

Agenda Item 63.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
203456	5 April 2021	Woodley	Coronation

Applicant	Mr John O'Keeffe
Site Address	Waingels College, Waingels Road, Woodley RG5 4RF
Proposal	Full planning application for the proposed construction of a 3G synthetic pitch consisting of sports fencing, LED floodlights, storage container, spectator area and pedestrian access
Type	Full
Officer	Simon Taylor
Reason for determination by committee	Major application (>1 ha)

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday 10 March 2021
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY

Waingels College is a co-educational comprehensive secondary academy school for 1,300 students on Waingels Road on the north eastern edge of Woodley. The school was redeveloped following the grant of planning permission F/2008/1844.

The proposal seeks to install a full size (100m x 64m) artificial grass football pitch (AGP) for all weather use that is available for use during school hours as well as after-hours community use up to 10pm on weekdays, 9pm on Saturdays and 6pm on Sundays and bank holidays. It includes six x 15m high floodlights, 4.5m high perimeter fencing, a storage unit, access paths and a 2.5m high bund to its eastern end. The existing changing facilities and car park within the school campus will be used.

A similar multi-use games area (MUGA) for 11-a-side football was approved to the south west closer to the school buildings (planning application 173584) but there is no longer any intention to construct this facility and the permission expires 11 April 2021. A smaller floodlit MUGA immediately to its east with the equivalent size of a tennis court and 6 x 10m high floodlights (planning application 163217) was constructed in 2017. This MUGA is limited by condition for use until 10pm.

The pitch and the wider playing fields are within designated countryside but there is a collection of residential properties opposite the pitch in Waingels Road and residential development within the development limits adjoining the western boundary of the school in Copse Mead and Denmark Avenue.

Concerns have been raised by Charvil and Woodley Parish Councils and from two residents in Waingels Road. The primary issues are light spill, noise disturbance, ecological harm to bats and birds, traffic and safety impacts and increased drainage upon the limited local network.

The application has been reviewed by internal and external consultees, including Sport England. There is no in principle objection to the proposal, subject to conditions relating to the use of the facility, including the preparation of a Management and Maintenance Scheme and Community Use Agreement (Conditions 10-11). Additional landscaping and grassland habitat is required as a biodiversity net gain in Condition 9. The hours of use of

the floodlights have been curtailed during the week to 9:15pm to be consistent with the 2017 approval (Condition 14) as well as to protect foraging and commuting bats.

PLANNING STATUS

- Countryside
- Opposite Ancient Woodland (TPO protected)
- Opposite Local Wildlife Site (Norris' Copse Bird Sanctuary)
- Bat consultation zone
- Flood Zone 1
- Nitrate vulnerable zone (groundwater)
- Heathrow Aerodrome wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Sand and gravel extraction consultation zone
- Radon affected area
- Landfill gas consultation area
- WBC owned land
- Non-classified road
- Adopted highway

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

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 drawing numbered MCA-MUK2392-08 Rev C, dated 7 October 2020 and received by the local planning authority on 6 January 2021, and MCA-MUK2392-42 Rev A, dated 1 February 2020 and received 25 February 2021 and the following plans all received on 11 December 2021 and numbered:

- MCA-MUK2392-02 Rev F, MCA-MUK2392-04 Rev F, MCA-MUK2392-06 and MCA-MUK2392-07 Rev E, all dated 6 October 2020
- MCA-MUK2392-09 Rev C, MCA-MUK2392-10, MCA-MUK2392-11, MCA-MUK2392-16 Rev A, MCA-MUK2392-18, MCA-MUK2392-19, MCA-MUK2392-20, MCA-MUK2392-22, MCA-MUK2392-23, MCA-MUK2392-24, MCA-MUK2392-25 and MCA-MUK2392-26 Rev A, all dated 7 October 2020
- MCA-MUK2392-41 Rev F, dated 9 October 2020
- 2091/E01, Rev P1, dated 1 March 2021 and 2091/E02, dated 25 November 2020
- 710, Rev A, dated 10 December 2020

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. Written Scheme of Investigation

Prior to the commencement of the development, hereby approved, a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase) in the form of a written scheme of investigation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The site is within an area of archaeological potential, and further investigation is required to allow preservation and recording of any archaeological features or artefacts before disturbance by the development.

Relevant policies: NPPF Section 16, Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.

4. Tree Protection Details

No development or any other operation associated with this planning permission shall commence on site until an updated Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The updated details shall outline the drainage connection method in the north east of the site onto Waingels Road with particular regard to the protection of the adjacent Oak tree growing in the verge of Waingels Road.

No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the plan numbered 701, Rev A, dated October 2020 and the details in Section 4 of the Arboricultural Survey And Method Statement (ref: JSL3812_770) prepared by RPS Group and dated November 2020 and as amended by the updated details in this condition, hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme.

No operations (including any tree felling or pruning, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved until the tree protection works and fencing has been installed in accordance with the approved details.

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.

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.

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

5. Construction of Temporary Access

Prior to the commencement of the development, hereby approved, the temporary access to Waingels Road shall be constructed to a width of 5.5m (in accordance with the approved drawing numbered MCA-MUK2392-42) and surfaced with a permeable and bonded material across the entire width of the access for a distance of 10m from the carriageway edge.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected unless set back a distance of at least 10m from the highway boundary and so as to open away from the highway

Reason: To ensure adequate and accessible access into the site for vehicles, plant and deliveries associated with the development, to avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway in the interests of highway safety and convenience and to ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.

6. Visibility Splay Provision

Prior to the commencement of the development, hereby approved, the temporary construction vehicular access shall have been formed and provided with visibility splays shown on the approved drawing number MCA-MUK2392-42 Rev A. The land within the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m in height and maintained clear of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

7. Discovery of Unexpected Contamination

If contamination is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork and construction, the discovery shall be reported as soon as possible to the local planning authority. A full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out and if found to be necessary, a Remediation Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the recommencement of any further works on the site. Should no evidence of contamination be found during the development, a statement to that effect shall be submitted to the local planning authority prior to the first use of the development.

If necessary, works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Remediation Method Statement and a final Validation Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to first use.

Reason: To protect those involved in the construction phase and end users from contaminated land.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 and Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

8. Materials

The materials used in the construction of this development, hereby approved, shall match those as shown on the approved drawings and application form 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.

