

21/00028/FUL - Priest Hill Sports Pavilion, Reigate Road, Ewell, KT17 3DT

Application Number	21/00028/FUL
Application Type	Full Planning Permission (Major)
Address	Priest Hill Sports Pavilion, Reigate Road, Ewell Surrey, KT17 3DT
Ward	Nonsuch Ward;
Proposal	Construction of a new all-weather sports pitch including fencing, floodlighting and all other associated works.
Expiry Date	09 October 2024
Recommendation	Approval, subject to conditions and informatives
Number of Submissions	16 letters of objection and 205 letters of support
Reason for Committee	Major development
Case Officer	Gemma Paterson
Contact Officer	Simon Taylor, Interim Manager
Plans, Documents and Submissions	Available at Priest Hill Sports Pavilion
Glossary of Terms	Found at the following link: Glossary of Terms



SUMMARY

1. Summary and Recommendation

- 1.1. The application is classified as a Major planning application (due to the site area being >1 hectare) and is referred to the Planning Committee in accordance with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Scheme of Delegations.
- 1.2. The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a 3G synthetic pitch on an existing sports ground, involving the installation of hard surfacing, 4.5 metre and 2.1 metre high galvanised fencing, 8 no. 12 metre high LED floodlights and upgrades to the existing car park to provide additional vehicle and cycle parking spaces.
- 1.3. The proposal would be primarily utilised by Glyn School for school curriculum and extracurricular activities and by the Epsom and Ewell Colts FC for weekend matches and evening training. Along with these primary uses of the site, a number of other community sporting groups have registered their interest for the use of the site.
- 1.4. Historic planning permission on the site for similar developments were granted in 2011 (10/01034/FUL) and 2015 (14/01222/FUL), although these were never implemented on the site. The permissions have since expired.
- 1.5. The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt as a result of spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt. However, very special circumstances, namely the need for the facility for both school and community use in light of a clear deficiency of similar sporting facilities in the Borough and the planning history of the site, otherwise outweigh this harm.
- 1.6. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of a pitch marked out for rugby and prejudice the ability to mark out sufficiently sized boundaries for the small natural turf cricket pitch, Sport England are satisfied that there would not be any detrimental impact to rugby provision at Priest Hill Playing Fields, as there is sufficient flexibility within what is a large site to re-mark a rugby pitch elsewhere if required and that the compromise to the cricket pitch would not affect junior play on the cricket pitch.
- 1.7. It has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the County Highway Authority that the potential traffic effect of the proposed development would not cause any material impact upon the capacity or safety of the local highway network. It has also been demonstrated that the proposed development would meet the Council's Parking Standards on site
- 1.8. The proposal is visually acceptable within the context of the existing established sport facility.

- 1.9. The proposal would create opportunities for noise, disturbance and light pollution impacts on the amenities of the surrounding neighbouring properties as a result of the proposal introducing evening weekday training sessions. However, these impacts are not excessive and could be suitably mitigated through the use of planning conditions.
- 1.10. The proposal would create some minimal light spill onto a small section of the north west hedgerow that has the potential to provide a foraging resource and commuting route for bats. However, these impacts could be suitably mitigated through the use of planning conditions.
- 1.11. Subject to conditions in the event planning permission is granted, it has been demonstrated that the proposal would accord with Council policies in relation to trees, archaeology and sustainable drainage.
- 1.12. Overall, whilst there are limited adverse effects in respect of this application, these would not outweigh the benefits.

PROPOSAL

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1. The proposal involves the following works:
 - The installation of a 3G synthetic pitch measuring 106 metres x 70 metres.
 - The erection of 4.5 metre high galvanised 'Ball Stop' fencing along the perimeter of the site.
 - The erection of a 1.2 metres high galvanised Super Rebound Panel, along the perimeter of the proposed pitch, internal to the 4.5 metre high fencing
 - The installation of no 1.2 x 4 metre wide Team Shelters
 - Upgrades to and enlargement of the existing car park (currently unmarked space for about 48 vehicles) with 58 formal marked spaces, 16 of which would be on reinforced grass surface, along with 3 disabled bays and 2 minibus parking spaces
 - A facility to securely store up to 10 cycles

3. Key Information

	Existing	Proposed
Site Area	1.7 hectares	
Car Parking Spaces	48 unmarked spaces	58 marked spaces
Cycle Parking Spaces	0	10

SITE

4. Description

- 4.1. The Priest Hill Playing Fields site relates to a large field on the eastern side of Reigate Road that serves as the remote sports field of Glyn School pupils, located about 1.5km to the south-east of the school complex.
- 4.2. The wider site comprises an area of about 12.3ha and is bounded on to the north and east by public footpaths. The land to the east, north and south are all open space used for educational purposes or for recreation, whilst the west of the site is the residential built up area.
- 4.3. The wider site includes grassed rugby pitches, football pitches and cricket pitches. In addition, there is a part two storey, part single storey pavilion, housing changing rooms and viewing stands.
- 4.4. The site contains 2 no. poles with floodlights, for which there is no planning history. These poles are estimated to be about 8.0 metres in height and each support two lamps angled towards the east and the playing fields. The poles are sited along the eastern edge of the parking area.
- 4.5. The site accounts for approximately the northern-most one-third of the Glyn School playing field site. It is the lowest level of the three areas, which step up in level plateaus according to the site gradients. The intersecting footpaths to the north and east of the site are set below the level of this lowest plateau.
- 4.6. The western part of the site abuts Reigate Road, which is assessed via vehicular access points, the pavilion and a patched and pot-holed carpark of tarmac and concrete. The southern edge of the car park is reinforced by 5 variously sized trees.

5. Constraints

- Green Belt
- Archaeological Site
- SSSI Impact Risk Zone
- Flood Zone 1
- Classified A Road

6. History

App No.	Description	Status
14/01222/FUL	Re-submission of 10/01034/FUL for the construction of synthetic grass football pitch with perimeter fence and floodlighting, reconstruction of cricket square and outfield, construction of polymeric surfaced 200 metre "J" athletics track,	Granted 13/04/2015

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App No.	Description	Status
	revision to access to site and upgrading of car parking and access	
10/01034/FUL	Construction of synthetic grass football pitch with perimeter fence and floodlighting, reconstruction of cricket square and outfield, construction of polymeric surfaced 200 metre "J" athletics track Revision to access to site and upgrading of car parking, providing in and out access.	Refused 09.05.2011 Appeal Allowed 05.12.2011

CONSULTATIONS

Consultee	Comments
Internal Consultees	
County Highway Authority	No objection subject to conditions
Lead Local Flood Authority	No objection subject to conditions
County Archaeology	No objection
Council's Ecologist	No comment made on this application
Council's Tree Officer	No comment made on this application
External Consultees	
Sport England	No objection
Public Consultation	
Neighbours	<p>The application was advertised by means of a site notice, press notice, and notification to 15 neighbouring properties, concluding on 17 March 2021.</p> <p>15 letters of objection were received. They raised the following issues:</p> <p>Impact on Character of Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of the nature reserve used commonly by the community for walks to commercialism. • This area of relatively dark sky will be spoilt by the proposed floodlighting. <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal has an acceptable impact upon the character of the area, as discussed in Section 10 and 12 of this Agenda Report.</p>

