



<b>Application Reference:</b>	<b>P0692.18</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Westlands Playing Field Pavilion, London Road, Romford, RM7 9NX</b>
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Brooklands</b>
<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavation of 3,800 cubic metres of soil, construction of new football ground with synthetic grass pitch, floodlighting, fencing, club house, food kiosk and machinery store, spectator stand, parking and access road.</b>
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>Brenda Louisy-Johnson</b>
<b>Reason for Report to Committee:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>The Assistant Director Planning considers committee consideration to be necessary.</b></li></ul>

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## **1 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

### **1.1 Principle of Development including Green Belt**

1.1.1 The proposal is appropriate development in the Green Belt and would not adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt in terms of its visual impact. There is an identified need for the proposed development by Romford Football Club and Havering Council. The provision of additional and improved sports and recreational facilities within the Borough is in accordance with the general principles of national and local policy.

### **1.2 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Green Belt**

1.2.1 The existing playing fields are located within a mixed use area with sports education and residential uses surrounding the site. However, the area is predominantly open and serves an important Green Belt function. The residential properties in the wider area comprise two and three storey

buildings, the school has single to four storey buildings and the playing fields itself has a double height pavilion building with related detached toilet block and store buildings.

1.2.2 The proposed club house with terracing and the terracing stand would measure 6.88m high and 5.11m high respectively, the cumulative impact of these buildings together with the kiosk, machinery store, fencing and new access means that there would be a materially adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt for which there is required a case of very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

### 1.3 Design / Impact on Street / Garden Scene

1.3.1 It is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the street scene in London Road. The design and finishing of the buildings would be acceptable subject to the use of high quality external finishes.

### 1.4 Impact on Amenity

1.4.1 From a residential amenity perspective, impacts arising from the proposal fall into four broad themes: whether the new buildings are physically overbearing, whether a prejudicial loss of privacy would arise, whether car parking overspill would occur and whether a harmful level of noise and disturbance would result from the development. It is considered that the proposals would not result in unacceptable conditions in terms of privacy, outlook, noise, loss of light or light overspill.

### 1.5 Highway and Parking Matters

1.5.1 The proposed new access would be acceptable as it would connect to the existing car park and continue to the flow of traffic towards the new car park and pavilion building. There would be sufficient car parking provision for the proposed use.

### 1.6 Flood Risk

1.5.1 The site is within Flood Zone 1, although it is not within the 1% annual probability flood plan (1 in 100 year) and therefore it is not at risk of flooding. It is not considered that any other specific mitigation works would be required in respect of flood risk to the development. The Lead Local Flood Authority raise no objection to the Flood Risk Assessment or indication drainage layout.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Committee resolve to GRANT planning permission subject to conditions.

- 2.3 That the Assistant Director Planning is delegated authority to issue the planning permission and impose conditions [and informatives] to secure the following matters:

**Conditions**

1. Time limit - Time limit of three years for the commencement of the development.
2. In accordance with approved plans.
3. Parking - The additional 22 parking spaces and overspill parking areas shall be permanently made available for use by the football club and supporters during home matches.
4. Materials - Submission of materials to be used on the external construction of the buildings hereby permitted before above ground works of the these buildings.
5. Landscaping - No above ground works shall take place before the submission of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping.
6. Ancillary use - Ancillary and incidental use of the lounge space, office and kitchen areas to the primary use of the clubhouse and not as a separate use.
7. Ancillary use - Ancillary and incidental use of the kiosk building to the primary use of the site for sports and leisure and not as a separate use.
8. Ancillary W.C facility - The visitor w.c facility to be used ancillary to the main use of the building for sports and not as a separate use.
9. Perimeter fencing - Prior to above ground works submission of details of perimeter fencing
10. Smoking shelter – Prior to above ground works submission of details of smoking shelter.
11. Wheel washing – Before commencement of development submission of details of wheel washing.
12. Hours of construction

13. Construction method statement – Submission before development is commenced.
14. Amplified music – Not permitted at any time other than within the clubhouse
15. Live music – limited to Fridays and Saturdays no later than 23.00
16. Hours of clubhouse – limited hours for use of the clubhouse.
17. Use of floodlights – limited hours of use of floodlights.
18. Noise levels – Prior to above ground works submission of a scheme for new plant or machinery limiting noise levels.
19. Odours – Before commencement of use a submission of a scheme controlling odours from an extract ventilation system.
20. Noise – Before commencement of use a submission of a scheme controlling transmission of noise and vibration from any mechanical ventilation system.
21. Noise – Prior to first occupation submission of details of a scheme to control noise emanating from the clubhouse building.
22. Contamination – Prior to commencement of development site derived soils shall be tested for contamination.
23. Waste and recycling – Prior to first occupation submission of facilities for the storage and disposal of waste and recycling.
24. Grease trap – Before operation of the kitchen a grease trap shall be fitted to the foul drainage system.
25. Secured by Design – Prior to above ground works of the buildings hereby approved submission of a Secured by Design scheme.
26. CCTV – Prior to above ground works submission of a scheme showing details of a CCTV system.
27. Anti-graffiti treatment - Prior to above ground works submission of details of an anti-graffiti treatment to be applied to the external surfaces of the building.
28. Public Highway – Prior to above ground works submission of details of the proposed works affecting the public highway.

