

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 6 January 2016

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	15/00715/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	15 January 2016
WARD/PARISH:	HUMMERSKNOTT
LOCATION:	Carmel College, The Headlands
DESCRIPTION:	Construction of a synthetic sand dressed turf pitch, along with associated floodlighting, enclosures and acoustic fence (amended plans and additional information received 11 September 2015 and 13 November 2015)
APPLICANT:	Carmel College

Members will recall that this planning application has been deferred from previous Planning Applications Committees to allow officers and objectors further opportunity to assess the amended plans and additional information that was received 11 September 2015 and 13 November 2015.

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Carmel College comprises the main school buildings with associated car parking areas, playing fields, sports facilities and hard standing areas. Vehicular access to the site is off The Headlands with a pedestrian access off Clare Avenue to the north. There are residential dwellings to the north, west and south of the College and St Clares Abbey lies to the east beyond the playing fields and an adjacent woodland area. There are a number of trees within the site which are covered by a tree preservation order dated 2004.

The Football Foundation has approved a contribution towards the refurbishment of the existing sand filled playing pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex to form a new floodlit 3G football training pitch at the Complex. As this pitch is funded by the Football Association, its synthetic surface will need to be a one that is appropriate for football and as a result, is not suitable for hockey. This dedicated surface for football will provide the opportunity to expand the range of partners and clubs that use the facilities at Eastbourne therefore supporting the financial viability of the Complex. As a result of changing the surface at Eastbourne, there is a need to secure alternative provision where hockey can be played alongside other sports (this is a grant condition of the Football Foundation offer for Eastbourne Sports Complex). Working in partnership with Sport England, the Football Association and England Hockey, a potential solution has been proposed in partnership with Carmel College.

Carmel College have had aspirations for some time to provide a synthetic pitch on their site to meet curriculum need, however whilst having significant funding available, are unable to commit to the full costs. The Council has been supporting Carmel College with funding applications to Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund and one to England Hockey, both to support the proposed provision of the new facility at Carmel College. Both of these applications have been approved for funding by the respective bodies.

There are two hockey clubs currently playing at Eastbourne Sports Complex (Darlington Hockey Club and Bishop Auckland) and demand is equivalent to two hockey matches at peak time. Club development may impact on requirements if the number of teams grow as forecasted. Sport England Facilities Planning modelling reveals that there is unmet demand for synthetic pitches within the Borough and that all existing facilities are used to capacity.

There is an overall requirement for 3 x 3G pitch (football and rugby) and 1 x hockey pitch to meet the supply needs of Darlington (needs assessment carried out as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy Development 2015).

Carmel College is an important community use venue in the town already and the school are fully committed to supporting a comprehensive programme of hockey development in the town (this is detailed in the Hockey Development Plan that has been written in partnership with England Hockey). Surveys were sent to all schools from the Council's Childrens Services Education Department to consult on the Playing Pitch and Facilities Strategy to inform school aspirations in the next five years and only Carmel College responded with an aspiration to build a new sand based AGP.

All sites were considered at Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group and numerous options considered. Carmel was the preferred option for England Hockey, Sport England and the Council as it meets the curriculum requirement of the College (currently very limited all weather outdoor surface provision) and is financially achievable. Other sites considered by the steering group included Mowden Rugby Club and Eastbourne but only Carmel College wanted a hockey synthetic pitch and were prepared to put forward the funding. Darlington Rugby Club's priorities at Blackwell Meadows were captured through the club consultation process and centred on relocating Darlington FC 1883 to their Grange Road site. There was no aspiration for a Hockey sand based pitch from the club as this does not meet FA or RFU specification.

The proposal involves the erection of a synthetic sand dressed turf pitch on the eastern playing field at the College. The overall size of the pitch (including run offs around the edge of the pitch) measures approximately 101.4metres long by 63 metres wide. The pitch would be enclosed by welded mesh fencing (coloured green) predominately 3 metres in height but with two sections directly behind the goalmouths 5 metres in height. There would be eight 15 metre high lighting columns around the edge of the pitch. It is proposed that an acoustic fence measuring 3 metres in height would be located around both the northern and southern boundaries of the pitch.

The pitch would be used between the hours of 08:00 – 21:00 weekdays (Monday to Friday) and 09:00 – 16:00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

During term time (Monday to Friday) it is anticipated that between 08:00 to 15:35, the pitch would be used by the pupils of the College for curriculum activities after which it would be used by After College Clubs until 17:00. Between 18:00 and 21:00 the pitch would be available for usage by Hockey Club Training nights and other community uses such as quad kids athletics,

small sided hockey, rounders, rush hockey ,golf initiatives (soft ball) and casual football practice. The facility would be available on Saturdays and Sundays for the above and also junior and mini coaching sessions and hockey club matches. Outside of term time, the Academy works closely with Darlington Move More Team and the Get Going summer programme.

The pitch surface is a sand dressed surface to meet England Hockey Strategy Category 2 requirements and it would not be used for any competitive football matches, adult football leagues and adult club training. Adult football is defined as persons over the age of 16.

The usage of the pitch would be confirmed by a Community Use Agreement which has been submitted in support of this planning application. Whilst the Agreement has been secured by the Local Planning Authority, it would be the Academy's responsibility to ensure that the pitch is operated in accordance with the Agreement. A Management Plan has also been submitted to highlight how the Academy will manage bookings, supervise the pitch when in use, ensure toilets and changing room facilities are made available along with contact details to report any contraventions.

The applicant carried out a consultation exercise with local residents prior to the submission of the planning application. Members will see further in this Report that a number of residents have heavily criticised how this consultation exercise was carried out by the Academy. Officers can advise Members that carrying out such a consultation prior to submitting a planning application is encouraged by the Local Planning Authority but there is no statutory requirement for any applicant to do such an exercise. Furthermore, how successful the residents consider the consultation to have been is not a material planning consideration when determining the planning application.

PLANNING HISTORY

The most recent and relevant entries are:

04/01291/DC In December 2004 planning permission was GRANTED for the provision of a multi-use games area and associated fencing and floodlights

06/00454/FUL In June 2006 planning permission was GRANTED for the installation of ten temporary teaching accommodation cabins

06/00687/FUL In September 2006 planning permission was GRANTED for the demolition of buildings and the erection of three replacement school buildings

07/00035/FUL In April 2007 planning permission was GRANTED for the retention of temporary car park and access track

07/00934/FUL In November 2007 planning permission was GRANTED for the retention of temporary car park and extension of opening times to 0730 to 1800 hours

12/00491/FUL In September 2012 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of first floor extension to incorporate three classrooms with associated storage, seminar room, accessible toilet, replacement roof over dining terrace, replacement staircases and provision of a platform lift and replacement of Main Visitor entrance doors

14/00080/FUL In April 2014 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of a two storey extension to north west of the site to form the Music and Drama Department and associated additional car parking

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The relevant national and local development plan policies are:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997

E2 – Development Limits

E3 – Protection Of Open Land

E12 – Trees and Development

R11 – Artificial Playing Turf

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

CS1 – Darlington’s Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy

CS2 – Achieving High Quality Sustainable Design

CS14 – Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness

CS15 – Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity

CS16 – Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

CS18 – Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities

Other Documents

Tees Valley Design Guide and Specification – Residential and Industrial Estates Development

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Prior to the submission of the amended and additional plans received 13 November 2015 a total of 127 letters of objection were received by the Local Planning Authority. Some of the letters are detailed and comment and query matters on drainage, highway matters, ecology, the plans and information such as the Lighting Assessment and the Noise Impact Assessment that supported the planning application at this stage which has been considered by the Local Planning Authority.

General comments on the planning application can be summarised as follows:

- *Carmel College have sought to make significant changes to their site and facilities at the same time of year for many of the last 40 years. This means that for two periods each day residents of The Headlands are unable to access or leave their own driveways and they could be denied access to emergency services;*
- *The development would be a dominant feature in this residential area, made worse by the fact that the proposed site is at the top of an incline, making it more prominent in the area. Such masts (lighting columns) are more suitable for use in high level security for industrial buildings. I have also have concerns about noise at night if this pitch was to be hired out to local football teams;*
- *It is interesting to note the number of times the word “urban” is used and the obscure references to Benton Park School and brownfields. It is also interesting that the term hockey is used with only one hockey club in Darlington and a pitch at Eastbourne already. The Statement states the mesh fencing would enable views through the fencing but how does this relate to the 3metre high timber sound proof fencing and 15 metre high lighting columns projecting above? The lighting columns are higher than this at Frankland prison, Durham*
- *The development will destroy the character of this area. It is too close to residential housing. No account has been taken of the birds and bats, which feed on the existing*

grassland and the purposes of the MUGA is at best obscure. Carmel College already have rugby and soccer pitches to excess. The lighting is not of great benefit to a school and they are seeking commercial gain only.

- How can any assessment on noise and light be carried out when the project is at planning stage? No one will know the adverse impact on the neighbourhood by doing hypothetical assessments. Residents who live nearby other similar sites complain bitterly about both issues. That is real evidence.*
- Over many years police, Councillors, school representatives and residents have tackled the already existing severe traffic congestion and parking difficulties at the start and end of the school day. The school has increased in size and so has the amount of traffic. Several building projects have taken place all of which entailed site traffic using The Headlands. We tolerated that because it was short term. Evenings and weekends should be relatively free from added traffic in that it ought to remain a peaceful residential area. Some nights the existing car park is already in use. Would the hockey pitch still be used on those occasions?*
- Unhappy about the amount of fencing to be used and the size and number of floodlights. These will have a detrimental impact on the outlook over the school field. Our back gardens will be flood lit on an evening*
- Strongly object to the number of hours the pitch will be available for use. No problem with activities on the pitch during school hours but the use during weekday evening and weekend use is unacceptable*
- The proposed plan will mean increased traffic on an already over-used road. There has been considerable increase in traffic since the houses were built because the school has increased in size. There have been several occasions during the past few years when construction traffic has had to use the road. This disruption we have tolerated because it was not long term. Police, councillors and the school have been involved on several occasions to deal with traffic congestion, inconsiderate parking etc. The increase in traffic at weekends and in the evenings resulting from this proposal is totally unfair to residents who deserve some peace and quiet...and some respite from the parking problem.*
- We have it on good authority that residents who live near similar pitches have been very bothered about noise anti-social behaviour from spectators. What is the guarantee that the pitch will just be used for hockey? Once it is established it could be used for football, which in turn could increase the noise nuisance.*
- We are now aware that this will be located immediately behind our houses and are therefore concerned. We are concerned about the impact of increased noise levels from players and spectators, especially in the evenings and at weekends, and light spillage from the floodlights which are to be situated very close to neighbouring houses. In the winter months particularly there will be no protection from the lights provided by the trees. It seems likely that the consequences of locating a sports pitch so close to a residential area are likely to be detrimental, especially if it is designed for use during the hours of darkness and at weekends.*
- It is difficult to understand how meaningful noise impact and light spillage assessments could be undertaken. Was temporary floodlighting erected to gauge its impact? Were spectators bussed in to create a suitable 'atmosphere'? How will noise (and bad language) be 'mitigated'? Will spectators be gagged or asked to communicate in whispers?*
- There will be a lot of traffic. Why should an existing, quiet residential area be subject to this sort of disruption at weekends and in the evenings? This disruption will continue well after 9pm as people will not be leaving on the dot.*

- *The wildlife of the area is one of the great pleasures of living here. There will be an impact because many of the creatures are nocturnal- foxes, owls and of course bats, which, you will be aware, are active at twilight. Floodlighting will disrupt their feeding cycle.*
- *This site may well be within Flood Zone 1 but there are always problems with standing water on the field in heavy rain, and especially in winter. This also affects gardens backing onto the field due to the clay composition of the soil.*
- *Residents are opposed to this scheme now that they are in possession of the facts. We are very tolerant of Carmel College - the never-ending building work, inconsiderate (and sometimes illegal) parking and littering by pupils. But the school was here before the houses, so we live with it. To impose such a development as this pitch on an existing residential area is totally unacceptable. Anti-social behaviour at a similar pitch at Hummersknott School has severely blighted the quality of life of nearby residents, as you must surely be aware. Unlike them, we have been forewarned.*
- *We do not feel there is a requirement for this proposal on this site. The applicants state the lack of hockey facilities at Carmel as the main reason for the development but that the site will then be made available for other organisations. However, it seems quite clear this is a commercial activity for the school to assist finances following its decision to become an Academy. The application is using arguments to dictate the Council policy on sport by identifying need that does not appear to exist. If there is an issue to be addressed then the Council should be considering more suitable alternatives.*
- *The application notes that the noise will be unacceptable but will not provide adequate controls. This will not enable us to use our back gardens without these intolerable noise intrusions.*
- *There appears to have been little thought as to the impact of lighting on both neighbouring residents and adjoining bat roosts*
- *There has not been as proper flooding assessment of the impact of the site on flooding in this area*
- *Although the playing field is currently laid out for sports pitch use without any planning restrictions in terms of hours of use but the existing facility does not have lighting and therefore cannot be practically used after the hours of dusk*
- *The application states there is high demand for this type of facility in Darlington and mentions a waiting list for its use. The current level of usage for the existing football pitch outside of school activities is low and the planned level of usage will significantly increase the potential impact on neighbouring residents*
- *We are concerned that the potential availability of this facility is beyond being usage regarded as for community use and tending towards a full blown commercial sports facility. The planning application needs to state the maximum likely use of this facility and needs to consider whether this is reasonable. The potential use is 5 days per week up to 21:00 plus weekends and Bank Holidays. We would have strong objections if usage after 1900 on weekdays is allowed on an unlimited basis. We would like a planning restriction that imposes a limit on the number of times that this facility can be used after 1900 over a 2 week period (for example, no more than 50% of the available sessions)*
- *We are also concerned about the usage on weekends (Sundays in particular) and Bank Holidays which could lead us to virtually no time periods when we are able to enjoy the amenity of our back garden without having noise intrusion from this facility*
- *There is no assessment of the noise levels that will be generated and it is not clear how the decision to only place acoustic fencing on the south side of the development was arrived at? The development has neighbours at both the south and north sides so why are the same level of protection not being offered to the north side?*