Consultee	Comments
	<p>Highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impacts on already busy and overly fast road as a result of additional traffic generation. • The entrance to the site is almost opposite an access road to a housing development and is very close to a pedestrian crossing used regularly by large numbers of school children. • This is already a busy road and the impact on this could be dangerous. • Site is only a couple of hundred yards from an accident blackspot. • Impact of floodlights on drivers of road, causing accidents • Proposals could lead to cars parking on verges, which would cause accidents on busy road. • Poor parking for matches at weekend. • Car queuing to get into site would create exhaust issues for nearby residents. <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Matters relating to the highway implications of the proposed development are set out within Section 14 of this Agenda Report. The County Highway are satisfied that the additional traffic generation and parking provision would not cause harm to the safety or operation of the surrounding highway network.</p> <p><u>Neighbouring Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable floodlights have been used before on the site and have been intrusive to the room of the front of the houses opposite. • Floodlights would cause light pollution. • Noise and disruption with lighting and evening noise. • Size of the development suggests intense usage in both volume and duration day and night. • Proposal will attract crime if not managed properly. • Loss of view and devaluation of property. • If permission is granted, usage MUST be restricted to no later than 9pm. Even with this finishing time the site will take 30 minutes to clear. <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Matters relating to the implications of noise, disturbance, and light pollution are discussed in Section 13 of this Agenda Report.</p>

Consultee	Comments
	<p>A condition restricting the operational times of floodlights would be sufficient mitigation to ensure that the development would not detrimentally harm the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring property.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that the site would increase crime in the area.</p> <p>The loss of view and devaluation of property is not a material planning consideration that would form part of the assessment of this application.</p> <p><u>Ecology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area of relatively dark sky and floodlights would impact on existing wildlife <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Matters relating to the implications of the proposed development are discussed in Section 16 of this Agenda Report. A condition restricting the operation times of floodlights would be sufficient mitigation to ensure that the development would not cause harm to any potential bat corridors or access to foraging hedgerows.</p> <p>1 submission of neutrality was received highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the schools wish to develop the site to meet more modern standards of sporting facilities, which will benefit the students and wider community. • There should be consideration given to how the floodlights are directed, to ensure they do not encroach on the houses opposite. • There should be consideration on restricting use to reasonable times in the evening as well to ensure noise and disturbance is kept to a minimum at anti-social times. • The school currently guides patrons to use an overflow car park at Nestcot but this needs better regulation. At weekends, cars park on verges and also deteriorate the actual school playing fields by parking on them, so it will be beneficial for the school to limit access of cars to the actual fields. • Existing dangerous speed on unenforced 30mph road. Preference would be to have an average speed limit camera which will ensure proper obedience of the speed limit from the main roundabout A24 / A240 intersection to the A240 / B291 intersection. • Proposals could lead to cars parking on verges, which would cause accidents on busy road.

Consultee	Comments
	<p><u>Officer comment:</u> These issues have been discussed in the relevant sections of the Agenda Report and the scheme has had the full consideration of both the County Highway Authority and the Council's Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p>40 submissions of support were received raising the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the needs for junior women's sport in local clubs and the need for adequate facilities for them • Provides much needed facilities for the young people of Epsom and Ewell to participate in healthy sporting activity and regain social interactions to participate in sport, make friends, whilst representing Epsom & Ewell. • Children need to be active; they need activity and areas where they can have fun and enjoy themselves. We should all be behind these types of schemes • This addition to the Borough's sports facilities would be very positive. Both the school and the wider community would benefit significantly. • It is hugely important for young people to have a safe place to train. • Would have a beneficial impact on young people's mental health • During the winter many games involving the Epsom and Ewell Colts Team at Court Rec are cancelled each Sunday so this would avoid the need for them to miss so many games. • Would provide a much better playing surface for improving skills and passing. • The area has a huge shortage of all weather, safe, accessible facilities for our local community. • New initiatives planned to get young girls, teenage girls and women into football. Without this new facility there would be a struggle to offer these new sessions as there are no adequate alternative facilities for our local community. • An upgrade to an existing facility makes more sense than a completely new facility. • Having a facility in Ewell minimises need for travel further afield during winter months, which is good for traffic and the environment, enabling shorter journeys or independent travel on foot/bike. • This has been a waste of space and eyesore for far too long and needs this planning to go through to help the children and adults alike. • An increase in sport facilities for kids who over the last two/three years have had their sporting life turned upside down.

Consultee	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots football clubs provide the facilities and opportunities for young children to play football and keep them off the streets. <p>Additional supporting information was received by the Council and the application was readvertised by means of notification to 15 neighbouring properties, concluding on 16 July 2024.</p> <p>165 submissions of support were received, none of which raised new material considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed facility would be invaluable to the members of Epsom and Ewell Colts F.C. It would allow for the players to have year-round access to suitable training facilities and a match ready playing surface. The pitch could also generate welcome income to the organisation through the ability to hire the facility to unaffiliated parties. • The laying of 3G turf will lead to fewer injuries caused by slippery mud. • Epsom & Ewell have done an amazing job of getting hundreds of girls playing football. 30+ girls at the younger age groups with waiting lists. They need a decent facility to support these girls develop. • There is a clear shortage in the area. Scattering kids over miles using unsuitable facilities. • Families on lower incomes can't afford to pay more for better quality facilities at commercial centres like Goals. • For the size of Epsom and Ewell FC it needs a home in the community. • Without this facility girls are competing for venues who are already committed to established (usually boys) teams.

PLANNING LEGISLATION, POLICY, AND GUIDANCE

7. Planning Policy

7.1. National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

- Section 8: Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
- Section 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 12: Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places
- Section 13: Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

7.2. Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy 2007 (CS)

- Policy CS1: Sustainable Development
- Policy CS2: Green Belt
- Policy CS3: Biodiversity and Designated Nature Conservation Areas
- Policy CS4: Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS5: The Built Environment
- Policy CS6: Sustainability in New Development
- Policy CS13: Community, Cultural and Built Sports Facilities
- Policy CS16: Managing Transport and Travel

7.3. Epsom and Ewell Development Management Policies Document 2015 (DMPD)

- Policy DM1: Extent of the Green Belt
- Policy DM4: Biodiversity and New Development
- Policy DM5: Trees and Landscape
- Policy DM6: Open Space Provision
- Policy DM9: Townscape Character and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DM10: Design Requirements for New Developments
- Policy DM19: Development and Flood Risk
- Policy DM36: Sustainable Transport for New Development
- Policy DM37: Parking Standards

8. Supporting Guidance

8.1. National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

- Effective Use of Land
- Flood Risk and Coastal Change
- Green Belt
- Healthy and Safe Communities
- Light Pollution
- Natural Environment
- Noise
- Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way, and Local Green Space
- Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements

8.2. Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

- Parking Standards for Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document 2015
- Surrey County Council
- Surrey Transport Plan 2022–2032
- Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document 2016

8.3. Other Documentation

- Bats Conservation Trust, in conjunction with the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 08/10 – Bats and artificial lighting on the UK 2018

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

9. Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 9.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF 2023 stipulates that development proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved and where a proposal conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not usually be granted.

10. Principle of Development

10.1. Development in the Green Belt

- 10.2. The site is within Green Belt and Section 13 of the NPPF aims to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open with the purposes being to check unrestricted sprawl, prevent merging of towns, prevent encroachment within the countryside, preserve the setting of towns and encourage recycling of derelict sites.

- 10.3. Paragraph 152 of the NPPF, reinforced in Policy CS2 of the CS states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 requires substantial weight to be applied to harm to the Green Belt.

