

**Application Number: 21/11170** Full Planning Permission

**Site:** RINGWOOD TOWN FOOTBALL AND SOCIAL CLUB, LONG LANE, RINGWOOD BH24 3BX

**Development:** Replacement of the sub-standard pavilion/changing facilities on the site; Construction of a new FTP (Football Turf Pitch) with LED floodlighting; Improved car parking/infrastructure; Change of use of arable to sports use to include improvements to an existing arable field to allow future sports use; appropriate landscaping enhancements.

**Applicant:** Ringwood Town Council

**Agent:** PCH Associates Ltd

**Target Date:** 12/11/2021

**Case Officer:** Richard Natt

**Extension Date:** 14/12/2021

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## 1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The following matters are considered to be the main issues to be taken into account when determining this application.

The main issues in this application are:

- Whether the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant development plan policies;
- The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
- Whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Other Material Considerations

- Principle/Policy/Strategic Site Allocation
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Whether the development proposals would have an acceptable impact on the character and special qualities of the New Forest National Park, having regard to the development's design quality and its landscape and visual impact
- Transportation & Highway issues
- Neighbour amenity
- Ecology
- Impact on flooding/drainage

- 1.2 This matter is before Committee as the application is considered a departure from policy.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site lies to the south of Moortown Lane and south of the built up area up area of Ringwood. The site occupies the land to the east of Long Lane and to the west of Green Lane. The site lies within the designated Green Belt. The application site is in the ownership of Ringwood Town Council.
- 2.2 The site extends to approximately 5.4 hectares in size and is slightly irregular in shape and comprises two rectangular areas which are offset from one another. This includes Ringwood Town Football Club to the south west and the other parcel to the north east comprises existing grassed football pitches and a paddock currently accommodating livestock (agricultural use). All parcels of land are physically attached and connected to each other.
- 2.3 Within the grounds of Ringwood Town Football Club, there is the main 11 aside playing pitch with floodlighting (6 floodlights in total rising to around 15 metres in height), dug outs and stand. Alongside this, there is a single storey pavilion building used for changing rooms and clubroom, together with a small training pitch. A separate rifle range building lies north of the pavilion building. A gravel surfaced car park lies to the west of the playing pitch. Access is currently gained from Long Lane.
- 2.4 To the north east of Ringwood Town Football Club pitch and within the application site, there are existing grassed playing pitches, which include a 11 aside (adult) and a 9 aside (junior) pitch, together with two mini football pitches. There are no buildings or structures within this part of the site and the land is laid to grass.
- 2.5 Existing hedgerows rising to around 2 metres in height bound the curtilage of Ringwood Town Football club and the existing playing pitches and paddock to the north east. In relation to the areas surrounding the site, directly to the north of Ringwood Town Football Club are allotments, which do not form part of the application site. To the north of the existing grassed playing pitches, are further grassed football pitches and they are accessible from the application site. It is noted that the existing car parking facilities at Ringwood Town Football Club are used by people using these grassed pitches. To the south of the site are fields. There are a few scattered dwellings to the north east and east of the site along Moortown Lane and Green Lane, the closest residential property being 'Four Views' which has its rear garden bounding the north east of the application site.

## **3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 This planning application relates to a proposal to replace the existing pavilion/changing facilities on the site, the construction of a new Football Turf Pitch (FTP pitch) with LED floodlighting, re-configured car parking area, the change of use of agricultural land to playing pitches and landscaping enhancements. For the purposes of this report, the proposed artificial pitch has been referred to as FTP.
- 3.2 The application has been submitted by Ringwood Town Council in partnership with AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust and Ringwood Town Football Club. New Forest District Council and Hampshire Football Association have also been involved in the proposals for the site. The overall proposal is to enhance the existing sporting facilities at the site and is aimed at providing a community based facility which will be managed by AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust.

- 3.3 In more detail, this planning application proposes the following works:
- An artificial (synthetic turf 3G) pitch with 6 floodlight (LED) masts rising to 15 metres in height.
  - Fencing around the perimeter of the artificial pitch rising to 4.5 metres in height with 500mm high retaining boards, constructed from Polyester PowderCoated Green fencing.
  - The construction of a new pavilion building (demolishment of the existing single storey pavilion building) to accommodate changing rooms, club room, store and office).
  - Change of use of land used for agricultural use to sports pitches.
  - Reconfiguration of car parking spaces to create a new surface car park comprising 85 new spaces (56 in tarmac and 29 on grasscrete) which includes 6 new DDA car parking spaces, 6 electric charging points and cycle stands.
- 3.4 The proposed FTP and floodlighting would be sited centrally on the site, on part of the land currently used as grassed playing pitches. The footprint of the FTP will result in the loss of grassed playing pitches including an adult 11 aside and 9 aside pitch. The two mini playing pitches will be re-orientated to an east-west direction in the remaining area of the playing field and as such, the FTP would not occupy all of the land currently used as playing pitches.
- 3.5 The FTP will be marked out with smaller sided pitches (9 x 9, 7 x 7 and 5 x 5) as well as a full-size adult pitch to ensure it can be used flexibility for a range of age and ability groups. It is proposed to use the FTP seven days a week, between the hours of 08:00 and 22:00. The FTP will be managed by AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust in which they will operate the site from an office within the proposed pavilion building.
- 3.6 In relation to the works proposed at Ringwood Town Football Club, the proposed pavilion building would replace the existing changing rooms and clubroom building. The new pavilion building would be sited immediately to the north east of the existing stadium pitch, and the existing changing room and clubroom would be demolished to make way for the reconfigured car parking area.
- 3.7 The proposed pavilion building would occupy a similar sized footprint compared to the existing building, although the level of internal floor space would increase by approximately 166 square metres, which is due to the first floor accommodation being provided. Other than a small office area being provided within the building to accommodate staff from AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust to manage the site, the internal rooms would be similar to the existing building ie. changing rooms, toilets, club room etc. It should also be noted that the pavilion building will be available for all users of the site, together with other wider community functions.
- 3.8 The proposed building would be just under 8 metres in height and designed with a simple pitch roof design constructed with a brick plinth and Marley Cedral Dark Grey cladding 'timber effect' under a tiled roof on the main section.
- 3.9 Other than the 1.8 metre-high fencing along the western boundary of the playing pitch, and the new car parking arrangements, it is not proposed to alter or make any changes to Ringwood Town FC playing pitch and the

existing stand, floodlighting and dugouts will remain. The existing access from Long Lane would remain with some a slight cut back of the existing hedgerow to improve visibility. Moreover, it is not proposed to make any changes to the Firing range building.

- 3.10 The proposal also seeks to change the use of the existing agricultural land to the north east to create additional grassed playing pitches. The extended area is considered to be of sufficient size such that a range of football pitch types could be accommodated including an 11 aside sized pitch or a range of smaller sided pitches.
- 3.11 How the proposals have been put forward for the site, how it will be managed/ used and long-term strategy
- 3.12 The proposal to develop the facilities and land at Long Lane into an enhanced sporting facility has been planned over the last few years. Although several key stakeholders have been involved in the process, the long-term vision for the site has been heavily led by AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust, Ringwood Town Council and Ringwood Town Football Club, together with Hampshire FA and NFDC. AFC Bournemouth's Community Sports Trust will have a base on site and ensure that these facilities are used by all ages and abilities of the local Community.
- 3.13 As stated above, AFC Bournemouth Community Sport Trust will manage and operate the site (on a long term lease from Ringwood Town Council), in which part of the pavilion building will be used as a base for Trust staff. AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust is the charitable 'arm' of AFC Bournemouth, and is currently active throughout Bournemouth, Poole and surrounding areas including the western part of the New Forest Area, delivering work across its four key objectives: *Education, Health, Participation, and Inclusion*. As part of their work, full time staff are employed delivering a variety of sessions a week, working in partnership with schools, organisations and business, coaching, teaching, and engaging with people across all age ranges.
- 3.14 It should also be noted that the FTP and associated grass pitches, will continue to be used by Ringwood Town Football Club including their youth teams for training. The facility (pitches and club house/community space) will also be used by other local teams, Schools, and organisations/community groups from Ringwood. The development proposed will enable Ringwood Town FC to expand the number of teams it operates and the range of football activities it promotes - making its offer to the people of Ringwood and surrounding areas more diverse and inclusive.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

Extension of existing car park to provide 33 additional spaces; fence (92552)  
Granted with conditions on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Relief from Condition 1 on planning permission 65533 (69528) Refused on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2000. Appeal dismissed.