- *We are concerned that once the application has been approved there is no duty of care imposed on the school to ensure that the lights are operated in a responsible way. We would like a planning restriction put in place that mandates that the lights must be positioned to minimise the light spill. There needs to be a planning restriction that requires the impact of the lighting to be assessed on a regular basis by consultation with neighbouring residents. We have had reason to complain to the school in the past about the positioning of the car park lighting and the hours of operation for these lights. We continue to be concerned about the levels of light nuisance and seem to have no form of redress for this*
- *We need assurances that the lights on the new facility will not be positioned to cast strong light beyond the confines of the school grounds*
- *We are extremely concerned that if light and noise levels from the new facility cause us nuisance we will continue to have no effective avenue to have these either assessed or addressed*
- *We have strong concerns over the unsightliness of the lighting poles which seem extremely tall. This height of permanent structure will be obtrusive on the planned location*
- *The positioning of the pitch further away from our residence is welcomed. We have experienced significant issues with the football field located directly behind our house (Whitemeadows). There is considerable noise including foul language from both players and spectators. Although we have complained to the school about this we have not been able to get positive action to stop it. We don't go outside or open windows when this pitch is being used but this is far from satisfactory*
- *We are concerned about the range of activities that are proposed for this facility on the basis that this will increase usage and also on the basis that some of them appear unsuitable for the proposed height of mesh fencing*
- *We are concerned about how this land around the development will be used and the lack detail in the planning application about this. Will there continue to be any other sports pitches laid out outside of the boundaries of this development*
- *We attended the neighbourhood consultation meeting and were assured that the pitch was being tailored in length to exclusively meet the requirements of hockey by the college and other local hockey clubs and therefore the pitch would not be excessively used out of college hours. On that basis we supported the college. However, the planning application no longer gives these assurances as the college plans to allow other sporting clubs to use the facilities out of college hours which could increase the impact of noise and light pollution levels experienced by residential properties which border the new pitch. If this rather surprising move to include sports other than hockey is what is intended, we would withdraw our support for this application.*
- *We are concerned that the floodlighting which will be taller than our house would be an unwanted invasion into the back of our property and subsequently into all of the rooms in this side of our house. This is where our living room and bedrooms are which we occupy every evening*
- *The sources of noise that result from shouting from players and spectators including obscene language as well as noise from balls impacting the playing surfaces and any catch fencing would be unacceptable*
- *Parking may overflow over the current car park and mean we have to endure people parking outside our house during the evening and weekends*
- *We have concerns regarding health and safety such as toilet facilities and rubbish being thrown over our fence. Also the increased activity at the rear may increase the risk to the security of our home.*

- *Whilst great emphasis is made of the benefit to the college and surrounding community, no mention is made of the increase in cars and coaches using The Headlands which at 17 feet wide is neither safe nor suitable for such use. The pitch and floodlighting that will operate for up to 13 hours per day is simply unacceptable both in terms of the environment and the quality of life of those living nearby*
- *This will lead to a great increase in traffic in The Headlands for longer hours than at the moment. I know from experience that pitches are often troubled by having obscene language from the players and they feel unable to sit in the gardens*
- *There are currently problems every school day with students parking their cars outside the school premises, but sometimes on a corner, or close to people's drives which causes potential issues. When parents drop off and collect children they block driveways, narrow the roads which stops buses gaining access. They also park on the footpaths stopping mums with prams or wheelchair users getting passed. It is often manic and very dangerous for the children walking home. At weekends we have parents of children driving too fast up The Headlands to drop children off to play football. As there are children living in The Headlands and this is a constant worry and concern. If the proposed plans go through, the amount of extra traffic will be intolerable. I assume the extra traffic will be on a night and at weekends and this will cause more potential road safety issues.*
- *The lighting will be a nuisance as we understand it will be high voltage flood lighting.*
- *All our lounges are at the rear and face the playing field. If this goes ahead we would have no option but to suffer the impact of the noise and light spillage in the evenings. The quality of life for the residents, several of whom are elderly, could be seriously affected.*
- *The proposed facility will generate intolerable levels of noise. This will be caused by the constant kicking of balls and the noise made from this and the impact of the ball on the surrounding structure. In addition the neighbours both adults and children will be subjected to unreasonable, indecent, in some cases illegal shouting and swearing from both players and spectators/parents/supporters. Despite the acoustic barrier anyone just has to visit the same facility at Hummersknott School to appreciate the high levels of noise, disturbance and disgusting behaviour by players who for some reason think it is alright to shout and swear whilst playing sport.*
- *The school has already just about doubled its numbers over the years, increased its staff, car parking, banned students' cars from the car park as well as running night classes. The neighbours already tolerate high levels of inconvenience with the parking of students' cars in the street, the daily grid lock scenarios with coaches and parents collecting children. The proposed facility will add new levels of inconvenience and disturbance, and add to the parking problem and generate more noise and traffic.*
- *Again despite the 'mickey mouse' light report included in the documents produced by persons with an obvious agenda for themselves, the installation of 15m high flood lights will generate light pollution and disturbance to the neighbours. Yet again, despite the report, visit Hummersknott facility who have the same lights and actually witness the reality of the light pollution (and while you are there listen to the swearing!)*
- *This is a quiet residential area during evening and weekend times. I certainly don't have a problem with the present activities by school children on the field and the occasional event that is held at the school. Turning the field into a commercial venture is totally out of character with the area and will draw in numerous people and cars for outside the local area and even beyond Darlington. It is an unnecessary facility bearing in mind there already such facilities in place at Eastbourne and Hummersknott*
- *There is an environmental report in the documents which gives no details whatsoever of what they have considered. Their remit is not really applicable to the concerns of the*

effect this facility will have on the various animals and birds that live in the woodland adjacent to the proposed facility. In fact, the application for planning states there are no trees adjacent to the proposal. Clearly this is a lie. Therefore the council have not conducted proper checks on the application and handled it correctly. A detailed assessment of the impact on the identified wildlife surely is a pre-requisite to such a proposal adjacent to an established woodland containing trees subject to a tree preservation order and animals such as Bats that may be subject to a protection order

- *The Headlands provides the only access to the school site. The access road is situated on a bend which is far from ideal.*
- *There has been no study conducted on the effects of the increased traffic. Yet again I have observed the traffic at Hummersknott School travelling to that facility on an evening. It is very noticeable and constant all evening. The people heading for that facility could easily be spotted. They are ones who as well as think it is OK to shout and swear, think it is ok to race to the facility to get there on time. The Headlands is a smaller road with residential houses on it. I am concerned about the safety and convenience not only of residents but other normal road users. This applicant falsely stated in their report that the residents had been consulted and was in favour. This is simply untrue and has enraged many residents who I hope will also object. It seems the application is not being questioned therefore I request it is referred to a committee so that it can be properly debated and NOT delegated to a planning officer.*
- *We have suffered wave after wave of school expansion and resulting traffic/parking problems over the last 15 years. This proposal would rob us of our quiet times in the evenings and school holidays.*
- *The environment to the north side of The Headlands may not be officially recognised for its rich wildlife value but that is simply because no study has been made and yet the proposal makes assumptions and wrongly asserts that there are no protected species adjacent to the playing fields. Neighbours with gardens bordering the area have observed bats regularly feeding and many insect eating birds overfly the grass playing fields*
- *Surely there is scope to improve the drainage of the field which was no doubt damaged by construction traffic during previous works in 2006/07.*
- *The extended use into evenings, requiring very tall lighting towers and a plastic pitch, would bring noise and light pollution to what is a very quiet environment, an amenity which is valued by a number of residents who lived here for up to 40 years. Many are old and not well and this proposal will adversely affect their quality of life. There may also be exposed to an increased risk of crime*
- *We are unable to access the plans that are on the website. The public consultation on this planning application has been abysmal. The initial public meeting that was held in May was poorly attended because there was a failure to invite most of the interested parties. This was a crucial opportunity for us to gain a full understanding of the planning application and to get early comments against it. We were denied that opportunity. The 14 day response period is reduced by a failure to correctly publish the documents although this is the last chance to comment on the changes before going to a Planning Committee*
- *I have not previously commented on the application 15/00715/FUL due to the misunderstanding that the sports facilities were for school use with the opportunity for revenue generation and thus probably infrequent use. Having now assessed the application and anecdotal comments, I feel I must strongly object and ask that the planning application be assessed by an independent body due to the vested interest of the council. It appears the intent is to replace a facility elsewhere in the town to generate cash for the council which removes its independence.*

- *The lighting assessment has been carried out by a company with a vested interest and cannot be considered as independent. The Zone has been wrongly classified as E3 and should be E2. In any case a procedure should be specified to default to the minimum lighting level if switched on, and only increase the intensity for designated competitive hockey matches with a timer switch off at the specified time if not manually switched off earlier.*
- *Could the applicant provide evidence that justifies the low fence of 3m and the distance around the goal area which appears too small.*
- *Could the applicant provide information about the noise assessment that has led to only one side of the pitch having an acoustic screen. This appears completely inadequate.*
- *Consideration only appears to have been given to creating a new hockey pitch with removal of the existing football area. This is to the detriment of pupils and current users of the facilities. Could the applicant please explain why the hockey facility is so important when the whole idea of Sport England is to increase the facilities and participation in sport. This development appears to have a negative impact on Sport England goals.*
- *Planning procedures have not been followed and we would like to know why the planning department have allowed this application to proceed so far. The procedures for the DBC website has not been followed and it seems the application has already been passed and the emphasis is on getting the application through as soon as possible to obtain Sport England funding rather than ensuring that procedures are followed to ensure residents are protected.*
- *The consultation has been inadequate, incomplete and misleading both residents and Councillors. The applicants made great play of the fact they had pre-meetings and that people agreed with the proposals. However many of those affected were not invited to the meetings in May and those who were invited commented that they were misled. The proposal they understood was to be implemented was on the other side of the field – Mike Crawshaw states this was not the case but the residents have been supported by Councillor Charles Johnson who stated that he had the same understanding as them. There was no mention of floodlights and certainly no extension of use all day over weekends, school holidays and every evening. The first most of us knew about this was when planning permission was sought so in effect there was no public consultation. This really needs to start from scratch as this application is being rushed through before people have a real opportunity to comment.*
- *The application itself noted that the noise from the facility will be 'unacceptable' to residents and also recognises that football will always involve bad language. However despite the fact that the facility is supposed to be for hockey and, they claim, will not be used for competitive football they have still ensured that football will still be included in the usage. The school have shown previously that, despite being a Christian school, they have no regard for neighbours, for instance allowing football teams to swear unhindered despite numerous complaints. The behaviour of the school has led us to doubt whether or not they can be relied upon to keep their promises.*
- *We mentioned that there was little thought as to the impact of lighting on both neighbouring residents and wildlife, particularly bat roosts. The response from the applicants was that wildlife will not be affected by the flood lights as they will be hibernating! Animals are not hibernating currently and would certainly be affected by the proposals. This facetious comment is typical of the cavalier approach to this application with the seeming knowledge that is bound to be accepted. The fact is that a wildlife assessment should be carried out, and is another example of planning processes not being followed.*

- *The proposed development goes beyond the bounds of what is required for educational purposes, and is changing what should be an educational facility into a commercial facility. The school sits surrounded by prime residential properties which are attractive to incoming professionals the town is attempting to attract as part of One Darlington Perfectly Placed. The impact of the development on the neighbouring properties will cause increased and potentially excessive noise over 7 days a week and extended operating hours, light intrusion, unsightly high lighting, sound barrier and fencing. This affects both sides of the development but particularly The Headlands where living rooms overlook the field. All properties have bedrooms overlooking with the consequent loss of privacy. The extended hours will mean our gardens could not be used without the excessive noise intrusion.*
- *The proposal is for a MUGA on land owned by the Council and leased to the College at a peppercorn rent. The lease has restrictions on noise, noxious and offensive behaviour that is presently causing problems particularly for the residents of Broadmeadows. Why are the restrictions not being enforced? The lease is a peppercorn rent. If, as the proposal suggests, the MUGA is made available for rental up to 32 hours per week (67 hours during the school holidays) will a new agreement with a normal commercial rent replace the existing agreement forthwith?*
- *In the applicant's submission they state that the conclusion of the public consultation was that this is not contentious. The subsequent number of letters of objection and the passion that these display against this application show that the original conclusion is wrong. This is a highly contentious issue. The public consultation held in May 2015 was flawed. The distribution list for that exercise, showing who was contacted has not been published but we know that many of those now identified as "neighbours" were not invited to attend. In addition it is clear from some of the responses posted on the Planning Portal website that those who did attend that meeting were lied to and / or misled over the nature of this development. As a result we believe that consideration of this application should be delayed subject to a full public consultation.*
- *I have just read this email and am deeply concerned by the statement: The noise assessment has not considered the effect on bedrooms due to the pitch not operating during night-time hours (23:00 – 07:00). This implies that the bedrooms would only be in use from 23:00. Ours is a 4-bedroomed house with 3 of those bedrooms (not including the master bedroom) facing out onto this development. Our youngest child is 16 now, but if we were to sell our property to a family with young children those bedrooms would be in use at a considerably earlier time than 23:00 (i.e. potentially from as early as 18:30 for young children). There are a number of other properties bordering this development that will be similarly affected. We believe it is not acceptable to disregard the potential noise levels that would be experienced in bedrooms of surrounding properties and feel that it is incorrect to use the "daytime" levels as the reference point when considering the impact on our properties. We feel that the proposed development will impact on our property prices and may even render them "unsellable" as family homes due to the potential for noise disturbance and light intrusion into the bedrooms that would be used by young children. We feel that it is essential that this is fully assessed for noise impact in respect of the current and future use of these rooms as bedrooms for children.*
- *The lease has restrictions on noise, noxious and offensive behaviour that is presently causing problems particularly for the residents of Broadmeadows. Why are the restrictions not being enforced. The lease is also peppercorn rent. If the MUGA is made available for rental up to 32 hours per week will a new agreement with a normal commercial rent replace the existing agreement forthwith?*