- 10.4. The Green Belt considerations include the following:

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of Section 13 of the NPPF and development plan policy

- 10.5. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF considers the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate, with one of the exceptions to this being (as per paragraph 154(b)) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land) for outdoor sport; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 10.6. Whilst the proposal would provide facilities for outdoor sport, paragraph 154 of the NPPF relates solely to the construction of new buildings. the proposed pitch, 8 no. 12 metre floodlights and associated fencing/spectator railings are not buildings, and therefore regard should also be given to paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

- 10.7. This sets out certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes (b) engineering operations.
- 10.8. In considering paragraphs 154(b) and 155(b) of the NPPF, the proposal would need to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

- 10.9. The NPPF highlights that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 10.10. Openness is, in effect, the absence of development and it has both a spatial and visual aspect to it.
- 10.11. The proposal involves the installation of an artificial grass pitch with 8 no. 12 metre high flood lights, 1.2 metre and 4.5 metre high galvanised perimeter fencing, team shelters and associated hard surfacing, as well as an increase of vehicle parking provision on the site.
- 10.12. Whilst the pitch itself would be at ground level and would not significantly alter the openness of the Green Belt, the floodlighting, new fencing, structures and would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the current facility.
- 10.13. Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 64-002-20190722 sets out that factors that can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt. One of these is the degree of activity likely to be generated. The proposal would increase the number of vehicle spaces on the site, which is also likely to conflict with the openness of the Green Belt.
- 10.14. The proposed floodlights would be greater in height than the existing boundary treatments surrounding the site and would therefore be visible from the surrounding properties, as well as the adjacent public footpath. Whilst their slender structure and limited bulk would somewhat mitigate their appearance, without any surrounding contextual backdrop of similar height, the proposed floodlights would appear as dominant additions to the site
- 10.15. Consequently, the development would cause spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt. For these reasons, the facilities would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as stated in the NPPF, to keep land permanently open.

Purposes of the Green Belt

10.16. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF indicates that there are five purposes of the Green Belt.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

10.17. The proposal would be in connection with the existing use of the land for outdoor sports and would therefore not conflict with these purposes of the Green Belt.

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

10.18. The site is not within the setting of an historic town or designated heritage asset and so the proposal would not conflict with this Green Belt purpose.

To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

10.19. Whilst the proposal would not positively contribute towards the Green Belt purpose of encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, it would not be in specific conflict with it either.

10.20. Accordingly, based on the evidence presented, the proposal would not fall under any of the exceptions listed in the NPPF and would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to Policy CS2 of the CS and Chapter 13 of the NPPF 2023.

If it is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development

10.21. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

10.22. The development would be inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful, as well as harm to the openness of the Green Belt. These matters attract substantial weight against the development.

Education

10.23. Paragraph 99 of the NPPF gives great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through planning permissions.

10.24. The proposal would be primarily utilised by Glyn School and feeder primary schools during the school day (term time), with some extracurricular activities up to around 4.30pm, and on Saturdays in term time up until 14:00, for a range of sporting fixtures.

10.25. Whilst Glyn School currently has access to existing grassed football pitches at Priest Hill Playing Fields, the School has advised that several PE sessions, extracurricular clubs and matches have been forfeited due to surface flooding and in inherent unsuitability of grass pitches during inclement weather.

10.26. As an all-weather pitch, the proposal would represent a significant upgrade to the existing school sport provision, which would have a beneficial impact on the school curriculum by allowing for a playing surface that would enable a significantly greater use than is currently possible without damage to the playing surface.

Community Facilities

10.27. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF seeks to plan positively for the provision of community facilities, including sports venues, an approach which is supported Policy CS2 of the C2, particularly where they address a deficiency in current provision.

10.28. Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities.

10.29. The Council's Play Pitch Strategy 2021 identifies that there are no full size 3G Artificial Grass Pitches in the Borough, although there are some smaller sided 3G pitches which have secured community use, but due to their lack of registration with the Football Association, can only be used for training purposes and not affiliated match play.

10.30. Notwithstanding that there has been a provision of a full-sized 3G football turf pitch at Epsom and Ewell High School since the adoption of the Play Pitch Strategy 2021, it still identifies a need for 4 no. additional 3G Football Turf Pitches in the Borough and the site is listed within the Strategy with specific actions for provision of new changing facilities, 3G Artificial Grass Pitches provision and to negotiate a Community User Agreement.

10.31. It is therefore clear that the Borough has a current deficiency in 3G Artificial Grass Pitch provision and the proposal would contribute towards meeting this outstanding need.

- 10.32. In regard to community uses, Epsom & Ewell Colts FC will occupy evening slots for training as part of the operating agreement in place between the school and club. Epsom & Ewell Colts FC are involved in this project and are one of the biggest clubs in Surrey with 41 mixed youth teams and 15 girls' teams.
- 10.33. Epsom & Ewell Colts would use the facility for training on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday between 17:00 – 21:00, with use by Colts Women on Fridays between 19:00 – 20:00. Matches would take place on Sunday, between 10:00 – 16:00.
- 10.34. The documents submitted in support of this application suggest that outside of the above hours, the facility would be made available for use by other community groups and local recreational users to 22:00 each evening, including weekends.
- 10.35. The documents submitted in support of this application demonstrates that there is confirmed community interest in using the facility by the following groups:
- Tidy Keepers (Chelsea FC Foundation and the goalkeeping coaching academy)
 - GLF Foundation (fully funded sessions for local children)
 - Pavletico Rovers
 - Tadworth Tigers
 - Glyn 6th Form Girls
 - FA Just Play (via Colts)
 - Jamie Cook Football Coaching
 - Glyn School Old Boys
 - Priest Hill Utd
- 10.36. Officers are satisfied that the proposal would provide an important sporting and recreational community facility. In supporting a prosperous rural economy, the NPPF encourages the retention and development of community facilities such as sports venues. It also acknowledges that sports facilities can enable and support healthy lifestyles and advance the well-being of communities.

Planning History

- 10.37. There are two pertinent permission on the site that are material to the consideration of this application.
- 10.38. In 2010, planning application 10/01034/FUL for the construction of a synthetic grass football pitch with perimeter fence and floodlighting (inter alia) was refused by the Council for reasons relating to harm to the openness, appearance and setting of the Green Belt, for which there were insufficient very special circumstances demonstrated to outweigh that

harm, and noise and disturbance resulting from the increased use of the site during the evenings.

10.39. At a subsequent appeal, the Inspector concluded that the proposal, which included 8 no 12 metre high floodlights, a 4.0 metre high perimeter fence and over flow parking, would result conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and would therefore be inappropriate development.

10.40. However, the Inspector considered the harm to the Green Belt would be outweighed by the provision of an enhanced sports facility for the school and wider community and allowed the appeal. Notwithstanding this, the permission was not commenced on site and has since expired.

10.41. In 2014, a further application, 14/01222/FUL, for the construction of a synthetic grass football pitch with perimeter fence and floodlighting (inter alia) was granted by the Council. Again, this permission had not commenced on site and has since expired.

10.42. The following table demonstrates the similarities of the current scheme against the previous permissions:

	Current	10/01034/FUL	14/01222/FUL
Athletic Track	Not Proposed	200m synthetic J-Track	200m synthetic J-Track
3G Pitch	70m x 106m	56m x 100m	56m x 100m
Perimeter Fence	4.5m and 1.2m high	4.0m high	4.0m high
Floodlights	8 no. 12m high	8 no. 12m high	8 no. 12m high
Parking Provision	58 spaces	46 spaces	46 spaces
Operation Hours	09:00 -21:00 Monday to Sat; 09:00 – 20:00 Sundays and public holidays	09:00 -21:00 Monday to Sat; 09:00 – 20:00 Sundays and public holidays	09:00 -21:00 Monday to Sat; 09:00 – 20:00 Sundays and public holidays

10.43. The planning history demonstrates that planning permission for a development similar to that currently sought under this application have been granted on this site in the past.

10.44. Whilst it is relevant that the methodology and policy for Green Belt has changed with the revisions to the NPPF since both these permissions, the emphasis on the great importance of Green Belts and the fundamental aims have remained in all revisions.

