

Questions asked and answered during a webinar on a new playing pitch for Manor Park, Newbury held on 24 June 2022

Questions submitted by Contributor (A) on 10/6/2022

1. Firstly, planning consent ref: 20/00604/FULEXT for Coley Farm includes installing a play area and planting a wild flower meadow in the open space as well as removing hedgerows and trees to the north and west of the site - the pitch proposal makes no reference about where it's to be located in relation to the play area and wild flower meadow (and the national oil pipeline that runs from east to west across the open space).

Answer:

Yes this is noted thank you. The playground can be accommodated in the location allocated to it in the planning details, but the playground will need to be oriented differently and moved back to accommodate the pitch, as shown on the indicative plans. We are fully aware of the oil pipeline, the indicative position of which is on the plan. A full consultation will take place with the Oil Pipeline Agency, if this project progresses.

2. No detail included to reflect construction costs, who's paying for it, ongoing maintenance costs to be met by whom? Who will be opening / closing the facilities and at what cost? The Council are cash strapped given the increase in council tax this April - is this an appropriate way to spend money when there are far more pressing issues to address?

Answer:

We have indicative construction costs which we consider to be accurate, but bear in mind this is a consultation exercise. We are at the pre-application stage, so no detailed design and costing has been undertaken. The proposal will not progress further until we have ascertained public and user group opinion. If the proposal is to progress, then a full worked up engineering design and construction solution will have to be produced especially as this proposal will need to go through the full planning process, if we take it to the next stage. The council will meet the costs from existing capital and revenue budgets.

As regards operational matters, the toilets will be opened and closed by our grounds maintenance contractor only when the pitch is in use. Pitch maintenance and marking will be added to the existing grounds maintenance contract and the annual cost for this and related tasks are currently around £4000 per annum.



3. There is no compelling or logical reason to use this site other than it's owned by WBC.

Answer:

The compelling reason for considering this proposal is that we have a deficit of playing pitches for football as highlighted in the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Manor Park offers a potential option for an additional pitch.

In recent months we have conducted a review of supply and demand for pitches. This has been with the Berks and Bucks Football Association who have liaised directly with multiple football clubs within West Berkshire.

The results show that there is an excess of demand in relation to the supply of pitches and that local teams are having to travel outside of West Berkshire to access pitches. In 2018 the number of teams travelling to play outside of West Berkshire was 22 teams, and in 2022 the number had risen to 59.

The findings show that for grass pitches, we have demand requiring in the region of 10 adult pitches, 11 youth pitches and 9 mini soccer pitches.

West Berkshire Council is looking at multiple venues to increase the provision of both artificial pitches and grass pitches not just at Manor Park, this includes school sites. The details are included in the PPS.

It is important to note that a grass pitch only has limited weekly capacity for play before it becomes unusable due to deterioration of quality, so the grass pitch would only be used for 6 hours of adult play per week during the season, and demand for this will predominantly be for day time use at the weekend with each weekend day having around 3 hours use.

It is a site that is capable of accommodating the requirement that is accessible.

4. The site is impacted by a significant gradient and is waterlogged all year round due to the impermeable clay. Pitch drainage is referenced but where will the excess water be directed to bearing in mind the drainage also required for the Coley Farm development? That's a lot of water to redirect - you'll recall that there was flooding in this area in 2007 and the winter of 2013-14 - this has not been forgotten by the residents whose homes were impacted by it, and the anxiety remains when there is heavy rainfall forecast.

Answer:

No detailed work has been undertaken on flooding or drainage. That would be the next stages of work, but would undoubtedly include sustainable sports pitch drainage. The initial feasibility scope did not include for a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), but this will form part of a full application if the site moves forward.

Clearly there is no change to the permeability of the proposed pitch to what is existing. The proposed additional parking will be of a permeable surface so as to avoid water run off issues.

Our intention is to retain trees on the site which act in mitigating waterlogging at this site. If the drainage of the pitch leads to potential inundation of the attenuation structure then this may be prohibitive for site development. Part of an engineering solution would seek to determine this, and establish mitigation measure if required.

5. Both the open space and the proposed parking area are currently havens for wildlife - birds, insects, mice, foxes, deer to name but a few and any change of use would have an impact on their habitat. The local residents enjoy the peace and quiet the open space provides them whether that's for walking dogs, young children running around and playing or just sitting on the benches enjoying the view and reflecting on their thoughts.

