

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
190673	9 May 2019	Wokingham Town	Wescott

<b>Applicant</b>	Mr Norman Patterson
<b>Site Address</b>	Luckley House School, Luckley Road, Wokingham RG40 3EU
<b>Proposal</b>	Full application for the proposed construction of a reduced size multi-use synthetic turf sports pitch with a 3m-4.5m high fence and 6no 12m column floodlights
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>PS Category</b>	18
<b>Officer</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Listed by Councillor Cllr Julian Sumner (Ward Member for Westcott)

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 8 May 2019
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>Luckley House School is a coeducational independent secondary school with day and boarding pupils from 11-18 years old. The proposal seeks to install a multi-use games area (MUGA) at the southern end of the campus. It will be constructed with a synthetic turf playing surface and dimensions of 80m x 50m and located within the existing turf playing fields and multi-purpose tennis and netball courts. It is to be used as an undersized hockey and soccer field but will also accommodate tennis courts. It will also comprise 3.0m fencing (with a rebounding surface) around the perimeter of the field and six x 12m high floodlights enabling morning and evening use to 9pm (and 8pm on weekends and bank holidays). It is intended to be made available for use by the public.</p> <p>The minimum residential separation is to 51m to properties in Denby Close to the west and approximately 75m to properties in Luckley Wood to the east (although these properties are separated by tree coverage), and these are the two areas of properties where most of the 59 objections against the proposal have been received.</p> <p>The primary issues relate to noise disturbance and light spillage to surrounding residents. Unacceptable impacts upon traffic and harm to existing wildlife and habitat were also noted in numerous submissions.</p> <p>The proposal was accompanied by a Noise Report, Lighting Strategy and Ecology Report and these have been reviewed by the Council's Environment Health Officer, Trees Officer and Ecology Officer. Sport England were also consulted in relation to the provision of sports facilities.</p> <p>On balance, the proposal is acceptable, subject to conditions relating to drainage (Condition 3), a Construction Management Plan (Condition 4), Maintenance Scheme (Condition 5), Noise management scheme (Condition 6), biodiversity measures (Condition 9), limiting the use until 9pm on weekdays (and 8pm on weekends) and the lighting to earlier times (Condition 12), protection of trees (Condition 14) and a Community Use Agreement (Condition 15).</p>

## PLANNING STATUS

- Major development location
- Settlement edge (southern boundary)
- Greenway Route (along Luckley Road)
- Tree Preservation Orders 1564-2017 (to southern boundary and woodland on eastern edge of the site)
- 7 x Veteran trees interspersed across the campus
- Priority habitat (Lowland mixed deciduous woodland)
- Bat consultation zone
- Grade II listed building (Luckley House)
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (5km zone)
- Nitrate vulnerable zone (surface water)
- Flood zone 1
- South East Water consultation zone
- Farnborough Aerodrome consultation zone
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Minerals consultation zone
- Sand and gravel extraction consultation zone
- Non-classified road

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions and informatives:**

### Conditions

#### 1. Timescale

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

*Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*

#### 2. Approved details

This permission is in respect of the submitted drawings numbered LHS02/01 (dated 7 January 2019), LHS02/03 (dated 9 January 2019), LHS02/04 (dated 8 January 2019) and LHS02/05 (dated 19 January 2019), all received by the local planning authority on 8 March 2019. The development shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

#### 3. Drainage details

Prior to the commencement of the development, details of the implementation, maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme

shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Those details shall include:

- a) A timetable for its implementation, and
- b) A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

*Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

#### 4. Construction Management Plan

No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period and shall provide for:

- a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- b) Loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- c) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- d) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- e) Wheel washing facilities,
- f) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- g) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- h) Measures for ensuring that there is no adverse interruption to existing school activities and operations, including the movement and learning of students

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience and neighbour and school amenities.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.*

#### 5. Management and Maintenance Scheme

Before the first use of the MUGA hereby approved, a Management and Maintenance Scheme for management responsibilities, maintenance schedule and a mechanism for review shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority after consultation with Sport England. The scheme is to include measures to ensure the replacement of the Artificial Grass Pitch within the manufactures' specified period. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the MUGA.

*Reason: To ensure that a new artificial grass pitch is capable of being managed and maintained to deliver an artificial grass pitch which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Paragraphs 92, 96 and 97, Core Strategy Policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB08*

#### 6. Noise management scheme

Prior to the first use of the MUGA hereby approved, a noise management scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme must specify provisions for the control and mitigation of noise emanating from the use of the MUGA and include the following:

- a) A noise monitoring supervisor
- b) A code of conduct for users of the pitch
- c) A mechanism to report and investigate noise complaints
- d) A mechanism for reviewing and updating noise mitigation measures following receipt of substantiated complaints
- e) Liaison with stakeholders and interested parties

The pitch shall only be used in accordance with the approved noise management scheme.

*Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of nearby residents and the area generally from noise and disturbance.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

#### 7. Noise mitigation

Prior to the first use of the MUGA hereby approved, the noise mitigation measures in paragraphs 12.4 and 12.5 of the Noise Impact Assessment (numbered TH2111182NR, dated 15 January 2019 and prepared by Peak Consultants) shall be installed and maintained throughout the life of the facility.

*Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of nearby residents and the area generally from noise and disturbance.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

#### 8. Construction of Multi Use Games Area

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the area shaded in green and edged by a red outline on drawing LHS02/01 has been cleared and laid out in accordance with drawings LHS02/01 and LHS02/03 so that it is available for use as an artificial grass pitch. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order amending, revoking or re enacting that order) the MUGA shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than as an artificial grass pitch.

