

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 24 August 2016

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	16/00597/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	3 August 2016
WARD/PARISH:	HUMMERSKNOTT
LOCATION:	Carmel RC College, The Headlands
DESCRIPTION:	Construction of a synthetic sand dressed turf pitch, along with associated floodlighting, enclosures, acoustic fencing and re grading of existing grass pitches (Revised Scheme) (Amended Drainage Assessment Report received 28 July 2016)
APPLICANT:	Carmel College

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.

Members will recall that a previous planning application (ref no 15/00715/FUL) for a synthetic pitch was put before the Planning Applications Committee in January 2016 but Officers advised Members not to make a determination as it had been revealed that the supporting information and plans were incorrect. The application was subsequently withdrawn (see Planning History).

This is a revised submission and the proposal involves:

- A sand dressed artificial synthetic pitch on the east playing field measuring in total 101.4m long x 63m wide in order to meet Sport England guidelines for full size playing pitches with run off areas;
- Welded mesh fencing (coloured green) around the perimeter of the playing pitch measuring predominantly 3m in height with areas behind the north and south goalmouths measuring 5m in height;
- Three metre high timber acoustic fencing on the southern and northern edges of the playing pitch;
- Eight floodlights around the edge of the playing pitch that would measure 15m high

- The regrading of the east playing field which would raise the height of the current ground level to the north of the playing pitch by approximately 500mm.

The pitch would be used between the hours of 09:00 – 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 09:00 to 15:35, the pitch would be used by the pupils of the College for curriculum activity

es after which it would be used by After College Clubs until 17:00. There would be a break in usage until 18:00 and where 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 up until 21:00. 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 and an example has been submitted in support of this planning application. Whilst the Agreement would be 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.

Many comments have been submitted by objectors that the applicant did not carry out a consultation exercise with local residents prior to the submission of this new planning application. The Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement document encourages a developer/applicant to carry out such an exercise for "significant" developments. A "significant" application is defined as being a major development; a development that needs an environmental assessment, a significant development that conflicts with development plan policies or a development that proposes changing or closing a public right of way. However, there is no statutory requirement for a developer to carry out such an exercise and any subsequent planning application should not be refused due to the lack of a pre-application consultation exercise.

The type of development being proposed here would not fall within the requirements contained in the Localism Act 2011 which prescribes that an applicant must carry out pre-application consultation when "the proposed development is of a description specified in a development order"; for example proposals for onshore wind development or where an application is made direct to the Secretary of State for development consent.

The "Call In" Request

Members are advised that the Secretary of State (the National Planning Casebook Unit) has been requested by a third party to call in the planning application. It is normal practice for the Local Planning Authority to determine the planning application and then if the application has been minded to be approved the Secretary of State will consider the request and then advise the Council as to whether the Secretary of State wishes to call in 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

15/00715/FUL In March 2016 a planning application for the construction of a synthetic sand dressed turf pitch, along with associated floodlighting, enclosures and acoustic fence was WITHDRAWN

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The relevant national and local development plan policies are:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997

E3 – Protection of Open Land

E12 – Trees and Development

R11 – Artificial Playing Turf

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

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

Interim Planning Position Statement 2016**Other Documents**

Tees Valley Design Guide and Specification – Residential and Industrial Estates Development
Darlington Open Space Strategy 2007 – 2017

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

The Council has issued 541 consultation letters to local residents. Six Site Notices have been erected in the locality. 133 letters of objection have been received. The variety of comments can be summarised as follows:

- *I object to this proposal as the light pollution and traffic will be detrimental to the residents close by.*
- *On reviewing the application it is clear these facilities are not school use only but understand it will be available for public use outside school opening hours. From the documentation the level of this use appears wide spread and likely to be fully in use up to 9pm every week days both term time and holidays and up to 4pm every weekend. There appears to be minimal consideration of the increased traffic flow and while there is recognition of the additional parking this appears to only be managed by working together? This feels very woolly and not clearly thought out. The increased volume of traffic on evenings, weekends and bank holidays will seriously impact on the leafy residential area we reside. It will have a substantial impact on the way we live our life and the safety of our children. We already experience some terrible driving at the junction with Hummersknott Avenue where cars fail to stop and check for traffic before turning right. We have witnessed many near misses. Along with this when the parking facilities at Carmel are inadequate visitor's park on the roadside which extends past a very busy junction with Hummersknott Avenue causing parking hazards. Very little if no consideration is given to the residents by these visitors. Have the council considered changing the road usage for The Headlands, such as a one way system, crossings at the junctions with Hummersknott Avenue either zebra or traffic light controlled and or traffic lights to assist in these increased traffic volumes? The paperwork clearly recognises there will be an increase in traffic and visitors to the school. The school will have no control outside its boundaries. Provisions are in place for events to finish at 8.55pm with the best will in the world there is no way all visitors will be changed, vacated and off site in 5 minutes, therefore the impact for residents realistically will be closer to 9.30pm to try and ensure the mass exodus is somewhere near safe. This extended time clearly would be the same for a weekend probably around 4.30pm. The significant increase in traffic will further impact on our lifestyle.*
- *Over and above the impact on our lives if these plans are passed it is extremely likely to impact on the value of our homes and their saleability.*
- *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.*
- *As for the flood lighting and acoustic measures. While efforts have been made to curtail this, this does not detract from the fact the lighting will be on until 9pm. For families which this location is highly populated with, this extends past many children's bedtimes again impacting on lifestyle and quality of life. No longer enjoying peaceful afternoons and evenings in our gardens. I also wish to comment the list of potential users is long but then or any other!! This could be an inordinate amount of users. Realistically the*

facilities are likely to be in permanent use. I note the school facility management where possible should be within school hours, so the primary time an organisation outside the school uses the facilities and creates an issue, this cannot be reported until the next school day. This seems extremely unfair on residents.

- We also are interested in the councils view and considerations that this facility already exists in the west end provided by Hummersknott School. We would then question the benefit to this area of a second facility so close to one already in existence. The town also has facilities which cover the east end of town at Eastbourne complex. Clearly this will be a source of income for the school at the cost of the residents in the area, with this in mind I find it extremely hard to believe the school wishes to work with the residents but is just looking to generate funds itself.*
- I have great concerns regarding the proposed works. There already exists a parking problem in the area, residents have students vehicles parked adjacent to their homes causing site line problems, etc. I understand that the school will be hiring the pitch to other teams in the area bringing further vehicles to the area. The school seem to be more concerned with their bank balance than the environment they are neighbours to. I feel very sorry for residents adjacent to the proposed pitch, they will suffer noise and light pollution which will affect the value of their properties*
- We are against this application as it is not suitable in a residential area because of noise, lights and increased traffic and will affect the neighbourhood*
- At present the cars that park in our road to go to the school is getting out of hand and if the scheme goes ahead it will make life unbearable in this part of Darlington, and there is also the disturbance to this residential area. Is it part of Darlington Council s plan to destroy this part of the town completely. If this proposal is passed it will be a gross injustice.*
- Can Darlington Council truly justify the spending of £100.000 on a pitch of this nature when we are told there will be major cut backs to spending in the town*
- Increase in traffic on what is already a very busy road all through the day and evenings due to both schools and their evening and weekend provisions of courses. There is already an all-weather pitch at Hummersknott so there is no need for another one in such close proximity*
- The views of residents were not really listened to in the previous planning application*
- Carmel seems dead set on going ahead with this venture regardless of resident's opinions which doesn't help relationships between the two*
- The school would be better off thinking about car parking for their students so we don't have students parking outside houses all day causing problems for buses and lorries and visitors*
- The proposed application is alien to the residents nearby these premises and would cause much disruption in an area already disrupted by the location of the school*
- The residents surrounding the pitch will be impacted detrimentally due to having noise and light pollution up until 9pm each week day and all day at weekends. This will result in loss of enjoyment to their gardens and properties and there will also be impacts no young children going to bed at a reasonable hour*
- Car parking is already bad in the area with no thought for residents with cars parked in the surrounding streets often left in precarious positions on bends*
- This is a more commercial venture that just providing facilities for school use between 0800 and 1800 which would be acceptable.*
- I object on the usual grounds of noise, traffic and the fact that the scheme is unneeded. The reason we moved here was peaceful ambience of Hummersknott especially in the*

evenings. If we had known this was threatened we would probably not have moved here. This devalues the area and makes it distinctly less attractive to professionals such as my wife and I

