typically rear garden depths of between 10 and 15 metres but with nearest property, Meadowcroft, with the access road wrapping around the rear of this plot, has a rear garden depth ranging between approximately 5 and 8 metres, but with a 1.8 metre (approximate) high close boarded fence on this rear and flank boundary with the application site.
- 7.6.3 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has indicated that the car parking would operate without any adverse noise effects above that which currently exists and no adverse noise impacts from the clubhouse use would occur to nearby residential properties on the basis that there are no openings (windows/doors) on the west and south elevations. The secondary door to the west elevation would need to be fixed shut later in this evening and this could be covered by condition, if minded to approve. The level of noise from the increased use of the pitches and courts would increase but the level of increase would be barely perceptible and would not lead to unacceptable noise impacts.
- 7.6.4 The proposal would lead to illumination of the field, proposed (up to 22:00 hours) and any resulting light spill, or light glow, would have an impact on residential amenity. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has indicated that whilst the external lighting would be seen, there would be no direct light from the floodlights shining into or across any nearby residential properties. However, further details of the floodlighting scheme would be needed to be agreed by condition, if minded to approve.
- 7.6.5 It is noted that an objection was raised to the proposal to the refused scheme in 2012 on residential amenity grounds on the basis of noise and disturbance from users of the facility, particularly from car movements, and associated disturbance, particularly later at night. However, with no objections raised by Environmental Health and a reduced scheme currently under consideration (including a smaller clubhouse building and reduced number of playing pitches), it is considered that an objection on these grounds cannot be sustained.
- 7.6.6 As such, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity with the proposal complying with Policy DM9 of the CSDMP.

## **7.7 Impact on highway safety**

- 7.7.1 Policy DM11 of the CSDMP indicates that development which would adversely impact upon the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement on the highway network will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures to reduce and mitigate such impacts to acceptable levels can be implemented. All development should ensure safe and well designed vehicular access and egress and layouts which consider the needs and accessibility of all highway users including cyclists and pedestrians.
- 7.7.2 The proposal would intensify the use of the site by providing a larger clubhouse, synthetic (including multi-use) pitches and floodlighting to allow a greater use of the facilities at this site. This would lead to an increased use of the site and increased parking demand.

7.7.3 The current proposal would provide an increase from about 70 to 81 parking spaces, as well as further accommodation for mini-buses and an overflow car park. Due to the specialised nature of this proposal, there are no parking standards set out in the Surrey County Council's adopted parking standards. However, it has been considered that this level of provision is considered to be acceptable. In this regard, the County Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposal on parking or highway safety grounds, subject to the provision, by condition, of a travel statement to monitor the use of the increased car parking provision. The proposal would also provide improved site visibility by providing visibility across highway land (and land owned/controlled by the applicant) to meet minimum standards with arrangements also considered to be acceptable by the County Highway Authority.

7.7.4 As such, no objections are raised on these grounds with the proposal complying with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the CSDMP and the NPPF.

## **7.8 Impact on ecology**

7.8.1 Policy CP14 of the CSDMP indicates that development that result in harm or loss to features of interest for biodiversity will not be permitted. The applicant has provided an ecological report. However, this report has provided survey material from 2006 and it is now considered this information is now out-of-date. The Surrey Wildlife Trust has advised that in the absence of an up-to-date survey base, there is insufficient information to ensure that ecological material consideration can be appropriately considered.

7.8.2 It is noted that the 2012 refusal SU/12/0639 included a reason on the basis of a lack of sufficient information on ecology and this issue has not been sufficiently addressed with this proposal. As such, an objection is raised to the proposal on these grounds with the proposal failing to comply with Policy CP14 of the CSDMP and the NPPF.

## **7.9 Impact on drainage and flood risk**

7.9.1 Policy DM10 of the CSDMP indicates that development would be expected to reduce the volume and rate of surface water run-off through the incorporation of appropriately design Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) at a level appropriate to the scale and type of development. The comments are awaited for the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) and any formal comments will be provided on the update. As such, subject to the comments of the LLFA, no objections are raised on the grounds, with the proposal complying with Policy DM10 of the CSDMP and the NPPF.

## **7.10 Impact on archaeology**

7.10.1 Policy DM17 of the CSDMP indicates that on sites of 0.4 hectares, or over, are required to undertake a prior assessment of the possible archaeological significance of the site, and any resulting implications for the proposal. The application has been supported by an archaeology study. This study concludes that the survey undertaken indicates that no remains of archaeological origin had been identified. The comments of the Surrey County Council Archaeology Officer are awaited and, subject to their comments, no objections are raised on these grounds with the proposal complying with Policy DM17 of the CSDMP and the NPPF.