*Reason: To secure the provision and use of the MUGA.*

*Relevant Policy: NPPF Paragraph 97, Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CP3, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB08.*

#### 9. Biodiversity measures

The lighting, hereby permitted, shall be used until the biodiversity measures outlined in Table 8 of the Bat Survey prepared by Arbtech Consulting Ltd have been installed. A letter/report confirming that the boxes, bricks or tiles have been installed, including a plan showing their location and photographs of the boxes, bricks or tiles in situ, is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council prior to use of the lighting.

*Reason: To ensure that the ecological value of the site is enhanced post development in line with paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF.*

#### 10. Hours of construction work and deliveries

No work or deliveries relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am and 1pm Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

*Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

#### 11. External Lighting

The proposed artificial pitch shall be artificially illuminated only in accordance with the lighting specification set out within the Lighting Statement by Paul Hawkins Development dated February 2019. The artificial light spill associated with the development shall not exceed that as set out in the approved plans.

*Reason: In the interests of neighbour amenity.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

#### 12. Hours of use of MUGA pitch and lighting

The use of the MUGA pitch, hereby permitted, shall not operate other than between the hours of 8am and 9pm Monday to Friday and between the hours of 8am and 8pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Notwithstanding the above, the use of the floodlighting, hereby permitted, is to be turned off no later than the following:

- 6:30pm GMT/7:30pm BST in March
- 8:30pm BST in April
- 9pm BST in June and July
- 8:45pm BST in August
- 7:45pm BST in September
- 6:45pm BST/5:15pm GMT in October

Lighting is to be operated by a secure/lockable, automatic, timer controlled switch and is not to be operated beyond the specified hours.

*Reason: To safeguard residential amenities and to protect foraging routes for bats in the nearby woodland.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06 and TB23.*

### 13. Amplified music

No external sound amplifying equipment shall be installed within the confines of the MUGA.

*Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of nearby residents and the area generally from noise and disturbance.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

### 14. Protection of trees

- a) The development shall take place in complete accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan prepared by Arbtech Consulting Ltd, which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012.
- b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.
- c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

*Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

### 15. Community Use Agreement

Within 12 months of the date of this permission and prior to first non-school related use, whether or not it is part of a commercial arrangement, a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England is to be submitted to and

approved in writing by the local planning authority. A copy of the completed approved agreement is to be provided to the local planning authority.

The agreement shall refer to car parking details, changing details, pricing policy, access by non-educational establishment users, hours of use of non-educational users, management responsibilities (including operation of lighting) and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

*Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the MUGA to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB08.*

## **Informatives**

### **1. Changes to the Approved Plans**

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **2. Pre occupation conditions**

Where this permission requires further details to be submitted for approval, the information must formally be submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

### **3. Protected species**

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

### **4. Tree Preservation Order**

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

### **5. Community Use Agreements**

Guidance on preparing Community Use Agreements is available from the Sport England website at <http://www.sportengland.org/planningapplications/>. For artificial grass pitches, it is recommended that the applicant seek guidance from the England Hockey on pitch construction when determining the community use hours the artificial pitch can accommodate.

6. Discussion

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

<b>RECENT PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
There is an extensive planning history relating to the Luckley Oakfield School dating back to 1959. The more recent planning history is provided.		
<b>App Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
F/1997/66008	Single storey conservatory extension	Approved 22 August 1997
LA/1998/67563 F/1998/67330	Upgrading of assembly hall	Approved 24 July 1998
F/2001/4282	Two storey extension to science block	Approved 15 August 2001
F/2001/5482	Two storey library building with classrooms	Approved 20 February 2002
F/2004/3037	Single storey rear extension to art room	Approved 18 November 2004
F/20070963	Two storey music room	Withdrawn 4 June 2007
F/2008/0439		Approved 8 August 2008
F/2008/1144	Maintenance building	Approved 18 July 2008
F/2011/1038	New entrance and improvements to roads and parking	Approved 9 September 2011
VAR/2011/2448	Variation of F/2011/1038 to allow changes to car parking	Approved 13 January 2012
VAR/2012/1235	Variation of F/2011/1038 to allow road, parking and footpath changes	Approved 7 June 2017
182774	MUGA sports pitch (larger pitch but in similar location)	Withdrawn 13 December 2018

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>	
Site Area	School campus measures 5.7 hectares with sports fields making up approximately 1.3 hectares
Previous land use(s)	Class D1 school campus with playing fields and car parking.
Number of jobs created/lost	Nil
Existing parking spaces	Two separate car parks with 89 spaces.
Proposed parking spaces	No change

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
WBC Environmental Health	No objections are raised in relation to the light spillage or noise disturbance to neighbouring properties, subject to conditions that are imposed to protect neighbour amenity and require adherence to the

	Lighting Strategy, the preparation of a Noise Management Scheme and a limitation on the hours of use (see Conditions 11, 6 and 12 respectively).
WBC Trees and Landscaping	No objection, subject to the protection of existing trees (including TPO protected trees), as specified in Condition 14.
WBC Ecology	No objection, subject to Condition 9 relating to biodiversity measures and Condition 12 restricting the use of the lighting in summer months when the bats will be foraging in the nearby woodland.
WBC Highways	No objection.
Sport England	No objection, subject to conditions relating to the construction of the facility (Condition 8) and the submission of additional details in the form of a Management and Maintenance Scheme (Condition 5) and a Community Use Agreement (Condition 15).