9. Soft Landscaping, Grassland and Tree Details

Prior to the first use of the development, hereby approved, a scheme of soft landscaping and tree planting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted and seeding mix or grassland habitat in and around the bund and is intended to serve as compensatory, replacement and enhancement of tree coverage, provide screening of the development (including the bund) and to act as net biodiversity gain.

Planting and seeding shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first use of the pitch and following removal of the temporary access hereby approved. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity and to serve as a net biodiversity gain for the site.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB21 and TB23.

10. Management and Maintenance Plan

Prior to the first use of the development, hereby approved, a Management and Maintenance Plan for the facility including management responsibilities, a 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 shall include measures to ensure the replacement of the Artificial Grass Pitch within the manufacturer's specified period. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the Artificial Grass Pitch.

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

Relevant policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

11. Community Use Agreement

Within 9 months of the date of this permission, a Community Use Agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The agreement shall apply to the pitch, changing accommodation and car parking and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities 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 sports facility and to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport

Relevant policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

12. Removal of Temporary Access

Within one month of the completion of this development, hereby approved, the temporary access to Waingels Road (constructed in accordance with the approved drawing numbered MCA-MUK2392-42) and including the access road, bonded entrance and dropped kerb, shall be removed, stopped up and abandoned, and the footway and/or verge crossings re-instated within one month of the completion of this development in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.

13. Compliance with Noise Management Plan

The future use of the development, including the pitch, floodlights and change rooms, shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the Noise Management Plan (v1, dated 1 March 2021) and Code of Conduct, received by the local planning authority on 25 February 2021.

Reason: To protect the occupiers of nearby premises from unreasonable noise levels.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

14. Hours of Use

The development, hereby permitted, inclusive of the floodlighting shall not be used other than between the hours of 8am and 9:15pm Monday to Saturday and 10am and 7pm on Sundays. No use is permitted on Bank Holidays. Lighting is to be operated in accordance with Condition 15.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

15. Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Lighting

The floodlights, bollard lighting and all other associated elements, hereby approved, shall be installed, maintained and illuminated only in accordance with the approved details and the following:

- a) the Philips leaflet titled OptiVision LED gen3 – Smart area and recreational sports lighting), dated 8 August 2019, using LO lanterns only
- b) drawing numbered MCA-MUK2392-12 Rev E, dated 9 October 2020
- c) Guidance Note 01/20 (Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light),
- a) the details headed ‘Floodlight Curfew Timer’, submitted to the local planning authority on 26 February 2021 and consisting of a Philips Dynalite BDDC120 Dali ballast controller

Reason: To ensure an appropriate lighting level for the semi-rural setting and to minimise the light spill out of the target area and reduce the impact on light sensitive protected species.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23.

16. Amplified Sound

No sound amplifying equipment shall be installed within the pitch or its surrounds.

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

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

17. Site Access via Denmark Avenue

The school gate from Denmark Avenue is to remain locked except between the hours of 7am and 5pm on days when the school is open.

Reason: To deter the parking of vehicles outside of the school grounds, manage parking and protect the amenities of local residents.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06 and CC07.

18. Only One Scheme to be Implemented

The development to which this planning permission relates shall not be implemented if any part of the development for which planning permission was granted in planning application reference 173584 is commenced.

Reason: To avoid the net loss of sporting facilities and cumulative impacts associated with additional vehicle movements, parking demand, noise disturbance and light spillage.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06 and CC07.

19. Drainage Maintenance

The drainage for the AGP, hereby permitted, shall be implemented and maintained in full accordance with the drawing numbered 2091/E02 Rev P1, dated 1 March 2021 and the Drainage/SuDS Management and Maintenance Plan, including all agreed terms and conditions, for the life of the development.

Reason: To ensure the continued operation and maintenance of drainage features serving the site and avoid flooding.

Relevant policies: NPPF Section 15, Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

Informatives

1. Community Use Agreement

Guidance on preparing Community Use Agreements is available from the Sport England website at <http://www.sportengland.org/planningapplications/>.

2. Access Construction

The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.

3. Mud on the Road

Adequate precautions such as wheel washing shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Discussion

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of providing additional plans. The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

PLANNING HISTORY		
App Number	Proposal	Decision
42420	One replacement and five temporary classrooms	Approved 23 May 1994
44409	Garage for storage of scout equipment	Approved 16 June 1995
44577	Extension to sports block to form drama studio, weights room and equipment storage	Approved 7 August 1995
FP/1995/4056	Drama and dance studio	Refused 19 January 1996
F/1997/64927	First floor extension	Approved 18 March 1997
F/1997/66037	Conversion of flat roofs to pitched roofs	Approved 18 September 1997
FP/97/6548	First floor extension to sixth form	Approved 12 November 1997
FP/97/6708	Conversion of flat roofs to pitched roofs	Refused 25 September 1997
FP/97/6708/A	Music and boiler room	Approved 9 January 1998
F/1998/67833	New classroom building	Approved 3 August 1998
F/1998/67875	Conversion of flat roofs to pitched roofs	Approved 13 August 1998
F/1998/68280	Single storey extension for storage area	Approved 26 November 1998
FP/98/7754	Conversion of flat roofs to pitched roofs	Refused 20 August 1998
FP/98/7852	Double classroom	Approved 19 August 1998
FP/98/7754/A	Conversion of flat roofs to pitched roofs	Approved 19 August 1998
F/2000/1615	Portable double classroom	Approved 19 July 2000
FP/2000/0941	Single storey pitched roof classroom block	Approved 12 September 2000
F/2000/2639	Six new classrooms and support accommodation to hall	Approved 17 January 2000
F/2004/3593	First floor extension for teaching facility with disabled access	Approved 7 February 2005
F/2005/5292	Two storey modular teaching block	Approved 22 September 2005
F/2005/6566	Multi use games area with artificial grass	Approved 8 February 2006
F/2008/1844	Redevelopment of Waingels College for new secondary school academic	Approved 4 December 2008

	floorspace comprising four new two storey buildings and retention and refurbishment of five existing single and two storey buildings, new vehicular access from Waingels Road	
F/2011/0574	Single storey extension to the existing sports block for a PE classroom and associated storage	Approved 4 May 2011
160062	Change of use from dwelling (C3) to nursery (D1) plus single storey side and rear extension to dwelling	Approved 25 May 2016
163217	Erection of 6no floodlighting columns at the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	Approved 16 January 2017
173584	Demolition of existing store and new multi-use games area with floodlights	Approved 11 April 2018
203631	Change of use from ancillary store building to 2no. residential apartments	Approved 26 February 2021