## 7.11 Very special circumstances

- 7.11.1 Paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF indicate that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. "Very special circumstances" will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 7.11.2 In paragraphs 7.3, 7.5 and 7.8 above, it was concluded that the proposal would be harmful to the openness and rural character of the Green Belt; and ecology.
- 7.11.3 The applicant had considered the proposed development to be appropriate facilities within the Green Belt and had not provided "very special circumstances" to support this proposal. However, Part 3 of the Planning Statement summarises the benefits of the application proposal as follows:

- The proposal would provide enhanced, modern sporting facilities to serve the local community as a whole, replacing existing, dilapidated facilities;
- The proposal would provide a multi-sports use including football, five-a-side football, basketball, netball, tennis, mini-soccer, tag-rugby for use by all sectors of the community (including women, children, elderly and disabled);
- The proposal would provide facilities to modern standards defined by Sports England; and
- The design is in keeping with the character and context of the application site.

The proposal would provide enhanced, modern sporting facilities to serve the local community as a whole, replacing existing, dilapidated facilities

- 7.11.4 As indicated in Paragraph 7.4 above, the applicant has provided evidence of the need for this further pitch provision, including the provision of synthetic pitches and the benefits of improved use, by all parts of the local community, of all-weather pitches which is not disputed. It is clear that the existing facilities are poor in quality and need to be upgraded. The provision of floodlighting would support the expanded, wider sports use of the site, particularly in winter, and these benefits are also noted.
- 7.11.5 The proposed changing room accommodation would meet minimum requirements for such facilities, and providing separate male and female changing facilities would increase the use of the playing facilities.
- 7.11.6 The proposed bar/cafe/kitchen facilities are similar in scale to the existing facility and their replacement within the proposal is acceptable, in principle. However, as indicated above, the justification for elements of the proposed building, particularly to the first floor accommodation, has not been justified and limited weight should be afforded this benefit.

The proposal would provide a multi-sports use including football, five-a-side football, basketball, netball, tennis, mini-soccer, tag-rugby for use by all sectors of the community (including women, children, elderly and disabled)

- 7.11.7 The current use of the site is for football purposes and the benefits from the opportunities for the use of a wider range of sports at the site, under this proposal would have wider benefits to the local community. However, the use and needs from the sports club who use, and those who could also benefit from this proposal, have not been fully explored and without this balance, this benefit should be afforded limited weight.

The proposal would provide facilities to modern standards defined by Sports England

- 7.11.8 The support for this proposal from Sports England is also noted. Whilst they were concerned about the gap between the proposed pitches and the site boundary, this has been corrected by amendment. The increased changing room provision at the site would also meet their standards. This is a clear benefit of the proposal and medium weight should be afforded this benefit.

The design is in keeping with the character and context of the application site

- 7.11.9 The applicant has also indicated that the proposal would support sustainable development. The benefits of the sustainable nature within the design of the proposed building, and the potential to blend the building into its surroundings by the use of materials (e.g. wood cladding and green walls (not shown but could be conditioned, if minded to approve), are noted but would only have very limited benefits.
- 7.11.10 Substantial weight must be given to the harm to the Green Belt and other harm identified above. Whilst there are benefits of the proposal in terms of improving sports provision and those benefits to the wider community, as set out in Paragraphs 7.4 and 7.11.4 - 7.11.9 above, it is not considered that these benefits, alone or in combination, would amount to very special circumstances to outweigh the harm. The application therefore fails to comply with the NPPF.

## **8.0 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER**

In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive, creative and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 38-41 of the NPPF. This included the following:-

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.
- c) Have proactively communicated with the applicant through the process to advise progress, timescale or recommendation.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The current proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity, highway safety and drainage/flood risk. However, the proposal represents inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. In addition, an objection is also raised to the proposal due to the lack of information on ecology. There are no very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE for the following reason(s):-

1. The proposed clubhouse building would be materially larger than the one it replaces and it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that all the facilities would be appropriate. The quantum of built form would also be harmful to openness and conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Furthermore, the fencing and floodlighting would be harmful to the openness and rural character of the area. No very special circumstances have been demonstrated which would outweigh the Green Belt harm (and other harm to ecology identified in Refusal Reason 2 below) and as such the development is contrary to the objectives of Policy CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.
  
2. It has not been demonstrated that the development would not have an adverse impact on protected species within or adjoining the site or result in the loss of significant habitats within the site. Accordingly the development conflicts with the objectives of Policy CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework; and it is contrary to the guidance contained in Circular 06/2005.