- *The nature of this development can only have an adverse impact on all adjoining and adjacent properties notwithstanding the proposed mitigation works. The floodlights will have a significant detrimental impact due to light spillage and light glare.*
- *This facility would bring increased use over longer periods of time to The Headlands which was not designed to accommodate both the volume and type of traffic which currently uses it. The Headlands is not a suitable access for the town and area wide use that is proposed*
- *We understand that parking within the site is at a premium and at peak times of usage would overflow into The Headlands which would exasperate an already difficult and dangerous situation*
- *A Surface Water Drainage system should be obtained and its requirements carried out. It is not appropriate to say that surface water drainage with its pollutants is to discharge into the wooded area*
- *Part of the development is on land outside of the ownership of the applicant. Has all the relevant forms etc. been obtained?*
- *The development is not suitable for this site due to the inevitable substantial and overwhelming adverse impact 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. The application could be breach of Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998.*
- *The proposal does not comply with policy R11 of the Local Plan relating to the installation of artificial playing pitches*
- *We ask that before any decisions are made to grant this application, the Planning Committee visit the similar facility at Hummersknott College, which does not lie in a predominately residential area and see for themselves what a chaotic facility the Council have allowed. Noise through to unsociable hours, parking issues, antisocial behaviour, the list goes on. Just imagine a similar facility but in a residential area*
- *Carmel College has obviously outgrown its own footprint and any further/future development needs to be stopped or declined. The College cannot keep increasing its facilities at the detriment to the residential area.*
- *Clare Avenue and Hillclose Avenue has already become a car park for Carmel College with students and teaching staff parking here all day because The Headlands is too difficult to park on or its full*
- *Noise will be relentless on an evening during the week. The noise a whistle makes carries over long distances. Whistles in general range from 113dB up to 127dB.*
- *It is evident that the College just don't care about community relationships with its neighbours after receiving all the objections for the first application. Will these previous objections be taken into consideration?*
- *It has been established at a previous meeting that the Council stand to gain financially for the use of this facility. I have to ask is this not a conflict of interest that the Planning Committee is made up of 13 Members and these Members have the deciding vote?*
- *The timing of this submission is also dubious as it is over the holiday period where residents might not be able to attend meetings and offer objections due to holiday commitments*

- *I am not aware of any further meetings offered by the School to explain what measures have been taken to allay the fears expressed during the first application and therefore the problems remain. The roads are not designed to take in the extra cars and coaches involved and there remains a risk of a serious accident as a consequence. The noise and light pollution will significantly reduce the quality of life for residents*
- *The school wants to run this as a business hiring it out to other groups not considering the peace and quiet of neighbours*
- *This resubmission is a great disappointment after all the work done by neighbours to try and stop the work previously. The noise, traffic in a very narrow road would be a significant disruption to all those living there*
- *We oppose the application on the grounds of public safety (congestion and heavy traffic on estate roads) in appropriate noise levels in a residential area, light pollution and environmental degradation*
- *We are entitled to enjoy the peace and quiet of our homes and gardens. There is already inadequate parking facilities hence the number of students and staff that park outside our houses all day. Increased traffic would be substantial on an already busy road*
- *The extra hours that the College will remain open to facilitate the use of this will impact substantially on the residents. The teachings of the Catholic Church encourage us to have respect for our neighbours but the College is not taking into account the concern that their neighbours are seriously worried about*
- *The Council should not be funding this application. The Council is in a time of hardship shedding jobs and services left, right and centre. The money would be better spent keeping people in jobs*
- *The School/College is fully backed by the Church*
- *It is a minority sport*
- *I can't believe a Council supposedly strapped for cash can consider £100,000 when we have so many homeless in the town*
- *Previous planning application received a big volume of objections. Is the different reference number a way to skirt around the fact that this is the same application?*
- *With school traffic causing severe child safety issues is this the best solution?*
- *Have other options been fully explored to ensure a fair and just decision?*
- *I am concerned regarding the increase number of cars to the school, the noise they will generate, the headlights and the revving of engines*
- *I am concerned about the noise levels when the games are on and the times these run to. This will be everyday and weekends too. There is limited support from the school regarding issues stating for issues in school hours and this will be out of school were issues will not be resolved before the next school day*
- *I have had issues in the past with the security lighting directly impacting on my bedroom just like Blackpool illuminations all night long*
- *Noise such as whistles, swearing and shouting and intrusive lighting until 9pm every night are unacceptable in a residential area*
- *At present traffic to and from the College is predictable and unhurried which differs greatly from the traffic at other times where cars are driven at speed without consideration for the residents. This is likely to increase if the plans are approved.*
- *It is beyond belief that anyone can think that 50 foot high lighting towers just yards from homes is acceptable. Suggestions that light spillage can be avoided is laughable. The Headlands does not meet your own criteria for use by school vehicles and is made worse by visitors unable to find spaces in the College grounds*

- *I do not believe any measures will be enough to reduce noise levels coming from the playing pitch to an acceptable level*
- *I note that an ecology report has now been submitted. There is also bird life and amphibians, frogs and toads and a strong chance of newts. The drainage system will impact on wildlife*
- *The pitch is in a highly populated area of Darlington, squashed into a very tight piece of land. Siting this facility away from dense housing would be a better idea*
- *This facility will affect the resale value of our property*
- *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*
- *We do not want to live next to this new sports centre. It will not benefit the nearest neighbours but draw people from the whole town and surrounding areas*
- *The fact that this pitch will be used 7 days a week and every evening, weekends and Bank Holidays is totally unacceptable to residents who are already inconvenienced and frustrated by traffic never mind increasing this to an unacceptable level*
- *At least nine large coaches deliver students to the college daily and at the end of the day return pupils to the own homes and areas. This number can only increase with the rising population and requirement of the Council to build more houses to supply the demand of the demographic. This increase in traffic will only further impact this narrow residential street in terms of noise, congestion, damage to road surfaces and pavements*
- *There is only one access point from The Headlands and coaches have to swing around the tight narrow corner of the road giving direct access to the school whilst avoiding parked cars and walking students*
- *Carmel College has insufficient parking facilities for its own staff and students*
- *On many nights during the year there are parents evenings, open evenings, special training seminars and the lack of onsite parking is clearly seen. The all-weather pitch will only exacerbate this problem*
- *Carmel College has instructed parents not to park in the college at pick up times but to park in the surrounding streets. Parents park up on pavements as they know buses will be driving up the street. Some parents use resident's driveways to await students leaving the school*
- *The increased traffic that this will generate can only be estimated. Three all-weather pitches being hired out every hours means 168 cars driving to and from the school using the only access available onto The Headlands.*
- *As parking is limited the inevitable overflow will flow onto the streets*
- *Hummersknott Avenue is already affected by increased traffic due to the out of school business that Hummersknott Academy generates.*
- *Accidents have happened in The Headlands, buses reverse down the street.*
- *Has there been a Health and Safety Risk Assessment carried out on the street concerning volume of traffic and the number of students that walk to and from the school?*
- *Has there been a Traffic Congestion analysis of the street been carried out by the Highways Agency?*
- *Has the Police or Fire Brigade or other relevant emergency service agencies been informed of the increased traffic, congestion, access problems?*
- *The £100,000 should be used on budget cuts.*
- *This area is residential with many young families who could do without excess traffic noise up to and after 21:00*

- *Areas of green land will be damaged and there has been no consideration for wildlife. Trees are the habitat for thousands of different species*
- *I don't object to the hockey pitch being used by the school but 7 days a week means we will have traffic, noise and light issues*
- *I am shocked that Carmel has not had the decency to contact the residents with this proposal. Are they trying to keep residents in the dark hoping we won't get the necessary information and object?*
- *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 school buildings and homes*
- *The facility would be located near to Carmel Convent, Clare Abbey and St Marys. The setting of these buildings would be affected by the scale and intrusive nature of the development and the use of the floodlights*
- *There will be an increase in traffic, pollution, tension between visitors and residents about parking. It would be detrimental to our health and enjoyment of our street*
- *The development is not needed*
- *If the Council has money to waste they can finance a car park within the school*
- *It will make the enjoyment of their own gardens an impossibility*
- *The conclusions of the noise assessment appear to be optimistic in favour of the planning approval as the tables of the results indicate noise levels much higher than recommended. For example, it is agreed that the impact of the hockey balls on backboards is a massive noise generator although it can be attenuated by turfing the backboards. The results within the report indicate even with the attenuation the noise level is far in excess of recommended levels which is inconsistent with a conclusion of no noise impact.*
- *The fundamental reason for low utilisation of the existing grass facility is due to the poor drainage which the applicant has consistently failed to address. The drainage scheme focuses on drainage of the sand dressed pitch and the effective drainage of the complete facility which still appears to be ignored*
- *The existing football pitch which is used extensively by the school and for community use will be removed and replaced by 5 a side pitches for which there is no forecast usage which is clearly a major loss to the facility. The proposal also increases the level of the 5 a side pitch area with no consideration given to the increased impact of noise and disturbance from the gain height reducing the attenuation effect of any screening.*
- *Of additional concern is the apparent uncontrolled nature of the lighting, being reliant upon the Building Maintenance Officer and likely a poorly set timer*
- *Hockey is not constrained by the lack of a pitch. The existing hockey pitch at Eastbourne is being converted to a football pitch as a more viable option of a hockey pitch. The viability concern is also supported by the lack of forecast usage by Darlington residents bringing the emphasis on Bishop Auckland Hockey Club to provide volume. Providing a facility for Bishop Auckland residents is not a priority for Darlington Borough Council*
- *In terms of assessment of selection of the proposed site there is no reference in the proposal to the reasons for selecting the site over others mentioned on the playing pitch and sports facility strategy*
- *The site is currently leased by the Council to the applicant and therefore it appears to be a major conflict of interest for the Council to approve its own application. If this happens the decision must be referred for Judicial Review to gain an independent assessment not only of this application but to the other contributory conflicts on playing pitch strategy and funding*