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Site Area	School campus measures 10.8 hectares with sports fields and open space making up approximately 7.6 hectares.
Previous land use(s)	Class D1 school campus with playing fields and car parking.
Number of jobs created/lost	Management of the facility is required but no actual job creation has been specified.
Existing parking spaces	Two separate car parks with a total of 178 spaces.
Proposed parking spaces	No change.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Highways	No objection, subject to Conditions 5, 6 and 12 relating to the temporary access, visibility splays, surfacing of the access and its removal upon completion.
WBC Environmental Health	No objection, Noise will be noticeable on occasions but not intrusive and there will not be any light glare or spill onto nearby residential properties. Conditions 13 and 14 relate to compliance with the Noise Management Plan and the hours of operation of the pitch and lighting.
WBC Ecology	No objection is raised, subject to the control of hours of operation of the lighting (Condition 14) to ensure no unacceptably adverse harm to bats. Additional landscaping is also required in Condition 9 to ensure a net gain of biodiversity.
WBC Drainage	No objection on drainage and flooding grounds.
WBC Trees and Landscaping	No objection, subject to compensatory replacement planting (Condition 9) and additional details and compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement (Condition 4).
WBC Education	No comments received.
WBC Sports Development	
Sport England	The application has been the subject of pre application discussions and a strategic need for the facility has been identified. No objection is raised (the FA and Football Foundation are supportive of the application), subject to Conditions 10 and 11 requiring a Management

	and Maintenance Scheme and Community Use Agreement respectively.
Thames Water	No objection in terms of foul and surface water disposal or water provision.
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection, subject to a programme of archaeological work in Condition 3 as finds of Roman date have been made to the northeast and the Roman road from Henley to Silchester runs to the north.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Woodley Town Council	<p>Concerns are raised on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will exacerbate flooding problems in Waingels Road and SuDS features will be required. <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal will result in additional impermeable surfaces but the drainage strategy is to the satisfaction of the Council's Drainage Officer, as noted in paragraphs 69-72.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased traffic problems in Waingels Road <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The Council's Highways Officer does not raise objection with the likely increase in traffic, as outlined in paragraphs 65-66.</p>
Charvil Parish Council	<p>Concerns are raised on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hours should be reduced to 8am-9pm (to 6pm on weekends) to minimise noise disturbance <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to Condition 14, which outlines a reduction in the proposed hours of use of the floodlights to 9:15pm Monday to Saturday. It is considered unnecessary to reduce the hours on Saturday to 6pm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floodlights should not be allowed so close to ancient woodland <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The location of the floodlights is acceptable in terms of its relationship with the ancient woodland but it is subject to limitations on use on ecological grounds, as outlined in Condition 14. See paragraphs 82-84.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved cycling infrastructure from Charvil should be a condition of consent <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The existing cycling infrastructure is satisfactory and no off site works are considered necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased traffic on a local road and the speed limit should be lowered to 30mph <p><u>Officer comment:</u> This request is outside the scope of this application and is considered unnecessary given the Council's Highways Officer does not raise objection on these grounds.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional access poses a pedestrian safety issue <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The additional access is for construction purposes only and is not intended for pedestrian access onto the site. It will be removed at the conclusion of the development works and it is not envisaged that it poses an unacceptable short or medium term pedestrian risk.</p>
Ward Members	No comments received.
Neighbour Comments	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 6 January to 16 February 2021 and a site notice installed from 26 January 2021. Submissions were received from the following properties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Blackberries, Waingels Road, Lands End, Twyford RG10 0UA 2) Acorns, Waingels Road, Lands End, Twyford RG10 0UA <p>The submissions raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this location, it will impact upon houses and should be located behind buildings <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Subject to appropriate controls on hours of use, the proposal has an acceptable amenity outcome and there is no specific need for its relocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is at high risk of surface flooding and drainage to the sewer will lead to increased flooding because of an existing lack of capacity <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal includes an increase in impermeable surfaces and a drainage strategy proposes controlled release of surface water. There are no watercourses close to the pitch. The nearest storm water drains are located within Waingels Road, adjacent to the development. This drainage is owned and maintained by Wokingham Borough Council who have been consulted regarding the proposals and have accepted in principle the point of connection as shown on the adjacent plan. This is satisfactory, as detailed in paragraphs 69-72.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased light pollution • Increased noise pollution, including swearing <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The neighbour amenity impacts are considered to be acceptable, as noted in paragraphs 41-59 and when subject to further details in Conditions 11, 13, 14 and 15.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bund is of inadequate height to achieve any substantive change to noise levels <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The bund has a dual function in noise minimisation and screening of the court. Whilst not completely eliminating any impacts, it serves a purpose and is acceptable. Any increase in height</p>

	<p>above that proposed is likely to result in adverse impacts to the character of the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lights will harm birds and bats • A bat survey should have been submitted <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Ecological considerations are detailed in paragraphs 85-91 and warrant the imposition of Conditions 9 and 14 to protect against any unacceptably adverse harm to protected species. This assessment is on the basis of an ecology report not being submitted with the application although this was not a statutory requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is this development exempt from limits on lighting in the countryside • Any approval should be subject to the bund being raised to 5m and additional tree planting <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Condition 9 requires additional landscaping details prior to the first use of the development and this will include seeding to the bund and tree planting. There is no justifiable reason to increase the height of the bund, particularly when it would result in a foreign element in the countryside.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic problems and safety risks for pedestrians in Waingels Road, including from the new access <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The Council's Highways Officer does not raise objection with the likely increase in traffic, as outlined in paragraphs 65-66. The additional access is for construction purposes only and is not intended for pedestrian access onto the site. It will be removed at the conclusion of the development works and it is not envisaged that it poses an unacceptable short or medium term pedestrian risk.</p>
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APPLICANTS POINTS

- The proposal would provide the College with an all-weather facility in line with the existing use of the land that will be available seven days a week and throughout the entire year (irrespective of weather conditions), enabling an intensification of sporting uses and increased access to a wider range of participants.
- The proposed AGP would be available for use by partner organisations and community groups organised by the applicant.
- The proposed AGP would make a significant contribution towards addressing the unmet demand for modern football facilities and would allow users of the site including partner football clubs to focus on training in one venue and provide access during peak community use periods thereby gaining greater control over facility availability and pricing.
- The proposal would meet the need identified as being required within the area by the Football Association (FA).

