

20/00756/FUL

**ST JOHN FISHER RECREATION GROUND, LITTLE
WHEATLEY CHASE, RAYLEIGH**

PROVIDE STORAGE CONTAINER

APPLICANT: RAYLEIGH FOOTBALL CLUB

**ZONING: METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT AND
EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

PARISH: RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

WARD: SWEYNE PARK AND GRANGE

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES

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

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the following approved plans:

- Site location plan
- Site Plan
- Proposed storage container plan and elevations Drawing Reference: RFC/JFRG/08/20/01.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is completed out in accordance with the details considered as part of the planning application.

- (3) The container hereby approved shall be finished in dark green colour and thereafter so maintained.

REASON: To ensure the external appearance of the development is appropriate to the locality in accordance with policy CP1 of the Development Management Plan and to mitigate impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

2 PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

Site Description and Context

- 2.1 St John Fisher is a recreation ground that includes a single storey building (Community Centre) situated on the western side of Little Wheatley Chase in Rayleigh. The extensive recreation ground surrounds the building to the west and south and three grass pitches are laid out for use as training pitches and league games. The recreation ground is fully operational by Rayleigh Football Club. Dense vegetation borders the site. Agricultural fields lie beyond the site's boundary to the west. To the north, Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School abuts the site. To the east lies residential dwellings and to the south, residential dwellings and Wheatley Woods. The site is situated in the Metropolitan Green Belt and Existing Open Space as designated by the Council's Allocations Plan (2014).

Description of the Proposal

- 2.2 Planning permission is sought for a storage facility to support the Rayleigh Football Club's (Rayleigh Boys FC and Rayleigh Girls FC) regular use of the football pitches at the John Fisher Recreation Ground off Little Wheatley Chase, Rayleigh.
- 2.3 The provision of storage on site would enable necessary equipment, such as goal posts, flags, balls and similar items to remain securely on the site between regular matches, using the pitches at the recreation ground. The storage container would measure 2.59m in height, 2.59m in width and 6.06m in length. It has been confirmed by the applicant that the container would be dark green in colour and located on the fringe of the playing field adjacent to the northern boundary of the John Fisher Recreation Ground.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.4 Application No. 94/00243/COU - Change Use of Sports Changing Rooms to Include Use as Youth Club and Meeting Place With External Alterations to Building and Installation of External Lighting – Approved.
- 2.5 Application No. 97/00318/DP3 - Layout Grassed Five-a-Side Pitch, Construct Tarmac Basket Ball Court – Approved.

3 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the Development

- 3.1 The application site is located within the extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt, as set out in Rochford District Council's Development Plan, adopted Allocations Proposals Map (2014), where restrictive policies apply.
- 3.2 Policies GB1 and GB2 of the Core Strategy seek to direct development away from the Green Belt as far as practicable and prioritise the protection of the Green Belt based on how well the land helps achieve the purposes of the Green Belt, whilst allowing rural diversification in appropriate circumstances. One of these circumstances being outdoor recreation and leisure activities. Both policies pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) but can still attract weight in proportion to their consistency with the NPPF. These policies reflect the aims of those parts of the NPPF which seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development. However, they do not reflect the exceptions listed within the NPPF and are therefore inconsistent with it.
- 3.3 Part 13 of the NPPF - Protecting Green Belt Land states that great importance is attached to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate except for a limited number of exceptions. Development that does not fall to be considered under one of these categories will be considered to be inappropriate development and is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 3.4 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF makes allowance for "the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it."
- 3.5 Furthermore, policy DM16 of the Development Management Plan refers to playing pitches and other leisure and recreational facilities. The aforesaid policy confirms that "where additional permanent facilities associated with the provision of playing pitches will be required, they will be permitted provided that: -
- (a) They are small scale and it can be demonstrated that such facilities are essential for the functioning of the activity.

- (b) They are suitably located so as to minimise the impact on amenity for neighbouring properties; and
- (c) Ancillary facilities are modest in size, bulk and height to ensure minimal impact on the Green Belt.”
- 3.6 It is therefore necessary to consider whether the scheme amounts to inappropriate development taking account of whether it would affect the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 3.7 The application site is used by Rayleigh Football Club. The provision of the small storage facility would be ancillary to the use of the recreation ground for the storage of sports equipment in association with Rayleigh Football Club. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would amount to appropriate development in the Green Belt. The use of the pitches maintains openness.
- 3.8 Notwithstanding the above, careful consideration needs to be given to the impact on the character, appearance and openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.9 The storage facility would be situated at the rear of the community centre where views from the highway are limited due to the intervening presence of buildings to the front. The proposed storage container would be painted dark green to accord with the colour scheme of the buildings already on site. As a consequence of the siting and colour scheme, the container would assimilate with the backdrop of the buildings. The proposed container would appear utilitarian in its design and single storey in nature and therefore small-scale and modest in its appearance. It is considered that the proposed storage container would not create urban sprawl and would have no greater impact on the openness of the area and would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 3.10 The proposal would therefore not impinge on the fundamental aims of the Green Belt whereby it would maintain its openness complying with the NPPF, policies GB1, GB2, CP1 of the Core Strategy and policy DM16 of the Development Management Plan. Notwithstanding this, careful consideration needs to be given to impact upon residential amenity, car parking and highway safety.

