

APPLICATION NO: 15/01162/FUL		OFFICER: Mrs Lucy White	
DATE REGISTERED: 21st July 2015		DATE OF EXPIRY : 20th October 2015	
WARD: Pittville		PARISH:	
APPLICANT:	Pittville School		
LOCATION:	Pittville School, Albert Road, Cheltenham		
PROPOSAL:	Erection of indoor sports centre, artificial turf pitch, tennis courts, floodlighting, associated parking and landscaping and including demolition of two dwellings.		

REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	14
Number of objections	6
Number of representations	0
Number of supporting	8

128 Albert Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3JF

Comments: 6th August 2015
Letter attached.

48 Linden Avenue
Prestbury
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3DP

Comments: 9th October 2015

There are masses of benefits to this proposal and no major drawbacks as far as I can see.

Pittville school lacks decent sports provision which is a contributing factor to it's lack of local support. Its reputation is improving and this year more applicants than in a long time put it as first choice and are now attending from the local area. Our local secondary should have full support from the local population as we have the power to enable it to become a really popular school choice for local children.

Local sports teams need more indoor provision to see them safely through the winter months.

Pittville looks to increase income which will directly benefit our local children.

Obesity is an increasing issue nationally as well as closer to home, by providing more sport and fitness opportunity we at least make headway into combating this major lifestyle issue.

Noise pollution isn't even valid as a point in my eyes for this proposal - I can't see excessive noise being an issue for this type of facility. The noise is equal to increased children playing outdoors - something else we ought to all be encouraging.

Traffic may increase in and out of the school site but the new homes being built nearby will have a much larger impact on local traffic, noise, light pollution and additional pressure on our local amenities. This school is and will be growing over the next few years as its popularity increases and local population booms - the additional traffic from this facility will be negligible.

We as a local community ought to be supporting our local school in trying to make improvements with which to benefit our local children. Unfortunately villages have to grow but we ought to remember that it's the people within the village that have the power to ensure it maintains its friendly village feel and opposing opportunities for our new generation and making them go further afield for such provision in education and leisure is simply not helpful.

Greenfields
New Barn Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3LG

Comments: 14th September 2015

We wish to object to the Pittville sports development for the following reasons

1. This is a commercial enterprise set in the middle of an established residential district.
2. Opening hours 8am to 10pm-7days a week. Neighbours will lose enjoyment of their homes-to which they are entitled. Totally. The constant noise from 4 tennis courts and hockey pitch in close proximity to gardens is mental torture.
3. The Foxley Tagg report was issued before approval was granted for the students accommodation, therefore the accumulative effect on the surrounding area has not been factored in .
4. We are not aware of any survey having been carried out locally to quantify the demand from the community for this facilities
5. The proposed use of the complex by the community is to justify the sale of the playing field.
6. We believe that Cheltenham is well served with leisure facilities.
7. This is a state funded school of C550 pupils and its priority should be to spend less and improve the existing facilities for its pupils only.
8. The development does not meet with the approval of Sport England.
9. The provision of the sport complex does not meet the conditions laid down to justify the disposal of a playing field.
10. The Landscape Architect report does not favour the loss of the playing field needed to fund this.
11. The sale of the playing field which will fund this project has to be approved by the Dept.for Education.
12. As PE was the one thing in this school that Ofsted rated as good, we do not understand why the headmaster feels his pupils deserve such exquisite sports facilities.

13. The use of the field which is being forfeited to pay for this venture was deliberately stopped and it would appear, from the photos and the pleading of Foxley Tagg about the poor facilities, that no regular maintenance has been carried out- in order to show things in the worst possible light.
14. We agree with the landscape architect report that while we understand the need to update the school sports facilities it is regrettable that this should require the disposal of a playing field and the erosion of urban green space.
15. This is a commercial enterprise associated with the school. If it is not financially successful who will pick up the tab ?
16. The character of Regency Pittville has already been eroded by characterless buildings. This one is no different. Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder.
17. Fitness First are opening in the new Brewery development.

