

APPLICATION NO: 23/00117/FUL	OFFICER: Mrs Lucy White
DATE REGISTERED: 24th February 2023	DATE OF EXPIRY : 26th May 2023
WARD: Warden Hill	PARISH:
APPLICANT:	Belmont School
LOCATION:	Belmont School Warden Hill Road Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Installation of 200m oval running track with a 60m straight and run-off, 2no. smaller 100m ovals, a campus-wide 2 metre wide cycle track, a long jump pit and informal and equiped play areas. Erection of 1no. MUGA (to include five-a-side football pitch), 1no. BMX pump track (advanced and beginner combined) and bleacher seating.

REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	44
Number of objections	23
Number of representations	2
Number of supporting	19

The Lindens
1 The Burgage
Prestbury Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3DJ

Comments: 31st October 2023

I am writing in support of this planning application. I worked for 34 years as a Chartered Physiotherapist initially for the NHS and more recently for the Leonard Cheshire Disability charity, and went on to develop an inclusive cycling project for Gloucestershire, which I am continuing to deliver today, seven years on from retirement. I believe passionately in the importance of participating in physical activity and/or sport for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of people of all ages and abilities. For people who, through no fault of their own, have a lifelong or acquired disability, accessing safe and appropriate sporting and physical activity facilities is usually difficult and often impossible. The facilities proposed in this planning application will enable all the students of Belmont, Bettridge and other local special schools and people of all ages in the community, to take part in sports and physical activities such as cycling, in a safe and suitable environment. Currently, the closest facility for safe adapted cycling is an athletics track in Gloucester - 10 miles away. The proposed 2 metre wide cycle track around the school campus, will provide a safe cycle route for people of all ages and abilities on the existing adapted bikes, from the current Belmont students to the residents of the local Leonard Cheshire home and future generations.

6 Bournside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AR

Comments: 20th March 2023

I would like to register an objection to some aspects of this planning proposal on the following grounds:

1) Noise outside of normal school hours

As with many of our neighbours, we accept that by living near a school site there will be associated noise during standard school hours. The current proposal to have the sports facility in use until 10pm at night and over both Saturdays and Sundays goes beyond reasonable expectations of the disruption one should expect from a school site, with impacts on residents' sleep, and ability to enjoy our homes and gardens in peace and quiet after school hours.

As it currently stands, inside with double-glazed windows shut we often hear evening noise coming from the outdoor sports facilities at Bournside school (shouts and so on), so the noise from the proposed facility at Belmont would have a far greater impact as it is that much closer.

In addition, on the few occasions that Belmont currently host weekend or evening activities, we are often disturbed by noise from the school car park which is just a few metres from our house (e.g. loud conversations across the car park as people get into their cars). Because the car park users are on a school site, perhaps they have no awareness that they are also in a residential area where noise can cause a nuisance. This is perfectly tolerable whilst it happens only occasionally, but would be a problem if it became the norm.

2) Concern over traffic

The proposal states that the site entrance would remain via Warden Hill road, but it does not specify how traffic will exit.

I would like a condition put in place specifying that traffic must not enter or exit via Bournside Close. The current arrangement whereby school taxis exit via Bournside Close is thoroughly unsuitable, and must not be made even worse.

3) Biodiversity

The UK is facing a biodiversity crisis, and on the day (20/03/23) that the UN has launched a plan to save humanity from the climate crisis, I feel that this proposal does not do nearly enough to compensate for replacing green field with asphalt, and bringing noise and disruption close to a strip of land that is a haven for local wildlife.

I have over the past two years observed the school removing significant areas of wildlife habitat from the site, including cutting down trees at their boundary in which birds were nesting, in order to make way for additional parking spaces (parking spaces which were not included on the relevant planning application), which gives me no confidence that

they take this issue seriously. I would therefore like conditions to be imposed that ensure maximum effort is put into ongoing responsible environmental stewardship of this land. Instructing the school to plant some token trees is not enough, especially since those planted in recent years on the Bournside site have failed.

4) Commercial use of the facility

Whilst the proposal states this is only a 'tertiary' motivation for the development, I have concerns about the fundamental change of land use that would result if this were to effectively turn into a commercial sports facility. I'd like to see restrictions imposed to ensure that the facility is used for its main purpose (Belmont pupils, other Gloucestershire special schools, local primary pupils) with only very limited scope for commercial/community activities, and only where they are run by organisations whose aims are in line with the school's (focussed on accessible/disability sport) rather than general sporting clubs who have other facilities available to them.

With many thanks for your consideration.

Comments: 8th October 2023

I continue to object to this proposal because the relatively minor changes made since the original proposal do not address the concerns that I and others have raised. The school had an opportunity to engage constructively with residents over the summer, but did not. The school has repeatedly broken trust with the residents of Bournside Close regarding the use of their 'emergency gate' for daily school traffic and, as such, I am no longer able to trust any assurances they provide over the intended use of this site. I strongly object to the proposed hours of operation, which are vastly out of keeping with the main stated purpose of the facilities.

76 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 26th September 2023

The revised plans do not meet the concerns initially raised. We have received a letter from the Head which has also not really added any weight to the proposal and that this is going to be beneficial to the surrounding community or individuals at the school.

This continues to be a design/proposal which is for a leisure centre to the public and not at all in the interests of the students.

Inclusions of a sound wall is acknowledging the noise, yet does not change the the proposed hours of operation. There is zero benefit to the students of this site being open weekends or evening until 10pm.

Sound/light pollution are not being addressed. Also the school has given no details around the bleacher seating in their plans - where they will be located or the height of them. These too could have a privacy concern and add further to noise pollution.

They need to restrict operating hours for this to be acceptable to residents in any form. We do not want football matches going on with floodlights until 10pm.

Objection remains and thoughts inline with all the other vast majority of objections.

Comments: 5th April 2023

Firstly, I would like to say I am not in objection of the aims of the proposal, however I believe the actual intent behind the proposal is not that which is being presented.

Nobody would object to improving the education facilities of children with SEN. However, the facilities being built are not being aimed at the small number of students, which potentially may not be practical for disabled pupils. This is an application instead to open the school up as a public sports facility. The school are starting with this and will look to put retrospective applications in to further expand it.

As a resident who backs onto this space, it is already loud in the summer months when students are outside. However, that is to confined hours and infrequent. This is perfectly acceptable of course. However, this would become exponentially worse if this permission was granted.

The hours of use for a large sports facility for loud sporting activity is quite simply unacceptable to be open and accessible until 10pm. This will severely ruin quality of life in what is a quite and tranquil area, certainly come weekends when the school is mostly closed.

10pm is very late when there are many young children who live in the residences which sit opposite the proposed new sports facility. In the summer months, windows will not be able to be left open with the noise which will be emitted from the site due to loud cheering from the bleachers at football games, for example. Young children will be in bed. The assumption is this will be utilised for football matches for adults. Therefore noise pollution must be considered - not just for residents but local wildlife. We have an abundance of wildlife living along the stream at the bottom of gardens.

In addition to this, the secondary concern is light pollution. If this facility is open at such late hours, it will need sufficient lighting so the site is not dangerous to navigate. This will reflect into all the neighbouring homes which reside opposite - so now we have noise and lighting to contend with far beyond what anyone would deem as reasonable hours.

My final point of concern is the brook itself and the water levels. We get very high water levels in the brook when there is persistent rain, which is becoming more frequent. We had damage to our riverbank reinforcement wall which took some of the slabs away due to the speed of the high levels of water in Summer 2022 - they have been there for years. With less natural land for water to naturally drain away, this will create considerable more water surface run off which will collect in the brook, further pushing water levels up during these periods risking severe damage and flooding to our properties.

As such, to summarise:

1. Facilities are not reasonable - this is a school for SEN, not a sports facility for the general public (does it need an entire change of purpose?)

2. The operating hours are not reasonable - weekend extension is not ideal, but opening until 10pm at night it completely inconsiderate and completely unreasonable for fair use.

3. The lighting situation and bleachers elevating views into gardens is of concern. We do not want light pollution late at night as this will be a nuisance to residents, but also an issue for the wildlife.

We strongly object to this being fair and reasonable usage and believe the application (not well circulated and information provided to residents) is not in fact of any benefit to the students given the nature of what is being installed. This is simply a public facility being pushed through under the guise of school facilities. Not needed.

I find it quite upsetting as residents requesting extensions, we cannot have windows at certain angles etc, due to sensitivity around privacy or other minor low impacting issues...yet the school can quietly pop a public leisure centre at the bottom of our gardens with extreme usage. Please consider this fairly.

74 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 9th April 2023

We are writing in regard to the proposed plans for Belmont School to improve their sports facilities on their playing fields. Looking at the plans in detail this weekend we are shocked to see the huge scale and ambition of the proposals which we feel are out of scale with local needs and do not sit well within the suburban environment around the school. We back onto the proposed development in the bottom left hand corner.

We were not aware or invited to any consultation meeting in January. Plans like these, that will have such a huge impact on the local area, should have been consulted more widely.

We are concerned about the light and noise pollution. The extended opening hours, operating all year round seem to be completely unreasonable given that the school backs onto suburban gardens that will be impacted both by noise and light pollution every day of the year until 10pm at night . We knew when we bought our house in Bournside Road 20 years ago that we were backing onto the school site, and that there would be noise during the school day. We could not have anticipated that anyone would conceive building what is effectively a commercial sports complex on the Belmont site and open up the fields to all. To enable the opening hours until 10 at night all year round, we are sure retrospective planning for increased lighting will be submitted. The scale of the development not only impacts us, but also the wildlife and habitat at the bottom of our gardens.

We cannot see any provision for extra parking and traffic control. I feel particularly sorry for those that live near the current exit gate. It is not clear how cars will flow though the site at all hours. The roads are already blocked at certain times of the day, this will greatly increase commuter times and parking problems in the local area. (and the traffic risk to local students who have had a number of accidents outside Bournside school over

the years). Also, there has to be an increased security risk to our homes that back onto the site. What security arrangements will be put in place and who will staff the complex until 10 at night?

We do not understand the need for this sports development, given that extensive sporting facilities already exist at the neighbouring Bournside and Leckhampton schools. What unmet need is this development really serving that could not be addressed within existing built sport facilities?

