

13/00727/FUL

CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM AGRICULTURAL TO USE FOR 8 NO. FOOTBALL PITCHES. PROVIDE AREA FOR CAR PARKING, PROVIDE THREE STORAGE CONTAINERS FOR USE AS CHANGING ROOMS AND TOILETS. PROVIDE CATCH FENCING 6.5M HIGH TO WESTERN AND SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OF SITE.

NORTH OF A129 EAST OF A130, OLD LONDON ROAD, RAWRETH, ESSEX.

APPLICANT: ACADEMY SOCCER

ZONING: METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

PARISH: RAWRETH

WARD: DOWNHALL AND RAWRETH

1 PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

- 1.1 This application is to a site to the immediate east of where the A130 crosses the A129 Old London Road. The site at present is an agricultural field irregular in shape of some 4.74ha.
- 1.2 The site is bounded to the west and south by the A130 and A129.
- 1.3 To the east is the alignment of a former highway immediately east of which is an area in use for football pitches with various containers providing storage and changing rooms.
- 1.4 To the north of the site is a disused section of former road now a bridle way with and dwelling beyond and an arable field and detached housing fronting Old London Road.

The Proposal

- 1.5 The proposal is to change the use of the field to provide 8 football pitches of varying size and which would be managed by Academy Soccer Football Club and used as a home for all their teams on one site. Generally the pitches would not be used at the same time but would be used in rotation to protect the playing surface.

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- 1.6 As originally submitted, the application details show a layout for a general arrangement and an alternative layout for an annual tournament event.
 - 1.7 The general layout would provide 2 adult pitches of the same size and 6 junior pitches of varying size. The general layout shows the provision of 124 car parking spaces along the eastern boundary of the site on a surface of type one chippings. The car parking area would be laid out to provide a one way direction of travel with a turning circle at the far end in order to manage site traffic flow.
 - 1.8 At the northern end of the site a group of 7 containers would provide changing facilities and toilets for teams and officials.
 - 1.9 The two team changing facilities would comprise a double container unit 12.6m in length and 5.1m wide to a height of 2.7m. These units would also feature eight roof lanterns a further 0.15m in height.
 - 1.10 The two containers providing changing facilities for officials would be in containers 12.6m in length and 3m in width and to a height of 2.7m.
 - 1.11 The group of containers would also include 3 storage containers each 2.5m in width and 2.7m in height but one of which would be 12.9m in length slightly longer than the 12.6m length of the others. A further container would be provided at the southern end of the car park layout to provide storage for those pitches at the far south of the site.
 - 1.12 All the containers would be painted green or subject to any other colour specified by the Council. The applicant would also be willing to plant shrubs or provide screening to help blend the containers into the backdrop of hedging adjoining their siting.
 - 1.13 The changing room and toilet facilities would drain to a septic tank of 7,150 litres capacity started to be in excess of the 5700 litres required in order to ensure adequate capacity. The septic tank would be located behind and to the north of the group of containers proposed.
 - 1.14 The regular layout would be used during the football season September to May. The 14 teams that would operate from the site would generally expect to hold one adult home match on a Saturday afternoon and seven children's matches at different times on Sunday morning / early afternoon.
 - 1.15 The proposal as originally submitted also included an alternative layout for a tournament event. Those details show a revised pitch layout for 7 pitches and the south part of the site given over to additional parking on the grassed area for 342 cars. The applicant advises this is an annual event played over two weekends between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm, on both Saturdays and Sundays.
 - 1.16 In response to concerns raised by the County Highway Authority at the potential for balls to interfere with the traffic on the adjoining highway network

the applicant revised the application details to provide 6.5m high galvanised metal posts, powder coated green, sited 5m apart and with heavy duty black polythene netting mounted along and between each post. This revision has been the subject of a revised notification with neighbours and a revised consultation with the County Highway Authority and Rawreth Parish Council.

2 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 Application No. 13/00767/ADV

Provide Two non-illuminated Goal Post Type Signs to Site Entrance.

Permission refused 11 February 2014 for reasons of proliferation of signage detrimental to visual amenity.

2.2 Other than the above application the site has no relevant planning history and has been used for agriculture for a number of years.

2.3 Of relevance, however, are the following applications relating to the adjoining site to the east.

2.4 Application No. 05/00432/FUL

Change Of Use From Agriculture To Provision Of Four Junior And One Full Size Football Pitches, Access And Parking Areas.

Permission refused 16 August 2005 for reasons that the scale and use and likely level of car parking required is considered inappropriate, the site being in an unsustainable location and that the level of activity being likely to be detrimental to residential amenity.

2.5 Application No. 05/01043/FUL

Change Of Use From Agriculture to Provision of Two Junior and One Full Size Football Pitches, Access and Parking Areas.

Permission granted 28 March 2006.

2.6 Application No. 09/00282/FUL

Retain storage container and three portacabin changing facilities.

Permission granted 24 September 2009.

2.7 Application No. 09/00417/FUL

Provide Additional Storage Container and Additional Eight Youth Football Pitches.

Permission refused 23 November 2009 for reasons that notwithstanding the appropriateness generally of outdoor sport uses within the Green Belt, the scale of the use and the level of car parking required considered detrimental to openness, undesirable use of a substandard access, lack of visibility, increase in unnecessary traffic, lack of footways intensification detrimental to amenity.

2.8 Application No. 10/0087/FUL

Provide 8 (Additional) Football Pitches, Provide Extension to Existing Car Park and Provide Storage Container.

Permission granted 25 May 2010.

2.9 Application No. 10/00805/FUL

Retrospective Application to Retain Metal Storage Container Incorporating Ladies And Gents Toilet Facilities.

Permission granted 31 January 2011.

3 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Rawreth Parish Council: First Round Consultation Response

3.1 Have the following observations and objections to make.

3.2 The land at Old London Road lies in the heart of the Metropolitan Green Belt neighboured by residential properties. The proposed use of the land for outdoor sport falls within a category of development generally considered appropriate within the Metropolitan Green Belt. In this case, the scale of the use and the likely level of traffic flow, the car parking required to serve the use, along with the noise and general disruption is considered to affect the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt, contrary to Policy R1 of the Rochford District Local Replacement Plan and as no special circumstances have been demonstrated the application should not be permitted.

3.3 Members note that the applicants feel a precedent has already been set by allowing the existing 10 pitches nearby, however Members disagree as they still feel strongly that permission should never have been granted for these pitches in the first instance as Policy R1 and LT21 were not taken into consideration.

3.4 Since the original pitches were granted planning permission in 2009 local residents have suffered excessive traffic, noise, disturbance and because of this the Council is insisting that special notice is taken of both Policy R1 and LT21, both of which are retained policies with the Rochford District Local Replacement Plan.