Comments: 4th November 2015

There has been a remarkable lack of support for a new sports complex funded by the loss of a school playing field, until now. We therefore suspect that a concerted campaign has been put into action , so that in two days we have 5 comments in support . Are they all from parents ?

While it is recognised that the PE facilities at the school may need improving, selling off your best playing field is not the best way to do it. Does anyone really believe that spending £3,000,000 on a sports hall will improve their children's chance in life ? Get real.

To anyone who thinks Pittville is an excellent senior school I would say, read the Ofsted reports. This school has been in need of improvement for years and has to be supported by Balcarras School.

Parents who wish to do the best for their children do not choose a school because it has a good sports hall. If they have the choice they will send their children to a school with good academic results. I have never in my life ever encountered anyone who chose to send their children to a school with low academic standards and good sporting facilities.

I can assure you that the playing field in question is level , is in good condition, and WAS USED regularly for all kinds of sporting activity until the headmaster suddenly put a stop to it all. We know why.

Pittville School is 80 years old . It is a small school of about 550 pupils. In 2008 it was being considered for a major refurbishment or rebuilding. With this in mind, I must ask, just 7 years later, is spending £3, 000,000 on a new sports centre attached to an 80 year old school ,locally listed, in a conservation area, a good idea ?

Other schools with good sporting facilities are usually more modern build and larger schools. Perhaps in the not too distant future Pittville will need a more modern school. In that case, will this become a sports hall with an old school attached. ?

Sport England is a body set up to encourage sport . They want to protect our playing fields. Have they or any other source (of which there is a long list) been approached by the school for funding to bring the school's facilities up to an acceptable standard? We have no evidence of this having been done. Is this not the first thing the school should do or is it hellbent on this grandiose scheme. Is this a school with a mission ?

We note that everyone who supports the provision of the sports complex does not live adjacent to Pittville School and will not be affected by the loss of the playing field.

The residents of Albert Road and New Barn Lane will have 800/1000 new students thrust upon them in the near future plus another 300 houses in Starvehall Farm. The noise , pollution and traffic generated by these developments can only have an adverse affect on the well- being of everyone in this area. Perhaps those who support these applications are not aware of this. Two major developments (the student accommodation and Starvehall Farm) followed by the two school projects (the sports complex and housebuilding) would turn the whole area into a massive building site for many years, as well as causing disruption to commuters.

That is over development and is not acceptable.

We need and value the green space that the school playing field provides between the two new developments.

Pittville School does need to provide an unnecessary leisure centre for the community at the cost of £3,000,000 and this application should not be approved.

Comments: 4th November 2015

N.B. The last sentence should read-Pittville School does NOT need to provide an unnecessary leisure centre for the community at the cost of £3,000,000

Comments: 20th January 2016

We see from the officer's update report that the reason for deferment of these planning applications was due to a dispute over the quota of affordable housing on the playing field.

In view of the historical problems with flooding in Wymans Brook I am shocked to learn from the officers report

- a positive recommendation could be given for the sports centre application (15/01162/FUL), this being acceptable as a stand-alone proposal.

5 Holmer Crescent
Up Hatherley
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3LR

Comments: 1st November 2015

The school is expanding to meet demand and while it has a beautifully maintained small sport hall it is wholly insufficient to meet the needs of the school population. The site chosen is well placed with good access from Albert Road and not overly close to residential housing. The school has larger playing fields at the front of the grounds that will continue to be used for outdoor sports so outlining an innovative use of the smaller space for indoor sports hall and the other facilities makes sense. I wholly support the provision of those facilities for the school.

51 Pilley Crescent
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 9ES

Comments: 1st November 2015

Much needed sports facilities for the school to sustain development at the school as a whole.

9 Tamar Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 5QB

Comments: 1st November 2015

I wholeheartedly support the development of these facilities.