Finally we cannot understand the status as having a low flood risk. Other comments suggest that the incorrect post code has been used to ascertain the flood implications. Belmont may not have an increased flood risk but there will be implications for others that live adjacent to Hatherley Brook, such as ourselves and our neighbours. Belmont playing fields sit much higher in the landscape than the gardens along Bournside Road. With a number of developments around Cheltenham in recent years, Hatherley Brook is getting deeper and faster. Only in 2007 did we experience catastrophic floods around here that flooded houses at the end of our road and encroached into our gardens. (caused by heavy rain - not by burst pipes) Others have commented on the erosion at the bottom of their garden. We are responsible for the damage caused on our side of the bank - who is responsible for the damage on Belmont side? There have been issues around Merestones with falling trees and a collapsed bank along a footpath, that have yet to be rectified.

In short we object to such a large scale development of this site. We would be supportive of school improvements, but believe the scale of development is beyond what is needed for the school and will have a huge detrimental impact to local residents.

Comments: 11th October 2023

Reference 23/00117/FUL- Installation of 200m oval running track, with a 100m straight and run-off, 2no. smaller 100m ovals, a campus-wide 2 metre wide cycle track and a long jump pit. Erection of 2no. MUGAs (to include five-a-side football pitches), 2no. BMX pump tracks (advanced and beginner) and bleacher seating. ¿Belmont School Warden Hill Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 3AT

I am writing in reference to the above planning application as we continue to object to this proposal. I support the comments of our neighbours in Bournside Road who have also objected to this proposal.

This proposal remains an overdevelopment & what amounts to a change of use to an "open all hours" sports facility immediately adjacent to many residential properties. It is out of scale with local needs and does not sit well within the suburban environment around the school.

We back onto the proposed development in the bottom left hand corner

Intended use

In the responses since the last proposal, there have been a large number of comments requesting clarification on who will use the new facilities and in what number. This remains unclear. letter of the 5th October to residents states that he wishes to "reassure residents that principal reason for the improved facilities are for educational

use of our students", while then going on to state that "in relation to any other user, the access to the school is controlled and any ancillary use must be booked in", clearly suggesting that use is intended outside of the schools students.

This is reinforced by the proposed normal weekday operational hours which are 08.30-22.00 and 08.30-16.30 at weekends, all year round. Given these operating hours are well outside that of normal school hours and even term times at Belmont, it would suggest use is expected well beyond Belmont pupils and outside school hours. The inclusion of 2 BMX tracks in the application only reinforces this view.

Given that the user numbers and hours on which the site will be used are not defined, I cannot see how any credible assessment on noise levels, environmental impact, flood risk, parking or traffic can be made based on the revised proposals. There is a world of difference between 170 Belmont students using the site in school hours and potentially anyone in Gloucestershire being able to use it all year round.

Noise

A noise impact assessment has been made as part of the revised application and its summary states that with the installation of a 2m acoustic fence, the resultant highest predicted noise levels from the site backing on to our gardens will be around 49 dB. This is only 1 dB below the noise level considered to be a moderate outdoor annoyance so the results should be considered at best borderline. There is no statistical analysis in the report or confidence levels around these estimates which is concerning given their borderline nature.

It is important to note that the noise impact assessment is considered "in a vacuum" as it fails to take into account the existing environmental cumulative noise from the other local schools (Bournside, Belmont and Betteridge) as the measurements in the report were made between 18.00 and 21.00 hours when these schools are closed. As many Bournside residents have commented, the noise from existing school usage at the back of our properties is already significant during the school without the additional noise from this proposal adding to those levels during the school day and then extending them to late at night and weekends for every day of the year under this proposal.

As an illustration, I today measured the noise in our back garden using an iPhone app with an average of 56 dB and a peak of 77 dB over a 10 minute period at 12.40pm measured just outside my back door when school pupils were outside on a break. This is already at a level of "Serious annoyance" i.e. > 55 dB" according to the WHO guidance referred to in the noise impact assessment. We live at 74 Bournside Road and back onto the proposed development in the bottom left hand corner, so noise levels on those properties on the North side of the development will be much higher during school hours, as others have commented.

In addition, the fact that an acoustic fence is included in the revised plans suggest that the applicant accepts that noise impact is likely to be significant, but there is no fence planned on the North side of the site where noise levels are already very high. Surrounding properties are virtually all more than one story high so I fail to see how a 2m low level acoustic fence will have any impact at all. The noise impact assessment just assumes that the installation of the acoustic fencing will keep noise levels within an acceptable level but does not verify that this would be the case by testing its impact at all on the site or provide any statistical analysis/confidence levels that this will be effective,

especially so given earlier points regarding no clarity on numbers using the site or hours of use.

Flood risk

The applicants recent letter to residents now recognises that there is an increased potential for run off and flood risk. How can we be sure that the proposed rainwater storage facility is sufficient to mitigate this ever increasing risk as no assessment of this proposal has been provided or looked at by consultees at this stage?

Flood Lighting

While no application for floodlighting is included at this stage I cannot see how it will be possible to operate the facilities as proposed without flood lighting for most of the year, requiring a future application for floodlighting. This will cause significant light pollution into the adjacent properties on Bournside Road in addition to the noise.

Overall there has been little if any attempt by the school to address the main concerns of residents or provide any real clarity on the use case for the site. This is a very ambitious plan that steps well beyond the needs for the schools students and will have significant negative impact on local residents.

19 Oldbury Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 0HH

Comments: 16th February 2024

I am highly supportive of this application due to having a child at this school to whom like many others children at Belmont Special Needs school would benefit them, in aspects of outdoor activities and different types of sports to which many have a high interest.

This application will also give the children a chance to socialise with other communities and schools in a safe environment to which will help in developing skills for life.

Comments: 16th February 2024

I am highly supportive of this application due to having a child at this school to whom like many others children at Belmont Special Needs school would benefit them, in aspects of outdoor activities and different types of sports to which many have a high interest.

This application will also give the children a chance to socialise with other communities and schools in a safe environment to which will help in developing skills for life.

141 Fairview Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 2EX

Comments: 19th October 2023

Application Reference - 23/00117/FUL

To whom it may concern

Please see our comments in support of the proposed Belmont School Sports Facilities.

Please see a summary from SWCP (South West Cerebral Palsy) Tri County Disability Football Project.

SWCP were fortunate to receive funding from the sports partnerships in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset.

Between April and October, we hosted around 15 disability football sessions / football festivals.

Kevin the Head Teacher from Belmont School was kind enough to allow us to use the grass field at the school to host some of the sessions.

These were attended by both students from Belmont and other young people with additional needs from in and around Cheltenham.

We have since the conclusion of the project been able to signpost some of the young people to sessions / clubs in & around the areas they live in.

We have had some lovely feedback from parents about their children's experience as the majority would not be able to access grassroots football / sports opportunities.

We had several parents tell us they were not sure their child would cope in our sessions but were pleased to tell us they had thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and it would be fantastic if more sessions could take place.

The positive impact on so many of the participants who had had their first experiences of attending a football session was fantastic to see as well as new friendships being built between players. It was also a great opportunity for parents to talk to each other, share experiences and to add to their own networks.

Whilst there are a handful of disability clubs in Gloucestershire there remains a need for additional provision and opportunities for young people with SEN to access football / all sports and become more active.

Statistics show that people with a disability have struggled to access sports and exercise since the pandemic so if there are new opportunities to offer accessibility to sports / becoming active in new facilities we really should (in my opinion) look to support this -

The provision of new facilities that Belmont School are planning to build would certainly support access to so many young people who want the chance to become more active, get fit, play for a team and improve their mental health and well-being.

Parents and carers have so many barriers to a host of areas - it would be fantastic to have such a great provision within the community that could allow these young people to have a safe place to enjoy their sports

As a club we hope to be able, to host some additional sessions in 2024 and have some these new proposed facilities to utilise.

Belmont is a fantastic school which I've been fortunate enough to visit a few times - the whole vibe around the school is one of a very happy and caring place to be.

We ran a Facebook page through the time the sessions were taking place so please do check it out to see what a great time these sessions have the young people with SEN who attended (as well as a great opportunity for parents to chat)

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/263401959457976/?ref=share>

Thanks for reading
***** (SWCP Founder & Development)
Email - *****

137 Arle Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 8LJ

Comments: 12th February 2024

I am supporting for the work done, as it will make a huge difference to our children at Belmont.

72 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 13th March 2023

Letter attached.

42 Fairfield Parade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7PJ

Comments: 3rd November 2023

I write in support of the proposed application for the development of a cycle track, running track, BMX track and pitches. Historically, people with a disability have struggled significantly to find access to appropriately designed and supervised sports amenities. This has over many years, prevented positive progress for equality and inclusion for people with disabilities within the Cheltenham district. There is nowhere else in Cheltenham for our daughter, who uses a very specialist bike that is provided, to cycle safely. An approved application would both provide essential amenities for people with a disability, and be a positive demonstration of the local authority's strategic intent to support diversity and inclusion.

My daughter who is 30 years old and has profound learning disabilities already benefits from the present arrangement for cycling at Belmont School on a Sunday and this has had a positive affect on her mental and physical wellbeing. She also benefits from the vital social interactions with her peers as this also helps towards the prevention of social isolation. I have personally witnessed this with other users of the existing cycling arrangements at Belmont School. I was heartened by the acoustic assessment carried out by industry professionals who clearly noted that the predicted noise pollution to surrounding neighbourhoods fell below the recognised limits for noise annoyance.

10 Church Avenue
Falfield
Wotton-Under-Edge
GL12 8BY

Comments: 14th February 2024

I fully support the proposed plans.

My child attends the school and they alongside the other pupils will absolutely benefit from something like this. Sadly there are not enough places for inclusive sports facilities around, therefore SEN children miss out on opportunities to feel equal to others. It also enables them to have physical exercise and burn off that additional steam that they have resulting in a better mind set which benefits both them and their families.

17 Cadbury Close
Hucclecote
Gloucester
GL3 3UJ

Comments: 1st November 2023

Hello

I'd like to offer some support for the new sports facility at Belmont School. I am a military veteran and medically retired healthcare practitioner who has benefited from accessible cycling and other para sport as part of my rehabilitation from a number of injuries and health conditions.

