

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Decision Report**

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Regulatory Committee
<b>Date:</b>	29 September 2010
<b>Title:</b>	Proposed Multi Use Games Area with associated fencing and pedestrian path at Hiltingbury Junior School, Hiltingbury Road, Chandlers Ford (Application No: S/10/676480) (Site Ref: EAE 008)
<b>Reference:</b>	2084
<b>Report From:</b>	Head of Planning and Development

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Planning consent is required to construct a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with associated fencing and pedestrian footpath within the existing grounds of Hiltingbury Junior School, off Hiltingbury Road, Chandlers Ford, near Eastleigh. Objections have been received from Sport England and from local residents.
- 1.2. Issues: Accordance with development plan, consultees comments and representations from local residents.
- 1.3. Recommendation: The application be approved as it accords with the relevant the development plan - Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) Adopted May 2006 (see Integral Appendix C) policies: 59.BE (Promoting Good Design), 145.OS (Protection of Existing Open Space) and 149.OS (Playing Fields) in that the proposed development takes full and proper account of the context of the site in relation to its surroundings, makes efficient use of land and is ancillary to the school.

## 2. Site and proposal

- 2.1. The junior school is approximately 1.705 hectares of which its existing school playing fields are approximately 0.51 hectares. It is situated at the end of a cul-de-sac off Hiltingbury Road in a primarily residential area. The junior school shares a campus with the infant school, all the schools' buildings being east of the playing field. The western, southern and eastern boundaries of the playing field have mature trees with bushes/hedging and behind this

vegetation belt is housing. However, the treed belt is relatively dense and the housing (the nearest to the proposed MUGA is about 45 metres to the south) is well screened from the playing field.

- 2.2. Approximately 120 metres away to the north-west of the school playing field is the large recreation ground off Hiltngbury Road which has sets of tennis courts and a community building. None of these facilities are part of the junior/infant school's campus.
- 2.3. Proposal - The proposed MUGA with associated footpath is to be provided on part of the existing school playing field, approximately 10 metres from the junior school's hard play area since currently the existing playing field pitches become frequently waterlogged, muddy and unusable. The MUGA is to be of synthetic turf on a base to allow water to percolate through. The pitch will be 33 metres long by 18.5 metres wide, and will have a four metre high weldmesh panel fence surrounding it. In order to preserve the synthetic turf surface it is important the pitch remains free of mud, grass and other debris. This necessitates the provision of a hard surfaced access path from the hard play area to the MUGA. A gazebo which was previously included in the submitted planning application, has since been taken out of the proposal. At the southern end of the MUGA, additional tree planting is proposed to form another "outdoor classroom". The MUGA will not have any floodlighting and therefore can only be used during normal daylight hours. The pitch surface will be suitable for access by spectators in wheelchairs and be fully accessible to ambulant disabled persons. Emergency and maintenance vehicles will be able to access the site from the existing double gates on the western boundary.
- 2.4. Information from the Junior School in support of the proposed development is as follows:

**The Curriculum:**

- (i) an all weather surface will allow games lessons to happen even when the weather makes the field unusable;
- (ii) the playground is too small to allow three games lessons with 33 children in each class at a time;
- (iii) a greater range of sports could be taught, for example basketball boards and hoops could be mounted permanently to allow better teaching in this sport; currently we aim to offer a possible three hours of physical activity, including clubs, to all children as this wasn't achieved last year (2009), mainly due to the above reasons;

**Lunchtime and Playtime:**

- (i) the pitch could be used at these times as playground space is severely restricted especially when the field is not in use;

- (ii) we have a programme of lunchtime sport activities that currently is restricted because of lack of space. The pitch would allow us to develop this option in much greater depth and with many more children;
- (iii) children could use the pitch for sporting activities during playtime thereby helping to cut down on poor behaviour as many children become frustrated that they cannot play certain games due to the lack of space;

### **The Community**

- (i) the pitch would be available for use by the infant school who share the same site;
- (ii) the pitch would be open to our school community and available for use – currently, there are 15 letters of commitment from local sports groups with links to the school who would wish to use such a facility if it were available.
- (iii) we have been discussing youth problems with our Police Liaison Officer and how we can try to minimise vandalism and antisocial behaviour as regards to the new pitch.