- 3.5 Council considers that In the case of these proposed pitches there is clearly an adverse effect on all three parts of the policy, residents, wintering birds, and highway safety by virtue of the sheer size of the overall combined total pitches. If the application is permitted this rural area will have no less than 18 football pitches in one road.
- 3.6 POLICY LT21states that proposals for sport and leisure facilities and activities likely to cause noise or disturbance will be permitted where there will be no serious adverse effects on:-
- i. occupiers of nearby residential properties/plots;
 - ii. existing flora and fauna (for example overwintering birds);
 - iii. traffic impact or highway safety by virtue of the scale, siting, design, construction or operation of the activity.”
- 3.7 Council also notes that the site is not considered to be within reasonable walking distance of any major settlement, or railway station, nor is the site well served by buses. The remote location of the site and lack of public transport will mean that virtually all journeys to and from the site will be car borne. The nearest bus stop is a 15 minute walk from the site and the nearest main road is the A129, not the A132, as referred to by the applicant. In Council’s opinion, as there is no alternative mode of transport to the site other than by car, the movements to and from the proposed site will represent a 100% increase on those for the existing pitches and the site in its current use as agricultural land. The proposal is therefore not considered by Council to be sustainable due to reliance upon the use of private cars, which is contrary to Policy TP1 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan as policy TP1 clearly states that the Local Planning Authority will develop and implement a sustainable approach to transport planning based on managing the demand for travel and distribution, which is integrated with land use planning, and which aims to:-
- i. reduce the need to travel,
 - ii. reduce the growth in the length, duration and number of motorised journeys,
 - iii. encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact and
 - iv. reduce reliance on the private car and road haulage.
- 3.8 Council also notes that under Policy LT2 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan there is a public playing pitch provision stating that new proposals for public playing pitches, including the provision of synthetic playing pitches, will be required to meet all of the following criteria and have regard for LPSPD3:-

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- i. The finished site should be level, free draining and of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed pitches;
 - ii. It should be located where there is convenient access for the local communities;
 - iii. The proposed pitches are for public use;
 - iv. Vehicular access to the site from the highway can be accommodated without creating a highway hazard;
 - v. It should not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, nature conservation interests or the character of the countryside;
 - vi. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that provision has been made for the area's long term retention and maintenance.
- 3.9 In Council's opinion, this policy should also apply to proposed pitches for private club use and hire, and in the case of this application, points ii, iv, v and vi cannot be substantiated.
- 3.10 Rochford District Council is very aware of the existing 10 football pitches in the vicinity, which already cause heavy traffic flow over weekend periods, and have on many occasions in the past led to a gridlocked road. Rochford District Council and Essex County Council are also fully aware that Old London Road is a de-restricted road with a speed limit of 60mph and no pedestrian footpath. In addition situated between the existing Rayleigh Boys pitches and the proposed Academy Soccer pitches is an Essex County Council chippings bay, which has access 7 days a week by 44 ton lorries. At peak use, lorries accessing the site have queued in Old London Road waiting their turn to load or unload, one 44 ton lorry takes up over half the road width, when two are travelling in opposite directions they barely have room to pass, causing a danger to pedestrians and other motorists, when they are queued awaiting access to the site the road is blocked. In addition the only alternative route to the site is via Church Road, an extremely unsuitable road as it is narrow, semi-rural with housing and stables sporadically placed each side and a width restriction at the end nearest the site.
- 3.11 Members also note that the applicants have not supplied a Flood Risk Assessment, despite the fact the site lies within flood zone 3 and is already subject to flooding. The site is in very close proximity to a water course, being the Benfleet Brook and the whole area is always at risk from fluvial and tidal flooding as the brook runs into the River Crouch. On numerous occasions land, the road and properties flood in this location, the most recent being in December when the area was put on a Green state of alert by the Environment Agency, the highest level you can be on and the area remained on this status for 2 days. Members are concerned by the size of the car park

and that the applicant has not detailed how the car park will be structured or surfaced. Council is concerned that because there is already a risk and history of flooding in the area, creating any hard standing would have a detrimental effect. Council also understands that using a permeable surface does not work when placed on the top of clay, which is the total make up of soil in this area.

- 3.12 Council also notes that there is a lack of mains drainage on the site and that a septic tank is proposed, again Council is concerned about the implications this would have when the area floods and Council is concerned that the site would not be suitable for a septic tank as it would have to be installed above ground level to stop effluent escaping in the event of a flood.
- 3.13 With regard to the advertising application Council is of the opinion that it would be wrong for signs like these to be permitted when the request for Pedestrian Beware signs made by both the Council and residents have been knocked back by the County Council and will not be permitted. It should also be noted that a previous application, (09/00486/ADV) made by the adjacent occupiers for 2 signs at their entrance was refused and reduced to 1 only.
- 3.14 On the basis of all the information detailed above Rawreth Parish Council strongly objects to both the planning applications submitted.

Rawreth Parish Council Second Round Consultation Response:

- 3.15 The contents of the Council's letter dated 15 January 2014 still stand in their entirety. However, in addition and in reference to this amendment to the application, Council is shocked to learn that Essex County Council Highways feel there is a necessity to erect a ball stop protection net of this magnitude on football pitches which the Council was led to believe would only be used by children and have only ever been referred to as for use by specific age group children. Council feels that if a protection net is needed it raises the question are some of the pitches to be used by adults? This question is then answered as the plans accompanying the revised application clearly show two of the pitches marked as "adult;" this is the first reference to adult pitches and this gravely concerns Members.
- 3.16 A ball stop protection net of this magnitude will detract from the openness of the countryside and the Green Belt.
- 3.17 Whilst writing Council has also attached a number of photographs of the surrounding fields and roads, this week and last week, they show the area in a state of flood and clearly show this area lies within a flood plain, yet the application is asking for consideration to be given for a large expanse of hard standing for car park use and no flood risk assessment has been submitted or requested.

3.18 Essex County Council Highways:

3.19 No objection to raise, subject to the following heads of conditions:-

1. Prior to the commencement of the development a pitch layout shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority providing a minimum 15m non-playing area between the pitch edge and the fencing alignment.
2. Prior to the beneficial use a 6.5m high ball stop protection net system along the edge of field immediately adjacent to the A130 and A129 shall be provided. The pitches shall not be occupied unless the protection system is deployed as shown in principle on drawing No. 13-field -013
3. 3 parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards 2009.
4. Prior to the first beneficial use of the development a vehicular turning facility of a design to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be constructed and maintained free of obstruction within the site at all times for that sole purpose.
5. Any gates provided at the vehicular access shall be inward opening only and shall be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the nearest edge of the carriageway.

3.20 Sport England:

3.21 As the site is not considered to form part of or constitute a playing field Sport England has considered this a non-statutory consultation and makes the following comments:-

3.22 Sport England has assessed the application in the light of guidance consistent with the NPPF and which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that the provision of facilities and opportunities for sport and recreation meets the needs of the local community including new facilities. The proposal would seek to address the club's future needs. Understand from the Football Association (FA) and the Essex County FA who have advised there is a clear need for additional pitches in the Rayleigh area to meet the needs of the applicant. As such the proposal would clearly meet Sport England's planning policy objective and therefore Sport England supports this application. A precedent is also established to the adjoining site.

3.23 Advise that the application would accord with the relevant aspects of Government policy in the NPPF and paragraph 70 in particular. Confirm that playing fields and their ancillary facilities are an appropriate use of land in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 81 of the NPPF. It is not necessary

for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify permission being granted.

- 3.24 Consider that a four team changing facility as proposed is a modest facility for supporting a playing field where up to four pitches may be used at the same time. Sport England's guidance argues that changing facilities should be large enough to accommodate the largest number of players likely to use the changing room. Individual changing rooms are preferred. The four team changing facilities proposed are therefore the minimum required for a playing field of this size. Any reduction would not be fit for purpose.
- 3.25 The officials' changing facilities are also considered to be modest in size and proportionate to the level of demand generated from the use proposed.
- 3.26 Sport England requests a pre-commencement condition requiring an assessment of ground conditions and constraints such as drainage, surface quality, and maintenance issues so that a suitable playing surface can be developed.
- 3.27 **Natural England**
- 3.28 Have no objection in relation to statutory nature conservation sites and advise the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected site or landscape.
- 3.29 Advise that Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts upon protected species.
- 3.30 Advise that the site may present opportunities to include features in the design which are beneficial to wildlife such as roosting opportunities for bats and nesting boxes for birds and that the authority should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant.
- 3.31 Advise further that the application may provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment through green space provision and access and contact with nature.
- 3.32 **Rochford District Council Head of Environmental Services:**
- 3.33 No adverse comments to make subject to SI16 (control of nuisances) being attached to the grant of permission.
- 3.34 **Rochford District Council Engineers:**
- 3.35 No observations or objections to make.