These new facilities will allow local children and young people with additional needs to benefit from a safe secure place to exercise and enjoy sport.

This will bring benefits for their health and well being along with the opportunity to develop new skills and also provide a space where their families can share in their fun during holidays and weekends.

If at all possible It would be fantastic opportunity for a weekly accessible cycling session to be available to older local people with disabilities or injuries to use the track and the accessible bikes and trikes as this could be a real community asset if approved.

This is just as important for disabled children as other children. I'm aware that an accessible cycling group meet at the school already on a Sunday and that the families really benefit from a safe space to spend time together.

I can appreciate people in neighbouring properties may be concerned. Frankly seeing most have decent sized gardens backing on to the school so there is some distance between the houses and sports facilities then priority should be given to the school. It vital the school provides a healthy learning environment where children can thrive and make use of the open space effectively.

Bettridge School
Warden Hill Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AT

Comments: 9th October 2023

Dear Lucy

I am emailing in full support of the proposed plans for the Community Sport Development at Belmont School.

As a neighbouring special school, Bettridge is a specialist provision catering for 148 children and young people from the age of 2 to 19 with Special Educational Needs within the areas of Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning and Sensory and/or Physical needs.

Our learners benefit from being as active as possible, being able to access their local environment in a safe and inclusive way as part of the 5 ways to Wellbeing that we promote at Bettridge.

Having the opportunity to access such a facility as the proposed plans at Belmont School on our door step will have a massive positive impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of our learners.

This will be used by learners during the school day to access the athletics track and cycle track, which is accessible for wheelchairs and adapted bikes and by learners during weekends and holidays as part of respite and extra-curricular clubs.

The availability of an accessible toilet and shower facility will be so important and enable some of our most complex learners to enjoy this great facility alongside their peers.

We wholeheartedly support this application and hope that the development will come to fruition to benefit our children and young people and those of the wider community.

Kind regards,

55 Eldon Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 6TX

Comments: 14th November 2023

I am writing in support of the application. I have been volunteering with Goals Beyond Grass for the last couple of years at the inclusive cycling sessions on Sunday afternoons at Belmont School. So far, we've been making do with basically a carpark and a playground to run the sessions, which is not sustainable in the long term. The new facilities planned in the application are needed to provide people of all ages with varying degrees of mental and/or physical disabilities the opportunity to exercise in an

environment appropriate to them. Everyone knows how important exercise and fresh air are to mental health and this applies just as much to people with disabilities as to able-bodied people. Accessing safe and appropriate sporting and physical activity facilities for people with disabilities is hard enough as it is and, as a caring society, I feel we should be taking the opportunity provided by this application to improve the facilities available and make them easier to access.

9 Rochester Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3DJ

Comments: 4th November 2023

I'm ** years old, go to Belmont every Sunday with Go Beyond the Grass to use tricycles around the school premises. The new facilities will greatly enhance our enjoyment of these sessions, which are for all ages with disabilities or just do not have the confidence to ride cycles with two wheels on the road. The sessions have greatly improved my stamina, fitness and recovery from two hip replacements, so I know it will be of benefit to the pupils. I know some of the residents who greatly object to the track and I find their reasoning unfounded, especially when they say the noise disturbs their peaceful Sundays. I am there I know how much noise we generate, low key chatter and laughter. I am afraid it is a case of NIMBYISM.

19 Oldbury Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 0HH

Comments: 16th February 2024

This application for these sports facilities are a welcome Proposal for the school, due to the needs of the Children at the Belmont school and the opportunities for them to expand thier interest in outdoor activities.

These also give the opportunity to socialise with other communities and schools, which in them self's are a great learning experience.

Avenoke
Kidnappers Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 0NL

Comments: 5th October 2023

I am in full support of this proposal. As a local resident with two children (one with special needs) I am keen to see more facilities like this in Cheltenham and locally. The school does good work already for special needs and these improved facilities will allow the children to access more high-quality opportunities. The plans improve access to sports and recreation for the children who already attend and allow areas like the school field to be accessed all year around and not only in the summer months.

I also want to highlight the need for these facilities locally, many children can't access facilities like the prince of Wales stadium, they are often fully booked by big mainstream clubs for adults and the size of the venue is huge for children with disabilities. Smaller facilities for children with autism and special needs are really needed. I hope this plan is supported as it is needed and will improve the quality of life for many children now and in the future.

Comments: 16th February 2024

The amended plans appear to have less facilities for the children, but are still a very big improvement on the large muddy field that many of the children can't access at this time. I am in full support of this application as the benefits to disabled children at this school and in Cheltenham are very big. Parents of disabled children have so few places for sport and recreation this facility is very much needed for this school.

5 Hillside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AS

Comments: 10th October 2023

Planning application 23/00117/FUL
Additional sports facilities at Belmont School

I am writing to express my views on this amended proposal and wish to highlight the following key areas:

Hours of use
Users of the facility
Number of users
Number of activities
Noise

Hours of use.

Current use is NOT as stated, and hours should be restricted to between 8.30 to 6pm on weekdays for outdoor activities plus 10am to 1pm on Saturday and Sunday, with no bank holiday usage. It should be noted that the school erected a marquee and all through the summer holidays there was a great amount of noise all day and every day. In particular, the noise of the weekend of 16th/17th September was outrageous, with screaming and screeching in what sounded like a swimming pool environment. The noise on the Sunday of that weekend did not stop until 6pm and could be heard through closed windows.

Users of the facility

The pseudo-conciliatory update letter received from Belmont school say that the 'main focus' is the provision of education of the children. Unfortunately this makes no further promises, and leaves it open for ancillary use. In addition the school makes much of ancillary use already in place, and that other users must share their ethos and values. The school did nothing to confirm or demonstrate this ethos during the school holidays or the weekend referred to above and I cannot see this changing. It should not fall to residents to make complaint and act as 'police' for Belmont school.

Numbers of users

There appears to be no information on the numbers of users or scale of usage the current hours of use stated in the proposal are misleading and disingenuous, and although Belmont say access to the school is controlled they make no reference to the noise of vehicles accessing and exiting the premises, with not only raised voices, but the electronic gates clanging noisily every time a vehicle goes in and out. Increased users is only going to exacerbate this. Currently vehicles such as bin collection wake me up as early as 6.30am. What restrictions would be in place?

Number of activities

The plans indicate a large amount of activities, carried out on a small site in close proximity. What control will there be over the types of activities? I refer to the apparent lack of controls referred to in Hours of use. As there is already a Sports Centre at Bournside school and I see no need to have another sports complex in the area. I bought my property near to a school, expecting normal school hours and use, which I can tolerate, but I did not buy a property to be subjected to innumerable activities and times of a commercial sports complex.

Noise

As well as points raised above about noise, the Environmental health report also questions the hours of use and the impact on residents for their amenity and the noise . I understand that noise surveys have been carried out and revealed the need for mitigation. While I agree this is necessary I note that an extra tree (New Tree 13) is planned outside my home. This will cut out my light and remove the amenity of my garden, and as the current large tree adjacent to the proposed one failed to cut out the noise, I fail to see how another will do the job.

Lack of decent consultation from the school to the local residents has created a level of bad feeling, and in one of their recent communications they stated that residents were agreeing with their proposals. I take exception to such a generalisation by the school.
Yours respectfully

Comments: 15th February 2024

15/2/24

Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council

Planning Application 23/00117/FUL

Additional Sports facilities at Belmont School.

Please refer to the submission made in October 2023 for relevant facts and background

I write with reference to the above Planning submission and confirm my objections. I now wish to add further comments in the light of amendments.

The Environmental Health document is vague around the use of the facility during "non-school days" weekends and holidays and there has already been an application for highly unsocial hours, which given the need to clear up after a session, and the revving of engines, slamming of car doors and shouting across the car park which goes on now, as well as the clanging of Belmont's electric gates, I can see this noise escalating until very late at night.

Last summer a large marquee was erected and the noise emanating from this with what sounded like a swimming gala (and I believe it could have been as there are companies who provide swimming pools in a marquee) was horrendous, with shouting, screaming and loud music going on all day and long into the evening.

I consider that if this application is granted and the facilities are used/rented out on an even greater scale than is now, the noise and disruption to neighbours will be immense; as it is with the current cycling clubs on a weekend with screaming and instructors shouting. If this was for the sole use of students during the school day then the project is laudable, BUT THIS IS PATENTLY A MONEY MAKING INITIATIVE, and there will be no monitoring of the use or misuse of facilities, giving rise to even greater unrest from neighbours, and even the other schools within the site, with whom we have an excellent relationship.

Understandably parents of children who attend this school will be in favour as they presume it will benefit their child, but as above, this is not going to be solely for the students' benefit. Those parents may find that their child is 'squeezed out' of the queue to use the facilities in preference to any odd and disparate group which will make money for the school. The frailties of human nature will prevail where money is concerned.

No matter what trees or screening are deployed this will not stop the noise, traffic or extra pollution. I have 2 metres between my home and my fence which is immediately next to the site. I am disabled and need to use my garden without undue noise, shouting etc for both my physical and mental health and this proposal will threaten this completely and the amenity of my garden will be taken away.

The noise assessment does not address all aspects of the proposal nor the cumulative impacts when considering the increasing level of noise occurring in the school today. Currently I am being woken up by heavy vehicles accessing the site at 4.45am. I understand the acoustic report is 49/50 which I consider is too close a number to be

comfortable with, especially this is BEFORE any further escalation of activity. This only gives a leeway of 2%. Far too small a margin.

Whilst no floodlighting appears on the plans, I am concerned by a comment in the 'background papers' which states:

'There shall be no external lighting associated with the running track, multiple use games area, and BMX pump tracks, unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority'. However there is also a conflicting statement 'The LEMP should include a bat sensitive lighting plan to demonstrate no light spill into woodland/hedgerows or this can be provided as a separate document.'

With regard to the proposed MUGA, my understanding is that there is already one at Bettridge School which is vastly underused. Would it not be more ecologically sound to come to an arrangement with this school to use this instead of erecting a further one, wasting resources, money and ruining the carbon footprint of the area.

