

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P17/V2659/FUL</a>
<b>SITE</b>	Faringdon Leisure Centre, Fernham Road, Faringdon, SN7 7LB
<b>PARISH</b>	Great Faringdon
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Provision of 3G football pitch with associated parking and storage. (Additional lighting and parking information received 8 December 2017).
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Roger Cox Mohinder Kainth
<b>APPLICANT OFFICER</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council Penny Silverwood

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## RECOMMENDATION

To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

### Compliance:

1. Time limit.
2. Approved plans.
3. Materials in accordance with application.
4. Car parking in accordance with plans.
5. Cycle parking in accordance with plans.
6. No drainage to highway.
7. Floodlighting in accordance with plans and light impact study.
8. Hours of use.
9. No drainage to highway.
10. Pitch specification.

### Details to be submitted prior to use:

11. Drainage details (surface and foul).
12. Management and maintenance scheme.

### Informatives

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the recommendations of the European Chemicals Agency in the report: 'An evaluation of the possible health risks of recycled rubber granules used as infill in synthetic turf sports fields' (February 2017).

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

1.1 The application is referred to committee as the applicant is the Vale of White Horse District Council and objections have been received.

1.2 The application site forms part of the wider site shared by Faringdon Leisure Centre and Faringdon Community College in the south-east of Faringdon. The proposed 3G pitch is to be located in the south-easterly corner of the site. A quarry and Rogers Gardenstone site lie to the east and an area of scrubland

and Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits Site of Specific Scientific Interest separates the site from residential properties to the west in Fernham Gate and Coxwell House Mews.

- 1.3 The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a 3G artificial grass pitch with floodlighting, perimeter fencing and additional car parking spaces. This includes incorporating the car parking area approved under planning permission P17/V3175/FUL for a new teaching block.
- 1.4 Following concerns raised by the Highways Liaison Officer at Oxfordshire County Council, the Town Council, neighbours and the Planning Officer, additional information has been submitted amending the layout of the car parking, providing clarity on the use of the facility and car parking for the leisure centre and college, providing additional information on the proposed floodlighting and on the use and of the proposed pitch.
- 1.5 **A site location plan is below:**



- 1.6 Extracts of the application plans are **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**
- 2.1 Below is a summary of the responses received to the submission. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

<p><b>Faringdon Town Council</b></p>	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wrong location, lighting and noise pollution will affect the residents of Fernham Gate</li> <li>- Wrong type of pitch, does not want a pitch specifically for football.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Against the neighbourhood plan and no reference to neighbourhood plan in the planning application which states Faringdon should have an all-weather pitch to allow a range of sports available to the town</li> <li>- This type of pitch will not be suitable for other sports such as hockey.</li> </ul>
<b>Sport England</b>	No objection – recommended conditions
<b>Vale – Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)</b>	No objection – recommended conditions
<b>Countryside Officer (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse)</b>	No objection
<b>Health and Housing – Contaminated Land</b>	No objection
<b>Health and Housing – Environmental Protection Team</b>	<p>No objection, recommended conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The nearest houses in Fernham Gate are not visible from the site. These properties are built below the surrounding ground level and the old quarry wall forms the boundary between the properties and adjacent land.</li> <li>- Estimate Fernham Gate is 3.5-4m below the level of surrounding ground, but houses are close enough that they could be impacted by noise from the use of the pitch at night.</li> <li>- If the pitch is used until 10.00pm concerns regarding potential noise impacts but the topography in this location will mitigate some of the impacts of noise on nearby properties</li> <li>- A noise assessment to assess if further mitigation is required should be carried out and a scheme of mitigation proposed to reduce noise impacts to a reasonable level.</li> <li>- With a suitable scheme of mitigation in place if deemed necessary the noise levels from the use of the pitch at night could be adequately controlled.</li> </ul>
<b>County Archaeologist</b>	No objection