Green Belt Conclusion

10.45. The harm to the Green Belt created by reason of inappropriateness would be outweighed by other considerations as referred to above; namely the

need for the facility for both school and community use and the planning history of the site which has allowed similar developments on the site. For these reasons, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the harm have been demonstrated.

10.46. Partial Loss of Playing Field

10.47. Paragraph 103 of the NPPF guards against the unnecessary loss of sports and recreational land, including playing fields, unless it is clearly demonstrated the provision is surplus; or the proposal delivers an equal or better quality replacement; or the proposal is for new sports and/or recreational provision, the needs of which clearly outweigh the loss. This is echoed by Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

10.48. The playing field currently accommodates 3 rugby pitches, 7 football pitches and 3 cricket pitches. The proposal would result in the loss of a pitch marked out for rugby and would prejudice the ability to mark out sufficiently sized boundaries for the small natural turf cricket pitch. Aerial images suggest the area has also been marked for an athletics track but this is a flexible use that can be easily relocated.

10.49. As set out in The Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing field land. This includes development that may prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field.

10.50. In considering the loss of the rugby provision and the potential conflict with cricket provision on site as a result of the proposal, Sport England has consulted the national bodies for rugby and cricket. The Rugby Football Union notes that the proposed development would have relevance to two rugby clubs in the area: Old Glynonians RFC, who play on the site in question and Sutton and Epsom RFC, who utilise two sites in the Borough.

10.51. Old Glynonians RFC reports that the proposed 3G Artificial Grass Pitch would not be a pitch predominantly used by them, and that any displacement of school activity onto the remaining pitches may have a detrimental impact on overall pitch quality.

10.52. However, the Rugby Football Union notes that the Play Pitch Strategy 2021 has identified a need to increase local rugby pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used rugby pitch sites to be retained. The Rugby Football Union therefore queries whether the loss of the rugby pitch meets the exception policies of Sports England as it would not be replaced.

10.53. The English Cricket Board comments that there are two cricket squares on site, and that one of these would be potentially compromised, as the

proposed 3G Artificial Grass Pitch would be 40m from the square. This is inside the minimum cricket square boundary of 45.72m for adult play and at the limit of 40m recommended for junior play.

- 10.54. However, all evidence for this square is that whilst it is large enough to accommodate a full pitch length, it has been used for junior pitch lengths in recent times. If the intention is for this to continue to service only junior (U13) cricket then the English Cricket Board do not object to the loss of the playing field area.
- 10.55. The Football Foundation, on behalf of the Football Association, highlights that there exists a strong partnership with the applicant, Partner Clubs and Chelsea Foundation throughout the pre-application process, resulting in a detailed Site Development Plan and Programme of Use, hosting over 80 teams by year five. The proposal would have a positive impact on the Women and Girls game, providing a full player pathway from Wildcats, affiliated youth teams, women's recreational sessions through to adult teams. The Partner Clubs would introduce disability provision with support from Chelsea Foundation and working with a local school that caters for children with severe learning difficulties.
- 10.56. Sport England has considered all of the comments of the above national sporting bodies when forming their conclusion. Sports England have acknowledged the lack of full size 3G Artificial Grass Pitch football provision in the borough and that there is a need for additional full size 3G Artificial Grass Pitch football provision, even taking account of a new facility at Epsom and Ewell High School.
- 10.57. Sport England notes that while there is community use of the Glyn School/Priest Hill playing fields for rugby, this community use is limited to Old Glynionians, a single men's team. The Play Pitch Strategy 2021 identifies that the site is played to below capacity based on the quality of pitches and their ability to accommodate demand from Old Glynionians.
- 10.58. While Sport England acknowledges that the Play Pitch Strategy 2021 identifies capacity issues with community secured rugby provision in the borough, particularly in respect of meeting the demand for floodlit mid-week training, it is satisfied that there would not be any detrimental impact to rugby provision at Priest Hill Playing Fields, as there is sufficient flexibility within what is a large site to re-mark a rugby pitch elsewhere if required and there will be no impact on Old Glynionians in terms of meeting their match play and training requirements.
- 10.59. Furthermore, use of the 3G Artificial Grass Pitch and its ability to accommodate more activity than natural turf will reduce pressure on the remaining grass pitches at the site.
- 10.60. On the basis of the above, Sport England raise no objection to the loss of the existing play pitch provision on site as a result of the proposal, as the scheme would meet their exception policies.

- 10.61. Sport England has not sought a condition for a community use agreement as the Football Foundation is supporting the proposal with investment, and a community use arrangement is written into the terms and conditions of the award.

11. Trees and Landscaping

- 11.1. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF, Policy CS3 of the CS, Policy DM5 of the DMPD and the Householder SPG seek the retention, protection and enhancement of existing and new trees, hedgerows, and other landscape features, with removal of trees supported by sound justification and appropriate replacement planting of native species.
- 11.2. Hedgerow lines the north western boundary of the site. Although the proposed 3G pitch and fencing would not result in the loss of the hedgerow, the application has not been supported by any arboricultural information to demonstrate that the existing trees would be adequately protected.
- 11.3. There is hedgerow to the front boundary on Reigate Road with six trees in the south western corner of the site alongside the car park. The proposal will maintain the existing hardstanding area of the car park with the additional grasscrete area to the north being outside of the protection area of these trees. Accordingly, no tree removal is required and it is unlikely that any harm will be caused to the existing trees to be retained from the additional car parking.
- 11.4. The County Highways Authority have requested visibility splays at the vehicular entrance. This will involve the removal of a small length of hedgerow totalling about 2m. This is relatively minor in landscape terms when having regard to the total length of hedgerow and is not unreasonable.
- 11.5. In the event planning permission is granted, it would be reasonable to recommend a condition to secure a tree protection condition, to ensure that the construction phase of the proposal would not cause harm to the future health and well being of the existing surrounding trees. This approach would be consistent with the previous planning permissions granted on site.

12. Design and Character

- 12.1. Paragraphs 129, 135 and 139 of the NPPF refer to the need for functional and visually attractive development that is sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS5 of the CS requires high quality design that is attractive, relates to local distinctiveness and complements the attractive characteristics of the area.

- 12.2. Policy DM9 of the DMPD requires a positive contribution to and compatibility with the local character and the historic and natural environment and Policy DM10 requires good design that respects, maintains or enhances the prevailing house types and sizes, density, scale, layout, height, form and massing, plot width and building separation, building lines and key features.
- 12.3. The proposed pitch and associated fencing and other facilities would be highly visible from the public footpath network. Whilst there is a mixture of mature shrubbery and trees bounding the periphery of Priest Hill Playing Fields, there are also a number of substantial gaps that allow clear and direct views of the site.
- 12.4. Notwithstanding this, there is also an established 1.8 - 2.0 metre high galvanised fence installed along the periphery of Priest Hill Playing Fields. The proposed 4.5 metre high fencing proposed around the pitch would be similar in design to this existing fencing and would therefore have an acceptable appearance upon the existing character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the design of the proposed 4.5 metre high fencing allows transparency, so it would not create any enclosure, that would otherwise conflict with the openness of views across the site.
- 12.5. From the public footpath network, the proposed development in its entirety would be seen in context with the existing sports and recreation use of the land and would therefore not be read as an incongruous feature.
- 12.6. The main visual impact of the proposed development from further viewpoints along Reigate Road would be the proposed flood lights. During the day, these distance views would be read in context with the setting of the existing street lights. Whilst the illumination would differentiate between the flood lights and the streetlights in the evening hours in longer views of the site, as further discussed in Section 13 of this agenda report, mitigation measures on the floodlighting would prevent any detrimental visual impacts that would otherwise cause significant harm the character and appearance of the area.
- 12.7. The additional hard surfacing/ grasscrete proposed to extend the existing vehicle parking would not have a significant impact upon the appearance of the site, particularly given the presence of the existing boundary treatment, preventing direct views of these additions from the main street scene. Similarly, the scale of the proposed cycle storey would be appropriate for a small ancillary building on the site, with limited visual impact outside of the sporting complex.
- 12.8. In light of the above, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies CS5 of the CS, Policies DM9 and DM10 of the DMDP and the relevant design policies of the NPPF 2023.