Yours faithfully

Comments: 17th March 2023

Reference number: 23/00117/FUL

Whilst I would not wish to stop pupils of the school being given unique opportunities to help with their well being, it should not be to the detriment of the mental health of neighbours. With just 160 pupils, I consider this application is too big and intrusive. We already experience noise from the site, especially lorries coming in as early as 5.41 am. The provision of all items in the proposal would be intrusive, noisy, unsociable and deprive many of us of the amenity of the solitude of our gardens.

In line with your suggested considerations, my comments are as follows:

- Noise or disturbance from the development

There is no way that, with a development like this, there will not be excessive noise. It is only natural for users to be shouting either to teammates or encouragement to their children. Obviously with bleacher seating being provided there is a strong intention to have large volume events on this site. Although the site is gated at the moment, to allow access the site may well have to remain open because of the unsociable hours required; this will mean that the facilities are an attraction during the night to unauthorised users, with the resultant noise and anti-social behaviour. and disturbance.

- Unsociable hours.

The opening hours are excessive, from 8.30 in the morning to 10.00 at night every day and 8.30 am to 4.30pm weekends and bank holidays. Knowing that it takes people a while to exit, these hours are sure to be extended to even later at night, with the resultant banging of car doors, shouting across car parks, revving engines, loud music from in car systems etc.

- Traffic

There is no provision made for parking, so as already happens, drivers will be parking on the main road and surrounding roads, creating hazards for pedestrians and residents alike. There is sheer chaos at school opening and closing times, so this can only get worse with more general access.

Entry to the site is currently managed by metal electric gates and a press button speaker linked to the school office. At the moment every entry can be heard on my property,

especially the clanging of the metal gates each time a vehicle enters and exits. With opening times extended to 10pm and on weekends and Bank Holidays, noise from traffic will be decidedly worse and even more intrusive. It must also be presumed that although opening hours are as per the application, users are more than likely to still be on the premises/grounds AT LEAST 30mins after those times. As late as these times are, and also all weekend and bank holidays, these must be considered as unsociable.

- Amenity

If amenity means having the use of ones own garden I consider this will be taken away. To lose the amenity of being able to sit in my own garden without excessive noise both from participants and cars (drivers and passengers have little or no consideration for neighbours, calling across to each other and banging vehicle doors) this will mean a direct loss of the amenity of my garden and will adversely affect my mental health.

- Privacy

The very nature of 2 BMX tracks will mean that these will be raised to a greater height than the normal permitted height of a garden fence and as such my garden will then be overlooked, making me exceedingly vulnerable, and removing my privacy.

I trust these points will be treated seriously and taken into account by officers.

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17 Hillside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AS

Comments: 19th March 2023

We strongly object to this application on the basis of security, increased noise, traffic, pollution, litter and possible light pollution.

The main school road is directly behind our garden and we already suffer with noise from traffic, pupils, cleaners, deliveries, main school gates opening and closing from 5.41 am well into the evening. These issues have slowly increased over the years and as residents we unfairly have no power to control the situation.

As an ongoing theme, we are regularly submitted to foul language from pupils. Young children and elderly residents, indeed anybody living in the cul de sac should not be submitted to this in the comfort of their own homes and gardens.

Over the last few years, the noise pollution in our garden (weekdays and weekends) seems to have gone from being very limited to truly intrusive and litter pollution along the cul de sac side of the boundary of the fence behind the car park has not been seen to.

Should this also be a commercial project running until late in the evening it will undoubtedly bring more noise, disturbance and potential increased security threats to our property. Is this really fair and justifiable? On more than one occasion pupils from the school have encroached on our private land with a teacher following without asking permission on one occasion. With regular visitors this could become an even wider issue which causes great concern and anxiety.

This is a briefly history of issues connected with the school and we can only see things becoming even worse if the submission is approved.

We have not been invited to any meetings to discuss these plans.

To confirm, we strongly object the proposal.

23 Hillside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AS

Comments: 20th March 2023

I strongly object to the proposed sports facilities at Belmont School.

As neighbours of the school we are subjected to increasing noise, pollution and disruption. Our privacy and enjoyment of our homes and gardens are at times severely curtailed and would only be worsened as these facilities are clearly not for the sole use of the school.

We suffer dangerous, inconsiderate and illegal parking of cars during school start/finish times and fear this would continue at weekends/evenings.

We have a perfectly suitable sports facility in the Prince of Wales stadium, these proposed facilities are being crammed into an area clearly not intended for such use.

I strongly object to these proposals

10 Bournside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AR

Comments: 12th February 2024

Dear Lucy

Whilst we are pleased to see removal of the northernmost MUGA pitch, we are still mindful to object to the proposals. We broadly support new facilities if they are proportionate and sensitive to the surrounding environment. At present there are too many uncertainties. We have previously commented in detail, so have tried to keep the following brief to highlight our key concerns:

1. We object to floodlighting (or any other lighting) in the future. This seems to be retained as a possibility - it is inappropriate for the area.

2. What is the purpose of the new play area, trim trail, trampolines etc? We were told there was an identified need for the original facilities proposed, so where does the need for these new additions suddenly come from? There are other play areas within the schools' complex. Could the play area not be retained as grass, especially seeing as drainage will be improved?

3. There is still no real clarity as to how many people could be on site at anyone time as no numbers are attached to out-of-hours cycle track and athletics track usage. This

leaves the door open to large numbers of people being on site during evenings, weekends and holidays. How can an assessment of impacts be done without this information?

4. At the third time of asking - what is the new access track highlighted by the blue arrow near our house? This contradicts the text which says no new access around the site is planned.

5. We support the suggestions of the EH department regarding hours of usage.

6. The noise assessment seems incomplete.

- no inclusion of the new activities (as a parent I know children can make a lot of noise on trampolines).

- no consideration of people moving around the site (including the possible new access right by our back fence), parents cheering, instructors, etc.

- no consideration of more frequent traffic compared to present day, including parking on the tennis court which currently happens.

- no consideration of the noise the shipping container bike shed can make if not handled with care.

- no mention of prohibiting music, loudspeakers - these are used sometimes during normal school hours in close proximity to our property, which can be irritating.

- no cumulative assessment of existing noise that could happen concurrently, eg from the tennis court and the new installation right outside our fence where children often engage in whacking plastic and metal tubs.

7. We are now into the second year of the application being considered - surely the applicant can provide more detail on the planting zone and acoustic fence along our boundary. We seem to have been forgotten in this respect as well as for wider landscaping features. Acoustic and visual protection is key for us. It was discussed with the applicant at the consultation meeting last January but not a word since on the detail. Have the practicalities of mitigation and proximity to the cycle path been considered? We agree with the Tree Officer's comments and furthermore believe planting should be mature and offer protection from the 1st day of operation (preferably during construction too).

8. The management plan needs to go beyond just noise, with firm commitments from the applicant to act upon any feedback (either a complaint or constructive feedback). We have contacted the school in the last year on alarm bells going off (within the hours it still claims to be operational), children throwing things into our garden and lights sometimes being left on at night in the new block...we don't get a response at present which does not inspire confidence and lends strength to the argument that noise etc should be predominantly eradicated/minimised through design and physical mitigation. (Note that proper planting of a substantial hedge would help mitigate some of these issues). We would also want firm commitments made during construction that would mean sensitive positioning of construction compounds and use of machinery etc, especially given the possible length of construction.

9. We think there should be some indication of how the facilities will be maintained - we would not wish to the facilities fall into disrepair during or after the expected lifetime (understood to be 10-15 years).

Comments: 13th March 2023

13 March 2023
Mrs Lucy White
Cheltenham Borough Council: Planning
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

Dear Mrs White

Application Ref No: 23/00117/FUL - 200m oval running track, with a 100m straight and run-off, with 2 smaller 100m ovals; a campus-wide 2-metre wide cycle track; 2no. MUGAs which include five-a-side football pitches; a long jump pit; 2no. BMX pump tracks (advanced and beginner), and bleacher seating at Belmont School Warden Hill Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 3AT

Our family lives at No.10 Bournside Close. Our house is one of those closest to the Belmont School sports field, site of the proposed development. It is also adjacent to the main school building and one of the school's dedicated parking areas. The school is an integral part of the local community, and the application site is bounded on 3 sides by residential property and amenity space - therefore careful and sensitive planning needs to be undertaken to ensure that the proposal fits into this constrained location.

We would like to begin by saying that we are broadly supportive of the principle of developing new sporting facilities for pupils attending Belmont School. Having benefitted from access to good sporting facilities when younger we appreciate the transformative effect sport can have particularly for school age pupils. We are aware that increased opportunities for sport and active leisure also form part of the Cheltenham Plan, however, we do have a number of concerns and objections to the application as it currently stands, in relation to how the application has been consulted upon and feedback incorporated by the applicant and now how it is presented in the application.

Overall, from what we can glean from the application documents, we believe that the current proposal is of such a scale and nature that it is out of keeping with its environment and the locality and will give rise to a loss of ecological habitat and an over intensification of use of the site, particularly in relation to non-school activities planned outside normal school hours, thereby affecting both our amenity and the general amenity of the neighbourhood.

Our comments and concerns are set out below and summarised as follows:

1. Pre-application consultation - lack of meaningful engagement in consultation process and failure to incorporate pre-application feedback;
2. The proposed development - concerns relating to the location and design of elements of the proposed development; operational hours and controls;
3. Environmental Effects of the proposed development during construction and operation;

Pre-application Consultation

We were first made aware of the proposed development in December 2022 and attended the consultation meeting at the school on 10 January 2023. Given the pre-application was submitted approximately one year ago, and that the pre-application advice was to engage 'as fully as possible with local community/residents', we question the value of

engaging with the local community only a fortnight prior to the planning application being submitted. It is also not clear how any engagement has helped shape the proposed development and the summary of the consultation process in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) is somewhat limited and selective. We would draw your attention to the DAS, which appears to be the only report accompanying the application describing the development and which could have provided greater detail in relation to, for example:

- The wider setting of the development, the full set of constraints and sensitive receptors (residential areas and wildlife corridor) and how those have been considered in design and any proposed mitigation;
- The evolution of the development and why certain design choices have been made;
- Specific measures to address loss of ecological habitat and the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain;
- How the development relates, either positively or negatively, to policy, including elements of the Cheltenham Plan.

