

14/00681/FUL**BELCHAMPS CAMP HOLYOAK LANE HAWKWELL****RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR PLANNING
PERMISSION TO RETAIN MARQUEE FOR USE IN
ASSOCIATION WITH THE SCOUT ACTIVITY CAMP**

APPLICANT: MR NIGEL RUSE

ZONING: METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

PARISH: HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

WARD: HAWKWELL WEST

In accordance with the agreed procedure this item is reported to this meeting for consideration.

This application was included in Weekly List No. 1260 requiring notification of referrals to the Head of Planning and Transportation by 1.00 pm on Wednesday, 19 November 2014 with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee. The item was referred by Cllr Mrs C M Mason.

The item that was referred is appended as it appeared in the Weekly List, together with a plan.

1 NOTES

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the retention of a marquee for use in association with the use of the site as a scout activity camp.

2 SITE

- 2.1 The scout activity centre operates over a site which extends to some 9 hectares and is located to the south-west of Hockley. The site offers an opportunity for scouts to enjoy a range of outdoor social and recreational activities in a semi-rural setting. The site immediately borders part of the built-up residential settlement to its eastern boundary, whilst to the west the site extends towards Hockley Woods. A small number of additional residential properties lie close to the site's southern boundary whilst to the north residential properties also border the site, albeit separated from the boundary by a wooded margin.

- 2.2 The main cluster of buildings within the site is positioned towards the southern boundary close to the site entrance off Holyoak Lane. The marquee that is the subject of this application is sited close to this cluster of existing buildings.
- 2.3 The Local Plan 2006 shows the site to be within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the adoption of the Allocations Plan 2014 does not alter the designation of this site. Part of the site is also designated as a wildlife site and part also lies within one of the District's Special Landscape Areas (SLA). The part of the site where the marquee is sited is designated Green Belt and within the SLA.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The marquee has a floor area of 108 square metres with a concrete base and is metal framed with white PVC walls.
- 3.2 Whilst Part 27 of the General Permitted Development Order (1995), as amended, enables the site as a Scout Association owned site to erect tents on the land for the purpose of recreation or instruction, this doesn't allow for the laying of a concrete base, which is operational development. Planning consent for the marquee is therefore required.
- 3.3 The applicants have stated that the marquee has been erected since May 2012 and provides a self-catered kitchen, dining and social area for users of the 'tented village' known as 'camp fox' from around May to October each year.
- 3.4 The proposal seeks permission to retain the marquee all year round as a permanent structure as it is used for storage and for wet weather activities during the winter when the sleeping tents associated with camp fox are dismantled.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The wider site has operated as a scout activity camp for many years and is lawful. The site provides a number of dormitory accommodation blocks, which can be hired out by scout groups in addition to allowing a traditional camping experience across the site where scouts bring their own sleeping equipment. The site provides a number of different outdoor, as well as some indoor, activities for the scouts during their stay.
- 4.2 By way of background, the 'tented village' consists of two separate camps known as 'camp fox' and 'camp squirrel,' which are situated adjacent to each other. These camps each provide a number of individual smaller tents, which contain bunk beds to sleep visiting scouts; each camp sleeps a maximum of 36. These tented camps offer a half-way-house between camping (where the scouts would be expected to bring their own tents) and dormitory accommodation (which is also provided at the site). It is understood that this option may be more popular with younger scout groups to give them the

experience of camping, but without the need to require each scout to bring their own kit or sleep in individual tents.