### **3. Development plan**

- 3.1. Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) Adopted May 2006 shows the site as land within the Urban Edge for Eastleigh, Chandlers Ford etc. The relevant policies are 59.BE (Promoting Good Design), 145.OS (Protection of Existing Open Space) and 149.OS (Playing Fields).

### **4. Consultations**

- 4.1. **Eastleigh Borough Council** have no objection subject to conditions
- 4.2. **Sport England** - a final view is awaited pending further information.
- 4.3. The **Highway Authority** has no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.4. **The local Member, Councillor Davidovitz** has commented that he is aware of concern by local residents but has advised that “the Borough Council also proposes to provide a MUGA nearby” - *(it is assumed this refers to the Hiltingbury Recreation Ground off Hiltingbury Road)* – and considers “duplication could be avoided and the objectives of the community and school can be met without impacting on the amenity of local residents”. The local Member further considers, “it might be advisable to delay the determination of the planning application to allow for this to be explored further.”
- 4.5. **The Chandlers Ford Parish Council** have been informed and their views are awaited.

## 5. Representations

5.1. An objection petition with 28 signatures and 10 letters of objection/concern, including one from a Member of Parliament on behalf of his constituents, have been received.

5.2. The grounds of objection/concern are:

- (i) proposed location of the site is too close to boundaries of residential properties and should be sited further away;
- (ii) security/safety of local residents;
- (iii) increased noise/invasion of privacy;
- (iv) probability of anti-social behaviour/crime;
- (v) use at weekends/evenings/holidays, who by and what times?;
- (vi) visual impact if floodlights are installed;
- (vii) if first site is success, how long before others are introduced?

## 6. Members' Site Visit

6.1. Eleven Members of the Regulatory Committee undertook a site visit on Monday 13 September 2010 to view the site.

6.2. It was confirmed that the proposed application for a MUGA would consist of a synthetic turf over an open texture sub-base and would be 33 metres x 18.5 metres. The pitch would be used primarily by the school and groups associated with the school and out of school hours by children of Junior school age. No floodlighting was planned for the site, meaning that the pitch would only be used during daylight hours.

6.3. Members were shown the proposed location of the pitch, where poles marked out the boundaries of the pitch itself. Currently, the area consisted of grass with a small football pitch, which would remain, laying parallel to the synthetic pitch. The area was fenced and bordered by trees, which shielded the area from nearby houses and it was confirmed that no trees would be removed to accommodate the new pitch.

6.4. Although a gazebo had initially been requested as part of the proposal, it was confirmed that this would be withdrawn to discourage teenagers from using it out of school hours.

6.5. Members requested that details of the security of the site at night, further details on drainage (for rain water) and hours of operation to be included in the final report.

### **Additional information requested by Members.**

6.6. Site security: The school have advised that the whole infant and junior site is surrounded by sturdy fencing in line with OFSTED expectations. The gates to the site are all locked by about 6.00pm except for the main gates which may remain open for meetings and cleaning – these are locked after those events are finished. A security firm were once employed by the school but the firm was found to be rather lacking in its duties and their use was discontinued. There is security lighting around both the junior and infant school buildings but no lighting on the playing field; no lighting is proposed for the MUGA.

6.7. Drainage of rain water from the new pitch:

"The pitch layers are constructed directly on top of the existing surface, with no excavation into the existing playing fields. By constructing the pitch in this manner, there is no change to the existing drainage pathway and no external drainage connection is required.

All of the pitch construction layers are porous and water is drained from the pitch by the simple action of percolation. As water hits the surface of the pitch it travels down through the synthetic turf construction, where it meets the uppermost fill layer. The uppermost fill layer is called Type 1 X and is a crushed rock material with very little fine material content. Type 1 X allows water to pass through it at an acceptable rate.