Erect 6 x 15 metre high pylons supporting floodlights (65533) Granted with conditions on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1999

Change of use from agriculture to football pitches (49272) Granted with conditions on the 13th May 1992

Fix additional lights to new pylons to illuminate training areas (47024) Refused on the 10th April 1991

Clubhouse (RFR 12456/1) Granted with conditions on the 30th August 1968

Change of use from allotments to sports ground (RFR/12456) Granted with conditions on the 30th August 1968

## **5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

### **Site constraints/ designations**

Strategic Allocated Site (SS13 Land at Moortown Lane)  
Part of the site is located within Flood Zone 2 (area within the north eastern part of the site)  
Green Belt  
Outside settlement boundary

### **The Core Strategy (Saved policy)**

CS7: Open spaces, sport and recreation

### **Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document (Saved Policies)**

DM1: Heritage and Conservation  
DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity  
DM8: Protection of public open space, private playing fields and sports grounds and school playing fields  
DM25: Recreational uses in the countryside - including horse-keeping/riding

### **Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy**

Policy STR1: Achieving Sustainable Development  
Policy STR2: Protection of the countryside, Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the adjoining New Forest National Park  
Policy STR3: The Strategy for locating new development  
Policy STR8: Community services, infrastructure and facilities  
Policy ENV2: The South West Hampshire Green Belt  
Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness  
Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality  
Policy CCC1: Safe and Healthy Communities  
Policy CCC2: Safe and Sustainable Travel  
Strategic Site 13: Land at Moortown Lane, Ringwood

### **Relevant Advice**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework 2021**

Para 7 - sustainable development

Paras 92-93 - promoting healthy and safe communities.

Paras 98-99 - opportunities for sport/ open space recreation

#### Planning Practice Guidance on Noise 2014

Advises LPAs on the determination of applications where noise is an issue. Noise can override other planning concerns, but neither the Noise policy statement for England nor the National Planning Policy Framework (which reflects the Noise policy statement) expects noise to be considered in isolation, separately from the economic, social and other environmental dimensions of proposed development.

#### Noise Policy Statement for England 2010

The Noise Policy Statement for England sets out the long term vision of government noise policy, to promote good health and a good quality of life through the management of noise.

#### Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation - December 2015

It is government's ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where our children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

#### Sport England Advice - Playing Fields Policy and Guidance 2018

Sport England on this occasion are a non-statutory consultee but their response to a planning application affecting sports facilities should be considered material.

- " Objective to maximise opportunities for sport and physical activity for all
- " To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision
- " To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations

## **6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Ringwood Town Council: No comment as they are the applicant

## **7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS**

Cllr Darren Loose: Support. Being a resident, Councillor, business owner and volunteer of the football club I know how much this is needed for the future of the club. The local children will have first class facilities all year round thanks to the support of all the interested parties inc Ringwood Town Council and AFC Bournemouth Community Trust. This will be a benefit not just for now but for many years to come.

## **8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS**

Ecologist: No objection subject to conditions

Environmental Health (Pollution): No objection subject to condition

This department has no concerns regarding this application so long as noise and light from the site is suitably controlled. The information submitted shows management controls on noise and light spillage plans which indicate that controls on site are in line with what would be expected to prevent significant adverse impact

from this development. This includes a condition to restrict hours of use between the hours of 8am and 10pm Mondays to Sundays and that any lighting installed at the hereby approved development shall not exceed the maximum values of vertical illuminance on properties in accordance with Environmental Zone E2 .

Environment Agency: No objection subject to condition

We would not wish to see any ground raising on existing land below the 1 in 100 year flood level including 40% climate change (no ground raising on land below 18.49mAOD). Any landscaping or pitch levelling or drainage works should take account of this requirement. We advise that any new built development associated with this proposal (i.e. pavilion, rifle range, MUGA etc.) has a minimum finished floor level of 18.79mAOD (i.e. 300mm freeboard above the 1 in 100 year flood level including 40% climate change. It appears that this would be possible given the existing ground levels.

Sports England: No objection

Natural England: No comment to make

HCC Minerals: No objection subject to condition

Hampshire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority: No objection subject to condition

HCC Highways: Comment

Parking is a matter for NFDC to consider.

Detailed tracking and emergency access arrangement plans have been submitted to support the application. The Highway Authority's advice is that there are no fundamental concerns with the internal layout from a highway safety perspective.

The proposal will result in the increase in traffic generation. Long Lane is a narrow single lane in which it is difficult for two vehicles to pass. It is understood that the Planning officers cannot support the widening of the lane, and as such the Highway Authority would therefore like to see improvements/enhancements to the passing places along Long Lane, which can be secured via a Grampian condition. However, the Highway Authority would require that the applicant needs to be made aware of the requirement to carry out any works on the highway to the appropriate standard laid down by and under a licence agreement with the highway authority. The applicant will need to provide a plan showing the proposals to the existing passing places.

HCC Minerals: No objection subject to condition

Given that the proposals include redevelopment of existing facilities and minimal built form, the extent of mineral sterilisation on site is below the viable threshold for prior extraction. Therefore, we do not consider prior extraction to be suitable in this case. However, the site could still provide opportunities for suitable mineral material, such as digging footings, excavations, or landscaping work, that could be processed and ideally, used on this application site. We request a condition to be included in any permission to be delivered through submitted construction management plans, requiring a statement outlining a method for ensuring that such minerals that can be viably recovered during the development operations are so recovered and put to beneficial use

## 9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

### For: 158 letters of support

- The proposal will provide improved facilities that will inspire the current teams, attract new members and would be a significant benefit the local community.
- Existing facilities and buildings are in poor state of repair.
- Proposed facilities will allow all year-round use.
- The design sits well within the site and the new parking design improves access into the site, therefore improving safety off the narrow access road.

### Against: 3

- How does AFC Bournemouth FC Community intend to incorporate these new facilities for the use and encouragement of local youth and local players? There is a strong youth setup at Long Lane, and I can see this getting pushed aside by the AFCB Community setup as they will be sourcing the funding. Good idea in principle, but in practice could be a long-term difficulty.
- 15m tall floodlights will have the potential to cause considerable sky glow effects and light pollution when viewed from within the National Park, which is nearby to the east of the site. The submitted ecological report indicates that the site provides forage habitat and potentially a roost for bats. The floodlights have the potential to cause disturbance to bats and other night time animals and insects, so it is important to be certain that the hours of use will be restricted by an enforceable condition.
- We were promised that there would be no further development on this site, which is a sensitive area – farm land, agricultural land, Green Belt. Impact from light pollution and damage to local environment, noise pollution. Concerns regarding involvement of Bournemouth. Dorset has many of its own football grounds it could develop for use of its own club.
- Highway safety is a big concern. Long Lane is in essence a single width road with pull-ins. Furthermore, with the lack of visibility splays, of note when leaving the allotments and also at the junction with Moortown Lane this situation leads dangerous, unsighted manoeuvres. This is popular cycle route. Surely improvements to site visibility should be included as part of this scheme and improvements to widen the short section of Long Lane up to the junction. This is a collaborative scheme involving the Local Authority and Town Council.
- Parking is a concern. Will there be measures in place to prevent parking down Green Lane and Long Lane? Parking on the verges is bad for wildlife, an also makes access with farm machinery which many of the neighbours require on a regular basis.

### Observations/ representation: 2 letters

### One comment below from user of Allotments

- The boundary treatment between the site and allotments to the north. At present there is a hedgerow which is scrubby in places and includes a gap through. Is this informal access to be closed off or retained? With increased used of the facility and hours of use as a result of the improvements, could



improvements to the boundary with the allotments be made to improve security, such as incorporating open metal fencing with improved hedge planting.