Cleeve has an outstanding school complete with excellent sports facilities, Charlton Kings and Hesters Way also. North east Cheltenham deserves a school with facilities, and therefore a following, that rivals all the other areas and their respective schools. Local people should not have to contemplate bussing children across or out of the town to access a school with good PE facilities. Nor should we be motivated to leave this otherwise fabulous area for the want of a more favorable catchment area. We want, need and support the continued development of Pittville school in its onward journey towards excellence.

I recently celebrated my 40th birthday. I am proud to say that I went to school at Pittville in the first year the former girls grammar school converted to a co-ed comprehensive. As we walked in the door, the scaffolding was being taken down around the new boys PE changing room. That was the end of developments in the PE department, which has seen the school lag behind most in the area in this respect and contributed to its inability to attract pupils.

The upper, former allotment playing field beyond the tree-line has NEVER been utilised by the school as it has a massive field to the front elevation of the school which can meet its needs. The area now proposed for disposal in order to fund enhanced sports facilities is so remote to the school itself its neither use or ornament. I totally disagree with Sports England as the loss of this area will not negatively impact on the school in any way.

Maybe there is some horse trading to be done over exact locations, heights of fencing, soundproofing etc. to make this more palatable to local residents, that's understandable. However, I would respectfully suggest to those objectors in the immediate area to the entire scheme that they are shooting themselves in the foot. Compare and contrast the value of your homes compared with similar in Charlton Kings within the catchment of well-equipped and regarded schools; it is in your interest to support this development and the school in the broader sense.

There are no good Gym / sports facilities on this side of town within easy walking or running distance. If the facilities are accessible outside of school hours it will be a massive benefit to local residents and no doubt the students set to be housed on the adjacent site. In a list of appropriate facilities for the university students to utilise in their spare time I am sure this would be higher than any involving access to alcohol in town or Prestbury down the road.

The rear field on which this development is proposed has a steep incline on it which makes it of no use for pitch based sports. It is only any use for running round and fair-weather break times. This is another point missed by Sports England; there is no real loss of usable field, only the gain of a much needed sports facility.

With my eldest daughter now in year 7 at this school and 2 siblings to follow I sincerely hope a way can be found to provide this vital development; the first significant enhancement to the PE facilities in decades.

34 Cakebridge Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3HJ

Comments: 5th August 2015

As a resident directly affected by this proposal I would like to make the following comments:

1. The school is not 'replacing the 3 x existing tennis courts' it is actually adding an additional court. It is requesting 4 x tennis courts.
2. The proximity of the courts - right up against our back garden walls - is not acceptable. I have information about other such courts in Cheltenham and Gloucester and non of them are right up against residential properties. I have been informed that at least one application for such a development was refused - precisely because it would have located the courts too close to residential properties.
3. These courts are intended to be available for use every single day of the year, including bank holidays and all Sundays. Therefore, the potential noise pollution for those residents such as myself whose properties back onto the school is immense, and, in my opinion, not acceptable. Especially given the potential in summer for these courts to be operating from 08:00 to 22:00.
4. If the additional court (which should be clearly stated as such in the application) were not included in the application the courts would at least be one court's width further away from residents' back gardens and the noise pollution would therefore be slightly reduced.
5. What specialist sound reduction measures, apart from a few trees, are being proposed to try and mitigate the noise pollution?

Comments: 1st November 2015

Proposed sports centre and tennis courts:

As has been pointed out by others, Sport England does not support this proposal. I will quote only the summary report from Sport England, which is a statutory consultee. However the detail of the report rejects the proposals for a whole variety of reasons, including lack of proven need and viability:

'The application has not fully demonstrated that the proposed sports facilities will be fit for purpose and sustainable in the longer term. Therefore, it is not yet possible to conclude that the proposed development fulfils the circumstances described in exception E5 of Sport England's Planning Policy Statement or the third bullet point in paragraph 74 of the NPPF. In light of the above, Sport England objects to the proposal the subject of this application.'