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
Wokingham Town Council	<p>No objection is raised if it were limited to 8pm, with lights being turned off by 8:30pm.</p> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to 'Neighbour Amenity' for further consideration of the operating hours.</p>
Local Members	<p>Councillor Julian Sumner listed the application for the Planning Committee on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise pollution</li> <li>• Light pollution</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> On balance, the proposal is likely to achieve a satisfactory outcome on neighbour amenity grounds, as discussed in further detail in 'Neighbour Amenity'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic congestion (including no assessment of traffic impacts)</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> There are no concerns on traffic and highway access grounds, as noted in 'Highway Access and Parking Provision'.</p>
Neighbours	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 25 March 2019 to 22 April 2019, with submissions received from the following properties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 3 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>2) 5 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>3) 22 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>4) 24 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>5) 30 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>6) 30 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>7) 31 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>8) 31 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>9) 32 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>10) 32 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>11) 35 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>12) 37 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>13) 39 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>14) 42 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> <li>15) 45 Luckley Wood, Wokingham RG41 2EW</li> </ol>

- 16) 44 Luckley Road, Wokingham RG41 2EN
- 17) 44 Luckley Road, Wokingham RG41 2EN
- 18) 44 Luckley Road, Wokingham RG41 2EN
- 19) 48 Luckley Road, Wokingham RG41 2EN
  
- 20) 1 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 21) 2 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 22) 3 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 23) 4 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 24) 6 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 25) 6 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 26) 8 Denby Close, Wokingham RG40 3EY
- 27) 8 Denby Close, Wokingham RG40 3EY
- 28) 9 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 29) 9 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
- 30) 9 Denby Close, Wokingham RG41 2AL
  
- 31) 6 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 32) 6 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 33) 7 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 34) 7 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 35) 8 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 36) 9 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 37) 10 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 38) 15 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 39) 17 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
- 40) 18 Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham RG41 2HQ
  
- 41) 185 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 3HD
- 42) 185a Finchampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 3HD
- 43) 203b Finchampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 3HS
- 44) 204 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham RG403HB
- 45) Finchampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 3HS (no number specified)
  
- 46) 3 Bradley Drive, Wokingham RG40 3HZ
- 47) 83 Evendons Lane, Wokingham RG41 4AD
- 48) 12 Gorrick Square, Wokingham RG41 2PB
- 49) Buchandale, Sandhurst Road, Wokingham RG40 3JQ
- 50) 3 St. Helier Close, Wokingham RG41 2HA
- 51) 3 St. Helier Close, Wokingham RG41 2HA
- 52) 41 Tattersall Close, Wokingham RG40 2LP
- 53) 23 Kiln Ride, Finchampstead RG40 3PN
- 54) Lyndhurst, The Village, Finchampstead RG40 4JR
- 55) Hawthorns, Longwater Lane, Finchampstead RG40 4NX
- 56) Hawthorns, Longwater Lane, Finchampstead RG40 4NX
  
- 57) White Cottage, Milley Road, Waltham St Lawrence RG10 0JP
- 58) White Cottage, Milley Road, Waltham St Lawrence RG10 0JP
- 59) No address supplied

The submissions raised the following issues:

### **Noise**

- Noise pollution
- No noise assessment has been undertaken, including for the tennis courts
- Noise consideration does not account for 22 football players
- Noise assessment only refers to hockey use
- Noise assessment does not refer to voice
- WHO and Sport England noise levels will be breached
- Computer modelling has been used
- The predicted noise levels are inaccurate
- Conclusion that the existing noise levels are the same is incorrect
- Spectators are anticipated in the Planning Statement but not expected in the Noise Statement
- Does not accord with Policy CC06
- Unacceptable continuous noise levels

Officer comment: The Noise Assessment accompanying the planning application includes consideration of football and netball use. It does not consider 22 football players because it is not a full sized football pitch. It includes consideration of hockey balls hitting backpads, human voice and referee whistles. It also includes measurements obtained over a three day period at two residential noise receptors at the nearest residential properties, and is supplemented with modelling, which is standard acoustic practice.

It makes comments in relation to the existing sports facilities but prefaces that there are different variables about intensity and time of use. It also assumes that there will be lower crowd participation than would be anticipated at larger sporting events, which is a reasonable assumption.

It is acceptable for the purposes of this assessment. It has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer and the methodology is considered to be sound and the outcomes are considered to be reasonable. Further comment can be found at 'Neighbour Amenity'.

### **Light pollution**

- Light pollution
- Lighting should be removed

Officer comment: The proposal was accompanied by a Lighting Strategy and Plan and the impacts of light spill are acceptable. Refer to 'Neighbour Amenity' for further comment.

- Loss of view/outlook
- Loss of darkness

Officer comment: The proposal will result in some glare to an existing unlit area of the school and against the backdrop of the woodland trees. However, the extent of the impact is not unreasonable in the context of the major development location.

The fencing and light columns are minor elements and sufficiently removed from neighbouring residential properties such that no objection is raised on the grounds of harm to any outlook.

- The lighting levels (and impact upon habitats) have reduced from the previous report

Officer comment: Because of a reduced pitch size, the total power has been reduced from 43kW to 30kW

### **Traffic and parking**

- Traffic congestion, including from large coaches

Officer comment: Refer to 'Highway Access and Parking Provision' for further comment.

- Lack of parking

Officer comment: The MUGA will be used during school hours (where there is no additional impact on traffic) or after school hours, when on-site parking is available. Refer to 'Highway Access and Parking Provision' for further comment.

### **Ecology**

- Light spill and noise will affect wildlife, including bats
- Loss of woodland habitat
- Loss of bats

Officer comment: 'Refer to Ecology' and Condition 12.

- Treelines will be illuminated, contrary to legislation

Officer comment: This is confirmed as an issue in 'Ecology' and has necessitated a restriction in the hours of use of the lighting in Condition 12.