One comment below from a land promoter/developer who has land interests immediately south of the above application site

- The prospect of optimising the development capacity of the allocation by locating the open space provision within the retained Green Belt south of Moortown Lane was the outcome of the local plan process and it is now enshrined within policy SS13 (Land at Moortown Lane, Ringwood, para ii) that land to the south of Moortown Lane is allocated for “supporting uses to enable allocated land north of Moortown Lane to deliver the minimum number of homes [at least 480] required” including “the provision of natural recreational greenspace and public open space (including outdoor sports facilities)”.
- In this respect the above application complies with policy. It represents ‘appropriate development in the Green Belt and is supported in principle.
- The main concern however is to ensure that the development of these recreation facilities does not prejudice or preclude the effective delivery of the additional open space and Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG) to be provided in accordance with Policy SS13. This is important, to maximise the potential and delivery of sites which have been removed from the Green Belt to meet local housing needs, at a time of a housing delivery shortfall.
- It is understood that land promoters (St Congar) have held consultation on proposals for c491 homes - indicating the ‘existing pitches’ south of Moortown Lane being retained. This is unlikely to provide for the additional need for open spaces and recreation facilities of all types that will be necessary to support that development. It is also unclear whether the land reserved for a new school, as part of SS13, will be delivered.
- The demands for further open space and recreation provision (on top of those already served by the Ringwood Town FC and Social Club site and as now proposed) need to be effectively planned for and delivered. Whatever the additional open space/ ANRG requirement for the SS13 residential development (which will need to be located south of Moortown Lane), this must be on land under Pennyfarthing Homes control.
- We are keen to ensure that any intervening development, including land shown on the above application, should not prejudice such comprehensive development of the land covered by SS13.
- The eastern part of the current application site (which abuts Green Lane), is shown on the plans, as “Existing field to be used for additional sports pitches. To be levelled and improved as necessary. ”Connectivity between different types of open spaces, accessibility and a strong landscape framework for the delivery of the strategic allocations are important elements of the Local Plan strategy. On that basis we ask the Council to recognise and ensure that any development in this application does not prejudice the delivery of wider strategic objectives for additional open space and ANRG.

## 10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

### Introduction

#### 10.1 The main issues in this application are:

- Whether the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant development plan policies;
- The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
- Whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

#### Other Material Considerations

- Principle/Policy/Strategic Site Allocation
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Whether the development proposals would have an acceptable impact on the character and special qualities of the New Forest National Park, having regard to the development's design quality and its landscape and visual impact.
- Transportation & Highway Issues
- Neighbour Amenity
- Ecology
- Impact on flooding/drainage

#### 10.2 Whether the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant development plan policies

10.2.1 Guidance in relation to development within the Green Belt is contained with Chapter 13 of the NPPF, the advice within which is broadly echoed within Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan. The NPPF and Policy ENV2 attaches great importance to Green Belts and advises that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

10.2.2 The site lies within the Green Belt where national policy states the construction of new buildings, save for a few exceptions, should be regarded as inappropriate. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

10.2.3 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate, but lists exceptions, which include provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

10.2.4 Paragraph 150 states that certain other forms of development (engineering operations) are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In addition, guidance states that material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds) are not inappropriate development.

- 10.2.5 For the purposes of paragraphs 149 and 150, it is considered that the proposed pavilion building, fencing, and lighting columns would constitute a 'building operation' within the Green Belt. The laying of the artificial pitch and vehicle parking area would constitute an 'engineering operation'. The proposed change of use from agricultural to playing pitches is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 10.2.6 It is considered that both the proposed pavilion building, artificial pitch with its associated fencing and floodlighting and engineering operations comprise facilities for outdoor sports/recreation and therefore looking at the provisions of paragraphs 149 and 150 of the NPPF the main consideration in determining whether the proposed development does not represent inappropriate development is whether it preserves the openness of the Green Belt, and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 10.2.7 Given that the proposed car parking is of similar size to the existing car parking arrangements and the layout of a artificial pitch with the fencing being a weld mesh fencing and therefore would not be a solid structure, it is considered that this part of the proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
- 10.2.8 It is also considered that the proposed pavilion building would be of similar scale and size compared to the existing building, and together with its sloping roof and its siting, would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 10.2.9 However, given their height, prominence and the context of the landscape, which is flat and open, it is considered that the proposed floodlighting would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Whilst it is accepted that the proposed floodlighting are slender structures, the existing floodlighting at the football ground can be observed from a long-range distance and the new floodlighting will only add to their presence.
- 10.2.10 As such, it is considered that the proposed development which entails the floodlighting masts would amount to inappropriate development in the Green belt. This conflicts with the aim of the Green Belt Policy to keep land permanently open and will result in some urbanising development that will clearly be at odds with this purpose. Therefore very special circumstances (VSCs) need to be demonstrated before the development can be approved. The applicants has put forward VSCs in which they state will outweigh the harm of the proposal by reason of its inappropriateness and any other harm. This is assessed in greater detail below.
- 10.3 What would the effect of the development be on the openness of the Green Belt and on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt?
- 10.3.1 The NPPF sets out the 5 main purposes of the Green Belt. In this case, it is considered that the proposal will conflict with one of the purposes, which seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The proposed development would undoubtedly change the appearance of the land with new floodlights, and when considering their height, number, and siting, this would amount impact on the openness of the Green Belt. It is recognised that the proposed floodlighting masts are slender in design, and as such, the extent of harm is low to moderate.

#### 10.4 Would there be any other non-Green Belt harm?

##### 10.4.1 The principle of the development

- 10.4.2 The site is located outside the settlement boundary where restrictive policies to protect the countryside apply. As set out in the local plan, the land comprising Ringwood Town FC main playing pitch, the firing range and car parking is identified as '*existing public open space*'. The part of the site comprising the proposed FTP and the area of land that is proposed to change from agriculture to playing pitches is located within land identified in the local plan as '*proposed public open space*'.
- 10.4.3 The site also lies within the boundary of Strategic Site 13 '*Land at Moortown Lane Ringwood*', which is allocated for a residential led development. To the north of Moortown Lane, the policy states that the residential development is to be provided, whereas the land in the Green Belt to the south of Moortown Lane is allocated for the provision of natural recreational greenspace and public open space (including outdoor sports facilities), to enable allocated land north of Moortown Lane to deliver the minimum number of homes required.
- 10.4.4 There are also further relevant local plan policies. Saved Core Strategy Policy CS7 and Local Plan Part 2 Policies DM7, DM8 and DM 25 state that improvements made to enhance recreation, play and sports facilities within communities will be supported.
- 10.4.5 Newly adopted Policy STR8 Community services, infrastructure and facilities is also applicable and highlights the need to ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure and services to meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses in the Plan Area. The policy states that the Council will support proposals for the provision of education, health, social and other community services that are located to be accessible to all sectors of the community.
- 10.4.6 Paragraphs 92-93 of the NPPF is relevant and encourages development which enables and support healthy lifestyles through sports facilities, a reduction in crime and disorder, and promoting social interaction. Para 98 encourages opportunities for sport and access to a high-quality network of facilities for sport and physical activity, and an ability to accommodate the needs of a community. The NPPF goes onto state that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless; the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- 10.4.7 In assessing the proposal against policy, and in relation to the replacement of the pavilion and improved car parking facilities, on the basis that this does not affect the quality or quantity of playing pitches and would provide wider improvements to the facilities and to help support their functions, this element of the proposal is acceptable and accords with local and national policy (subject to other planning assessments on character, Green Belt, Noise etc).
- 10.4.8 In relation to the proposal to change the use of the land from agriculture to playing pitches and the FTP, the local plan allocates the land for proposed

public open space. It is noted that the local plan does not specifically define playing pitches as public open space and it must be recognised that the use of the FTP, whilst available for the public, will be through a booking system. In terms of the grassed playing pitches, these will also be available for matches but must be booked. Importantly, if games are not being played, the land is accessible for the public to walk and enjoy, play football or use for other recreational activities. This will be no different to how any other recreation ground functions.