Neighbour Representations

Objections:

3.36 29 letters have been received from the following addresses:-

Church Road: "Brook Lodge," "Tufty Lodge," (2 letters) "The Rectory," 2 Burrells Cottages, "Braemar," (2 letters) "Jolians," "Ivy Cottage," "Old Forge Nurseries," "Bychurch Cottage," "Goldings Cottage," "School House"

Hambro Hill: 12,

London Road: "Claremont," "Rockhaven"

Orchard Avenue: 3,

Old London Road: "Ivydene," "Goymers Lodge," (2 letters) "Cherlynn," (3 letters) "Mardener," "Sellers End," "Somerdale"

Rawreth Lane: 1 Clarkes Cottages

Rawreth Flood Action Group

Southend Road: "White Heather"

And petition of 17 signatures objecting to the proposal.

In addition 7 letters have been received from the following addresses outside the District:-

Eastwood Road: 236 (2 letters)

Donald Thorn Close: 3,

Shotgate Farm (2 letters)

The Avenue, Wickford: 98

Tudor Avenue, Wickford: 1,

3.37 And in addition 20 unaddressed letters

3.38 And which in the main make the following comments and objections:-

Highway Issues

- Understand that there are different teams and clubs but it is just ridiculous to have so many pitches within a few minutes walk, the entrance just a few feet from another load of pitches and then a mere stroll through the underpass to another load. The traffic generated on a Sunday by the other pitches is a problem and this will be hugely exacerbated by another

development. There are also always a lot of horse riders including young riders in this area and they join a bridle path right on the corner which would be between the two entrances. I don't really need to highlight the consequences for any problems there.

- As a neighbouring volunteer based football club we always advocate and promote children playing and enjoying football in an organised and safe environment, however we feel that if any pitches are granted so close to an already established ground the safety of residents and supporters will be compromised and our existing pitches will become unsustainable due to traffic congestion and the ability of emergency vehicles to get to the ground if required.
- The entire approach to this site is along very narrow, single carriageway country lanes, some of which do not even have footpaths. This road is barely wide enough for 2 vehicles to pass and has recently been de-restricted by Essex County Council to a 60mph limit.
- The present occupiers of the adjacent football site (with 10 pitches in use) have just admitted that they completely underestimated the amount of vehicles generated by the use of their site and object to further pitches being allowed for safety reasons. In addition, the entrance to the proposed site would be immediately on a bend, adjacent to the neighbouring pitches.
- Between these two sites is an Essex County Chippings Bay which can be used constantly 7 days a week, every week of the year. Huge 44 ton lorries bring chippings to this bay and then redistribute them as required. At peak times lorries queue along Old London Road immediately at the site entrances to these football pitches.
- Frequently two of these lorries have to pass each other going in different directions, and there is absolutely no room for this to happen. The lorries have to back up to enable passage.
- All this time, as stated above, there is no pavement whatsoever and pedestrians have to jump into the hedge to avoid being run over.
- This is the road which the application states would be used by the children walking from the bus stop to the site - a 15 minute walk away.
- Increased volume of traffic that this will generate. Rayleigh Boys have 8 pitches at Chichester Ground and a further two are maintained by Sporting Events Ltd. Through our own experience we can only have in use at any one time six games total between us and Sporting Events otherwise the car park fills to excess and the traffic movement along Old London Road does become very congested due to volume of traffic and the turning of cars leaving and arriving at the ground. We also use King Georges

Playing Field in Rayleigh along with pitches at Rayleigh Town FC to take up any overflow.

- Old London Road is de-restricted, the speed limit is 60mph and there is no footpath which is usable between Cherlyn and the E.C.C. chippings bay and all pedestrians are forced to walk in the road. If this was approved it would create a five way junction on the bend by the chipping bay; apart from the congestion this would cause, it would be a safety hazard.
- Car parking may become an issue as Rayleigh Boys will not be able to control/prevent Academy parents or opposition and supporters from using the car park due to the entrances being less than 10 metres apart.
- With more homes being built in the near vicinity over the next few years, we are sure that these pitches will become more in demand and will be used more often than presently anticipated. Old London Road/Church Road already accommodates the Council/highways storage facility, a hotel plus other businesses, (ours included). We already experience impatient parents taking their children to the soccer facilities we currently have in the road and we're sure this will only get worse the more pitches that are in use.
- As Old London Road is classed as a rural road, we have an extremely inadequate footpath, which can be very dangerous to use at any time, but even more so just before or after the existing matches that are held. I myself have had my shopping bags clipped by a car leaving the current facilities as they wouldn't wait for an oncoming car to pass me first. This is because the path isn't wide enough in the first place and is always badly overgrown. It is also an unrestricted road, so despite the fact we received a consultation letter last February regarding bringing in 30mph speed limits, nothing has been done.
- If we had a decent footpath and a 30mph speed limit then it would be a different story from us, however at this time we strongly feel the road infrastructure needs to be improved before more pitches are considered.
- There are already pitches next door to this proposed site and when in use the increased noise and traffic is a complete intrusion
- Furious about the increase in traffic, bearing in mind the existing problems with Rayleigh Town youth football club.
- Existing 10 pitches, together with this application, will make 18 equating to over 100 car movements, together with lorry movements to stables and chippings bays. Therefore road is dangerous.

- Concerned that the entrance to our driveway could become obstructed if visitors park on the road, which has happened in the past with the other pitches nearby.
- There is insufficient parking for the cars, to say nothing of coaches from visiting teams. There is no suitable parking nearby. People will end up parking in the road in an area where on street parking would be positively dangerous both from the point of view of pedestrians and other motorists. The land is right on a bend and parking will impair visibility round this bend.
- The application will increase traffic on the A129 on match days. The access road (Old London Road) already carries heavy traffic at certain times because of the existing football pitches and is unsuitable for the extra traffic these pitches will bring.

3.39 Flooding Issues

- Not aware of the flooding situation for the site but can vouch for the fact that this local area has had huge problems recently with flooding and can only imagine that any impervious parking areas will make this problem worse. Our garden has been completely waterlogged and the field at the end of our garden like a lake at any downpour. I just don't think the use for this field is feasible at all.
- There are serious drainage and flooding issues in the area.
- There has not been a Flood Risk Assessment. The application calls for parking for 130 vehicles and further provision for an extra 340. Hard standing would severely increase the risk of flooding and, even if it was of "permeable" construction, it is well known that this is completely ineffective upon clay soil as the water just goes down to the clay, cannot get away and would further increase the flow into the immediate brooks.
- This application is for a field entirely in Flood Zone 3 and runs immediately alongside a ditch which enters Benfleet Brook which runs immediately to the rear of properties in Church Road. This area has a history of flooding when these properties have been flooded to a depth of 2ft on several occasions.
- In December 2013 we were put on Flood Alert, the highest alert level possible, for 2 days. 4 days ago, on Friday, 17 January 2014, the whole area was under deep flood with the water reaching front doors in Church Road. Old London Road and Church Road were both officially closed as the water was 2ft deep in places and the force of water was eroding the banks of the ditches alongside the Chichester Hotel.

- The adjacent underpass of the A130 was under 4ft of water and was approaching the houses here. We had to distribute sandbags to prevent water entering their houses and garages.
- This is not a one-off situation and is a very serious problem for residents. Anything which increases the possibility of flooding must be avoided at all costs.
- Contrary to application details the area is at high risk of flooding and car park will increase run-off.
- This land floods. The Benfleet Brook runs at the bottom of the field. That area lies in flood zone 3a.