- There are no bat records
- Ecology report is inadequate as it only considers bat roosts

Officer comment: The Bat Survey submitted with this application is satisfactory for the purposes of the application.

- The impacts are contrary to the findings of the Ecology Report for the music building

Officer comment: The Ecology Report for the music building (F/2008/0439) stated that lighting should be directed away from the retained woodland edge in order to maintain darkened flight paths for the bats who commonly use woodland edges to commute through. The lighting associated with this application will cause some illumination of the woodland and Condition 12 requires additional restrictions on the lighting.

- Lighting will affect the landscaping and the SANG

Officer comment: Subject to Condition 12, the proposed lighting will not have an adverse impact upon the landscape setting of the woodland and there is no impact upon the proposed SANG to the south, although it is not yet constructed. Refer to 'Landscaping and Trees'.

### **Demand**

- No requirement for such facilities
- There is no need

Officer comment: The Planning Statement states that the school wishes to provide an all-weather hockey pitch for competition use. There are no existing facilities that allow this. It would also be inappropriate for the Council to question the future desired facilities of the school.

It is worthwhile noting that if it is indeed correct that there is no need for such a facility, the level of use of the MUGA would be reduced.

- Loss of track and field facilities

Officer comment: The proposal will encroach into the existing playing fields, which show use for track and field (evidenced by aerial mapping). Sport England have reviewed the proposal and raise no objection. This is noted in 'Open Space'.

- Represents a change of use to commercial operation

Officer comment: Whilst the intention is for the MUGA to be used by the public, it remains ancillary to the main use of the facility by the school during school hours. It is not considered to represent a change of use to a commercial use and it is not unreasonable arrangement for the school.

### **Character**

- Loss of settlement gap
- Encroaches onto the countryside and will allow housing to be constructed
- Lights will contribute to a loss of settlement gap
- Harm to the character of the area

- Fencing will be intrusive
- Will be visible from neighbouring properties

Officer comment: The MUGA will be positioned inside the settlement boundary and does not encroach into the countryside. There will be some negligible light spill across the southern boundary into the designated countryside and the lighting will be visible from areas in the countryside to the south. However, the pitch, lighting and fencing is not unreasonable in the context of the surrounding built form is not out of character with the edge of settlement location. This is discussed further in 'Character of the Area'.

### **Landscaping**

- Loss of hedgerow
- Loss of TPO protected trees
- Leaf matter and overshadowing will affect the courts
- Canopies may need to be pruned

Officer comment: The MUGA, lighting, fencing and associated groundworks are sufficiently removed from existing hedgerow and trees, including TPO protected trees, such that there is no perceived landscaping issue and the Council's Trees Officer raises no objection.

### **Drainage**

- Flooding caused by additional runoff
- Inadequate drainage details

Officer comment: The MUGA will be positioned in the area of the existing hardcourt tennis courts and also comprises SuDS drainage. Subject to additional details as required by Condition 3, the net runoff from the site is likely to be minimal and no objection is raised.

### **Other/general**

- Unacceptable continuous noise levels
- No break in impact due to use seven days a week
- Hours and days of use are excessive

Officer comment: On the basis that the noise and lighting impacts are reasonable, there is no objection to the use of the MUGA being 365 days per year although in reality, however, continued after hours use will not be the case as it is dependent upon demand, seasonal variations and weather conditions.

- No consultation

Officer comment: Given the scale of the proposal, there is no obligation of the school to undertake consultation.

- Has already been rejected
- Only slightly changed from the previous withdrawn application

Officer comment: Planning application 182774 for a larger MUGA pitch was withdrawn and not rejected because of the Council's concerns with the loss of trees. This issue has been resolved, as noted in 'Landscaping and Trees' and the proposal is now acceptable.

- May be linked to housing proposed under application 190286

Officer comment: There is no connection with planning application 190286 for 216 houses on the site to the south.

- Plans are out of date and invalid

Officer comment: The plans are sufficient for the purposes of the assessment of the subject application, including consideration of the surrounding context.

- Community benefits are vague

Officer comment:

- No Management Plan has been submitted

Officer comment: Condition 15 requires the submission of a Community Use Agreement to address any issues associated with after-hours use by members of the general public.

- Security risk, including for boarders
- Increased risk of robbery

Officer comment: The school is currently used after hours by Wokingham Netball Club. It is also a boarding school, allowing for after-hours activation and surveillance. It is not perceived that the additional use of the MUGA would result in any additional security risk, whether in terms of the safety of boarders or for prospective users.

- Roadway will lead to antisocial behaviour

Officer comment: Aside from an access path, the proposal does not include any new access through the site. There is no perceived link with the use of the MUGA and access thereto and antisocial behaviour.

