

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

5 November 2014

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number:	S/1372/14/FL
Parish:	Girton
Proposal:	Demolition of existing pavilion and development of a new sports pavilion, two fenced and floodlit artificial turf pitches, car, coach and cycle parking and associated landscaping and access improvements
Site address:	Howes Close Sports Ground, Huntingdon Road
Applicant:	Anglia Ruskin University Higher Education Corporation
Recommendation:	Delegated Approval
Key material considerations:	Principle (including Green Belt), design, impact on character of the area, residential amenity, highway safety, drainage and other matters.
Committee Site Visit:	Yes
Departure Application:	Yes
Presenting Officer:	Paul Sexton
Application brought to Committee because:	The officer recommendation of delegated approval is contrary to the recommendation of refusal from Girton Parish Council
Date by which decision due:	18 September 2014

Site and Proposal

1. Howes Close Sports Ground is located to the west of Whitehouse Lane, north of the Huntingdon Road, Girton.
2. The area, which extends to 5.15ha, currently comprises four adult grass football pitches, a small pavilion on the south west boundary and a gravelled parking area at the southern end of the site, and a training floodlight.

3. The application, as amended, proposes demolition of the existing pavilion and redevelopment of the site to provide two flood lit artificial pitches, new sports pavilion and parking area on the east side of the site. Two grassed pitches are provided on the west side of the site.
4. Access will be from the existing entrance from Whitehouse Lane in the south east corner of the site.
5. One of the artificial pitches will be used primarily for hockey, and the other for football among other sports. Both pitches will be enclosed by 3m high perimeter fencing, rising to 5m behind the goals. Both pitches will be illuminated with a total of twelve 15m high floodlighting columns (4 of these being shared between the two pitches). The illuminance for the pitches is currently at a minimum maintained level of 500 lux. A path is proposed to connect the pavilion to the artificial pitches.
6. The new pavilion is located close to the site boundary with Whitehouse Lane. It provides changing rooms at ground floor, 6 separate football/hockey changing facilities are provided, as well as two additional and larger changing facilities for rugby and American Football. Separate changing facilities are provided for referees, along with other facilities including laundry room, physiotherapy/medical room, reception, toilets, storage and plant areas.
7. The first floor extends over a portion of the ground floor footprint and provides for a warm-up area, small kitchen and communal area, which includes a terraced area for spectators.
8. Solar thermal panels are to be installed on the first floor section of the roof space. Air source heat pumps are to be located adjacent to the building.
9. Parking facilities will increase from 18 cars to 54 cars, as well as four additional spaces which are capable of accommodating coach or minibus parking. 96 cycle parking spaces are provided between the new pavilion and Whitehouse Lane.
10. Additional landscaping is proposed.
11. To the north west the site adjoins the rear gardens of properties in Thornton Close, Girton. There is some boundary planting and fencing on this boundary. To the south west the site adjoins Felix House Hotel.
12. To the west the site adjoins the boundary with Cambridge City Council, and the premises of NIAB, which forms part of the site of the Darwin Green development. Whitehouse Lane continues to the north in the form of a public right of way, which also runs along the north east boundary of the site. Beyond the north east boundary are farm buildings, on land which will form part of the Darwin Green development, and will comprise school playing fields.
13. Anglia Ruskin University ("ARU") also owns an additional area of sports ground between the Felix Hotel and the Huntingdon Road.
14. The site is outside the village framework and in the Cambridge Green Belt.
15. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment Report, Travel Plan, Lighting Report, Visual Assessment, Archaeological

Evaluation, Ecological Assessment (including Phase 1 Habitat Survey), Arboricultural Report, Renewable Energy Statement, Statement of Community Involvement, Geophysical Report.

Planning History

16. S/1742/06/F – Floodlighting – Approved
17. S/1215/07/F – Variation of Condition 4 of Planning Permission S/1742/06/F to allow for floodlights to be used for period July to September - Approved