- 10.4.9 Accordingly, whilst the land will be available for the public to use as public open space, it must be recognised that the FTP can only be used through a booking system and the rest of the grassed areas are not available for the public to use if matches are being played, which is likely to be at weekends. Again, in relation to the grassed playing pitches, this will function in the same way to other recreational grounds where there are playing pitches and the public can use when no matches are being played. As such, the proposal is not strictly policy compliant with the local plan policy which allocates the land for public open space.
- 10.4.10 Against that, the local plan, including the policy criteria set out in the site allocation SS13, does recognise and support proposals that improve and enhance recreation, play and sports facilities within communities. This is echoed in the NPPF which encourages opportunities for sport and access to high quality network of facilities for sport and physical activity, and an ability to accommodate the needs of a community.
- 10.4.11 A further consideration is that, in the New Forest area, and as set out in the local plan, backed up by the comments from the Football Foundation, there is a clear deficit of artificial pitches in Ringwood and the New Forest. All weather pitches are a facility that provides significant benefits given that they are available to the community, can be used for different size games (11, 7 or 5 aside), available throughout the day and evening, every day of the week, and during all weather conditions. The proposal will certainly contribute to this need.
- 10.4.12 As such, and in assessing the policy position, including the deficit in Ringwood of football pitches, the proposed FTP and playing pitches will provide overriding benefits to sporting activity for the area, including all ranges of ages and abilities, teaching, education and coaching initiatives. Moreover, and in response to the concerns raised that the management of the site through AFC Bournemouth Sports Trust could prohibit the playing pitches being used by the local community and local clubs, a planning condition can be imposed for the submission of a Community Use Scheme. This will set out the details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-Ringwood Town Football Club and Bournemouth Community Trust users/non-members and the development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement. Through the imposition of this condition, this will secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility.
- 10.4.13 It is also considered that the proposal does not prejudice the objectives of the strategic site at Moortown Lane, which clearly highlight the land to the south of Moortown Lane to provide playing pitches to support the new housing development. As stated above, the grassed playing pitches will be available for the public to walk and use for recreational purposes and the delivery of Strategic Site development will actually enhance the connectivity and pedestrian and cycle link into land subject to this application. Indeed,

the applicants proposal includes a footpath and cycle link within the existing grassed playing fields to ensure that, in the long term, there is connectivity between all sites to the south of Moortown Lane and importantly the delivery of SS13 is not prejudiced.

10.4.14 In summary, whilst the proposal is not strictly in line with local plan policy in that part of the proposal does not provide public open space, there are other policies that support community and sporting facilities. Moreover, given that the public will still have access to use most of the land as open space, and considering the significant deficit of playing pitches in the area and the wider benefits to the community, the proposal would be acceptable in principle and accords with policy when considered as a whole.

## 10.5 Landscape/ Visual matters

10.5.1 The site lies within a sensitive location, lying outside the settlement boundary and within the Green Belt. The character of the area is rural with very few existing dwellings, several agricultural fields and narrow country lanes bounded by hedgerows with no pavements. The existing football pitches, allotments and Ringwood Town Football Club make up a significant portion of this land, in which the most noticeable features are the existing buildings and floodlighting masts.

10.5.2 The open and flat landscape which characterises this area is important in terms of affecting the landscape and maintaining the green belt edge. Equally, the boundary of the New Forest National Park lies approximately 320 metres to the east of the site at its closest point. Views of the site tend to be relatively short, in which the existing floodlighting masts can be viewed from the country lanes to the south of the site.

10.5.3 It is accepted that the cumulative impact of the new buildings, structures and its overall use will result in a change in the character and appearance of the site. Although the existing hedgerows would screen most of the proposal, the main visual impact will be the new pavilion building and the flood lighting masts. In addition, when the floodlighting's are in operation, there will be a degree of impact on the dark skies.

10.5.4 The proposed pavilion building would be sited more centrally on the site and would be slightly larger in scale than the existing building, although the footprint of the buildings would be similar. Whilst the proposed pavilion building will result in a greater visual impact compared to the existing building, this will not be significant. Its siting would be more central on the site, positioned away from the lanes and the design of the building with its sloping roof and all the first floor accommodation provided in the roof space, would result in a building that appears single storey scale.

10.5.5 Visually the proposed building would be of a simple design with a pitched roof, constructed from 'timber' effect cladding under a clay tiled roof. It is considered that the proposed building would make a positive enhancement given the poor condition and appearance of the existing building.

10.5.6 Concerning the proposed floodlighting masts, the number and size would match that on the existing Ringwood Town FC pitch. As such, the proposal would provide 6 floodlighting masts and when added to the existing 6 masts on Ringwood Town Football pitch, in total, will result in 12 floodlighting masts across the site.

- 10.5.7 It is acknowledged that floodlighting masts generally are an urban feature that would not ordinarily be found within a rural context. Equally, given their height floodlighting masts are normally considered to be visually intrusive features that would be harmful to sensitive rural areas. However, consideration needs to be given to the fact that the site already contains floodlight masts on the existing football pitch and the proposed FTP and floodlighting masts would be sited in the central part of the field, away from the lanes and less visually prominent
- 10.5.8 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed floodlights would still be apparent from outside the site and there will be a degree of harm, the columns on which they are positioned are relatively slim, and there would be spacing between them. In addition, they would appear as an integral part of the existing floodlighting on the site. Accordingly, whilst the proposal will result in additional harm on the landscape character of the area, they will not appear unduly harmful in their setting and visual impact will be moderate.
- 10.5.9 The proposed car parking re-configuration would be very similar to the existing situation, the main difference is that the car parking spaces will be formally laid out. In addition, given the increase in the use of the site, the extent of the car park will be more intensively used throughout the day and evening, compared to the existing situation which tends to be busy on match or training days. Given the high hedges along Long Lane, views of the car park would be minimal and the use of a grasscrete surface on part of the will be sympathetic to this rural context.
- 10.5.10 In terms of the impact of light pollution, the design of the floodlighting using the proposed LED system meets the standard for both pitch illuminance and control of obtrusive light. Indeed, the lighting is designed using a flat glass design, that enables the glare and spill to be well contained around the perimeter of the pitch with minimal impact on the surrounding landscape.
- 10.5.11 In summary, whilst it is recognised that the overall proposals will result in a change and a degree of harm in the context of the area, it is not considered to be significantly harmful and needs to be balanced against the need to provide the proposed facility and against the plan, when considered as a whole. In addition, a landscaping condition can be imposed to ensure that the existing hedgerows can be retained and enhanced, together with new planting.

## 10.6 Impact on National Park

- 10.6.1 There is a statutory duty for the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the purposes of the adjacent National Park, and it is therefore important that what is proposed has an acceptable impact on the setting of the New Forest National Park.
- 10.6.2 The proposed development lies within 320 metres of the New Forest National Park boundary and the key issue to assess would be the impact upon the wider landscape (particularly with regards to any impacts associated with external lighting).
- 10.6.3 Given the undeveloped nature of the site with its open paddocks, trees and hedgerows, it is accepted that the proposal could have a greater impact on the New Forest National Park and its setting, with particular regard to light pollution and visual impact from the flood lighting. The distances from the floodlighting to the National Park is more than 470 metres away and given these distances and that there are already existing floodlight masts on the site, the proposal would appear in combination with these lights.

- 10.6.4 Based upon the submitted technical lighting report, the overall extent of lighting proposed is such that the proposal would not cause unacceptable sky glow, and as such, the proposal will not have a harmful impact upon the special qualities of the New Forest National Park. The floodlighting can provide half pitch switching with the ability to dim the lighting to reduced illuminance level and there is the ability to automatically control the curfew time of the floodlighting would be provided with the proposed system and programmed in line with planning conditions.
- 10.6.5 Moreover, given the effectiveness of the design of the flood lighting using a flat glass hood, which reduces light spill, a planning condition can be applied that ensures that flood lighting are implemented in accordance with these details and no changes are made to the lighting or structure unless planning permission has first been obtained.

## 10.7 Transportation & Highway Issues

### Access and traffic generation

- 10.7.1 In relation to the policy context Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 107 of the NPPF specifically addresses car parking. It does not provide suggested standards, but instead sets out that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, the availability of and opportunities for public transport and the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Local Plan Policy CCC2: 'Safe and sustainable travel' requires new development to provide sufficient car and cycle parking, including secure cycle parking.
- 10.7.2 Access is currently gained from Long Lane, which is a narrow rural lane bounded by hedgerows and no footpaths. Long Lane connects onto Moortown Lane which is also a rural lane with no footpaths. Christchurch Road is the main road which connects most of Ringwood, but also to Christchurch to the south. The application site is around 470 metres to Christchurch Road. There are no bus stops within the vicinity of the site.
- 10.7.3 In terms of car parking, there are currently no designated spaces within the site, but the applicant states that the existing car parking arrangement enables up to around 85 car parking spaces (including the overflow). It is noted that, in the absence of markings, it is not possible to confirm an exact number of spaces, although, it is evident that the existing car park is a poor quality and uneven surface. It should also be noted that there are no Disabled parking spaces, cycle spaces or other electric charging points, together with limited emergency vehicle access.
- 10.7.4 The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access from Long Lane to serve all facilities on the site including the firing range, Ringwood Town Football Club, grassed playing pitches and the FTP. The proposal seeks to provide a much better parking facility for the site with up to 85 spaces to include disabled and 6 EV charging points, connection to the Ringwood Town via a future footpath/cycle way, the provision of 30 cycle shelters and improved emergency vehicle access to the site. It is also important to note that the proposal retains the existing overspill car park, which can accommodate approximately 40 vehicles. In total, the proposal could provide up to 125 car parking spaces.