29. Parking Management Scheme – Prior to above ground works submission of a Parking Management Scheme.
30. Flood and external lighting – Prior to above ground works submission of details of flooding lighting and any other means of external lighting to the site.
31. Renewable energy – Prior to the occupation of any part of the new floorspace a renewable energy generation system and rainwater harvesting system shall be installed.
32. Drainage – Prior to above ground works submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site based on the agreed Flood Risk Assessment.
33. Travel Plan – Prior to first use of the development submission of a Travel Plan.
34. Cycle storage – Prior to first use of the development submission of a secure cycle parking space within the site.
35. Community Use Scheme – Prior to above ground works submission of a Community Use Scheme.
36. Traffic Impact Assessment – The submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment prior to the site being used for its permitted purposes following acceptance of any promotion from their current division or any subsequent promotion.
37. Off street parking – The application site shall not be used for any FA Cup home fixtures prior to the applicant making provision for off street parking on a temporary basis.
38. Fire hydrant – Installation of a fire hydrant.
39. Archaeological works – A) Implementation of programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation for submission; B) No development or demolition other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation; C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation.

## **Informatives**

1. Statement Required by Article 31 (cc) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2010: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore, it has been determined in accordance with paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
2. The applicant is advised that the following information is required to discharge condition 32. In order to discharge the surface water condition, the following information must be provided based on the agreed drainage strategy:
  - A clearly labelled drainage layout plan showing pipe networks and any attenuation ponds, soakaways and drainage storage tanks. This plan should show any pipe 'node numbers' that have been referred to in network calculations and it should also show invert and cover levels of manholes.
  - Confirmation of the critical storm duration.
  - Where infiltration forms part of the proposed stormwater system such as infiltration trenches and soakaways, soakage test results and test locations are to be submitted in accordance with BRE digest 365.
  - Where on site attenuation is achieved through attenuation ponds or tanks, calculations showing the volume of these are also required.
  - Where an outfall discharge control device is to be used such as a hydrobrake or twin orifice, this should be shown on the plan with the rate of discharge stated.
  - Calculations should demonstrate how the system operates during a 1 in 100 chance of any year critical duration storm event, including an allowance for climate change in line with the National Planning Policy framework Technical Guidance. If overland flooding occurs in this event, a plan should also be submitted detailing the location of overland flow paths and the extent and depth of ponding.
3. The development of this site is likely to damage heritage assets of archaeological interest. The applicant should therefore submit detailed proposals in the form of an archaeological project design. The design should be in accordance with the appropriate English Heritage guidelines.
4. Pursuant to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and / or landowner. It is recommended that a watching brief is implemented for the presence of any land contamination throughout the life of the development. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the development it should be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must then be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, implemented and verified in accordance with current best practice and submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
5. The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not constitute Highways approval, which will need to be sought separately prior to the

commencement of the development. Any proposals which involve building over the public highway as managed by the London Borough of Havering, will require a licence and the applicant must contact Traffic & Engineering, Technical Services on 01708 432 501 to commence the Submission / Licence Approval process.

6. In aiming to satisfy conditions 25 and 26, the applicant should seek the advice of the Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor. In promoting the delivery of safer, stronger, sustainable places the Local Planning Authority fully supports the adoption of the principles and practices of the Secured by Design Award Scheme and Designing against Crime. Your attention is drawn to the free professional service provided by the Metropolitan Police Designing Out Crime Officers for North East London, who can be contacted via [DOCOMailbox.NE@met.police.uk](mailto:DOCOMailbox.NE@met.police.uk) or 0208 217 3813. They are able to provide qualified advice on incorporating crime prevention measures into new developments.
7. The applicant is advised that a separate application for any advertisements is required showing full details of the proposed position, materials and colouring to be used in the construction of the adverts and the development may only be carried out in accordance with detailed plans and particulars which shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
8. A fee is required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions. In order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2102, which came into force from 22.11.2012, a fee of £116 per request or £34 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse, is needed.