- *The environmental impact could be severe. This development could potentially make life intolerable for local residents. We have a young child whose sleep could be disturbed by this. There are already existing facilities at Hundens Lane. I use these myself, and there never seems to be a capacity issue. I'd therefore question what is driving this development and why it is needed. This development will potentially ruin a quiet, residential area of the town. If it happens the question of compensation to residents will have to be addressed for the increase in noise and the stress it will cause. No developer has the right to incur noise and disruption to local residents for something that brings no benefits to the locality*
- *I feel as though the plans for the east field of Carmel School are quite inappropriate. I have lived in this house for just about 9 years now and my bedroom faces the east field. Just about every weekend, the school use the field for football on a Saturday morning, foul language can be clearly heard from the field and that is unsuitable in an environment where children can hear such language. As the school plan to open the field to the public on week nights, bank holidays and weekends, the noise pollution would be made worse and increases the possibility of foul language being used in the vicinity of young children. Furthermore, the installation of additional flood lighting will extend the amount of time that the foul language can permeate through the neighbourhood, particularly at times when young children are at home, and trying to sleep. The flood lights that are already in place at Carmel are very dazzling and they shine into people's houses.*
- *The development will be totally out of character with the area. The present traffic from Carmel School at am and pm when the School is opening and closing is impacting upon the area. I have on many occasions had to wait for a parent collecting child or children to move their car from our drive entrance and the thought that this will be increased after the school and at weekends is not acceptable. This is a residential area*
- *This development will cause noise disturbance and light pollution when the pitch is in use during the evening and weekend hours when we do not experience such disturbances*
- *I am very poorly with a serious chronic illness. I am very disabled being permanently in a wheelchair and therefore housebound. I can be poorly at times and really do not need the noisy disturbance of hockey matches etc along with floodlights into our back garden. The sources of noise that result from shouting from players/spectators swearing, cheering and noise from balls impacting the playing surfaces and catch fencing is not acceptable*
- *The lighting will be a nuisance to residents nearest the sports field. traffic is bad enough during term time but it will be extended to evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays. There have been several near misses on the corner of The Headlands and the entrance to the College, involving residents and the traffic coming and going to the College*
- *The school currently use this field for football matches on a weekend and the shouting that accompanies these matches is so loud we can hear it inside our house. Language is often offensive. By increasing the area to three pitches I consider that the number of participants and supporters will also increase three fold and with it we will encounter a threefold increase in both noise and swearing*
- *The after school use will bring an increase in shouting and swearing potentially every evening which will affect our lives.*
- *Is there a demand over and above what is already accommodated by Hummersknott and Eastbourne? Are these facilities fully booked and used every weekend and weekday evening?*

- *Will changing and toilet facilities be made available and can they accommodate the increases in players and spectators?*
- *Are these facilities really necessary or are they just a money making scheme for Carmel School*
- *As Quaker land we believed in our purchase we were secure in maintaining a life in a quiet area where no further building or change/expanded use of land would arise. We question the benefit to this area of a second facility so close to one already in existence at Hummersknott School*
- *I am not sure the chosen site is suitable. It is bordered by houses and the entrance is already congested and the development will exacerbate the existing problems. Surely the pitch should be on the outskirts of town for all schools and colleges to use, with a sensible access and parking.*
- *Parents collecting children are oblivious to the needs of local residents and a school bus recently forced me to take avoiding action and scrape my alloys. If this proposal goes ahead the traffic problem will increase.*
- *The proposal will make an already noisy area so much worse and the lighting and traffic will be a big problem for us. We have had to raise our fence since we moved here we were initially troubled with children climbing over the fence into our fence causing damage. Balls landing in our garden still occur from time to time*
- *This is a suburban leafy area of Darlington for which we pay extremely high Council Tax and object very strongly to further disruption caused by vehicles, noise, light and impact on the character of the area*
- *Having experienced the noise level created at Hummersknott School. Along with the choice language it will be hard to avoid*
- *This project appears to be more of a different enterprise akin to a business which is wholly out of place in a residential area*
- *If a bat survey has not been carried please confirm that one will be undertaken before planning permission is considered. The grassland is a significant feeding ground for more than one species of bat as well as many other protected birds, reptiles and amphibians*
- *This will impact on our lifestyle, due to noise and light pollution as well as extra traffic. It, yet again, is another imposition on residents who have seemingly no rights whatsoever. We have already been assured that previous expansions to the school would not affect residents, which turned out to be totally untrue. The parking from users of the school already spill out to quiet narrow streets in the area. The majority of drivers paying little heed to safety and the local community. The visual impact will be detrimental to and mar the very ethos of the area*
- *I feel the use of it as a 'community facility' will cause significant problems with regard to noise and disturbance in the area both from increased traffic and users leaving the site in the evenings. Due to the low density of properties in the area, the facility will be mainly used by people travelling in from further afield. This could also lead to problems with parking on the narrow roads leading to the school. There is a limited bus service during the day and no evening buses which means that the vast majority of users will need to travel to the facility by car.*
- *The proposed changes will create light, noise and traffic pollution to the area. I feel very sorry for the residents that live directly opposite to the pitches. They must be devastated and feel their current standard of living is being threatened. The current traffic in the area is excessive and the extra traffic will compound an already potentially hazardous situation*

- *We fully support the objections of neighbours relating to loss of privacy, visual impact, overshadowing and overlooking*
- *School traffic is acceptable during term time, however it is not acceptable that traffic would be increased in The Headlands immensely if this planning application was to be approved. Darlington Council need to consider building sports facilities well away from desirable residential areas; traffic noise and associated noise levels and general disturbance in an otherwise quite residential area are not acceptable*
- *Why can't Carmel share the facility with Hummersnott? In this cash strapped austere era, surely we are serious in spending what £0.75 mill on a facility which could be shared. Is Hummersnott fully utilized? You cannot be serious where for goodness sake is the common sense approach here?*
- *At present we hear shouting, swearing, balls hitting fences from Carmel School this is part of school related noise which is irritating but understandable and we know it will stop by tea time. No one objects to this but to think of all of this going on into the evenings and weekends in a non school controlled environment is completely different. It will be shouting which will be adult in tone and content. The quiet aspect of the area will change especially for those on the route into the school there will inevitably be an increase in car numbers as it is not easily reached by public transport. I have a tree with a preservation order in my garden cannot be removed as that would be detrimental to the area (council words!) Surely 15metre floodlights would also be detrimental to this area, the light pollution would change it for residents obviously but also wildlife would suffer. Bats, which regularly swoop around my tree, are known to be badly affected by artificial light as they are nocturnal. This development would change the whole character of the area and not for the better*
- *We cannot imagine having a flood lit back garden and everything connected to the proposal practically 24/7, not to mention the loss of privacy, opening my bedroom curtains to crowds of people, horrendous noise, being overlooked and overshadowed. It is bad enough now being woken up every Saturday and Sunday morning during the football season by the noise and foul language from the games*
- *I visit family very weekend who's property backs onto the school playing field. This would make it impossible to spend time in the garden should competitive sport be played on the other side of the garden fence. The noise from players, the whistle from match officials and shouting from spectators would make enjoying the garden impossible. We often see bats and foxes both of which would be affected by the use of strong night time lighting. Other animals will be forced to relocate and in doing so destroy a natural wildlife habitat*
- *The development is too big and the lights will cause acute light pollution for the whole area and further afield. It will create additional noise as well as traffic and parking problems*
- *The visual impact of the facility will have a detrimental effect on the area.*
- *Carmel does not possess the facilities to cope with the amount of vehicles that will be attending these events. It barely caters for its parents evenings and theatre nights as it is. There is no call for any of these facilities in this area as Hummersnott has similar facilities and more than capable of accommodating a large volume of traffic*
- *Any Community Use Agreement should be put before the Planning Committee before reaching a decision. Any planning conditions need to accurately reflect the hours of operation of the pitch and lighting*
- *This will lead to an increase in noise, car parking problems, light pollution, litter and gangs of people milling around.*

- *An all weather pitch is beneficial for the school but to use for community use is a different matter and appears that unless also used for community use Sport England would not support it. The School itself is a lovely building and it seems the school is to turn into a large sports complex that will soon look unloved after a year or so.*
- *We expect to be affected by the noise & disturbance from the all-weather pitch and the fact that it is proposed to be in use every weekday evening and at weekends. We also feel strongly that the objections of those residents adjacent to the proposed application should be taken into account not just the closeness of the pitch and facilities but the additional traffic this would generate. This is a quiet suburb and surrounding area and the addition of this pitch would make a considerable difference to these residents and those further afield.*
- *If allowed this will significantly disrupt the neighbourhood on several planes including increase in noise and disturbance, loss of privacy and enjoyment of property from 8am to 9.30pm - disturbance the majority of the waking day. It would prevent any peaceful enjoyment of the area. Would impact on safety as most people will travel by car. Already experience young drivers at speed. Increase in on street parking and congestion. Potential anti social behaviour. Severe negative visual impact, the number of floodlights on poles at 15 metres high will create overshadowing and overlooking. Severe negative impact on the character of the surrounding area. The existing road and access widths are already substandard for a school that has grown from 350 to 1200 pupils. Only one access to the school which is directly beside and adjacent to private Housing*
- *The noise and disturbance in the immediate area of The Headlands, Broadmeadows, Whitmeadows, Cardinal Gardens and Hummersknot Avenue will be considerable, the amount of traffic movement and car parking will also be considerable. Not to mention the light pollution from fifty foot high flood lights. In short, the overall quality of life is going to be greatly affected by this application and the community does not need this facility*
- *It would ruin the character and nature of the area. Already residents have to contend with car parking and very heavy traffic flow, when parents drop off, or collect students going to the school. Once students are homeward bound then the area returns to a peaceful quiet, environment with very little traffic. However if the application were to go ahead, there would be continuous traffic, every weekday evening, weekends and Bank Holidays. Residents would have no privacy at all, visual impact would be horrendous, and the noise level would be unbearable.*
- *I am concerned about possible noise levels due to the increased traffic flow of people utilising this facility. Currently there are only two times in the day when there is a large amount of traffic due to the school. This proposal would mean this is significantly increased. As I live at the bottom of The Headlands increased traffic is likely to make it difficult for me to use my driveway. There will be an increase in light pollution due to the floodlights. It is a nice residential area and this development will more than likely have an impact on house prices.*
- *The residents of The Headlands has to endure the problem of huge coaches delivering and collecting pupils twice daily travelling at speed along a totally unsuitable road made worse by inconsiderate parent parking on pavements. The evening and weekend use would extend the disruption and increase the traffic in to the only time of peace we have. This a residential area and not an access route for the latest Carmel money making venture which ignores the lives of their nearest neighbours*
- *Whilst I fully support the school having all weather sports facilities to use during school hours and for school matches at the weekend I strongly object to the proposed "Community Use" which will keep the facility open until at least 9pm every weekday*

evening and 4pm every weekend and Bank Holiday. My wife and I can easily hear the pupils now from our back garden when they are using the current facilities and once these new facilities are open to the public there will be continuous background noise every evening and most of the weekend. As someone who regularly attends sporting events I can guarantee that there will be foul language and cars/motor bikes revving as they make their getaway. In addition the floodlights will cause significant light pollution blotting out another section of the night sky. This is basically a quiet residential area and this proposed development will be completely alien to the character of the neighbourhood. I urge the Council to reject the "Community Use" element of this application.

- *The use of the facility as a commercial venture was not obvious from the original notification dated July 29th and it is only through following developments on the planning website that this has become clear. Its use during evenings, weekends, and bank holidays will change the nature of the area and be a dreadful and unacceptable intrusion for the occupants of all neighbouring properties. The erection of floodlights that can be operated up until 21.00 is totally unacceptable. Furthermore, the lighting assessment appears to have wrongly classified this area as E3 instead of E2. Many properties adjoin the playing fields and would be badly affected. Football is already played on this area and the noise generated is disturbing. However, it has been tolerated for many years because matches are played during the hours of daylight and not too frequently. Changing to the proposed hours of use is completely unacceptable. The increased level of traffic using the access roads to the proposed facility would result in a complete change to the nature of those roads and the residential properties situated there as well as giving rise to an increased risk of motor accidents. Parking facilities are sometimes less than adequate now and inviting even more vehicles to the site cannot make sense. This does not seem to have been considered but it is well known that there are bats in this area. My understanding is that all 18 species of UK bat are protected under Annex IV of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC dated May 21st 1992 (the Habitat Directive) and it is unlawful to disturb their habitat. The installation of high powered floodlighting can be detrimental to bats. Attracting large numbers of people to sporting events can lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour which would be a constant source of annoyance to the local residents and particularly to those whose homes adjoin the playing field. The fact that this proposal appears to be a commercial venture means that, unlike normal school sporting events, there will be no teacher supervision which could lead to unacceptable standards of behaviour which the local residents should not have to tolerate.*
- *Increased traffic volumes are particularly relevant. Some while ago local residents received a communication from Carmel Academy seeking neighbourhood support over potential cuts in student transport financing. The letter focused on likely congestion arising from increased parental traffic. The thrust of that message must surely have been endorsed by the Board of Governors. Now, we have an apparent volte-face where the Academy seeks permission for a facility that cannot fail to raise - possibly considerably - local traffic volumes. This is at total odds with the published Academy parking pledge: Objective 1 - To reduce the number of vehicles driving to and from College. This pledge was drawn up in conjunction with representatives from the Borough Council and the Police*
- *Would there be a police presence at any time? Presumably, refreshments would be available, would there be alcohol?*
- *What is now a semi rural area would have its character spoiled*

- *I am house bound and enjoy the area and feel it would be spoiled and the character of the area destroyed*
- *The peace and quiet area would be disrupted were the plan to go ahead with floodlights, public hire facilities and noise*
- *Whilst a new hockey pitch may be beneficial for students who attend Carmel, the school grounds should not be used for commercial gain outside of school hours, particularly when it will disrupt the lives and wellbeing of those people around the school - a number of whom have lived there a considerable number of years. There are the same facilities very close by at Hummersknott Academy which can be utilised- so why do Sport England/the Council and Carmel feel it necessary to offer the same facilities in such close proximity? Carmel School is not in my opinion a suitable location for such a facility in terms of parking, access and the erection of flood lighting which would all be to the detriment not only of the residents in the neighbourhood, but also to the wildlife habitat including bats and foxes of which we are very privileged to have in the area. Hill Close Avenue, The Headlands, Carmel Road to name a few are already a traffic nightmare at school start and finish times and are even worse when parents' evenings/functions are held. The roads simply were not built to accommodate this level of traffic - an increase would be dangerous and potentially life threatening! The additional anti social behaviour/littering which would be attracted by out of school time activities is also a concern for the area. The Council should encourage Sport England to take their sports facilities to an area better suited to accommodate the number of visitors it hopes to attract and leave our residential area for the purpose for which it was built.*
- *We live some distance from Hummersknott Academy which has a similar floodlit facility and the noise and light pollution is extreme especially on clear evenings. I am sure traffic will be controllable but would like to understand how many people are anticipated and the hours of activity is of concern.*
- *My main points of objection are the increase in noise that this facility would cause, the additional light pollution and the increase in what is already intolerable traffic issues in the surrounding areas as widespread as Clare Avenue and Hillclose Ave. I attended the meeting held at Carmel College on 8th October, at which the venue had to be changed due to the amount of people that turned up to offer their objections. Emotions ran very high during the meeting and some residents were even brought to tears. One note I did pick up on during the meeting was that the application is for a Pitch (singular) yet the proposal is for 3 pitches. The installation of 3 pitches has not been applied for. It is evident that there is a conflict of interest with the proposal and council members have been involved in this application with Carmel College. Reading the documents on the Council Planning Application Portal it is also evident that there is a lot of inaccurate information which needs to be addressed before the application can even be considered. This proposed facility is not suitable for the area suggested as this is a residential area.*
- *The Headlands is a narrow road already in constant use with more traffic than it was ever designed for. The School has not got adequate parking and no traffic management scheme. This is a business venture and is not needed by either the school or the community. No consultation has been given to the local residents and this has been sneaked through by the school and local authority in a shameful way. What next an Asda or Lidl on the site?*
- *We wish to object to this planning application. It is inappropriate for the area on the grounds of increase in traffic, excessive noise and disturbance to the residents of the surrounding streets which is a quiet residential area. In addition the presence of floodlights will be detrimental to the privacy and quality of life to those living nearby.*

Hummersknott already offers similar community facilities for the area. We do not consider this application as suitable for this location.