- Loss of acoustic and visual privacy from spectators towards residents

Officer comment: There is separation of at least 50m to the nearest residential property. This is sufficient for the retention of acoustic and visual privacy for existing residents imposed by proposed users of the MUGA.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not satisfy the environmental principles in the Core Strategy and NPPF</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> On balance, the proposal achieves a satisfactory environmental outcome and is recommended for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No dimensions are shown</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The site layout plan is scaled, which is sufficient for the purposes of assessment.</p>
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<b>APPLICANTS POINTS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fencing has been designed in powder-coated black to be as invisible as possible against the backdrop of the area surrounding it</li> <li>The pitch has been positioned to minimise light spill and noise onto surrounding areas and roads, facilitate easy access, whilst eliminating the need for any tree removal, and avoiding damage or impediment to the existing trees to the east and south of the proposed development</li> <li>All tree protection during construction will be in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment report submitted with this application</li> <li>The entire structure, consisting of carpet, shockpad, base, sub-base and perimeter will be fully permeable. During heavy rainfall, the stone base acts as a water storage medium with a slow release rate. The drainage characteristics are, therefore, similar to the existing natural turf</li> <li>There is no illumination of the tree line to the west of the pitch, a maximum of 20 lux to the tree group south of the pitch and a maximum of 10 lux to the tree and hedgeline to the north-east of the pitch</li> <li>The lights are “state of the art”, and have been designed specifically to illuminate the playing area efficiently whilst minimising light spill both into neighbouring areas and upwards from the luminaire</li> <li>All recommendations of the noise report will be actioned</li> <li>Floodlighting will not impact tree T1; the only tree with bat roosting features. Furthermore, bat foraging and commuting behaviour will not be impacted by the increase in lighting on the tree lines.</li> </ul>

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage

	TB08	Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
Other	BDG	Borough Design Guide
	SDC SPD	Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
	OSRS	Wokingham Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy 2013

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Description of Development

1. The proposal involves the removal of four existing outdoor tennis/netball courts at the southern end of the school campus and the construction of an uncovered multi use playing area (MUGA) measuring 80m x 50m and constructed with a synthetic turf surface on a bitmac base.
2. It will be enclosed by 3.0m high fencing around the perimeter of the court (4.5m at the goal ends) with rebounding walls and a total of six x 12m high floodlights positioned equidistantly along both sides.
3. Minor groundworks are proposed along the western side, with a 350mm high batter along the western edge. An access path leads from the existing music building and connects with the western side of the pitch.
4. The MUGA is intended for hockey and football as well as tennis and general play and is proposed for use by the school during school hours and after hours use by the general public.
5. The supporting documentation refers to various operating hours of up to 10pm. For the purposes of this application, the hours specified in the application form are used, which are 8:30am-9pm weekdays and 8:30am-8pm on all other days, including bank holidays.

### Site Description

6. Luckley House School sits within a 5.7 hectare campus on the southern side of Luckley Road on the southern outskirts of Wokingham. On the site are a collection of two storey buildings, including the Grade II listed Luckley House in the centre of the site forming the nucleus of the main classroom and administration buildings and two storey buildings towards the southern end of the campus. There are two access roads from Luckley Road and two main carparks with 89 parking spaces. There are 1.3 hectares of sports fields at the southern end of the site, protected woodland to the eastern end of the site and TPO protected trees lining the southern boundary.

### Principle of Development

7. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for

Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8. The MUGA forms part of the wider school campus and replaces existing sports facilities. It does not involve an increase in staff or student numbers, is within a major development location and meets the sustainability intent of the NPPF and the Core Strategy.
9. The MUGA will be available for use by the general public as a private hire (pay and play) outside of normal school hours. It was initially proposed as being available for up to 10pm but based on the conclusions and recommendations of the applicant's own acoustic report, it is limited to 9pm on weekdays and 8pm on weekends and bank holidays.
10. Given the acceptable nature of the proposal on acoustic and light pollution grounds (when subject to various conditions), there are no planning objections to this arrangement. It accords with the *Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy 2013*, which permits the '*dual use of both primary and secondary school sports facilities...providing that these facilities include a higher proportion of artificial turf pitches or hard courts than might otherwise be expected.*'
11. Submissions against the application argued that there were other similar facilities in Wokingham and that the subject MUGA is not required. However, this ignores the fact that the initial intentions of the school are to provide additional facilities for students. Even so, the existence of other pitches in the area is of no real consequence and if it is underutilised, any amenity impacts upon surrounding residents would be lessened by less frequent use.

### **Character of the Area**

12. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. Policy NR8 requires high quality and simple materials and components.
13. The MUGA pitch will be located within the major development location but the settlement edge lies immediately to the south. In this respect, Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that development at the edge of settlements is acceptable where it is demonstrated that it is within development limits and respects the transition between the built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.
14. The proposal includes the removal of four hardcourt tennis courts (approximately 2,200m<sup>2</sup> of hard paving) and its replacement with a 4,030m<sup>2</sup> synthetic pitch. It will be coloured green, which will complement the turf of the playing fields. It will be constructed with a level playing surface, which will necessitate a 350mm raising of the ground on its western edge, which is not unreasonable. It will be located at the southern edge of the campus and will be framed by protected trees along its western and southern edge. This gives a detached appearance to the pitch but given it is within the settlement boundary and well removed from neighbours, the openness of the area will remain intact and there is no perceived issue.

15. The proposal also includes the installation of 3.0-4.5m high fencing around the playing surface and 8 x 15.5m high floodlights along the western and eastern (or long) sides of the court. The fencing will be open in nature and will allow sightlines through the site. It is not out of character with other facilities within the school campus and would arguably be less obtrusive than the combined effects of the existing tennis court fencing. At a predominant height of 3.2m, it is not of excessive height and no objections are raised.
16. The floodlights are lightweight in nature with a width of 440mm at the base. They are also retractable back onto the playing surface. At a height of 12m, they will be the equivalent height of the adjacent sports hall. However, the height is still not excessive given it is framed by woodland trees and can be viewed amongst the backdrop of the existing school buildings.
17. The spillage from the light columns is well contained to the immediate area of the pitch but the submitted plan shows some spillage across the settlement boundary to the south (when not accounting for existing trees). The light spill will also be visible as an urban element, reducing the level of darkness in this area of the school campus. However, on balance, it is an acceptable element within the development limits and when viewed from the rural landscape to the south.
18. Accordingly, no objection is raised in relation to the aforementioned Policies CP3, CC02 and NR8.