### **3 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS**

#### **Proposal**

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for excavation of 3,800 cubic metres of soil, construction of new football ground with synthetic grass pitch, floodlighting, fencing, club house, food kiosk, spectator stand, machinery store, parking and access road.
- 3.2 The synthetic football pitch would be located approximately 2m west of the proposed club house building and would measure 100m long by 64m wide. (A natural grass surface will have very limited usage if excess water is to be avoided – typically 4-6 hours per week. This will be totally inadequate to meet the demand. The proposed surface will have a far greater capacity.) The excavated soil to create the football pitch would be disposed of off-site in approximately 400 lorry loads. The access is from London Road, via the car park used by the School. It would therefore be necessary to restrict

movements to times when the School pupils are not entering or leaving the premises; so typically 5 hours per day. The Applicant intends to spread the traffic over 10 days which would equate to 8 lorries per hour, during the period.

- 3.3 The proposed club house building would measure 33m wide, 20m deep and 6.88m high to the pitched roof and incorporate a covered 180 person seating area, 2 adult changing rooms with showers and toilets, 2 officials changing rooms with showers and toilets, lounge with meeting area that can be partitioned off when required, kitchen, office, male, female and disable toilets, 2 store rooms, a medical room and a plant room.
- 3.4 All of the proposed floor space will be for sport and recreational purposes (Use Class D2) and the facilities would be used mainly by the Romford FC and associated senior leagues. The facilities would however, also be used for community based activities during school holidays and both the football pitch and social club will be made available to hire for other youth and sports groups, including college academy teams, local schools and football league. The clubhouse will also be used for meetings and afterschool clubs.
- 3.5 The 5 tier covered terracing block would be 43m wide, 5m deep and 5m high to sloping roof and incorporate concrete steps for standing purposes and a male / female toilet block.
- 3.6 A refreshment kiosk is to be provided. Exact dimensions for this building have not been submitted as part of the planning application. But it is evident from the drawings submitted that it would have a relatively small footprint of 3.26m<sup>2</sup>. A condition has been imposed on the recommendation of approval requiring details of the kiosk to be submitted. A storage building would also be provided measuring 3.5m by 2.5m and a height of 2m for the safe storage of maintenance machinery.
- 3.7 The site is to be enclosed by a perimeter fence that prevents observation of activities from outside the ground, in accordance with FA requirements. The fence is to be constructed with close boarded timber panels, 1.8m high, in slotted concrete posts, with a 300mm high, pre-cast concrete gravel board at the base. The overall height of the fence is to be 2.1m. There are to be matching gates in the locations shown on drawing SGB/RFC/03. The vehicle access gate will be a twin leaf gate with a total opening of 5m. There will be 3 emergency gates, each 1.2 metres wide, which will also be used for ball recovery. These gates will have locks operated from the inside and be self-closing.
- 3.8 To reduce loss of balls and to protect vehicles parked within the ground, ball stop netting is to be provided in the locations shown on drawing SGD/RFC/03. The netting would be black 125mm square mesh of 2.5mm minimum polyethylene cord. It would be mounted on 63.5mm round section, galvanised, steel, posts, finished in a green colour. 6no 15m floodlight columns are proposed around the pitch.



- 3.9 A new vehicle access road and 22 car parking spaces is proposed to connect to the existing car parking area to the north east which is currently accessed from London Road. The new car parking area would be located adjacent north of the proposed clubhouse building.
- 3.10 There would be no net loss of existing sports pitches however a new arrangement of the existing summer pitches is proposed which involves repositioning the 8 lane running track to have a north / south position rather than the existing east / west orientation. The 6 football pitches around the proposed football pitch would remain and 2 cricket pitches.

### **Site and Surroundings**

- 3.11 The application site is the Westlands Playing Fields, which are situated on the south side of London Road, immediately west of St. Edwards School. The site is relatively flat and consists of predominantly open green playing fields. In the north eastern corner of the site is an existing parking area accessed from London Road. To the north is a double height sports pavilion building together with a single storey WC block and a store building.
- 3.12 The general surroundings are predominantly open playing fields used for various summer and winter sports, with a car parking and tennis court area to the east. This adjoins the St Edwards School site to the east which comprises single to four storey buildings. Further to the west are two storey residential properties, with the West Ham training fields to the south west. To the north east are two storey residential properties opposite London Road. To the south approximately 190m from the site are railway lines and three storey flatted development and two storey residential properties.
- 3.13 The site forms part of the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Thames Chase Community Forest policy areas as identified within the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