Answer:

The Countryside Service has a role to consider and balance the needs of people and wildlife on open space and parks across the district. If we considered that there were likely to be significant impacts, then this site would not have been proposed as a possible location for a pitch.

However a Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken and has identified the habitats present and a further study will be undertaken once construction details are known. Any impact on species will be mitigated through a biodiversity plan. Ultimately there will be a mitigation strategy, and a 10% enhancement may be required by planning policy.

As regards public access. A pitch at this location does not prevent local people accessing the land, or using it informally for dog walking and recreation, the site could also be improved to have permanent dog walking routes and trim trails etc. and other related provision.

The construction of the toilet block and car park extension have a minimal impact on the land overall, and impacts on wildlife will be negligible.

6. Creation of parking for 30 vehicles - how does this align with the Council's green travel aspirations (the nearest bus stop is 10 mins walk and railway station is 30 mins), and the climate emergency declared in 2019? This will create additional pollution and vehicle movements - on top of the Coley Farm and land south of Waller Drive developments - approx. 140 dwellings in total.

Answer:

A transport, access and travel plan is likely to be prepared and submitted with a planning application to address these point if the project proceeds to this stage. It should be noted that car park journeys are not excessive for access to pitches, with teams only visiting the site once a week, arriving shortly before their

matches or training starts and then leaving thereafter, so there is only a short period of traffic flow.

7. If the car park overflows and vehicles park nearby in Stoney Lane / Waller Drive this will create danger for other road users and pedestrians. It is noted that overflow vehicles are often parked in Henwick Lane when the facilities are in use which makes it more difficult to negotiate when driving a vehicle and impacts on the visibility of pedestrians.

Answer:

A transport, access and travel plan would likely need to be prepared and submitted with any planning application to address these points, this will include a safety assessment.

The Henwick example given is not a relevant comparison, as Henwick Worthy is a sports facility with multiple pitches for football, hockey and rugby all taking place at the same time during evenings and weekend mornings. The use of Henwick is at a far greater scale than that proposed for Manor Park. This proposal is for one football pitch and additional vehicles movements will be minimal. Nevertheless a transport, access and travel plan will identify any issues.

8. I presume the additional parking spaces will be gated off when the facilities are not in use (to align with the approach operated at Henwick Worthy) to prevent inappropriate use and upset to neighbouring properties?

Answer:

Security of the site and facilities will need to be addressed in a planning application. Gating off the car park here is not currently part of the plans.

9. There are already issues with the aggressive manner and speed in which some motorists display when using Stoney Lane and Waller Drive which neither WBC nor TVP are addressing as no one has been killed, yet - more vehicle movements would add to this.

Answer:

Security of the site and facilities will need to be addressed in a planning application. We will however look at whether additional speed monitoring can be implemented at this location.

10. Where will the toilets be located? Water pressure is already poor in this area - as referenced by Thames Water's comments in the planning applications for Coley Farm and the land south of Waller Drive. Many local residents will also advise you of this issue which impacts them on a regular basis.

Answer:

This proposal is for a small toilet block located close to the parking area, providing male, female and disabled facilities. It will only be operated during the time the pitch is used. The draw on water services is minimal especially as we plan to consider low water usage options, i.e. low-flush or low-flow toilets.

11. Use of proposed facilities - 6 hours per week at weekends (Sept - May) - no indication of timings, use on bank holidays that fall on a Sunday e.g. Easter. If the usage increases this will impact on the properties in close proximity - no thought seems have been given to the fact that there are larger properties surrounding the area with young families living in them - it's very thoughtless creating additional, unwanted noise during children's bedtimes.

Answer:

Yes it may be that sports use will take place on bank holiday weekends during this period. Use is likely to be from 10am till 1pm. Noise impact will be something which will be considered as part of the consultation, and will be a factor in any decision making. No evening use is planned as part of this proposal, as this would lead to overuse of the pitches, something which is counterproductive.

12. Noise will be created not just by the additional vehicle movements but when the matches are in progress as well. Will the pitch be fenced off outside of the proposed 6 hours per week to prevent use / creating more unwanted noise?

Answer:

No, the intention is for this space to be retained as an open space for the community to use when football is not taking place. There will be no fencing of any kind. The plans are in line with other open spaces and parks where the public have access to the pitch space for the rest of the time out with sports use. Some residents may welcome the addition of the pitch for children's use, and potentially kids will use the pitch for games. Generally speaking ad hoc use is not significant at other locations, and is not expected to be a factor here.