- *It will have a detrimental effect on the character of the neighbourhood which is predominantly residential and valued for its quietness and attractiveness. The noise generated by the use of this commercial sporting facility will affect residents on a daily basis. It is likely to involve a lot of exuberant shouting, potential foul and abusive language, the sound of balls striking the perimeter barriers and piercing whistles. This disturbance will undermine the peaceful nature of the area and it will have a directly adverse effect on the residential amenity of our property, as it will be occurring on weekdays into the late evening - to at least 9pm (allowing people to leave the site) - and also over every weekend and bank holiday. We will not be able to enjoy the tranquillity of our own garden. The eight floodlights, set on poles 15 metres high, will be seen from all the rooms in the front of our house. This ugly, over-bearing, out-of-scale and out of character view will replace the one which we have enjoyed for eighteen years – tree tops and sky. The glow from these bright lights will also be particularly disturbing as we currently enjoy the views of the night sky. This facility would lead to the loss of a large proportion of the green open space which Carmel School and the surrounding residents currently enjoy; it acts as a ‘Green Belt’ between the school buildings and our homes. The proposed facility would be located near to Carmel Convent, Clare Abbey and St Mary’s. The settings of these buildings would be adversely affected by the inappropriate scale of the development (e.g the use of the floodlights). The development of the school so far has been for the benefit of the pupils, whereas this would be predominantly for commercial reasons and, as such, is less tolerable. Currently residents experience traffic/parking problems at the start and end of the school day. If this scheme goes ahead, these will continue in the evenings, weekends and bank holidays.*
- *In Cardinal Gardens we are already aware of the noise and we feel that the light pollution, extra traffic noise and noise that accompanies sporting activities would be unsuitable for a residential use*
- *I am a resident who lives with chronic health problems and I enjoy my garden which overlooks the playing field. I cannot bear the idea of constant noise. The hockey pitch, which is a commercial venture would have a detrimental effect on all our lives.*
- *The turning out of The Headlands into Hummersknott Avenue is dangerous now at peak times.*
- *This will simply be one more fee paying activity at the school. The school has little consideration for its neighbours and has no conception of the changes it is bringing about in this residential area. Although living 400m from the floodlights we would still expect to see them in daytime as well as night time. This is light pollution on a large scale*
- *I believe the pitch will bring unwanted noise and bad language until 2100 which will be a massive disturbance.*
- *Two facilities in close proximity would bring too much pressure and can only be detrimental to the residential area*
- *I have friends that back onto the playing fields and I feel strongly that their lives will be affected by the proposals in terms of noise and light from the flood lights. Parking and traffic increase will also prove to be a problem*
- *We have two small children whose bedrooms are at the back of our house which backs onto the playing field. The use of pitches at night time will generate noise which will be extremely disruptive and will disturb our children who go to sleep at 6:30 and 7pm. We have an open plan kitchen/conservatory/living area where we spend every evening and the floodlights will make it impossible to sit in this area due to light pollution. The*

pitches will bring increased traffic at all times of the day and night making our area significantly less desirable representing a significant loss of privacy

- *This will have an impact on the character of the area*
- *This will lead to a loss of privacy, visual impact, overshadowing and overlooking, noise and disturbance on the surrounding area along with traffic*
- *Existing pitches should be brought up to a decent standard instead to the benefit of young people at the school and surrounding area*
- *I object to this application on the grounds that it is inappropriate for this area of Darlington and will have a negative impact on local residents, particularly the floodlighting, noise and extended hours of operation which will result in noise and light disturbance*
- *I am concerned that the noise disturbance will increase. Currently noise from the school fields can be heard where I live and I can often clearly hear what people are shouting out. At the moment this noise is usually within school hours which is acceptable. Under the new proposals there will be noise disturbance during unsociable hours i.e. 18.00 - 21.00, on weekends & bank holidays. As well as the prospect of general noise disturbance every evening I am concerned that this might include foul language as has been experienced by residents near Hummersknott Academy who have similar facilities.*
- *As the area in question is a quiet residential area, noise from nearby schools is already very apparent during the normal school hours. This application would result in this noise continuing well into the late evening and during weekends/Bank Holidays, and it would be more noticeable with the reduction in other normal daytime background noise. There is already a significant amount of traffic using Clare Avenue either as a 'cut through' route or more relevantly to drop and pick up pupils at Carmel School. At pick up time there are waiting cars parked up on both sides of what is a fairly narrow residential road. This application will increase traffic noise and nuisance beyond normal school times. The potential operating hours of this application ie every weekday evening and daytime every weekend and Bank Holiday, with the resulting increase in noise and traffic at these times will have a detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding area.*
- *Currently at the start and end of the school day the volume of traffic, including coaches, and cars parked on both sides of the road makes it difficult and dangerous to exit or enter my drive .Currently this level of disturbance is only for short periods each day but it would be totally unacceptable if these problems persisted into the evening and at weekends. If this planning application is approved this quiet residential street will simply become the access road to a public sports facility with all the associated noise and traffic problems*
- *Currently on a weekend, noise from the playing fields being used for adult sports can be heard in our garden, we don't object to this but we do object to the foul language our grandchildren are exposed to. If this development is permitted it is going to add significantly to this problem in the evenings. We also object to the level of light pollution we feel we would be subjected to, the scale of the proposed lighting and visual impact in our opinion is not acceptable in a residential area*
- *Extra traffic in a residential area. Noise & light pollution. Similar facilities already exist at the nearby Hummersknott School*
- *The school has pursued a demanding schedule of extension works over recent years and inexorably with each expansion of the school the cost to the neighbourhood and residents is significant both during building work and afterwards with each increase in footfall. The construction of an all weather hockey pitch is utterly inappropriate in this quiet residential suburb. Our neighbourhood of older people and families with young ones in*

which heavy traffic would pose health and safety hazard to ours and visiting children. Drivers are often aggressive and verbally abusive if asked to politely move their vehicles.

- *We object to this planning application as it this will cause a great noise impact on a quiet residential area. There will also be a great increase in the traffic which is already a problem on the mornings and evenings when the school comes out. The 15 meter flood lights will be an awful problem with light pollution into the back of the houses. We have friends whose house backs onto this area and we have enjoyed lovely times in their garden which will be spoilt by the noise and pollution if this proposal is not stopped.*
- *I am concerned that the residents do not appear to have been consulted about this proposed development, which is likely to have a significant negative impact on the quality of life of the residents whose properties back onto the playing field and in the wider community of the west end of Darlington. In the broader community of the west-end of Darlington, this development is likely to increase traffic flow and cause noise pollution in the evenings and at weekends. This development is likely to have an adverse impact on property values in the west end of Darlington, which is not outweighed by the benefits of a sporting facility in this part of town*
- *The traffic situation in the wider area needs to be taken into consideration. Abbey Road already gets severely congested with traffic from Queen Elisabeth College and Abbey Junior School. Traffic from Hummersknott and Carmel College also use the same feeder streets. That is four educational establishments in the same residential area. Overload at the start and end on the school day is already seriously hazardous and any increase will be putting young lives at risk and must surely be a health and safety issue.*
- *The access to Carmel school is not adequate to cope with the increased levels of traffic this enterprise will bring and will have a detrimental impact on residents' enjoyment of their properties outside of school hours. This will be in the form of not only increased traffic levels but also noise levels and light pollution from the floodlights located close to back gardens.*
- *I do not object to the improvement of sports facilities at Carmel for the benefit of pupils but I do not support these being set up on a commercial basis to be open at evenings, weekends and school holidays. The local residents demonstrate considerable forbearance of the extensive traffic congestion during school opening and closing times and many will have been aware of this when buying their houses. I understand that the current building work at the school is also requiring considerable patience from the residents. They did not however buy their properties expecting to be near a commercial sports centre open over and above school operating hours*
- *I am concerned about the potential impact on local residents in this area as well environmental concerns. There will be a noise impact on the area, which in the evenings and at weekends is a quiet residential area. There will also be an increase in traffic which will cause problems on a small road. There will be a problem of light pollution from the proposed 15 metre flood lights.*
- *My concern is the volume of traffic during the day and on an evening in The Headlands. The proposed fields will result in a steady stream of cars belonging to competitors and spectators especially at the beginning and end of matches. The Headlands was not designed to take a great number of cars and therefore is unsuitable. The street is often under stress because of congestion at the beginning and end of the school day but got that congestion to be extended up to 9pm is unacceptable. Carmel School have not been a considerate neighbour. Their visitors frequently overspill into the street and double park residents causing problems. I am not confident that Carmel will take measures to ensure residents are not greatly inconvenienced and also traffic safety maintained.*

- *I moved into The Headlands with my parents when the houses were first built some 40 years ago. Whenever I now visit my parents I am aware of a noticeable and worrying increase in the volume of road traffic going to and from the school. The road infrastructure is simply inadequate to cope with the numbers and size of vehicles which would be required during construction. Once built, it would be unable to deal with the additional amount of traffic using the 'hockey pitch'. This clearly poses a health and safety risk to students and residents alike.*
- *My elderly father has a number of serious health issues, one of which is dementia. Following medical advice, my parents made the decision to stay in the familiarity of their existing home, as it was felt this would be the most appropriate place for my father, so that his routines and enjoyment of the home could be maintained. He currently spends the majority of the day in the back of the house, over-looking their garden and the school fields. One aspect of my father's dementia, is a condition called Lewy Body. With this condition he has frequent hallucinations, which for him, means he sees groups of people both in the garden and his home. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind, that construction work and then daily and excessive noise and light pollution from the pitch, would massively exacerbate this problem. This would further increase the anxiety and distress that dementia entails, as a result of seeing vast numbers of people at the rear of his house, all hours of the day. My father is already deteriorating as direct result of the proposals, as he is extremely confused as to what is happening and is unsure as to who actually owns his home.*
- *My mother is also experiencing severe stress and anxiety as a consequence of your actions. At 80 years of age, she should be entitled to live a peaceful existence in her home of four decades without having to worry about the daily intrusion into her life that this pitch will bring. She should also be in a position where she can focus on the care my father requires rather than devoting substantial amounts of time to challenging these proposals.*
- *My mother spent her entire working life as a teacher and headteacher and I too, am a teacher. We are both, therefore, more than acutely aware of the financial pressures which schools face. However, the manner in which Darlington Council and Carmel School have delivered the plans for this 'hockey pitch' has been less than transparent, with regards to the location and purpose of it. There are clearly other sites within the grounds of Carmel's fields where this pitch could be built, which would be less invasive for all residents. They are clearly other locations in Darlington where this pitch could be built. I understand the desire to generate income for the school, but this needs to be matched by a 'Duty of Care' to the local community and local residents, a responsibility of the council and the school. Currently, I feel both bodies are failing to meet this requirement.*

Ward Councillor Johnson and Ward Councillor Coultas raised concerns over the original scheme confirming that they would not support the application unless particular items were addressed before the application was considered by the Council.

Following the submission of the amended plans on 13 November 2015 a total of 51 letters have been received. Some of these letters are also detailed and comment on the layout and use of grass pitches around the proposed synthetic pitch, noise from any surrounding pitches, drainage, highway safety, parking and highway construction matters, ecology, the amended Lighting Assessment and amended Noise Impact Assessment, assessing the proposal against Council and Sport England sport related policies, the Council's relevant local development plan policies and the guidelines of the Tees Valley Design Guide which has been considered by the Local Planning Authority.