3.40 Amenity Issues

- Agree that we need to encourage the children to get involved in healthy outdoor activity, but this is not only in the form of football and in this area football has been more than accommodated for and the horse riders are another example of outdoor activity and surely this should be a balance that should be maintained.
- Concerned about the noise levels.
- We live opposite the site and are obviously concerned about the noise levels.
- Residents of Old London Road and Church Road are entitled to their historic right of peace and quiet.
- No indication in the application of playing time so not clear if this will be each day each week.
- If this application is approved it should come with restrictions on the number of days per year the pitches can be used to minimise disruption to local residents.
- Increase in noise unbearable.
- Litter
- There are already football pitches within the immediate vicinity of these proposed new pitches. They already cause nuisance to local residents on match days with increased traffic and noise. Any new pitches will cause a decrease in quality of life for local residents who already have to contend with traffic, parking etc. on a Sunday when they should be able to enjoy their homes in peace and quiet.

3.41 Need Issues

- Rayleigh Boys when granted use of the Chichester field gave up the use of 4 pitches at Fairview and the 3 pitches at Grove Park; these facilities are still available for use if Academy wants to expand.
- If an investigation was to be carried out as to the current/future use of football pitches in the area, it may highlight that some are under utilised so could accommodate Academy Soccer.
- Both Academy Soccer teams that play on a Saturday currently use King Georges in Rayleigh.
- Plenty of spare pitches in the district.
- Academy soccer is run as a profit making company and not as we were led to believe a small non-profit making outfit training young children.

3.42 Other Issues Raised

- The application appears to hang on the fact that a precedent has been set but dispute this for the following reasons:-
 1. Rayleigh Boys is a voluntary organisation whilst Academy Soccer is a business.
 2. Rayleigh Boys applied for their ground because the pitches in Rayleigh were over-subscribed. As Rayleigh Boys vacated many hours of pitch time in Rayleigh when they moved it means that Academy Soccer do not have issues with pitch availability.
 3. When Rayleigh Boys applied for their pitches there was not already another club in almost the same location.
- Therefore suggest that there is no precedent as the applications are based on totally different circumstances.
- Further pitches should not be allowed under policy LT21 and was not taken into account previously.
- Proposal wholly against policy LT21, as fishing lakes refused quoting this policy 2 years ago

3.43 Second Round Replies:

One further letter has been received from the following address:-

Church Road: "Brook Lodge"

And which make the following comments and objections:-

- Previous comments still apply.
- Traffic will increase considerably.
- The road is too small to deal with the increased traffic.
- Increased noise and intrusion taking into account the existing pitches.

3.44 One letter has been received from the applicant which makes the following comments in response to the objections raised:-

- I expect all of the points I list at the end to be reviewed and clarified. I would expect the same to be said for those in objection as many make no sense.

Traffic

- 3.45 Old London Road is de-restricted. The speed limit is 60mph. This may be the case but given the layout of the road and short stretches of straights it would be very difficult to reach such speed. Furthermore, I would be surprised if any parent was driving in such an erratic manner with their child on board. Such people do not exist at Academy Soccer FC and I think if they did and behaved in such a way they would not be welcome.
- 3.46 There is no footpath which is usable between Cherlyn and the E.C.C. chippings bay and all pedestrians are forced to walk in the road (see on-going complaints to E.C.C. and Councillor Maddox). What constitutes a usable footpath? Do all pedestrians walk in the road? How is the state of the footpath relevant to the application, which is obvious given it is an on-going complaint with E.C.C.
- 3.47 There is a reference that this application will cause the generation of 1000 car movements per day. To make such a throwaway comment is ridiculous and is not possible to substantiate or uphold. The application clearly states the membership base of Academy Soccer FC and also clearly states the pitch sizes along with number of participants. Whoever states this has not reviewed the application and is clearly not making informed objection.
- 3.48 There is further reference that E.C.C. uses 44 ton Lorries on this road. So E.C.C. deems this road suitable for such large vehicles then this can't be dangerous for cars?

Access

- 3.49 The access to the site is dangerous. The application clearly states that the on site car park operates a one way system to ensure traffic flow. Visibility splays from the site are excellent; in fact they are better than those to the E.C.C. chippings bay and the existing football pitches.

Flood Risk

- 3.50 It is stated the installation of the car park will increase run off water. Plans clearly state that the car park is of porous surface. The site is surrounded by drainage ditches and the car park will not increase any extra surface water.

Noise

- 3.51 It is suggested that there would be an increase in shouting and whistle blowing in a quiet residential area.
- 3.52 This application offers nothing different from what already exists, so if this is a quiet residential area it will remain so. The application includes a noise study, which depicts the busy A130 as a higher noise source and will drown out any noise associated with sport participation. The site itself is adequately screened from the road and is a significant distance from residential properties. There is a reference that there is no indication of playing time and this application proposes to play 7 days a week.
- 3.53 The application does state that the main days of play are Saturdays and Sundays. Common sense would tell anyone that children attend school Monday to Friday and senior members would be working. However, I will say this is a clear attempt to impose sanctions on the site. Why would you want to put sanctions on when a child can play and when they can't? What about school holidays? Is it better for a child to be involved in an organised sporting environment than wandering the streets causing mischief because they are not allowed to play sport at their club?

Saturation

- 3.54 The area is more than adequately supplied with football pitches. With this application the area would be overrun by pitches and must be refused. It is well documented that the Rochford District falls well short of the national average and guidelines for sports fields for its population. This will soon be exacerbated by the future development of more homes in the area. The- need for more projects of this nature will increase in future years. So for once it would be good for planners and the Council to be proactive in passing this application rather than reacting after the event, i.e., once these proposed new homes are built and current facilities are bursting to capacity.

- 3.55 The points below highlighted in the summary section of the application are valid grounds why this application should be approved:-
- 3.56 The use of this site for outdoor participatory sport is an appropriate use within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is considered the level of use will not have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the area, nearby residential amenities or the highway network.
- 3.57 It is stressed that Academy Soccer FC will be in control of this site and that with its established management structure and strong volunteer base the site will be managed to the exceptional standard that their existing matches are.

Letters in Support

- 3.58 152 letters have been received from the following addresses:-

Abbey Road: 67 (5 letters)
 Ashingdon Road: 249 (5 letters)
 Ballards Gore: 1 Mayfair Bungalows, 2 Mayfair Bungalows
 Bellingham Lane: 21,
 Blackmore Walk: 12 (4 letters)
 Brixham Close: 10 (2 letters)
 Canterbury Close: 9,
 Cheapside East: 54,
 Cheapside West: 7, 64, 53,
 Coombes Grove: 2,
 Dartmouth Close: 2,
 Derbydale: 14 (2 letters)
 Downhall Park Way: 83 (2 letters) 143,
 Downhall Road: 29, 44,
 Durham Way: 9 (four letters)
 Eastcheap: 22,
 Eastwood Road: 86 (2 letters) 397 (2 letters)
 Edinburgh Close: 8,
 Elm Drive: 45,
 Ely Way: 1,
 Falcon Close: 7 (2 letters),
 Fallon Close: 17,
 Golden Cross Road: 70b (3 letters) 70a (2 letters)
 Grosvenor Road: 11, 62,
 Hamilton Mews: 9 (three letters)
 Harberts Way: 8 (2 letters)
 Hawkwell Road: 60,
 Heathfield: 6,
 High Road: 8 (2 letters)
 Hilary Crescent: 43, 50 (2 letters)
 Hillcrest Avenue: 86,
 Hockley Rise: 6,