### **Heritage and Conservation**

19. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that development must ensure the preservation of any nearby listed building, including its setting, Paragraphs 192-196 of the NPPF requires consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, including their views and setting.
20. Luckley House is a Grade II listed building that is the focal building within the school campus. It is 50m to the north of the proposed MUGA as the crow flies but is largely screened by existing vegetation and the sports hall. Furthermore, there are numerous non-listed buildings closer to the listed building that interrupt the interpretation of the building. Moreover, the extent of the proposed works (pitch, fencing and light columns) and the impression of lighting from the columns is reasonable and does not pose an adverse outcome for the significance of the building.

### **Residential Amenities**

21. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact.
22. As measured from the fencing along the western and eastern sides of the pitch, it is some 75m from the rear boundary of the nearest residential property in Denby Close to the west and 51m from the rear boundary of the nearest residential property in Luckley Wood to the east. A total of 18 residential properties adjoin the

school grounds on both boundaries but the visibility of the pitch and its associated elements, including the lighting when it is in use, would vary because of available sightlines across open countryside to the south and the heavily wooded land to the east of the pitch.

#### Sunlight and Daylight, Dominance and Enclosure

23. The MUGA pitch is enclosed by a 3.0-4.5m high fence, which itself is unimposing. It is surrounded by other taller school buildings and is at least 75m from the nearest residential dwelling. There is no perception of dominance or loss of light and as a result the proposal is acceptable.

#### Overlooking

24. The MUGA will be located within the existing school grounds. Whilst it will feasibly lead to increased numbers of participants and for longer periods of the day, there is adequate separation to neighbouring properties such that there is no unreasonable overlooking.

#### Noise pollution

25. The existing sporting facilities in this area of the school comprise four tennis courts and playing fields, which have a dual use as an undersized football pitch, turf hockey pitch, track and field and rounders. The replacement with a synthetic, all weather pitch for hockey, football and tennis, which will allow increased usage of the facilities, including during evening periods and during poorer weather. The noise levels associated with this use are likely to increase and this has the potential to harm neighbouring residents.

26. A Noise Assessment was provided with the planning application. It notes that for most sports, the most dominant sound is generally from human voice, but in the case of hockey, the ball hitting the backboards is most pronounced. The assessment also refers to human voice (including shouting (in this case a male voice is referred to)), footballs hitting fences, clashing of sticks, some spectator participation and the referees whistle. Given the less intensive nature of a game of tennis, fewer participants and existing courts, noise arising from this activity is irrelevant to the assessment.

27. Furthermore, as the facility is for a school, it is not anticipated that there would be large numbers of vocal supporters and this conclusion is reasonable.

28. Amongst the other existing activities of the school, including use of the outdoor sporting facilities, the indoor sports hall and general lunchtime play, the use of the MUGA during normal school hours is unlikely to result in adverse or unacceptable noise transmission above that expected and tolerated of a secondary school. In this regard, it is acceptable.

29. Its use after school hours by school students would result in some additional noise levels but would remain acceptable in the context of existing school extracurricular and sporting activities that would typically occur or would be expected on a day to day basis at the school. Similarly, where the pitch would now allow for competition

marches (hockey and tennis only), it would not be unreasonable to expect some noise from the use of the facility for school purposes.

30. The use of the pitch by the general public up until 9pm on weekdays and 8pm on weekends will result in additional noise outside of normal school hours, including during holidays.
31. The comments from the Environmental Health Officer conclude that the proposal is satisfactory, subject to additional mitigation for rubber backboards, fabric football goals and resilient fencing as recommended in the Noise Assessment. Paragraphs 32-37 outline, in detail, these comments.
32. The Planning and Design and Access Statement states that the proposed artificial pitch provides an opportunity for additional use of the school's facilities by the community in the evenings after school activities have ceased as well as during the day and evenings during holiday periods. This will result in intensified use of the site compared to the existing grass sports field especially during winter weather conditions and the introduction of the artificial flood light system. There are existing sensitive residential properties located in close proximity to the proposal site that could be adversely affected by noise from this intensified use.
33. A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been submitted with the application dated 15 January 2019 by Peak Consultants. This includes an assessment of the existing residual noise levels at the site and comparison of these against criteria outlined in 'Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) Acoustics – Planning Implications' (Sport England, 2015) which specifies typical noise levels of sports pitches and their associated noise impacts.
34. The noise level of the MUGA over a representative period of one hour has been calculated at the nearest sensitive receptors (NSRs) and is displayed in Table 3. These results indicate that noise generated by the proposed MUGA would be below the existing ambient levels in terms of the level averaged over a sports game until 9pm on weekdays and 8pm on weekends. After these times the residual noise levels are lower and noise from the MUGA would be more prominent at the NSRs. It is understood the applicant was originally seeking use of the development until 10pm. The NIA states that this would be possible with mitigation in place such as acoustic fencing but the applicant has advised the development will now not be used beyond 9pm on weekdays and 8pm on weekends in view of the assessment results.
35. Maximum individual noise events have also been calculated and are shown in Table 4. The results indicate that impulsive noise events arising from hockey balls impacting on goal back boards and a referee's whistle would exceed the existing noise maxima by approximately 3-6db and so may be audible at the NSRs. It is stated that noise from hockey balls hitting the goal back boards could be mitigated by lining the backboards with a resilient rubber layer of the type supplied by sports surfacing manufacturers. Other more generic mitigation measures are also proposed in Section 12.5 to minimise noise impact in the design of the pitch and selection of materials and products in accordance with the Sport England Guidance.
36. This leaves only impulsive noise from a referee's whistle exceeding the existing noise maxima by approximately 3-6 db. IEMA's guidelines for environmental noise

impact assessment state that a change of 3 dB(A) is the minimum perceptible under normal conditions. Residents at the NSRs are therefore likely to notice the impulsive noise from a referee's whistle but I do not consider this to be at a level that would cause an unreasonable impact.