- *The proposal would inflict material net harm on the character and appearance of the locality through loss of openness*
- *I am concerned about a Council Officer expressing full support for this bid and an offer of £100,000. This cannot be right. A bid from a third party is supported by the Council in verbal and financial terms in advance of the application being subject to the full and proper planning process. This bid is highly contentious and even more so in the light of the cuts. Hockey is a minority sport. It matters not whether funds are ring-fenced. A view should be sought from the National Audit Office on whether advance commitments were appropriate in this particular instance and whether public monies on this scale is justified.*
- *The Bat Survey precludes the use of the floodlights from May to September. The pitch is to be available for use until 21.00. A check of Darlington sunset times would suggest the facility could not possibly be used throughout the month of September until 2100 due to insufficient light. The second half of August also looks dubious particularly as safety in a game such as hockey is particularly pertinent.*
- *This is not about the pupil's education but more about the Academy as a commercial enterprise hoping to welcome anyone willing to pay for a pitch that is essentially open all hours*
- *I am tired being told that the trees which line our boundary fence will screen us from the floodlighting. Out trees are leafy from May to September but that it not when the floodlights will be used*
- *No amount of fencing will protect us from prolonged shouting, whistles, litter, constant traffic and noisy exits from the premises after 9pm every night not to mention disruption from construction works*
- *From my garden I have had the privilege to witness a variety of birdlife. There are foxes, pheasants, treecreepers and tawny owls, rabbits, squirrels and frogs from which the pond is intended to be used for as part of the run off for drainage. The woodland should be afforded every protection not casually dismissed as of little importance.*
- *As it is Treelands is litter strewn across the pathway which school children use, crisp packets, coke cans etc which deceases in school holidays. This will increase with a hockey pitch being built as more people cut across Treelands*
- *We only have to look at past problems at Eastbourne Sports Complex and Hummersknott School with unruly behaviour*
- *A hockey pitch will spoil the look of the school and it will not take long for the complex to look tatty*
- *Crowds of people will traipse in and out of school grounds which is a recipe for disaster and attracts attention when you consider the valuable equipment in the buildings*
- *The noise emitted from this type of facility despite the information in the technical report is totally unacceptable for a residential area. One only has to monitor the noise at a similar establishment to hear the loud banging of balls against a so called acoustic fences, the shouting and obscene language by the participants*
- *The lights are an eyesore with increased light pollution*
- *This has nothing to do with education of the children and is to do with the College making money. The type of people who use this facility will behave in antisocial selfish manner and have no regard to local residents*
- *There is already an all-weather pitch at Hummersknott School which could be used*
- *There has been no consultations by the College and as such I have to assume the opinions, fears, concerns and questions that residents voice and that our democratic right to object to planning concerns is not being considered*

- *We are likely to be particularly affected by the proximity of the development, extending as it does to within a few metres of our back fence. The living conditions in many properties bordering the site will be adversely affected by noise generated by participants, spectators and officials. This will be compounded by the light spillage.*
- *A floodlit pitch is not needed for the College to meet its curriculum needs and requirements*
- *This facility is a commercial venture with the financial backing of the local authority which gives rise to a conflict of interests in the planning decision process as mentioned in Regulation 10 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations Act 1992*
- *Football is already played here and the noise generated is disturbing but tolerated. Noise pollution is covered by Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and incorporated into the UK law by the Human Rights Act*
- *Whilst the presence of bats is acknowledged in the proposal, my understanding is that all 18 species of UK bat are protected and it is unlawful to disturb their habitat. High powered floodlighting is known to be detrimental to bats and any new planting will not prevent disturbance to these creatures.*
- *I do not think any benefits to the students would outweigh the disruption to the lives of the local residents*
- *With respect to residents who have written in support of the application, their homes are sufficiently far away from the college for it to have no immediate impact on them*
- *The fact I will not be able to enjoy sitting in my back garden with my family due to noise, light pollution is unacceptable*
- *My objection to this planning application is due to lack of public consultation*
- *I am unclear why there is a need to have a floodlit facility when there are already appropriate and adequate sports facilities on the College grounds*
- *I personally enjoy running and road cycling and have already been intimidated on the road past my house by cars driving at excessive speeds. We have always started experiencing unwanted parking by students who have now started parking in front of our house and leaving their cars and walking to the College.*
- *The College has instructed parents to not park in the College at the end of day at pick up time but to park in surrounding streets. Parents park on the pavements as they know buses will be driving up the street*
- *Views of local residents do not seem to have been considered in this application or the previous application. We are not against the proposal for school hours but outside of this the traffic, light and noise pollution will be a serious disruption*
- *The development will serve a very small minority of Darlington residents as only hockey players would benefit including a Bishop Auckland team*
- *I believe there is a need to protect wildlife especially in residential areas*
- *The proposals to limit light and noise will be ineffectual to those living in the vicinity*
- *This application appears to be pushed through with no consultation from the College or the Council*
- *The application will change the character of the area forever*
- *We only have to look at past problems at Eastbourne Sports Complex and Hummersknott School with unruly behaviour*
- *The development will impact upon our health and well being as we are an elderly couple who need to be accessible and to have easy access to emergency services if required*
- *The application not only keeps this large football pitch but adds a further three 5 a side pitches which will increase the active participants from 22 players to 52 players which will increase noise and swearing*

- *We are not convinced that the lighting will not impact upon the bats*
- *I have concerns over the availability of toilets and changing facilities and will they accommodate increased numbers in players and spectators?*
- *Is there a demand and a need for these facilities?*
- *Why has there been a second application submitted? The local residents group has implied there is a corrupt or underhand practices been conducted with this application*
- *Assuming this white elephant of a project went ahead there would be no one using it as hockey is a minority sport*
- *We are concerned about the lack of litter bins and the collection of litter in the development*
- *It would be totally unacceptable if the existing problem of cars parked on the street persisted into the evenings, weekends and school holidays*
- *We look forward to the end of the school times and holidays where the area once again returns to a quiet peaceful area it once was. To be told that hockey pitch will be in use 7 days a week and at weekends is frightening.*
- *We are concerned that there is a lack of a boundary fence to prevent unfettered access out of hours from the playing pitches into the wildlife and wooded areas and the threat to security this poses*
- *We do accept that there is a need for the increased sports capacity on this playing field*
- *Policy R11 seems to preclude the suitability of an increased community use at Carmel with traffic attracted along a narrow residential street*
- *We consider the Council need to consult with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Durham Police to ensure that no planning permission is recommended for acceptance which may infringe the law protecting wildlife*
- *The College is already too large for its location and expansion and extended use out of hours is creating hostility, stress and illness*
- *At weekends we have parents of children driving too fast up The Headlands to drop off children to play football. As there are children living in The Headlands this is a constant worry and concern.*
- *Although the lighting report states an E2 level of lighting is expected, we believe that this may not be the case with reflection from the pitch surfaces and surrounding buildings causing unnecessary light pollution and intrusion*
- *I work in a secondary school and neighbours complain about noise and foul language pupils make and our pitches are not close to the perimeters*
- *This is supposed to be a residential area with a large population of elderly residents*
- *I have strong concerns over the security of the surrounding properties will be compromised by allowing free access into the school grounds after school hours*
- *We will only know the various possible effects of lighting and noise after the installation. How will the noise measures help with loud whistles and human voices. There is no mention of controls over sound amplification*
- *When we travel into town we pass three schools and have never seen them in use and it would seem there is an oversupply of sports facilities*
- *As the community use of the facilities is scheduled for evenings and weekends the chance of injury to local children and the elderly cannot be ignored*
- *If this application is granted it is likely that community use of the College facilities will lead to demand for permanent licensed premises on the college site and an extension to the community use hours*

- *In the last few years residents have been subjected to lengthy building works at the College and to ask residents now to tolerate yet more construction work and noise and light pollution which would follow is too much*
- *Assuming matches could be played without floodlighting in the summer months, the noise levels and parking would still cause unwelcome disruption*
- *The development will affect young people's sleeping patterns*
- *I agree that the college needs improvements to its current pitches and would support this for school use only but not for community use. It is not even our local community that is going to be one of the main users*
- *The college are turning themselves into a sports complex*
- *The noises from the hockey matches at Eastbourne complex are horrendous*
- *The lighting columns cannot be mitigated and will tower over the houses*
- *Not enough surveys have been done to discover the true nature of this unspoiled and precious woodland*

Detailed letters of objection (some supported by photographs) have been submitted by local residents and considered by the Officers. The letters raise issues relating to the Community Use Agreement; car parking; noise; light pollution; lack of consultation on the application; traffic congestion, the condition, design construction and scope of The Headlands being inappropriate for this form of development and increase in traffic; general disturbance; impact upon wildlife; surface water drainage; impact upon ecology; the funding of the development; parking facilities within the College; the condition of The Headlands, flooding, economic matters, impact on the character of the area; health impacts, the impartiality of the planning process; residential amenity concerns;

Some of the letters outline the medical history and conditions of some of the local residents and the concern that the proposed development will have further adverse effects on the health of those residents.

A letter has been received with photographs about an event that occurred recently at the College which resulted in all the available car parking spaces in the site being used including the basketball and tennis courts. The concerns raised related to where would the hockey players and supporters park their cars on such an evening

Letters have been received from the Hummersknott Residents Action Group which have been considered by Officers. The Group have raised a number of issues and concerns over the statements within the Design and Access Statement; the impact of the development on the character of the area; impact on the green network; accessible sport and recreation facilities; impacts upon listed buildings in the area, the need for floodlighting; the funding from the Council. The Group has suggested an alternative position of an all-weather pitch used primarily for curricular and extra curricular use up to 6pm with limited community use on a Saturday and Sunday; no use on a Bank Holiday and use by holiday clubs in the school holidays.