13. Neighbour Amenity

- 13.1. Policy CS5 of the CS and Policy DM10 of the DMPD seeks to protect occupant and neighbour amenity, including in terms of privacy, outlook, sunlight/daylight, and noise whilst Paragraph 191 of the NPPF and Policy CS6 of the CS seek to mitigate and reduce noise impact.
- 13.2. The closest neighbouring properties to the site would be those located beyond Reigate Road, to the west of the site (80(a) – 84(a) and 86 Reigate Road (evens). The front boundary of the closest neighbouring property to the site would be 70 metres, with a distance of between 90 - 100 metres from the principal elevations of these neighbouring properties to the site.

Noise and Disturbance

- 13.3. Although the site is currently in use for sports training and events, these are during the daytime. The proposal would introduce the use of the site in the evening, up to 21:00. It is also likely that there would also be some additional noise and disturbance after these hours from vehicles leaving the site.
- 13.4. There may be some additional noise and disturbance resulting from the evening use of the site including from player usage, whistles, supporters and balls hitting fences. However, given the 70 metre buffer between the proposal and background noise levels associated with traffic movements on Reigate Road and when considering the use of the site would not extend into unsociable hours, Officers are satisfied that any new noise and disturbance arising from the site would not cause significant harm to the amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent properties. Any increase in traffic noise would not be significant in context with the existing heavy traffic flows on Reigate Road.
- 13.5. Furthermore, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection to the proposal in terms of noise and disturbance. Compliance with the specified materials, including noise reduction measures, is required by condition

Light Pollution

- 13.6. The proposed flood lights would be visible to the residential properties opposite the site, beyond Reigate Road.
- 13.7. The proposed floodlights would be located at a distance of 70 metres from the front boundary of the closest neighbouring property. Substantial trees on both sites of Reigate Road and the existing pavilion would provide a buffer to these properties that would mitigate the visual impacts of these flood lights.

- 13.8. The supporting lighting plans and details demonstrate that light spill is very localised. These nearby residential properties would not suffer from any direct light spill, as a result of the use of cowls and focused nature of the proposed lighting. However, the Council's Environmental Health Officer is concerned that reflected light would illuminate surfaces and properties in the surrounding area. However, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has recommended that to mitigate for this, the flood lighting is restricted to 21:00 Monday to Saturday and 20:00 on Sundays and Public Holidays. This would be consistent with the permissions granted under planning permissions 10/01034/FUL and 14/01222/FUL. It also falls within the scope of the proposed usage, which is up until and not beyond 21:00.
- 13.9. In light of the measures proposed to limit the undue impact of the floodlights, Officers are satisfied that the neighbouring amenities would be satisfactorily safeguarded.

14. Traffic Generation, Parking and Access

- 14.1. Policy CS16 of the CS encourages an improved and integrated transport network and facilitates a shift of emphasis to non-car modes as a means of access to services and facilities.
- 14.2. Development proposals should provide safe, convenient, and attractive accesses for all, be appropriate for the highways network, provide appropriate and effective parking provision, both on and off-site and ensure that vehicular traffic generated does not create new, or exacerbate existing, on street parking problems, nor materially increase other traffic problems.

14.3. Traffic Generation

- 14.4. Policy DM35 of the DMPD requires consideration of the impact upon the transport network via a Transport Assessment or Statement.
- 14.5. The application is supported by a Transport Technical Note (TN), prepared by Pulsar Transport Planning, reference 24063/n01 Rev A. The TN gives an account of the existing local highway network, as well as highlighting the accessibility benefits of the site. The County Highway Authority are satisfied that this highways account gives a fair representation of the site and the surrounding local network.
- 14.6. In respect of establishing the frequency of use of the Priest Hill sports pitches, the TA sets out the existing use of the site by the Epsom and Ewell Colts FC and Glyn School.
- 14.7. Epsom & Ewell Colts FC currently uses the sports pitches on Sunday with approximately 16 home matches taking place across 8 of the Priest Hill sports pitches across all the team age groups. The Priest Hill sports pitches are used from 0900-1500. Weekday evening training for the

Epsom & Ewell Colts FC does not occur at the Priest Hill sports pitches, which instead takes place at 8 different venues around and outside of the Borough.

- 14.8. The Glyn School uses the pitches for Saturday morning football matches, in addition to daily use during school term time and some after school extra-curricular activities. There is currently no weekday evening use of the site for either matches or training for any school or community group.
- 14.9. In considering the impact of the increased use of the site on traffic generation, the TN sets out that the proposal would attract weekday evening use, with the site peak usage being the Epsom & Ewell Colts FC on Tuesday – Thursday evenings between 19:00 – 21:00 during the October – April football season. The Epsom & Ewell Colts FC proposed having up to 3 no. youth teams training on the pitch during each hour's training session with circa 10 players training in each team. This means that up to 30 players would attend each hour's session, plus coaching staff, equating to a worst case scenario of 35 vehicles (up to 70 two way movements) per hour and 210 additional movements over the three hour training period.
- 14.10. However, the TN notes that the provision of a training facility for local players in the local area would have the significant benefit of reducing the length of vehicle trips that are currently made to sites around and outside of the Borough for evening training. The vehicle trips attending the site for evening training are likely to be already on the local highway network, albeit often driving much further than the site, due to lack of suitable facilities.
- 14.11. Furthermore, the provision of a training facility within the local area provides a greater opportunity for sustainable transport, thereby reducing traffic on the overall highway network.
- 14.12. The TN acknowledges that the training facility will also be made available to community groups in the evening, with particular emphasis on the identified growth areas of disabled football, women's and girls' football teams. These groups are under-represented in football at present and are therefore likely to attract smaller, lower intensity training groups, than the Epsom & Ewell Colts FC peak forecast usage.
- 14.13. The County Highway Authority are satisfied with this assessment of the likely impact of the proposed development upon the highway network and have not raised any objections relating to the impact of the proposed development upon the capacity or safety of the surrounding highway network.
- 14.14. Pedestrian and Vehicle Access and Manoeuvrability**
- 14.15. Paragraph 114 of the NPPF requires safe and suitable access, whilst paragraph 115 of the NPPF allows for refusal where there would be an

unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe

- 14.16. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF seeks to minimise conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. This is reinforced in Policy CS16 of the CS and DM10(x) of the DMPD.
- 14.17. The site currently has two vehicular access points onto Reigate Road. The northern access point is regularly used by Glyn School for vehicular access and egress to the Priest Hill playing fields for sports lessons, with a separate adjacent pedestrian access provided immediately north via a pedestrian gate.
- 14.18. When the pitches are used by Epsom & Ewell Colts FC on Sundays, the second access (to the south) is utilised, so that it forms an access and egress-only arrangement with an internal loop. This is managed by Epsom & Ewell Colts FC volunteers as well as accompanying signage and pre-match information sent to all home and away teams.
- 14.19. The proposal would not involve any changes or modifications to the existing vehicular and pedestrian accesses to the site. Subject to a condition to secure a pedestrian inter-visibility splay on each side of both access points to Priest Hill Playing Fields, the County Highway Authority are satisfied that the proposal would not result in any conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. However, there is no pavement across the southern entrance and it is only used on matchdays. As such, the condition should only apply to the northern egress.