### **Planning History**

- 3.14 The following planning decisions are relevant to the application:
- 4.15 P0845.09 New football ground including pavilion clubhouse with covered seating area, covered terracing stand, toilet block, floodlight masts, car parking area and access road.
- Approved, but development not implemented.
- 3.16 P0847.13 Extension of Time limit on P0845.09-New football ground with related facilities including pavilion incorporating changing rooms, shower facilities and bar area. New terracing stand and toilet block, 8No. floodlight masts, perimeter fencing and car parking area
- Approved, but development not implemented.
- 3.17 P1915.05 Demolish existing sports pavilion, public WCs and maintenance

store and replace with new pavilion incorporating public WCs & maintenance store

Approved, but development not implemented.

- 3.18 P1513.04 Demolition of existing sports pavilion and replacement with new pavilion incorporating public WC's and maintenance store.

Approved, but development not implemented.

#### **4 CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

- 4.1 The views of the Planning Service are expressed in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section below.

- 4.2 The following were consulted regarding the application:

- 4.2.1 London Fire Brigade – No objection subject to submission of scaled plans showing specific details requested. Also no additional fire hydrants required.

- 4.2.2 Metropolitan Police (Design Out Crime) – No objection subject to Secured by Design condition and community safety informative.

- 4.2.3 Waste & Recycling Team – No objection.

- 4.2.4 Environmental Protection – No objection subject to three conditions relating to noise control from the new football ground and new plant and machinery and construction and associated delivery times.

- 4.2.5 Sport England – No objection subject to requested information relating to design and access statement of a previous related scheme, the rationale for the location of the proposed development, a drawing illustrating the existing winter and summer playing pitch layout of the site, existing layout of cricket, rugby and baseball pitches, explanation of why the dimensions of the proposed football pitches do not correspond to the required dimensions for any size football pitch in Sport England guidance.

- 4.2.6 Note the applicant has responded to Sport England's requested information satisfactorily. Sport England query why the proposed development is not moved more towards the north as they considered that this would cause less obstruction to the effective use of the playing field than in its current position. The proposed development is in the same location as the previously approved scheme P0847.13. The proposed development has been positioned to cause as little impact on local residents as possible. If the pitch is moved close to the north boundary the impact on the houses will increase and ball loss onto London road becomes an increasing issue with danger to traffic and pedestrians. A drawing illustrating options for future Summer and Winter sports has been submitted for example showing the existing layout of cricket and baseball pitches. The applicant has explained that the size of the

proposed football pitches are the standard FA (Football Association) size of 100m by 64m.

.2.7 Lead Local Flood Authority – No objection.

## 5 LOCAL REPRESENTATION

5.1 A total of 11 neighbouring properties were notified about the application and invited to comment. The application has been publicised by way of one or more site notices displayed in the vicinity of the application site. The application has also been publicised in the local press.

5.2 The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 4 of which, 2 objected, 1 supported and 1 commented

Petitions received: 0 objecting containing 0 signatories  
0 supporting containing 0 signatories

5.3 The following local groups/societies made representations:

N/A

5.4 The following [Councillor] [London Assembly Member] [MP] [MEP] made representations:

N/A

### Representations

5.5 The following issues were raised in representations that are material to the determination of the application, and they are addressed in substance in the next section of this report:

#### Objections

- Traffic jams arise due to queues of traffic in London Road and plans to restrict access to the car parks via gates will impede the flow of traffic further this will be very problematic at evenings and weekends
- Residents cannot get out of the access road and garage at the back of their properties when matches are on because of the queues.
- An additional space that could be used as an overflow area would be useful
- Excessive noise, social problems and security risks if the club house is rented out to private individuals
- Would people leave the grounds after 10 causing noise disturbance?
- Access road needs to be widened

- Many residents whose garages are at the back of their properties in London Road were not notified e.g at 365, 365A and b, 363 etc were not notified of the proposed development

#### Supporting comments

- Is this a self-funding project?
- A much needed new sporting facility
- A home for Romford Football Club without much disturbance to the area

#### **Non-material representations**

- 5.6 The following issues were raised in representations, but they are not material to the determination of the application:

N/A

#### **Procedural issues**

- 5.7 The following procedural issues were raised in representations, and are addressed below:

N/A

### **6 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

#### 6.2 Principle of Development

- 6.2.1 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In appropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

#### *Appropriateness*

- 6.2.2 The construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Although there are exceptions to this, the current proposal does not fall entirely within the exception categories. The proposal is not appropriate development in the Green Belt because while it represents provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments, it would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, although it would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The 5 purposes of including land within the Green Belt are listed in paragraph 134 of the NPPF, the first 3 purposes are most relevant to this proposal. The proposal would not result in the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

would not lead to neighbouring towns merging into one another; would not result in large scale encroachment into the countryside.