- 10.7.5 In terms of the increase in the use of the existing access, the applicants Transport Statement states that historic TRICS data for football pitches indicate there is minimal trip generation throughout a day. It estimates that between 5pm and 6pm there will be 10 trips and this increases to 13 trips between 6pm and 7pm. There is a further increase to 20 between 7pm and 8pm and this falls to 18 between 9pm and 10pm.
- 10.7.6 It is considered that at less than 20 trips in peak times, this proposal will not have a severe impact on the Local Highway. Whilst Long Lane is a narrow lane in which there are difficulties for two vehicles to pass, Long Lane is very quiet and there is a distance of around 270 metres between the site access and junction with Moortown Lane (which is a wider two-lane road). In addition, it is noted that there are two informal passing places along Long Lane between Moortown Lane and the site access. In terms of the visibility from the site entrance onto Long Lane, the applicant proposes to cut a short section of the hedge to improve the visibility.
- 10.7.7 Whilst the proposal will not significantly intensify activity on the site or result in a material increase in traffic generation on the local highway network, the Highway Authority had initially requested that the applicant explores the possibility to improve Long Lane to allow for two-way vehicular movement. In response, Officers recognise that Long Lane is narrow, however the lane has a strong rural character defined by its hedgerows, and there are concerns that this would unsympathetically urbanise this rural character. Moreover, based upon the overall traffic generation from the proposal, it will not be reasonable or proportionate for this development to make such a contribution for these works to be carried out and as such, will not meet the planning test set out in the NPPF.
- 10.7.8 Importantly, the Highway Authority have not said that the widening of Long Lane is essential. As such, and recognising that Long Lane is narrow, it is considered that there is potential to improve, enhance or widen the existing two passing places along Long Lane. The Highway Authority agree that such improvements will address their concerns in respect of increase traffic generation along Long Lane and accordingly, it is reasonable to impose a Grampian planning condition that requires the full details of the works to improve the passing places are submitted which consider the highway boundary, hedgerow loss, surfacing and passing places that are long enough to cater for private vehicles.
- 10.7.9 Personal Injury Accident is included within the Transport Assessment and the data indicates that there has been a total of three incidents within the wider area during the 5-year period, which have been categorised as slight. In reviewing the records, the three recorded incidents occurred at the North East of the site, all on Crow Lane. No accidents on the roads that immediately surround the site (Moortown Lane, Long Lane, Green Lane). As such, the records do not, therefore, contain any patterns that might suggest any areas of highway safety concern within the area.
- 10.7.10 Detailed tracking and emergency access arrangement plans have been submitted to support the application. The Highway Authority's advice is that there are no fundamental concerns with the internal layout from a highway safety perspective.

## Sustainability

- 10.7.11 The application site is poorly accessed for pedestrians, cyclist and public transport, and there is a reliance on accessing the site by car or other vehicles. Whilst it is unfortunate that the site is poorly connected for pedestrians and cyclist, based upon the scale of development, it would not be reasonable or feasible to create a footpath along Long Lane and Moortown Lane to link existing footpaths in Ringwood to the site. In addition, the creation of a footpath along these lanes would result in the loss and damage to hedgerows that would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.
- 10.7.12 The proposal will provide 6 electric charging points, which is a significant benefit. Moreover, in the long term, and as part of any future proposals for the residential development to come forward to the north/south of Moortown Lane, there is a clear opportunity through the masterplanning to incorporate footpath, cycle and crossing connections that not only link that development to the sporting facilities to the south of Moortown Lane but also the wider part of Ringwood. Improvements to public transport including bus facilities near or along Moortown Lane is likely to come forward as part of the strategic site developments.
- 10.7.13 The applicants proposed site plan indicatively shows a footpath and cycleway within the application site that connects right up to the existing playing pitches on the land to the north of the application to the site. This will mean that safe and direct footpaths and cycle paths can be put in place to deliver long term footpath/cycle links between the site and rest of Ringwood. In addition, this will ensure that there is good connectivity between the land to the south of Moortown Lane in delivering the objectives of the strategic site allocation.

## Car parking

- 10.7.14 Given the rural context of the site, its isolated location and lack of public transport/ footpath connections to the site, it is important that the site provides sufficient car parking to serve all facilities on the site. For the avoidance of doubt, the car parking at Ringwood Town Football Club is also used by the existing football pitches on the land directly to the south of Moortown Lane. As such, this facility needs to be considered as part of the car parking assessment.
- 10.7.15 Taking each individual use alone, it is considered that there is sufficient car parking. However, the most important matter is to ensure that there is sufficient car parking spaces available during the 'peak' times or when the different facilities are being used at the same time. Accordingly, to help understand the 'peak' times or the 'worst' case scenario, the applicant has helpfully provided details of the maximum number of users and the core times of the facilities that will be using the site. This is set out in the table below:

## Rifle range

- The maximum number of users is 20 users.
- No on-site staff
- Core hours of use Tuesday and Friday evenings - 5pm to 10pm and Wednesday - 9am to 12pm

### Ringwood Town Football Club match days

- The maximum number is 30 players/staff and 30 spectators
- Three games per week on main pitch, which includes one match midweek, one on Saturday afternoon and one on Sunday
- The majority of travelling teams car share to get to the venue, on occasion mini bus transport is used
- Training for the sides is included within the plan of the new FTP

### Pavilion building/ functions

- The maximum number is 100 users
- The pavilion will form a base for AFC Bournemouth CST.
- A maximum of 7 staff will be located on the site at anytime.
- The function room in the building, will this be used for birthday parties, events/celebrations etc or mainly as a bar/club for players/ spectators before and after games/ using the facilities
- The functions would not take place at the same time as a Ringwood Town matches and when the grass pitches are being used.
- For a function such as this, there would likely be a maximum of three staff on site

### FTP

- The maximum number is 60 users
- The FTP will only be able to accommodate limited numbers.
- The FTP can accommodate 4nr mini soccer pitches at a maximum. In the highly unlikely event that everybody drove to the site this would be just over 60 spaces.

### Other playing pitches (grassed pitches)

- The Long Lane and Moortown Lane pitches are used extensively (particularly on Saturday mornings for Youth and Sundays).
- Based on the combined area of the sports pitches which is approximately 6ha, this equates to a need for 72 spaces and these can be accommodated on the site in a sporadic manner.
- The grass pitches are not used at the same time as the rifle range or when Ringwood Town FC are playing.

### Assessment of the car parking

10.7.16 The Councils 'Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)' provides a recommended car parking provision for sports/playing fields of 12 spaces per hectare of pitch area. In total, there will be 6 hectares of playing pitches, which includes the land immediately to the south of Moortown Lane. This would equate to 72 car parking spaces. The parking standards do not include rifle range facilities, football stadiums or club house facilities and as such, these must be considered on a site-to-site basis and the information provided by the applicant.

10.7.17 Based upon the applicant's information, for most of the time, the site will not be intensively used, and all facilities operate during different times. Weekends will clearly be the busy times when the grassed playing pitches will be used and the main Ringwood Town Club Football playing pitch. However, the FTP does enable many youth teams that normally train on the playing fields weekends to be able to use the FTP and train during the

week. It should also be noted that the grassed playing pitches would be predominately used in the morning at weekends, whereas the Ringwood Town Football Club play in the afternoon.

10.7.18 Bournemouth Community Trust who will be managing the site confirm that there will not be a time where all the facilities on the site are used at the same time. In assessing the car parking facilities, it is considered that there is sufficient car parking spaces to serve all users of the site and through the management of the site, the car parking can be appropriately managed during peak times. Furthermore, this planning application proposes to significantly increase the number of car parking spaces and given that this proposal only entails a new FTP and new grassed pitch, it is considered that the proposal will provide a considerable improvement to car parking on the site.

#### 10.8 Impact on the living conditions of the neighbouring properties

10.8.1 It is considered that the main impact relates to the proposed FTP, and in particular, whether the light pollution caused by the proposed flood lighting and the increase in noise and disturbance due to the increase in activity on the site would be harmful to neighbouring residential properties.