The general comments that have been received to the amended and additional information can be summarised as follows:

- *Despite a number of residents raising questions about the bat population, no expert opinion appears to have been sought on the issue. All we seem to have is a bland platitude from the lighting consultants that the floodlights will be used from October to March when much of the wildlife are hibernating. This statement cannot be supported. Bats are protected species and expert opinion from an approved source should have been obtained*
- *The statement that the facility would permit participants to play safely whilst maintaining the amenity of neighbouring properties is illogical and somewhat disingenuous. A simple check of UK dusk times shows there are only about three months when floodlighting can confidently be assumed unnecessary before 9pm.*
- *Supporting documents appear to indicate the need for new hockey facilities elsewhere from those currently located at Eastbourne. The reason cited is the existing hockey pitch surface there is deemed unsuitable for football by the authorities concerned and needs to be relaid. Yet, one proposal for the new Carmel pitch is casual or recreational football practice. Apart from the difficulty of defining when recreational becomes non-recreational, if a hockey surface is seen as unsuitable for football, then any form of football should be absolutely excluded*
- *The increase in traffic volumes and likely lack of any out of hours control measures are at total odds with the College's own Parking Pledge drawn up in consultation with the Council and Police*
- *I believe there are no amendments to address my concerns over traffic levels on Hummersknott Avenue of The Headlands. I cannot see anything that would increase parking within Carmel grounds to address the lack of an adequate parking facility for the increased usage. Lastly, I still do not see why the West End needs another all-weather pitch when there is one situated extremely closely at Hummersknott School.*
- *I feel the expansion of use after school hours and weekend will have an impact on public safety with increased traffic and poor parking arrangements this will also have an environmental impact on this residential area that is already under pressure from three local schools.*
- *It is recognised that the applicant has made a number of efforts and modifications to the application to address previous concerns which are welcomed. However, certain objections remain which in my opinion will need the application to be referred to a Public Inquiry, as the Council cannot be considered to be an independent body to assess the application.*
- *It should be remembered that the root cause of the current process is the poor drainage of the existing field. This is not addressed with the addition of the new hockey pitch. The valid principles of the Community Use Agreement would be fulfilled by addressing that root cause. It appears the application has grown out of all proportion to the root cause and is more about addressing the goals of Sport England in order to obtain funding, than addressing the educational and community obligations of the College. I recommend that the applicant return to square 1, re-assess its needs and resolve the drainage issue of the field.*
- *Should Darlington Council wish to pursue the development of wider hockey, athletics and golf facilities, they should do this as a separate commercial venture in an alternative and more suitable location than the Carmel College site.*

- *Objective 4.2 of the Community Use Agreement is not a valid objective for the educational needs of Carmel College or the obligation to provide Community access to those facilities and should be removed.*
- *The lighting assessment remains invalid due to the mis-categorisation of the area as E3. Whilst a timer system has been added and an instruction to turn off lights when the pitch is not occupied, it appears that the proposal to have reduced level lighting sufficient for training has been omitted. This would save energy and reduce light pollution.*
- *I do not see the need for another facility of this nature so close to an existing one at Hummersknott School. It just doesn't seem sense to have two in the same vicinity. To me the perfect location for such a facility would be for it to be incorporated in the council owned pitches at Blackwell Meadows, this would be further away from housing so the noise & floodlights would not be as intrusive. It would be accessed by Grange Road, one of the bigger roads in the town rather than creating more traffic into a housing estate and it would be more central therefore more accessible for all Darlington residents*
- *My mum is an elderly lady who has mobility issues, sleeps issues and is house bound. Her house which has a siding with Leith Road is close to the application and fears the disruption and impact this will have on her quality of life. She is concerned about the visual impact of the flood lights, noise from the pitch, disturbance from an increase in footfall and traffic and the ability to rest and sleep and relax in her own home*
- *This is a commercial development and should be treated as such. No other commercial organisation would be allowed to set up an operation in a residential area. A much more suitable site would be at Blackwell Meadows*
- *There will be an adverse impact on residential amenity*
- *There will be noise and disturbance caused by it*
- *The effect of lighting will impact on many people*
- *There is a major concern of increased traffic*
- *It will affect the character of the area whose residents already pay very high council tax*
- *We object to a facility operating extended hours*
- *This will have a negative effect on the health of the elderly and those with young families*
- *This will lead to traffic congestion, additional noise, road surface damage and dirt from the movement of construction vehicles. The volume of traffic into and out of the site when it is open for community use is more of a concern. Residents own cars and those of family and friends who visit after the working day and at weekends can't always be accommodated in driveways of the houses and have to be parked on the narrow road way. Additional traffic will create further congestion and deterioration of the local environment.*
- *Treelands and The Headlands are regularly blocked by vehicles parking to drop off students in the morning and waiting from them at the end of school day and this situation will worsen.*
- *Have the traffic implications of the application at "pressure times" of day and night been considered by Durham Constabulary, the Fire Station and the Ambulance Service?*
- *The entrance/exit from Carmel College is far too narrow to allow safe two way passage of traffic which will result in backlogs down The Headlands which causes difficulties for residents to move off their drives.*
- *The community use of the college facilities will lead to demand for permanent licensed premises on the college site beyond the 9pm limit currently proposed with consequent noise and traffic issues*

- *Additional noise will clearly travel beyond the proposed boundary of the field up to seven days a week potentially until 21:00 during weekdays and Bank Holidays. Even with the best acoustic fencing available noise will travel especially on windy days*
- *Floodlighting will undoubtedly affect the immediate area with regards both illumination levels plus their unsightly presence on the skyline. Even with the latest floodlight technology light will invariably travel outside the designated area to be illuminated*
- *Additional traffic in an around the school which will affect more The Headlands and Hummersknott Avenue but never the less have an effect on the environment*
- *The proposals for the 8 floodlights enabling the sports facilities to be used late into the evening and by outside sports associations rather than just normal school pupils will have a significant impact on my right and others to enjoy our homes and gardens and on local wildlife. Whilst the proposed area does not directly overlook my home, the 15 metre lighting is likely to have a major impact as many of the nearby bungalows and even houses are on much lower ground. The lighting will also impact on the wildlife in the nearby wooded areas and gardens. Noise from one part of Whitemeadows is heard in all parts due to the nature of the land. Therefore noise from sports activities is likely to be heard Apart from construction noise which includes Saturdays from 8 am the noise when completed will impact on a normally very quiet area late into the evenings and weekends by the proposed hockey match fixtures, practice sessions etc by none school associations. The combination of excessive light and or noise will affect the sleep of young children and infants and the many older people who live nearby.*
- *The increased need for parking is likely to have a knock on effect on cars parked on Hillclose Avenue which is a continuation of Clare Avenue. Currently teachers and or older students park there on both sides of the road during school hours as there is a back pedestrian route into Carmel School. This is likely to impact on traffic flow on evenings and weekends, blocking local residents drive and make access difficult for larger emergency vehicles.*
- *The proposals will generally have a large impact on Whitemeadows, Broadmeadows and some parts of Cardinal Gardens all built on land sold with restrictive covenants by Carmel Covent in what is currently. a pleasant quiet residential area with varied local wild life.*
- *We have recently moved into The Headlands. Whilst we were fully aware of the traffic generated by the Carmel College, we knew it was only at around 9am and 3.30 to 4pm. This was not an issue for us. The noise, lighting of the grounds and the extra traffic and cars parked outside our home until 9pm at night and at weekends, we consider would be detrimental to what is now a relatively peaceful area. We are both pensioners and whilst have no problem with the everyday activities of the College, we both strongly object to the proposal*
- *I have a real concern about the amount of traffic this will generate. Anybody who has witnessed the number of cars that the similar and close facility at Hummersknott school would know this to be true. Unfortunately many of the drivers attending or dropping off leave it late and then speed dangerously through these residential streets. It is then often the same at the end of a session as the rush to home/pub/tv programme/food etc takes place It is also noticeable that when the sessions involve younger people, there is a considerable increase in litter [especially plastic bottles] in the surrounding streets and green areas. Those younger elements that cycle to their sport seem to have no idea of their mortality, I have often met riders with no lights, some do not seem to know which side of the road to ride on!!*

- *Of all the Darlington secondary schools this is the one that should not have such a development as the others have areas of open land [non residential] adjacent to them.*
- *I still do not understand why the area for development is classified E3. It should be E2, a relatively dark outer suburb, on account of the woodland areas. The report does not model likely scenarios e.g. glare off highly reflective, wet surfaces. It may therefore grossly underestimate the amount of light pollution*
- *There are known to be existing problems of drainage in this area. A similar facility in Eastbourne has been recently flooded out. Therefore it is disingenuous to suggest that there would not be an issue here.*
- *No new information was forthcoming in the updated documents. Has it been thoroughly risk assessed? A message from Carmel College to the catholic community via parish newsletters, intimated that feeder schools would also use the facility. This undoubtedly means more coaches and more nuisance to local residents*
- *I acknowledge that the report was a lot more detailed than the previous effort.*
- *There are still points to address. In section 3.1, the report is blatant in saying it is in support of the application. Surely for a development of this magnitude, the report should be neutral. Otherwise how do we know the models have not been manipulated to justify the development?*
- *The acoustic barrier is talked about. how can we be sure it will be properly maintained. As seen at Eastbourne, maintenance of these facilities tends to be very poor once they are established*
- *It seems the funding streams needed to build the facility have caused it to be completely oversized and intrusive to this neighbourhood. I don't think anyone would object to a smaller facility, without floodlights, used by the solely by the school*
- *The message from Carmel (in parish newsletters) was 'it was in the common good' to press ahead. How is it in the common good to ruin this part of Darlington with an unsuitable development? It was also described as 'exciting'. It is very far from exciting if you happen to live in the vicinity of it.*
- *The noise and bright lighting is totally unacceptable given the proximity of a vast residential area. Having lived in the property over 30 years we are used to a peaceful environment which would be seriously affected.*
- *Far from seeing reason and seeking to withdraw the scheme or modify it to remove the out of school hours which cause the maximum intrusion/nuisance/damage to health/damage to protected wildlife, the applicant has stubbornly ignored the protests and pleas of vulnerable neighbours. One example of that is proposed operating times on weekends has been increased from 10am to 4pm to 9am to 4pm. So the amelioration for the neighbours is a one hour earlier wake up call from traffic/noise and nuisance. We are advised that 5 other schools are to share the facility providing for additional traffic. Noise and nuisance*
- *We still have had no response to many issues such as abuse of our human rights, failure to address the issue of European Protected Species of bats/amphibians in the wooded/ponded areas, failure to properly address the issues of poor drainage to east playing field and the safety and security of this quiet outer suburban area of which we are so fond*
- *The report forming part of the planning application has been prepared for the sole benefit of the applicant. As such it cannot be relied upon and an independent report should be prepared. Notwithstanding this the very nature of the proposed development can only have an adverse impact on all adjoining and adjacent properties despite the proposed mitigating works.*

- *Again the report forming part of the planning application does not appear to be independent and an independent Lighting Impact Assessment should be obtained. In any event the area is clearly situated in an Environmental Zone E2 and not E3 as stated in the report. The proposed floodlights will have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of the adjoining properties due to light spillage and light glare.*
- *There does not appear to be any Traffic Management Scheme. This facility, if approved, would bring increased use over longer periods of time to The Headlands which was not designed to accommodate the both the volume and type of traffic which currently uses it. In general terms The Headlands is not a suitable access for the town and areawide use that is proposed.*
- *There does not appear to be any Parking Management Scheme. I understand that parking within the school is already at a premium and at peak times of usage would overflow into The Headlands which would only exasperate an already difficult and dangerous situation.*
- *As there are bats in the immediate area then an independent survey research report should be obtained and all due licences obtained in accordance with the requirements of Natural England and DEFRA. All bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are fully protected by the Law and, accordingly, it would constitute a criminal offence not to follow these requirements.*
- *A Surface Water Drainage Strategy (Report) should be obtained and its requirements carried out. It is totally inappropriate to simply say that surface water drainage, with its pollutants, is to discharge into the wooded area to the East*
- *There is an enormous amount of detail missing from the application such as access to the playing area for both players and spectators including arrangements for disabled access. It is also doubtful whether the remainder of the field can possibly accommodate the 3 x additional 5v5 and 7v7 pitches also envisaged which, in any event, would create their own problems with regard to noise pollution.*
- *The proposed development is not suitable for this site because of the inevitable substantial and overwhelming adverse impacts that it would have on the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood. The site is in close proximity to long established quiet residential areas. As such quality of life and health issues for the residents will suffer as will the basic right to enjoy their homes and the loss of privacy. There are much more suitable sites in the Borough which are capable of housing this type of development. I have not seen any Environmental Impact Assessment*
- *In particular the proposed development does not seem to comply with any of the requirements laid down in Policy R11 in the Darlington Local Plan relating to the installation of artificial turf playing surfaces*
- *Residents already suffer from the volume of traffic linked to both schools.. You can't get in or out of your driveways at school times, or after school and weekends due to the traffic from parents and after school and weekend clubs. The speed of some of this traffic is also frightening! Parents from Carmel are now parking in Hummersknott Ave to collect students, causing problems for the Carmel buses or residents wanting to access their drives. Now we even have 6th formers parking their cars up for the day! I feel that the quantity of traffic we are already subjected to is enough*
- *Objection to the increase in light pollution that will impact on neighbouring houses including my own.*
- *Increase in noise on an evening and weekends to what is currently a quiet neighbourhood*
- *Increase in traffic into a quiet neighbourhood and without the infrastructure to cope with existing traffic*

- *Due to the unique situation of Carmel being surrounded by housing estates i do not believe that this is the right place to grant planning permission for this increase sporting facilities*
- *The noise and disturbance that residents will experience with the planned hours of operation*
- *The adverse effect this will have on a neighbourhood which, uniquely in Darlington, borders the whole school. As such there is also only one single access road to the school which goes through the estate and is already a major concern regarding the safety of residents and students*
- *The severe impact of the increase in traffic relating to not only noise and disturbance but also to safety*
- *We are located right opposite the school but were excluded from any consultation meetings or indeed sent any information by Darlington Borough Council during the earlier stages. The first and only correspondence from the Council relating to this matter was received on 16 November 2015. It asks us to look at an "amended" plan when we had not even been informed of the original proposal. The reasons for our objection are no different to those already mentioned by our neighbours and people within the local community. These include the impact of noise, lighting and increased traffic not only on the environment but also the well being of the local residents. The stress caused by the increased disturbance in the neighbourhood and the loss of the individual's right to privacy and enjoying their home is likely to have a detrimental effect on their health. The "amendments" do not seem to have taken into account any of the issues that were raised. The additional information submitted by the head of curriculum for PE at the school does not justify a commercial venture. We understand that Darlington Borough Council intend to use the facility at Carmel for hockey instead of Eastbourne. It therefore raises the question whether an unbiased view is being taken during the planning process. We do not have any objection to students at Carmel School having access to facilities to support their curriculum but certainly have strong objection to the site being used for any other purpose.*
- *Concerned with increase in noise levels for extended days and hours. My property borders on Broadmeadows and Whitemeadows and I can clearly hear what is said by teachers and pupils.*
- *The impact of extra pollution from lights and traffic would affect my health, I suffer from M.S and need rest and lack of stress*
- *The construction of this would greatly interfere with residents in the immediate and surrounding area who already, on a daily basis have heavy traffic to contend with. This has to be endured. However if the application were to go ahead, this together with, loss of privacy, lighting, visual impact, noise and disturbance would be constant. At the moment I look forward to evenings, weekends and holidays when the area becomes peaceful and quiet. But if the planning application were to go ahead the impact and character of the surrounding area would be ruined.*
- *As a resident living in close proximity to the school, I have tried to be open minded about this application. To this end, I have paid careful attention to the noise generated by normal school activities, including sport. There is no doubt that a considerable amount of noise is generated, but this is acceptable as part of normal school life during the day. People living in the area bought their houses in full knowledge of this fact but the additional noise, light pollution and extra traffic could not have been foreseen. Noise generated by the excitement and passion of matches and the expressive language used, would be entirely unacceptable if occurring regularly, especially during evenings and*

weekends. I have no doubt that this application is not in the best interests of the wider community.