The Proposed Development

Operating Hours:

The planning application and the DAS state the existing school hours (and proposed hours of operation of the development) are:

- Monday to Friday - 08:30 to 22:00
- Saturday to Sunday - 08:30 to 16:30

Having lived at our address for 10 years and having worked at home for a large proportion of the time since the Covid-19 pandemic began, we believe that the proposed existing/operational hours misrepresent by some margin the current baseline of normal/regular use by the school. Children arrive at the school on weekdays at around 08:30 and are generally offsite by 15:00. It is very rare to see children using the playing fields at any time of the year after 15:00. The DAS notes that the school currently has sports days and weekend fundraisers, but it is unclear what these refer to - as with all schools there are one or two main sports day a year in the summer term, but we do not recall any weekend regular or frequent fundraiser events. During school holidays the playing fields are very rarely used during weekdays. On the weekends there is a regular group of cyclists which uses the site on Sunday afternoons (from around 12:00 to 16:00 and are very quiet) but that is really it. There have been some Cycle Stars events over the weekends (again very quiet) but none recently. We do not recall the playing field being used with any regularity for other sports outside the term time hours of 08:30-15:00. The current usage is therefore very low and we think the proposed operating hours reflect operational hours for a commercial business rather than for a school and represent a very significant increase with potential impacts on noise levels and our privacy and amenity.

Site usage:

On 10 January we were told the main users of the development would be the school and other special schools/community groups, particularly those with special educational and physical disabilities - this is also stated in Section 5 of the DAS. The DAS now refers to potential users including local primary schools, Bournside School as well as local sports clubs. The current number of children regularly using the playing field is low, being mainly the 170 or so children at Belmont and never all at once bar maybe Sports Day. The numbers suggested in the DAS are far in excess of this. There is therefore potential not only for more frequent use but also much larger groups using the site and proposed development at any one time. There is a distinct lack of information provided in this

respect. If the school is intending to raise funds for the development and also has to maintain the facilities and rent them out to other users, then it should present the likely anticipated use and related effects of this on the neighbourhood and the road network. We think this information should be made available as the increased frequency of use and numbers using the site have the potential to have significant adverse effects with regards to noise, loss of privacy and reduction in amenity (e.g. enjoyment of garden and house).

Operational Controls:

If the proposal is to become a sports facility for non-school users, we believe it only reasonable to see operational controls to be adopted and agreed with the local community, providing information on what can/cannot be done on the site i.e. sports and non-sports events and activities. We understand that this is a common practice for such facilities. From a disturbance perspective we would want to see a limit on the frequency and scale of activities outside of normal school hours, on weekends, bank holidays and outside term time and in the use of such things as loudspeakers, music and items like starter pistols (especially outside of normal term-time weekday school hours, i.e. 0830-1500), as well as dealing with litter/refuse etc. A booking mechanism that could vet users (those outside the anticipated user-groups in the DAS) has been referred to together with as a process for reporting anti-social behaviour.

Landscape planting:

There is no information provided so far on any proposed landscape planting. At the consultation we and others requested consideration be given to a wider buffer between our properties and the cycling track. This has not been included in the application and is not recognised in the DAS. We would like a wider planting buffer, say 4m-5m, instead of the proposed 3m buffer. We were told at this was not possible due to space constraints however from the plans provided there appears to be room to gain some additional metres. For planting, our preference would be for native deciduous hedgerow (eg Hawthorn) as the main planting feature maintained to around 1m-1.5m wide and 2.5m-3m height, with small trees in front of that. This would provide added security and privacy to our garden (but not affect light levels), whilst also providing visual interest to those using the development. It could also provide environmental benefits such as habitat and food for birds. There may be an opportunity to plant this early so as to provide a benefit from 'day 1' as well as providing screening and privacy during construction.

From the plans provided there appears to be opportunity to plant some small trees in certain spaces, for example in the green spaces between the running track and the bends of the running track, the area near the corner of our property, close to the proposed access route and around the parking area close to Bournside Close. This would provide further privacy, visual and environmental benefits and increased interest to those using the site. There are good examples of small-scale tree planting in Hatherley Park and we don't see why this type of planting couldn't be implemented into the proposed development, particularly as a number of trees have been lost and/or removed in recent years across the school site. Landscaping was discussed at the consultation meeting and the conclusion was that the cost of any landscaping would be minimal in the context of the overall funding required. Our community would welcome the opportunity to provide input to the planting scheme adopted in the area.

Floodlighting:

We are pleased that flood lighting is not, as yet, proposed but remain concerned they this could be implemented in the future. Prior to the consultation the plans on the school

website showed floodlights and although the message at the meeting was that floodlights were not being considered it does appear they had been considered at pre-application stage. At the time of writing this letter the 3D plan on the school's website still includes floodlights.

We reiterate our concerns made to the school (and the comments at the pre-application stage) and believe floodlights would be wholly inappropriate at this site given the proximity the adjacent wildlife corridor and surrounding sensitive residential areas.

MUGA:

A question raised at the consultation that does not appear to have been recorded in the DAS is:

- Could the MUGA pitches be located elsewhere within the footprint of Belmont School?

We object to the proposed location of the MUGA pitches. There are several hardstanding areas that look appropriate from a size perspective within the existing developed footprint - just to the right as you enter Belmont School gates and in the southern corner of school site. At the consultation the architects said they'd consulted with Sport England and that the MUGA pitches had to go on the existing playing field to maintain them as sports pitches. However, we don't see why an existing grass pitch or pitches could not be retained within the proposed running track.

The current grass pitch is used regularly during school hours by the children at Belmont. Keeping the grass pitch would help maintain a greater area of open grassland next to the wildlife corridor (the only substantial area of grassland within the school boundary). For a variety of reasons, the retention of green spaces is an important consideration in the Cheltenham Plan (Chapter 16).

There are other MUGA (or similar) pitches in the wider Schools area, one at Bettridge and one at Bournside. Given those schools have expressed an interest in using the proposed facilities at Belmont, could this arrangement not be reciprocated, particularly at Bettridge, which from the plans provided appears to be accessible from Belmont and will likely have very similar standards of safeguarding? The use of existing facilities nearby would also have sustainability benefits.

Running Track:

Another point raised at the consultation meeting but not recorded in the DAS:

- Could the running track be a green colour rather than red so that it blended in better with the surroundings and have less visual impact?

We were told the colour had to be red for the benefit of visually impaired users, but could a green track with sight lines also be appropriate and have less visual impact? Can this reasoning be confirmed with Sport England?

Vehicular Access:

One final significant point raised at the consultation but not recorded in the DAS:

- Would there need to be any new vehicular access to the playing field?

We were told that there would no new vehicular access however the application includes a new access route (marked by blue arrows) very close to the edge of our property. This would seemingly involve the demolition of an existing out-building. What is the purpose of this access? Is it for vehicles to access the playing field (including during construction) or is it for increased pedestrian access to the playing field?

Other design matters:

Other areas of the design that are not clear or apparent in the application include:

- Height and colour of proposed fencing around the MUGA pitches
- Would the MUGA pitches have solid boards at lower heights (for example to play balls off and which can generate a lot of noise)?
- Fencing requirements around the perimeter of the site - we were told on 10 January there would be need to better security and that the school would be looking to install security fencing inside. This is not included in the plans.
- What provisions are there for shelter for children from hot weather, heavy rain etc? Will there need to be temporary shelters erected?

Environmental effects of the proposed development

Given the above concerns and general lack of information presented in the application, we are concerned that the application does not contain a report of the potential environmental and traffic effects of the proposed development. The scale of the proposed development and its location, we would have expected both environmental and transport assessments to have been undertaken and the results presented in the application. In addition to the matters set out in the earlier sections, our principal concerns relate to the following.

Ecology:

At the time of writing the ecology report was not available to review. As a wildlife corridor runs along the proposed development and wildlife uses the grassland, we trust there will be consideration of all significant impacts on ecology. We would also be keen to see where mitigation, enhancement and biodiversity net gain has been incorporated into the proposed development.

Traffic Effects:

No Transport Assessment is included in the planning application therefore it is difficult to determine the likely impacts arising from the proposed increase in operating hours and additional site usage arising from this increase as well as the increased intensity of uses. The DAS states there will be no increase in traffic but given the increased usage implied by the scale of the proposed development, and the proposed increase in operating hours and likely numbers visiting the site, this is very likely to give rise to an increase in traffic arriving and departing the school grounds, both during and outside of regular school hours, as well as different types of traffic entering the site, such as coaches.

There is already pressure on traffic around the area during school hours, specifically at peak times, and we believe that the additional generated traffic could be forced to use the Bournside Close emergency exit gate more than it currently is, which is an unwelcome prospect. Located adjacent to this exit, we would be most affected by any increase in traffic as our property is adjacent to one of the parking areas and we have bedrooms with a direct line of sight to both the playing field and the car park. This has the potential to be give rise to an increase in noise and a reduction in amenity at both the front and the back of the house.

Parking:

Given the proximity to residential property, any parking proposed after 15:00 on term weekdays and on weekends/school holidays should be directed to parking areas away from the Bournside Close boundary and, in this respect, the school has a number of other parking areas. We would note that, from an HSE perspective, this would also help avoid any accidents between users of the cycle path and cars in this area.

Flood Risk & Drainage:

We trust the Environment Agency and/or the Council will check the drainage calculations as well as advise on any permits required to ensure that no additional flood risk occurs, particularly with respect to Hatherley Brook which has flooded in the past. Some ground raising is proposed along the perimeter of the development so we would like assurance that sufficient drainage will be included along the cycling track such that there is no risk of water running into the adjacent properties in Bournside Close (there is currently a natural fall from our property to the playing field). In that respect, planting and landscaping could also help attenuate water.

At the consultation we mentioned that our property (and I think some others) have drainage to the rear of the house, where I believe it joins with drainage system marked by the manhole cover next to the tennis court and close to where the oak tree once stood. This doesn't seem to be recorded on any of the plans submitted and would need to be considered when undertaking any groundworks.

Litter and waste:

We were told at the consultation that no further provision would be made for dealing with waste. Given the potential increase in numbers visiting the site, surely extra facilities will need to be considered for rubbish collection as well as a strict protocol for users to follow? There is already an issue with seagulls in the area. We wouldn't want any further increases in those or appearance of vermin, etc.