- The proposed AGP would contribute to the achieving The Football Association's National Game Strategy and be supported by a robust sustainable business plan, satisfying training needs and competitive matches.
- The proposed development would not result in an unacceptable impact upon the character, appearance or visual amenity of the surrounding area or have a detrimental effect on the private amenity of the adjoining residents due to an increase in noise or light pollution.
- The hours of use proposed for this facility are in line with those of other similar facilities during the week and below those of similar facilities at weekends. Therefore, given the sites current use and the proposed mitigation measures introduced it is not envisaged that the proposal will impact on existing properties.
- The proposed site will be partially screened by the existing tree/hedge screening and the existing access to/from the site will not be affected by the proposal.
- The proposal provides adequate on-site parking and necessary traffic management to meet the needs of the development. Traffic movement to and from the proposed Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) would be such that it would not overlap or create undue congestion within the surrounding vicinity of the application site and therefore not result in an increase in demand for off-street parking or have a detrimental impact on the surrounding public highway network.
- The proposed Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) will replace existing grass pitch provision with better quality provision, thereby providing access to greater quantity of provision in a suitable location and supported by effective and appropriate management arrangements; whilst implementing best practice construction techniques to minimise waste and pollution; in accordance with Achieving Sustainable Development of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- In accordance with Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) – Promoting Healthy Communities. The proposal would give rise to a considerable benefit to the wider community through the provision of an enhanced playing facility available throughout the whole year.
- In accordance with Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change. The proposal would ensure that surface water run-off is effectively managed and does not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- In accordance with Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The proposal would ensure that the performance of the proposed floodlighting system complies with the appropriate Environmental Zone for its location and that the noise emission created by use of the development is designed to be kept within acceptable levels. Neighbouring residents would therefore not be adversely affected by this proposal and as such it would not result in an unacceptable impact to any residential amenity.
- The proposal satisfies Sport England's Exception policy E5 – The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would

be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the natural turf pitch.

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
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
	CP11	Proposals outside Development Limits
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	Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary
	SPD	Planning Document
	WDS	Woodley Design Statement
	OSRS	Wokingham Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy 2013

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Proposal

- The proposal involves the following works:
 - Construction of an uncovered artificial grass pitch (AGP) in the north eastern corner of the existing playing fields, measuring 106m x 70m, comprising of a sand and rubber infill base and including goal storage areas and spectator area with 2.6m high storage container
 - Erection of 1.2m-4.5m high fencing, with rebound fencing to the lower 1.2m, around the perimeter of the pitch and spectator areas
 - A total of six x 15m high floodlights along the northern and southern sides of the pitch
 - Construction of a new, temporary access on Waingels Road to the north east of the existing school buildings to allow for separated construction access
 - Construction of a 2.5m high earth bund (from excavated topsoil) adjacent to the eastern corner of the AGP
 - Provision of a 2.5m wide path, with bollard lighting, connecting with the main area of the school campus, including the car park and changing rooms

2. The hours of use are nominated as from 8am-10pm on weekdays, 8am-9pm on Saturday and 9am-6pm on Sundays and bank holidays.
3. The facility is intended for use by the school during school hours and community use after hours, with use of the existing school car park and changing facilities. It is to be installed and maintained by Wokingham Borough Council in conjunction with Waingels Academies Trust who have a 125 year lease agreement.
4. The application has been the subject of pre application discussions with Sport England and is part funded through the Football Association foundation.

Description of Site and Surrounds

5. The school campus occupies 10.8 hectares of land on the northern side of Waingels Road on the north eastern outskirts of Woodley. It includes a variety of two storey school buildings and two main car parks concentrated at the southern end of the site with 7.5 hectares of playing fields and other sports facilities at the northern end. The pitch is within designated countryside at the north eastern end of the playing fields, with the settlement edge being the school buildings to the south. There is a fall of approximately 0.5m across the pitch.
6. Residential development within development limits backs onto the school campus along the western boundary with more detached residential development on larger plots within the countryside lining the southern side of Waingels Road to the south. The Norris' Copse Bird Sanctuary, Ashenbury Park, Loddon Valley Gravel Pits adjoin to the south and these serve as a local wildlife site, ancient woodland, public open space and Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Sonning Golf Club adjoins to the north, separated by the main GWR rail line.

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.

Development within the countryside

8. The AGP is part of the wider school campus and is located at the north eastern end of the existing playing fields. Although the school buildings are within the settlement limits, the site for the pitch is within designated countryside. Development is not normally permitted by Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, unless it comprises a sustainable rural or recreational enterprise, does not lead to excessive expansion away from the original building and is contained within a building suitable for conversion.

9. The AGP would be viewed as a recreational facility, particularly when it is open for after-hours community use. Furthermore, because it remains within the confines of the school campus and is an open air structure, it does not represent excessive encroachment away from the existing buildings. Appropriate mitigation, through additional landscaping is also proposed and enhanced by condition whereby there is a net improvement in the environment. As a result, the proposal accords with Policy CP11.

Site sustainability

10. Policies CP1, CP6, and CP11 of the Core Strategy aim to ensure that development is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. In this case, the pitch is intended for the benefit of the school population but also for community use. It does not involve an increase in staff or student numbers and involves the partial replacement of existing sports facilities such that it is not envisaged to result in any appreciable increase in vehicle movements associated with the school use of the facility and meets the sustainability intent of the NPPF and the Core Strategy.
11. For after-hours use, the site is well served by public transport well into the evening (the last service to Reading is at midnight), with a bus stop 500m to the south in Tippings Lane providing regular services on route 14 between Woodley and Reading. It is also easily accessed by bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is satisfactory.