- *This application seems to have been pushed through without any regard for the residents quality of life as most of the people effected have had no information on the matter , I would like to register my objection to this application on the basis Traffic, light pollution, noise for long hours and the effect on the quality of life.*
- *I object to this application primarily because of the increased traffic. Whenever there is an event at the school the parking in the immediate area is a problem. These are estate roads in a residential area and are not suitable for the increased traffic that this facility will bring.*
- *Adverse impact on residential amenity. Noise and disturbance that will be experienced the impact on the lighting on the environment the increased traffic in the area which is already heavy at times impact on the character of the surrounding area*
- *Carmel Academy is bordered on all sides by residential property and there is only one access road and I do not believe when The Headlands was constructed it was intended as a main thoroughfare. At present is congested with cars, buses stretching from the school gates down The Headlands along Hummersknott Avenue to Carmel Road junction. We avoid going out or arriving home at school leaving time. Cars so often are blocking entrances. Any works vans parked cause chaos. Over the years Carmel School has grown and we have had to adjust to a great deal of inconvenience. If this plan is passed not only will we have disturbance during term time but holidays, weekends and evenings. There could also be the noise of car doors slamming and generally chatter up to 10pm. It will without doubt have a detrimental effect on the quality of life for all who live in the vicinity of the proposal*
- *The location of the pitch is in very close proximity to our house and we are concerned about the possible effects of noise, lighting and disturbance. We are particularly concerned about the hours of its operation during weekdays and weekends. This objection is not about stopping student facilities but rather our concern is the operational extended hours in what is a residential area*
- *The current peaceful nature of ours and adjacent resident's homes and gardens on Saturdays and Sundays in particular from excited sports teams and spectators together with whistles and other types of annoying noise which no amount of noise suppression design features is actually able to mitigate. The floodlights and noise will dramatically change the peaceful nature of this residential area. The additional traffic and probable on road parking would also further aversely change the nature of our residential area and could increase the risk of accidents on roads designed for residential access only.*
- *We have already suffered a significant loss of amenity and enjoyment of our house and garden because of the extension to school buildings and the associated nuisance from extended duration construction works but having a publicly used facility over our back garden fence for the extended hours is a step too far*
- *My wife suffers from a chronic illness that can be greatly affected by stress. We are therefore both concerned that the increase in use of the playing field with the extra noise and light pollution could have a detrimental effect on my wife's health. My wife is permanently in a wheelchair and housebound and suffers from fatigue. It is therefore necessary for her to rest regularly during the day, evening and night. As she is only able to access the bedrooms at the rear of the property we believe that the pitch would not allow her the quiet environment in our own home for her to rest and thus cause unnecessary stress and fatigue.*

- *I object in the strongest possible way to the peace being disturbed every night and all weekend especially by flood lighting*
- *I feel that the huge potential increase in traffic will cause problems from the school's neighbours of which I am one. The disruption that is caused at home time is a problem in its self and the think further later disruption with parking, noise and light pollution is not in keeping with the area*
- *We maintain our strong objection should the pitch be offered for community use. In Cardinal Gardens we are already aware of noise from the school. We feel that consequent light pollution, extra traffic and the noise would be unsuitable for a residential area. We do not see that noise levels, in particular peaks of loud shouting, can be controlled especially outside normal school hours. We do not see how the additional parking could be controlled*
- *The sound assessment report cannot go forward as part of this application unless it is re-assessed with the pitch in the correct position. Unless this is done the report has no value and its findings must be ignored. We continue to have concerns about the impact that using the incorrect height for the pitch (relative to the surrounding residential properties) will have.*
- *I am absolutely fed up to the point where it's affecting my health and my financial status. Myself, wife and daughter have had too many near misses with our vehicles at the junction of Carmel College to the point where I have had cameras installed in my vehicle. We have also had people parking cars on our garden also damage done. We are now going to suffer noise, light pollution and more and more traffic plus abuse from the drivers when we are only trying to go about our normal life getting in and out of our street*
- *Carmel already creates a lot of noise both with their concert hall practice sessions of music and singing that can be clearly heard in our back garden. Additional weekend use of their field creates clear nuisance noise which includes clearly heard foul language. We can hear traffic arriving and leaving the grounds. School night lighting is already clearly visible at the back of our house. 15m high floodlights are not a welcome thought. We bought our house fully aware of the proximity of Carmel School however we are not aware that our good nature/acceptance would be pushed as far as it has already. I suffer from stress related depression so what impact is this going to have on me and those others with medical conditions*
- *I have no desire to look out of the back of our house and see a monstrosity of a sports facility, floodlights and be overlooked in what should be a private property. Our children and guests sleep and work at the back of our house and the facility can only bring discomfort, loss of privacy and unsightly view.*
- *The college are now seeking approval for facilities that will add traffic flow from the same Council that endorsed the original parking pledge measures. Furthermore these are for out of hours use when the vast majority of college staff would not be around to monitor anything. It is clear where most of the out of hours demand lies. Not hockey, rounders, soft ball practice but soccer. It would appear that this is the underlying justification for floodlighting and the expense incurred. If the College is not exercising reasonable control over a simple issue like school time traffic flows could there be any confidence in controls over out of hours community activities.*
- *This morning (4th Dec) monitored traffic driving along Hummersknott Avenue from Carmel Road North to The Headlands and the College (timed between 08:20 and 08:57) there results were 90 cars, 2 vans, 1 truck towing plant hire, 1 large waste truck, 9 large passenger coaches and 3 mini coaches (contravening the College Parking Pledge).*

Exiting from The Headlands were 83 cars; 1 truck minus plant hire equipment and the returning school coaches. The surely demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt the College has failed to deliver on its Pledge.

- *I have been monitoring Carmel car park and it is often at least half full in the evening. When school events take place parking overflows throughout the neighbouring streets. If sports teams begin using the facility the disruption will become unbearable and dangerous. Yet the police report seems to assume we are happy with these arrangements but we are not. The school has one narrow access road which is completely unacceptable. I also note that part of the application allows for 3 grass pitches around the synthetic pitch, one of which is immediately adjacent to the gardens of houses in The Headlands. Quite apart from the fact that this is a very waterlogged ground, I cannot see how noise, disruption and loss of privacy will be mitigated here.*
- *This application is to provide facilities for a sport that is dwindling in numbers year on year. There are good facilities within easy travelling distance for the two teams who are meant to be accommodated.*
- *This is a change of use to a commercial enterprise.*
- *Noise and its impact on our ability and human right to enjoy our homes and gardens without intrusion*
- *Negative effects on health and well being as a result of annoyance caused by noise, artificial light, potential anti social behaviour and its impact on sleep, rest, relaxation and physical and mental and emotional well being for all residents especially children, older residents and those with long term conditions such as dementia*
- *Increase in traffic in a residential area already suffering from significant pressure*
- *Annoyance and distress caused to neighbours as a consequence of additional traffic during the only time when they currently get respite from traffic problems*
- *The roads were never built for the volume of traffic that has already been produced by the school and this development will cause traffic chaos.*
- *The proposed use of long hours 7 days a week is unacceptable plus the light pollution for possibly 6 months of the year*
- *As a long time resident of this area I am concerned about the impact this development will have on the character of the area. I already experience cars parking in front of my house and am concerned that the increased use of the extra facilities will increase the likelihood of this happening*
- *I am also concerned about the level of traffic that is already generated and the increased levels that this facility will bring. I frequently witness cars speeding along Hummersknott Avenue and am concerned about the safety aspects of cars speeding at night endangering residents.*
- *I think that light and noise generated by the development will cause disturbance to many residents and adversely affect the quiet nature of the area.*
- *A cursory glance of the current parking situation would make it immediately apparent that such an idea is, in practical terms, completely impossible. Cars are permanently parked in Clare Avenue outside our house during the day because of the lack of space on the school grounds and the proposed plans would only exacerbate the problems we already encounter*
- *The peaceful nature of the resident's homes and gardens at weekends, in particular but also during weekday evenings would be shattered by noise and disturbance which no amount of noise suppression design features is actually able to fully mitigate. We have already suffered a significant loss of the amenity and enjoyment of our house and garden because of the extension to school buildings and the associated nuisance from extended*

duration construction works but having a publicly used facility over our back garden fence for the proposed extended hours is a step too far and would completely change the amenity value of our home.

- *The noise and floodlights from the proposed facility would dramatically change the peaceful nature of this residential part of Darlington town. We have already had to put black out blinds on all our back bedrooms because of light pollution from the College where regularly left on all night*
- *There is no other school site in Darlington is surrounded by so many residential properties at this boundary. Most of the residential properties that surround the school grounds have their main living accommodation to the rear of the property to allow them to benefit from the quiet environment that the outlook has previously enjoyed. Most of the properties have extensive gardens that the residents enjoy the use of. This development will impact a high number of residential properties with more than 25 within 70 m of the pitch. The overall impact of the development will be to destroy the way of life that many of the local residents currently enjoy.*

An objection has been submitted on behalf of a local resident with ill health outlining the resident's medical conditions. The email from the resident has been supported by two further letters from West Park Hospital and Carmel Medical Practice. The objection and supporting letters comment that

- *My husband is confined to the house most of the time. The erection of an acoustic screening and floodlights would take away the familiar view he so enjoys at the back of the house overlooking our garden and the open field and the changes will be very confusing and distressing seriously affecting his health. He often likes to nap during the day, sometimes in the bedroom (rear of house) with the window open. Both Carmel College and DBC take pride in caring for the community. This proposal goes against those aims. Surely you have a duty of care toward the elderly and vulnerable. As a full time carer I also have the right to have a peaceful existence. The stress of dealing with this has already had an adverse effect upon my health. The loss of privacy, the visual and noise impact, impinge on both our lives*
- *I write as a Consultant Psychiatrist in Old Age Psychiatry. Whilst I have no comments on the merits of this individual project I wish to state that a project of this nature is likely to have a very detrimental impact on the mental health of one of the local residents I am professionally involved with. They are likely to be confused and distressed by the building work and pitch usage if it is until late night with flood lights and noise*
- *This patient of mine has significant Lewy body dementia. He is very confused, has hallucinations and a progression of his dementia. He needs to bed early to be able to cope with getting up relatively early and coping with his symptoms throughout the day. Excessive noise and light at night does seem to make him worse and I am concerned that a synthetic hockey pitch is being constructed on the playing field at the rear of their house. I would be grateful if this gentleman's medical needs is taken into consideration during the planning process*

Consultee Responses

Northumbrian Water has no objections to the proposed scheme as no surface water will enter the public sewer system

Sport England has raised no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of a planning condition to secure the submission of transitional arrangements for the community users of the eastern playing field pitches

The Durham Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer has raised no objections but would ask that due consideration is given to the concerns of the residential properties over the potential increased use of the site. Durham Constabulary is committed to helping build strong communities

Environment Agency has confirmed that the proposal falls outside of their scope of matters on which they are a statutory consultee

The Council's Highways Engineer has raised no objections to the proposal

The Council's Principal Environmental Health Officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions

The Council's Ecology Officer has no objections to the proposal

The Council's Lead Flood Authority Officers have confirmed that the proposal falls outside their scope of matters on which they are a statutory consultee

PLANNING ISSUES

The main issues to be considered here are whether or not the proposal is acceptable in the following terms:

Planning Policy

Sport England Comments

Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

Residential Amenity

Health Concerns

Highway Safety and Parking

Impact upon Trees

Impact upon Ecology

Drainage

Flood Risk and Drainage

Planning Policy

The application site lies within the development limits for the urban area as defined by the Proposals Map of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997.

The application site, along with the wider Carmel College site, is part of the Open Land Network and Saved Policy E3 of the Local Plan states that development must not have a material net harm on the usefulness, appearance and nature conservation interest of the Network and its interconnectivity. Whilst the proposal will result in the loss of a section of the playing fields within the grounds of the College, the other playing fields and outdoor sports facilities will remain and will continue to provide visual relief across the wider school grounds. The overall openness of the playing field and the wider site will broadly remain intact. The remaining extent of the wider school site will ensure that the continuity of the system remains. The application site is not recognised for nature conservation or wildlife importance and will not result in the loss of any trees. It is considered that the proposal would accord Saved Policy E3 of the Local Plan.

Furthermore, the site is not considered to be an area of sufficient quality to be within the Darlington Open Space Strategy 2007 – 2017 aims to protect and enhance a variety of high quality, accessible, open and green spaces throughout the Borough.

Saved Policy R11 of the Local Plan permits the installation of artificial turf playing surfaces where they are accessible by a range of means of transport, they avoid the attraction of traffic through residential streets, are well related to other sports facilities and are designed as to protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The synthetic pitch would be well related to the other sport facilities at the College site and the remainder of the report will consider the proposal against the remaining criteria.

Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect and where appropriate enhance sport and recreation facilities and to provide a wide range of quality, accessible and safe facilities to meet the needs of the community. Synthetic pitches of appropriate quality will be provided and maintained at “satellite sites” such as schools and colleges. The proposal would be constructed on land that has been used as a playing field but the condition of the field is not satisfactory for sporting purposes and is not marked out as a formal pitch. There is a presumption against the loss of playing fields unless a proposal meets one of the five exceptional circumstances set out in policy CS18 and one of those circumstances is where the existing sports and recreation facility would be replaced by a facility of an equivalent or better quality and quantity in a sustainable location, with equivalent or better management arrangements. The proposal would accord with Policy CS18.

Sport England Comments

The application site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. Sport England would object to a proposal that would lead to the loss of, prejudice the use of all or part of a playing field unless one of five exceptions apply. In this particular case, the proposal would be judged against the following exception (E5) to Sport England’s policy:

“The proposed development is for an indoor/outdoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of playing field”

The application site has been previously used for temporary classrooms and car parking (see Planning History) and whilst there was remediation following the removal of the facilities, the drainage of the playing field has subsequently been poor. The application site cannot sustain competitive play and has limited value for pitch sports due to its current condition which places pressure on the remaining pitches at the College.

Analysis undertaken by Sport England and the Football Association as part of a draft Playing Pitches Strategy 2015 identifies that Darlington needs and could sustain another synthetic pitch for football. The same work and consultation with England Hockey reveals that it is important that Darlington retains a hockey specific synthetic pitch.