10.8.2 There are a few scattered dwellings located on the east side of Green Lane. There is a further dwelling known as 'Four Views' which is located on the corner of Moortown Lane and Green Lane. This property is the closest resident to the application site.

10.8.3 Because of the distances involved, it is considered that the new pavilion building, car parking, floodlight masts and associated perimeter fencing would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the light, outlook or privacy of the neighbouring properties. The nearest structure is the artificial pitch, and the distance to the nearest residential property at 'Four Views' is more than 150 metres away to their rear boundary.

10.8.4 In addition, the proposal to change the use of the agricultural field to additional playing pitches would not rise to an unacceptable impact to the neighbouring properties. Whilst it is accepted that the use of the field as playing pitches will increase the noise and disturbance to the neighbouring properties, the land is allocated in the local plan for proposed public open space, where there is an expectation that the land will be used for playing fields. Moreover, the land will be laid to grass and used as either one large pitch or small pitches, however, it is not considered that this will be intensively used to result in any adverse harm.

10.8.5 Turning to the main issue, which is the effect of noise, disturbance and light pollution from the proposed artificial pitch and its associated flood lighting, a detailed lighting assessment has been submitted to demonstrate the extent of light spillage and efficiency of the light spillage. The report concludes that the design of the lighting is such that light spillage is reduced to only the artificial playing pitch and whilst some marginal overspill to the hedgerows, there is no light over spill to the nearest resident which is located more than 150 metres away to their boundary and more than 190 metres away from the house.

- 10.8.6 The floodlights will be operable via a timer to ensure they switch off at stipulated times. The Environmental Health Officer does not raise any objections and considers that the proposed flood lighting would not result in an unacceptable impact on residents and a condition would need to be imposed to require the flood lighting to be implemented in accordance with the submitted details and specification. As such, it is not considered that the proposals would result in any adverse impacts to the occupants on these neighbouring properties in terms of light intrusion.
- 10.8.7 Concerning noise, the nearest residential properties to the FTP are 'Four Views' and the dwellings and along the eastern side of Green Lane. The distance between the FTP to the boundary of 'Four Views' measures more than 150 metres and around 190 metres to the house. The dwellings along Green Lane are sited more than 200 metres away.
- 10.8.8 In assessing the impact of noise and disturbance caused by the proposed facility, currently, the existing grassed playing pitches can be used during the day time and summer evenings, and as such, there is already a degree of noise generated from the site. The proposal to replace the existing grassed pitch with an artificial pitch which can be used up onto 22:00 seven days a week and useable in most weather conditions, will clearly intensify the use of the site and generate an increase in noise levels.
- 10.8.9 During the lighter summer evenings, the proposed facility could be used without the need for flood lighting and this would be the same situation as the existing playing field. Whilst the facility will be used more intensively, given the distances involved, in which the nearest residential property is more than 150 metres away to their boundary, it is not considered that during the longer (daylight) days between May and September, the proposal will result in significant harm to their living conditions.
- 10.8.10 During October and April between 18:00 and 22:00, the evenings are dark, and it is at these times the proposed floodlighting would be available for use and the proposal would intensify the level of activity on the site. However, during the darker winter evenings the residents would be likely to be inside their houses and would be less likely to be outside in their gardens and as such, is unlikely to cause unreasonable disturbance to occupiers of the nearest residential properties.
- 10.8.11 In assessing the impact of the proposal, it is accepted that there would be an increase in noise and disturbance, the most significant impact would be when the facility is used during the evening in the winter because, of the flood lighting. However, during the darker winter evenings the residents would be likely to be inside their houses and would be less likely to be outside in their gardens. Overall and taking into consideration that the Environmental Health Office does not raise any objections, it is considered that the proposal would increase the level of noise and disturbance to the nearby residents but this is considered to be within acceptable limits.
- 10.9 Sustainability
- 10.9.1 The proposal seeks to provide sustainable initiatives. In the absence of gas supply to the site and in order to avoid the use of fossil fuels and mitigate the use of electricity to be imported from the grid, the proposal includes the use of PV, LED lighting and appropriate lighting controls and Heat Pump technology. The proposal also incorporates electric charging points.

## 10.10 Ecology

- 10.10.1 The submitted application is accompanied by an Ecological Report. There are no designated sites within the site boundary, the closest of which is Avon Valley SPA, Ramsar and SSSI which is located 460 metres to the west.
- 10.10.2 The main assessment of the report relates to the impact on protected species, which include foraging and roosting bats, reptiles, badgers, and nesting birds.
- 10.10.3 No Badger setts or foraging signs were identified within the site during the habitat survey. A significant amount of the existing hedgerows will be retained. The applicants Ecological Report states that whilst this could be of use to invertebrates, the low species diversity means that these areas are unlikely to be utilised by a diverse assemblage of rare or nationally important invertebrates.
- 10.10.4 No bats were confirmed either egressing or re-entering the building during the surveys. At least nine bat species have been confirmed using habitats within the site during the manual foraging and static monitoring surveys. The majority of these are common and widespread species using the hedgerows along northern, southern, eastern, and western boundaries. The Councils Ecologists considers that an appropriate level of survey effort has been employed and as such, it can be concluded that the existing building does not currently support roosting bats.
- 10.10.5 The lighting assessment shows that several boundary features used by bats will be subject to increased light spill. The main period where the lights will be in use corresponds to the winter period when bats are hibernating and as such impacts would be unlikely due to a lack of bat activity. Some inferences for bat activity can be made given the presence of existing lighting on the existing pitch. Light adverse species such as brown long-eared, barbastelle and greater horseshoe currently use the site despite the seasonal use of this existing lighting. Subject to securing the mitigation detailed in the applicants Ecological Report, on balance, and despite a small residual impact, the Councils Ecologist has no objections to the proposals. This includes lighting being restricted for use no later than 22:00.
- 10.10.6 Assessment of impacts
- 10.10.7 Without mitigation, compensation and enhancement, the Ecological Impact Assessment recognises that the development would have a negative ecological impact. As such, a number of key mitigation and compensation proposals are put forward.
- 10.10.8 Bat bricks or boxes incorporated into new buildings within the scheme, situated close to (and facing) hedgerows and tree lines with recorded bat activity. Planting within the site should utilise species considered beneficial to wildlife. Planting night scented flowers would also be beneficial to foraging bats.
- 10.10.9 It is proposed to repair the defunct hedgerows on site will provide additional habitat for invertebrates, which will in turn provide a food source for reptiles, birds, bats and hedgehogs.

10.10.10 In relation to birds, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance work is undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. Avon Valley (SPA, Ramsar, SSSI) is located within 500m of the site boundary, as such there is potential for construction activities to provide an impact via noise disturbance to species using the protected site. It is recommended that a Construction Environmental Method statement is produced to ensure that noise is reduced as far as practicable during construction works.

10.10.11 Overall, with the mitigation and compensation measures that are proposed, it is considered that the ecological interests of the site would be adequately safeguarded, and negative impacts would be adequately mitigated. This said, future management will be critical to securing long-term benefits and this can be secured through conditions.

#### 10.11 Flood Risk

10.11.1 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. Part of the eastern site, which includes the existing agricultural fields is located within the Flood Zone 2 for fluvial flooding. The rest of the site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is at low risk. No significant risk from other source – surface water, groundwater, sewers, or reservoir flooding has been identified.

10.11.2 The Planning Practice Guidance for 'Flood risk and coastal change' puts amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation as 'Water-compatible development' within the Flood risk vulnerability classification and as such, the proposal would be appropriate use in Flood Zone 2.

10.11.3 The key consultee the Environment Agency is satisfied that the FRA demonstrates that the proposed development would be operated with minimal risk from flooding, would not increase flood risk elsewhere and is compliant with the requirements of national policy and guidance.

#### 10.12 Drainage

10.12.1 The application is accompanied by a Surface and Foul Water Drainage Strategy. The site's surface water from the FTP will go to a drainage trench and the foul water to sewage waste treatment system. All surface water from the road, car parking spaces and buildings would be intercepted and directed into a single soakaway located to the west of Ringwood Town FC playing pitch.

10.12.2 The key consultee the Lead Local Flood Authority at Hampshire County Council is satisfied that the applicants surface water drainage strategy is acceptable and consistent with policy.