My own comments:

The height of the (belatedly) proposed protective mesh netting around the courts is totally insufficient - c 2 metres only. The recommended height for tennis courts is 3-4 metres (ie 12 feet), and that's even where the siting of the courts is well away from any residential housing. Most men these days are c 2 m tall so the netting would only reach head height! There would be tennis balls constantly flying over the top of the wire mesh into residents' gardens, endangering not only their plants, sheds, their childrens' outdoor play areas, but also others sitting out/working in their gardens trying to enjoy their legitimate right to peace and quiet and fresh air.

Even if these tennis courts were in any way appropriate, which they are not because they are so close to residential properties, it would require effective acoustic screening on all sides to a height sufficient to have any hope of significantly reducing noise spill. Proposing (again belatedly) acoustic screening on one side only is totally inadequate, the sound will simply spill out on the other three sides, especially on the downhill side, into the back gardens of the residents on Cakebridge Road. The proposed height of the screening is only c 2m. To have any chance of being in any way effective the height would have to be greatly increased. However, we, the

residents, would then be faced with an enormous solid wooden 'box' blocking out the views/light from our back gardens - an enormous blot on the landscape.

The positioning of the courts right up against the school means also that the courts are actually closer to the back gardens of Cakebridge Road residents than they need to be. The planners have not even thought to propose that the courts be located right at the top of the school's land where the berm is. That would have at least slightly increased the distance to the nearest back gardens.

There is no reference to any lighting (floodlighting or otherwise) for these courts which must mean that there is no intention to construct any lighting. However, the intended presence or not of lighting needs to be clearly stated, as lighting would be yet another totally intolerable imposition on neighbouring houses. It would be completely unacceptable.

The new diagram of the courts now shows 3 courts rather than the original 4, but the corresponding other plans/diagrams still show the initial number of courts, ie 4.

Comments: 18th December 2015

In their excellent comments of 2 Dec and 4 Nov my neighbour at No 56 Cakebridge Road and the person living on New Barn Lane have meticulously listed the whole raft of reasons why this latest version of the proposed development is unacceptable. Pittville School does not need to provide an unnecessary, and we believe, actually financially unviable leisure centre for the whole community. We are just round the corner from Cheltenham Leisure. I am not going to repeat all the comments they/I have already made, they speak for themselves and for all the residents of Cakebridge Road whose quality of life (noise/light pollution) will be greatly and unacceptably degraded if this proposal goes ahead.

As the neighbour at No 44 Cakebridge Rd points out, the number of tennis courts has suddenly changed back again from 3 to 4 - why? The only reason I can think of is the developers trying yet again, with each review of the plans, to hope that no-one will manage to plough through all the hundreds of documents and notice all the details of what they are proposing, and that they are actually going back on previous changes made after initial, valid complaints. But, in addition, the proposal is now favouring an option where the sports complex itself (the sports building) will dominate the skyline looking up from Cakebridge Road toward the new GlosCat campus. Not only that, the residents of the middle to top of Cakebridge Road, myself included, will now not only have the excessive and unacceptable level of noise caused by the proposed tennis courts (now 4 not 3), we will also have all the noise plus the light pollution of the proposed large all-weather pitch. This is totally unacceptable.

And yes, it is strange to suddenly see a few comments in support of the proposal. Most of them from people living nowhere near the School: - Pilley, Up Hatherly and Paddocks Lane. Paddocks Lane is actually located right next to the very nice, very large green expanse of Pittville Park open area/golf course - and literally just above all the sports facilities available at the main Cheltenham Sport Centre. I wonder what they would feel about the same proposals right up behind their own back garden boundary.

