

PPG2: Green Belts
TR4: Highway Development Control Criteria
LT12: Golf, Outdoor Sport and Related Development

Applicant's Case: Since the previous application was refused the Junior Football Club has spoken with the headmaster of the school and consider that if Out Lane could not be used as access then the only place that the club could use is the bus lay-by on Highfield Road. They estimate that each match would attract approximately 12 vehicles maximum from away teams, so 24 if two teams were playing, plus vehicles for players from the village. Matches would be played at staggered times, 10am and 2pm, therefore there would not be massive crossover of vehicles in the lay-by. It is the clubs intension to have someone monitoring vehicles that attend matches to see vehicles are parking correctly.

The applicant in support of the previous application, and details how the pitches will be used provided the following information:

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 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**
The County Highways Engineer states that it is not clear how the

school lay-by will be managed. From observation the lay-by is often closed, and there are concerns regarding both the management of it and its use in terms of capacity to accommodate the number of vehicles attracted to the site. They note that the planning statement estimates 24 vehicles plus vehicles for players from the village. While the applicant states that the village players 'would be able to walk to the pitch', it would be expected that a large proportion would actually come by car. The applicant has not submitted any information showing how vehicles will be managed on the lay-by, and he does not believe that it could accommodate the number of vehicles that are likely to be generated. Hence the proposal will result in parking on Highfield Road on or close to a difficult bend in the classified road, with a detrimental effect on road safety. This is a situation he does not wish to encourage, and in these circumstances he would advise the application be resisted for highway safety issues.

Notwithstanding the issues regarding the school lay-by, there are no measures to prevent use of Out Lane to access the site. Any adverse effect on traffic and pedestrian safety on Out Lane adds to the objectionable nature of the application.

Croston Parish Council

No comments had been received at the time of writing the report.

LCC Archaeology

Do not consider any archaeological response necessary.

Representations:

A letter has been received stating that although they are not a resident of Out Lane, so the traffic does not affect them, the applicant works hard with the youth of the football club, without pay, keeping them off the streets. The proposal should be encouraged for their health and well being.

Nine letters of objection have been received from the nearest property on Out Lane. Their reasons for objection can be summarised as:

- The application has not solved one of the issues why the previous application was refused – disturbance to local residents.
- Should the lay-by ever be withdrawn for parking the footballers would have to use Out Lane for access and they believe there are as many as seven teams.
- Weekends are the only quiet days the nearest properties to the school get. Due to extensions the school is now very close with activity from 7am with after school activities and night school in the evenings.
- When the school was originally built it had not to be used on Sundays.
- The lay-by will not accommodate all the cars, which may be around 44, so there would be overflow parking on the road. Also, bowlers from the bowling green already use it at weekends and buses use it as far as the gates for turning.
- The applicant cannot control the parking ensuring people will park in the lay-by. No one believes parents will continue using the lay-by when the weather gets wet and cold and Out Lane is narrow with little or no footpaths. One parent on Out Lane already runs his

children to school by car and it is not believed that people will walk five times as far to get to the field.

- Weekends are the only time that residents can guarantee that the road is not blocked to allow them to have visitors. When there is a function at the school the lane is completely blocked. Although there is ample parking parents prefer to park on the road.
- There is very little agricultural land left in the village
- A lot of money has been spent improving a footpath that runs down the side of the field and people using it will not want the noise of a football match.
- Any balls that go over the hedge will need to be retrieved by going onto their property, possibly causing damage.
- There are already several football pitches available in the village including over the bridge on the Bretherton Road.
- The site is in the Green Belt, which should be preserved.

Although it should be noted that several objectors stated that they did not want to deprive young people of facilities for sport they objected to the proposal in the location proposed.

A letter from a resident on Highfield Road near the lay-by states that the access point to the parking area is on a double bend that severely limits the view of people pulling out of their properties. Any on street parking means that traffic cannot be seen until it is within a metre or two of their driveway, which is dangerous. If parking were strictly limited to the bus lay-by with no on street parking they would have no objection to the proposed development.

The Head teacher 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 in the lay-by off Highfield Road. However, although the Council could ensure the lay-by was made freely available for parking through a legal agreement, it could not enforce that people actually use it and don't park on Highfield Road or drive down Out Lane, which the County Highways Engineer objects to.

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 if the lay-by was not used, 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 Highfield Road and possibly Out Lane contrary to Policy TR4 and section (g) of Policy LT12 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review, specifically as the Local Planning Authority cannot ensure that the lay-by is used for parking.

Neighbour Amenity

One of the reasons the previous application was refused was on the grounds of 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:

To conclude, most people would not object to the principle of providing outdoor sport facilities for Croston Junior Football Club, as stated by some of the objectors and the applicant has tried to address the issue of parking that resulted in the previous application being refused.

However, the Council cannot make visitors to the football pitches park in the lay-by and it is likely that if the lay-by is full they will park on the Highfield Road or drive down Out Lane. In addition, it is intended in the future to bring the existing pitches at the school up to a standard where they can be used again, so eventually there could be four useable pitches north of the school. These existing pitches could be served by parking at the school. It would be difficult to distinguish between visitors to the school pitches that could park at the school and the two that this application proposes that would use the lay-by. In addition, the applicant has not addressed the issue of neighbour amenity. As the previous application noted, the properties on Out Lane suffer noise and disturbance from the school throughout the week. The pitched 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. For these reasons the application is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Refuse Full Planning Permission

Reasons

1. Due to the increase in the number of pitches north of Bishop Rawstone International Language College the number of vehicles likely to visit the site is likely to increase, having an adverse effect on traffic and pedestrian safety on Out Lane. Although parking is proposed in the lay-by off Highfield Road, the applicant or the local planning authority cannot enforce that visitors use this parking, so vehicles are still likely to access the site via Out Lane. In addition, the applicant has not satisfied the Council that the lay-by is large enough to accommodate all vehicles associated with the pitches, which is therefore likely to result in parking on Highfield Road (a classified road) close to a bend. 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.