It is likely that the current synthetic hockey pitch at the Eastbourne Sports Complex will be refurbished and resurfaced to become a 3G football specific facility and therefore whilst the proposed short pile sand based pitch at Carmel College can be used for other limited sport it has been designed specifically for competitive hockey and will be important to hockey provision in Darlington. It will also allow further much needed training provision for junior football clubs which subsequently reduces the wear and tear on grass pitches that are currently used for such purposes. The pitch would be used by hockey clubs in Darlington and also Bishop Auckland. The school itself will also benefit from the pitch in the delivery of curriculum sport.

Sport England has advised that the FA is supportive of the planning application along with England Hockey.

The perimeter fencing around the pitch and the pitch markings have been revised to meet the requirements of England Hockey and Sport England and a plan to show how the remaining parts of the College's eastern playing field would be set out once the development is complete has been provided. The plan shows that two 5 v 5 playing pitches and a 7 v 7 playing pitch can be provided alongside the synthetic pitch and they could be used for both football and rugby. The setting out of these pitches would involve white lining and the setting up of goals and such work does not constitute development meaning planning permission is not required for them. As such, the usage of the pitches would fall outside of the scope of the Community Use Agreement for the synthetic pitch.

The playing pitches on the College's western playing field have been out of use to allow for the implementation of playing field drainage improvements (funded by Sport England) and at present it is uncertain whether these pitches will be ready to allow community users to be accommodated once construction work on the eastern playing field commences. Clubs and teams need to be able to plan ahead to arrange training and to fulfil fixtures and Sport England wishes to seek clarity and certainty around the need for the transitional arrangements which can be secured by a planning condition.

Community Use Agreements

Sport England has a crucial role in promoting greater opportunities for sport and active recreation for local communities. It is therefore keen to encourage the opening up of sports facilities to the wider community, when they are not required by the main user.

Many educational sites, including schools of all kinds, academies and sports colleges, have very good sports facilities which are often underused out of normal school hours.

When an educational establishment decides that its sports facilities will be available for community use it is valuable to agree in a Community Use Agreement to show how it is intended to operate, covering such matters as hours of availability, management arrangements, pricing policy etc. The use of an Agreement should help secure well managed and safe community access to sports facilities on educational sites

An Agreement has been submitted to support the planning application and Sport England has confirmed that the document meets their requirements.

Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

The eight 15m high lighting columns are slim structures that would not be an overbearing addition to the appearance of the area. The perimeter fencing that encloses the pitch would be coloured green and would have a similar design to the fencing that bounds the existing MUGA and tennis courts to the west of the proposed synthetic pitch. The acoustic fencing on the northern and southern boundaries would be the most dominant structures but not to such an extent that it would significantly harm the appearance of the site.

There is a slight embankment that runs east to west across the playing field and a section of the bank would be cut into by the northern boundary of the pitch in order to ensure that the pitch is level. Any earth and top soil would be removed from the site.

It is considered that the proposed development and its associated structures relates visually well with the existing school buildings and they are features that can be found in other educational sites. The proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact upon the visual appearance or character of the wider Carmel College site or the street scene in general.

Residential Amenity

Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development should protect and where possible, improve environmental resources, whilst ensuring there is no detrimental impact on the environment, general amenity and the health and safety of the local community. Saved policy R11 of the Local Plan permits the installation of artificial playing pitches provided they are designed as to protect the amenities of neighbouring dwellings. One of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 is to secure good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The applicant has advised that the playing fields are currently used after school approximately 2 or 3 nights per week during the winter season for school football matches. Occasionally outside teams play matches on an evening when the nights are light but this is probably no more than 5 times per year. The pitch is used for three hours every Saturday morning from October to April by the Total Soccer Centre and for 10 to 15 days during the holidays for football holiday courses.

A Management Plan to be read in conjunction with the Community Use Agreement outlines how the synthetic pitch would be supervised and managed by the College. Carmel College has committed to a resident Site Supervisor to manage the out of hours use of the College's facilities and in addition there are two Building Maintenance Officers who cover the period of 0730 to 2100 respectively and a Grounds person who works 0800 to 1600. Changing facilities and toilet facilities within the College would be available for patrons to use.

At its closest point, the synthetic pitch would be approximately an equal distance 43m from the dwellings to the north and south of the playing field (not including the acoustic fence that bounds the north and south edges). A belt of mature trees and hedges form the boundary with the dwellings to the south and a hedge is the predominant boundary treatment to the north.

Other Existing Facilities

Whilst the sites below differ in terms of the distance between the synthetic pitches and existing neighbouring dwellings, it is worth noting the hours of use for the other pitches in the Borough. The proposed hours for the application site are not as extensive as those outlined below:

Longfield Academy

08:00 – 22:00 Monday to Friday

09:00 – 21:30 Saturday

10:00 – 20:00 Sunday

Hummersknott School

08:00 – 21:30 Monday to Friday

09:00 – 20:00 Saturday and Sunday

Eastbourne Sport Complex

There are no planning conditions attached to the original planning permission (dated 1996) for the complex but the pitch is operated as per the times below:

09:00 – 22:00 Monday to Friday

12:00 – 16:30 Saturday

09:30 – 16:00 Sunday

Members are being requested to consider the proposed hours of operation and should be aware that any reduction in the hours of operation will increase the likelihood of any funding application to Sport England being unsuccessful and the proposal may not then be implemented.

Noise

At the time of the original submission there was no specific methodology or assessment criteria for rating noise from sports pitches/artificial grass pitches (AGP). BS4142 “Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound” has been used in the past but now specifically states it is not to be used for the determination of noise from recreational activities. There is no other British Standard or official planning guidance specifically aimed at the evaluation of noise from such sources.

In August 2015 Sports England published a Design Guidance Note titled “Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) Acoustics – Planning Implications” which calculated typical noise levels from a typical AGP sports session. The most significant noise levels were found to be generally from the voices of players, with the exception of hockey where impact noises of balls hitting perimeter strike boards and goal back boards were more noticeable. A typical free-field noise level from an AGP (at 10m from the side line halfway marking) of 58dB LAeq(1 hour) was determined as representative. The Design Guidance Note considers that with no specific criteria in place the World Health Organisation (WHO) ‘Guidelines for Community Noise’ (1999) is one of the most relevant documents for the assessment of noise from AGPs. The WHO Guidelines (1999) defines noise level limits in outdoor living areas of 55dB LAeq(16 hours) to “protect the majority of people from being seriously annoyed during the daytime” and 50 dB LAeq(16 hours) to “protect the majority of people from being moderately annoyed during the daytime”. The Sports England Design Note states that when in an open location noise levels of 50dB LAeq(1 hour) can be achieved at a distance of 40 metres from an AGP without any mitigation but acknowledges that this distance maybe greater when taking into account reflections from buildings and the topography of the site. The Design Guidance Note does not use any other assessment criteria i.e. with regard to internal noise levels or the impact of maximum noise levels.

Apex Acoustics in the absence of any assessment criteria (Sports England Design Note published August 2015) have developed the following criteria to be used in the assessment of noise from MUGAs/AGPs following a research project:

- 1) L_{Aeq} , 15 min not to exceed the L_{A90} , 5 min by more than 5dB.
- 2) L_{Aeq} , 15 min should not exceed 55dB.
- 3) Average L_{Amax} not to exceed 60dB where the average L_{Amax} is defined as the logarithmic mean of the 10 loudest events from at least three separate 15 minute measurement periods.

Apex Acoustics concluded that all of the above criteria should be met at a noise sensitive receptor as an indication that the AGP is unlikely to be the cause of complaints.

Environmental Health negotiated with Apex Acoustics revised assessment criteria to be used in any assessment of noise from the pitch was agreed:

Environmental Health negotiated a stricter criteria to this development than that recently adopted by Sports England in that the noise level was assessed against the background level, shorter measurement periods are used and an assessment is made of the maximum noise levels i.e. impact of balls against the fence. This stricter criteria will provide greater protection to residents than that afforded by Sports England Design Note.

The sound impact assessment has demonstrated that with the mitigation of a 3 metre acoustic fence to the north and south which extends at least 20 metres on the west and east edges and the lining of kickboards the agreed noise assessment criteria and internal ambient noise levels for bedrooms (daytime resting and living rooms) contained within BS8233 "Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction" will be met. The worse-case calculated noise level at the noise sensitive receivers is 37 dB L_{Aeq} ; this is 13dB less than the 50 L_{Aeq} required "to protect the majority of people from being moderately annoyed during the daytime" and assuming a reduction of 15 dB L_{Aeq} for a partially openable window the worst case calculated internal noise level is 22dB L_{Aeq} which is 13dB less than daytime noise levels for living room and bedrooms given in BS8233.

Objectors have raised concerns over noise levels within their conservatories. There are no specific guidelines for conservatories but it could be argued that WHO guidelines for outdoor living areas apply to conservatories as well as gardens. There will still be a reduction in noise as a result of the glazing in conservatories.

As this is a planning application for a synthetic sand surfaced pitch which is predominantly to be used for hockey the revised sound impact assessment has considered source noise levels from hockey being played on the pitch. The findings of the assessment using noise measurements of football and hockey being played at the pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex found that as long as the kickboards are padded/insulated the highest noise levels are attributed to football as opposed to hockey. The assessment has therefore used sound levels from football being played on the pitch, the impact of the football hitting the catch fencing and whistle noise. A worse case source level has been used in that three 6 a side football games were taking place simultaneously at the time of the measurement and the worse-case level during a game was used.

Objectors have raised concerns that lower noise levels have been used but are taking measurements quoted in other reports out of context i.e. distance measured. The pitch has been modelled as an area source using the calculated sound power level which is distance independent.

Objectors have raised concerns over the background noise level used in the sound impact assessment. The background noise measurement was taken from a location on the west field at a time which is likely to be representative of the quietest period in relation to the proposed operational hours of the pitch i.e. between 20.00 and 21.00. If taken from the east field the noise measurement is likely to have been subject to road traffic but also noise from coming and goings to Carmel College i.e. evening classes and use of the car park. The calculated worse case $L_{Aeq, 15}$ min noise level at the most exposed noise sensitive receiver is 7 dB below the measured background noise level i.e. 10 dB below the criteria. Further measurements of background level may or may not result in different background levels to those used in the assessment, however, these will not differ significantly and therefore will not have an effect on whether or not the first noise assessment criteria is met.

Apex Acoustics have used CADNA a recognised noise model widely used by consultants to calculate the noise levels at the noise sensitive receivers and takes into account a wide range of input parameters. The input parameters such as temperature, humidity, ground factor have been entered into the model in accordance with ISO 9613.

The majority of objections which raise technical issues relate to the parameters inputted into the model and are considered below:

Objections have been raised that the pitch in the sound impact assessment is in the wrong location. This has been clarified with Apex Acoustics and the agent and it has been confirmed that the pitch is in the correct location. The confusion would appear to be the result of google earth photographs being used for illustrative purposes within the sound impact assessment report.

Objections have been raised that the sound impact assessment fails to take into account the topography of the east field and surrounding residential properties. Apex Acoustics have used topographical data purchased from Ordnance Survey and made use of radar data.

Objections have been raised that an insufficient number of sensitive receivers has been assessed. The revised sound impact assessment has increased the number of noise sensitive receptors considered within the report from 3 to 5. The contour plans included within the report show noise levels for other residential properties. The noise sensitive locations have been selected to cover the most sensitive locations and the contour plans of noise levels contained within various figures in the report demonstrate noise levels for the wider area comply with the agreed noise assessment criteria.

Objections have been raised that spectator noise has not been assessed. The revised noise impact assessment has taken into account spectator noise by extending the size of the pitch but large numbers of spectators are unlikely.

Queries have been raised over some of the input parameters for example ground factor which is used to reflect the absorption factor of the ground i.e. porous ground has a ground factor of 1.0 and hard standing a ground factor of zero. Values in between these two values reflect the fraction of hard and soft ground. The value of 0.8 which has been used within the report and changing this parameter to be more conservative i.e. ground factor from 0.8 to 0.5 for example will not result in the required noise levels not being met.

Objections have been raised that the noise model does not take into account reflection of the noise. CADNA does take into account reflections within the model.

The noise from the synthetic pitch will be audible in the gardens of surrounding residential properties but the noise assessment criteria used which is based on research concluded that if all of the above criteria is met at a noise sensitive receptor, this is an indication that an AGP is unlikely to be the cause of noise complaints.

The aim of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that noise should not give rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of a new development and Local Planning Authorities should mitigate and reduce to minimum adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from new development through the use of conditions. The Noise Policy

Statement for England referred to in the NPPF states the decisions should be made taking into account economic and social benefit of the activity.

Taking into account NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance including the noise exposure hierarchy and Noise Policy Statement for England the noise from the synthetic sand dressed turf pitch will not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the neighbouring dwellings and any adverse impacts will be reduced to a minimum by mitigation measures such as installation of a 3 metre acoustic fence, padded kick boards and the use of conditions with regard to restricting the hours of use and the implementation of a community use agreement.

Lighting

To ensure that the proposed lighting does not result in obtrusive light (i.e. light which shines outside the area it is intended to illuminate) a Lighting Impact Assessment has been carried out. The proposals have been designed using accredited lighting software package CALCULUX and the proposed floodlighting features flat style optics designed to reduce upward waste light overspill and are to be fitted with internal baffles to reduce the impact of glare.

The lighting levels have been assessed using the Institute of Lighting Professionals “Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light” 2011 and compared against the obtrusive light limitations for exterior lighting installations for the selected environmental zone, as contained within Table 2 of the guidance.

Objectors have disputed the environmental zone that has been assigned to Carmel College (i.e. E3 suburban area of medium brightness for the proposed floodlighting) and an argument could be put forward that E2 rural or relatively dark outer suburban should have been used. This argument however becomes irrelevant in that the designed lighting complies with the lighting levels for environmental zone 1 intrinsically dark i.e. national parks. A vertical spill calculation has been carried out with the maximum vertical illuminance projected towards the façade of the residential building within closes proximity to the pitch development is less than 0.5 lux (E2 level 5 lux) and the upward light output ratio is calculated at 0% (E2 level 2. 5%) . The maximum luminaire intensity is 1827candalas and well below the pre curfew level of 7,500 candalas for environmental zone E2. However it is recommended that if planning permission is granted a condition is imposed to secure that the lighting scheme complies with light limitations for environmental zone E2 as a minimum.

To be able to put the lighting levels within the Assessment in some context street lighting can range from 2 to 10 lux with 5 lux often being quoted as the average level for street lighting.

Following a site visit to assess lighting levels, the existing lighting levels will not result in exceedence of the light intrusion into windows.

Visual Amenity

The planning system is not intended to protect the outlook that residents might enjoy at a particular point in time but to maintain an outlook that meets acceptable standard of amenity.