Letters of objection have been received from Councillor Johnson and Councillor Coultas

Jenny Chapman MP has submitted a letter confirming that constituents have contacted her about the application and raised concerns over the lack of consultation by the College, that there is already a hockey pitch at Hummersknott, noise and light pollution, increased parking, the effects on their health, the Council contributing financially, the commercial nature of the development. The MP asks that these concerns are taken into account when the application is being considered.

Eighteen letters of support has been received. The comments can be summarised as follows:

- *I fully support this application as I believe this facility would benefit both students and the community*
- *I would be in favour of this all-weather pitch. It would be beneficial to the pupils attending Carmel College as it would be used for a number of different sports. The pitch could also be used by the wider community*
- *This facility would be an excellent addition to both the college and the community. This facility will create numerous opportunities for our young people at a time when health and obesity amongst the younger generation is a national concern. Any opportunity to get children outdoors and active must surely be a positive and therefore be supported in an age where technology encourages many to stay indoors and passive leading to future health issues*
- *It would be a great resource for the students at the school and would bring the local community together to support matches*
- *As an employee stakeholder in the College I feel the benefits are great to the students and other users especially in poor weather conditions. It will maximise the opportunities they will get to actively take part in outdoor sports*
- *Great benefit to the school and the local community*
- *I urge the Council to allow this sporting development. Hockey is a great game that is vastly enhanced by the playing surface more than any other sport. It is about time*
- *The all weather pitch will benefit children greatly*
- *I think this is very worthwhile project for the locality*
- *This will support education of current and future students and enable children to be involved on sport where current facilities don't allow*
- *The students will greatly benefit from having an artificial pitch. This would enable pupils to play hockey and other sports all year round whereas the current hockey pitch is often waterlogged and not usable. The facility would be a great benefit to the community and would improve the health of the local population*

Following the submission of the amended drainage plan, a further nineteen letters of objections have been received and the comments can be summarised as set out below:

- *The extended hours and increase in traffic is being imposed on local residents. Most people bought their properties anticipating these levels around school hours only not every evening, every weekend and every bank holiday*
- *It has now become evident that the construction of synthetic pitches will give rise to the potential problem of inadequate drainage of the site and the risk of flooding to neighbouring properties. This is wholly unacceptable. Any planning application that is going to place other properties at risk of flooding must be rejected.*
- *The drainage report fails to address the root cause of the drainage issue thus leading the report in totality is of no consequence. If the root cause of the drainage issue is addressed the existing grass area becomes a usable space negating the need for a sand dressed pitch*
- *The applicant failed to address drainage problems made by the temporary classrooms and this puts into question their credibility and likelihood of compliance with any new planning conditions*

- *Amended drainage plans have given thought to the possibility of potential flooding hazards to nearby residents as it is noted in the application that the infiltration rates are poor*
- *My concerns have been raised significantly having seen an objection that includes a photograph of substantial amounts of rainwater that had not drained away*
- *The amended drainage plan seems to only deal with the potential drainage from the AGP and shows that the planned water storage soakaway system has been significantly increased in size to handle a ground infiltration rate which is poorer than originally assumed. Can you please verify that this is the only change made? From this we can assume that any ground water that falls in heavy rain conditions onto any part of the field will not drain away as quickly as the engineers had originally assumed.*
- *The issue at the north east corner of the east field is that the raised area where the 5v5 pitches are being created has the potential to cause flooding to the residential gardens to the North East corner of the field due to the increase in the level of the land. This change forms a gully between the pitch and the existing bank down which excess surface water could be channelled. The raised land level extends eastwards, beyond the end of the bank to the rear of residential properties, which has the potential to cause surface water to flow further eastwards than currently before reaching flat land where it can be absorbed. Can you please ask the applicant / DTA to confirm that they have evaluated this risk and adequately provided mitigation to avoid potential flooding to residential properties from excess groundwater caused by heavy and sustained rainfall? The comments in section 10 of the revised report about the poor “ground infiltration rate” increase our concerns that this is a substantial risk.*
- *The response to the planning application from the Highways Engineer does not make reference to the comments from the Architectural Liaison Officer or consideration to a traffic management plan*
- *Safety of children and people in the area due to the increase in traffic. Traffic at the beginning and end of the school day is already treacherous. Is there a need for this facility as there is already one at Hummersknott School*
- *I am fully supportive of another MUGA in the town but I object to this location. I would like Darlington Borough Council to consult all residents on alternate venues for sites so then we can make sure all residents of Darlington benefit from a good facility which will benefit a larger number and not just those that play hockey*
- *Loss of privacy due to the amount of increased traffic going to and from the School*
- *Floodlights will have a visual impact on the area, a negative impact on the value of my property and will change the character of the area*
- *There is a lack of parking facilities*
- *There has been a lack of public consultation*
- *Why is Darlington Borough Council contributing £100,000 to support this pitch?*
- *There are very few accidents occurring due to the fact that residents have to take extreme caution moving onto and off their driveways because of congestion*
- *There is nearly always on street parking. We have witnessed on several occasions two coaches at a standstill and cars having to drive over the pavements to alleviate the blockage*
- *We do not see that the amendment mitigates the nuisance value of the project at all and our previous objections still stand*
- *Specialists who work for other local authorities have advised that when residents with serious illnesses are affected, developments have been adjusted or even cancelled. This is why we asked if the Council had taken medical and/or legal advice and whether the*

results of such discussions had been conveyed to the objectors concerned. Surely they have the right to have their objections assessed by someone who understands their problems and can judge consequences

- *A 5 v 5 pitch one metre from a garden and extra powerful flood lights only 35m away are more than significant change to the environment, particularly to those restricted to a life at home.*
- *We cannot see how Sport England can imagine how the regrading of the central part to construct the AGHP can be achieved before work starts on regrading the two northern 5x5 pitches. If this is really seen by Sport England as a constraint on the development to the existing grass pitches until the AGP is built, then it throws into question the whole sequence of excavated spoil and topsoil being used in raising the northern pitches. Where would the surplus excavated material go? We are very much concerned that the history of the college site management in the illegal tipping of non top soil excavated material, clay subsoil, concrete, tarmac and building materials during the previous construction projects which must not be allowed to be repeated*
- *My understanding is that such pitches have to regularly treated with weed killer and this will drain down into the wildlife area. You have failed as yet to carry out a newt survey. Legislation is quite clear that anything that affects the environment and feeding area of certain newts is forbidden. The planned drainage system, carrying contaminants from weed killing operations will certainly do this. A full all species survey with the backing and help of Natural England is essential*
- *Several residents have written expressing concern over health issues with regard to the proposal plan. Two residents whose gardens border the proposed pitch (less than 45 metres away) have Multiple Sclerosis. Other elderly residents who live in very close proximity to the proposed development have serious heart problems, and blood pressure related illnesses. The council encourages Carers to care for these vulnerable people in their own homes. They help ease the effect of National cuts to councils. Life is not easy for those with medical problems, not is it for the Carers who try to ensure that can live in a happy peaceful environment.*
- *As good citizens of Darlington they have paid their taxes and supported the community. If this proposal goes ahead there would be a drastic detrimental impact on their well being. These people are not hypothetical cases; they are real people who deserve and have a statutory right to enjoy their homes under the Human Rights Bill. Mental Health is more difficult to quantify. I realise that Carmel College have submitted this proposal as a new application, but we first heard about plans with their first application in May 2015. From that date we have suffered anxiety and stress.*
- *If the proposal goes ahead the impact of noise and light almost certainly exacerbate that stress, bearing in mind there will be no respite; weekends and school holidays will be affected. Is it fair that residents, many of whom have lived here for 40 years, should have their lives blighted by a scheme that is not essential?*
- *A different matter but nonetheless crucial is many residents need reassurance regarding the Council's impartiality. The Council has a vested interest, therefore we cannot feel secure that we will get fair, unbiased hearing.*
- *I am concerned that Carmel was chosen as a venue as the fields are entirely enclosed by residential properties. It is an odd choice when other schools have more open land. The pitch will change the nature of the area*
- *Nature too is a concern as wildlife will clearly be disturbed. Has a bat survey been carried out? The grounds are home to a variety of birds and also foxes*
- *Adding more concrete will create a flooding risk for properties*

- *I object to the height of the lights and light pollution*
- *Will Carmel be able to control offensive language. Children playing in their gardens should not be subjected to foul language*
- *The amendment does not address the issue of noise and light pollution and therefore I continue to object*

One objection letter highlights inaccuracies in the supporting text of the Drainage Statement in terms of orientation and layout of the site.