#### 10.13 Are there any considerations which weigh in favour of the development?

10.13.1 The applicant has provided the following details in relation to 'need' as part of the submission that very special circumstances (VSCs) exist which justify allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

10.13.2 The submitted VSCs are as follows:

*'the proposal constitutes a new artificial playing pitch with floodlighting's and new pavilion building in the Green Belt, and that the proposal makes a significant contribution to the local community, economy, environment and local employment'.*

- 10.13.3 The supporting statement states that the proposal will benefit the wider community. The proposal will provide access to pitch facilities that can be used during the daytime and evening, throughout the winter, and under different weather conditions and as such, can be used much more intensively all year round. The applicant also states that there are no other alternative sites that can provide these facilities within Ringwood.
- 10.13.4 The facilities will be available to surrounding schools, community, and club for use as much as possible on a managed basis. Teaching, coaching and different educational initiatives will make use of the facility. The development proposed will enable Ringwood Town FC to expand the number of teams it operates and the range of football activities it promotes making its offer to the people of Ringwood and surrounding areas more diverse and inclusive.
- 10.13.5 Sports England in the consultation response refer to comments from the national governing body 'The Football Foundation' on behalf of the FAA, *'there is a clear deficit of 3G artificial pitch provision in the area and there are no 3G artificial pitch provision in the west of the District'*. Sports England state that within the New Forest there is a demand for nine 3G pitches and the current 3G pitches currently reaches 3.25 pitches, however, only serves the east of the District. The proposal would go far in reducing this deficit. Moreover, Sports England have highlighted the fact that the New Forest has a significant deficit in 3G Artificial pitches and raise concern that there will be increase demand for football due to the new housing sites coming forward.
- 10.13.6 The supporting statement goes onto state that there are wider environmental benefits created by the proposal. The existing facilities are in poor state of repair and the replacement facilities will link to the Governments' strategy for decarbonisation by utilising electricity as much as possible and heat pumps/PV. The scheme minimises the impact on the wider environment by only cutting back a small area of hedgerow to improve visibility on Long Lane. A small section is also removed to accommodate the new access to the FTP and the remainder of the existing hedgerows and vegetation will be retained. To compensate for the small loss of vegetation, landscape enhancements would take place elsewhere on the site.
- 10.13.7 The applicants state that the site currently provides the only provision in the town for football, including the Wessex League men's team and the many junior teams, both boys and girls. The whole site will be managed by AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust on behalf of the town council. Ringwood Town FC's use is stated and agreed in partnership with the adult and junior clubs. This will be safeguarded in the Community Use Agreement and reviewed by the Community User Group on an ongoing basis. This project is also accompanied by a development plan and a usage plan which will include programmes to provide new opportunities for local residents, particularly targeted groups such as female residents and residents with a disability. Through partnership with the AFCBCT wider social programmes will be explored and included in the offer. These will look to tackle issues such as obesity, community safety.
- 10.13.8 The supporting statement highlights the social and economic benefits. The scheme will provide employment for several additional football coaches and the facilities will be available for all ages including people



with disabilities. It is anticipated that the scheme would create the need for 3nr additional coaches. The site would also be open in the evening so additional management staff would be needed.

- 10.14 Do the matters which weigh in favour of the development clearly outweigh any harm to the Green Belt and any other harm
- 10.14.1 As set out above, the proposed development amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt. Substantial weight attaches to any harm to the Green Belt. However, while the proposal would lead to some loss of openness, which adds to the harm to the Green Belt, albeit to a limited extent because of the floodlighting masts.
- 10.14.2 With respect to 'any other harm, the proposed development would result in some harm to the rural character of the area, given the fairly open and flat nature of the land, however, a detailed landscaping scheme can ensure the protection and retention of hedgerows within the site provided through planning conditions together with further wider landscape enhancements. There would be some impact on residential amenity, but this would not be severe and sufficient car parking will be made available. New electric charging points will be provided and the proposed building would be constructed using sustainable initiatives. The proposal will provide some ecological enhancements, but it has to be noted that the lighting will result in some impact on foraging bats on the hedgerows immediately adjacent to the floodlighting.
- 10.14.3 In respect of those matters which weigh in favour of the scheme, the applicant has provided evidence in relation to the need for the artificial pitch. Such a deficit of 3G Artificial pitches is also highlighted by the Football Foundation and Sports England, which fully endorse the proposal. Local Plan Policies and the NPPF also seek to support development that enhancing sporting facilities. It is also important to note that there is no other alternative location that can provide such sporting facilities within or close to Ringwood. The site is the only appropriate and available location to provide such facilities and this must be given significant weight.
- 10.14.4 As such, the most significant benefit is the creation of a sporting facility for the community where there is a clear deficit in the town and New Forest. This has to be given significant weight. This sporting facility will provide significant benefits for health, social, community, education and economic. Officers are not aware of any other matters raised in representations that would weigh against the scheme.
- 10.14.5 Are there 'very special circumstances to justify allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt?
- 10.14.6 In light of the above, it is concluded that 'very special circumstance's do exist, in terms of need, lack of alternative sites and benefits to the local community to warrant a departure from established and adopted Green Belt policies. The principle of the proposed development within Green Belt is therefore considered to be acceptable in this instance.

## 11 CONCLUSION

11.1 This report has set out that the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt that is harmful to openness by definition and to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. It must be recognised that the extent of harm is caused by the floodlighting mast and it is considered that this impact is low to moderate. With this borne in mind, it is considered that very special circumstances have been demonstrated that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm and as such there is no reason to withhold the granting of planning permission for this proposal.

## 12 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### 12.1 Other matters

#### Human Rights

12.2 In coming to this recommendation, consideration has been given to the rights set out in Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Whilst it is recognised that there may be an interference with these rights and the rights of other third parties, such interference has to be balanced with the like rights of the applicant to develop the land in the way proposed. In this case it is considered that the protection of the rights and freedoms of the applicant outweigh any possible interference that may result to any third party.

### 12.3 Equality

12.4 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. The Committee must be mindful of this duty *inter alia* when determining all planning applications. In particular the Committee must pay due regard to the need to:

- (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## 13 RECOMMENDATION

### **Grant Subject to Conditions**

## Proposed Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

MCA MUK2571-11.R1  
MCA-MUK2571-10  
MCA-MUK2571-11  
PL-05. R04.R4  
PL-06. R06.R4  
PL -01.R05.R6  
21046-D-500-P2  
21046-D-501-P2  
332-1\_PL-01.R05  
332-1\_PL-03.R06  
332-1\_PL-03.R05  
332-1\_PL-04.R3  
332-1\_PL-05.R3  
332-1\_PL-06.R3  
332-1\_PL-07.R4

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.

3. The Pavilion building hereby approved shall be constructed from the following materials, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Facing brick: Ibstock Dorset Red Mortar Grey Black  
Facing Cladding: Marley Cedral Dark Grey smooth  
Roofing: Redland Rosemary Clay Classic -Heather Brindle  
Roofing: Bauder Single Ply Thermofol PVC

The development shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable appearance of the building in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

4. No use shall be made of the approved Football Turf Pitch nor shall the approved lights be switched on, at any time other than between the hours of 08:00 and 22.00 Mondays to Sundays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residential properties, to safeguard protected species and light pollution in accordance with Policies ENV3, ENV4 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside the National Park and Policies DM1, DM2 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

5. The floodlighting hereby permitted shall be installed and operated in accordance with the approved Floodlighting Performance Report, design and specification by Christy Lighting Masts Ltd Dated 19-07-2021 and references PL-04.R03, MCA-MUK2571-10 C and shall continue to be operated in accordance with these details including the drawing/lighting contours, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residential properties, to safeguard protected species and light pollution in accordance with Policies ENV3, ENV4 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside the National Park and Policies DM1, DM2 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

6. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works, including the trees and hedgerows to be retained have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include proposed finished levels or contours; means of enclosure; car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas; hard surfacing materials; and structures (eg refuse or other storage units, lighting). Soft Landscape works shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate and an implementation programme.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the first occupation of the pavillion building or artificial pitch, which ever is the sooner. The maintenance shall be carried out in accordance with the approved schedule. Any trees or plants that, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with others of species, size and number as originally approved, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the appearance and setting of the development is satisfactory and to comply with Policies ENV3 and ENV4 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

7. The Football Turf Pitch and Pavillion building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the spaces shown on plan 332-1\_PL-03.R05 for the parking of motor vehicles have been provided. The spaces shown on plan 332-1\_PL-03.R05 for the parking of motor vehicles shall be retained and kept available for the parking of motor vehicles for the development hereby approved at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking provision is made in the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policies ENV3 and CCC2 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

8. Prior to the first occupation of the pavilion building or artificial pitch hereby approved, which ever is the sooner, the detailed design of the cycle parking facility including the specification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Before the first occupation of the pavillion building or artificial pitch hereby approved, the cycle store shall be installed in accordance with the approved plans and thereafter retained, maintained and kept available for the occupants of the development at all times.