Planning Policies

18. *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*
19. Paragraph 79 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their permanence and openness.
20. Paragraphs 87 to 90 advise on the definition of inappropriate development, and harm to the Green Belt (see paras 79-82 below)
21. *Planning Practice Guidelines (NPPG)*
22. The NPPG provides guidance on such topic as climate change, the need for transport assessments, and reiterates and expands on points in the NPPF in relation to healthy communities. It also provides advice on the principle of light pollution.
23. *The Inner Green Belt Study 2012*
24. The application site falls within Sector 1, Area 2 of this study and comprises part of gap between Girton and Cambridge the significance of which was said to be high importance to the setting of the City in this study.
25. *Local Development Framework*
 - ST/1 – Green Belt
 - DP/1 – Sustainable Development
 - DP/2 – Design of New Development
 - DP/3 – Development Criteria
 - DP/4 – Infrastructure and New Developments
 - DP/7 – Development Framework
 - GB/1 – Development in the Green Belt
 - GB/2 – Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt
 - GB/5 – Recreation in the Green Belt
 - NE/1 – Renewable Energy
 - NE/3 – Renewable Energy Technology in New Developments
 - NE/6 – Biodiversity
 - NE/11 – Flood Risk
 - NE/12 – Water Conservation
 - NE/14 – Lighting Proposals
 - NE/15 – Noise Pollution
 - CH/2 – Archaeological Sites
 - TR/1 – Planning for More Sustainable Travel
 - TR/2 – Car and Cycle Parking Standards

26. Supplementary Planning Documents

District Design Guide SPD – adopted March 2010
Biodiversity SPD – adopted July 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD – adopted March 2010

27. *Draft Local Plan*

S/3 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S/4 – Cambridge Green Belt
CC/3 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
CC/4 – Sustainable Design and Construction
CC/8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems
CC/9 – Managing Flood Risk
HQ/1 – Design Principles
NH/2 – Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
NH/4 – Biodiversity
NH/8 – Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt
NH/10 – Recreation in the Green Belt
SC/10 – Lighting Proposals
SC/11 – Noise Pollution
TI/3 – Parking Provision

Consultations

28. **Girton Parish Council** – recommends refusal. “Although acknowledging that the demolition and replacement on Green Belt land is acceptable according to planning law, the Council suggests that any changes to floodlighting should be taken into account regarding the effect on light pollution levels. The configuration could be moved to improve the application and the pitches should be relocated with landscaping to mitigate light pollution. The council noted the discrepancy between the design and access statement and the transport statements, and supports the idea of a broad leaf tree break between the houses and the sports field.”
29. Comments on the revised details will be reported in an update report, or at the meeting.
30. **Cambridge City Council** – supports the application in order to provide the necessary sports facilities as generated by the Darwin Green 1 development. A direct off-road cycle/pedestrian route from the entrance to the site to the cycle parking and pavilion would be preferable to prevent conflict with vehicle movements within the car park.
31. **Local Highway Authority** – It is believed that the applicant has been in informal consultation with Barratt Homes (Darwin Green Development), but the Highway Authority would recommend that these consultations are carried out to formally produce a design in this area that is suitable for all end users.
32. The Highway Authority believes that the proposed access is still very motor vehicle dominated, and separate cycle and pedestrian routes should be provided as a 1.0m footway would not be adequate for the number of pedestrians that are intended to frequent the proposed development.
33. The drawing showing the relocation of the 40mph signs has been superseded as this stretch of road is now 30ph. A swept path analysis for coach and minibus parking should be provided to ensure that these spaces can be accessed without undue manoeuvring.

34. The applicant mentions that car parking within the site and on Whitehouse Lane will be managed. The applicant should show how this will be achieved and it is recommended that this area is expanded to incorporate the carriageways in the surrounding area.
35. Comments on the revised drawings will be reported in an update report, or at the meeting.
36. **Environmental Health Officer**– notes that a number of objections have been received which have the common themes of disturbance caused by light from floodlighting and noise.
37. The revised lighting assessment indicates the revised lighting spill will not impact existing properties any more than the originally proposed scheme. However, it will fall onto the proposed residential premises to the south-east of the site in the Cambridge City Council's area and may require appropriate screening to limit the light falling on these properties in the future.
38. Existing residential premises to the north-west of the site are likely to experience impacts from light from the illuminated pitches. The plans submitted indicate the housing will be outside the area illuminated by the lights and as such it is highly unlikely a statutory nuisance from artificial light will be an issue.
39. The submitted lighting assessment determines the Environmental Zone according to the Institute of Lighting Professionals as being E3. Whilst the pre curfew and post curfew levels of light intrusion are acceptable, it is necessary to also consider the luminaire intensity. Details of these have not been provided. The ILP require a pre curfew level of 10,000 candela and a post curfew value of 1,000 candelas in order to prevent excessive glare from the installation.
40. In any case, these lights will be visible to anyone in direct line-of-sight of the pitches from their dwelling. It would not be reasonably practical to mitigate against this.
41. The other common issue is that of noise. Due to the distance from and the nature of the plant being installed at the changing rooms it is highly unlikely to cause an issue. Similarly, vehicle movements and parking may be audible at times but not be an issue for existing residential properties at Thornton Close.
42. However, there are concerns regarding what will be an intensification of use on the site, as whilst the current use will not be changed, potentially the amount of people using the facility, and the times that it will be used for, will be increased from what is experienced at present.
43. There is not robust data available to predict what noise levels will be produced by supporters at the facility and consequently received by receptors when matches are played. This will also be dictated by other environmental factors such as wind direction, weather conditions, topography, etc. The noise report submitted considers data measured that is representative of ambient (background) levels obtained at times when matches were not being played, and attempts to predict what may happen during play, but until a facility is up and running it will be difficult to make precise calculations.
44. Spectators and players will often shout at their teams and can involve the use of language some may find offensive. This cannot reasonably be controlled at such a