As water meets the Type 1 X it either, percolates vertically through the remaining pitch layers into the existing topsoil beneath or is discharged horizontally out of the side of this layer. There is capacity within the air voids of the Type 1 X for some storm water storage if it is needed. The pitch drainage has been checked for a 1 in 100 year storm."

6.8. Hours of operation: A planning condition has been added to include the times of operation of the MUGA after the normal school day. However, these times have been agreed with the school:- "Use of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) after the normal school day will be limited to the available light. However, during the British Summer Time use of the MUGA shall finish by 21:00 hours, Monday to Friday, shall only be used on Saturdays between 09:00 and 18:30 hours, and on Sundays between 10:00 and 16:00 hours." These times will allow the School to carry out its social functions.

## **7. Commentary**

7.1. The school and its playing fields are established developments within the defined urban area for Chandlers Ford where it would be normal for additional school facilities to be located. The proposed development also is considered to accord with the development plan. However, it is noted that an objection petition with 28 signatures and 10 letters of objection/concerns has been received from local residents.

7.2. Regarding the objections, and taking them in order as per paragraph 5.2 above:

- (i) *site is too close to boundaries of residential properties and should be sited further away* – the existing school playing fields are separated from local housing by a belt of mature trees with bushes and hedging and which are located on the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the playing field. The distance from the proposed MUGA to the nearest house is, as scaled off the application plan, 45 metres. This distance with the in-between tree belt is considered to be acceptable for a sports pitch of this nature. The particular location has been chosen as it will be close to the junior school's existing hard play area and can easily be reached from that play area without having to traverse the rest of the school playing field which are required for other activities;
- (ii) *security/safety of local residents* – it is not clear what the objectors are referring to here as the proposed MUGA will have four-metre high fencing surrounding the pitch and the prime use will be by the school during the normal school day;
- (iii) *increased noise/invasion of privacy* – it is acknowledged that with the addition of a new sports pitch, there may be some increase in noise when in use, but no more than may be the case in the summer months when children are out on the playing field. This is reasonable and does not equate to an “invasion of privacy”;
- (iv) *probability of anti-social behaviour/crime* – it is understandable that residents are concerned about this issue but the development in itself will not increase this. This is a matter to which residents should address the school management;
- (v) *use at weekends/evenings/holidays, who by and when?* – at the time of preparing this report, although the school has indicated that there are after-school clubs and activities likely to use the new facility, these will be limited to those clubs that have a direct link with the school. However, such detailed information is awaited from them.
- (vi) *visual impact if floodlights are installed* – floodlighting is not proposed;
- (vii) *if first site is success, how long before others are introduced?* – this is not material to the current application.

7.3. If Sport England have submitted views these will be reported orally at Committee.

7.4. The comments from the local Member are noted. However, the Borough Council has not decided on a specific area to position their proposed MUGA

on the Hiltingbury Recreation Ground. This is another issue not material to the application, but it is advised it would not be beneficial to the school's use.

7.5. In summary, the proposed development accords with the relevant Policies in the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) Adopted May 2006, it is within an existing school site and will be well screened from residential development by existing trees/bushes and hedging. In addition, there is a definite need by the school to improve its teaching curriculum. The new development would enhance the childrens' activity by providing an all weather pitch on synthetic turf since the existing playing pitches are subject to becoming waterlogged, thereby making them unusable at certain times of the year. It is further considered that a shared MUGA on a site away from the school campus would not benefit the school as they would not be able to use it properly in terms of managing it and there would be a time factor for teachers and pupils getting to and from the site. Taking into account all considerations, there is no substantive reason to withhold planning permission.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1. That planning permission for the construction of a Multi-Use Games Area with associated fencing and pedestrian path at Hiltingbury County Junior School, Hiltingbury Road, Chandlers Ford, near Eastleigh, (Application No. S/10/67648), be granted subject to the planning conditions in Integral Appendix B.