37. In view of the above, I have no grounds for objection and so would recommend approval subject to the conditions to ensure the proposed hours of use and noise mitigation outlined in the report are adhered to. I would also recommend a condition requiring provision of a noise management plan for the facility in view of the proximity of the NSRs. The facility is being opened up to the community and some users may act in an unreasonable manner resulting in higher noise levels and the Sport England Guidance states that a management/monitoring plan could effectively respond to specific incidents. Similarly, the restriction of use to authorised groups could be appropriate in many situations.
38. The above conditions form Conditions 5, 6, 7, 12 and 15. It would also be prudent to prohibit any external speaker or public address system, as Condition 13 does.
39. Expanding on this, it is worth noting that the pitch does not conform to full standards that would allow 11 on 11 play in hockey or football or full competition play. As such, the numbers of players will generally be lower than would otherwise be expected of such an activity. Where it is proposed to be used for tennis, it would, as an absolute maximum, result in a similar number of players if all courts were being used.
40. The construction of the proposal is likely to generate noise but it is not unreasonable in the residential context. Hours of construction are conditioned at Condition 10.

#### Light pollution

41. The MUGA pitch will have six x 12m high lighting columns spaced equally along the long sides of the pitch. The lighting level is 350 lux. The supporting documentation refers to the height of the columns and the lighting levels are the minimum standard to meet England Hockey and The Federation International de Hockey.
42. The lighting is proposed to be used until 9pm on weekdays and 8pm on weekends, which will result in light glare from surrounding residential properties, mostly in winter months. The application was supported by a Lighting Strategy and Lighting Plan (dated February 2019 by Paul Hawkins Development) and this was reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer. Comments follow in paragraphs 43 and 44.
43. The proposed lighting system utilises 20 x Philips MVP 507 Optivision luminaires with 2Kw lamps. These are reportedly 'state of the art' and have been designed specifically to illuminate the playing area efficiently whilst minimising light spill both into neighbouring areas and upwards from the luminaire. The light spill levels away from the pitch at a height of 2m are shown in accompanying calculations and on drawing LHS02/04. These indicate that the illumination is largely confined to the playing area and falls off rapidly away from the pitch. There is no measurable illumination either onto (or beyond) the tree lines to the west and south west of the pitch, any nearby homes or roads.

44. The proposed lighting installation complies with the Institution of Lighting Engineers Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light (2005) and is the minimum required by England Hockey and The Federation international de Hockey (FIH). It is accepted, subject to Condition 11 requiring installation to be in accordance with the submitted details.
45. Expanding on this, it is also worth noting that if the light columns were lowered below 12m, it would lead to increased upwards light spillage because of the need to project the light outwards rather than downwards. It would also result in glare for players,
46. Whilst the lighting will be visible in the backdrop of the school and its edge of settlement location, the existing vegetation provides some screening and even then, the existence of the lights in the wider domain is not unreasonable. Furthermore, the visual impacts will generally only be confined to the winter months. During daylight saving, the lighting will be used for only a limited period in the evening, if at all at the height of summer.
47. Accordingly, subject to Condition 12, there are no objections on light spillage grounds and there is no specific opposition to the lights being in use until 9pm. The condition is specific in that it requires that the lights be controlled by a timer, that access be secure so that it cannot be tampered with and that they are off by 9pm, which means that play will cease prior to 9pm.

#### Dust pollution

48. The construction of the proposal may give rise to some dust generation but there is a relatively large separation distance to neighbouring properties. Condition 4 requires the submission of a Construction Management Plan to address any potential issues, including with school pupils.

#### **Access and Movement**

49. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards. In this case, the MUGA pitch supplements the existing school facilities and the parking generation rate is applied per number of staff. Alternatively, with its availability for community use, the generation rate could also be applied at a rate of 20 spaces per pitch.
50. Use of the MUGA during school hours is unlikely to generate any perceptible increase in traffic movement during peak hour periods. It is feasible that additional coaches will access the site during competition but the impact is minimal and not unreasonable.
51. It will allow for increased after school usage by students, This would have the benefit of reducing peak traffic movements during the afternoon pick up time as more students will remain on the campus after hours and be picked up later in the afternoon. There would also be more parking spaces available in the existing car park.
52. The facility is also intended for use for private hire by members of the public up to 9pm. With its undersized dimensions not allowing for a full game of hockey or

football, there is likely to be no more than 25-35 additional people attending the school, when accounting for players, officials and spectators and allowing for overlap between games. Any perceived increase in traffic movements from the use of the facility by coaches and players will be comfortably accommodated within the existing 89 car spaces and the movements will be outside of school hours and almost entirely outside of peak hour when traffic flows are lower. Cycling facilities are available, which are likely to be used given the limited need for the equipment required for football activities.

53. The existing parking facilities are sufficient to account for the increase in movements and it is unlikely that on-street parking will be affected, particularly given the walking distances to the pitch at the southern end of the school. In this regard, no objection is raised, particularly as Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection.

### **Open Space**

54. Policy TB08 of the MDD Local Plan states that there should be no loss of open space, sporting or recreational facilities and that new facilities should be provided on site. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless

- a) *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

55. The existing playing field is used for undersized hockey pitches and summer sports like athletics and rounders. Four hard tennis courts are located in the south east corner. The proposed fenced synthetic sport pitch with sports lighting will be designed primarily for hockey training and play. Other sports may be possible to be delivered on in within the curriculum.