Hockley Road: 139, 188, 141 (3 letters)
 Kestrel Grove: 27 (2 letters)
 Kingswood Crescent: 2 (5 letters)
 London Hill: 38 (2 letters)
 Lower Road: 110 (2 letters)
 Louis Drive East: 1 (2 letters) 29 (2 letters)
 Love Lane: 10, 44,
 Lynwood Green: 1 (4 letters)
 Maine Crescent: 19 (3 letters)
 Magnolia Road: "Wayside"
 Minton Heights: 3 (2 letters)
 Moat Rise: 32,
 Nelson Gardens: 4, 21 (2 letters)
 Nelson Road: 18 (3 letters)
 Sairard Close Eastwood: 7,
 Salisbury Close: 3,
 Sandhill Road: 26,
 Somerset Avenue: 22,
 South Avenue: 1 (4 letters)
 Southbourne Grove: 33 (2 letters), 56,
 Southend Road: 78,
 Stambridge Road: 46
 Station Avenue: 4 (2 letters)
 Station Crescent: 65,
 Sycamore Close: 12 (2 letters)
 Swallow Close: 21 (4 letters)
 Oak Walk: 45,
 Orchard Avenue: 3,
 Osborne Avenue: 19,
 Piagnton Close: 14,
 Rectory Avenue: 181,
 Riverview Gardens: 23,
 Temple Way: 19,
 The Approach: 46 (2 letters)
 The Courts: 5,
 The Limes: 5,
 The Westerings: 53 (5 letters)
 Upway: 16 (2 letters)
 Western Road: 19 (2 letters) 30,
 Willingale Avenue: 9,

3.59 And one anonymous letter.

3.60 In addition 67 letters have been received from the following addresses outside the District:-

Amerne Drive, Prittlewell: 28,
 Bramble Road, Eastwood: 84,

Benfleet Road: 117,
 Blake Hall Drive, Wickford: 45 (2 letters)
 Claysprings Close: 3 (2 letters)
 Clifton Avenue, Benfleet: 36 (2 letters)
 Coronation Hill, Epping: 24,
 Cottesmore Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea: 59,
 Double Gate Lane, Wickford: "Dollymans Farm House"
 Grangeway, Thundersley: 10,
 Hackamore: 26 (4 letters)
 Hyland Gate Billericay: 2,
 Highcliffe Road Wickford: 16 (2 letters)
 Herschell Road, Leigh- on-Sea: 76a,
 Fleet Road Benfleet: 25a, 55 (2 letters)
 Fourth Avenue, Wickford: 54 (7 letters)
 Johnson Close, Wickford: 6 (2 letters)
 Egbert Gardens, Runwell: 37,
 Furtherwick Road, Canvey: 170,
 Bocket Way Chigwell: 269 (2 letters)
 Kingley Close, Wickford: 14 (2 letters)
 Limetree Avenue, Benfleet: 5,
 Mamonia Drive, Lannngdon Hills: 1,
 Oak Hill Road, Stapleford Abbots: "Salcombe"
 Orkney Gardens Wickford: 2 (3 letters)
 Riverside Court, Lower Southend Road: 10 (2 letters)
 Roxwell Avenue, Chelmsford: 32,
 School Road Kelvedon Hatch: "Sheraton" (3 letters)
 Shaftesbury Avenue, Southend: 90,
 Surig Avenue, Canvey: 4,
 Tensing Gardens, Billericay: 32,
 Tilney Turn Basildon: 5,
 Thisselt Road, Canvey: 184,
 Thundersely Church Road, Benfleet: 6 (2 letters)
 Westbeech Ave, Wickford: 9 (3 letters)
 Woodgrange Drive, Southend: 490,
 The Rodings, Eastwood: 19,
 The Willows, Benfleet: 4

3.61 and one illegible letter.

3.62 In summary, these letters make the following comments in support of the application:-

- Great Idea, good use of the land.
- Having lived in Rayleigh all my life I'm delighted to see local sports clubs growing and supporting the children of Rayleigh in pursuing a healthy lifestyle.

- Developing facilities for sports by local clubs to augment those provided by the local authority is an ideal way to increase the total number of facilities and encourage sports, physical exercise as well as team and social skills of youngsters.
- The proposed site makes use of a field close to Rayleigh but away from the main busy traffic areas of Rayleigh. There is parking to be provided on site and the visual impact is low with the site surrounded by trees and the hours of use will not be at anti-social hours.
- Believe this proposed development will be a positive asset to the community, and promote a healthy lifestyle in our children.
- Having been involved in the integral workings of Academy Soccer since conception I know what a fantastic club it is in its inclusive nature from top to bottom. Furthermore, I know how hard the club committee have worked to get to the point of this application. They have made careful consideration to their needs but also given careful consideration to the impact and looked to reduce this to a minimum.
- This is a club of the community. No one can say that this is not a good idea and for our next generations learning life lessons in a structured sporting environment.
- The summary section of the application summed up reasons for approval excellently and I fully back them all and therefore list at the end. However, I would like to comment on some of the reasons I have read for objection and am surprised as some of these were clarified and cleared up at the Rawreth Parish Council meeting. Academy Soccer representatives presented their application to Members and dignifiedly answered questions. Obviously they did not need to do this but this again demonstrates the calibre of this club to look to address local residents' concern. None of us are naive to think that there would be no objection and many hate change. However, without change nothing would get done, nothing would be achieved, no progression would be made. Change is not always bad.
- Academy soccer is constantly progressing and proving itself within the local community and the football community by just achieving a Community Status Club by the FA.
- Academy Soccer is instilling great discipline, respect and important social/life skills to the boys and girls and also how to work as part of a team.
- The benefit of having an independent ground for Academy Soccer will remove any dependency and pressure on the Council and their pitches.

- The benefits far outweigh the negatives.
- The pitches will not be used constantly every day, and therefore the effect on the neighbours will be very minimal, but Academy Soccer is willing to work with the local residents to resolve any issues, both before and after planning.
- The site is in a conveniently accessible location that is central to the teams which use the site and close to a bus stop. The local clubs strongly encourage car sharing to reduce impact but a realistic assessment of car use must be taken in relation to this type of use.
- The development provides an important community facility targeted to youth community football and fully supported by the F.A. There is provision to create alliance football and expand our girls section for more female football on this site.
- Academy Soccer will not create as much noise or traffic as the other club which is in the adjacent field to this which has 11 pitches, parking, 7 containers for storage and changing rooms and signage.
- It is also proven that the extra disruption will not be any greater than that already created by the other club, and this application would also not generate any extra disturbance, as this is proposed at a similar time, so the duration would not be affected either.
- The location of this proposal within the District has been carefully examined and it is considered that it meets the requirements of both national and local planning policies and is in line with precedents set by previously passed applications, and should be supported.
- Soccer academy is a great company, not just improving football within the community, but also improving people's quality of life because Soccer Academy demands very high standards and it demands the best from the coaches, players and parents.
- It also helps build relationships between people because the children can strive for perfection on the pitch within a safe and happy environment.
- Allowing this plan to go ahead will benefit the extremely talented kids who already play at Soccer Academy and will hopefully attract more and more talented footballers and coaches.
- By allowing these new football pitches at the bottom of Rawreth it will improve the standard of football within the community and also help the soccer academy community to come together and bond with other group based organisations within the community because the club will have a lot more space for games and tournaments and other activities.