venue. Due to the open and exposed features of a playing field “noise barriers” will not be effective. In effect, the only realistic control on noise from spectators and players is to limit the times of operation. Additionally, this would also limit the impacts from light pollution.

45. In order to reduce the occurrences of stray balls entering nearby residential gardens, high level netting could be installed close to the boundary of the site.
46. It is suggested that in order to achieve a balance between allowing evening use of the pitches, but preventing excessive impacts on residential premises, the hours of operation of the pavilion and car park area should be restricted to 07.00-23.00 hours Mondays to Saturdays and 09.00-22.00 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Floodlighting should be timed controlled and switched off at 21.00 hours.
47. If approved a condition should also be included restricting the hours of use of power driven machinery during the course of demolition and construction.
48. In conclusion, the use of the site will be intensified and the times of use will be extended. Due to the nature of the facility noise and lighting impacts are difficult to moderate apart from the introduction of time limits. Impacts will be noticeable at nearby residential premises but these need to be considered against the benefits of the provision of such a facility.
49. Comments on the revised details will be reported in an update report, or at the meeting
50. **Sport England** – supports the principle of enhancing the sports facilities on this site, but objected with regard to the details as originally submitted, particularly the proposed football artificial grass pitch, which did not meet current FA technical guidance
51. Sport England has confirmed its support for the revised scheme subject to conditions, commenting that the new facilities can make a positive contribution to sport in Cambridge for both university and local community.
52. It suggests conditions restricting the use of floodlighting to between 8am and 10pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 8pm on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays, and that the use should not commence until a community use agreement has been secured. It also requests a condition requiring final specification of the 3G artificial pitch to be agreed.
53. A copy of its full comments (both letters) is attached as Appendix 1.
54. **Design Enabling Panel** – agreed that this is a good building, appropriately sited and of a scale suitable for the location, reflecting a sound design approach, but with the potential to be further improved to be a high quality building.
55. Suggested improvements included materials detailing; revisions to the enclosure of external plant and refuse area; rationalisation of window/door head/toplight details through the ground floor to create a consistent approach to fenestration treatment; careful attention to any signage; appropriate detailing of rainwater pipes, minimising visual impact of solar thermal panels and the railings; and details of covered cycle parking to ensure it does not detract from the building.
56. It is suggested that many of these details can be secured by conditions.

57. **Asset Information Definitive Map Officer** – Public Footpath No.48 Cambridge shares the site access. The proposal will slightly increase traffic along the footpath, but this footpath is already shared with traffic for some its route. No significant objections but informatives should be included in any consent regarding protection of the right of way.
58. **Environment Agency** – The Council's Drainage Manager should be consulted in respect of local awarded watercourses, their byelaws and constraints. The Drainage Manager should agree the attenuated water volume to be discharged to a local watercourse.
59. The Agency would wish to see conditions requiring the submission of schemes for sustainable surface water drainage, and pollution control.
60. **Ecology Officer** – Comments will be included in an update report or reported at the meeting.
61. **Drainage Manager** – Comments will be included in an update report or reported at the meeting.
62. **Landscapes Officer** – Comments will be included in an update report or reported at the meeting
63. **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** – Comments will be included in an update report or reported at the meeting.

Representations

64. Letters have been received from the occupiers of Nos. 12, 14, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 44, 48, 50, 58, 62 and 66 Thornton Close Girton, objecting to the application on the following grounds: Comments have also been received from Cllr Holland, Cambridge City Council (Castle Ward).
 - a. This is a Green Belt site, which will include a new building, new hard surface pitches and floodlighting, which will have a significant detrimental impact on local residents. The site currently has limited light pollution. This is one of the last remaining stretches of the Green Belt between Cambridge and Girton. The 2012 Inner Green Belt Boundary Study classified the significance of development on this critical gap as 'Very High'. This development will erode that gap.
 - b. The NPPF states that account should be taken of 'the different role and character of different areas' whilst protecting the Green Belt around urban areas. 'And deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities to meet Local needs'. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. These seem to be missing. The intensification of use will change the sports ground to an urban space and will soon become ideal for housing being 'surrounded by development' The proposal is contrary to Paras 79, 87, 88 and 89 of the NPPF.
 - c. Increase in noise. This is a commercial enterprise with the facilities being used by both Anglia Ruskin and general public at any time of year, not just term time as at present. The area of Thornton Close is currently a quiet

residential area. Currently the site is used on average one Wednesday afternoon during term time for approximately half the year, on a Sunday morning. When all the current pitches are in use the noise is unbearable.