Impact Upon the Private Amenity of Neighbouring Property

- 3.11 There are no residential properties directly adjacent to the siting of the proposed storage facility. Given the location of the development, it is not considered the proposal would have an adverse impact on residential amenity and would therefore be compliant with the NPPF.

Impact Upon Car Parking and Highway Safety

- 3.12 The proposed storage facility would be situated to the rear of the community centre. Given where the proposed storage facility would be situated, it is considered that the proposal would not alter the existing car parking situation at the site. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact upon highway safety complying with DM30 of the Development Management Plan.

4 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**Rayleigh Town Council**

- 4.1 No written comments received.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The application has been assessed against relevant planning policies and national guidance and is considered to be on balance acceptable, subject to conditions.

Marcus Hotten



Assistant Director, Place and Environment

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

National Planning Policy Framework (2019) – Protecting Green Belt Land

Rochford District Council Core Strategy (2011) – CP1, GB1, GB2

Rochford District Council Development Management Plan (2014) – Policy DM1, DM16, DM31

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Allocations Plan (February 2014)

Parking Standards Design and Good Practice (2010)

Background Papers

None.

For further information please contact Katie Ellis on: -

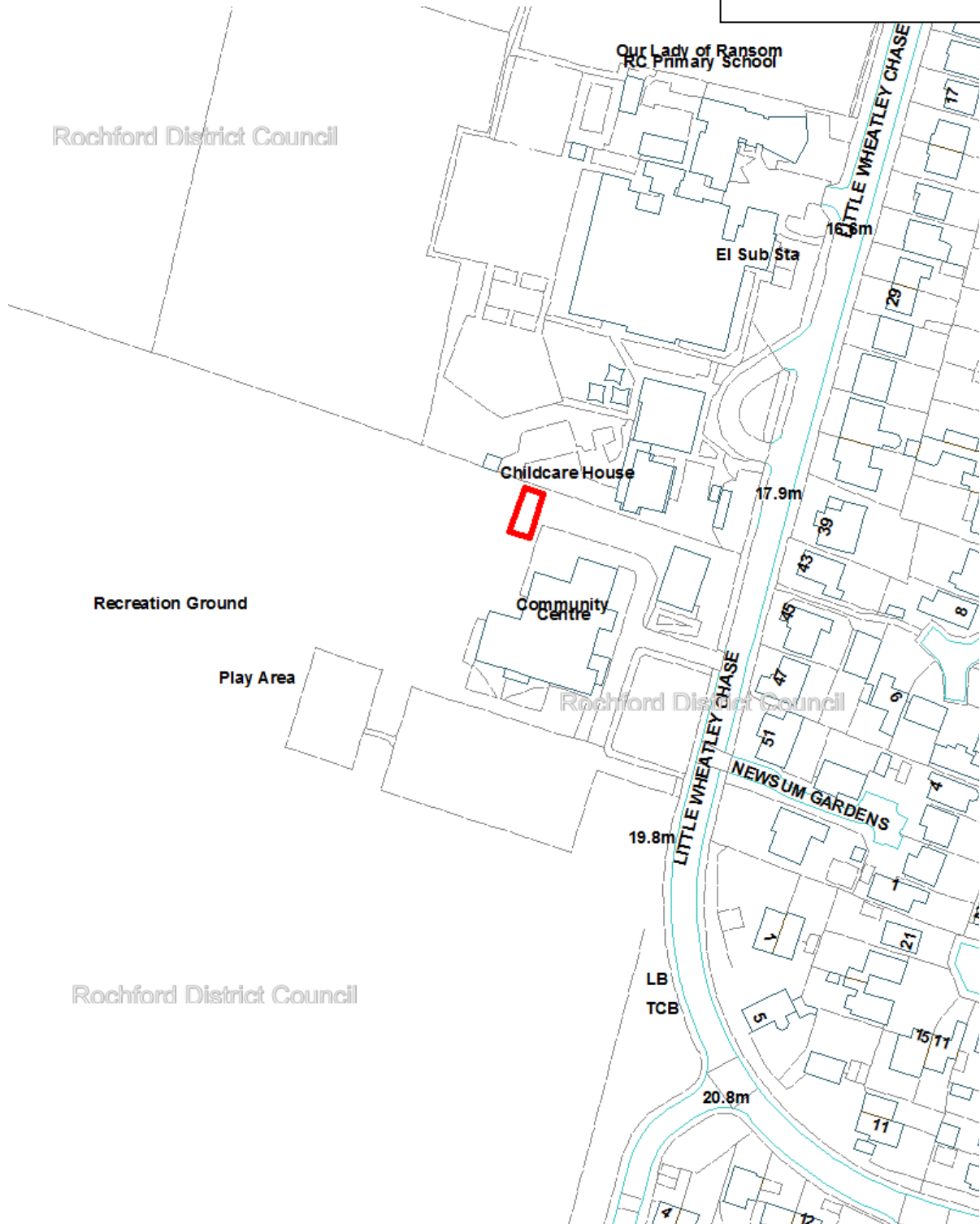
Phone: 01702 318188

Mobile: 07546 525 104

Email: Katie.ellis@rochford.gov.uk

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

20/00756/FUL



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. This copy is believed to be correct.

Nevertheless Rochford District Council can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions, changes in the details given or for any expense or loss thereby caused.

Rochford District Council, licence No.LA079138