- Great use of land which is otherwise left standing unused. Not only will our children benefit from these pitches, but it would benefit adult games too.
- Nice to see land being used for leisure rather than housing.
- It is all too easy these days for kids to sit in front of TV or computer games when instead they should be encouraged to take part in sport. Please grant Academy Soccer permission to create a home for their football club as this will enable them to continue their good work. I am convinced that the entire local community will benefit from their efforts.
- It is stressed that Academy Soccer FC will be in control of this site and that with its established management structure and strong volunteer base the site will be managed to the exceptional standard that our existing matches already are. Academy soccer is also constantly progressing and proving itself within the local community and the football community by just achieving a Community Status Club by the FA.
- The pitches will not be used constantly every day, and therefore the effect on the neighbours will be very minimal, but Academy Soccer is willing to work with the local residents to resolve any issues, both before and after planning.
- The benefit of having an independent ground for Academy Soccer will also remove any dependency and pressure on the Council and their pitches.
- Have worked for the company Academy Soccer for over 6 years and in that time we have become one of the best, if not the best football coaching academy in the area. We have always worked to very high standards and as an employee of the Academy Soccer franchise can assure you that we will continue to do that. The new pitches will allow us to grow even more as a coaching school and I consider this to be the most detailed, concise and relevant application I have seen of its nature.
- Brilliant idea - my nephew and his team mates need decent pitches to play on. These are great plans - why would anyone object to boys playing football on a field that is not being used for anything else? There will be minimal disruption - and a great deal of pleasure gained for the boys, their friends and families.
- My three boys have all used Academy Soccer to some degree and, in my opinion, it is an extremely well run organisation which is being held back by a lack of its own facilities and a reliance on RDC to provide and maintain the pitches behind Rayleigh Leisure Centre.
- This proposal would provide the club with its own base and allow it to expand further. The club's growth is currently constrained by space and this seems to be the perfect place to remedy the situation. The proposed

site is in the vicinity of existing pitches and therefore is not out of character with the area and, indeed, the proposal appears to be on a smaller scale to that already in existence. While I appreciate that there are neighbours, any disturbance caused by AS would clearly not greatly exceed that already occurring on a Sunday.

- The fact that the pitches will be controlled by the club should also give cause for comfort as the complaints (noise, traffic, litter etc.) against other clubs using pitches off Rawreth Lane far exceed those against Academy Soccer at Rayleigh Leisure Centre, which prides itself on maintaining good relations with its neighbours.
- Have lived in the area for many years and my impression has always been of a fairly sterile, commuter based environment without a great deal of outdoors based activities. This development strikes me as an extremely productive use of the land, which hundreds of families will benefit from.
- There are numerous Central, County and District Government initiatives stating how important it is for families to get outdoors and for children to get fit. This use of land supports all of them. If as a society we cannot support the development of football pitches for children to use, what hope is there of beating the current obesity epidemic?
- Academy Soccer is, in my opinion, one of the very best community based organisations that I have come across. It is run in a business-like way whilst also crystallising values of inclusion, community spirit and fairness. It draws together volunteers, supporters and families from across the area and represents everything that the Government tells us we should be looking to achieve in communities. I actively chose to join my children up because of the superb way the organisation is run. The Local Authority should respect and support an organisation of this quality.
- This is an opportunity for a Local Authority to support the youth within the community to allow them a sporting facility.
- Academy Soccer Football Club has demonstrated a desire to integrate with the immediate neighbourhood in attending a recent Parish Council meeting to present the plans and give residents an early preview prior to the application being submitted.
- Having a 9 year old son who constantly sits on computer games for someone to give up their time to involve children in physical activity is essential in this day and age. The plans are well thought out and considerate of the local residents and the area. There are already football pitches in this vicinity and would like to again express my support for this proposal.

- It would be good to have our own pitches because the old ones have dog poo on them, uncut grass and poor white lines, there have been branches on the pitches, the Council calls off games when our pitches are fine; it would be good to have adults and boys playing at the same place, so can watch.
- We would feel professional to have our own changing rooms and not having people walking their dogs as we are playing.
- Have been at academy for nearly 9 years and have learnt about being a team player and am on our children's committee to try and help the younger players and also myself.
- They have taught me discipline and self control.
- A few of my friends have come over to academy recently and they cannot believe how good we are set up, and the way it is run.
- These new pitches would give us a great new level to move up from.
- Confident the club will work/consult with the local residents to help appease their concerns.
- Know this area very well having walked with several of our local rambling groups, and I think the site is well suited for young people (including my grandsons) to play football. Schools are losing their playing fields for housing, so it is only fair that open land is allocated for their recreational play. As long as public footpaths are respected, it would remain available for the general public's use during the day, as well as leaving the flora and fauna undisturbed.
- Providing the communities of Wickford and Rayleigh with social and sport opportunities that brings people together can only be a good thing. The club has now become a community club and is embarking on this project for the surrounding areas and its existing customers and must be held in high esteem by the Council. I strongly recommend that the Council approves this planning application for the good of local adults and children for all future generations to appreciate.
- Consider that the proposal of improving the land adjacent to the A129 would be a very beneficial addition to Rawreth/Rayleigh, bringing safe opportunities for local youngsters to develop their sports skills in purpose built surroundings.
- The change of use for the land is for a very good cause in providing a sporting facility for young children and youths that reside in the locality. We need to provide healthy sport for our children if they are to grow up to be strong in personality as well as fit. Many comments are made regarding

the creation of home grown talent in sport and this will not happen unless we nurture this at the grass roots. In this instance it is football, probably the country's most popular game. This application is to provide football to over one hundred children of the club making this request. Obviously they will be playing opposing boys and girls so therefore the nucleus to benefit children grows.

- Of course there would not be more than fifty boys / girls playing on one day at varying times. Having seen the plans for the site I know that they have been prepared most professionally and thought has been given to the layout and facilities proving that this will not be a ragamuffin facility that would shame the locality. I know there will be people who will want to oppose this application but it would be impossible for any activity to take place if we did not think of the greater picture. Residential numbers are very small in the vicinity compared to urban areas where sports like this take place and the distance between dwellings and the field is such that there should be no immediate impact.
- It should be noted that one side of the field is bordered by the A130, a very noisy multi-carriageway road which would tend to overshadow noise created by the boys and girls.
- I believe this application will stand on its own merit without the mention of the permission already granted for the football pitches situated nearby. I trust the Council will see that the benefits and amenities put forward will outweigh any concerns.
- I am writing to you to urge my support towards the above planning application for football pitches on the Old London Road. I am one of the longest serving players to the club as I have been playing there for almost 10 years and I believe if we can get these pitches the club will do the almost impossible task of making the club even better. The 8 pitches that are being applied for include a range that will help the club to grow even more and it will give all children from 6-12 a chance of playing football for fun. At the moment we are playing on pitches behind the Rayleigh Leisure Centre, even though these pitches provide us for all of our needs, including excellent drainage that allows us to play when most other teams cannot, we only have three pitches that belong to us there being 1X 9v9 and 2X 7v7.
- It is stressed that Academy Soccer FC will be in control of this site and that with its established management structure and strong volunteer base the site will be managed to the exceptional standard that their existing matches are.
- The benefit of having an independent ground for Academy Soccer will remove any dependency and pressure on the Council and their pitches.

- The benefits far outweigh the negatives.
- The pitches will not be used constantly every day, and therefore the effect on the neighbours will be very minimal, but Academy Soccer is willing to work with the local residents to resolve any issues, both before and after planning.
- The site is in a conveniently accessible location that is central to the teams which use the site and close to a bus stop. The local clubs strongly encourage car sharing to reduce impact but a realistic assessment of car use must be taken in relation to this type of use.
- The development provides an important community facility targeted to youth community football and fully supported by the F.A. There is provision to create alliance football and expand our girls section for more female football on this site.
- Academy Soccer will not create as much noise or traffic as the other team which is in the adjacent field to this which has 11 pitches, parking, 7 containers for storage and changing rooms and signage.
- The location of this proposal within the District has been carefully examined and it is considered that it meets the requirements of both national and local planning policies and that in line with precedents set by previously passed applications, and should be supported.
- Many of the clubs in Essex have their own grounds and this is very important so that they can have their own identity. By having this new ground approved it will allow a large number of children to pursue their love of football and also give the younger ones starting out the option of playing football in the local community.
- If the club continues growing like it has we will soon need to look at other options. The proposed set up will allow for the growth whilst also giving the children currently playing excellent facilities to enjoy the game. I think in this current climate where obesity is at a record high and the national squad is struggling, we should all be helping to encourage our children in the sport, whatever the level. Grass roots is where everything starts and it is important we give our youngsters the best possible opportunity we can.
- The use of this site for outdoor participatory sport is an appropriate use within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is considered the level of use will not have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the area, nearby residential amenities or the highway network.
- I live within 200 yards of where the club currently plays its home matches, and its approach regarding the management of the area when it is in their control is exemplary and always ensures respect to the local residents is

maintained at all times.