#### *Openness*

- 6.2.3 In terms of impact on openness the proposed club house with terracing and the stand would be sited near the east and south boundaries of the proposed synthetic football pitch, 148m and 93m respectively away from the nearest school building in a relatively open and exposed area of the playing field. Despite their relatively small footprint in comparison to the size of the playing field and their relatively low lying height (the club house measures 6.88m high the stand measures 5.11m high comparable to the nearest school buildings, due to their overall mass, bulk and scale, it is considered that they would adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt in terms of their visual impact.
- 6.2.4 However, the need for this long waited community facility can be sited as the very special circumstances advanced by the Applicant that outweighs any harm to the Green Belt.

#### *Very Special Circumstances*

- 6.2.5 The Romford Football Club is a long established Club whose First Team plays at Step 4 of the Football Associations' National Pyramid. There are also 12 Youth Boys' Teams, one Youth Girls' Team and 2 Cerebral Palsy Teams. Currently the Club have no home ground and the 1<sup>st</sup> Team ground share with Thurrock. This arrangement, however, will cease at the end of the current 2017/18 season, as the Thurrock ground is the subject of a sale. There also have a College Academy Team that also plays outside the borough.
- 6.2.6 Romford FC and Havering Council have been looking for a suitable area of land for the club to build a community facility for over 20 years. The site at Westlands Playing Field has been identified by the Club and the Council as the most suitable site to meet the Club's needs. The Playing Field which is owned by the London Borough of Havering have agreed to the Club taking a long term lease on the area for the new ground. Furthermore the proposed development is a relatively small scale development in terms of football stadia. The applicant also confirms that in a worst case scenario, if the Club reached the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the FA cup, there could be the potential for a 1000 supporters as a one off game. This however has never happened in the clubs' 18 year existence. The highest attendance for Romford FC is 260 supporters.

#### *Accordance with National and Local Policy*

- 6.2.7 The provision of additional and improved sports and recreational facilities within the Borough is in accordance with the general principles of national and local policy. From a strategic perspective, the London Plan states supports development that increases or enhances the provision of sports and recreation facilities.

- 6.2.8 Policy DC18 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Plan DPD encourages the retention and enhancement of all public open space and recreation, sports and leisure facilities that are in private and public ownership. Priority will be given to other recreation/leisure uses such as allotments or sports pitches where there is an identified need for such uses.
- 6.2.9 Policy DC20 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Plan DPD encourages a varied range of accessible leisure and recreation facilities throughout the borough. The policy also promotes the dual use of education sports and recreation facilities by the public to make the best use of additional sports facilities and the proposal complies with this policy.
- 6.2.10 Policy DC45 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Plan DPD further acknowledges the appropriateness of outdoor recreational facilities within the Green Belt. The Policy also requires that care be taken to ensure the use would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would introduce a new club house and terracing stand. Care should therefore be taken within Green Belt land to avoid inappropriate development and as such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

### 6.3 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Green Belt

- 6.3.1 The existing playing fields are located within a mixed use area with sports, educational and residential uses surrounding the site. However, the area is predominantly open and serves an important Green Belt function. The residential properties in the wider area comprise of two and three storey buildings, the school has single to four storey buildings and the playing fields itself has a double height pavilion building with related detached toilet block and store buildings.
- 6.3.2 The applicant states that the proposed facilities are essential and required in connection with the use of the proposed football pitch by Romford Football Club. Although this would replace in part existing sports pitches on Westlands Playing Fields, the proposed use for D2 outdoor sports purposes seek to improve on the existing facilities and would be in keeping with the existing outdoor uses including football, rugby, cricket, rounders and athletics. The majority of the proposed site would be taken up by the proposed football pitch which is comparable in size with the minimum required league pitches of 100m by 64m. Drawing SGD/RFC/03 shows options for future Summer and Winter sports surrounding the proposed football pitch within Westlands Playing Fields which includes several football pitches a running track and a cricket pitch.
- 6.3.3 The proposed buildings would be sited deeper within the site towards the centre of the open fields away from nearby buildings and would not be screened by any existing boundary landscaping. It is however proposed to create new perimeter fencing with hedging around the pitch and buildings. The proposed screening would consist of steel fencing and hedging, in order

to reduce the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and to provide some natural screening of the use. This in itself however constitutes development and could be judged as further encroachment into the Green Belt.