A second letter has been submitted from one of the objectors with a photograph attached. The objector states

“I have come across the attached image of the sports field which I took from my property in 2007 when the field was flooded. I thought you may be interested in this evidence showing the extent of the problem. It happened to be at the time (June 2007) when the temporary classrooms referred to were in place. I believe it clearly demonstrates that the philosophy of the drainage report to maintain the existing drainage rates is completely inadequate”

A detailed objection has been received raising concerns over the design of the proposed development and they are outlined below:

- *The pitch design currently shows the pitch entrance gate to be located in a position that would take users through the acoustic barrier. This design is impractical because any gateway through the acoustic fence would render that part of the acoustic fence completely ineffective as an acoustic barrier. A new plan needs to be submitted with a new proposed pitch entrance*
- *As a result of moving the pitch entrance the landscaping leading up to the new entrance location will need to be redesigned because the most likely pitch entrance will be at a location that currently has a steep slope leading to the pitch edge*
- *There are no access paths marked on the plan. Sport England design guidelines for AGPs recommend that access to AGPs is not provided directly from natural grass as this can lead to contamination of the AGP surface (e.g. by mud). Suitable paths and / or hard standing needs to be defined at the pitch edge, including disabled access and the access routes from the changing rooms to the pitch need to be shown so that it can be demonstrated that users can safely pass between the 2 areas without risk of injury to pedestrians associated with moving traffic in the car park*
- *The current pitch entrance is adjacent to the 4 car parking spaces that are on the most northern edge of the east side of the car park. The current design would appear to propose that users of the pitch access the pitch from the car park through these car parking spaces. The planning application states that no parking spaces will be lost as a result of this development. This is also impractical and does not provide suitable disabled access which is a Sport England design requirement for AGPs. When determining the new pitch entrance the route that pedestrians will take from the car park will need to be clearly marked, including disabled access*
- *There is a health and safety risk caused by the design of the acoustic fence. The north east corner of the acoustic fence is positioned at the bottom of a slope directly next to the runoff of one of the 5v5 pitches. Anyone using the 5v5 pitch that overshoot the runoff area would fall down the slope and hit the sharp exposed corner of the fence. There is a serious risk of injury. This needs to be redesigned to put safety measures in place or if that is not possible the 5v5 pitch will not be usable and should be marked as such*

Councillor Johnson has submitted the results from a survey on Coach and Car Estate road usage which Officers will consider and report to Members verbally at the Planning Applications Committee.

Two letters of support have been received raising the following issues:

- *I would like to fully support this application, I feel it is brutal in day and age of technology and computer games/TV to encourage young people into sport in any way possible. Improving facilities at the College will help develop sport now but also inspire the younger generation to stay fit and healthy therefore reducing medical issues for the future. I struggle to understand how anyone would not support this even those who live near the college who clearly purchased their houses knowing there was a College next door*
- *The plans have clearly been revisited and address prior concerns. Traffic in the area will be no worse while students use the facilities during the day and the area is quiet after college hours so any additional cars won't cause an issue. Hummersknott seem to cope so I don't see why The Headlands cant.*
- *Sport should be always encouraged in my opinion*

Consultee Responses

Northumbrian Water has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Sport England has raised no objections to the proposed development

Durham Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer has advised that the Police have no objections to the construction of the pitch but they echo the concerns of the neighbouring residents in relation to vehicular access to the site.

The Senior Fire Safety Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development

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 planning application subject to the imposition of a number of planning conditions.

The Council's Ecology Officer has raised no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

The Flood Risk Management Team has raised no objections to the proposed development

PLANNING ISSUES

Background

There were two hockey clubs 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 grows 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.

The existing sand based playing pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex has been refurbished to form a new floodlit 3G football training pitch at the Complex. The new surface for this pitch would not be suitable for hockey and would be a dedicated surface for football. Planning permission has recently been granted for these works subject to a planning condition that a transitional plan is agreed in consultation with Sport England showing where hockey will be played whilst an alternative site is obtained. The agreed transitional plan shows that hockey

matches would take place at Longfield Academy, Richmond School and Thornaby Academy during the time period where there is no hockey pitch provision in Darlington.

Surveys were sent to all schools from the Council 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 it would be financially achievable. 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 various external bodies and the Council would also make a contribution, if planning permission is granted.

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 a contribution of the funding. Darlington Rugby Club's priorities at Blackwell Meadows centred on relocating Darlington 1883 FC to their Grange Road site and there was no aspiration for a hockey sand based pitch from the club as this does not meet FA or RFU specification.

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

Highway Safety and Parking

Impact upon Trees

Impact upon Ecology

Drainage

Flood Risk and Drainage

Health Concerns

Impact on Listed Buildings

Other Matters

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) confirms that the starting point for decision making is the local development plan and applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF has 12 principles that planning should follow and these include:

- Contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution;
- Taking account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs;

- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings

The NPPF states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive local communities. To deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities and services for the community, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities such as sports venues to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. The NPPF acknowledges that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sports and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well being of communities. Planning policies and decisions should be made on up to date assessments for the needs of open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings should not be built upon unless

- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity in a suitable location;
- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The NPPF also provides guidance on sustainable transport, good design, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and the natural environment.

Furthermore, one of the core principles of the NPPF is to secure good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The application site, along with the wider Carmel College site, is part of the Open Land Network and Saved Policy E3 of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 states that development must not have a material net harm on the usefulness, appearance and nature conservation interest of the Network and its interconnectivity.

Saved Policy E12 of the Local Plan states that developments will be required to take full account of trees, woodlands and hedgerows on and adjacent to a development site. Trees should be retained and protected during development.

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, meeting the necessary parking standards, are well related to other sports facilities and are designed as to protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy is a broad overarching policy that seeks to secure appropriate and high quality sustainable development.

Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect or enhance the distinctive character of the Borough's historic, natural and environmental townscapes and landscapes such as historic buildings.

Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development does not result in any net loss of existing biodiversity value by protecting and enhancing the priority habitats, biodiversity

features and the geological network through the design of new development. The protection, restoration, extension and management of the Borough's biodiversity and geological network will be delivered by restricting or managing access and use where appropriate, to conserve an area's existing biodiversity value whilst enhancing biodiversity along access corridors and linking habitat networks with high biodiversity and geodiversity value. Furthermore, healthy ancient woodland, mature trees, and hedgerows should be protected and enhanced.

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.

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.

Following the withdrawal of the Making and Growing Places DPD and pending the adoption of a new local plan, the Council has issued an Interim Planning Position Statement in April 2016. The Statement sets out local guidance on the Council's current position on key planning matters. The Statement will be given some weight in determining planning applications. The Statement states:

"The Darlington Core Strategy recognises the important role quality, accessible, managed outdoor sport and recreation facilities can have on residents' health and quality of life. Consequently, it aims to protect, enhance and extend the sporting offer, to ensure that provision meets residents' needs now and in the future."

The Darlington Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Strategy (June 2015) confirms that there is an overall requirement for three 3G pitches for football and rugby and one pitch for hockey in the Borough. There are two 3G pitches already at Hummersknott School and Longfield Academy and both pitches are of good quality and are on the FA register of pitches meaning that they are approved for match use as well as training. The existing sand based hockey pitch at the Eastbourne Complex is identified as being of poor quality. The Strategy identifies that there is a clear requirement to provide improved sand based facility as well as an additional 3G pitch.

The sand based pitch at the Eastbourne Complex has recently received planning approval to be refurbished to a dedicated playing surface for football which results in the need for a further hockey pitch in the Borough to meet an identified demand.

The Strategy confirms that there are two hockey clubs that used the pitch at the Eastbourne Complex and that a hockey pitch is required to meet the current peak time demand and projected demand. The Strategy outlines options for delivering such facilities and highlights that Carmel College have expressed demand for a sand based facility and that the relocation of the hockey club to the Carmel College site would provide further developmental opportunities for hockey and enable growth to school club links.

Sport England Comments

The proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 74) and Sport England's policy on planning applications affecting playing fields 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply.

This application relates to the provision of a new indoor/outdoor sports facility or facilities on the existing playing field at the above site. It therefore needs to be considered against exception E5 of the above policy, which states:

E5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

In essence, exception E5 balances the value to sport of the existing grass playing field against the value to sport of the proposed sports facility. The applicant has submitted a statement which seeks to address the matters considered under this exception. By and large, Sport England accepts the justification put forward.

Grass playing field can accommodate a variety of pitch sports. The draft 2015 Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) identifies "pinch-points" around the supply of junior and 9v9 football pitches which the application site could address.

The application site was utilised for temporary classrooms and car parking when Carmel School was being rebuilt and whilst there was remediation once these temporary facilities were removed the drainage of the playing field has subsequently been poor. As such whilst the school is used by a local junior football club for training, the application site cannot sustain competitive play. This places pressure on the school's remaining pitches.

As such, in its current condition, the area of playing field has limited value for pitch sports.

Analysis undertaken as part of the draft PPS by both Sport England and the FA identifies that Darlington needs (and could sustain) another AGP for football. The same work and consultation with England Hockey reveals that it is important that Darlington retains a hockey-specific AGP.

Planning permission has now been granted for the current hockey-specific AGP at Eastbourne sports centre to be refurbished and resurfaced to become a 3G football specific facility which will displace the training and competitive matches of the hockey teams.

The AGP proposed at Carmel is a short pile sand-based design suited specifically for competitive hockey. It can also be used for football training.

As part of a development chain (involving changes at Eastbourne), the AGP 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 currently used for that purpose. The school itself will also realise considerable additional benefits in the delivery of curriculum sport.

The development chain involves funding from a variety of sources, which in a number of instances are only available within a defined window of opportunity. Sport England and the Council has worked closely with the respective NGBs, clubs and school in developing the consideration of AGP provision in Darlington,

The Football Association has advised;

Due to the construction of a 3G AGP at Eastbourne Sports Complex, the FA understands the significance of this facility to Hockey in Darlington and therefore has no objections.