Construction Phase Effects:

We would like to be consulted on any construction management plans to ensure this phase is carried out sensitively, particularly with respect to privacy. During the previous build at the school, a double-story workers' compound, including welfare facilities, was erected close to our bedroom window over the summer holidays. As you will imagine, this was not greatly appreciated.

Cumulative effects arising from intensification of use:

We note that there is a mismatch between the site plan and the 3-D plan of the proposed development, with the latter not showing elements such as:

- The proposed new access route
- The shipping containers that house bikes and the uncovered equipment storage area behind (both adjacent to our property)
- The current extent of parking adjacent to Bournside Close and the reduction in trees/green space (2021).
- The new school block that was built in 2021

We appreciate bullet points 2 & 3 may well have been carried out as permitted development and that point 4 received planning consent (which we did not object to), however we believe the intensification of development at the site over the years and its cumulative impact together with the proposed development should be considered particularly with respect to the increase in noise and loss of privacy and amenity. We would note that the pre-application feedback concurs with this point and comments that '..the cumulative effect of the proposals [is] currently considered an over-intensive use of the school grounds'.

Protecting amenity, disturbance from noise and increase traffic, as well as loss of privacy are all considerations within the Cheltenham Plan (Chapter 14 - Health and Environmental Quality). The DAS refers to the fact that we have chosen to live next to a

school and the associated noise that brings - that is true but the flip side, as raised at the consultation, is that outside of the regular operating hours (08:30-15:00 school weekdays) the site is extremely quiet.

Summary

We have significant concerns around the lack of information provided in the application generally, and in particular in relation to operational hours and controls of the site and uses, the frequency of use (not the same as operating hours), the number of users and the likely levels of additional traffic which this will generate out of school hours. There is no real consideration of landscaping or other mitigation which could retain privacy and provide noise attenuation to local residents but also provide wider environmental benefits and user interest. We believe that there is a continued role for the community in supporting a successful and thriving school at this location, operating comfortably in its locality and being a good neighbour. We would like to be consulted and have active participation in future with respect to planting/landscaping and associated maintenance schemes, in future construction management plans, and operational rules for use of the facilities for non-school users and out of hours uses.

With respect to the planning application specifically, we object to the intensification of uses implied by the scale of the proposed development and the increase in operating hours proposed. We object to the location of the proposed MUGA pitches and believe that other, more appropriate locations within the existing built footprint of the school should be considered. We consider that a more sustainable option of sharing existing similar facilities at Bettridge and Bournside Schools has not been fully explored.

Whilst we strongly support the overall objective of providing better sporting facilities for the users of Belmont School, we believe that the development as proposed is flawed and has the potential to give rise to a number of significant adverse environmental effects which have not been addressed in the application documents and which are contrary to Local Plan policies. These effects, experienced by individual properties adjacent to the site and the wider community, arise from potential increases in traffic through the working day, weekends and school holidays, a loss of biodiversity, the potential for increased flood risk and general loss of amenity from the intensification, increased duration and likely diversification of uses at the site.

We trust these points are clear and will be considered in the decision-making process for this application and we look forward to receiving your feedback on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Comments: 22nd March 2023

Dear Lucy

We understand that the official period for commenting on the above proposal has ended, however we wanted to raise some concerns based on documents that have been added to the application as late as the 20th March and which we think need further explanation. Our position remains that we object to the proposal as it stands.

1 - Downlighting - this is mentioned in the ecology report but has never been mentioned before, either in the original set of documents provided or at the consultation. Given the application had said floodlighting was not being applied for we'd like to know what the purpose of this downlighting is, the location and design before any further comment.

2 - Revised drawings - there is a revised proposed site layout and revised existing and proposed site sections. What has changed since the equivalent documents were submitted in January? There is no obvious explanation provided.

3 - Justification for the loss of the playing field - we have direct views over the playing field and we find it quite hard to believe that 350 children currently access the playing field every single day of the school year and certainly rarely if ever at the same time. Whatever the current number is, there is likely to be an intensification of use during school hours with pupils from Belmont, Bournside and Bettridge (and maybe local primary schools) using the facilities. This makes it even more important that use outside of normal school hours is controlled to protect and preserve local residents' privacy and amenity as well as limit other environmental, ecology and traffic impacts.

We still don't understand the rationale for the 2 x 100m oval tracks - there is already a 200m oval as well as a straight 100m track for those that cannot run the full 100m.

The fact that the facilities will be used by at least Belmont, Bettridge and Bournside (the latter which now seems to be one of the prime beneficiaries of the facilities) also again raises the question as to whether the facilities could be spread out and shared across the wider schools' estates. In the grand scheme of things the Belmont playing field is quite small and much more constrained compared with the larger wide open space around Bournside school, much of which is set well back from residential areas and away from wildlife corridors and watercourse, as well as sharing the use of the existing facilities across the combined school areas.

We'd like to understand where ball-games have been banned as we see children playing football daily on the hardstanding play area next to the playing field, there are goals there this morning as we write and as recently as last Friday we were returning footballs landing in our garden.

As noted in our initial response, we are broadly in favour of improving sporting facilities (with appropriate controls and mitigation) but feel that as this increasingly seems to be a

shared facility across the three schools, more should be done to explore joint siting of new facilities and the sharing of existing ones.

yours sincerely

Comments: 16th February 2024

Dear Lucy

We hadn't at first picked up on the fact the suggested noise management plan applies only to the MUGA. Is the applicant suggesting no management of noise across the whole site? Noise is noise. If it's loud enough to impact amenity etc, the source is irrelevant. The plan ought to cover all activities and associated movements of people outside of normal term-time school hours, as well as include other behaviours that may negatively impact local residents.

Comments: 4th October 2023

Having reviewed the most recent set of plans, we continue to object to this development in its present form. Without meaning to repeat existing comments (the majority of which still stand), we would like to draw attention to:

Consultation -

Despite rhetoric to the contrary earlier in the year and over the summer there has been no attempt by the applicant to further engage with residents other than a letter received days before the revised application went in. The updated Design and Access Statement (DAS) still refers to a selective list of concerns raised at the only public consultation to date, whilst not capturing many of the comments made in response to the original application. As a result, we can only conclude that the applicant has little interest in direct communication with its immediate neighbours. Furthermore, the Planning and Management Summary (PMS) (Section 4) demonstrates that it doesn't consider any of the comments and concerns received from the public as important.

Current operational hours and current usage -

The revised application continues to suggest normal operational hours are 0830-2200 (weekdays) and 0830-1630 (weekends) - throughout the calendar year (not just during school terms). We find it very hard to believe this - we've lived next to the school for over 10 years and the school is not continually operated and staffed during those hours. Suggesting otherwise is misleading.

Regardless of the 'operating' hours though, the focus should be on the current use of the playing field and outside space, especially outside of normal school hours. The applicant refers to various current uses but many of these are irrelevant to this application and obfuscate the current situation, for example the Cheltenham Bird Club, Finesteps and Stagecoach all use inside space.

It is currently very rare to see anyone using the playing field after 1500 during school term weekdays (many of the children are picked up by taxis and leave around 1445). During weekends throughout the year the Sunday cycling group (which uses hard surfaces) is the only frequent regularly observed user over the last few years, with occasional use by Cycle Stars. The recent summer holidays also included some occasional football sessions on the playing field.

Proposed usage and operational hours -

We still have no real idea as to how frequently (and in what numbers) the playing field or outside space will be used after normal school hours have ended, on the weekends or throughout the school holidays. That surely makes it hard to assess impacts on traffic, noise, privacy, etc?

The applicant's letter to residents, dated September 23, states that the proposed usage is 'much misunderstood', however any confusion is as a result of the mixed information coming from the applicant itself, particularly around secondary and tertiary usage, the latter which is vague and could well include activities outside those currently permitted. The applicant and its consultants seem to have differing opinions about who will use the facilities - for example we were led to believe in the original application that Bournside School had expressed interest in the running track, and now the applicant's planning consultant says that as Bournside has its own artificial pitch it won't need to use the new facilities. Which is it? Inconsistencies like this just add to the confusion.

We were informed at the public consultation that the capital cost was in the region of £1.5M for the development - surely therefore to attract investment the applicant must have some target in mind for tertiary (commercial) usage in order for example to maintain the surfaces as well as eventually replace them (the application states the expected lifetime of the MUGA pitches is only 10-15years).

The PMS states that the school is open to discussion on operational hours - that's good to hear because we have been waiting all summer to discuss this with the applicant. The PMS makes the point that out-of-hours activities have not so far resulted in any complaints but to date those activities are so limited that there is little to complain about. If outdoor activities continue in the same vein as suggested in the table in the PMS, then the applicant shouldn't have an issue accepting a reduced set of operational hours compared to those proposed, one more in line with current use.

What is indisputable is that the proposed development will see increased usage during normal school hours; in line with the Environmental Health Department's previous comments this should be factored into ensuring that residents are given fair respite from what can at times be an extremely noisy site, noting that residents include families with young children, retirees and people who spend time working from home.

Noise assessment -

The summary states that with the installation of a 2m acoustic fence the resultant highest predicted noise levels from the MUGA pitches in our gardens will be around 49 dB, which is only 1 dB below the noise considered to be a nuisance (so the results could be considered borderline in terms of potential impact). No level of confidence/error has been expressed in these results. No effort has been made to consider cumulative noise from full joint use of the running, cycling, pump track, MUGA pitches and other users, despite this being recommended by the Environmental Health Department and despite the applicant saying that all these activities could happen concurrently.

The layout shows a new access route just to the south of our property (indicated by blue arrows, requiring demolition of a building and despite the applicant saying no new vehicular or pedestrian access within the site is planned) - no attempt has been made to model noise from people or vehicles moving through that route or more generally from

people moving around the whole site, including those stationary on seats - are we led to believe that anyone walking around or watching will be silent?

Why hasn't the opening of doors and movement of bikes in the shipping containers next to our house been considered (or for other residents noise from the school entrance gates)? This often creates a loud noise with an echo effect. These containers are within 10m of our garden, both our daughters' bedrooms and the master bedroom. We think the acoustic fence should extend along that boundary of our house too; and given other comments there could be an argument for this fence being installed more widely around the site, including along the boundary with 11 Bournside Close and Hillside Close.