<p><b>Neighbours comments (object)</b></p>	<p>10 letters of objection have been received. The reasons for objection can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Unclear what parking spaces will be available for the college and leisure centre</li><li>- The college requires all the spaces otherwise overspill parks on Fernham Road, Leamington Drive and Carters Cresecent causing annoyance, inconvenience and a safety hazard to residents</li><li>- Floodlights will cause light pollution to nearby residential properties</li><li>- Noise pollution from the pitch will cause distress to residents and be intrusive</li><li>- The ground is at least 8m higher than the ground level of Fernham Gate development and the 5m high fencing and 15m high floodlighting will be clearly visible from the rear of properties</li><li>- No indication of usage times, evening use will cause noise pollution to local residents</li><li>- The site is close to the old quarry face (Wicklesham and Coxwell SSSI).</li><li>- No light assessment of impact of floodlighting has been submitted.</li><li>- No reference is made to application P16/V0918/SCR which will result in residential homes directly bordering the proposed pitch</li><li>- No consideration has been given to LED colour temperature and associated health effects common with high colour temperature</li><li>- No noise impact study has been submitted</li><li>- Current noise levels in the evenings are minimal so can only be negatively impacted by the proposed application.</li><li>- The increase in traffic is dangerous and will make it more difficult for residents to leave and enter their properties</li><li>- The application does not address how it proposes to alleviate noise and traffic pollution</li><li>- All traffic to the leisure centre should use the road from Park Road through Rogers Concrete.</li><li>- Additional weight and vibration and rainwater draining may impact the SSSI</li><li>- The increase in leisure centre facilities will result in greater water consumption and low water pressure is a concern in the area</li><li>- The application is made by the Vale of White Horse District Council and the Council cannot make a judgement on its own application.</li><li>- Questions have been raised about the dangers to health of playing on 3G pitches</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- An alternative location on the site should be considered.</li><li>- The light study makes no mention of glare and upward reflected light produced. Clarification that glare will not be visible to residential properties should be sought.</li><li>- Operation should cease at 8.00pm</li><li>- No effort to address with evidence the impact from noise including ball strikes.</li></ul>
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### 3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

#### 3.1 [P17/V2589/DIS](#) - Approved (08/11/2017)

Discharge of conditions 5( Surface Water Drainage) 6(Foul Water Drainage) 9(Hard and Soft Landscaping) on planning application P17/V1375/FUL

The application is for a new teaching block to accommodate the proposed expansion of the Faringdon Community College from 7 form entry to 9 form entry. It is proposed that the new three storey building will be located partially onto the existing hard courts and partially on the side of the existing school playing fields. The proposed new building will be 2,380m<sup>2</sup> GIA with the new accommodation briefly comprising; 17 general teaching classrooms, business studies, science, and drama suites, and open plan cafe together with the associated ancillary facilities.

The proposed development works will also include the removal from site of 2 no. 129m<sup>2</sup> pre-fabricated classroom units, each comprising of 2 no. 55m<sup>2</sup> classrooms, associated small stores and small lobby.

The proposed external works will comprise 28 additional new parking spaces, which will be located at the end of the existing school car park, new hard and soft landscaping and re-formed hard games area adjacent to the new block. A new grasscrete route will also be formed extending from the existing access route around the leisure centre to provide access to the new building for emergency vehicles, and a temporary construction route is proposed to be formed to access the development works area from the rear of the site.

#### [P17/V1375/FUL](#) - Approved (13/09/2017)

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route around the leisure centre to provide access to the new building for emergency vehicles, and a temporary construction route is proposed to be formed to access the development works area from the rear of the site.

[P17/V0809/FUL](#) - Approved (27/06/2017)

Change of use from C3 dwelling houses to DI-non residential institutions

[P14/V2297/FUL](#) - Approved (18/12/2014)

Erection of a three storey classroom block with associated landscape and car parking. (As amended by documentation received 6 November submitted by the applicant/agent)

### 3.2 **Pre-application History**

No formal pre-application advice history.

### 4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The site is less than 5 hectares and the site is not in a 'sensitive area'. The proposal is not therefore EIA development.

### 5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

5.1 The relevant planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. The principle of enhanced sport and recreation facilities at this site;
2. The impact upon the character and local distinctiveness of the area
3. The impact on the amenities of the neighbouring residents
4. Highways impacts
5. Impact upon designated sites

### 5.2 **The principle of development**

The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 73 confirms that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities.