- 1. The impact on football would be minimal as the school can also use the proposed AGP for curriculum and out of hours football use.*
- 2. While the AGP will be suitable for training and curriculum purposes it will not be suitable for football match play as it will not meet the FA specifications to appear on the FA 3G register.*
- 3. The school have indicated that through some drainage work they are bringing back into use grass pitches for small side football for school year 7/8 which will support training and match play. We would recommend that these areas are PQS tested and passed to ensure the quality of the pitches are of suitable quality. We would also advise that pitch sizes follow FA recommendations.*

England Hockey has responded and advised;

- 1. The development of a new hockey compliant floodlit Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) on the existing natural grass hockey pitch will provide increased usage for Darlington Hockey Club to train and play matches. The new AGP will replace the existing AGP provision lost at the leisure centre, to a 3G AGP.*
- 2. The new AGP will be sand dressed and floodlit to 350 Lux level with a 3mtr high perimeter fencing and 5mtrs directly behind the goal.*
- 3. There is currently no hockey played on the existing grass pitch, as this is now all played on AGP's, Darlington Hockey Club will use the new pitch for midweek training and match play on Saturdays and junior development on Sundays, this will be secured by a Community Use Agreement between the school and club. The pitch will also be available for other sports use outside of school hours.*

Sport England has raised no objections to this application as it is considered to meet exception E5 of the above policy.

Further to the comments from Sport England, whilst the application site is used as a playing field the condition of the field is not satisfactory for sporting purposes and is not marked out as a formal pitch. Under the provision of Policy CS18 of the Core there is a presumption against the loss of playing fields unless a proposal meets one of the five exceptional circumstances set out in the policy 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 of the Core Strategy.

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 example of an Agreement has been submitted to support the planning application and a formal document would be secured by the imposition of a planning condition.

With regard to access to the pitch, the development must not be accessed directly from grass as this can lead to contamination of the surface. To accord with Sport England design guidance on synthetic pitches, a condition has been imposed to secure details of footways leading to the pitch.

Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area

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. It is considered that in visual terms, the proposal would accord Saved Policy E3 of the Local Plan.

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 an 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. The regrading of the northern part of the playing field as part of the earthworks and drainage scheme would not have an adverse impact on the visual appearance of the playing field.

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 development would be well related to the other sports facilities on the wider College site in accordance with saved Policy R11 of the Local Plan. The proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact upon the visual appearance or character of the wider Carmel College site or the wider surrounding area in general.

Residential Amenity

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 has been submitted with the planning application which highlights the responsibilities of the College for managing the operation of the facility. The Plan covers site supervision and the methods for reporting concerns. The Plan also confirms that the changing facilities and toilet facilities will be available for use by the patrons.

At its closest point, the synthetic pitch would be approximately 40m from the dwellings to the north and 35m from the dwellings to the south of the playing field. 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.

Regrading of Pitches

The land to the north of the synthetic pitch once re-graded and grassed would be marked out to be used as two playing pitches. It is also possible to provide a third grass playing pitch to the south of the synthetic pitch. These pitches are not enclosed by any fencing (acoustic or otherwise) and they are not floodlit. These grass playing pitches have been identified to show that the location of the synthetic would not stymie the remainder of the playing field being used for sporting purposes. The marking out of the pitches once the land has been regraded and the after use of the fields for such purposes would not require planning permission. Therefore the impacts of the usage would not be a determining factor in this planning proposal. The Community Use Agreement would relate to the synthetic pitch only.

Other Existing Facilities

Whilst the sites below differ in terms of their 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

08:00 – 22:00 Monday to Friday

09:00 – 16:30 Saturday

09:00 – 16:30 Sunday

Members should be aware that any reduction in the hours of operation of the proposed facility may increase the likelihood of any funding application by the College to Sport England being unsuccessful. As a result, the planning application has also been considered by Officers on the basis of the proposed hours of use.

Noise

There is no British Standard or official planning guidance specifically aimed at the evaluation of noise from playing pitches. 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 rating and assessment of noise from recreational activities. 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. 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.

Environmental Health negotiated with the College’s Noise Consultant and revised assessment criteria was agreed:

- 1) LAeq, 15 min not to exceed the LA90, 5 min by more than 3dB.
- 2) LAeq, 15 min should not exceed 50dB.
- 3) Average LAmax not to exceed 60dB where the average LAmax is defined as the logarithmic mean of the 10 loudest events from at least three separate 15 minute measurement periods.

It should be noted that a stricter criteria has been applied to this development than that recently adopted by Sports England in that the noise level is 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. These stricter criteria will provide greater protection to residents than that afforded by the Sports England Design Note.

The sound impact assessment has demonstrated that with the mitigation of a 3 metre high 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 38 dB LAeq; which is 12dB less than the 50 LAeq required “to protect the majority of people from being moderately annoyed during the daytime” and assuming a reduction of 15 dB LAeq for a partially openable window the worst case calculated internal noise level is 23db LAeq which is 12dB 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.

The 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.

The noise levels used in the sound impact assessment for Carmel College have also been used for other AGP planning applications within the Borough and have been accepted for use by other local authorities.

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 6 dB below the measured background noise level i.e. 9 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.

The noise consultants have used CADNA which is 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 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 which it is understood to be the accepted data to rely upon when determining planning applications.

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 Authority's should mitigate and reduce to minimum adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from new development through the use of planning 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 health and quality of life and any adverse impacts will be reduced to a minimum by mitigation measures such as installation of a 3 metre high 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 Study has been carried out on behalf of the College. 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.

The lighting levels have been assessed against 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.

The proposed floodlighting is designed to comply with Environmental Zone E2 which is "rural or relatively dark outer suburban". A vertical overspill calculation carried out with the maximum vertical illuminance projected towards the façade of the residential building within closest proximity to the pitch is less than 0.5 lux calculated at a height of 3.5 metres above

ground level (E2 level 5 lux). Horizontal and vertical 1.5 metre and 4 metre overspill drawings have been submitted which also demonstrate compliance with the E2 level of 5 lux. The upward light output ratio is calculated at 0% (E2 level 2.5). The maximum luminaire intensity is 2254 candelas and well below the pre curfew level of 7,500 candelas for environmental zone E2.

To be able to put the lighting levels within the report 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.

It is also considered that the existing lighting levels will not result in exceedence of the light intrusion into windows which takes account existing light intrusion and this can be secured by condition.

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 the development will be visible and that the trees will shed leaves during certain times of the year reducing their ability to screen the development from the neighbouring properties.

The dwellings to the north are on a higher ground level and the upper floor windows and in some cases conservatory roofs are visible above the boundary hedge giving an uninterrupted view of the development.

However, due to the distance between the proposed pitch, fencing and lighting columns and the neighbouring dwellings along with the existence of the trees and hedges that will provide an element of screening, it is considered that the proposed structures will not be visually overbearing or unacceptable when viewed from the neighbouring dwellings and their gardens areas.

Fear of Crime

It is clear from the application that the site would be supervised during evening and weekends. The security arrangements outlined in the Community Use Agreement and Management Plan would be the responsibility of the College to manage.

The Durham Constabulary Architectural Liaison has advised that the Police have no objections to the construction of the pitch. The ALO has stated that other such pitches have not generated antisocial behaviour and no evidence has been provided to suggest that this one will.

Construction Management Plan

An example of a Construction Management Plan has been submitted and a formal plan can be secured by a planning condition.

Having assessed the impact of the development on the amenities of the neighbouring dwellings it is considered that appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposal to meet the necessary guidelines 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.

Highway Safety and Parking

Saved Policy R11 of the Local Plan 1997 states that proposals to install artificial turf pitches will be permitted provided that the site is accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and that traffic attraction through residential roads is avoided.

Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy 2011 identifies that playing pitches, synthetic turf pitches and multi-use games areas will be provided and maintained according to a hierarchy of strategic hub sites (Eastbourne Sports Complex and Blackwell Meadows) and satellite sites such as schools and colleges.

The Architectural Liaison Officer from Durham Constabulary echoes the concerns of the residents in relation to vehicular access to the site. He has advised that "large coaches transporting students to the site and parents dropping of their children create congestion and parking complaints which can be a draw on Police resources during term time and there must be a concern that the introduction of the artificial pitch will attract further traffic outside of normal traffic accessing the site. The approach roads to the College were not designed to take the amount of traffic that the College now attracts and there is no obvious infrastructure changes that could alleviate the traffic flow, the viable solution to the problem seems to be to find ways to reduce the amount of traffic accessing the site".

The College is served by the Service 16 bus which provides an hourly service Monday to Saturday with no evening service. Bus Service 3 is also available with a half hourly service Monday to Saturday with no evening service. The nearest bus stops to the College for these Services are approximately 400m and 550m. It is accepted that the facility will be predominately accessed by persons using motor vehicles rather than the public transport although the College site can be reached on foot or by cycle.

The pitch will be available for use the pupils of the College during the operational hours of the College with use extended to 5.30pm for after school activities and clubs. This use should therefore not generate an increase in traffic as the pupils would be already in attendance at the school and not making additional trips to the facility.

The facility is then open for community use from 1800 until 2100 weekdays and 1000 – 1600 at weekends.

