

Item D. 1 **06/00005/COU Refuse Full Planning Permission**

Case Officer **Miss Caron Taylor**

Ward **Lostock**

Proposal **Change of use of agricultural land to two full size football pitches with training area,**

Location **Land To The North Of Bishop Rawstorne C Of E International Language College Out Lane Croston**

Applicant **Mr D Sumner**

Proposal: The application is for the change of use of agricultural land to two full size football pitches (with permanently erected metal goal posts) and training area.

Background: The land is situated to the north of Bishop Rawstorne Church of England International Language College and will be accessed via Out Lane, with parking on the existing school car park. Croston Junior Football Club will use the pitches and training area. There is an existing football pitch to the east of the application site belonging to the school. The nearest properties are Taylor's Barn and Workhouse Barn on Out Lane and properties at the Southern end of Lostock Road.

The Diocese of Blackburn owns the application site and the Football Club will rent the land.

Planning History: There is no planning history on the site where the pitches are proposed.

Planning Policy: DC1: Development in the Green Belt
PPG2: Green Belts
TR4: Highway Development Control Criteria
LT12: Golf, Outdoor Sport and Related Development

Applicant's Case: The school uses the existing pitch adjacent to the application site and is due to have drainage installed, hopefully this year. The school itself cannot use it during the winter months due to water logging, so is therefore not available to Croston Junior Football Club.

The school are awaiting a grant from both the Council and Football Foundation, in order to address the problem of poor drainage on the school site, once it has been installed it is hoped that Croston Junior Football Club will be able to use the larger of the two pitches, and that the school will also be able to make use of the field that the club will be renting.

The main use of the pitches will be during the period September through to April, i.e. the football season for the Central Lancashire League, with the majority of games being played on a Sunday, with kick off times being 11.00am and 2.00pm.

It is hoped that the maintenance will be done by the Junior Football Club themselves, and they are looking into funding from different bodies, in order to regenerate the field into two full size pitches, with maintenance costs for the next five years, this includes a sit on gang mower which will be sited at the school. The school have provisionally agreed to allow access to the field, via the second gate on Out Lane. This is in order for the club to grow and prosper, and the school has additionally agreed that the club can use the parking and changing facilities at the school.

The club has over 280 members, with age ranges from under 7's through to under 16's. It is anticipated that teams from age groups under 11's, 12's, 13's, 14's, and 15's, will use the facilities at both the school and the application field. These will all be eleven a side teams, and will play in the Central Lancashire League so away teams and their supporters will also visit the application site.

Training during the summer is usually done on the fields situated at the front of the school, adjacent to the bus lay-bys, and the Junior Football Club hope this will continue.

Consultations:

LCC Highways

Lancashire County Council Highways have objected to the application. They state that considering the information provided, and the number of vehicles likely to visit the site, the proposed use is likely to have an adverse effect on traffic and pedestrian safety on Out Lane. In the circumstance they recommend that the application be resisted for highway safety reasons.

Also given the nature of Out Lane it would be unacceptable to rely on this road to provide car parking provision. The lack of off road car and coach parking under the direct control of the applicant, and hence uncertainty over the long-term provision of off road car parking adds to the objectionable nature of the application.

Croston Parish Council

The Parish Council object to the application. Whilst it is of the opinion that the provision of sports facilities should be encouraged and supported, particularly relating to younger people, it is felt a development of this nature would be more appropriately located well away from a residential area.

Additional use of Out Lane should not be encouraged. Out Lane was highlighted in the Parish Council's Parish Business Plan as one of the four main areas for concern with regard to traffic issues and as a result of this LCC has begun the process of implementing traffic calming measures.

LCC Archaeology

Do not consider any archaeological response necessary.