5.3 Saved Policy L1 from Local Plan 2011 states that development upon existing outdoor playing space will only be permitted where there is a deficiency where the benefits of the proposed development for sport facilities outweighs the loss of playing space.

5.4 Saved Policy L8 confirms that small scale developments for open space, sport and recreation will be permitted within or on the edge of settlements provided that they meet a local need, do not harm the character of the surrounding area and do not have a detrimental impact on the ecology of the area. Policy 4.10B of the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan strongly supports the development of a floodlit multi-use all-weather pitch within the town. The supporting text to this policy states that investing in existing facilities such as the leisure centre is needed.

5.5 The supporting text in the Neighbourhood Plan states that the most appropriate location for a new pitch in Faringdon is thought to be Tucker Park. Money collected under local section 106 obligations in recent years has been

earmarked for such a pitch and the current application does not require the use of any of this section 106 money. In any event, as members are aware, each application is assessed on its own merits. This application for a pitch to be located adjacent to the school and leisure centre must be considered on its own merits against the development plan.

- 5.6 The proposed development of a 3G pitch will provide enhanced sport and recreational opportunities for the residents of Faringdon and the surrounding area and will improve existing facilities at the site. The location for the proposed pitch is currently vacant and not formally marked out as a sports pitch. The location of the car parking area may result in the loss of part of a rugby pitch and running track as currently laid out, However the layout of pitches, which is controlled by Faringdon Community College, changes according to the needs of the college and there is considered to be sufficient space within the site to provide alternative pitch provision.
- 5.7 Additional supporting information submitted by the applicant has confirmed that the pitch will be available for sole use by Faringdon Community College during term-time school hours and for use by the local community and leisure centre at other times. The supporting documentation confirms that the primary use of the pitch will be for football of all ages and abilities but will also be available for use for non-contact rugby training, recreational hockey, circuit training, cricket and walking football.
- 5.8 Sport England have noted that the pitch could also be used for lacrosse and ultimate Frisbee, but it is does not meet the requirements for competition hockey and rugby.
- 5.9 As set out in Figure 30 of the Vale Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy it is difficult to provide a pitch surface that is suitable for all sports particularly to a competition standard for football, rugby and hockey. Officers consider that the proposed pitch will provide a facility that can accommodate a wide variety of sports for a wide variety of users and abilities. It will also be available for use by both the school and the local community.
- 5.10 Officers consider that the proposed development contributes positively to the leisure facilities available within Faringdon and the social and economic benefits of the new facilities outweighs the minimal loss of existing playing space. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with policies L1 and L8 of the Local Plan 2011, the provisions of the NPPF and Policy 4.10B of the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.11 **Character and local distinctiveness**  
The pitch will be viewed within the context of the wider school and leisure centre complex adjacent to existing sport pitches. Whilst it will be located on an area of ground higher than the majority of the school sports pitches officers do not consider that there will be any to the harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Officers do not consider the pitch and its associated fencing to be overly dominant or visible from public vantage points.