- If the application is approved the club wishes to maintain on-going dialogue with the local residents to ensure a working relationship that allows the club to flourish, but not to the detriment of the residents' enjoyment of their surroundings.
- The application itself it is very detailed and given previous precedents set by similar applications in an adjacent field I do not see how this can be declined. Guidelines state that football pitches are a suitable use of Green Belt land. It should also be of comfort to local residents that Rochford District Council has stated in development plans that it will vigorously defend the development of land used for recreational sport (i.e. football pitches). I take this to mean that if this application is passed then this site would be preserved as an open space and free from future development.
- Comments posted by residents seem to centre around the pedestrian footpath which is outside of this application and simply require foliage to be cut back. If this application is passed I am sure residents would find the Academy Soccer members a great support in getting this resolved.
- Reading some of the comments from the local residents, I was unaware that they have a right to anything outside of their own property and boundary, and as such fail to see how they can complain if the area around them is being used for a different purpose.
- As far as flooding goes, one would assume that a completely grassed field would be better in helping any problems as the grass will need water to grow; the fact that the storage and changing would be raised off the floor and non-habitable only helps the area with any problems it may have.
- Fail to see how any speed limit, any width of path or no path is relevant to this application; it sounds like the residents have an existing issue with this, and as such Academy Soccer should not be penalised for trying to push the younger generation to better things.

4 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the Development

- 4.1 The site is within an area allocated Metropolitan Green Belt in the Council's saved Local Plan (2006). The provision for playing pitches and appropriate buildings such as changing rooms and storage buildings are considered appropriate to the Green Belt and do not require the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances in order that permission might be exceptionally granted.

- 4.2 Policy CLT 10 to the Council's adopted Core Strategy (2011) states that the Council will take a positive approach to the provision of pitches within the District. The policy goes on to state that Green Belt locations for additional playing pitches will be considered appropriate in the circumstances considered below. Similar criteria are set out in the Development Management Submission Document (April 2013).
- 4.3 The Council's Local Development Framework Playing Pitch Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (October 2011) concludes for the Rayleigh sub area (table 7.1 page 44) that whilst there is a surplus of 9 pitches for senior football, there is a deficit of 15 junior pitches and 16 mini soccer pitches. Although the applicant proposes two adult pitches, the remaining 6 pitches would improve upon the shortfall for junior and mini soccer. There is therefore a need identified for the pitches proposed.
- 4.4 The site is in a remote part of the District. This is at odds with the requirement for the use to be in an accessible location on the edge of a settlement set out in Policy CLT10 and DM16. There is, however, no objection raised in sustainability terms from the County Highway Authority. There is also a precedent for the same use to the adjoining site. Furthermore, from the representations in favour received the applicants would appear to serve a catchment to the west of the District and those neighbouring authorities such that the site location would be central to their members' location, thus representing a degree of sustainable vehicle movements at least for home games held at the site proposed.
- 4.5 The playing pitches would retain the openness of the site. The changing room and storage facilities would be provided in low rise containers relatively modest in scale and sited in a low lying location against a backdrop of hedging, having a minimal impact upon the Green Belt.
- 4.6 Sport England has recommended a condition to require the submission of details to ensure the site is well drained and that the site preparation and seeding ensure a quality playing surface. The submission of these details can be the subject of a condition, given the strength of guidance from Sport England and that this requirement is part of the criteria set out at policy CLT 10 to the Core Strategy.

Flood Risk Issues

- 4.7 The northern part of the site falls within Flood zones 2 and 3 identified by the Environment Agency as areas with the medium and more likely risk of flooding. The extent of the site within these zones generally corresponds with the proposed siting of the storage containers, the changing facilities and the surface area around them. The remainder of the site where the pitches are proposed and the remaining parking area are within flood zone 1 and the least likely to be at risk from flooding.

- 4.8 A consultation with the Environment Agency is outstanding at the time of writing. Generally the Environment Agency would require the containers providing changing rooms and storage to be protected from the effects of flooding such as the routing of electrical services above the flood level. Other concerns would relate to the appropriate storage and management of the foul drainage arising from the changing rooms and toilet facilities and the need to ensure that untreated discharge does not enter the water environment. As the proposed changing rooms and storage containers would not provide homes, officers anticipate that the Environment Agency will be unlikely to raise formal objection to the proposal.

Design Issues

- 4.9 The proposed container type changing rooms and storage facilities would be purpose designed and would be similar to those approved to the adjoining site. Whilst functional in appearance, they have the advantage of having a minimal impact and in this case would be grouped at the lower end of the site, with one storage container located at the southern extent of the car park. Officers consider that the suggested colour green would be the most appropriate but given the backdrop of hedging there would not be a requirement for further screen planting adjacent to the containers.
- 4.10 The application was revised on 27 January to include the provision of 6.5m high ball catch fencing to the western and southern boundaries with the A130 and A129 respectively. This revision has been at the request of the County Highway Authority in order to mitigate against potential ball flight interfering with passing traffic on the major routes.
- 4.11 To the western boundary this fencing would have a limited impact against the backdrop of the A130 which rises northwards alongside the proposed fence line.
- 4.12 To the southern boundary the proposed fencing would have limited impact due to the depth of tree and hedge planting adjacent to the A129. As such the impact is considered acceptable and would not impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or the landscape such as to justify withholding consent.

Highway Issues

- 4.13 The site is served by a narrow lane that historically connected the area but since the construction of the A129 and A130 has had a reduced role serving now to give access to local homes and businesses. The Chichester hotel exists further east of the site a short distance from the A129. The site is, however, further west from the junction with the A129 along which there is no footpath. Pedestrians therefore have to walk along the metalled road surface. The adjacent field hedging also hinders visibility from time to time, particularly around the beds in the street alignment.

- 4.14 No objection is raised by the County Highway Authority at the use of Old London Road to serve the site. Various conditions are, however, recommended including the setting back of future gates.
- 4.15 The general layout would require the provision of a maximum 160 car parking spaces at a rate of 20 spaces per pitch. No spectator seating is shown to the application and therefore no additional requirement for that is necessary. The proposal would provide 124 car parking spaces representing provision of 78% of the maximum required.
- 4.16 The County Highway Authority has no objection to raise against this level of provision provided details are submitted to show the effective working of the turn around facility supporting the one way routing of the parking management. Although the site is in a remote location away from alternative forms of transport, the County Highway Authority is satisfied at the level of parking provision.
- 4.17 The tournament layout would provide a further 342 cars for only seven pitches requiring a maximum of 140 car parking spaces. This extra provision over and above that provided on the site would reflect the likely greater number of spectators attending this event held over two weekends and to which there is no objection raised in highway terms.
- 4.18 Members will note that whilst the County Highway Authority raises no objection, its recommendation is conditional that an alternative pitch layout is submitted and agreed such as to achieve a minimum 15m safeguard zone between adult pitches and the catch fencing.

Residential Amenity Issues

- 4.19 Policy CLT10 to the Core Strategy (2011) and part (iv) to policy DM16 to the Development Management Submission Document both require that the proposal does not generate undue levels of noise and disturbance to residential amenity. Policy LT21 to the Council's saved Local Plan (2006) generally states that sport and leisure facilities and activities likely to cause noise or disturbance will be permitted where there are no serious adverse effects upon occupiers of nearby residential properties.
- 4.20 The dwellings "Rockhaven" and "Rawreth Lodge" front Church Road 60m and 90m respectively north of the proposed changing rooms and storage containers. "Cherlyn Lodge" fronts London Road 270m east of the site access. "Sunny view" also fronting Old London Road is located 200m south of the site. The area is remote giving varying degrees of quiet against a backdrop of traffic along the A130. A proportion of objections to the proposal raise concerns at the likely noise levels of matches interrupting the quiet, particularly when taking into account the use of the adjoining site.
- 4.21 The adjoining site provides a total of 11 pitches and operates under a permission granted on 28 March 2006 under application reference

05//01043/COU for two junior and one full size pitches and for one day per weekend being either Saturday or Sunday together with a later permission for 8 pitches granted on 25 May 2010 under application reference 10/0087/FUL which allows those eight pitches to be used on Sundays and for up to eight Saturdays a year.