### Links to the Corporate Strategy

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	yes
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes

### Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

Proposed Multi Use Games Area with associated fencing and, pedestrian path at Hiltingbury Junior School, Hiltingbury Road, Chandlers Ford-- (Application No: S/10/676480) (Site Ref: EAE 008)

Planning and Development, Environment Department, Hampshire County Council, Elizabeth II Court West, The Castle. Winchester.

## CONDITIONS

### Time Limit

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date on which this planning permission was granted.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### Hours of Work

2. No work relating to the construction of the development approved, including works of preparation prior to operations, the delivery of construction materials, skips or machinery, nor the removal of waste materials, shall take place before 0800 hours or after 1800 hours Monday to Friday inclusive, before 0800 hours or after 1600 hours on Saturday and not at all on Sunday or recognised public holidays, unless otherwise agreed beforehand in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties.

### Protection of trees from damage

3. Before any works are commenced on site, measures shall be taken to protect from damage, by the erection of sturdy metal fencing such as "Heras" type or similar, those trees on the site which are to be retained. Such measures shall be maintained for the duration of the building contract works.

Reason: In the interest of preserving the natural features of the site.

### Highways

4. Before the development commences, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CTMP shall include details of the temporary haul road to be provided in the site, parking and turning provision to be made on site and a programme for construction.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety

5. Measures shall be taken to prevent mud and spoil from vehicles leaving the site during the construction works being deposited on the public highway. No vehicle shall leave the site unless its wheels have been cleaned sufficiently to prevent mud being carried on to the public highway. In the event that any mud or spoil is deposited on the highway, it shall be cleaned-off on each day of working.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

### **Multi-Use Games Area**

6. Before the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is brought into use, the associated four metre high fencing, together with the hard surfaced footpath link, shall have been provided and made available for use. No floodlighting in connection with the use of the MUGA is to be installed on the site.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory development and, in the case of the floodlighting, in the interest of amenity of occupiers of nearby housing.

### **Use of Multi-Use Games Area after School Day**

7. Use of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) after the normal school day will be limited to the available light. However, during the British Summer Time use of the MUGA shall finish by 21:00 hours, Monday to Friday, shall only be used on Saturdays between 09:00 and 18:30 hours, and on Sundays between 10:00 and 16:00 hours.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of local residents whose properties are near the school boundary.

*Annexe to Reason for Conditions  
(as required by Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning  
(General Procedure) Order 1995 – as amended)*

**EASTLEIGH BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW (2001-2011) ADOPTED MAY 2006**

**Policy 59.BE (Promoting Good Design)**

Development proposals which are in accordance with the other policies in this plan will be permitted provided they meet (*inter-alia*) the following criteria:

- i) they take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality or neighbourhood and are appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, both in themselves and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views, natural features and trees worthy of retention;
- ii) they make the most efficient use of the land;
- iii) development should use native plants in landscape schemes to benefit biodiversity, and development adjacent to or within the urban edge, must not have an adverse impact on the setting of the settlement;
- iv) they are an appropriate use for the locality and avoid unduly interfering, disturbing or conflicting with adjoining or nearby uses, especially in terms of noise, fumes, dust, overlooking, loss of daylight, loss of outlook, vibration, or from floodlighting or security lighting;
- v) new development should reduce the potential for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour by the use of appropriate design.

**Policy 145.OS (Protection of Existing Open Space)**

The Borough Council will refuse any proposals that would result in the loss of land currently used for open space or outdoor children's play, sports pitches, whether in public or private ownership unless:

- i) the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site and does not adversely affect the quality and quantity of pitches and their use;  
or
- ii) the proposed development only affects land which is incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch; or
- iii) the open space that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by open space of an equivalent or better quality and quantity in a suitable location, prior to the commencement of the development; or
- iv) the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field; or

- v) in the case of school playing fields, the land is surplus to educational requirements and there is no local shortage of open space in the locality, for which the land could reasonably be used.

**Policy 149.OS (Playing Fields)**

The Borough Council will support proposals to develop new facilities and the enhancement of existing playing field facilities, including the provision of all weather pitches, subject to their scale, siting and design conforming with policies for the protection of the environment.