13. What measures are the council proposing to shield and soundproof the nearby properties from this additional, unwanted noise in what is currently a quiet area? If WBC took the time to talk to the local residents, they would ascertain that many of them appreciate how quiet the area is - and want it to stay that way!

Answer:

We appreciate that some members of the community prefer the open space to be retained as a quiet space, but our open spaces are subject to other demands and sports use is one of these. It's a difficult balance to strike but this is one pitch for a limited window of use, both in hours of use and within the year. As we have seen during and after lockdown, our open spaces resources are being used more frequently for uses over and beyond dog walking. This is a positive development, and one we need to encourage and accommodate.

14. How will they compensate the nearby property owners as this will have a negative effect on the value of their properties as well as the additional noise impacting on their lives when the facility is in use? It's far from ideal for a key worker who works shifts having to endure 6 hours of playing noise as well as the vehicle movement before and after matches when they're trying to sleep!

Answer:

The pitch will only be in use for 6 hours per week and only at weekends. There is no evidence that the playing pitch, with 6 hours of use, will have a negative impact on property values. The site will not have floodlights or football stands etc. The pitch will not be in use during hours that people will normally sleep. Teams will be required to accord with the Football Association's Respect Rules in relation to behaviour and language and this can be a condition of the bookings.

15. ASB - there is already some ASB occurring in the car park and in the open space itself - cars gathering playing loud music and dropping litter, casual drinking and drug taking in the open space. The toilets and additional facilities are likely to encourage ASB as the site is relatively well shielded from Waller Drive due to the trees and hedges on the south side. What will be done to prevent and manage that when police resources are already very stretched?

Answer:

Having consulted with the local police for this area, there are no reported issues at this site. If antisocial behaviour becomes an issue, then it must be reported on the police non-emergency number.

Both the police and the council's experience elsewhere is that increased positive, use of the open spaces by the public is likely to lead to a reduction in antisocial behaviour. Anti-social behaviour is normally associated with locations which are quiet and underused, precisely because the participants know or assume they can get away with it.

16. Litter - how will this be managed? There is already a litter problem - takeaway wrappers dropped from cars using the car park as well as bottles, cans, food and occasional drug paraphernalia etc. within the open space.

Answer:

Experience at sports pitches elsewhere suggests that litter is not a significant issue. This site is not known by the police as being a location for drug taking.

Questions submitted by Contributor (B) on 19/6/2022

17. What alternate sites have been considered?

a. Why were they not out for consultation alongside this proposal?

Answer:

We are looking at multiple sites to increase pitches, some examples include Holybrook Linear Park, and Goosecroft playing fields (Purley on Thames). Full details can be seen in the PPS. Manor Park is close to a high-density population area, and therefore a site worth considering.

18. Have the council looked at other options such as school playing fields?

Answer:

The PPS examined all local supply, and their recommendation takes into account schools provision. The council will be looking at how school fields can play a role, however it needs to be understood that public use will create further wear and tear on any grass pitch, which could impact on schools own Physical Education (PE) programmes.

Many schools are now independent organisations, and have their own agendas for their sites.

19. Why can't Faraday Rd be used as the proposed site? Especially as at the recent WBC Executive meeting it was announced that this site was no longer needed for housing, as has been the plan to supposedly make the LRIE development economically viable.

Answer:

The council's vision for the London Road Industrial Estate and the old football pitch is to be a beacon for the development of commercial development to attract the new industries of the 21st century. We have in mind areas such as life sciences, technology and high end manufacturing generating high quality, well paid employment. This will build on the success of both the Thames Valley Corridor for tech users and the nearby area to the South of Oxford on the A34 which has been the major growth point for the life sciences sector. The proximity to Newbury Town Centre and the recently improved public transport links highlight the uniqueness of the site location from a carbon reduction perspective. This combined with the quality of the workforce, much of which currently travel to employment out of the district, makes this an outstanding opportunity to grow the economic base of West Berkshire. This far outweighs any thought of reverting to football use, which will be catered for with a superb new sports hub at Monks Lane, as well as further new pitches to come in line with our PPS.

20. What analysis/assessment has been conducted with regards to increase in traffic to and from the site?

Answer:

A transport, access and travel plan will need to be prepared and submitted with a planning application to address these points, this will include a safety assessment.

21. What will be done to improve active travel links to the site? Currently there aren't any.

Answer:

The project is at pre-application stage. This work has not been undertaken in detail, but our Environment Team consider that as this proposal is required to meet a need, and considering the limited periods the facility is anticipated to be in use, then new journeys and transport impacts are not considered to be significant. Nevertheless plans will include provision for cycling and further opportunities will be identified if this progresses to the planning stage.