- 4.3 The smaller sleeping tents are not fixed to any permanent base and do not therefore constitute operational development that would require planning permission. The use of these parts of the site for camping is consistent with the overall use of the site as a scout activity camp. The marquee for which retrospective planning permission is sought would therefore serve a use at the site which is authorised.
- 4.4 A marquee is also erected between May and October to provide a space for the occupants of camp squirrel to self cater and dine. As this marquee is not erected on a permanent basis it does not constitute operational development for which planning permission from the Local Authority must be sought. As previously mentioned, the site as a Scout Association site benefits from permitted development rights, which allow for the siting of tents in association with recreational or instructional use by members of the Scout Association. The marquee that is sited in connection with camp squirrel benefits from these permitted development rights.
- 4.5 Other consents for self-catered kitchen/dining facilities have been sought at the site to serve existing dormitory accommodation blocks. By way of context the site has 5 different dormitory blocks scattered around the site. The Kath Batts building provides 36 beds, the 'hutch/den' provides 14 beds, the 'coop' provides 12 beds, Vincent Lodge provides 38 beds and the dormitory accommodation within the 2-storey building close to the site entrance provides 56 beds. Whilst the site does have a building that provides an on-site catered facility for visiting groups, having a self catered kitchen/dining facility adjacent to each accommodation block enables the individual scout groups that hire out the dormitories to self cater for their own scouts, bringing food with them for the duration of their stay that can be kept in their own kitchen and prepared for their group when needed.
- 4.6 A kitchen/dining facility was approved in 2011 to serve the dormitory block known as the Kath Batts building. This was in the form of a timber clad extension to the existing dormitory building. This proposal was not considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt as it was for a purpose associated with an appropriate use within the Green Belt, namely an activity camp, which maintains openness. In the consideration of this 2011 proposal, national Green Belt policy contained within Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (PPG2) was relevant. In this consideration officers noted the policy advice that Green Belts have a positive role to play by providing access to the open countryside for the urban population and by providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas, but that any development permitted should be of a scale, design and siting such that the character of the countryside is not harmed. The view was taken that the 2011 proposal would have had a minimal impact, being adjacent to an existing

building and given the existing trees and vegetation that would reduce visual intrusion. In the context of the use and buildings on the overall site, it was considered that openness of the Green Belt would not be compromised such as to warrant refusal.

- 4.7 Planning permission was, however, refused earlier this year for another new building to provide a kitchen/dining facility for the dormitory accommodation housed in the two storey building close to the site entrance. In this case it was considered that there was not sufficient justification that the additional facility was necessary, given that the dormitory it was proposed to serve already benefitted from use of an existing kitchen and dining facility, which was near to the building. This application was therefore refused on Green Belt grounds. Whilst a revised planning application has been submitted for this same building officers have agreed an extension of time for the determination of this application to enable the outstanding matter of the unauthorised marquee to be considered first.

5 PLANNING HISTORY (since the 1990s)

- 5.1 49/00211/ROC - Headquarters Building - APPROVED.
- 5.2 56/00096/ROC - Erection of lavatory block - APPROVED.
- 5.3 60/00122/ROC - Erection of ladies toilet block - APPROVED.
- 5.4 63/00345/ROC - Erection of 6 foot high chain link fence - APPROVED.
- 5.5 64/00334/ROC - Erection of brick wall and double gates - APPROVED.
- 5.6 68/00198/ROC - Outline application for erection of an addition to provide accommodation for camping and training courses. APPROVED.
- 5.7 71/00472/ROC - Erection of open-sided store - APPROVED.
- 5.8 72/00129/ROC - Extend existing lavatory building to replace existing open-wash facilities. APPROVED.
- 5.9 80/00099/ROC - Add an extension to existing toilet block. APPROVED.
- 5.10 87/00643/FUL - Erection of a pack holiday centre - APPROVED.
- 5.11 94/00232/FUL - Demolish Existing and Erect New Single Storey W.C Block - APPROVED.
- 5.12 97/00173/FUL - Erect 25m (82ft) High Aerial Tower (27.6m (90ft) Overall) Supporting 3 Dual Polar Antennae and 2 Dish Antennae. Construct Single Storey Equipment Cabin Within Fenced Compound to Base - REFUSED.

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- 5.13 98/00733/FUL - Alterations to Front Elevation Comprising Removal of Two Windows, Provision of Three New Doors and Extension to Existing Canopy - APPROVED.
- 5.14 99/00046/FUL - Construct Parking Areas - APPROVED.
- 5.15 01/00346/FUL - Layout Track for Non Motorised Pedal Go Karts with Banking and Bridge (2.5m High Approx) - APPROVED.
- 5.16 07/00985/FUL - Installation of 13m High Linear High Ropes Apparatus - APPROVED.
- 5.17 08/00064/FUL - Single Storey Pitched Roofed Extension to Provide Dormitory to 'Kath Batts' Building With Access Ramp - APPROVED.
- 5.18 11/00652/FUL - Proposed Pitched Roofed Timber Out Building To Provide Dining Hall And Kitchen For Use In Connection With Scout Centre At The Site, Attached To Main Building By Proposed Open Side Porch- APPROVED.
- 5.19 14/00140/FUL - Construct pitched roofed timber building for use as a dining room/kitchen in connection with the use of the site as an activity centre. REFUSED.
- 5.20 14/00401/FUL - Construct pitched roofed timber building for use as a dining room/kitchen in connection with the use of the site as an activity centre. PENDING.