The car park management plan that has been submitted with the planning application demonstrates how the car park will be managed during events and out of hours activities and it states that "the majority of students leave College at the end of the day and for those travelling on buses this would normally be 10 minutes later. Staff normally leave College between 15 minutes after the end of the College day and 5.30 pm therefore leaving a fallow period of 30 minutes prior to the commencement of Community Use at 6 pm. Therefore we anticipate that the parking requirements of the members of the community will be met by our existing parking spaces in the car park and on the tennis courts if necessary"

The comments made by local residents and the Architectural Liaison Officer are acknowledged and it is accepted that around school pick up/drop off times the surrounding highway network including Clare Avenue and The Headlands gets congested with vehicles given that the College has a student intake of around 1200 pupils of which around 300 of the students attend the 6th form.

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. This scenario is not uncommon to other residential streets surrounding schools in the Borough and the creation of the artificial pitch should not exacerbate the situation due to the community use starting after the after school clubs have finished and pupils left the premises.

Traffic surveys that have previously been carried out on The Headlands and these showed that over a 15 minute period in the Am 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. A further peak occurs between 15:15 and 17:45 with a maximum two way total in any 15 minute period of 74 vehicles. Between the hours of 17:30 -18:00 the two way vehicle movements reduces to a maximum of 35 two way trips which would concur with the car park management plan stating that the majority of students and staff have left the site by this time.

Between the hours of 18:00 – 21:30 when the new facility would be in operation for community use a maximum of flow on The Headlands of 26 two way trips is recorded, with a minimum flow of only 3 vehicles in any one 15 minute period.

Speed surveys have also been carried out on The Headlands and the mean average speed recorded during a 24 hour period was between 24-26mph therefore there is not a current speeding issue associated with the local highway network.

In terms of traffic generated from the new facility and for robustness, the new pitch could potentially generate 30 players including substitutes 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 60 vehicle trips on the local network. It could be argued that there are more or less spectators and that players could generally arrive in the same vehicle as spectators, however this is to demonstrate a potential generation of traffic. This would show therefore that there would be less traffic than the worst recorded period during the Am or Pm peaks associated with school operation and including commuter trips.

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 use 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 as in MfS tends to be relied upon more heavily than local guidance when making a decision therefore this is also worth noting.

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 approximately 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 of 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. However 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.

Parking provision for sports pitches as per the Tees Valley Design Guidance would be as follows:

- 1 space per 2 patrons for sports users,
- 1 space per 3 spectators.
- 1 space per 2 members of staff.
-

Assuming 30 players (including subs) and 30 spectators with a referee this would equate to 26 car parking spaces.

There are 129 car parking spaces within the site which would be unaffected by the proposed development but on occasion can be near or exceed 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 (except special events), there should be sufficient car parking space within the grounds to avoid overspill onto the adjacent highway which should be avoided.

It is considered that the proposed facility would not have a severe impact on the local highway network and the Council's Highways Engineer has advised that it would be difficult to constitute a highways refusal.

The Senior Fire Safety Officer has advised that the Fire Service require a minimum road width of 3.7m for any new development. The roads leading to the College are over this width and are therefore acceptable to the Fire Service for vehicular access. The Fire Service has no statutory power or authority to limit parking on a highway and as such they must only consider the width of any road without any vehicles on. The Fire Safety Officer has raised no objections to the proposal.

It is clear that the proposal would not fully comply with all the highway related criteria set out in Saved policy R11 of the Local Plan 1997 but this has to be considered against the more up-to-date policy (CS18) of the Core Strategy 2011 that identifies school and college sites as the appropriate locations for synthetic pitches. The advice from the Council's Highways Engineer and the Fire Safety Officer is that the impact of the development on the local highway network, parking requirements and highway safety is acceptable. It is considered that on balance Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy and the highway related advice carry more weight than saved Policy R11 and the planning application should not be refused on highway grounds.

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

A risk assessment survey has been carried out to determine:

- The value of the existing sports field as a foraging habitat for bats;
- Flight lines of bats using the area for foraging and/or commuting;
- If roosting bats are present within the school buildings;
- Light lines of bats to and from any roosts within the school grounds

The existing sports field is considered species poor amenity grassland which does not provide any feeding potential for foraging bats. This is a large area with no cover for feeding or commuting bats. The woodland area to the east will provide medium high quality bat foraging habitat augmented by the gardens of the neighbouring properties to the north and south of the playing field. The existing hedge lines, and trees lines and the woodland area will provide bat commuting routes to link the school grounds to the wider area.

Four species of bats were recorded during the bat activity surveys. Common and soprano pipistrelle bats were recorded flying into the survey area from the east along the hedge lines to

the north and to the south. The overall levels of bat activity were moderate and all were recorded in close proximity to either the hedge lines to the north and south or the edge of the woodland area to the east of the playing field. No bat activity was detected away from the perimeter of the survey area.

A brown long eared bat maternity roost was found within the loft of the main school building. On emergence these bats fly south east along the access road, keeping close to the trees immediately to the east of the main school building. The bats leave the site following the tree line that leads south between the houses of Chilton Close and St Hild Close. The school grounds are moderately well lit at night and this route is the one dark corridor leading away from the main school building. The car park is flood lit which creates a brightly lit space that acts as a barrier for these bats, especially brown long eared bats which are light sensitive and are not known to cross open areas, especially when these trees are illuminated.

The light spill of the proposed flood lights has been assessed along with sunset times during various parts of the year and Assessment provides the following mitigation measures for the foraging and commuting habitat:

- Improving the hedges to the north and south of the proposed pitch. The hedges could be widened or a second hedge planted within the school grounds to provide enhanced bat flight and create wildlife corridors around the new pitch. The Assessment recommends native species such as dog rose, hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn.
- That the floodlights are not used between the months of May and September in order to reduce the minimal impact of the light spill on the woodland area

The maternity bat roost found in the main school building would not be affected by the proposal and no mitigation is required but the Assessment puts forward some recommendations to retain the favourable status of the roost.

The Council's Ecology Officer has accepted the findings of the Assessment subject to the mitigation measures outlined above being secured by planning conditions and the recommendations for the maternity roost being placed on any approval as Informatives.

On that basis a European Protected Species License with regard to bats would not be required to allow the development to proceed.

With regard to other species, no signs of badger were found during the site survey and the risk of badger occurring on site is considered to be low. No signs of otter or water vole were found and the risk of either otter or water vole occurring on site is considered to be negligible. Twenty three bird species were recorded in the wider area during the survey period area but no birds would be expected to breed during on the site of the proposed pitch due to the intensive management of the existing sports field but the surrounding area will support both foraging and breeding birds. There is no standing water or ponds and as a result there is no scope for amphibians, including great crested newts. The risk of reptiles and invertebrates being present is negligible due to the poor connectivity of the site to the wider area and the constant maintenance of the playing field. To mitigate for the presence of birds, any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) and if any excavations are left open overnight a means of escape will be provided for any mammals in the form of a rough wooden ramp.

It is considered that the proposed development accords with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy 2011.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The Flood Risk Management Team has advised that the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Maps indicates that an area to the east of the proposed pitch is a high risk of surface water flooding. The proposed pitch must not increase the risk of surface water runoff from the site or cause any increased flood risk to neighbouring sites. Any increase in surface water generated by the proposed development or existing surface water/ground water issues on the site must be alleviated by the installation of sustainable drainage systems within the site.

Existing drainage crosses the playing field and to ensure any manhole covers that need to be resited can be, the existing drainage that currently crosses the area requires diversion. The diversion picks up the car park drainage initially then travels along the northern edge of the pitch collecting and intercepting two more existing drains before returning to the same discharge point at the existing soakaway to the south. This route has been chosen to intercept all known existing drains and position all manholes within landscaped areas away from both the pitch and the main practice areas. The regrading of the levels as part the earthworks provides the required cover to the proposed drains.

The principle of the pitch drainage is based on a system that can store the runoff and discharge it slowly which reduces its impact and mimicking the existing playing field discharge. A percolation test result and site investigation confirmed that the ground infiltration rate is poor. The extent of the existing soakaway is unknown without excavation but it is known that the currently field drainage system and part of the car park currently discharges to the existing soakaway. Following discussions with the Flood Risk Management Team, an under pitch storage system has been redesigned to account for "a lack of positive outlet" and to include storage for all storm durations for a 1 in 100 year return with a 20% increase to account for climate change. A discharge rate of 2.5l/s has been agreed. A revised drainage assessment and plan has been submitted based on the above parameters.

The proposed pitch will allow the rainfall to percolate through its porous layers into the carrier drains which then transport it to the attenuation storage facility. The process will be much quicker than the existing field and its field drainage system. In order to mimic this slower process, the water is stored under the pitch and released at the equivalent rate. The increased size of the storage facility will now allow this process to occur without flooding for a 1 in 100 year storm event with 20% increase for climate change.

The Flood Risk Team has raised no objections to the development provided that the measures highlighted in the amended drainage assessment and plans are fully implemented. The discharge rates from the development into the existing private surface water drainage system will be restricted to less than existing Greenfield rates and the 365m² of storage will be provided. The Flood Risk Team has advised that if the measures are fully implemented the proposed development will not increase the existing flood risk to the development or the surrounding area. A planning condition would be imposed to ensure that the measures are secured and implemented.

As the surface water of the pitch would be disposed of via a soakaway/watercourse Northumbrian Water has raised no objections to the proposal.

Health Concerns

Health can be a material planning consideration but the weight given to health concerns arising from the impacts of a development is a matter for the decision maker. The NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to avoid noise from development giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development and decisions should mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, for example through the use of planning conditions.