Many of the points noted in the Noise Management Plan (NMP) were raised by residents at the original application so it is good to see at least some comments have been taken on board. However, it should go further. Things like starter guns and loudspeakers should also be banned. Normal school hours have also seen the increased playing of loud music close to our boundary which can be heard inside our house. This should also be prohibited.

Landscaping -

The applicant still doesn't acknowledge that residents in the north-west corner (where the acoustic fence is proposed) requested an extended planting buffer of 5m rather than 3m (raised at the public consultation and then later again). This would help further mitigate noise pollution and provide more visual privacy, especially during after-school hours when our children may be in their bedrooms, one of which looks out onto the playing field. Presumably there will need to be at least 1-2m space around the acoustic fence in order that it doesn't interfere with existing fences, and to access and maintain it to a high level over its full lifetime - so at the very least there should be a 4-5m buffer just to incorporate the originally proposed 3m planting zone.

We've yet to be further consulted on the planting buffer scheme for this area (the need to do seemed to have been acknowledged). There is an opportunity to provide a mixture of native hedgerow and native trees along the length of that fence to provide a degree of ecological connectivity with the woodland area at the eastern boundary of the site. We believe these should be relatively mature at the time of planting so that they provide immediate mitigation. The planting should also be maintained as appropriate to maximise ecological benefit but reduce nuisance to residents.

We raised further planting/landscaping with the applicant at the consultation, which it acknowledged should be achievable. Seeing as the layout plan identifies the properties at the end of Bournside Close as having 'residential overlook', it is disappointing that as a group we seem to have been totally excluded from the updated landscaping proposals, namely hedge and tree planting and enhanced grassland. There appears to be ample space in the northern areas of the site to plant some small trees within and outside the running track (outside of the planting buffer zone), that would further reduce visual impact, maintain privacy, and provide visual stimulation to the children, ecological benefit and rainwater attenuation.

Tree/hedge planting could also be considered alongside the western boundary with 11 Bournside Close and Hillside Close. These areas have seen a lot of vegetation disappear with the remodelling and expansion of parking provision a couple of years ago. New trees would provide similar benefits to those mentioned above and in particular help attenuate

rainwater...heavy rain at present results in a silt-laden stream of water flowing off the school site and into Bournside Close.

Layout -

Increasingly it seems that there is not enough space for all the activities and adequate mitigation to residents. The BMX track seems like a step too far. The provision of a new cycling track, running track and MUGA pitches would already put Belmont far above many other schools in the area in terms of sporting activity provision. The cycling track will already provide changes in surface, scenery, slope etc so why is more stimulation needed? Removing the pump track and moving the other activities even just 5m to the south-east could increase room to provide the mitigation requested and still maintain a (much larger) buffer zone for properties to the south. Even a re-configuration of the pump track might be able to achieve this if it had to stay.

We also think more explanation is still required on the siting of the MUGA pitches. Bettridge already has a large MUGA pitch which we have rarely if ever seen in use when walking past it - can this not be a shared area? That would immediately provide a sustainability benefit in minimising resource use, and maintain grass coverage. Why haven't other locations, for example in the southernmost corner of the school site, been considered? That location would mean relocation of some equipment but would take the northernmost MUGA pitch well away from any residents.

The cycle track is presently tight up against the planting buffer along the Bournside Close and Bournside Drive properties. How will this work with respect to roots and branches from the trees/hedges that were discussed as being planting options, as well as debris on the track?

Is there a throwing area and a new climbing frame? This is not clear from the documents. If these are part of the plan then where are they on the updated layout?

Benefit -

The applicant states that the current status of the playing field does not benefit all children, however it is very clear looking out onto the field during normal school hours that a lot of the children at Belmont do enjoy playing there, either in formally arranged games or informally. Many of the games played seem to have a spatial extent that would mean they'd likely be impractical under the proposed change in land use. Furthermore, will children have the freedom to roam and run around the only large open space available within the school if the development goes ahead? Will there be controls on children being able just to walk around and play informally on the field in order to reduce wear and tear? The actual 'play zones' on the layout appear very limited in area. There seems to be the attitude that 'grass is bad', 'artificial surfaces are good'. We suspect it's a lot more nuanced than this and we think close consideration should be given to what is being taken away as this cannot be replicated anywhere else within the school site and is potentially then lost for ever.

Parking -

The parking management plan is also something the residents requested so good to hear the applicant has listened. This should include banning parking on the existing playground next to the playing field. This has been an unwelcome new occurrence over the summer as the playground is elevated and allows view back into our property outside of normal school hours.

Construction Management Plan -

Given the age of some of the school buildings, where demolition is needed hazardous materials will need to be considered. We think that the acoustic fence and a mature planting buffer should be in place prior to any construction starting.

Summary -

Whilst we still oppose this development as it currently stands we do believe there can be a way forward that still benefits the school greatly in its ambition to improve sporting provision whilst also respecting better the environment and local residents' amenity and privacy - however this can only be achieved if the applicant starts to fully listen and engage with its neighbours.

9 Bournside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AR

Comments: 9th February 2024

I continue to oppose the application due to many of the issues outlined in my previous response not having been addressed.

While supporting additional facilities for the students at the school, the overarching principle of the suitability of the site for the proposed project is the real issue here.

The development area is small and surrounded by residential properties. The current green space is a haven for both wildlife and the children of the school during break times and indeed throughout the school day. Too many individual resources would be crammed in a small space and my view is that a smaller more sensible approach to facility improvement while retaining the green space would make more sense. Perhaps the development of the cycle track but keeping the sports pitches (grass) which seem to get more and more use and is great to see.

The proposed hours of use still represent a massive change to the current hours of use. No after school activities take place outdoors at present and no students are using the space at weekends or in school holidays at present. The statement regarding the hours is rather muddled and contradictory to the tables supplied.

School hours in term time and very limited weekend use would be OK should the application be granted in any form, but bank holidays, Sundays and most of the school holiday periods need to be protected for reasonable expected peace and quiet for the residents.

The management of the site out of school hours, particularly with multiple activities would concern especially regarding access and parking as the proposed development would massively increase traffic. The "alamo" of taxis leaving at 3pm is quite challenge for residents as it is.

The provision of lighting which previously was excluded for the lifetime of the facilities appears watered down and would need rewording back to the original proposal. In

addition, I feel that, if the development were to go ahead, there would need to be statements that loudspeakers, music and starter guns etc would not be in operation at any time.

There is nothing in the proposal regarding the maximum number of people on each facility or the total on site at any given time and therefore calculations of noise levels at their peak cannot be calculated. Additionally, as per the EA consultation document the noise analysis is generally not fit for purpose.

The proposed screening to the boundary to our property (Northern boundary) seems a little vague. If there is to be an acoustic fence and 3 metre planting strip, how does this work with our boundary fences in terms of maintenance of the planting - there would clearly need to be a gap for access to control the planting which is not shown on the plans.

If, as stated that the facilities would be for the students at Belmont school it is rather telling that nobody identifying as a parent of a student has written in support of the proposal. This, coupled with the lack of current after school outdoor sports participation, leads me to think that ultimately the students are not the real target user group.

The reduction to one MUGA pitch in the most recent application is welcome. However, in this space the provision of swings, trampoline etc seems unnecessary. Additionally, this being the only space without "formal" sporting infrastructure and therefore potentially the only "free play" space there would likely be a high concentration of pupils and the associated noise in close proximity to our property. Currently the whole site is enjoyed, and students are evenly dispersed across the space.

It is again disappointing that, apart from the first "consultation" at the school ahead of the first application, there has been zero attempt to keep local residents informed or indeed to look for a plan that could work for all. Instead, we have seen the three proposals "appear" with the two most recent not addressing the concerns raised by residents from the first.

It is a shame that this process has driven a wedge between the school and local residents as I am sure we all want a good outcome for the students while preserving our right to utilise our outdoor spaces with a reasonable level of tranquility. Unfortunately, the nature of the proposal in relation to the site and its location determines generally a strong resistance to the development from residents and I too strongly oppose it.

Comments: 10th March 2023

9, Bournside Close
Cheltenham
GL51 3AR

5th March 2023

Ref Planning application 23/00117/FUL - Belmont School sports development

Mrs White
Planning
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham

Dear Mrs White,

My name is ***** and I live on Bournside Close with my family. Our house, along with our neighbours either side, are the closest properties to the playing fields of Belmont school and therefore will be impacted to the greatest extent by any development of the site.

We have enjoyed a good relationship with the school over the 14 years we have lived on the close and in principle support an improvement to the facilities there for children with additional needs it supports. However, having attended the consultation held at the school in January and now having seen the application on the council website I would like to make a number points that I ask to be considered.

1. We were told at the consultation that the proposed facilities were for the sole use of the Belmont and Bettridge schools plus potentially partner organisations supporting children with additional needs. I would not support should the facilities be made available for hire to parties outside of this. I now see within the updated application it is proposed that the MUGA pitches are likely to be hired out to the general public under the proposal. This would be totally opposed by myself and I suspect all local residents. It is one thing to improve facilities for children with special needs which I support as a principle however renting out the space to the general public would guarantee a heightened level of noise and bad language.

2. The lack of natural grass in the plans is a concern both for the look of the site and also the potential drainage implications, as well as the impact on local bio-diversity We have experienced flooding in periods of excessive rainfall and any decrease in natural drainage nearby is likely to be an issue.

3. The main issue regarding lack of natural grass is within the proposed installation generally and particularly within the two MUGA pitches. I understand that these are designed for basketball and football amongst other games. Currently at Belmont school they have a small football area and a sperate designated basketball court. While this area is used as a general break time play area I have not witnessed and formal sports activities using these facilities. With this in mind I wonder what benefit the two proposed MUGA courts would provide. I therefore question the inclusion of such provision in the plan and suggest a grassed area would be better all round and could only support a proposal excluding the MUGA courts.

4. While I understand that there are no floodlights within the application, I believe that initially there were proposed, and I want to ensure that any planning agreement included a clear undertaking to not retrospectively fit lighting in the future.

5. The times that the facility will be used is very important to me as a neighbour as when using our garden in the evening and at weekends it is important that it is a quiet calm place that we can enjoy. In order for me to support the plan there would need to be a curfew of no later than 6.30pm (and obviously no early mornings) and restricted to a small number of weekends a year. I do note in the design and access statement that the proposed opening hours are 8.30 to 10pm - supposedly aligned to the schools normal working hours which is rather laughable as the school is effectively silent from 3pm.