- d. As amended the pitches are now 10m closer to Thornton Close further increasing noise impact. Modelling the noise of 3 football matches, a hockey match and a gallery of spectators as a single point source is a nonsense. The report does not consider the startling impact of sudden outbursts of men shouting, balls hitting a backing plate or car doors slamming at night. When assessing industrial noises BS4142 suggests that sources of noise with a startling affect have a 5dbA penalty applied to account for the increased likelihood of complaints. Nearby gardens cannot be insulated from the noise as the report suggests.
- e. Concern that there are very close links between the authors of the noise report and ARU, such that there is a clear conflict of interest and the report should not be considered as an objective and independent assessment.
- f. The NPPF states that the planning system should 'protect areas of tranquillity'.
- g. Should not be a commercial development but limited to students and members of ARU. At local meetings residents have been advised that the new facilities would be made available to local clubs which will again increase impact.
- h. The grass pitches are being re-aligned due to the other development proposed. There is only one full-size grass pitch which may be used to a much greater extent than at present, causing increased noise to local residents. The grass pitches should therefore form part of the application and be open to control by appropriate planning conditions. The pitches have recently been re-aligned but the previous alignment caused little problem with stray balls in adjoining gardens. Pitches will now be within 10 metres of the north west boundary, when they are currently 30 metres away. Moving the pitches 20 metres away would lessen the impact.
- i. Concern about noise from the pavilion, particularly the first floor spectator area. The first floor and viewing balcony are likely to be well used after the artificial pitches have stopped at 22.00 hrs. This would be increased further if the premises is licensed and events held with amplified music. The background noise levels have only been carried out between 09.00 to 11.00 and 17.00 to 19.00 when nearby traffic noise is likely to be high and therefore a proper assessment of late night noise levels is impossible. No weekend levels were taken.
- j. The noise report relies on attenuation that 'could' be provided, but does not specify how this will be achieved. Cass Allen in preparing its report should have visited residents in Thornton Close for a more informed view of the acceptability, or otherwise, of sports noise. Pitches should be re-orientated to reduce impact.
- k. The viewing gallery will result in a loss of privacy.
- l. Discrepancy in the hours requested for the floodlit pitches, between the Planning Statement and Transport Assessment.

- m. 3 – 5 metre high ball-stop fencing should be provided where pitches are adjacent to residential properties.
- n. Impact of floodlighting to 22.00 hours during the week. It is understood that it is currently restricted to 21.00 hours and with limited facilities the site is cleared soon afterwards. The extension of hours and more extensive facilities users are likely to be on site much later. Lighting should be restricted to 21.00 hours and the site cleared by 22.00 hours. The need for the additional lighting is poorly justified. Lux levels are double that which the FA states are needed.
- o. The application suggests that light pollution to nearby residencies will be minimal, however this only refers to illuminated ground space. As the lights will not have total bulb covers they will be clearly visible from significant distances, and very intrusive, principally to bedroom windows of houses adjoining the site. NPPGG states that light should not spill beyond the boundary of the area proposed to be lit, and should not affect the surrounding area. With the height of the poles this does not appear possible. The height of the lights will be higher than first floor windows of properties in Thornton Close and will be intrusive. The proposal contravenes Policy NE/14.
- p. The applicant has used the Institute of Lighting Professionals' environment zones to categorise the site as an E3 zone "Medium district brightness" e.g. small town centres of suburban locations. This categorisation is strongly disputed. The surrounding area is currently very dark at night.
- q. Alternative locations for the illuminated pitches should be explored, either on the existing rugby pitch adjacent Huntingdon Road, or adjacent the Felix Hotel car park, where there is already light pollution.
- r. If the applicant already has permission for current floodlights then why is there an in-depth analysis for the impact of light pollution on a Green Belt site.
- s. The application makes no mention of tree planting. Is there to be any? Broad leaf planting should be provided to lessen the impact to properties in Thornton Close.
- t. The size of the proposed pavilion is contrary to Policy GB/2.
- u. What are the effects on the future inhabitants of the NIAB development?
- v. Effects of change should be monitored.
- w. Parking is provided for about 500 people, with coach parking. Such a large number of spectators will generate a louder noise than the decibels in the Noise Report. The proposal contravenes Policy TR/1.
- x. Current noise from occasional large scale events is tolerated but this increase will be very different.
- y. Concern about additional traffic and air pollution. The additional activity will increase congestion in Wilberforce Road and Huntingdon Road.