Loss of existing sporting facilities

12. 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 playing fields should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
13. The proposal involves the loss of 1 hectare of playing fields which is currently used for football and a running track. The existing cricket field will be maintained as will existing tennis courts, a MUGA hockey pitch and rounders and there remains sufficient space to the west of the pitch for a reconfigured grass football pitch.
14. Sport England were consulted on the proposal and their assessment is based on whether the development meets one or more of five specific criteria. In this case, criterion five notes that '*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.*'
15. The application has been the subject of previous discussions with Sport England and the Football Association. The site is identified in the Local Facilities Football Plan for a 3G AGP and the current Playing Pitch Strategy identifies a need for 3G AGPs in this area. Furthermore, the Football Association and Football Foundation are

supportive of the development, the former contributing to funding its delivery. It has therefore been identified that there is a strategic need.

16. The loss of playing surfaces is offset by a net increase in the total area of usable playing fields with the proposed pitch extending further to the north east into an area not currently used for sporting activities. It will open up of facilities for community use and allow for all weather and night time use and a more durable surface, allowing for an increase in usage by the broader community. It also allows for adaptable use by different sized football games, with a dividing net allowing for two consecutive, half sized games or up to a total of four games at once.
17. With the provision of all-weather facilities, proposed community use (to be secured in Condition 11) and subject to a maintenance plan (Condition 12), the proposal represents an overall benefit in terms of sporting and community based facilities, and no objection is raised.

Acceptability of community use

18. The community use of the facility is conditional upon the funding from the Football Association.
19. The Council's *Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy 2013* 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.*' The proposal is supportive of this.
20. There are other underutilised floodlit facilities within 3 miles of Woodley Town Centre, including within the school campus itself. However, the facility is a full sized football pitch and the primary aim of the application is to provide additional facilities for students. 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.

Previous planning permissions

21. There is an existing multi use games area (MUGA) pitch to the south west of the proposed site. It was approved in 2016 (planning ref: 163217) and includes six x 10m high floodlights. At 60m x 35m, it is much smaller than the subject proposal and is currently used for hockey. The subject application would not affect this pitch.
22. Another MUGA was approved to the west of the 2016 pitch (application ref: 173584). It involved a 101m x 60m all-weather pitch, which is largely identical in dimensions to the subject application. Eight x 15.5m high floodlights were also proposed. There is no intention for this permission to be enacted, with the expiry date for implementation being 11 April 2021. In this respect and subject to a consideration of the differing amenity, ecological and character implications, there is a degree of precedent for such a scheme within the playing fields. As they are in different areas of the campus, Condition 18 protects against the implementation of two schemes.

Character of the Area

23. 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. Paragraph 170(b) of the NPPF requires that planning applications enhance the natural and local environment by *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*
24. RD1 of the Borough Design Guide requires that new development should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute to the character and biodiversity of the area. RD9 requires that development on the settlement edge create an edge and incorporate soft landscaping to integrate to the rural setting. NR8 requires high quality and simple materials and components. R12 states that boundary treatments contribute positively to the character of the area.
25. The pitch and all other elements will be located wholly within the countryside, which also encompasses all of the main sports fields to the north. All of the buildings and the car park to the south and west of the pitch are located within the settlement boundary. The intent of this delineation is to limit the further encroachment of buildings on the campus and to protect the openness that the sports field delivers to the northern part of the school as well as surrounding open space and countryside.
26. The pitch will be comprise an uncovered hard paved area extending from the existing buildings and sports facilities. The playing surface will be a green 3G artificial turf with 60mm pile with silica sand and rubber and marked with blue, white, yellow and red line markings for various pitch arrangements. It will be maintained at or near natural ground level, with a slope across the site of not more than 0.5m. As a result, the pitch will be relatively consistent with the existing character of the playing fields, with no perception of its artificial nature when viewed from surrounding areas, including the rail line. The line markings will be apparent but not sufficiently contrasting to warrant concern.
27. The fencing type will be 4.5m high steel open mesh fencing containing a general 200x50mm aperture and 66x50mm aperture to the lower 1.2m to allow for balls to rebound. It lowers to 1.2m-2.0m around the spectator areas. It will be visible in views but will also be open in appearance and will continue to allow sightlines through the site. It is not out of character with other facilities within the school campus and is not dissimilar to the existing fencing for the netball/basketball court to the south west nor is it viewed as a foreign element within the edge of settlement or semi-rural location. At 4.5m in height, the proposed fencing is not of excessive height and no objections are raised.
28. The floodlights along the northern and southern (or long) sides of the court consist of six galvanized 15m high columns with a galvanised steel with a self-coloured finish with 2 no. Philips BVP527 NB/A55 luminaires to each column (12 in total) and aluminium fittings. There is no indication that the columns will be retractable. At a height of 15m, they will extend above the height of the school buildings to the south west and will be apparent in the openness of the playing fields, particularly when viewed from the rail line. However, the height is still not excessive in the context of the other pitch infrastructure, the fencing and recently installed gantries associated

with the electrification of the raised rail corridor and associated fencing and when it will be equivalent to the height of the taller Oaks lining Waingels Road, which have a canopy height of between 12m and 15m. In this context, they are acceptable.

29. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF aims to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. The light spill from the floodlights will be apparent in wider views along the elevated train line and when travelling east along Waingels Road towards Chavil. However, it is positioned in an edge of settlement location with lighting within the school campus to the south west and dwellings to the south as well as denser residential development to the west.
30. A 15m mounting height was chosen as this will result in low vertical overspill and good uniformity on the playing surface to ensure that artificial lighting is directed fully downwards towards the playing pitch surface and to avoid sky glow. The lighting will therefore be contained to the immediate area, which will retain a suitable level of darkness in this area of the rural landscape to the north. It is also time limited to 9:15pm Monday to Saturday and 7pm on Sundays by Condition 14.
31. The bund will occupy a 3000m² area of land at the north eastern end of the pitch, contoured around its perimeter. It will consist of a 1.3m earth mound on top of a 1.2m base (i.e. 2.5m overall) with a 1:3 gradient with fill obtained from the construction of the pitch. The intent of the bund is to provide a degree of screening from the east and to absorb (but not eliminate) noise transmission. Because of the minimal gradients to its banks, large flat expanse at its top, nonlinear or curved appearance around the edges of the pitch and appropriate height, it does not appear as an unacceptably foreign element in the countryside. It also serves a screening purpose and Condition 9 requires it to be suitably landscaped for biodiversity and character reasons. On these grounds, it is acceptable.
32. The associated paving includes a path linking the pitch with the school facilities to the south west as well as emergency access, spectator area, goal recesses and mowing margins, all in grey/black coloured porous asphalt. The pitch will run alongside the existing MUGA pitch to the south west and will not encroach into the playing fields more than necessary. It therefore achieves a satisfactory relationship with the character of the countryside.
33. The sports storage container is located in the spectator area on the southern side of the pitch. It will have dimensions of a height of 2.6m and length of 6.1m with a total volume of 38m³. It will consist of steel with a dark green polyester powder coating. In this location and with this type of materials and overall scale, it will not be unacceptable in the backdrop of the existing pitch and is therefore acceptable on character grounds.
34. On the basis of the above conclusions, there are no objections in terms of its relationship within the countryside or to Policies CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy and the Borough Design Guide.