22. What has been assessed as the Biodiversity loss at the site?

a. What will be done to protect the Biodiversity?

Answer:

This question was answered previously, but in summary a Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken and has identified the habitats present, and a further study will be undertaken once construction details are known. Any impact on species will be mitigated through a biodiversity plan.

23. With the building of the Coley Farm development, and this site a natural part of the local drainage solution for surface run off; What analysis/assessment has been done on the cumulative flood impact on houses off of Stoney Lane and Waller Drive?

Answer:

No detailed work has been undertaken on flooding or drainage. That would be the next stages of work but would undoubtedly include sustainable sports pitch drainage. The initial feasibility scope did not include for a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), but it will form part of a full application if the site moves forward.

24. How will the Biodiversity be protected?

Answer:

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken and has identified the habitats present and a further study will be undertaken once construction details are known.

25. Have the Police been invited to consult based off of any perceived increase in ASB with additional buildings and car parking at the site?

Answer:

The police were informed of this proposal and asked about the incidence of anti-social behaviour (ASB). ASB has not been reported at this site, and the police

have stated that as with any other public open space or park, the more these areas are used for a positive purpose the less likely ASB is to arise.

26. Why has a segment of this site already been given up for a play area for the Coley Farm development rather than being on the Coley Farm development itself?

Answer:

It was considered at the planning stage for the Coley Farm Development that the playground provision was best accommodated off site where there is additional useable open space. Enhancement of this open space for sports purposes will also benefit the residents of the new development.

27. Will there be 'scope creep'? This site has been stated as being used for 6 hrs per week, and access for others maintained. Can this be assured?

Answer:

No. Grass pitches do not accommodate more than this level of use otherwise they deteriorate beyond the point where general maintenance can keep them in a usable condition. This is primarily why we need more playing pitches. This should provide the reassurance sought.

It is possible that whilst the site is developed to the size of an adult pitch, the usage area may be marked out for junior size pitches or mini pitches which are smaller. The final markings for a pitch will be considered in light of the results of the recent surveys with clubs.

28. Why has the consultation not been promoted adequately at every entrance to the site? And why no advertised provision for those without access to the Internet?

Answer:

The Consultation was advertised on site, but some notices were removed. The Consultation was however advertised widely on social media, and as a consequence was shared by local interest groups.

Communications included this sentence – “If you're not able to view the consultation online, please call Jim Sweeting, Sports & Leisure manager (01635) 519251 to request a hard copy version.”

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/39790/Consultation-on-Manor-Park-playing-pitch-proposal-goes-live>

29. How will the site be levelled? And how much will this cost? And how can you guarantee no damage to the Biodiversity?

Answer:

It will essentially be 'levelled' by importation of material which would then be graded by machinery. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be required which will manage the development on site so as to reduce impact on habitats. The role is to balance the needs of wildlife and people. As regards to trees, we will request a tree survey if the project progresses to the planning stage.

30. When and where will this open, undeveloped green space be replaced?

Answer:

The open space at Manor Park will not be lost. The space here will be open to public access, enhanced by a sports pitch which can be used by the local community for recreational purposes. This is true also of our other open spaces with sports pitches.

Questions submitted by Contributor (C) on 20/6/2022

31. What other Sites were considered and on what criteria was this site chosen. Not visible to the Public and is this stage of Project Planning even visible to our elected representatives?

Answer:

We are looking at multiple sites to increase pitches, some examples include Holybrook Linear Park, and Goosecroft playing fields (Purley on Thames). Manor Park is close to a high-density population area and therefore a site worth considering. Ward members are aware of this project.

32. Consultation launch with no prior notification to the Parish Councils involved?

Answer:

This is a preliminary consultation to ascertain the views of the general public. If this project progresses to the next stage and a worked up planning permission, then the views of the parishes will be sought formally.

33. Lack of a coherent Green Infrastructure Framework for Clayhill Ward.

Answer:

This is noted thank you. Officers will raise this with Planning Service colleagues.

34. We do NOT have an abundance of accessible Green Spaces, and are to lose the one in LRIE to Development.

Answer:

The space here will continue to be open to public access. This access will be enhanced by a sports pitch which can be used by the local community for recreational purposes. This is true also of our other open spaces with sports pitches.

35. It is impossible to find out the amount of Green Space per Resident for Clayhill Ward, as WBC GIS system does not give the necessary information.