- z. Impact on bird and bat populations in the area. Many species are seen, including Peregrine Falcon. Policy NE/6 (enhancing wildlife and habitats) will become difficult/impossible to implement.
- aa. Additional public access will raise security concerns. People already come into gardens to retrieve stray balls.
- bb. There will be a lot of excavated material in providing the new pitches – could some of this be used as a noise bund?
- cc. Why is there to be a £250,000 potential donation from Cambridge City Council? SCDC should not be swayed by the possibility of Section 106 money from a neighbouring authority. Why is this money not being used to fund the development of Wilberforce Road's hockey facilities.
- dd. The South Cambridgeshire Recreation and Open Space Study was set up to assess whether there was quantity or quality of recreation and open space provision within the District and that such as there was, met local needs and that such space was 'available to the general public' of the locality. It also claims that Girton exceeds the minimum standards for outdoor sport, which serves mainly the village to the north, but that accessibility to residents to the south is restricted.
- ee. The Committee Report for the North West Cambridge extension (C/11/1115/OUT) which acknowledged that the use of the Green Belt for outdoor recreation was supported in principle, floodlighting would not normally be encouraged in the Green Belt.
- ff. Cllr Holland's main concern is how the application relates to proposals for Darwin Green in Cambridge City, and the impact of the proposed development on Whitehouse Lane. The D & A states that Whitehouse Lane would be widened to accommodate the additional traffic, but states that this is not part of this application. If the traffic impact is considered such as to warrant widening the road should this not be part of the main application as access has implications for existing and proposed cycle routes. The widening of the junction may also impact on the parcel of land owned by ARU which currently accommodates the rugby pitch and this will have a visual impact on the character of Huntingdon Road. There are already several junctions with permissions to serve Darwin Green and the North west site and these should not be compromised.
- gg. Cllr Holland states that the Travel Plan does not mention coaches accessing the site and feels that these would need to use the Park and Ride site on Madingley Road and passengers would access coaches from there. The Travel Plan does not demonstrate how the various transport modes will impact on Whitehouse Lane. How does the proposal relate to the school and sporting facilities on Darwin Green – again there is concern for traffic safety along Whitehouse Lane. From a briefing by the Arts Officer at Cambridge City Council it was suggested that Section 106 monies may be used to develop a community room/meeting room in the proposed pavilion. One of these uses could be for training courses for referees, which would be an income stream for ARU, but would it fit with the Use Classes applied to the pavilion. Has a noise assessment been carried out for the potential use of the pavilion for sports social events?

65. Comments on the revised details will be included in an update report or reported at the meeting.

Additional comments submitted by applicant

66. The applicant has submitted a letter in response to a number of the points raised during the consultation period.
67. In response to questions raised about the proposed floodlighting and luminaire intensity it is noted that Environmental Health identify that the lux plans submitted indicate that the proposed horizontal lighting spill would encroach onto the proposed residential properties to the south east in Whitehouse Lane. However it is emphasised that the lux level plans show a worst case scenario basis, and do not take account of established boundary planting that exists, and which further restricts the extent of light spill. In addition those lux levels which are shown as extending beyond Whitehouse Lane indicate a horizontal lux level of between 2 and 10 lux, which is comparable to street lights for a footpath. Given the urban context of the locality, such levels are deemed in character and not to adversely impact on the residential amenity of properties. This is further assisted by the willingness of the applicant to agree to a condition that restricts the use of the proposed floodlighting.
68. Environmental Health also sought further clarification as to the luminaire intensity of the proposed floodlighting. In accordance with ILP standards, a pre-curfew level below 10,000 candelas and post curfew level of below 1,000 candelas is required in order to prevent excessive glare. The lighting consultant has confirmed that maximum light source intensity of the worst case floodlight is 1,400 candelas, which is significantly below the recommended pre-curfew level. Since the hours of operation will be restricted, the post curfew value is not applicable to the proposed floodlighting.
69. Regarding proposed lighting levels for the artificial pitches, the value of 600 lux is the initial illuminance only, which will occur for the first 100 hours until the lamps have burnt in. The value will then drop to a maintained illuminance level of 500 lux, as identified on the lux plans submitted. In order for the hockey pitch to be used for National League play, a minimum of 500 lux must be provided. It should be noted that England Hockey do set out a preference for 750 lux, although accept 500 lux. The lighting levels are therefore crucial for the proposed artificial hockey pitch and cannot be reduced.
70. The lighting for the proposed artificial football pitch is more flexible. It is proposed that this pitch should be maintained at a standard suitable for 'club use', which requires a minimum lighting value of 200 lux. It is therefore accepted that the floodlighting of the proposed artificial football pitch could be restricted to a maintained value of 200 lux by way of condition should the Council see fit. This is a minimum requirement and it is therefore suggested that a 10% margin for error is accommodated into the wording of any condition. This would further reduce any risk of light overspill to the south east of the site, to which the Environmental Health Officer makes reference.
71. Officers suggest that a condition relating to hours of use should be attached to any planning consent, which would restrict the use of the floodlighting to 21:00 and the use of the pavilion to 22:00.
72. The applicant agrees that a condition relating to the hours of use of the floodlighting. However a restriction to 22:00 would be more appropriate. Since the hours of use for the floodlighting are to be restricted, there seems little need for a further condition on the use of the pavilion. However, the applicant would be willing to accept a condition