- 6.3.4 In respect of impact on the Green Belt, the proposed club house building measures 6.88m in height and covers 534sq.m in footprint. The terracing stand would measure 5.11m in height with a footprint of 223sq.m. The applicant states that these structures are required by the Football Association ground grading criteria and the facilities have been based around the minimum ground grading requirements. Any club that seeks promotion to a league or division in a higher level must have a ground that fulfils certain criteria. The criteria are based on various standards laid out within specific sections that are required to be met. Some of these that are relevant in terms of planning considerations include capacity, boundary of ground, car parking, pitch perimeter barrier, playing area, technical area, floodlighting, entrances, lighting, spectator accommodation, press seating, terracing, toilets, ground refreshment facilities, dressing room facilities - players and match officials.
- 6.3.5 With regards to using the existing replacement pavilion building, the applicant states that the facilities offered by this building could not be used given that the changing rooms would not meet the required standards for the club.
- 6.3.6 Given the strict ground grading rules Staff are of the opinion that the facilities are essential to the use as proposed. In addition, it is not considered that the existing pavilion building could be used for the purpose as required by the club.
- 6.3.7 In respect of impact on the Green Belt therefore, although the proposed Clubhouse building with terracing would be equivalent to one and a half storeys in height, that would be set in large open grounds, it would not, look out of character or scale within such a sports facility. Similarly the terracing stand, although set further within the open site, is an essential facility to such an use and could be appropriately screened by landscaping on the perimeter. The proposed development, although adding additional floor space, is not considered to result in an over-intense use leading to overdevelopment of the site above that normally associated with football clubs of this size and status.
- 6.3.8 However, cumulative impact of the scale of the buildings, the introduction of floodlights, new access, and fencing and netting within currently undeveloped Green Belt would materially upon its openness. This would be compounded by the retention of the pavilion adjoining the site. Notwithstanding that, a case of very special circumstances has been advanced to justify any harm to the Green belt.

#### 6.4 Design / Impact on Street / Garden Scene

- 6.4.1 It is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the street scene in London Road, as the buildings would be located towards the centre of the open fields away from nearby buildings. In addition, the impact of

the pitch and buildings would be partly mitigated by new steel fencing with hedging on their perimeter, which would provide some screening.

6.4.2 The design and finishing of the buildings would be acceptable subject to the use of high quality external finishes. Details of materials can be secured via condition which would help to ensure that they are sympathetic to their context. The applicant has agreed to have all facing brickwork finished with anti-graffiti material. Similarly the type and size of hard and soft landscaping proposed along the perimeter fencing could be secured via a condition.

## 6.5 Impact on Amenity

6.5.1 The club house building would be set approximately 130m from the nearest residential properties facing London Road towards the north east. On the basis of these distances and given the siting of the buildings, it is considered that physical impact of the single storey buildings upon neighbours' light and outlook would accord with Policy DC61 objectives. Furthermore in terms of overlooking and invasion of privacy there would be no greater impact on the amenities of the nearest properties than currently exists.

6.5.2 The major issue when considering the issue of amenity is the degree to which the existing pattern of use would change and whether the effect of this would be acceptable under Policy DC61. This includes consideration of matters such as the intensification of the use, the effect of additional car parking and movements to and from the site.

6.5.3 The ground is to be enclosed by a close boarded perimeter fence which will have some effect in reducing noise from the facility. Given the proximity of the busy railway line, the heavily trafficked London Road and the existing site use for sports, the establishment of the football ground is not considered to be a cause of significant increase in noise level at the site. There will be some noise generated by the use of the ground during major matches, but given the current use of the site, including pitches close to the boundaries, and the enclosure of the new pitch, the noise level is not considered to be an issue to cause concern.

6.5.4 The proposed lounge / bar area is likely to intensify activity at the site, including social activities. The existing facilities at the site already have an impact upon the amenity of the surrounding area. In particular, neighbour representations cite disturbance caused by social activities and patrons leaving the clubhouse late at night. Issues relating to later evening use and disturbance need to be seen within the context of existing social use of the fields. Whilst the lounge / bar area is to be used by different community groups, this would not in itself necessarily lead to any greater use of the clubhouse for social use, therefore there would not be a significant material change in levels of use or activity. Furthermore, conditions could be imposed to restrict its use so that it would remain incidental to the main use as a clubhouse. Also provided that conditions are imposed restricting hours of opening and amplified music, it is suggested that it would be difficult to



oppose an additional lounge / bar solely that it would cause more intensive occupation of the site.