6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

CONSIDERATION

- 6.1 The Local Planning Authority must determine the proposal in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, which includes saved policies in the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006) and the Rochford District Core Strategy (2012), taking account also of any other relevant planning policy and other material planning considerations.

GREEN BELT

- 6.2 As the site is within the Green Belt consideration must be given as to the acceptability of the proposal in relation to relevant Green Belt policy, which consists both of national Green Belt policy contained within the NPPF and local policies GB1 and GB2 of the Core Strategy (2011).
- 6.3 The overall aim of national Green Belt policy continues to place great importance on the protection of Green Belts and supports appropriate uses within them. It remains supportive of provision of new buildings, which would provide appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation as long as the

proposal would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and would preserve openness.

- 6.4 The proposal to retain the marquee for use to provide a kitchen/dining facility to serve 'camp fox' would be an example of a new building, which would provide a facility in association with outdoor sport and recreation given that the purpose of the scouts staying in camp fox is to take advantage of the outdoor activities the site has on offer. National Green Belt policy requires consideration of whether the new building would be an 'appropriate' facility to support such a use and the Council's local planning policy. Whilst Policy GB2 requires that development be essential for outdoor sport and recreation in order to be considered appropriate in the Green Belt, national planning policy which does not contain the criterion of 'essential' has superseded this local planning policy.
- 6.5 The applicants have indicated that camp fox relies on the marquee to provide a self catering facility as the significant majority of bookings for this camp opt to self cater. A space for self catering is therefore needed. The marquee as a self catered kitchen/dining facility is therefore considered necessary to support the camp fox, which in turn provides an outdoor recreational activity appropriate in the Green Belt.
- 6.6 During the winter months when camp fox does not operate as a kitchen/dining facility as the sleeping tents associated with the camp are taken down, the marquee acts as a storage space for the sleeping tents for both camp fox and squirrel and for the marquee that is taken down in the winter associated with camp squirrel. In addition, the applicants have confirmed that the marquee is used for wet weather activities during the winter months. A marquee without a permanent base could be erected as permitted development for use in connection with the recreational activities at the site for scouts and on this basis it would not be considered reasonable to refuse permission for the retention all year round.
- 6.7 Whilst the marquee does impact on the openness of the Green Belt it is considered that it would be an appropriate facility, which would support an existing appropriate and open use within the Green Belt during the summer and given the fall back position it is not considered reasonable to refuse planning permission for retention in the winter months. A marquee type structure would also not be considered unusual in a camp site setting such as this site offers.

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA

- 6.8 Part of the scout activity camp site falls within the SLA including that part of the site where the marquee is sited and policy URV1 is therefore a relevant consideration. This policy seeks to encourage informal recreational opportunities for local residents and protect the area from development that

would undermine this aim. As the marquee would support an existing outdoor recreational use it would not be contrary to the aims of this policy.

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 6.9 Several residents have raised objection to the proposal including in relation to noise generation within the marquee and the consequent effect on residential amenity. The marquee is sited some 70 metres from the rear garden boundary of the nearest residential neighbours, however several neighbours have noted that the marquee, without solid walls and with an opening facing the rear gardens, gives rise to noise transfer from activities within the marquee, which they consider unreasonable.
- 6.10 It is understood from the applicants that the area of the site now used by camp fox and camp squirrel has previously been used for the siting of marquees and tents with these earlier sites known as arena 1 and arena 2. In the previous arrangement scout leaders hiring out these areas brought their own sleeping tents and a larger tent/marquee to provide cooking and dining space. The applicants have explained their view that the use of this area of the site has not therefore significantly changed, but Belchamps, in providing a permanent marquee and the sleeping tents themselves, are trying to provide an improved, more convenient facility for hire for scouts; scout leaders no longer need to bring sleeping tents or marquees or cooking equipment with them.
- 6.11 Given that the proposal seeks to retain the marquee all year round and to provide a space for wet weather activities during the winter it is considered that this proposal would likely give rise to an increase in activity in this particular part of the site compared to the previous situation where this area was used for camping and activities where the scouts brought their own tents and marquee for cooking and activities. However, given the fall back position that would allow for a marquee for scout related activities to be permanently erected here, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission for the proposed development, subject to the recommended planning condition, which would restrict use to use in connection with the authorised use of the site as a scout activity camp. This would enable the marquee to be used as a kitchen/dining facility for scouts, girl guides, beavers, cubs, etc., as well as providing a space for wet weather and other activities for these groups. A degree of ancillary non scouting activity already operates at the site and has done so for some time. School groups, for example, can hire dormitories or camp to provide recreational breaks for young people; this does not introduce any new use to the site *per se*; the only difference being that the young people in a school group may not be scouts. The recommended planning condition would not prohibit a small degree of use of the marquee by non scouts, but would ensure that this type of activity would have to remain ancillary to the main use, which would have to be for scouts and would restrict sole or significant use of the marquee by other non

scouting groups, which may give rise to greater potential for noise and disturbance to local residents.

