

**Southern Planning Committee 29 November 2017**

**UPDATE TO AGENDA**

**APPLICATION No**

16/6197C

**UPDATE PREPARED**

24 November 2017

**Removal of Condition 1 and Variation of Condition 3 on Approved 14/5464C - Variation of conditions 1 & 2 on application 13/1064C- Construction of pre-fabricated pre-school and associated external works For Mrs Helen Scott, Holmes Chapel Primary School**

**Error Correction**

An agreed call-in request as set out below was not referred to in the Committee Report. This was an error.

**REASON FOR REPORT**

The application has been called in to Committee by the Ward Councillor, Cllr Les Gilbert for the following reasons:

*It appears that Sport England will object to the temporary permission being made permanent which is expected to result in a recommendation for refusal under delegated powers. There is significant community benefit in this facility as nursery provision in the area is limited and is vitally important to working parents. Consideration also needs to be given to whether the temporary structure is suitable for a permanent permission. The Committee is best placed to weigh up the public interest and the planning balance.*

**Comments received from Cllr Les Gilbert**

*I believe that item 9 is going to Committee pursuant to my call-in but there is no mention of this in the Planning Officer's report.*

*I do not propose to attend as there is little I can add to the recommendation which I support. Please ask the Committee to excuse my attendance.*

*I believe that the Planning Officer is right to focus on the wider community benefit whilst at the same time having due regard to the impact on the amenities of residents in the vicinity.*

*Holmes Chapel is in the process of growing from a population of about 6,000 to an estimated 7,500 as a result of permissions already granted. This will inevitably increase the demand for child care facilities and Happy Days tell me*

*that they already have a waiting list for after school clubs. Their facilities are vital to support working parents.*

*I should be grateful if these Ward Member views could be brought to the attention of the Committee.*

### **Further Information Received from Sport England**

Sport England has submitted further information as regards its objection to this application. Sport England state that the proposed development is contrary to the planning policy exception of Policy E3 of its Planning Policy Statement – A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England.

*- The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of, or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing area of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facility on the site.*

Sport England considers that the applicants have “not demonstrated compliance with either any of our planning policy exceptions or the exceptions set out in the NPPF paragraph 74”.

In addition Sport England point out that other locations have been identified where the development can be relocated off the playing field and therefore consider, “it is difficult to conceive how a robust case can be made which satisfies the NPPF and your adopted local plan and adopted playing pitch strategy”.

In response to a request to clarify the position as regards the provision of the current pitch being in accordance with the minimum sizes out by the 2017/18 FA Handbook, Sport England have quoted the following extent of a consultation response it has received from the FA ;

*“The standard code of rules does set out some flexibility for leagues but this has been part of a transitional period as we try and align a whole lot of complicated sizes that have existed across the country. Most of our leagues now operate to the recommended size which is the maximum size in our guidance. For planning purposes, since 2012 our policy in dealing with planning applications as part of the MOU process has always been to work to our recommended sizes and these have been widely circulated to LA Development Control teams across the country. See attached our latest guidance for youth football.*

*There is sometimes the opportunity to be flexible i.e. around fixed objects such as trees or overhanging branches but this would only be offered if the applicant had exhausted all options in a site feasibility study and this had been agreed by SE at the pre planning stage. In this case whilst accepting that it is an application for a fixed period of time, I would support SE stance in*

*objecting to the application because there are other options available on the site to have located the building”*

### **Further Information received from the Applicant**

In response to the issues raised by Sport England the following points have been raised;

- 1. The current pitch adjacent to the nursery is and had been used for a number of years for 7 v 7 league matches by the Holmes Chapel Hurricanes (i.e. Under 8s and Under 9s).*
- 2. There have not been any concerns raised by the League.*

Sport England have previously suggested that the Nursery could be relocated to south eastern corner of the playing field which would enable a larger football pitch to be provided in accordance with the recommended size. The applicant states that;

*“this would not be a suitable location on which to re-site the nursery for the following reasons:*

- a. Distance from school – OFSTED are happy with the current distance from the school but would be concerned if the nursery building was located further away from the school buildings.*
- b. The smooth transition from pre-school to school would be diminished if Happy Days were located to the far end of the school site.*
- c. The potential increased traffic concentration to Westway due to the building being located to the other end of Jubilee Walk.*
- d. Drainage – this area of the field floods regularly and would be difficult to build on.*
- e. This area has started to be developed as a wildlife habitat area.”*

### **OFFICER COMMENT**

It is not considered that the latest comments received from Sport England and the applicant result in any change to the initial officer recommendation. In particular, for operational reasons the Nursery occupies the most practical and optimal site within the school grounds notwithstanding the suggested alternative locations by Sport England.

Sport England maintains its objection on the basis that should the Nursery continue to occupy its present location, a football pitch of the recommended size cannot be provided. Nevertheless, it is the case that the current pitch meets the FA minimum size (7 v7), and has been used without any issues being raised by the local League since 2013.

Although the proposal will result the loss of small part of the playing field contrary to the Development Plan, and to which Sport England have objected, it is considered on balance that this is clearly outweighed by the significant benefits of maintaining these child care facilities on this site given the confirmed importance in meeting local childcare needs.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**No change to the recommendation**