In this particular case, noise has been mitigated by the requirement for the acoustic fencing on the north and south ends of the pitch and by the use of planning conditions to restrict the hours of operation of the pitch and the associated flood lighting.

It is considered that health considerations have been taken into account by Officers by securing the above measures and on balance the planning application should not be refused on such grounds.

Impact on Listed Buildings

An objection has been received raising concerns that the proposal would have a negative impact on listed buildings surrounding the site. The objection lists 8 protected buildings within 350 metres of the proposed development, and includes the approximate distances between the proposed synthetic pitch and floodlights, and these heritage assets.

The College site adjoins St Clare's Abbey to the east, which is a Grade II building. The walls surrounding Abbey are listed and the Chapel within the Abbey is a Grade II* listed building. The Abbey buildings are set in large grounds with mature landscaping.

The majority of the sites that have been listed in the objection letter are a significant distance from the proposed pitch and floodlights, and separated from the site by substantial amount of residential development

Although the site adjoins the St Clare's Abbey site, a significant distance would be retained between the pitches and floodlights and the boundary. An even greater distance separates the proposed development from the Abbey buildings themselves due to the extensive grounds the Abbey is set within.

The development proposed is neither within the curtilage of any of the 8 listed buildings, or within the setting of them.

The proposal, specifically the floodlights (structures and the artificial light coming from them), would not have any negative impact on any designated, or non-designated heritage assets.

The artificial lighting from the floodlights would not encroach upon the St Clare's heritage assets, and would therefore have no negative impact individually or cumulatively, or on the 'setting,' of these assets.

The proposed development would not impact on the historic significance of the town, or harm any of the heritage assets in this area.

Other Matters*Funding*

The funding of the proposed development is not a material planning consideration. However, as it has been mentioned by objectors, Officers can confirm that the contribution that would be made by the Council comes from the anticipated capital receipt from the sale of land at Eastbourne School for housing. Until 2019 (which is 10 years from the closure of the School) the Department of Education must approve the use of any capital receipt from the disposal of the Eastbourne School playing fields with a strong presumption it will be re-invested in school sports provision or community provision available to Schools.

Withdrawn application

The previous planning application for a synthetic pitch was withdrawn due to continued inaccuracies in the planning submission. This is a common practice in such circumstances. Furthermore, this revised planning application differs from the previous submission in terms of the requirement to regrade the land to the north of the synthetic pitch (which increases the extent of the red line boundary of the submission) and the need to submit ecological reports which justifies the requirement for the submission of a fresh planning application for consideration.

Existing Facilities

Objectors have stated that there are other similar facilities at Hummersknott School. The Darlington Needs Assessment and Evidence Base document shows that the pitch at Hummersknott School is a rubber crumb pile 3G pitch which is suitable for football but not for hockey.

Impartiality of the Decision Making Process

It is the role of Development Management to be a regulator and to provide Members with an objective Report outlining the main issues for consideration. The Council's financial involvement in this project is not a material planning consideration and not an issue for the Planning Applications Committee. The decision making process is acceptable in terms of The Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992

Land Ownership

The application site would be located on land that is within the freehold ownership of the Council. As a result, the relevant Ownership Certificate (Certificate B) has been signed on behalf of the applicant. If the lease between the Council and the College needs to be revised as a result of the development, this is not a material planning consideration.

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 proposal would not fully accord with saved Policy R11 of the Local Plan 1997 as it is not easily accessible by public transport (on an evening) and the site would be accessed via residential streets. However, this is a facility within an existing College site already used out of school hours and which is accessible on foot and by cycle as well as by motor vehicles. The impact the development will have on the highway network in terms of traffic generation and highway safety is considered to be acceptable. Furthermore, policy CS18 of the Core Strategy is a more up to date policy on promoting quality, accessible sport facilities and should carry more

weight in the decision making process. It is considered that the proposal would comply with the other criterion mentioned in this saved policy along with more recent national and local development plan policies and the Interim Planning Policy Position Statement.

The proposed development will meet an identified need for a sand dressed synthetic pitch to be used primarily for hockey and it also will bring benefits to the students of the College and to the wider community in terms of adding to the existing offer of publicly accessible sports provision within the Borough.

The impacts of noise and light spill on the neighbouring properties in the locality have been mitigated by the requirement of acoustic fencing and imposition of planning conditions to restrict the hours of usage of the pitch and the associated floodlights. The health and well being of local residents has also been considered and given appropriate weight in the decision making process.

An example of a Community Use Agreement has been submitted with the planning application and a formal Agreement will be secured by a planning condition. A Car Park Management Plan and Facilities Management Plan have been submitted in support of the planning application but these are Plans that would be managed and enforced by the College and not via planning conditions.

The impact of the development on protected species has been mitigated by reducing the usage of the floodlights during the course of the year and by improving the hedgeline on the northern and southern boundaries of the playing field.

It is considered that subject to appropriate planning conditions, the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT MEMBERS ARE MINDED TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS AND THAT THE APPLICATION BE REFERRED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE (NATIONAL PLANNING CASE WORK UNIT) FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (CONSOLIDATION) (ENGLAND) DIRECTION 2009

1. A3 – Implementation Limit (Three Years)
2. The synthetic pitch hereby approved shall not be used outside the hours of 0900 - 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 0900 - 2100 Mondays to Fridays; 0900 – 1600 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays
REASON - In the interests of residential amenity
4. The floodlighting hereby approved shall not be used between 1st May to 30th September
REASON: In the interests of the bat foraging and commuting habitats
5. A scheme to improve the hedges to the north and south of the synthetic pitch hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first use of the development. The development shall not be carried out

otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details and shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the life of the development and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In the interests of improving the bat foraging and commuting habitats.

6. No vegetation clearance shall take place during the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August) unless a checking survey by a suitability qualified experienced ornithologist confirms the absence of any active bird nests to the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In the interests of protecting breeding birds and their habitats

7. If any excavations are left open overnight a means of escape shall be provided for any mammals. This will take the form of a rough wooden ramp at an angle of no greater than 45o and at least 300mm in width unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that there are no significant long term impact to the habitats and ecology of the locality

8. Prior to the first use of the development a Community Use Agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and a copy of the completed approved agreement shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority. The Agreement shall apply to the Artificial Grass Pitch and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, and anything else which the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England consider necessary in order to secure the effective community use of the facilities. The development shall not be used at any time other than in strict compliance with the approved Agreement.

REASON: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility to ensure the sufficient benefit to the development of sport.

9. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, precise details of footways and access points to the pitch shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details

REASON: In order to ensure that the development incorporates appropriate accesses to the pitch

10. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the document Ref No 3418-14-001 entitled “Drainage Assessment Report for Carmel College Planning Application for the Construction of an All Weather Hockey Pitch” produced by DTA Consulting Engineers LLP dated 4 May 2016 (including appendices contained therein) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

REASON: To prevent the risk of flooding.

11. 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

12. Prior to the first use of the approved development the acoustic barrier shall be constructed in complete accordance with the details contained within the SSDTP Sound Impact Assessment reference 4879.3 dated 28 April 2016 and Drawing Reference

Number NSCRCC003n and shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the life of the development and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity

13. The noise from the use of the synthetic sand dressed turf pitch shall meet the Local Authority noise assessment criteria contained within SSDTP Sound Impact Assessment reference 4879.3 dated 28 April 2016 at all noise sensitive locations.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity

14. The perimeter backboards and goal backboards surrounding the entire pitch shall be designed and lined with a suitable padding material 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 perimeter backboards and goal backboards shall be maintained throughout the life of the development and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity

15. 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

16. Prior to the commencement of the development, a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include details of the hours of construction and deliveries, measures for controlling dust noise and vibration during the construction phase, traffic routes for construction traffic, warning signage, car park management and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved Plan

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety

17. The development hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the measures outlined in the Halliday Lighting "Lighting Impact Study" dated 7 May 2016 and the lighting specification. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the planning application, the floodlights shall be fitted with internal baffles to reduce the impact of glare. The floodlighting shall be maintained thereafter throughout the life of the development and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

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

18. Notwithstanding the details submitted with the planning application, the lighting levels from the development hereby approved shall not exceed the Sky Glow Upward Light Ratio Max %, Light intrusion into windows E_v (Lux) and Luminaire Intensity (candelas) for Environmental Zone E2 contained within Table 2 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

19. 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

Interim Planning Position Statement 2016**Other Documents**

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

Darlington Open Space Strategy 2007 – 2017

INFORMATIVE TO BE INCLUDED SHOULD PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED**Protected Species**

If any repairs are required to the roof, roof covering, lead flashing and valley gutter, chimneys, wall tops or fascia boards of the main school building advice must be sought from an appropriately licenced and experienced ecologist to ensure that the roost is not disturbed and that any bat access points are not inadvertently blocked.

The external lighting of this building will not be altered without first seeking advice in relation to the roosting bats. Illuminating a bat roost creates disturbance and can cause the bats to desert the roost. Light falling on a roost access point will at least delay bats from emerging and this shortens the amount of time available to them for foraging

Brown long-eared bats are sensitive to light and do not cross open areas to reach foraging grounds. The survey work to date has shown that the bats leave their roost along the dark corridor to the south east of the school along the tree line to the east of the buildings. This route will be maintained as is and will not be subject to any lighting