- 6.5.5 Perhaps the most significant change during these periods of use would be the additional parking and activity to and from the site. However, this would be overspill parking which could be restricted by condition. It is relevant to note that, in the case of the nearest properties at 371a and 371 London Road, the garden/amenity areas of these properties are set at a distance of approximately 125m from the proposed pavilion building and, in the case of no. 371a there is a walled/fenced access between the car parking area and the proposed car parking. Its rear garden is set further away and, taking account of the level of vehicular activity already associated with this part of the application site, staff consider that any additional noise and disturbance created during daytime/early evening periods would not be so severe as to justify refusal on amenity grounds.
- 6.5.7 The remaining amenity issue concerns the impact of the floodlighting on nearby residents during later evening hours. It is proposed to floodlight the pitch with LED lights mounted on six 15 metre columns. The height of the columns is the optimum to provide the required lighting level for safe play, while limiting the spillage to surrounding area. Lower columns require the lights to angled up to reach the centre of the pitch and result in greater spillage.
- 6.5.8 The pitch floodlighting design prepared by Halliday lighting shows the spillage of tightly controlled and all residential properties are well outside the 5 lux contour. As the applicant notes in the submitted Design & Access Statement the design is well within the recommended limits of the Institute of Lighting Engineers as detailed in their Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Furthermore the proposed hours of use of the pitch would be restricted in the evenings, the hours of use would be Saturday July to May 13:30 to 17:00m, Tuesdays August to May 18:00 to 21:45, Wednesday 13:00 to 16:00 college students, Thursday July to May 19:00 to 21:00 and at all other times the facility would be used for community use or private hire. .
- 6.5.9 It is considered that the proposals would not result in unacceptable conditions in terms of privacy, outlook, noise, loss of light or light overspill and complies with Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.
- 6.6 Highway and Parking Matters
- 6.6.1 There are no alterations proposed to the existing access from London Road to the existing open parking area. A new access will be formed from the existing car park. The new road will be 5m wide with the addition of a 34m wide pedestrian path on the north side. They will be gated and fenced on each side with palisade fencing, to match he existing site fencing, to restrict unauthorised access when the Club's ground is not in use. At the entrance there will be close boarded gates to match the perimeter fence around the new ground.

- 6.6.2 Entry into the site will further be improved through the provision of an additional car park and the access road that will allow for the additional traffic expected during peak periods. The primary site access arrangement would remain unaltered and will continue to allow service and emergency vehicles to access the site via the northern access junction. The management of the gate at the access into the new car park could be controlled by way of condition to secure further details.
- 6.6.3 Delivery and refuse needs would have to be incorporated and extended to the new development and a condition is recommended to ensure appropriate steps would be taken to address arrangements on refuse collection days. This is recommended by way of a refuse collection condition.
- 6.6.4 The new access will lead to additional parking with 22 car parking spaces of which two will be sized and designed for disabled users and one coach parking space. There are 80 car parking spaces and two coach parking spaces in the existing car park. This is principally used by the School during the day and is proposed to be used in the evenings and weekends for users of the new facilities. In addition the School use the macadam court south of the existing car park, which can accommodate a further 100 cars. To the south of this court is a further macadam court, where overspill parking for an additional 120 cars can be provided.
- 6.6.5 The proposals would therefore provide for a total car parking capacity of 322 spaces. Policy DC33 requires that at least 1 space per 6 seats be provided for D2 assembly and leisure uses. For outdoor recreation the assessment should be based on the total number of players, including substitutes, referees etc, and an allowance for paying spectators. Where clubhouse facilities are provided, additional parking provision at a licensed premises standard will be required.
- 6.6.6 For the previously approved planning application proposal (ref: P0847.13), the Applicant confirmed that for a First Team match there would be approximately 34 players, 8 support staff, 3 officials and 12 committee members. The Club's average attendance is 100 spectators per match.
- 6.6.7 (The applicant also confirms that in a worst case scenario, if the Club reached the 1st round of the FA cup, there could be the potential for a 1000 supporters as a one off game. This however has never happened in the club's 18 year existence. The highest attendance for Romford FC is 260 supporters. For the level at which Romford FC play, the facility would need a safety certificate for 3500 supporters, although this figure is never likely to be reached. Should a situation arise where the club needed a large capacity then the Council, emergency services, and the FA would advise the club if it is safe to put the fixture on based on the crowd. If for example, Romford FC was drawn at home to a side whose average crowd is 4000, it is unlikely the club would be allowed to host the game, so Romford FC would have to hire the nearest ground that could hold and segregate supporters safely. Romford FC would probably hire Dagenham and Redbridge, or possibly Orient. AFC

Hornchurch recently hosted a league game and Sky Sports at Bridge Avenue.)