Answer:

Noted thank you. If this information is available, then we will look at providing this on our website.

36. The Biodiversity value of the land as it is and the linkage to the Ancient Woodlands nearby has not been mentioned in the Consultation Document

Answer:

The impact on the trees at this site, and potential wildlife corridors/links to the ancient woodland nearby, is not considered to be significant. Ultimately there will be a mitigation strategy and a minimum of 10% enhancement is likely to be required by planning policy.

37. No Costs have been included in the Consultation. The paperwork that was in the Forward Plan (now removed) indicated £1/2 million.

Answer:

The full costs will be identified when the design has been finalised but we are not at this stage yet.

38. Current Leisure Usage has not been indicated and there is no data to indicate the proposal will be a better use of the space.

Answer:

There is clear demand for increased pitches and playing sport and being active contributes to improving health and wellbeing, so this is a good use of space

39. There is no visual schematic of the size and proportion of intended pitch and buildings. A visualisation should include the proposed Children's Play Area at the North End which has already been agreed as part of the Coley Farm development.

Answer:

The playground can be accommodated in the location allocated to it in the planning details, but the playground will need to be oriented differently and moved back to accommodate the pitch as shown on the indicative plans.

40. What Sports England Category of Pitch is it trying to meet? Many of the Categories require much more infrastructure than is described in the Consultation Documents

Answer:

Sport England Type 5. The proposal is for a grass pitch, and not a stadia facility under the FA's ground grading system

41. Not part of an integrated Sports & Active Leisure Delivery Plan. In response to my question at the last Exec meeting Cllr Woollaston indicated it would make sense to have one delivery plan (and costings) for the Playing Pitch Strategy & the (Active) Leisure Strategy.

Answer:

This is part of the PSS which is the primary document. Closely linked and not a single strategy. The two strategies are closely linked but they are not a single strategy.

42. Leisure Strategy indicates low desire for Football.

Answer:

The Leisure strategy consulted across the community, whilst the recent stage E review of the PPS has consulted directly with local clubs and the Governing Body of sports, and this provides a more detailed and accurate picture of demand for specific sports like football.

43. The Consultation Survey is of poor quality. It does not seem to know whether it is a Questionnaire or an Opinion Survey, and the tool used is very basic and does not allow you to receive an automated copy of your response or save and come back to it.

Answer:

The purpose of the survey was clearly stated on the webpage.

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/manorparkpitch>

The survey tool is not basic; it allows for advanced branching, sentiment analysis, mapping etc. A responder can go back and edit their response as long as they've not submitted it and they're using the same browser, this is explained on the exercise's webpage.

The software does not have the function of being able to provide a copy of your response. However, word versions of the survey and supporting information are made available on request, which can be completed and emailed/posted in. Telephone responses are also accepted.

In order to be able to have this functionality, the system would have to capture email addresses, or the person would need to enter it and then it would have to be stored in the system. Under GDPR, we try to limit the amount of personal identifiable data that is retained/stored, and no longer ask for an email address where it can be avoided.

44. Heritage assets on the site. I believe the site is part of the War-time Pipe-line Network.

Answer:

Thank you for pointing this out. This is being raised with our Heritage Team. Note previous answer regarding the oil pipeline, and the intention to work with them should this project progress.

45. There is no indication of when and how the results will be considered and how our elected representative on Newbury Town Council will be involved in the next stages.

Answer:

All feedback will be taken into consideration and a recommendation report will be considered by the Culture and Leisure Programme Board who will make a recommendation to elected Members later in the year. Elected members of the Parish and Town Council's currently have the opportunity to comment on this consultation, or to make their views known directly to officers.

46. Noise, air quality impact, traffic, parking and built environment impacts on nearby residents and wildlife that occupies the site

Answer:

A transport, access and travel plan will need to be prepared and submitted with a planning application to address these points if the project proceeds to this stage.

It should be noted that car park journeys are not considered to be excessive. The pitch can only sustain sport for 6 hours per week so the period of use is very low.

47. Part of the Flood Mitigation scheme.

Answer:

No detailed work has been undertaken on flooding or drainage. That would be the next stages of work, but would undoubtedly include sustainable sports pitch drainage. The initial feasibility scope did not include for a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), but it should form part of a full application if the site moves forward.

48. Potentially Contaminated by dead cows who were buried on the site.

Answer:

We have raised this with colleagues in public protection. They have confirmed this is not contaminated land.

END