Archaeology

35. Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan requires the retention of archaeological sites in situ.

36. Berkshire Archaeology were consulted and they have noted that the site is in close proximity of an area of archaeological potential. Finds of Roman date have been made to the northeast of the site and the Roman road from Henley to Silchester runs to the north. Previous archaeological assessments within the campus have concluded that, given the sites and finds noted on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record, as well as the geology favourable to finding, in particular, prehistoric evidence, there is potential for archaeology from most periods to exist on the site. However, it is also noted that in some areas of the campus, below-ground deposits may have been affected by construction or landscaping works.
37. Any archaeological features currently surviving are likely to be truncated by groundworks required for the sub-base and/or drainage for the new pitch. It is unlikely however that any archaeological features surviving will be of regional or national significance, and therefore in line with local and national planning policy, the impact can be dealt with satisfactorily via a scheme of archaeological works, as required in Condition 3.

Accessibility (incorporating The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010))

38. In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including for and the disabled.
39. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.
40. The pitch will be installed at existing ground level with level paved access from the car park (where there are 11 existing blue badge spaces) and the changing facilities (which are accessible). The proposal therefore achieves full accessibility.

Residential Amenities

41. 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. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF also aims to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of noise pollution. Paragraph 180 seeks to mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.
42. There is a collection of residential properties on large countryside plots opposite the pitch in Waingels Road, the closest being within 50m. These properties are partially screened by roadside vegetation. Denser residential development within the

development limits adjoining the western boundary of the school in Copse Mead and Denmark Avenue is 235m away, with rear gardens backing onto the existing playing fields.

Sunlight, Daylight and Sense of Enclosure

43. The pitch is enclosed by an open fencing, partly screened by roadside vegetation and is at least 50m from the nearest residential property (to the south). The bund is a modest alteration to the landform. In both cases, the development will not result in any adverse perception of dominance or loss of light.

Overlooking

44. The pitch will result in increased numbers of participants in the northern area of the playing fields for longer periods of the day. However, by virtue of the adequate separation and the proposed 2.5m high bund at its eastern end as well as existing and proposed/conditioned landscaping, there is no unreasonable sense of overlooking.

Light spill

45. Artificial lighting to the new pitch is to consist of 6 no. galvanized 15m high floodlight columns with 2 no. Philips BVP527 NB/A55 luminaires to each column, to provide the required light levels for the new pitch. Evening use is proposed until 10pm Monday to Friday, 9pm on Saturday and 6pm on Sundays and public holidays.
46. The application was supported by a Design and Access Statement which referred to the following lighting details:

The proposed Philips BVP527 NB/A55 is a down lighting luminaire that will provide the optimum sports lighting solution, ensuring that light reaches the sports surface and not into the sky or polluting the environment. Light intrusion to the closest residential properties are below the threshold for an E2 environmental zone (rural location) and as such, does not create an unacceptable impact by way of artificial lighting. Use of the artificial (flood) lighting system within permitted times will be controlled by a photocell detector and timer switch to ensure that any lighting does not adversely impact neighbouring residential amenity.

47. Guidance on obtrusive light spill is provided by Institution of Lighting Engineers. In a rural area, the guidance would be a maximum of 5 lux before curfew (11pm) and 1 lux after curfew although the latter is not relevant as the lights will not be operating at this time. The application was accompanied by an isolux contour plan demonstrating that light will be mostly confined to the pitch – at 335 lux on the pitch and 5 lux no more than 28m from the edge of the pitch, which remains well inside the site boundaries even when not accounting for tree coverage. This demonstrate that the maximum light spill to the boundaries of neighbouring properties would be less than 5 lux and therefore accord with the pre curfew guidance. At this level, the Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objection.
48. Additional lighting details about lanterns (on ecological grounds) and the ongoing management of the lighting during use such as how the timer will operate have been

submitted and this detail forms part of Condition 15. Condition 14 limits the use of the floodlights to 9:15pm Monday to Saturday and 7pm on Sunday to achieve consistency with the previous 2017 permission and to minimise harm to foraging and commuting bats. This will further improve any perceived harm. The hours vary from the 2016 permission, which is to 10pm nightly. However, the 2016 approval is of smaller size and located closer to the school buildings.

49. Bollard lights are proposed along the access path to allow safe access to and from the school buildings. Because these lights are at a low level and closer to the main school buildings, it does not present any foreseeable issue.

Noise Disturbance

50. Amongst the other existing activities of the school, including use of the outdoor sporting facilities and general lunchtime play, the use of the pitch 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
51. However, its use after school hours into the late evening, six days a week, may result in additional noise transfer to surrounding residential properties outside of normal school hours, including during holidays. Residents on Waingels Road live in a semi-rural location and would also expect some respite from the activities of the school when it is closed even despite the location alongside a busy commuter rail line,
52. The use of the pitch will be at its greatest during the football season or winter months but it is still anticipated to be used during the summer. It is also worth noting that sport is already played in this area although it is during daylight hours and by school students only. Existing tree cover, the train line to the north and distances to residential dwellings are also mitigating factors that affect the background and expected noise levels.
53. A noise impact assessment (Acoustic Consultants Ltd Ref: 8836/DO Dated February 2021) was submitted at the request of the Council's Environmental Health Officer. The assessment uses library data from nine sports sessions of football, hockey and rugby, with men, women and children on three other nearby AGPs. The measurements were used to establish likely noise output from the subject site. Monitoring also took place at the site to establish baseline noise levels and predict any changes to the existing environment.
54. The modelling assumes most noise will be emitted at a height of 1.5m below the 2.5m high bund. The report concludes that the noise impact will be below the level for community annoyance derived from WHO 1999 and the comparative assessment concludes that the impact on the existing noise climate will be approximately 0.8dB. Any change below a 3dB increase is considered to be insignificant.
55. The main conclusion is that noise from the AGP will be noticeable on occasions but will not be intrusive. This equates to the 'No Observed Adverse Effect level' which is considered acceptable and does not require further mitigation.
56. The report acknowledges that it is not possible to 'engineer out' noise from swearing and antisocial behaviour and recommends the use of a Noise Management Plan (NMP) which includes a mechanism to deal swiftly and effectively with any

complaints received. A draft Plan has already been submitted with the application and it refers to the following aspects:

- A nominated noise monitoring supervisor
- Maximum user capacity
- Pre-booked lettings under a signed lettings agreement and Code of Conduct
- Supervisor liaison
- Complaint's procedure
- Stakeholder liaison.

57. A Noise Management Plan and Code of Conduct has also been submitted which relates to the ongoing use of the facility. It deals with the potential noise sources including car movements and swearing, the noise complaints procedure and recording, the general noise policy and rules to be adhered to by players. The details are to the satisfaction of the Council's Environmental Health Officer and this forms Condition 13. The earth bund and conditioned landscaping will provide some further assistance in reducing any noise levels to neighbouring properties beyond what is specified in the noise assessment.
58. More broadly, the Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objection with the proposal on these grounds. Notwithstanding, the hours of use of the floodlights are reduced by Condition 14 to 9:15pm Monday to Saturday and 7pm on Sundays and this will provide additional acoustic benefit.
59. The noise generation from the existing smaller MUGA pitch to the east (which is intended for smaller ball sports with fewer participants) is unlikely to have any discernible impact upon the noise generated from the proposed MUGA pitch. Noise associated with vehicle movements is also likely to be low and within the scope of existing traffic movements on Waingels Road. As such, there are no adverse concerns with traffic noise such as cars starting or doors being closed even though it would likely extend up to 15-30 minutes beyond the last use of the facility.

Access and Movement

Car and cycle parking

60. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street car and cycle parking standards. In this case, the 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 parking generation rate could also be applied at a rate of 20 car spaces per pitch plus one space per spectator seat and 11 cycle spaces.
61. The site currently has 178 car parking spaces which includes 11 disabled spaces plus an additional 20 motor bike parking spaces. The proposal seeks to utilise these existing facilities as part of the community use agreement.
62. With its dimensions allowing for 11-a-side football (or concurrent smaller games), there is the potential for upwards of 30 additional people attending the school, when accounting for players, officials and spectators. This could, in theory, double to 60 persons when there is any changeover of games. Regardless, any perceived increase in parking and traffic movements from the use of the facility by coaches,

players and spectators will be comfortably accommodated within the existing 178 car spaces and the Council's Highways Officer raises no objection.

63. Condition 17 requires that the pedestrian access gate to Denmark Avenue be closed between 5pm and 7am nightly to deter the parking of vehicles on surrounding streets and using this access point which is situated amongst residential dwellings. This is a replication of the same condition imposed upon the previous permission 173584 and is of relevance here.
64. Existing cycling facilities (well in excess of 11 spaces) are available within the school campus and this is sufficient for the proposed development.

Traffic Generation

65. The pitch 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.
66. Additional traffic movement is likely to be generated in the evening from the community use, particularly during the football season in the winter months. The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection as the local road network will be able to accommodate the likely vehicle movements as these movements will predominantly be outside of school hours and mostly outside of peak hours when traffic flows are lower. Furthermore, the sustainable location of the school close to public transport and existing residential areas will likely reduce private car dependence further.

Access, Maneuverability and Traffic Generation

67. Pedestrian and vehicular access will be via the existing two way entrance and exit to the school on Waingels Road and this arrangement is acceptable. A new access for construction purposes is proposed further north along Waingels Road. It is intended to remove conflict with existing school operations and is supported. It is to be constructed to 5.5m width which allows two way access and there is sufficient room within the site to allow for forward movement to and from the site. Gates are to be located 10m inside the site to remove the potential for traffic conflict. Visibility splays at this entrance have been shown to 120m distance which is satisfactory for a speed limit of 40mph and acceptable when it involves the movement of slower construction vehicles. It is accommodated without requiring any tree removal or pruning.

Construction Management

68. As a separate construction access is proposed via Waingels Road, with ample space within the site well removed from the main school buildings and heras fencing segregating pupils, staff, visitors and public from the construction operations, there is no identifiable need for a Construction Method Statement or Management Plan.

Flooding and Drainage

69. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposal

represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability, particularly where there is no change in use. A flood risk assessment would be required where it is more than one hectare in area but the size of the pitch itself is in the vicinity of 7500m². The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.

70. Paragraph 163 of the NPPF aims to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. The NPPG also specifies the hierarchy for discharge of surface run off as being (1) (infiltration), (2) to a surface water body, (3) to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system or as a last resort, (4) to a combined sewer.
71. An Impermeable Plan was submitted with the application, indicating that approximately 8000m² of additional hardstanding is proposed and that there will be increased surface runoff. Soakaways were considered unviable on account of soil conditions and there are no nearby surface water bodies. The only feasible option was via the Council sewer on Waingels Road, with connection north of the proposed pitch.
72. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection with the method of disposal of pitch surface water being via the surface water sewer. Attenuation is provided via the porous pitch construction with quarterly check dams and inspection chambers with 40mm orifice plates to restrict flows to 2L/sec, which is no worse than the existing greenfield rate. Calculations supporting the sufficiency of the system and amount of the flow demonstrate that there will be no flooding for events up to and including the 1 in 100-year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change. The Council has not opposed connection to its system on this basis.
73. Thames Water were also consulted and raise no objection in terms of any likely impact upon their system.
74. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC10.

Construction Sustainability

75. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation. The development has adopted positive sustainable design solutions, including reuse of excavated material for use in the bund, imported sub base aggregate for the pitch foundations from local quarries and time sensitive floodlights to avoid for unnecessary illumination before dusk or past curfew. There is also no intention to utilise the Thames Water supply. On this basis, the proposal is acceptable.