Representations: Seven letters of objection have been received from six properties on Out Lane and Lostock Road. The reasons for objection can be summarised as:

1. Increase in noise and disturbance
2. Increase in litter
3. Damage to trees and hedges
4. Loss of agricultural land
5. Better use could be made of existing football pitches in the area
6. The land is in the Green Belt and the perimeter of the village should not be extended
7. The proposal would negatively impact on local residents due to a loss of privacy
8. Light pollution at night due to floodlighting (however, it should be noted that no lighting is proposed)
9. The proposals would set a precedent and open up the surrounding fields for development
10. The development would increase the traffic flow down Out Lane disturbing residents
11. The proposals will exacerbate existing parking problems
12. The proposal may damage the pond in the field
13. Walkers using the public footpath along the edge of the site could be hit by footballs
14. The building of the new gymnasium at the school already has a detrimental impact on nearby properties and the proposed pitches will exacerbate this
15. The pitches will be used at the weekends which is currently the only time that the residents get a break from the noise and traffic currently caused by the school
16. Footballs may go into adjacent properties gardens

The Headteacher of Bishop Rawstone Language College supports the application as the pitches would prove to be an excellent provision for both the community and the College.

Assessment:

Green Belt

The site lies within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development and where Policy DC1 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review and PPG2: Green Belts apply. There are a number of types of development that are appropriate in the Green Belt, one of which is essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation. The application does not include any form of building or floodlighting and does therefore comply with Green Belt policy.

Highways

One of the main issues is that of highways, as the Highways Authority has objected to the application. Parking for the pitches will be provided at the school with the pitches accessed via a field gate. There are already highways issues on Out Lane and the

proposals will increase the number of football pitches north of the school from the existing one, to three, therefore increasing the amount of traffic that would be accessing the bottom of Out Lane, particularly as the applicant has indicated that the school may also use the proposed pitches. This intensification of the use and the associated traffic, (including teams and visiting teams along with supporters) along with more than one match in a day will be detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety on Out Lane contrary to Policy TR4 and section (g) of Policy LT12 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

In addition, the car parking is in third party control (the school). If the school were to withdraw this car parking for use by the football club, Out Lane would not be able to provide acceptable parking for the pitches.

In any respect, it is unlikely that the parking within the school will be able to accommodate the number of vehicles and the turning movements necessary on this constrained site. As a consequence it is inevitable that parking will take place on Out Lane itself. This is a narrow road, ill suited for the level of activity it currently accommodates. These existing problems are going to be significantly worsened by the proposed use.

Neighbour Amenity

The nearest properties to the pitches will be Taylor's Barn and Workhouse Farm on Out Lane, along with properties on Lostock Road. Although there is already a football pitch north of the school it is further away from residential properties than those currently proposed. The proposals will result in pitches being sited adjacent to the garden of a residential property. In addition it is proposed that the majority of games will be played on a Sunday, a day when most people would reasonably expect peaceful enjoyment of their property, particularly as disturbance is caused to these properties from the school throughout the week. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy LT12 which states noise generating outdoor sports should not harm the amenities of local residents.

Conclusion:

This is a finely balanced application. Croston Junior Football Club will be providing recreational facilities for the youth of the area and several objectors have stated that normally they would wish to encourage the provision of sports facilities for young people. However, there are already traffic problems on Out Lane and increasing the number of pitches using this access will only exacerbate these issues. In addition the properties on Out Lane suffer noise and disturbance from the school throughout the week. The pitches would mainly be used on a Sunday, therefore extending the period of disturbance caused to neighbouring properties at a time in the week when they could reasonably expect peaceful enjoyment of their property.

Recommendation: Refuse Full Planning Permission

Reasons

1. Due to the increase in the number of pitches north of Bishop Rawstorne International Language College the number of vehicles likely to visit the site accessed via Out Lane is likely to increase, having an adverse effect on traffic and pedestrian safety on Out Lane. In addition, if the school withdrew its parking facilities from use by the football club, Out Lane could not provide suitable parking facilities. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy TR4 and section (g) of Policy LT12 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

2. The proposed pitches would mainly be used on Sundays, a day when most people would reasonably expect peaceful enjoyment of their property. The properties nearest to the proposed pitches and access already suffer from noise and disturbance throughout the week from the school and the proposals would extend this period, contrary to section (e) of Policy LT12 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.