for the use of the pavilion, providing that there is a minimum of an hour between the floodlights being turned off and the pavilion being vacated. This will provide suitable time for those using the facilities to get changed and leave.

73. Ensuring that the floodlighting can remain on, and the pitches can therefore be in use up to 22:00, will provide significant benefits for the University and the wider community. As has been discussed throughout the submission, there is a significant shortfall of artificial pitches within the Cambridge sub-region and competition for access is high. The University has its own significant demand and enabling the artificial pitches to remain in use up until 22:00 would enable this demand to be met, and so greater opportunities to also offer the facilities to the local community. By constraining the potential operational hours of the facilities, this risks compromising the extent that the local community, youth groups and other clubs may be able to use the services. Evening demand is particularly high given the need for both students and those from the local community needing to focus either training or matches outside of standard working hours, or times when academic studies take place. Since University demand will take priority, any further restriction to operating hours than 22:00 would adversely impact on community use.
74. Sport England has also identified in its consultation response that floodlit community sports facilities should be available for use until 10pm at peak times, identified as weekday evenings. It states that hours should only be reduced where there are strong residential amenity reasons for this course of action. Since assessments submitted confirm that lighting and noise levels are acceptable in this instance, the benefits to the community in extending operational hours of the floodlighting to 22:00 as opposed to 21:00 exceed any minimal disturbance that might arise in using the artificial pitches for an additional hour.
75. Reference is made to the proposals resulting in an intensification of use. Whilst the proposed facilities on site are to be enhanced, it should be recognised that the existing outdoor sports facilities could be intensified within the existing lawful use of the site. In this context it is not considered that the proposed development results in a significant intensification.
76. In terms of potential spectators, details are provided within the Transport Assessment and suggest 5 spectators per pitch. Based on a day time peak period where all 4 pitches are in use, one would expect 20 spectators on the application site. A further 5 spectators may then also be associated with the rugby pitch to the south of the site.

Planning Considerations

Principle of development (including Green Belt)

77. There are a number of key issues for Members to consider in this case; whether the proposed development is appropriate development by definition in the Green Belt; whether the proposal results in any other harm to the Green Belt; residential amenity, landscape impact; highway safety, lighting; ecology; drainage, archaeology and any other matters.
78. If it is concluded that the proposal is inappropriate by definition, then this, and the extent of any other harm, will require Members to consider whether the applicant has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh that harm.
79. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special

circumstances. Paragraph 88 states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

80. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate, but lists exceptions, which includes 'provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'.
81. Paragraph 90 states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Engineering operations are referred to as falling within the scope of this paragraph.
82. The proposed development provides facilities for outdoor recreation and therefore looking at the provisions of paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF the main consideration in determining whether the proposed development represents inappropriate development is whether it preserves the openness of the Green Belt, and the purpose of including land within it.
83. Policy GB/5 encourages proposals in the Green Belt which provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, appropriate to the Green Belt, where it would not harm the objectives of the Green Belt.
84. The site forms part of a narrow area of land between the edge of Girton and Cambridge. Although the site cannot be viewed from Huntingdon Road the existence of a public right away along two boundaries of the site means that the potential for the site to be viewed is increased. The existing building and car parking area are located at the south west end of the site, with the remaining land being open. Officers are of the view that the larger replacement pavilion building, additional parking area, and the introduction of two pitches which will be enclosed by fencing, with floodlighting, will not preserve the openness of this particular section of the Green Belt. Although the fencing will be 'open-mesh' style fencing it can have a fairly solid appearance depending on the angle from which it is views.
85. Officers are therefore of the view that the proposal is inappropriate development, and therefore harmful by definition.