14.20. Car Parking

- 14.21. Policy DM37 of the DMPD and the Parking Standards for Residential Development SPD specify a minimum requirement for vehicle parking provision. Parking spaces are to be 2.4m x 4.8m in order to be considered a standard parking space.
- 14.22. The Council's Parking Standards SPD defers to the Surrey County Council Vehicular, Electric Vehicle and Cycle Parking Guidance 2023 recommended parking provision for non-residential development.
- 14.23. To accommodate a Field Sports Club use, the County Guidance advises that there should be a maximum range of 1.0 vehicle parking spaces per 2 playing participants.
- 14.24. The TN advises that currently on Epsom and Ewell Colt FC Sunday Match days, only team managers and match officials are permitted to park in the on-site car park and a strict drop off policy for players applies. This is closely managed by Epsom & Ewell Colts FC volunteers who are positioned around the car park and at the access and egress points to ensure that the car park operates as efficiently as possible. The club uses

signage, as well as informal barriers to create an efficient drop off area within the car park.

- 14.25. The drop off facility operates by vehicles entering the site and players exiting the car to a formalised drop off point. Drop off vehicles are not permitted to park on site; instead, they are directed to park at NESCOL (3 minute walk to the site) where arrangements are in place between Epsom & Ewell Colts FC to use their car park for weekend matches.
- 14.26. The Glyn School operates a similar system on Saturday morning matches, where players are dropped off and parents and spectators are directed to park in the NESCOL car park, for which Glyn School have an arrangement with NESCOL. Parking on site is only reserved for staff and match officials on these days.
- 14.27. The existing use of the playing fields has demonstrated that visiting school teams rarely use coaches to attend school matches. However, on the rare occasions that coaches do attend, these are accommodated within the NESCOL parking area under the School's parking agreement.
- 14.28. The proposal would introduce an increased use of the site during weekday evenings, with peak usage during the football season (October – April). To accommodate a new evening demand resulting from the development, an increase of vehicle parking spaces is proposed on the site; increasing from 48 spaces (currently unmarked) to 56 formal car parking spaces, along with 2.0 minibus spaces for Glyn School use.
- 14.29. As discussed in paragraph 14.9 of this Agenda Report, the worst case traffic generation scenario for evening training would result in a demand for 35 car parking spaces. The training timetable for the 3 no 1 hour evening training sessions includes a 10 minute buffer between sessions to allow for the majority of parents and players from the previous training session to have cleared the car park before the peak arrival for the next session occurs.
- 14.30. The provision of 58 vehicle parking spaces on the site would meet the evening weekday demand.
- 14.31. In respect of Epsom & Ewell Colts FC Sunday matches, it is understood that the existing drop off operation currently in use on the site would be maintained.
- 14.32. Whilst the training facility will also be made available to community groups, as nature of these are likely to be at a lower intensity than the Epsom & Ewell Colts FC forecast usage, there would be vehicle parking spaces on site to meet this demand.
- 14.33. Notwithstanding the above, the County Highway Authority have recommended a condition to secure a Car Parking Management Plan in the event that planning permission is granted, to include details relating to

the Sunday drop off operation and details of how the 10 minute buffer period between training sessions is to be managed, to ensure car park is cleared ready for the next peak arrival. Subject to this condition which would require ongoing compliance with the Car Parking Management Plan, the County Highway Authority raises no objection to the scheme in terms of the parking provision proposed on site.

14.34. EV charging

14.35. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF requires new development to (inter alia) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

14.36. The TN advises that 6.0 vehicle parking spaces are proposed to have active electric vehicle charging capability (10% of total spaces) with an opportunity to increase the provision if demand dictates. The County Highway Authority have recommended a condition to secure this provision, in the event that planning permission is granted.

14.37. Disabled parking

14.38. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF requires new development to (inter alia) be designed to address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport.

14.39. The TN advises that 3.0 vehicle parking spaces would be designated as disabled (5% of total spaces), which would meet Government and County requirements.

14.40. Cycle Parking

14.41. Policy DM36 of the DMPD requires the provision of cycle networks and facilities and Policy DM37 requires minimum provision of cycle storage as set out in Annexe 2 - Parking Standards for new development.

14.42. The Council's Parking Standards requires cycle parking provision to be in line with the minimum levels identified in the Surrey County Council Vehicle, Cycle and Electric Vehicle Parking Guidance for New Development 2023. There is no identified cycle parking standard identified in the guidance for the use proposed and therefore an individual assessment is undertaken by the County Highway Authority.

14.43. The details supporting this application demonstrate that 10 no cycle parking spaces are proposed. The County Highway Authority is satisfied with the quantity of cycle provision proposed, subject to a condition, in the event permission is granted, to secure details of the cycle storage facilities.

14.44. In light of the above, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy CS16 of the CS, Policies DM10, DM35, DM36 and DM37 of the DMDP and the relevant sustainable transport policies of the NPPF.

15. Flooding and Drainage

15.1. Flood Risk and Vulnerability

15.2. Paragraphs 165 and 173 of the NPPF, Policy CS6 of the CS and Policy DM19 of the DMPD state that development at medium or high risk from flooding must ensure that there is no increase in flood risk, whether on or off site, and implementation of flood resilience and mitigation to reduce it to acceptable levels.

15.3. In terms of fluvial flooding, the site is located in an area of low flood risk, outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3 as identified on the Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and therefore the proposed development would be wholly in Flood Zone 1. As such the development has low risk of fluvial flooding.

15.4. Furthermore, the access to the site is also located within Flood Zone 1 and would continue unimpeded to provide safe access to and from the residential developments in the event of a flood.

15.5. As the proposed development would lie within Flood Zone 1, neither the sequential test nor the exceptions test, as set out in the Governments guidance 'Flood risk assessment: the sequential test for applicants' 2017 needs to be carried out.

15.6. Sustainable Drainage

15.7. Paragraph 173 of the NPPF, Policy CS6 of the CS 2007 and Policy DM19 of the DMPD seek the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).

15.8. The application is supported by a Drainage Management Plan, associated drainage drawing and infiltration tests, prepared by Smith Construction, which identifies that the drainage scheme involves the installation of catch pits at each corner of the pitch and at the connection to the main outfall pipe, plus any further changes of direction in the drainage runs.

15.9. The Lead Local Flood Authority have confirmed that the drainage proposal satisfies the requirements of the NPPF and has recommended that should permission be granted, suitable conditions are required to secure details of the design of the surface water drainage scheme and to secure a verification report, to ensure that the surface water drainage scheme has been constructed as per the agreed scheme.

- 15.10. As such, it is considered that the flood risk and surface water flooding have been addressed in accordance with Policy CS6 of the CS and Policy DM19 of the DMDP and the relevant flood requirements of the NPPF.

16. Ecology and Biodiversity

16.1. Ecological Impact

- 16.2. Paragraphs 180 and 186 of the NPPF, Policy CS3 of the CS and Policy DM4 of the DMPD require the conservation and enhancement of on-site biodiversity, with minimisation of impacts and the provision of mitigation measures. The duty of care extends to Regulation 9(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to protect species identified under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- 16.3. The site is located 120 metres from the boundary of the Priest Hill Nature Reserve, which is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.
- 16.4. The application has not been supported by any ecological information, partly because the proposal would replicate an existing use on the site.
- 16.5. The main impact of the proposed development on existing ecology would be the floodlighting, as all bat species are light adverse, although the extent to which this varies according to species. Given the distance of the site to the Priest Hill Nature Reserve, it is likely that the edge of the site is a foraging resource and commuting route for bats.
- 16.6. Artificial lighting along foraging pathways can be disturbing to bats and can deter them from using their usual foraging area. However, lighting is particularly harmful if used along woodland edges and near hedgerow.
- 16.7. Whilst the supporting lighting plans and details demonstrate that the majority of the light spill would not impact upon the adjoining SNCI or the surrounding boundary hedgerow to the north east, east, and south of the field, a small section of the north west hedgerow would be affected by light spill at an intensity of 2-5 lux.
- 16.8. The Bats Conservation Trust, in conjunction with the Institution of Lighting Professionals have produced Guidance Note 08/10 – Bats and artificial lighting on the UK advises that the average light level on hedgerows mostly used for foraging by bats is 0.45 lux and significant avoidance impacts have been recorded from as low as 3.6 lux.
- 16.9. The Guidance also provides appropriate luminaire specification that provide mitigation, which includes the use of LED luminaires and ensuring that lighting is not used longer than necessary.