44 Cakebridge Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3HJ

Comments: 11th December 2015

Our garden backs onto the playing field. The plans show the new tennis courts backing onto our garden wall. The previous set of plans had shown a reduction to three courts with a gap between

our garden and the first court. Why have four courts be reinstated? How far behind the wall will they come? Why do we now have to look at unsightly chain fencing?

56 Cakebridge Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3HJ

Comments: 10th September 2015

I wish to object to the Planning Application for the following reasons:

1. The significant amount of noise pollution which will be created by the tennis courts adjacent to the dwellings on Cakebridge Road. The School proposes to open these courts 'out of school hours' to the public therefore this noise will be present up to 2200hrs
2. The significant light pollution which will be caused by the floodlights used on these tennis courts, this will obviously be especially evident in the winter.
3. The School is using the 'open to the community' statement as a sop to justify the creation of a very expensive Sports Complex which is far in excess of what the School requires. Cheltenham does not need another Sports Complex, especially as this one will be in direct competition with the Cheltenham Leisure Centre.
4. The proposed University Campus will include its own gym therefore there will be very little membership of the Complex coming from the students
5. The School infrastructure in general require significant refurbishment, at some point in the future will a decision have to be made with regard the future of the School and in this event is there a likelihood we will have a very expensive Sports Complex with no School to use it.
6. The long term manning/management of any 'out of hours' usage will be very expensive and it is debatable if this commitment can be sustained
7. The School does not require a very expensive Sports Complex, its existing sports infrastructure should be refurbished with any additional buildings identified considered in the light of the School requirement, not governed by the amount of money it may have available from selling a Playing Field

Comments: 2nd December 2015

As identified in our initial response to this proposal I would like to reiterate our objection to this planning application. The salient points of our objection are still:

Noise pollution, when the school is using the existing playing fields the noise from the participants and spectators can be heard quite clearly on Cakebridge Road. Multiply this by the envisaged use of the external all weather till 2200hrs facilities then this will become 'significant'.

Light pollution, this speaks for itself given the all weather all hours proposed usage.

Sport England objects to this proposal. A quote from their response is given: 'The application has not fully demonstrated that the proposed sports facilities will be fit for purpose and sustainable in the longer term. Therefore, it is not yet possible to conclude that the proposed development fulfils the circumstances described in exception E5 of Sport England's Planning Policy Statement or the third bullet point in paragraph 74 of the NPPF. In light of the above, Sport England objects to the proposal the subject of this application.'

Although it is outside the remit of the Planning Office evaluation process I would like to take the opportunity presented by this comment platform to voice some potential concerns on the proposed Complex financial position. Due to the quasi school/commercial aspect of the proposed Complex it would seem necessary, and common sense, to base some of the decision making on a Business Plan, and Foxley Tagg have confirmed such a Plan exists (although not open to us, the council tax payers). I raise the following points for consideration:

The Plan states (confirmed in Foxley Tagg submitted comment) that at some time in the future it is envisaged a 'small profit' being returned to the School, this by default identifies some sort of break even or deficit existence for some years to come (the Community User Agreement states the Complex must be available to the Community for ten years from the date of signing). Gloucestershire County Council have stated in an FOI request that they require no sight of the Business Plan, evaluation of it will be carried out by the Pittville School Governors and ongoing budgetary responsibility will be the School's, this raises the following questions:

Is there any external oversight of the Plan, independent from the School Governors.

Has the Plan been prepared by a party with a vested interest ? Hypothetically if a planning company were employed on a ' no win no fee' basis then a Business Plan written by them, for their customers eyes only, might lean towards identifying a favourable position, in much the same way other documents written by them to obtain planning permission might seem to have been prepared.