Any other harm to the Green Belt

86. The site in its current less intensely developed form provides an important gap between Girton and the edge of Cambridge. The character of this area will be changed by other proposed development in the immediate area. The sports ground will be enclosed by development on all sides and therefore the visual impact of the proposed development on the wider area will be more restricted.
87. Although officers are of the view that the wider visual impact of the lighting columns will be limited, there will be an increased impact when the floodlights are in use. The applicant accepts the need for a restriction on the hours of use of the floodlights and this is considered in more detail under residential amenity below. Given this time restriction, and the ability to control the type and direction of lighting to limit light spill, officers are of the view that it may be possible to reduce the potential visual impact on the Green Belt to an acceptable degree.

88. The comments of the Landscapes Officer will be reported.

Residential amenity

89. The proposed development has the potential to significantly increase the level of use of the site, and as a result the impact on adjoining residents. At present the use of the site is limited, although residents have highlighted concerns as a result of the existing level of use. The site has consent for training floodlights near the existing pavilion and these can be used until 21.00 hours. However these are fewer in number (only one at present) and lower in height.
90. As amended the artificial pitches will be sited between 50m and 70m from the boundary of existing properties in Thornton Close. The car parking and pavilion will be a minimum of 100m from Thornton Close. The Environmental Health Officers comments in respect of the potential impact in terms of noise and lighting are set out in paragraphs 36-49 above. It is recommended that in order to reduce potential impact the hours of illumination should be restricted to 21.00 hours, as opposed to the 22.00 hours as requested by the applicant. Officers are of the view that a restriction is necessary in this case.
91. The Environmental Health Officer has stated that the use of the pavilion should be restricted to 23.00 hours, however officers are of the view that if the use of floodlighting is to be restricted to 21.00 hours then the use of the pavilion could reasonably be restricted to 22.00 hours, and the site vacated by 22.30 hours.
92. The applicant has expressed concern that a restriction on the hours of use of the floodlights to 21:00 hours will severely restrict the potential for community use of the facilities. Sport England has suggested a restriction of 22:00 hours Mondays to Friday, but 20:00 hours at all other times. Clearly a balance needs to be struck between allowing reasonable use of any improved facilities by both ARU and the local community, and protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents. Given the existing character of the area, and the potential change which will be brought about by this proposed development officers are of the view that the use of floodlighting should be restricted to 21:00 hours and the use of the pavilion to 22:00 hours.
93. The applicant has confirmed that the lux levels proposed for the hockey pitch cannot be reduced, but that those of the football pitch can be reduced to 200 lux (with a 10% margin). Officers are of the view that this reduction should be secured by condition.
94. Given that the pavilion building is 100m from the boundary with properties in Thornton Close officers are of the view that the extent of any overlooking will not be unreasonable.
95. The Environmental Health Officer has commented on the difficulty of assessing potential impact of noise from increased spectator use of the site. The applicant has confirmed that spectator level is unlikely to be high, although officers are of the view that there will be occasions when there is a more intensive spectator usage.
96. The application proposes additional planting on the west boundary of the site and additional protection in the form of fencing can be required by condition.
97. Cambridge City Council has not objected to the application, however officers have requested clarification that the potential impact of the development on future occupiers of the Darwin Green site within its area is acceptable.

Highway safety

98. The Highways Authority has requested that the applicant considers the impacts of this development alongside that of Darwin Green. The further comments of the Local Highway Authority will be reported. Whitehouse Lane is narrow, without formal footpaths and the proposed development has the potential to significantly increase the amount of traffic.
99. Enhanced access to the site from Whitehouse Lane is proposed as part of the application and can be secured by condition. The level of car parking proposed within the site has been increased to cater for the proposed additional use envisaged.
100. 96 cycle parking spaces are provided, although the scheme does not currently show these as being covered. A condition should be attached to any consent requiring secure covered cycle parking, and for the design to be agreed.

Design of Pavilion

101. The building is a modern part two-storey design, which will be brick at ground level with cladding above. The building will have thermal panels on the roof, which will take the total height to the top of the panels of 8m.
102. Officers are of the view that the level of facilities provided within the building is reasonable to support the level of development proposed.
103. Amended drawings have been submitted incorporating revisions to the roof plan and elevations as suggested by the Design Enabling Panel.

Drainage

104. The site is within Flood Zone 1 but due to the scale of development a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application. The site is bounded by a ditch on the north and east boundaries and the comments of the Council's Drainage Manager will be important in agreeing any surface water discharge rate to these watercourses in order to prevent potential flooding issues.
105. The conditions requested by the Environment Agency can be included in any consent.