The boundary with the dwellings to the south consists of a hedge and a mature belt of trees although there are some breaks in the tree line to the rear of Nos 20 and 22 The Headlands. It is acknowledged that trees will shed leaves at certain times of the year reducing their screening ability. The boundary to the north is predominately a maintained hedgeline. The dwellings to the north are on a higher ground level due to the embankment that runs east west across the playing

field and the upper floor windows and in some cases conservatory roofs are visible above the hedge.

Due to the proximity distance between the proposed pitch, fencing and lighting columns and the dwellings to the north and south and the trees and hedges that provide an element of screening, it is considered that the proposed structures will not be overbearing when viewed from the neighbouring dwellings.

Fear of Crime

It is clear from the application that the site would be supervised during evening and weekends. The security arrangements would be the responsibility of the College but they would be secured by the Community Use Agreement and Management Plan.

The Durham Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer has highlighted that due consideration is given to the concerns of local residents over the potential increased use of the site but he has raised no objections to the proposal.

Construction Management Plan

The details within the proposed Construction Management Plan are acceptable and can be secured by a planning condition.

It is considered that appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposal in the interests of residential amenity and the proposal would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Saved Policy R11 of the Local Plan 1997 and policy CS16 of the Core Strategy 2011.

Health Concerns

A number of the objection letters make reference to the health and living conditions of some of the residents who live in close proximity to the application site. Harm to the health of a person is a material planning consideration but the weight that is given to it is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that in this case, appropriate mitigation measures have been secured within the proposal and having taken account of all other material planning considerations the planning application should not be refused on health grounds.

Highway Safety and Parking

The pitch will be used by the pupils of the College during the hours of 8am – 3.35pm with use extended to 5pm for after college activities and clubs. This usage would not generate an increase in traffic as the pupils would be already in attendance at the school.

The facility is then available for community use from 6pm until 9pm weekdays and 9am – 4pm at weekends. The private parking facilities for the school would be utilised for public use therefore there should be no impact of parked vehicles on the surrounding highway network in relation to this particular facility.

The college has a student intake of around 1200 pupils of whom 300 attend the 6th form (as confirmed by the College website and recent travel surveys) and it is assumed that 150 of these students will be of driving age, but not all will own or drive a car. However taking a worst case scenario for calculating parking, it could be assumed that all of the 150 students over the age of 17 could potentially own and use a vehicle for travelling to the college. There are currently 98 full time staff and 47 part time staff at the college, a proportion of which would use a private car

to travel to work. This amounts to a significant amount of traffic associated to the current use of the school that currently has planning permission.

Recent traffic surveys have been carried out on The Headlands and these showed that over a 15 minute period in the morning peak that 116 vehicles were recorded (2 way) which would include residential trips and vehicle trips associated with pick up/drop off at the school and other school movements. The new pitch could potentially generate 22 players (11 a side) with an assumed number of spectators in the order of 30no. Assuming a potential worst case scenario of all players and spectators arriving in separate private vehicles, this could generate a total of around 52 vehicle trips on the local network. (It could be argued that there will be more or less spectators, however this is to demonstrate a potential generation of traffic).

There are occasions during the course of a year when staff remain on site and visitors/parents visit the College to attend events such as Christmas Liturgy, Presentation Evenings, Christmas Fayres and Open Evenings. There are 129 car parking spaces within the site which on occasion are near capacity. As the car park would be actively managed and the community use of the new pitch would be at a separate time to the College hours, there should be sufficient car parking space within the grounds to avoid overspill onto the adjunct highway. There are occasions where the existing tennis courts are used for overspill parking.

In terms of vehicle numbers on the local highway, it can be seen that there is a much greater potential for private cars generated by the pupil and staff numbers at the College than could be envisaged by the competitors and spectator numbers generated by the new pitch.

Manual For Streets (MfS) is a recognised publication produced by the Department for Transport and draws on numerous project teams and case studies in its preparation and introduced a significant change and new approach to street design and together with the previous 'Places, Streets and Movement' guidance, introduces the principle of establishing a sense of place and removing the dominance of motor vehicles. This guidance sets out good design practices for residential streets and developments. The Tees Valley Design Guidance (TVDG) which the Council uses to assess the requirements for new residential and Industrial Estate developments has principles broadly based on the MfS documents among other sources. Should applications be taken to appeal, National Guidance such as MfS tends to be relied upon more heavily than local guidance when making a decision.

In terms of link capacity of the access routes there is a section within Manual for Streets (MfS) that summarises research data carried out as part of the document production and this states that "Traffic flow and road safety for streets with direct frontage access - The relationship between traffic flow and road safety for streets with direct frontage access was researched for MfS. Data on recorded accidents and traffic flow for a total of 20 sites were obtained. All of the sites were similar in terms of land use (continuous houses with driveways), speed limit (30 mph) and geometry (single-carriageway roads with limited side road junctions). Traffic flows at the sites varied from some 600 vehicles per day to some 23,000 vehicles per day, with an average traffic flow of some 4,000 vehicles per day."

"It was found that very few accidents occurred involving vehicles turning into and out of driveways, even on heavily-trafficked roads. Links with direct frontage access can be designed for significantly higher traffic flows than have been used in the past, and there is good evidence to raise this figure to 10,000 vehicles per day. It could be increased further, and it is suggested that local authorities review their standards with reference to their own traffic flows and personal

injury accident records. The research indicated that a link carrying this volume of traffic, with characteristics similar to those studied, would experience around one driveway-related accident every five years per kilometre."

Traffic surveys have been carried out to take a snap shot of the traffic using The Headlands and these have shown a total daily two way traffic flow of 1360 vehicles as the largest volume on any part of the link, therefore the current traffic volumes are below the average figure quoted in the above paragraphs. The accident rate on the immediate surrounding highway network is low and does not raise cause for concern as there has only been one reported accident within the last 5 year period based on data taken from the Police database.

The Headlands is based roughly on a 6.0m wide carriageway which is suitable to allow two HGVs to pass, although on street car parking does narrow the available space in places. However this does have the benefit of creating natural traffic calming and helps to regulate vehicle speeds. The Tees Valley Design Guide states that carriageway widths up to 5.5m wide are suitable to serve up to 300 dwellings and its associated traffic movements. There are currently around 90 dwellings served off The Headlands therefore the capacity of the existing carriageway is suitable to serve the existing number of dwellings. The additional spare capacity which would be taken up by the further 210 or so dwellings would be taken up by vehicles traveling to the College. These are only guidelines and as detailed above the actual traffic volumes that can be accommodated on estate roads is generally a lot higher without a significant effect on safety of all road users.

There have been recent reports of damage to bollards and kerbing along The Headlands due to heavy vehicles which has been confirmed by our Highways Inspector although the damage to the bollards is historical and has not been done recently. This is not as a direct result of the geometry of The Headlands but has resulted due to parked residential vehicles near the access road to the College and parking restrictions could be imposed if this was a long term issue.

There is a reported issue of parents dropping off children around school opening and closing times and this causes issues on the surrounding local highway network including Clare Avenue and The Headlands. However this application would not directly affect the numbers of staff or students attending the college and it should not impact further on the parking issues currently experienced and as stated previously the community use would be outside of the main school operational times.

Saved Policy R11 of the Local Plan 1997 states that a synthetic pitch should be accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and traffic attraction through residential streets should be avoided. However, Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy 2011 is more up to date and carries more weight and states that synthetic pitches to help achieve the target level of playing pitches set out in the Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy will be provided and maintained at satellite sites such as schools and colleges. There are limited bus services that can be used to gain access to the College but mainly on Saturdays only as there are no evening services and therefore visitors will predominately arrive by car. However, as explained above it is considered that there is sufficient capacity on the highway network and parking spaces within the site to cater for the additional traffic.

The highway safety implications of the Construction Management Plan are considered acceptable.

Impact upon Trees

The trees and hedges around the site would not be affected by the proposed development. Any cabling positions for the lighting columns will be located to prevent any damage to the existing tree roots and vegetation.

Impact upon Ecology

The application site is of low habitat quality providing minimal opportunities for foraging by bats and other animals. The surrounding area consists of moderate quality habitats to the north and south, which comprises of domestic gardens along with a higher quality foraging woodland habitat to the east.

A Data Search with the regional records centre reveals there are no bat roosts within 1km of the application site and no recordings of specific sightings within the site itself. A lighting column on the east boundary of the pitch has been repositioned and a Lux spread of less than 3Lux onto the woodland area is acceptable. The Floodlight Assessment states that the flood lights would be used between the months of October to March unless light is poor in September and April when the school is using the pitch). It has been recognised that bats may be evident in the area and it is considered that these mitigation measures are acceptable and the planning application does not have to be supported by a Bat Survey.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and a proposal of this type and size does not require the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment. Nevertheless, the proposal must not increase the risk of surface water runoff from the site or cause any increased flood risk to neighbouring sites.

The synthetic pitch is a porous sand dressed synthetic grass on a porous in-situ rubber shock pad, macadam, 250mm Type 3 with minimal fine stones. There are lateral drains at 10m centres running across the pitch footprint and perimeter drains lead to a silt trap. The proposed outfall is into the adjacent woodland area. The flow into this area is expected to be minimal due to the porous nature of the pitch. Approximately 70% of the rainfall will be absorbed into the new pitch and the ground below with the rest taken away by the positive drainage system and out into the woodland area where it will be held and percolate into the woodland.

Northumbrian Water has advised that they do not wish to make any comments on the basis that no surface water will enter the public sewer system.

The Environment Agency and the Council's Lead Flood Authority Officers have confirmed that the proposal falls outside of the scope of works that they are a statutory consultee for.

Notwithstanding the above, a planning condition would need to be imposed on any grant of planning permission to secure the precise details of the drainage system for the pitch and the woodland area which would be considered by the Council once the details have been provided should planning permission be granted for the proposal.

Other Matters

One of the objections relates to the lease between the Council and the College and whether or not the lease would need to be revised as a result of the development. Members are advised that the contents of a covenant on a lease or a deed is not a material planning consideration.

Sport England has advised that synthetic pitches such as the one proposed and others that have been developed in Darlington do not make a profit. Users are charged to hire the facility in order to cover operational costs and provide a sinking fund to cover the long term maintenance costs associated with the lifespan of the surface. The need to charge in this way does not make such pitches a commercial venture.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

CONCLUSION

The usage of the proposed pitch has been secured by a Community Use Agreement. No competitive sport such as Football Association sponsored football tournaments, adult football leagues and adult club training would be carried out on the pitch. The proposed hours of operation of the pitch and the floodlighting would be secured by planning conditions in the interest of the amenity of the area.

The findings of the lighting assessment and noise assessment are accepted. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in highway safety and parking terms and it would not adversely affect the visual appearance of the locality or the general amenities of the neighbouring dwellings.

RECOMMENDATION

PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS

1. A3 – Implementation Limit (Three Years)
2. The synthetic pitch hereby approved shall not be used outside the hours of 0800 - 2100 Mondays to Fridays; 0900 – 1600 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays
REASON - In the interests of residential amenity
3. The floodlighting hereby approved shall not be used outside the hours of 0800 - 2100 Mondays to Fridays; 0900 – 1600 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays
REASON - In the interests of residential amenity
4. The proposed development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved document entitled “Construction of Synthetic Turf Pitch at Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington DL3 8RW – Preliminary Construction Management Plan” unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.
5. The proposed development shall not operate otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved Community Use Agreement dated 20 October 2015 unless other agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority
REASON: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility/facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport.

6. The proposed development shall not operate otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved document entitled “Management Plan relating to Carmel College – Out of Hours of College Facilities” unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority
REASON: To secure a well managed safe community sports facility/facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport
7. The proposed development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved document entitled “Carmel College Waste Management Plan” unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority
REASON – In order to secure a satisfactory form of development
8. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme which sets out transitional arrangements for community users of the eastern playing field pitches shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with Sport England. The approved scheme shall be brought into use upon the commencement of development and shall remain in effect until the completion of the development, or until the pitches on the western playing field are available for community use (whichever is sooner).
REASON – To ensure the needs of the site’s community users are met in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan 2011
9. Prior to the commencement of the use, a scheme for the disposal of surface water shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the outlet into the adjacent woodland area. The development shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the use and shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: To prevent an increase in flood risk elsewhere
10. No means of amplification of sound shall be permitted as part of the development including the use of loud speakers and public announcement systems without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
11. Prior to the use of the approved development the acoustic barrier shall be constructed in complete accordance with the details contained within the approved document entitled “SSDTP Sound Impact Assessment. Carmel College, Darlington” Report Number 4879.2 dated 4 November 2015 and produced by Apex Acoustics. The barrier shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the life of the development.
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
12. The noise from the use of the synthetic sand dressed turf pitch shall meet the noise assessment criteria contained within the approved documents entitled “SSDTP Sound Impact Assessment. Carmel College, Darlington” Report Number 4879.2 dated 4 November 2015 and produced by Apex Acoustics at all noise sensitive locations.
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
13. The perimeter backboards and goal backboards surrounding the entire pitch shall be designed and lined so as to reduce the impact noise on the boards so that the $L_{Amax(fast)}$

does not exceed 65 dB(A) when measured at 5 metres. The backboards and goal backboards shall be retained and maintained throughout the life of the development
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity

14. Construction work shall not take place outside the hours of 08.00 - 18.00 Monday - Friday, 08.00 -14.00 Saturday with no working on a Sunday and Bank/Public Holidays without the prior written permission from the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity

15. The development hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the measures outlined in approved document entitled “Carmel College, Darlington. Proposed Pitch Floodlighting. Lighting Impact Study” dated 9 November 2015 and produced by Halliday Lighting. The floodlighting shall be maintained thereafter throughout the life of the development.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and the visual amenity of the locality

16. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the planning application, the lighting levels from the development hereby approved shall not exceed the levels contained within Table 2 for Environmental Zone E2 of the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and the visual amenity of the locality

17. B5 – Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plans)

THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN ARRIVING AT THIS DECISION:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997

E2 – Development Limits

E3 – Protection Of Open Land

E12 – Trees and Development

R11 – Artificial Playing Turf

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

CS1 – Darlington’s Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy

CS2 – Achieving High Quality Sustainable Design

CS14 – Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness

CS15 – Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity

CS16 –Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

CS18 – Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities

Other Documents

Tees Valley Design Guide and Specification – Residential and Industrial Estates Development