A component of the Plan must obviously comprise some form of market research, and as the local community (among others) is being expected to make use of the Complex you would assume some form of research, i.e. ask us, would have been carried out. We live in the local community and nobody has asked us. As a slight aside the University Campus will comprise its own gymnasium, thereby potentially removing a significant number of potential members

Following on from the above and having read the Community Use Agreement it is evident that the School is proposing a full blown sports centre fully open to the public (when not in use by the School) between 0800hrs and 2200hrs daily. Inherent in this is that the School will be totally responsible for all staffing costs, public liability, health and safety etc, plus accelerated wear and tear costs increased by external usage, all met to a significant degree by external membership fees, and failing this by a School budget which has not been increased to cater for this potential liability. Given that Cheltenham does not need another sports facility, especially one which will be in direct competition with Cheltenham Leisure less than a mile away, is there a fallback position in the event membership falls below a required level and the Complex becomes a significant drain on a finite School budget?

7 York Row
Prestbury
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3EW

Comments: 11th August 2015

I am concerned that the proposal coupled with work already planned in to develop Starvehall Farm/New Barn fields will lead to traffic problems on all roads between Prestbury and Cheltenham town, having a negative effect on residents in the area. I am also concerned with lack of information on local facilities such as schools and doctors, and waste management. I would like a further study to be done to investigate these issues and consult local residents.

29 Linden Avenue
Prestbury
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3DW

Comments: 8th October 2015

We would like to Support the proposal for the following reasons:

There is a lack of indoor sports facilities in Cheltenham that are available to hire for local netball clubs, and social netball.

- a recently created junior netball club in Prestbury is playing outside on a Saturday because of this! Weather constraints will undoubtedly mean that sessions will be cancelled especially in the winter months.
- Netball Fun League, who run social netball leagues in and around Gloucestershire, are really struggling to find new indoor venues for their leagues. Participation is growing month on month, as we strive to grow participation.
- Gloucestershire Netball have many clubs in the Cheltenham area that are crying out for indoor sports facilities to hold their training - for both Junior & Senior teams. Without these new facilities, netball participation is likely to fall. With the imminent closure of Bentham Country Club, there will be even more pressure on the current facilities.
- The netball development programme, which is the grass roots of netball in this county, also struggle to find appropriate venues.

This is only one sport, and just from a netball perspective, there is undoubtedly a "need" for more facilities in Cheltenham.

Participation in sport is one of the legacies of the 2012 Olympics, and is essential for the development and well being of everyone. The more facilities there are, then better that has to be for the community.

1 Selkirk Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 2HY

Comments: 2nd November 2015

Great addition to the school and local community.

6 Paddocks Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4NT

Comments: 6th November 2015

I can only see that this sports centre will be a excellent and positive contribution to the school, the pupils, local area and community. Pittville school has 'very' much improved over the last few years all thanks to the hard work from the head and teachers. Now it NEEDS the practical improvements. There is a lovely large sports field in front of the school for other activities.

6 Brymore Close
Prestbury
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3DY

Comments: 2nd November 2015

Pittville is an excellent senior school and is becoming a very popular choice when choosing a senior school. What however it hugely lacks is up to date sports facilities.

This is given as the main reason as to why many families living near the school don't opt to send their children there, instead choosing a school that requires driving their child every day, thus adding to the local traffic. With better sports facilities more children would walk to their local school and actually reduce the traffic.

All of the other major local senior schools (e.g. Balcarras, Bournside, Cleeve, All Saints Academy) have excellent up to date sports facilities and it only seems fair to allow pupils at Pittville to be able to enjoy up to date facilities as well.

If the school was able to hire out the new facilities this would generate a much needed income that could be spent for the benefit of pupils. With the current crisis of obesity, particularly amongst young people a local up to date sports complex would benefit both pupils and the local community, hopefully instilling a healthier lifestyle.

Local residents cite concerns re adding to local traffic. Directly opposite the school is the most used park in Cheltenham, frequently hosting events that draw in huge crowds (charity fetes, park runs etc). This doesn't have much of an impact on the local traffic so I can't imagine a few cars attending e.g. a tennis match is of any significance. Certainly nothing comparable to Cheltenham racecourse just up the road !!