6.6.8 On average assuming the use would attract an average of 157 persons per game and based on 1 space per 6 seats, this would mean that at least 26 car parking spaces should be provided. It is therefore considered that the 100 existing / proposed car parking spaces and 2 coach / bus bays, as well as the existing 220 spaces available for overspill car parking would be more than sufficient to accommodate the likely car parking demand.

6.6.9 It is acknowledged that, during school hours, the existing car parking areas are heavily used by staff of the adjacent St. Edward's School. The existing pavilion is mainly used by pupils of St. Edwards School during school days, and it is proposed to continue this relationship with Romford FC. Other schools using the pavilion would arrive at the site by coach, for which there are parking facilities. During the weekend and during match days, when the Club is likely to attract most general usage, the overspill car park areas would be available for visitors' cars. The proposed use of the existing tennis court for overspill car parking on match days would further supplement car parking.

6.6.10 The Club have indicated a wish to increase the car parking facilities to match the potential maximum demand that would be generated by the proposed use. It is considered that the net increase of player membership and other community groups introduced at the site could be managed and additional parking proposed would be able to accommodate the additional traffic. Furthermore, it should be noted that larger matches would take place on evenings and over weekends out of school hours, which would avoid a conflict with school parking. Rather, the aim of the extended car park is to improve upon their existing cramped parking situation, whilst providing additional spaces to ensure that higher demands can be catered for.

6.6.11 Cycle racks will be located within the compound formed by the perimeter fence, for the safe storage of cycles. It is recommended that cycle parking be provided on site in line with the standard requirement of 1 space per 20 staff and 1 space per 20 peak period visitors.

6.6.12 It is considered by Officers that the proposals would be consistent with Policies DC32, DC33, DC34, DC35 and DC36 subject to the recommended conditions.

## 6.7 Flood Risk

6.7.1 Flood risk takes account of both the probability and the consequences of flooding.

6.7.2 The application site is within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding in any year. However, the Flood Risk Assessment identifies a number possible sources of flooding which shall be assessed in turn: fluvial, open drainage ditches, groundwater,

surface water, existing water mains, sewers and from reservoirs, canals, and other artificial sources.

- 6.7.3 There are no potential sources of fluvial flooding.
- 6.7.4 There is an open ditch located approximately 130m from the eastern boundary of the development site. During extreme rainfall event there is a potential risk of the ditch overtopping its banks and causing a degree of overland flooding. However, the catchment area of the ditch is small and the natural topography of the land would result in any such localised flooding flowing in a south easterly directly toward the lowest lying land. On this basis the site would not be affected and the risk to development from this potential source is therefore considered to be low and acceptable.
- 6.7.5 The proposal will not involve excessive deep excavation works and consequently the risk to the development from this potential flood source is considered to be low and acceptable.
- 6.7.6 Figure 4 of the Flood Risk Assessment shows an *“Environment Agency Map dated July 2018 Showing the Extent of Flooding from Surface Water”* this map reveals that the risk to development from any such potential flood source is considered to be low and acceptable.
- 6.7.7 In terms of risk from proposed sewers, there are new drainage works involved with the new development. The network will be designed to the required standard which will minimise the risk of flooding, therefore it is considered that the risk to the development from any such potential flood source is considered to be low and acceptable.
- 6.7.8 Turning to flood mitigation measures, with the area of the new development site lying within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) there is no requirement to elevate the floor level of the new club house building above tradition construction methods (normally 150mm above adjacent ground level).
- 6.7.9 As the development is not at risk from fluvial flooding, it is considered that there will be no requirement to incorporate any flood resilient construction measures within the design of the development.
- 6.7.10 Finished external ground levels should be designed to direct waters away from the building to ensure there is no localised risk of flooding arising from overland surface water flooding during an extreme rainfall event.
- 6.7.11 All approach roads to the development are shown to lie within Flood Zone 1 and consequently safe access to and egress from the development should still be achievable should a flood situation arise. There should therefore be no requirements for evacuation of building occupants resulting from the development.

6.7.12 It is not considered that any other specific mitigation works would be required in respect of flood risk to the development.

6.7.13 The Lead Local Flood Authority was consulted on the proposal due to the application being a major development and the application site being greater than 1 hectare (1.25 hectares) and raised no objection to the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and indicative drainage layout.

#### **Financial and Other Mitigation**

6.8 The proposal would attract the following section 106 contributions to mitigate the impact of the development:

N/A

6.8.1 The proposal would attract the following Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy contributions to mitigate the impact of the development:

- £13,906.8 Mayoral CIL towards Crossrail (this may be less or more depending on indexation)

#### **6.9 Conclusions**

6.10 All other relevant policies and considerations have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.