Reason: To promote sustainable mode of travel.

9. Prior to the development being brought into use, a Community Use Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, after consultation with Sport England. The agreement shall apply to the Artificial Grass Pitch, any ancillary accommodation and the car park, and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-Ringwood Town Football Club and Bournemouth Community Trust users/non-members, management responsibilities and include a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Authority.

Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with development plan policy.

10. The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) produced by Geosphere Environmental dated 11/06/21 and the following mitigation measures:

- a) The finished floor levels of the pavillion building and football artificial pitch shall be set no lower than 18.79mAOD

The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to first occupation of the development and thereafter retained.

Reason: To minimise the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants and to comply with Chpt 14 of the NPPF in relation to planning for flood risk and climate change.

11. Prior to the commencement of development, including site clearance, further details of biodiversity mitigation, compensation and enhancement shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include measures as outlined in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Geosphere Environmental, dated 15/06/2021 and updated report dated 11/10/2021/. Moreover, prior to the commencement of development, including site clearance, a Construction Environmental Management Plan, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall then proceed in accordance with the details and recommendations as approved in the strategy and none of the development hereby approved shall be first used until the approved ecological enhancements have been fully implemented in accordance with the ecology enhancement strategy with any amendments agreed in writing. Thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the mitigation measures shall be permanently maintained and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard protected species in accordance with Policies ENV3, ENV4 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside the National Park and Policies DM1, DM2 and DW-E12 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

12. No building hereby permitted shall be occupied or at no time shall the artificial pitch first come into use, until drainage works have been implemented in accordance with Drawing No's 21046-D-501-P1 and 21046-D-500-P2. The surface water drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed details and management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the drainage arrangements are appropriate and in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park and the New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park Authority Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Local Development Frameworks.

13. Prior to the commencement of development a Materials Management Plan - minerals (MMP-M) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority jointly with the Mineral Planning Authority (Hampshire County Council): The MMP-M shall contain the following information:

- I. The MMP-M will estimate; based on particle size distribution testing, the extent to which on site materials extracted during the proposed development would meet specifications for use on site.
- II. The MMP-M will outline the amount of material which could be reused on site; For material which cannot be used on-site, the MMP-M will specify its movement to an aggregate processing plant.

The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved MMP-M. During the construction phase, the applicant/developer shall keep a record of the amounts of material obtained from on-site resources which are used on site and the amount of material returned to an aggregate processing plant through to the Local Planning Authority and the Mineral Planning Authority, or upon request of either the Local Planning Authority or Mineral Planning Authority.

Reason: The recovered mineral could be either re-used on site, which provides a reduction of excavation waste removed from site as well as inbound materials for construction uses associated with reduced costs, as well potential to export off site to a local mineral operator for further treatment.

14. Before development commences, a scheme for the provision of infrastructure and facilities to enable the installation of charging points for electric vehicles to serve that part of the development, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its written approval. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability and to ensure that opportunities for the provision of electrical charging points are maximised in accordance with policy expectations.

15. No development hereby permitted shall be commenced until the detailed design of the enhancement and improvements works to be carried out to the passing places along Long Lane between the site and the junction of Moortown Lane has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the works for passing places are completed in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policies ENV3 and CCC2 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

16. Before development commences (including site clearance, demolition and any other preparatory works) a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall include a method statement detailing timing of events, all changes of existing surfaces and plans showing the protective fencing or other measures required for the avoidance of damage to retained trees all in accordance with BS 5837 (2012) "Trees in Relation to Construction Recommendations". Such fencing shall be erected prior to any other site operation and at least 24 hours notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. The tree protection measures installed shall be maintained and retained for the full duration of the works or until such time as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No activities, nor material storage, nor placement of site huts or other equipment whatsoever shall take place within the fencing without the prior written agreement with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the retention of existing trees and natural features and avoidance of damage during the construction phase in accordance with Policies ENV3 and ENV4 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

**Further Information:**

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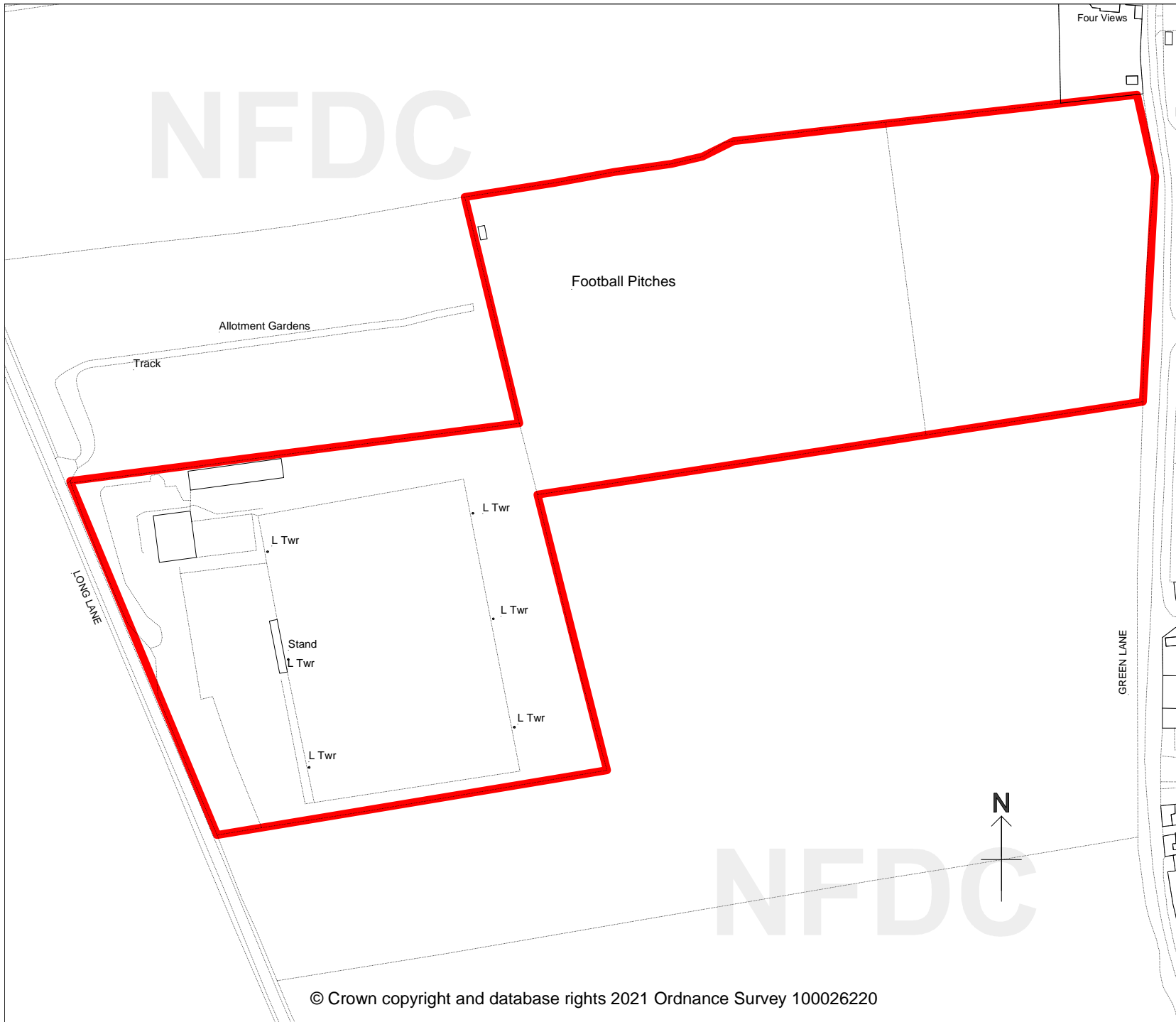
**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**December 2021**

Ringwood Town Football  
and Social Club  
Long Lane, Ringwood  
21/11170

Scale 1:2100

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