- 16.10. Bats emerge from their roosts and start foraging at dusk (approximately 30 minutes after sunset). During the summer months, the pitch will either not be in use or lighting would not be required as use is limited to 21:00. During the winter months (November to March) bats are usually hibernating, so are unlikely to be affected by lighting. There is potential for a very small degree of conflict during the shoulder seasons when foraging is potentially occurring and lighting will be in use.
- 16.11. However, given that the proposal would only affect a small proportion of the existing north west hedgerow and given the mitigation in the form of operational hours of the lighting to 21:00, Officers are satisfied that there would not be an unacceptable effect on bats as a result of the proposal.
- 16.12. In light of the above, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that they have carried out their duty of care under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to protect the species identified under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

17. Archaeology

- 17.1. Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- 17.2. Policy CS5 of the CS sets out that the Council will protect and seek to enhance the Borough's heritage assets including (inter alia) archaeological remains. The settings of these assets will be protected and enhanced.
- 17.3. Policy DM8 of the DMPD seeks to resist the loss of Heritage Assets and instead promote the opportunity to conserve and enhance these. Specifically, on any major development site of 0.4ha or greater, applicants are required to undertake prior assessment of the possible archaeological significance of a site and the implications of the proposals.
- 17.4. Although the site lies within an area of archaeological interest, the application is not supported by any archaeological assessments. Notwithstanding this, the County Archaeological Officer has reviewed the details light of the archaeological potential on the site, and recommends, in the event permission is granted, a condition to an archaeological watching brief over excavations required to facilitate the development, in order to mitigate the impacts of development on archaeology.
- 17.5. In light of the above, and subject to the recommended condition as set out by the County Archaeologist, Officers are satisfied that there would be no adverse archaeological implications and the proposal would accord with

Policy CS5 of the CS, Policy DM8 of the DMPD and the requirements of the NPPF.

18. Accessibility and Equality

- 18.1. Policy CS16 of the CS and Policy DM12 of the DMPD requires safe, convenient, and attractive access to be incorporated within the design of the development.
- 18.2. In comparison to the existing situation, the proposal would create an accessible pitch that can be accessed from the car parking area by hardstanding. Furthermore, the proposal would provide 3 no. dedicated accessible parking spaces on site.
- 18.3. The Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or belief. There would be no adverse impacts because of the development.

19. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 19.1. The application is not liable for CIL payments.

CONCLUSION

20. Green Belt Conclusion

- 20.1. The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt as a result of spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt caused by the proposed floodlighting, new fencing, structures and increase in the degree of activity likely to be generated.
- 20.2. However, very special circumstances, namely the need for the facility for both school and community use in light of a clear deficiency of similar sporting facilities in the Borough and the planning history of the site that has constantly supported similar development, otherwise outweigh this harm.

21. Planning Balance

- 21.1. The presumption is to grant permission for sustainable development unless any adverse effects of doing so would outweigh the benefits.
- 21.2. Section 2 of the NPPF has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the Development Plan. Policy CS1 of the CS expects development to contribute positively to the social, economic, and environmental improvements in achieving

sustainable development whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.

21.3. Social Considerations

21.4. The proposal would enhance the quality of facilities on the site to the benefit of the school curriculum and extracurricular activities associated with Glyn School and its associated feeder schools by enabling a significantly greater use of a football pitch than is currently possible. Given the great weight that the NPPF places on the need to expand or alter schools, this benefit is given significant weight in the planning balance.

21.5. The proposal would provide a sporting and recreational community facility that contributes to there is a clear and identified need as a result of a shortfall in provision, as well as meeting the needs of diverse members of the community. This benefit is given significant weight in the planning balance.

21.6. The proposal would provide important physical and mental health benefits especially for young people, which would align with the aims of the Framework to enable and support healthy lifestyles. This benefit is given moderate weight in the planning balance.

21.7. Environmental Considerations

21.8. The proposal represents an opportunity to better manage access and parking arrangements at the site through conditions, to ensure impact upon the surrounding highway network is managed and within acceptable levels. This benefit is given moderate weight in the planning balance.

21.9. Environmental Adverse Impacts

21.10. The proposal would create opportunities for noise, disturbance and light pollution impacts on the amenities of the surrounding neighbouring properties as a result of the proposal introducing evening weekday training sessions. However, these impacts could be suitably mitigated through the use of planning conditions. This adverse impact is given moderate weight in the planning balance.

21.11. The proposal would result in a low level light of spill over a small section of the north west hedgerow that has the potential to provide a foraging resource and commuting route for bats. However, these impacts could be suitably mitigated through the use of planning conditions. This adverse impact is given moderate weight in the planning balance.

21.12. Conclusion

21.13. Overall, whilst there are adverse effects in respect of this application, these would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits,

when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or where specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions and informatives

1. Time Limit

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

Reason: To comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Approved Details

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and reports:

Drawing Number 2371/OVER/02 – Proposed Synthetic Sports Pitch
Existing Building Shown

Drawing Number 2371/SITE/02 – Proposed Synthetic Sports Pitch
Existing Building Shown Site Layout

Drawing Number 24063 001 Rev B – Proposed Car Parking Layout
(Sheet 1 of 2)

Drawing Number 24063 001 Rev B – Proposed Car Parking Layout
(Sheet 2 of 2)

Drawing Number 2371/SEC/01 – Proposed Section Drawing General
Arrangement

Drawing Number 2371/GA/01 Rev D – Proposed Synthetic Sports Pitch
General Arrangement

Drawing Number 2371/SECT/01 Rev P – Proposed Synthetic Sports Pitch
Long Sections

Drawing Number 1- Football Pitch Floodlighting
Product Specification Sheet 4m Pro Team Shelter

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning as required by Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy 2007.

Pre Commencement Conditions

3. SuDS Details

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the design of a surface water drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The design must satisfy the SuDS Hierarchy and be compliant with the national Non- Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS, NPPF and Ministerial Statement on SuDS. The required drainage details shall include:

- a) The results of infiltration testing completed in accordance with BRE Digest: 365 and confirmation of groundwater levels.
- b) Evidence that the proposed final solution will effectively manage the 1 in 30 & 1 in 100 (+20 allowance for climate change) storm events, during all stages of the development. The final solution should follow the principles set out in the approved drainage strategy.
- c) Detailed drainage design drawings and calculations to include: a finalised drainage layout detailing the location of drainage elements, pipe diameters, levels, and long and cross sections of each element including details of any flow restrictions and maintenance/risk reducing features (silt traps, inspection chambers etc.). Confirmation is required of a 1m unsaturated zone from the base of any proposed soakaway to the seasonal high groundwater level and confirmation of half-drain times.
- d) A plan showing exceedance flows (i.e. during rainfall greater than design events or during blockage) and how property on and off site will be protected from increased flood risk.
- e) Details of drainage management responsibilities and maintenance regimes for the drainage system.
- f) Details of how the drainage system will be protected during construction and how runoff (including any pollutants) from the development site will be managed before the drainage system is operational.