Ecology

106. The applicant has undertaken a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Protected Species Survey, and as a result of its recommendations a Nocturnal Bat Emergence Survey was conducted. That report did not find evidence of bats emerging from the existing building, although it recommends that bat boxes are incorporated into the new building. The main report suggests that clearance work is undertaken outside bird breeding season and recommends ecological enhancements.
107. The comment of the Ecology Officer will be reported and he has been asked to comment on the potential impact of floodlighting on existing wildlife, an issue which has been raised in local representations.

Archaeology

108. The applicant has undertaken an archaeological investigation of the site which has not found archaeological features. The comments of Cambridgeshire Archaeology will be reported.

Other matters

109. Officers have concluded that the proposal is inappropriate development by definition as it will not preserve the openness of the Green Belt
110. The applicant does not agree with officers view that the proposed development is inappropriate by definition but has, without prejudice to that view, set out what it considers to be the very special circumstances that exist in this case. This is contained in the Planning Statement (paras 6.18 – 6.20) and expanded upon in a letter dated 17 September 2014. The letter, and relevant section of the Planning Statement, are attached as Appendix 2.
111. The Planning Statement clarifies the significant shortfall of sports pitches in the Cambridge sub-region, and in particular floodlit all-weather pitches. The report states that the lack of such facilities can have an adverse impact on health and wellbeing. The proposed facilities will allow access for local community clubs and usage, in addition to that of ARU.
112. ARU states that it has limited direct access to sports facilities, with much reliance of hiring of facilities, which restricts potential use by students. The letter sets out the teams currently run by ARU, and in addition to the needs of these teams it refers to the other student sports teams and activities that require similar surfaces for training. The Howes Close Sports Ground is within the ownership of the University and developing and enhanced and all weather sports pitches will provide much needed certainty and assurances that students will be able to access high quality facilities throughout the academic year. Floodlighting is crucial to allow use through winter months. ARU states that this better access reflects the expectations that students hold for a University of this scale with a reputation for sports education, which it seeks to retain and enhance. The letter sets out four strategic themes from ARU's 'Active Anglia' strategy, and states that the proposed development is an important factor in achieving these themes, whilst also providing an essential resource for a number of sports related degrees that it offers, or would wish to offer.
113. ARU's main site on East Road, and other subsidiaries, do not benefit from outdoor sports facilities. There are limited other opportunities in the area to create such facilities.
114. Officers are of the view that the proposed development will have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt in the immediate area of the site, but accept that the impact on the wider Green Belt will be minimal, with the exception of the lighting proposed.
115. The applicant has submitted a Statement of Community Involvement with the application. It is recognised that the enhanced sporting facilities that the development will provide will benefit local users and groups, in addition to persons from ARU, and that these will include residents of both this District and Cambridge City. The City Council is seeking to secure some funding for this development from the Section 106 for the Darwin Green development. Sport England seeks to secure community use by condition.

Conclusion

116. Officers are of the view that the issues in this case are finely balanced. As a matter of fact the proposed development will have an impact on the openness of this part of the Cambridge Green Belt, however Policy GB/5 and the NPPF support the appropriate provision of facilities for sport in the Green Belt, and it is the benefit of the provision of these, and the enhanced facilities for ARU, which forms the main basis of the applicants 'very special circumstances' in this case.
117. Officers are of the view that the applicant has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist in support of this proposal. Provided that the areas of concern relating to hours of use of both the floodlighting and pavilion can be addressed, and that the matters in respect of highway safety, ecology and drainage can be dealt with appropriately, officers are of the view that on balance that any identified harm could be clearly outweighed by the overall benefits of the proposal.
118. Should Members be minded to support the application, it would need to be referred to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Consultation Direction 2009.

Recommendation

119. Officers will report the response to consultations of the amended details, and views of the outstanding consultees. If these issues are satisfactorily addressed officer will recommend delegated powers of approval subject to conditions.

Conditions (to include)

- (a) 3 year time limit
- (b) Approved drawings
- (c) Landscaping
- (d) Tree/hedge protection
- (e) External materials
- (f) Boundary treatment
- (g) Surface water drainage
- (h) Details of floodlighting
- (i) Hours of operation of floodlights – restrict to 21.00hrs
- (j) Restrict use of pavilion to 22.00hrs
- (k) Restrict lux levels of artificial football pitch
- (l) Ecology measures
- (m) Covered cycle parking
- (n) Restriction on hours of power driven machinery during demolition and construction
- (o) Highway conditions
- (p) Community use

Background Papers

Where the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission July 2013
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Planning File References: S/1372/14/FL and S/1742/06/F and S/1215/07/F

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