- 6.12 The proposal would not, given the siting of the marquee, give rise to any harm to residential amenity by way of overlooking.
- 6.13 In addition, whilst neighbours have raised a concern with regard to light pollution, in the context of the wider site operating as a scout activity camp, the proposed marquee and its associated activity, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable impact with regard to light transfer. The proposal does not include any provision of external lights and whilst lights from inside the marquee may be noticeable from the rear gardens and/or rear windows of nearby properties it is considered that the degree of light pollution would not be such that planning permission could justifiably be refused.

HIGHWAYS

- 6.14 The main site entrance is located off Holyoak Lane, which can be accessed via Mount Bovers Lane, although this is a private road which is unmade and heavily potholed at present such that the route of most visitors to the site's main entrance is likely to be via Poplars Avenue and then Woodside Chase, both of which are residential streets serving a built up residential area.
- 6.15 There are two car parks at the site, one is adjacent to the site's main entrance and the other is located some 170 metres north of this. The latter car park is larger than the one at the site entrance, measuring some 40 metres by 40 metres and is accessed via a single track, which runs close to the eastern boundary of the site.
- 6.16 An additional area of hard surface has been laid within the last 4 years, which has expanded the site entrance car parking area enabling car parking close to the rear garden boundaries of several neighbouring residential properties on Woodside Chase. The Council's planning enforcement team is aware of this unauthorised work and is working to agree a time frame for the removal of the additional hard surface with the site's trustees.
- 6.17 The proposed marquee would not generate a significant demand for additional car parking provision at the site *per se*, as it is the tented village that the marquee serves that would attract the overnight campers and consequent traffic movements to and from the site, rather than the marquee itself. The retention of the marquee would, however, make the tented village camp it serves a more attractive facility and may therefore generate additional bookings. The applicants have explained their view that the marquee and associated camp fox do not generate the need for additional parking provision given that this camp replaced a previous camp in this location, albeit a camp

where the tents and marquee were brought to the site by the scouts booking the site themselves.

- 6.18 The site has operated as a scout activity camp for many years and vehicle movements to and from the site associated with this therefore take place. Only the potential noise and disturbance from additional vehicles visiting the site as a result of the proposed development can therefore be taken into account in the determination of the current application.
- 6.19 The adopted parking standard operates a maximum parking standard for trip destinations such as this site although policy T8 still requires that adequate parking provision is provided. There is no specific policy parking standard for a scout activity camp and the necessary parking provision would therefore be treated on merit. In this case it is considered that the two authorised car parks would provide sufficient space to accommodate likely parking need that would arise at the site, taking into account the potential for increase in visitor numbers that may occur as a result of the retention of the marquee providing an enhanced camping facility and self catered option. The applicants have confirmed that they do not consider it necessary to retain the current unauthorised section of car park to ensure adequate parking provision.
- 6.20 It is also considered that the likely number of additional traffic movements that would arise as a result of the proposed retention of the marquee would not impact significantly on the highway network close to the site. As already set out above, the site is somewhat awkwardly accessed through a built up residential area and on street parking may arise in the locality despite efforts by the site operators to encourage parking on site. The NPPF advises that planning permission should only be refused on transport grounds where residual cumulative impacts would be severe. In this case, in relation to the specific development for which planning permission is sought, namely retention of a marquee, it is considered that the impacts on the highway network surrounding the site would not be severe. It is recommended that an informative be added to any consent granted to require the site operator to actively encourage on site parking and dropping off, including directing visitors to the northern car park.
- 6.21 It is considered that the marquee, in supporting an existing authorised use, would not be likely to give rise to increased vehicle movements to and from the site, which would be of a level so as to have a significant harmful effect on the residential amenity that ought to be reasonably expected by the occupants of nearby properties.
- 6.22 It is understood that management of traffic to and from the wider site is being discussed with Essex County Council although this matter is not something that is of particular significance to the determination of this application.

FLOOD RISK

- 6.23 The site is within an area designated at the lowest risk of flooding and it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to concern with regard to flood risk either on site or off site.