- 4.22 The proposal would provide a further eight pitches but further distant from most dwellings to Old London Road but closer to those fronting Church Road and which are closer to the A130. In essence the background noise levels are higher in the location of the proposed site.
- 4.23 The applicant has provided an assessment of noise levels acknowledging that the human response to noise is subjective. The applicant's assessment concludes that the noise levels are likely to be comparable to the equivalent of a conversation at home for those nearby residents and therefore acceptable. The Council's Head of Environmental Services is considering this information at the time of writing and officers will update Members on this issue in the addendum or at the meeting.
- 4.24 On balance and subject to more detailed consideration of the assessment submitted by the Council's Head of Environmental Services, officers conclude that subject to similar limitations with regard to the extent of usage allowed to the adjoining site by way of conditions to the grant of permission and for weekends, that the disturbance would not be so great so as to justify withholding permission.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposed use of the site for football pitches is an appropriate use of land within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposed changing rooms and ball catch fencing would be appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and local policies for development in the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 5.2 The use proposed would provide sufficient off street car parking and would not give rise to adverse conditions of highway safety or residential amenity that would weigh against the merits of the proposal.

6 RECOMMENDATION

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

To **APPROVE** planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) SC4B – Time limits standard 3 years
- (2) The site shall only be used for the purposes of football and for no other purpose, including any use otherwise permitted within Class D2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987

(including any order revoking or re-enacting that order, with or without modification) or such uses ordinarily incidental to the use hereby permitted.

- (3) The use hereby permitted shall not operate and shall not be made available outside the following times 1200 hours Midday – 1800 hours Saturday afternoons and Sundays all day and at no other time or any other weekday than specified in this condition.
- (4) No amplified speech/music or other form of public address system shall be broadcast or operated on the site.
- (5) No floodlights or other means of artificially illuminating any part of the site shall be installed and/or operated, whether or not in association with the use of the site hereby permitted.
- (6) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved the applicant shall submit to the Local Planning Authority a revised layout for the provision of the pitches proposed to show the provision of a 15m wide non-playing area between the pitch edge and the catch fencing alignment. The development shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be agreed.
- (7) Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved the 6.5m high ball stop catch fencing net protection system hereby approved and as shown on Drawing No. 13-field-013 shall be provided along the edge of the site immediately adjacent to the line of the A130 and A129.
- (8) Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved the applicant shall submit details to the Local Planning Authority for the design of a vehicular turning facility to be provided to serve the one way traffic management system to be provided at the southern end of the parking area. The development shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be agreed.
- (9) Any gates to be provided at the vehicular access shall be inward opening only and shall be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the nearside edge of the carriageway.

(10) No development shall commence until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England:-

- (i) A detailed assessment of ground conditions (including drainage and topography) of the land proposed for the playing field which identifies constraints which could affect playing field quality; and

Based on the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to 0 above, a detailed scheme which ensures that the playing field will be provided to an acceptable quality. The scheme shall include a written specification of soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment and a programme of implementation.

The approved scheme shall be carried out in full and in accordance with a timeframe agreed with the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England] or other specified time frame – e.g. before first occupation of the educational establishment. The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme.



Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning and Transportation

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy Adopted
Version December 2011

CLT 10.

Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006) as saved by Direction of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and dated 5 June 2009 in exercise of the power conferred by paragraph 1(3) of schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

LT 10, LT 21.

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Development Management Submission Document (April 2013)

DM 16

Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice Supplementary Planning Document adopted December 2010

Standard D2

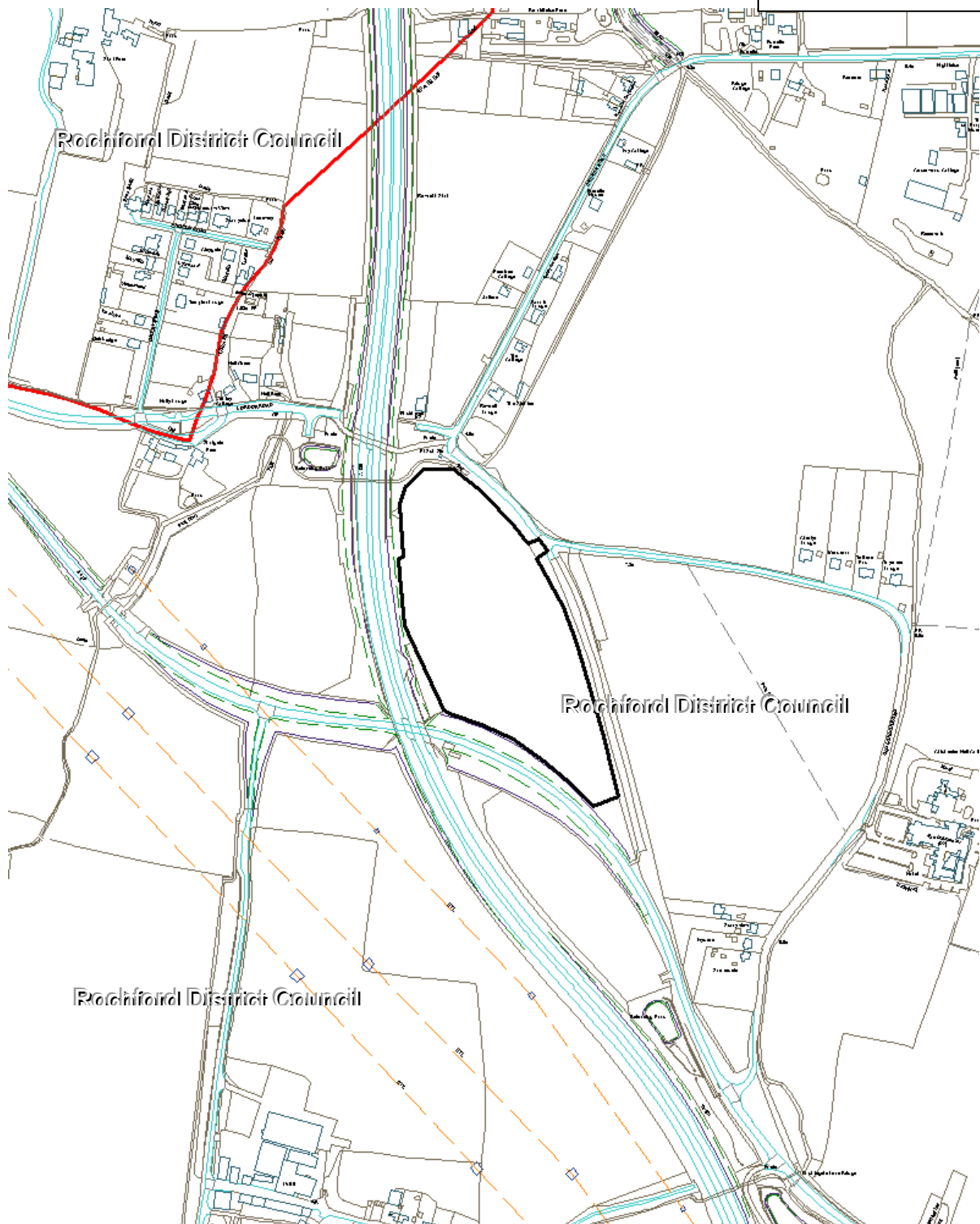
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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

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