- 5.12 The development will extend the parking area approved in planning permission ref. P17/V1375/FUL, but this is not considered to harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.13 **Residential amenity**  
Saved Policy DC9 in the Local Plan 2011 states that development would not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment in terms of loss of privacy, dominance, noise or vibration, smells or dust, pollution or external lighting. Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF.
- 5.14 In addition, paragraph 125 of the NPPF specifically refers to lighting, stating: “By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”
- 5.15 The nearest residential property to the proposed pitch is no.13 Fernham Gate, to the west. The distance of the pitch to the nearest elevation of no.13 Fernham Gate will be approximately 48 metres.
- 5.16 Residential amenity - light  
Saved Policy DC20 in the Local Plan 2011 states that external lighting will only be permitted where there will be no adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties, that the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary to undertake the task for which it is required, and that potential light pollution from glare and spillage is minimised.
- 5.17 Drawings submitted as an amendment to the application demonstrate the predicted light spill from the proposed floodlights. The Lux level is the measurement of light reaching a surface where 1 Lux is given by one lumen falling evenly on a square metre.
- 5.18 The submitted drawings indicate that the Lux levels of the lighting when reaching the elevations of dwellings to the west of the proposed pitch will be substantially less than 5 Lux. As a means of comparison, an average residential side street light would be approximately 5 Lux as stated in “Secured by Design – lighting against crime: a guide for crime reduction professionals”. The light impact study submitted indicates that the specification of lighting is designed to reduce upward waste light and overspill and the main beam angle is below the recommended 70° set out by the Institute of Lighting Professionals to reduce horizontal light overspill and glare. The environmental health officer has confirmed that the submitted predictions and light impact study indicate that light spill can be contained to an acceptable level. Officers therefore consider the development unlikely to have a significant detrimental impact upon the amenities of nearby properties as a result of the proposed floodlighting.
- 5.19 Officers acknowledge that given the ‘natural’ topography of the surrounding area with properties of Fernham Gate being built below the surrounding ground level, the pitch and its associated infrastructure will be built at a higher level than these residential properties. Despite the difference in levels officers are



satisfied that given the significant distance between these residential properties and the proposed development and the acceptability of the predicted light spill there will not be a significant detrimental impact upon the amenities of nearby properties.

5.20 Residential amenity – noise

The proposed floodlighting would allow the use of the proposed pitch for longer periods into the evening. The environmental health officer has assessed the proposal and visited the site to assess the potential harm to nearby residential properties.

5.21 The elevations of nearby residential properties are approximately 48 metres from the perimeter of the proposed pitch at the closest point. The environmental health officer references these nearby properties in the Fernham Gate development as being built below the surrounding ground level, approximately 3.5-4.0 metres below with an old quarry wall forming the boundary to the surrounding land. Whilst the environmental health officer has raised concerns regarding the use of the pitch beyond 8.00pm to 10.00pm he has acknowledged that the topography of the site and surrounding area will mitigate some of the impacts of noise upon nearby residential properties.

5.22 The officer has recommended that a noise assessment should be carried out to determine the degree to which the 'natural' topography will mitigate any noise impact and recommend further mitigation to reduce the impact on nearby properties to a reasonable level. The officer has confirmed that a suitable scheme of mitigation is feasible should it be required to reduce the noise impact to a reasonable level. It is therefore considered by officers that the degree of harm on the amenities of neighbouring properties from the use of the pitch into the evenings can be reduced through mitigation measures, such as acoustic fencing to an acceptable level that would not be significantly detrimental to warrant refusal of the application. It is recommended therefore that conditions be attached restricting the use of the pitch to 10.00pm on any given day and requiring a noise assessment to determine if further mitigation measures are required.

5.23 **Traffic, parking and highway safety**

Following concerns raised by the Town Council, Highways Liaison Officer, local residents and the case officer further information has been submitted amending the layout of the proposed car parking and to clarify the use of the car parking area.

5.24 Planning permission was granted in September 2017 for the erection of a new teaching block for Faringdon Community College which included provision of a new car parking area comprising of 28 new spaces at the end of the existing school car park (P17/V1375/FUL). This application seeks to extend this approved parking to provide a total of 45 spaces, 4 of which will be disabled spaces. Supporting information confirms that the 3G pitch and use of the car parking area will be for sole use by Faringdon Community College during term time hours of 9.00 am - 4.30pm. A barrier is proposed to be installed at the entrance to the extended parking area which will ensure that parking during

term-time school hours is only by students and staff of the school and it will operate by the use of fobs provided to students by the school.

5.25 The parking layout was amended to accord with the district's dimensional standards. The Highways Liaison Officer has confirmed that the clarified details and amended plans are acceptable. It is considered that the proposed parking area will provide sufficient provision required by the expansion of the school approved under planning permission ref. P17/V1375/FUL and the use of the proposed pitch. It is not considered that the proposed development will have a detrimental impact upon the safety of the highways network and adequate parking provision has been demonstrated. The Highways Liaison Officer has not raised any concerns regarding the impact of traffic generation as a result of the proposed development upon the surrounding highways network.