WILDLIFE

- 6.24 Whilst policy ENV1 of the Core Strategy is a relevant consideration, given the wildlife site and ancient woodland designation of part of the wider site. This area is to the northern boundary of the site at sufficient distance from the proposed marquee such that it would not have any adverse impact on these wildlife sites. The earlier 2011 proposal, located closer to these sensitive sites, was also not considered to have any adverse impact.
- 6.25 The area of the site where the new building would be positioned is not considered likely to support protected species.

TREES

- 6.26 The marquee to which the application relates is already in place and has not impacted on any trees, including several trees at the site that are subject to Tree Preservation Orders which are all at a sufficient distance away so as not to be affected.

SUSTAINABILITY

- 6.27 Policy ENV10 requires all new non residential buildings to meet, as a minimum, the BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' unless such requirements would render a particular development economically unviable. A marquee is, however, more akin to a temporary structure, albeit that in this case the intention is for the marquee to remain as a permanent fixture throughout the year and this BREEAM rating would not therefore be expected in this case.

CONCLUSION

- 6.28 The key consideration in this determination is the acceptability of the proposed marquee in Green Belt terms taking account of impact on residential amenity and policy, which supports the growth of businesses in the district. It is considered that the proposed marquee, a form of development familiar to camp site settings, would form an acceptable development within the Green Belt, which would not unduly impact on residential amenity such as to warrant refusal. Given the permitted development fall back position it would be considered unreasonable to refuse planning permission, subject to the recommended planning condition restricting use.
- 6.29 There are no emerging policies within the Development Management Submission Document that should be given some weight, given the advanced

stage of consideration that would warrant a different view being taken as to the acceptability of this proposal.

7 REPRESENTATIONS

- 7.1 HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL: No objection.
- 7.2 HIGHWAYS: From a highway and transportation perspective the Highway Authority has no comments to make on this proposal.
- 7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (RDC): The Head of Environmental Services has no adverse comments in respect of this application.
- 7.4 NEIGHBOURS: 4 letters of objection received.
- 7.5 Occupants of 15 Woodside Chase
- 7.6 We object to the retrospective planning application on the grounds of over development of the camp site, which is designated Green Belt land. The permanent erection of the marquee and associated tents has caused the concentration of activities in use at the site, including quad bikes and laser type games being installed on the remainder of the activity field directly to the rear of neighbours' houses. The constant noise that radiates from these activities is unbearable at times and are subject to ongoing complaints to Belchamps and Rochford DC.
- 7.7 Occupant of 17 Woodside Chase
- 7.8 I object to this application based largely on the fact that it has been used by groups to practise their music. Because it is a marquee the sound is carried over the field. Unfortunately the practice can take all day and occurs over very long periods of time. Over these periods I am unable to enjoy my garden, and as a result either go out or stay indoors with the windows shut. Even when occupied by just groups of people, chatter and shouting can be heard very clearly.
- 7.9 The more Belchamps adds to its site the more people it generates, thereby increasing the traffic which has become very substantial over recent years. Cars travel along pavements because drivers are too impatient to get to their destination – it's become dangerous. There is very little consideration, if any, given to residents.
- 7.10 Occupants of 19 Woodside Chase
- 7.11 This is one of many recent developments at the site. This development should not be considered in isolation. It is also located next to a further marquee and tented village that is not mentioned in this application. The area that both of these marquees occupy are directly to the rear of our property.

With the entrance of the marquees facing our property. The area that they both occupy were areas that, although designated as previous camping sites, were rarely ever used as such. This development has compressed the area of the site where games and informal activities often occur, bringing many activities closer to our boundary. We have submitted numerous complaints regarding the noise from this area to RDC during 2012, 2013 and 2014.