The development shall not be used until the drainage scheme has been implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into the development and to reduce the impact of flooding in accordance with Policy CS6 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy 2007 and Policy DM19 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

4. Arboricultural Method Statement

No development shall take place until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 (or later revision) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details. No equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought onto the site for the purposes of the development until fencing has been erected in accordance with the Tree Protection Plan. Within any area fenced in accordance with this condition, nothing shall be stored, placed or disposed of above or below ground, the ground level shall not be altered, no excavations shall be made, nor shall any fires be lit, without the prior written consent of the local planning authority. The fencing shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details, until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been moved from the site.

Reason: To protect the trees on site which are to be retained in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy 2007 and Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

5. Written Scheme of Investigation

No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure archaeological investigation recording in accordance with Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

6. Compliance with Construction Management Plan

The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in accordance with the Construction Management Plan prepared by Smith Construction and received by the Local Planning Authority on 11 January 2021.

Reason: In order for the development not to prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF 2023, and to satisfy policies DM35 and DM36 of the Development Management Policies 2015 and Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy 2007.

Pre Operation Conditions

7. Pedestrian Visibility Splays

The development hereby approved shall not first operate unless and until a pedestrian inter-visibility splay measuring 2m by 2m has been provided on each side of the northern access point to Priest Hill Sports Pavilion (Reigate Road), the depth measured from the back of the footway (or verge) and the widths outwards from the edges of the access. No

obstruction to visibility between 0.6m and 2m in height above ground level shall be erected within the area of such splays and the splays shall be maintained for the life of the development.

Reason: In order for the development not to prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF 2023, and to satisfy policies DM35 and DM36 of the Development Management Policies 2015 and Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy 2007.

8. Car Parking Management Plan

The development hereby approved shall not first operate unless and until a Car Parking Management Plan has been provided and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Management Plan shall include details such as all proposed access arrangements to and from the site, marshalling, match day operations, information provided to teams, gate operation and signage. The operation of the car park shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details for the life of the development.

Reason: In order for the development not to prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF 2023, and to satisfy policies DM35 and DM36 of the Development Management Policies 2015 and Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy 2007.

9. Electric Vehicle Charging Points

The development hereby approved shall not first operate unless and until at least 6 parking spaces are provided with a fast-charge Electric Vehicle charging point (current minimum requirements - 7 kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230v AC 32 Amp single phase dedicated supply) and a further 6 are provided with cabling for the future provision of charging points, in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In recognition of Section 9 of the NPPF 2023 an in meeting its objectives, as well as and to satisfy policies DM35 and DM36 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

10. Cycle Storage Details

The development hereby approved shall not first operate unless and until facilities for the secure, lit and covered parking of bicycles and the provision of a charging point with timer for e-bikes by said facilities have been provided within the development site in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

and thereafter the said approved facilities shall be provided, retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In recognition of Section 9 of the NPPF 2023 and in meeting its objectives, as well as and to satisfy policies DM35 and DM36 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

11. SuDS Verification

Prior to the first occupation of the development, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This must demonstrate that the surface water drainage system has been constructed as per the agreed scheme (or detail any minor variations), provide the details of any management company and state the national grid reference of any key drainage elements (surface water attenuation devices/areas, flow restriction devices and outfalls), and confirm any defects have been rectified.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into the development and to reduce the impact of flooding in accordance with Policy CS6 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy 2007 and Policy DM19 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

12. Compliance with Materials Schedule

Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, the materials as submitted with the application shall be installed in accordance with the following:

- Plans numbered BL-Rubber-01 Rev A, dated 16 January 2014
- Plans numbered Twin SB4470-02, and Twin SB4470-02-B, dated 14 January 2014
- Product Specification prepared by B&L Fencing Services Ltd

unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

Post Development Conditions

13. External Lighting

The proposed artificial pitch shall be artificially illuminated only in accordance with the lighting specifications and product description from GigTera, the report from Christy Lighting Masts Ltd and the lighting plan numbered 1, all received by the local planning authority on 14 June 2024. The artificial light spill associated with the development shall not exceed

that as set out in the approved details, unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

14. Floodlight and Facility Hours of Operation

The floodlighting and facilities hereby approved shall not be used outside the following times: 09.00 hrs - 21.00 hrs Mondays to Saturdays, and 09.00 hrs - 20.00 hrs on Sundays, Public Holidays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

15. Amplification

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

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

INFORMATIVES

1. Floodlight and Facility Hours of Operation

This consent contains conditions that require subsequent approval of detailed matters before the development commences. There is a fee for submission of details to comply with conditions, which is payable for each separate submission rather than for each condition. Decisions may take up to eight weeks, or longer if consultation with third parties is required.

2. Positive and Proactive Discussion

In dealing with the application the Council has implemented the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre-application advice service, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably.

3. Building Control

Your attention is drawn to the need to comply with the relevant provisions of the Building Regulations, the Building Acts and other related legislation. These cover such works as - the demolition of existing buildings, the erection of a new building or structure, the extension or alteration to a building, change of use of buildings, installation of services, underpinning works, and fire safety/means of escape works. Notice of intention to demolish existing buildings must be given to the Council's Building Control Service at least 6 weeks before work starts. A completed application form together with detailed plans must be submitted for approval before any building work is commenced.

4. Wheel Washing

The developer is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be carried from the site and deposited on or damage the highway from uncleaned wheels or badly loaded vehicles. The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to recover any expenses incurred in clearing, cleaning or repairing highway surfaces and prosecutes persistent offenders (Highways Act 1980 Sections 131, 148, 149).

5. Damage to Highway

Section 59 of the Highways Act permits the Highway Authority to charge developers for damage caused by excessive weight and movements of vehicles to and from a site. The Highway Authority will pass on the cost of any excess repairs compared to normal maintenance costs to the applicant/organisation responsible for the damage.

6. Electric Vehicle Provision

Condition No 2 & 3 have been recommended because Surrey County Council's Electric Vehicle charging requirements for the development proposed, exceeds those as defined within Building Regulations. The County Highway consider it is necessary for the condition to be imposed on any consent granted, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (2023) at paragraph 116 (e) and Surrey County Council's LTP4 policy on improving emissions intensity and energy efficiency of vehicles and operational efficiency of roads through technology improvements.

7. Electricity Supply (Vehicle)

It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the electricity supply is sufficient to meet future demands and that any power balancing technology is in place if required. Electric Vehicle Charging Points shall be provided in accordance with the Surrey County Council Vehicular, Cycle and Electric Vehicle Parking Guidance for New Development 2023. Where undercover parking areas (multi-storey car parks, basement or

undercroft parking) are proposed, the developer and LPA should liaise with Building Control Teams and the Local Fire Service to understand any additional requirements. If an active connection costs on average more than £3600 to install, the developer must provide cabling (defined as a 'cabled route' within the 2022 Building Regulations) and two formal quotes from the distribution network operator showing this.

8. Electricity Supply (E-Bike)

It is the responsibility of the developer to provide e-bike charging points with socket timers to prevent them constantly drawing a current over night or for longer than required. Signage should be considered regarding damaged or shock impacted batteries, indicating that these should not be used/charged. The design of communal bike areas should consider fire spread and there should be detection in areas where charging takes place. With regard to an e-bike socket in non-domestic buildings the premises should have detection, and an official e-bike charger should be used. Guidance on detection can be found in BS 5839-1 of the code of practice for designing, installing, commissioning, and maintaining fire detection and alarm systems in non-domestic buildings.

9. Source Protection Zone

If proposed works result in infiltration of surface water to ground within a Source Protection Zone the Environment Agency will require proof of surface water treatment to achieve water quality standards.