5.26 **Designated sites and biodiversity**

The Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits Site of Specific Scientific Interest, designated for its geological interest, lies approximately 20 metres away from the boundary of the application site and approximately 30 metres away from the proposed perimeter fencing to the playing surface. The designated site is separated from the application site by an area of scrubland. It is recommended that a condition be attached requiring details of a sustainable drainage scheme are submitted. The countryside officer has not raised any concerns regarding potential detrimental impact upon the designated site. Given the distance and separation to the site it is not considered that the proposed development will have any significant detrimental harm to the site or its geological interest.

5.27 **Other considerations**

Reference has been made by local residents to the Screening Opinion application (ref. P16/V0918/SCR) to the south of the site for up to 90 dwellings and the potential for future residential properties to directly border the application site. No planning application has been submitted and the area in question has not been allocated for residential development in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 or the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 2. Officers have assessed the current application on its own merits and against the existing policy and planning background.

5.28 In their response to this application Sport England recommended that conditions be attached requiring the pitch to be constructed in accordance with FA technical guidance notes, a management and maintenance scheme to be agreed and implemented, and for certification and registration of the pitch with FIFA to be submitted. Whilst acknowledging the importance of ensuring the pitch meets a certain technical specification officers do not consider that it is either reasonable or necessary for certification and registration of the pitch to be submitted prior to its use. Officers recommend that a condition be attached requiring details of the pitch specification to be submitted for approval.

5.29 A local resident has raised concerns with regards to the possible health risks associated with the rubber granules used in pitches such as the one proposed. Sport England has not raised any concerns regarding the pitch surface and actively promotes and funds pitches of this nature. The European Chemicals

Agency (ECHA) has considered the possible health risks and describes the risk as very low and makes recommendations for precautionary measures to be followed by operators. Officers recommend that an informative be attached should planning permission be granted to ensure the operators of the pitch are aware of the ECHA's recommendations.

## 6.0 **CONCLUSION**

6.1 The application has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), relevant saved and adopted policies in the Local Plan 2011 and Local Plan 2031 Part 1, the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan as well as against all other material planning considerations. The application is recommended for approval as the development is considered to comply with the relevant development plan policies and the provisions of the NPPF. The principle of the development is considered acceptable as it would provide enhanced leisure facilities, contributing to the social and economic sustainability of the local community. The environmental impacts have been assessed against technical guidance and officers do not consider that the proposed development will be significantly harmful to the amenities of neighbouring properties, the character and appearance of the area, local wildlife or designated sites or to highways safety.

### **The following planning policies have been taken into account:**

#### ADOPTED VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 1

CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
CP03 – Settlement Hierarchy  
CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness  
CP42 - Flood Risk  
CP44 - Landscape  
CP46 – Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

#### SAVED POLICIES OF VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2011

DC20 - External Lighting  
DC5 - Access  
DC6 - Landscaping  
DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses  
L1 - Playing Space  
L8 - Provision of small-scale Local Leisure Facilities  
NE7 - The North Vale Corallian Ridge

#### EMERGING VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 2

A publication draft of this Local Plan has been produced and has undergone consultation (the consultation period expired on 22 November). It is now intended to submit the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 for Examination. Its policies currently hold limited weight but those relevant to this application are considered to be:

DP16 – Access  
DP17 – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans  
DP23 – Impact of Development on Amenity

DP25 – Noise Pollution

DP34 – Leisure and Sports Facilities

FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2031

Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan was made on 14 December 2016. Policies considered relevant to this application are:

4.3E – Footpaths and Cycleways

4.10B – Sports Facilities

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DESIGN GUIDE 2015

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2012

EQUALITIES ACT 201

The application has been assessed under the public sector equality duty. The proposal is considered to meet the three aims of the equality duty and not to cause inequality to any of the nine protected characteristics defined in the equality duty.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998

The application has been assessed against Articles 1 and 8 of the Human Rights Act. The impact on individuals has been weighed against the public interest and officers consider they have acted proportionately in arriving at the recommendation to grant planning permission

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