- 7.12 Green Belt: This is a permanent structure, that is used for 12 months of the year. The area it occupies is on Green Belt. The marquee in question and the accompanying marquee do impact on the openness of the site. The additional marquee has been in place since the spring, a period of approaching seven months.
- 7.13 Over development: This is not the only development that has been requested for the site. It is also not the only development that finds itself without planning permission on the site. Belchamps was originally developed as a small usage district site for camping. It has now developed over the last four years into a busy activity centre with a turnover of over 500,000. Much of this development has occurred with limited oversight or assessment of impact from RDC.
- 7.14 Change of Use: The marquee contributes to the issue of change of use for the site; this comes from the volume of people that currently use the site. The nature of visits, many being for shorter durations, ie., for meetings, presentations, children's parties, etc.
- 7.15 The type of users: Not limited to scouts and youth groups, but now includes members of the public, corporate events, children's parties, schools, not limited to the local district, but advertised to anybody.
- 7.16 Traffic Generation: The site has experienced a massive increase in traffic to and from it because of the increased development. This is evidenced by the amount of complaints received related to this issue. The increase includes refuse vehicles, supermarket delivery vehicles, lorries delivering wood, coaches, as well as the large increase in general car traffic for pick ups and drop offs. This is also evidenced by Belchamps's request to alter existing access for traffic to and from the site. The marquee itself is of very little aesthetic merit and is visible along with the other marquee from my property. The nature of the structure does little to contain the noise of activities, or the light pollution that we experience. The marquee has been used for a brass band to practise in it. It goes without saying that a marquee offers few sound insulating qualities, so is unsuitable for activities of this nature.
- 7.17 Planning Policy: The development of this structure, the other marquee and the car park near to our property, the lighting of the area, without prior planning permission, has caused my family considerable upset and on many occasions ruined the enjoyment of our own property over the last three years. We have

very little confidence that any future development will consider anything other than the Belchamps management's ambitions for the site. They have proved that they have little regard for the impact of their actions on their neighbours and the surrounding environment.

- 7.18 Occupants of 21 Woodside Chase
- 7.19 Please note the following inconsistencies on the planning application.
- 7.20 The documentation refers to camp fox and then also refers to camp squirrel, so we have deduced that it is used for both camps.
- 7.21 The site map does not reflect the position of the marquee or tents, nor does it reflect other activities and car parks in the immediate site (swimming pool, water zorbing, etc.), which may lead the planners to believe that the area is more open than it is.
- 7.22 The plan refers to a track and parking for cars. This is not reflected in the actual application or on any of the plans and there is a designated car park on the site.
- 7.23 We object to the location of this marquee due to the proximity to our properties and the noise that the increase of use has created. The noise and light pollution from the marquee and the activities connected to camp fox and camp squirrel contribute to serious complaints in 2012 and 2013 with ongoing issues this year.
- 7.24 The marquee is visible from inside our house as it is higher than the surrounding fences.
- 7.25 The marquee in question is positioned in an area that is within 70 metres of properties in Woodside Chase. The area was open in nature before and although the whole site is designated a campsite this was not used regularly. Any camping that did take place would be associated with events and was temporary in nature. As residents we barely noticed any camping activity on that location. Any noise was not concentrated and the open nature of the site diffused the noise. The open nature also allowed games to be played in a bigger area and because of the siting of the marquee this has concentrated the games area closer to the residents. The marquee entrance opens out to the strip of land between residents and the marquee. All activity is therefore located in this strip of land. This is a direct consequence of the siting of the marquee.
- 7.26 After the introduction of the marquee in 2012 and the creation of camp fox and camp squirrel in this location the levels of activity in the immediate vicinity have risen sharply. This designated site is used all year round and because of the nature of a marquee noise emanates at all times. There are no sound barriers for the noise.

- 7.27 The planning application states that the camps are mainly used May to October but the marquee in question is used at all times of the year as it provides shelter and is permanent in nature. It is the permanent nature that creates the constant noise and disturbance from this location. It is now a social area tent for all those staying in camp fox and squirrel, as per the planning application - this is up to 72 people.
- 7.28 We object to this being a permanent feature on Green Belt land. The marquee now has water and electricity since 2013, which actually means that the use has increased since 2012. The marquee is used during the week and weekends, not just for scouts, but also for schools. The marquee and associated camps have been put up to facilitate an increase in use for the site, enabling the site to accommodate more residential visitors. The application states that it is used 20% of the time by groups other than scouts.
- 7.29 As the marquee facilitates a different type of camping from the original use of the site we also object as this is not essential to the running of the camp, is over development and should not be allowed on a Green Belt site.
- 7.30 The site has 30 acres of land. We are absolutely appalled that the camp has been able to have this marquee erected permanently with blatant disregard for planning policy. We would ask the Council to take this opportunity to assess all constructions on this Green Belt site.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That planning permission be approved, subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) SC4B Time Limits Full - Standard
- (2) The marquee hereby approved shall be used only in association with the authorised use of the site as a scout activity camp.



Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning and Transportation

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

Rochford District Council Adopted Replacement Local Plan

National Planning Policy Framework

Emerging Policies DM30, DM25, DM11 of the Development Management Submission Document 2013 (unadopted)

GB1, GB2, ENV1, URV1, T8, H1, of the Rochford District Council Core Strategy 2011

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