Landscape and Trees

76. 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.
77. The boundaries of the school are bordered by mature trees and dense road-side understory in places but the pitch itself will be centrally located on existing playing

fields where it will not pose any adverse impact to existing trees. Likewise, the path is along the edge of the playing fields and poses no issue and the bund is located outside of the RPA of all trees.

78. The application was accompanied by an Arboricultural Survey and Method Statement, dated November 2020, which has been reviewed and is acceptable. The access road will pass through the RPA of two trees on the northern side of Waingels Road - T8 (Oak to 12m height) and T6 (a Hazel to 5m). However, with a cellular confinement system such as Cellweb proposed as part of the ground construction, it is achievable without long term harm. Tree Protection Fencing within the Construction Exclusion Zone will protect the remaining trees and the canopy spread of T6 and T8.
79. The drainage connection is to the north east, which may impact on a larger Oak tree growing in the verge of Waingels Road. Further details will need to be submitted to ensure that the method of connection is satisfactory.
80. Four trees – T15 (Sweet chestnut to 12m height and T9-11 (3 x Lawson Cypress to 5m) are proposed for removal although the removal of the three Cypress, all small species, is to remove interference with T8, a much more prominent tree. Crown reduction is also proposed to T8 to reduce future failures.
81. The Council's Trees Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection, particularly when recognising that the access is temporary and replacement and enhanced planting can be conditioned. These landscaping details are required by Condition 9 as a landscape plan was submitted but it refers to seeding and does not include any replacement tree planting. An updated Arboricultural Method Statement and compliance with its associated recommendations is also required by Condition 4.
82. The proposed access is broadly opposite nominated Ancient Woodland in Norris's Copse to the south. The proposal would therefore need to accord with the standing advice provided by Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Broadly, the intent is to conserve and enhance biodiversity and reduce the level of impact of the proposed development on ancient woodland.
83. Because the development is separated from the ancient woodland by Waingels Road and up to 90m between the pitch and the northern extent of the woodland, there is a sufficient buffer and the development will be no loss of the ancient woodland, no change to existing access and no compaction of soil around the trees and no apparent change to the landscape character of the area.
84. There would ordinarily be the potential for some changes to the water table or drainage and increased pollution but this is managed by controlled release of surface water, as detailed in paragraphs 71-72. There is also the potential for night time light pollution from the floodlights, but this is adequately mitigated, as detailed in paragraphs 87-90. Traffic movements will likely increase in the afternoon and evening period but it is not sufficient to warrant concern. Beyond the measures taken in the conditions already imposed, the level of harm is minimal and any further mitigation is considered unnecessary.

Ecology

85. Paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF seek to minimise impacts on, conserve or enhance biodiversity and provide net gains for biodiversity improvements. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation are to be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. 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.
86. To the south-west is Norris Copse Bird Sanctuary Local Wildlife Site which contains a patch of ancient woodland that is likely to support roosting of bats. To the north of the site runs an unlit railway line and a golf course which are also likely to be important foraging sites for bats. Both areas would also support birds.
87. The primary issue with the development relates to the light spill from the 15m floodlights upon bats, a light sensitive species group, and the foraging and commuting across and around the site. The application was not supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal or Ecological Impact Assessment to consider the potential impacts upon protected species and species of principal importance. However, the Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the proposal and does not raise any in principle objection to the installation of the lights.
88. 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 depending upon the time of year.
89. The use of the facility (and presumably the operation of the lights) was initially proposed to 10pm Monday to Saturday. During winter (November to March) bats are usually hibernating, so bats are unlikely to be affected by lighting during this period. During summer, the lights would be used less often because bats would be commuting and foraging later and there would be fewer football competitions during the off season. The shoulder months for bat activity (May and September-October) is this period where there is potential for harm to bats, as they are in transition into or out of hibernation. There is sufficient justification, therefore, to limit the use of the floodlights to 9:15pm Monday to Saturday (see Condition 14), to minimise the overlap between foraging and the need for artificial lighting after sunset. The operating hours of the floodlights on Sunday raise no particular issue during the shoulder months because of the earlier finishing time.
90. The Council's Ecology Officer is of the view that the 'LO' option (full spill light control (integrated louver)) is the most appropriate option for the semi-rural setting to minimise the light spill out of the target area and reduce the impact on light sensitive protected species. Confirmation of this is in Condition 15.
91. The existing field is amenity grassland and the proposal represents the loss of this low distinctiveness habitat as a result of its conversion to an artificial pitch. To sufficiently compensate for the biodiversity net loss, appropriate seeding mix or grassland habitat is required. Provisional landscaping details have since been provided but these have not been confirmed as acceptable and so still form part of the details as required by Condition 9.

Waste Storage

92. The development complements existing school facilities and does not represent any significant increase in waste generation, particularly when it is a synthetic, all weather pitch and as most after-hours participants will be visiting the site for a short time frame. Any refuse can be disposed of using existing facilities. As such, no objection is raised.

Contamination

93. The area is listed as potentially contaminated with landfill gas on the Council's inventory and an initial Site Investigation Report accompanied the application dealing with the matter of site contamination. The report noted that there *"was no ground or soils exhibiting obvious contamination. Therefore, the soils are considered unlikely to exhibit significant contamination or present a risk to human health and at this stage no contamination testing has been undertaken. If any made ground soils are encountered and require offsite disposal to landfill, laboratory testing may be required to allow classification under WM3 and the Waste Acceptance Criteria."*
94. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no in principle objection to the proposed development but has recommended a condition requiring further details if unexpected conditions are encountered. This is detailed at Condition 7.

CONCLUSION

95. The proposed AGP, including fencing, lighting, storage, hardstanding, pathways and bund, are considered to be acceptable in principle, and it would not be harmful to the character of the area, including in its countryside setting. There is an identified and funded need for the pitch and its provision will provide a good quality, accessible, durable and all weather football asset as part of improved and expanded facilities available at the College and for the local community.
96. Recommended approval of the development is subject to satisfactory management of the pitch to address noise disturbance, general day to day management and maintenance (Conditions 10, 11, 13 and 15) and a reduction in the operating hours of the floodlights to 9:15pm to maintain consistency with the existing approval and to protect nearby bats (Condition 14). There is also a satisfactory outcome on traffic and drainage grounds.

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