56. The proposal includes six tennis courts within the MUGA, which is a net increase of two courts. However, the enlarged MUGA within the playing field prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). On this basis, Sport England were consulted.

57. The application relates to the provision of a new indoor/outdoor sports facility or facilities on the existing playing field and is to be considered against exception 5 of the above policy, which states:

*'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.'*

58. Sport England note that the non-conforming size of the pitch is disappointing particularly given it does not address a shortfall of pitches in the area. However, it is not opposed on these grounds. To address this, Condition 15 requires a Community Use Agreement, which will allow for more broader use of the pitch as a community facility and to provide training facilities for teams.
16. Sport England, along with the Football Association and England Hockey raise no objection as it is considered to meet exception 5 (E5) of the above policy. This is subject to Condition 5 (Management and Maintenance Scheme) and Condition 15 (Community Use Agreement).

### **Accessibility**

59. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including for aged persons, children and the disabled. The pitch will be installed at existing ground level, a DDA complaint path will connect with the school and there are blue badge spaces in the existing car park. This ensures that the proposal achieves full accessibility.

### **Flooding and Drainage**

60. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and Policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow.
61. The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1 and there is no increase in the vulnerability of the use. As it is replacing a four existing hard court tennis courts, the loss of soft landscaping is less than 2000m<sup>2</sup>. It will also be fully permeable and comprise inbuilt SuDS drainage as part of the new playing surface, thereby implying negligible impacts in terms of runoff. Subject to additional details in Condition 3, there is no objection in terms of Policies CC09 and CC10.

### **Landscaping and Trees**

62. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.
63. The site is located within the settlement boundary but adjacent to the countryside which is south of the site. The southern boundary of the school with the countryside is defined by a TPO woodland and tree group (1564/2017) which are significant landscape features.
64. The Council's Trees Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection. The pitch is oriented within the site so as not to impact on the adjacent TPO trees, whether in terms of existing roots or canopy. This is confirmed by the information provided within the Arboricultural Method Statement dated 5 March 2019 and associated Tree Protection Plan (Arbtech TTP 02).

## Ecology

65. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
66. Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the proposal in terms of any perceived impact upon protected species from light spill and noise disturbance. They note that the site comprises an amenity grassland sports pitch, bound by hedgerows/lines of trees and a block of broadleaved woodland along the north-eastern and western boundary. The woodland is a priority habitat as per the NPPF as are the hedgerows.
67. A bat survey report (prepared by Arbtech Ltd and dated 09 January 19) has been submitted with the application. The report details the results of a day time inspection and a survey of nearby trees for their potential to host roosting bats. The report states that *'The tree lines on site provide excellent foraging and commuting habitat for bats. Tree T1 has suitable roosting features'* and that *'the new floodlighting will have no impact on T1. The proposed lighting will not impact bat commuting and foraging as this will only be used during the winter months when bats are hibernating.'*
68. The assessment that the "tree lines on site provide excellent foraging and commuting habitat for bats" is likely to be correct., and, if the proposed lighting is only to be used during the winter then the statement that "The proposed lighting will not impact bat commuting and foraging as this will only be used during the winter months when bats are hibernating" would also be correct.
69. However, the Design and Access Statement does not rule this out, noting that the floodlights will not be used after 10:00pm. It notes further that *'there is no illumination of the tree line to the west of the pitch, a maximum of 20 lux to the tree group south of the pitch and a maximum of 10 lux to the tree and hedgeline to the north-east of the pitch.'* This appears to differ from the Illuminance Plan (plan LHS02/04) which shows lux levels of up to 368 Lux along the north eastern boundary and up to 73 along the south.
70. These are very high light levels and are likely to stop bats commuting along these routes. This is likely to occur even if light levels were the lower figures quoted in the Design and Access Statement. Bats emerge from their roosts and start foraging at dusk (approximately 30 minutes after sunset). Impacts on bats can therefore be reduced by restricting the times at which lights can be switched on. During winter (November to March) bats are usually hibernating, so are unlikely to be affected by lighting.
71. As such, unless the lights are not used during the summer months, there is a risk that the proposals would affect commuting and foraging bats. It is therefore recommended that a condition is set to ensure that the lights are turned off by the following times and that the pitches are not used before dawn:
- March: 18.30 GMT/19.30 BST
  - April: 20.30 BST
  - May: 21.15 BST

- June: 21.45 BST
- July: 21.30 BST
- August: 20.45 BST
- September 19.45BST
- October 18.45 BST/ 17:15 GMT

72. The Council's Ecology Officer notes that the proposal is unlikely to affect other protected species such as badgers, reptiles or amphibians as the habitat to be affected (amenity grassland) are unlikely to be used by these species. On this basis, and when subject to Condition 12 controlling the time of the lighting, there are no objections on ecology grounds.

**Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area**

73. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy states that where development is likely to have an effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA), it is required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered. There are no SPA related implications associated with the proposal.

**Waste**

74. The development complements existing school facilities and does not represent any adverse increase in waste generation. Any refuse can be disposed of using existing facilities. As such, no objection is raised.

**Contamination**

75. There is no known contamination of the site.

**Community Infrastructure Levy**

76. The application is not liable for CIL payments.

**CONCLUSION**

The proposal is considered to be acceptable, including in terms of its community use during the evening period (and the associated impacts of light and noise pollution upon surrounding residents. Approval is recommended although it remains subject to conditions relating to the hours of use of the MUGA and of the lighting and ongoing management and use.

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