6. I am broadly supportive of the running track as I understand it will be suitable for wheelchair use. However again please note that the current grass running track has been rarely used by Belmont school as far as I have seen. The cycle track sounds a really good idea and I fully support that development.

7. The expected increase in use of the site will undoubtedly increase the level of traffic although unrealistically the application states there would be no more than there is currently. The access via Bournside Close is already tolerated but there would be strong objection to any more increase in the current levels.

8. Finally, I want to address the issue of the boundary. One of the things we love and in fact drew us to buy our house is our outlook. My concern is the impact this development will have. I see that there is provision for a 3-metre planting between our boundary and the cycle track. I feel 5 metres would be a minimum requirement for my support and that any planting was agreed by ourselves and maintained by the school to our agreed height.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of the points above and look forward to finding a revised proposal that is satisfactory for all. However, I cannot lend my support to the proposal in this form and in essence formally object to this proposal without revision.

I am available should you wish to discuss my concerns on *****

Yours faithfully

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Comments: 9th October 2023

Mrs Lucy White
Cheltenham Borough Council: Planning
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

6th October 2023

Reference Belmont school proposed development

I write to oppose the application as submitted. Many of the points I made in my previous letter still stand as the application remains largely as it was originally. Below are the key issues with the application from the point of view of a resident of one of the properties identified as having residential overlook within the application.

Consultation

Firstly, I would like to make a point regarding the lack of meaningful consultation. The lack of any contact outside of the original consultation has occurred - particularly as residents have reached out directly and through local councilors but no response has been forthcoming, and no resident concerns have been properly addressed in the largely unchanged submission. This lack of communication is very unfortunate and although there are many local residents who are impacted by the proposed development, there are a small number of properties that will be impacted the most and the school has not reached out and in fact, as one of those residents, did not even receive a letter outlining the new proposal.

Hours of use

The hours of use outlined currently within the application appear to be purposefully misleading. While I know the school has a number of after school activities in the school week, these are exclusively within the buildings and not utilising the outside space. Indeed, the after-school hours use of the school would appear not to be for the students at the school but third party users and as this is inside, there is no disturbance to the school's neighbors. If current normal use of outdoor space is proposed this is fine, as use is very limited. However, I am sure this is not what is proposed, and the willful misrepresentation of current use is very concerning. Currently all students leave the site at 2.45 to 3.00pm.

Loss of green space

The proposed development removes virtually all of the natural grass. I work from home and can see the use by current students make of this important facility. The students are free to make use of the space in so many ways including casual football matches. I believe this change is not only an act of environmental vandalism, it is also removing a clearly well-loved outdoor space for generally informal sporting and general recreational facilities and I cannot help but feel this is a real negative for the current Belmont students. The portrayal of the field as a muddy unused space (as suggested in the proposal) is again misleading.

Loss of amenity for the school's neighbours

Not sure I can put this any better way than the environmental health feedback from the previous application (see below). I would, however, add that the value of our garden and the tranquility we currently enjoy should very much be considered when reviewing this application.

"Residents will be accepting that they live near to a school setting, but the general hours of a school are not in line with the hours proposed. A concern is also that if granted, the facilities would not only be used by children attending Belmont School, but by outside clubs/groups, (including outside groups who have recorded their support for the project in the design and access statement), which could lead to additional noise. As a result of the multiple activities discussed in the application, there is also a risk of cumulative noise from all the sports activities/pitches etc. being used at the same time as well as for the full length of time proposed in the operational hours."

Users and number of users

There were numerous requests within the responses to the last proposal to understand better who will use the new facilities. This has not been clarified and without understanding of the users and the number of users, it is impossible to understand any impact on noise, parking and traffic. Suggestions that there will be no impact is clearly again not particularly credible or transparent.

Scope of the development

There has been no change in the number of facilities being crammed into a small space surrounded by houses. One has to question if some of the proposed facilities are required due to other facilities on the wider school estate e.g. the MUGA pitch at Bettridge school which appears to be used very occasionally. If (as I suspect is the case) the proposed MUGA pitches would be used by third parties, then additional space when Bettridge and indeed Bournside have sufficient capacity.

While I am not qualified to comment fully on the appropriateness of the proposed devolvement for the Belmont school students, I have seen that very rarely (if ever) outside of one sports day a year, that the athletics track as marked out on the grass has been used at all. There needs to be a proposal that keeps the grass area and enhances the facilities for the current students - potentially drainage to facilitate year-round use.

Noise pollution

While the new proposal has tried to provide for what is expected to be an increase in noise by including noise reducing fencing, I honestly doubt how this can be effective as our properties are more than one story high and fail to see how noise travelling up and across would be affected. Also, the provided data in the proposal only deals with one activity and the "abatement" of that noise only brings the noise level just below an "acceptable" level, however it does not model any cumulative noise, should more than one activity be happening at the same time.

Furthermore, I struggle to understand under the current proposal, how there would be room for the additional fencing, the cycle track, the planting between our boundary and the athletics track. We also suggested that a more reasonable boundary was 5 meters, but no feedback on this has been forthcoming.

Communication received from school today 5th October (6 days ahead of the deadline for comments) demonstrates the lack of willingness to engage with local residents to the point where Mr Day states that should we have any "immediate concerns" we e.mail him directly without actually giving and e.mail address other than typing "XXXXXX." This only highlights the poor attention to detail across the whole process.

In summary we strongly oppose the proposal in its current form. We have no issue with improving facilities for the children of Belmont school, but feel the proposal goes way beyond this and question the loss of the green space both environmentally, aesthetically and loss of current usage by students.

Comments: 6th October 2023

Mrs Lucy White
Cheltenham Borough Council: Planning
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

6th October 2023

Reference Belmont school proposed development

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Users and number of users

There were numerous requests within the responses to the last proposal to understand better who will use the new facilities. This has not been clarified and without understanding of the users and the number of users, it is impossible to understand any impact on noise, parking and traffic. Suggestions that there will be no impact is clearly again not particularly transparent.

Scope of the development

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Furthermore, I struggle to understand under the current proposal, how there would be room for the additional fencing, the cycle track, the planting between our boundary and the athletics track. We also suggested that a more reasonable boundary was 5 metres, but no feedback on this has been forthcoming.

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In summary we strongly oppose the proposal in its current form. We have no issue with improving facilities for the children of Belmont school, but feel the proposal goes way beyond this and question the loss of the green space both environmentally, aesthetically and loss of current usage by students.

8 Bournside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AR

Comments: 18th March 2023

8 Bournside Close
Cheltenham
Glos
GL51 3AR

18/03/23

Dear Mrs White

Full Planning Application - Belmont School Ref No 2300117/FUL

After having the opportunity to view the full planning application, together with the accompanying drawings and plans, we can confirm we are very concerned now the full detail has become apparent.

To give a little background, our house is situated towards the end of a row of 4 houses at the North Western end of the playing field and has a very clear view of the field and the hills beyond. We have lived here for just over 23 years and the view and surrounding nature has always been a big part of the enjoyment of living here. The plans submitted will in our view substantially change this outlook, privacy and enjoyment of the views.

Over the years we have also enjoyed a friendly and respectful relationship with the school and in that time, apart from the odd football being kicked in to our garden which we have happily thrown back, the noise levels and disruption in general, have been minimal and restricted to school hours and term times. Sport tend to be played regularly in the field with the bigger events held every year i.e. sports days. More recently a cycling event has been set up at the weekend for a few hours, again with minimum noise levels and whilst at first there was quite a bit of interest, numbers have of late dwindled.

Whilst in principle we are not against some expansion of the sporting facilities at Belmont, benefiting both the students there and any other neighbouring schools with children with additional needs as detailed, it would appear that despite what was said in the January public consultation meeting it seems that the facility may in fact be open to any other schools nearby and other members of the public. This is a completely different to what we who attended were assured and will make a far bigger impact on the numbers visiting the site. Whilst this may increase funding for the school this will increase the noise pollution especially if Adults are also included. This can already be established by the floodlit pitches in Bournside School which, although next door, you can still hear a lot of shouting in the evenings.

General Issues with plans

An increase in numbers, increase in noise, increase in vehicles going in and out of the school. If no further parking is being added how will this operate? We will need full assurances that the gates leading in to Bournside Close will not be used for this purpose, we already have a problem with a stream of cars exiting twice a day without looking to see if any cars are approaching from their right hand side, almost causing an accident on more than one occasion.

Proposed hours of opening Week days 8.30 - 10.00pm and Weekends 8.30 - 4.30pm. This is far in excess of current usage and the proposed lateness during the week would seem to point toward the requirement for possible use of floodlights which seem to appear in some of the planning documentation, despite verbally assurances to the contrary. We need absolute and categorical confirmation that floodlights will at no time be requested for this site. Perhaps an increase of a couple of hours after school would allow any neighbouring schools to travel to Belmont for usage but the times open at the weekend currently for the Cycle club would seem about right. Any increase in these hours would suggest additional security may be needed at unnecessary additional cost.

Scope

Why the need for the football pitches at all? It does appear to be a very over ambitious project. It seems sensible to extend the size of the running track and make this more of a hardstanding material and the same with the Cycle track both of which will improve the current facility and attract more Children to the site. The proposed football pitches seem to be completely excessive and are not the most attractive material to look out on, this would appear to be nothing more than a project to attract any other groups and additional funding.

The current playground is used daily for football by the students, has this been considered for adapting and improving for usage of a proper pitch? There are other nearby pitches that could also be used by Belmont to save the creation of these two additional pitches.

Environment and wellbeing The other major issue with re-developing the whole of the playing field on this side of Belmont, is the impact on the environment and local habitat and wildlife, which are seen here on a daily basis, there would be virtually no grass left to see or for birds and animals and insects to roam. We have also viewed countless times the benefit of this open green space for the students of Belmont. They seem to thrive when running around, letting off steam or just walking quietly taking in their surroundings, it would be a shame to replace this with Astro Turf, MUGA or other hardstanding surface. The travesty of this is indescribable.

Other points of Concern

The proposed viewing and seating area designed to spectate sporting events, we have not really had any detail as to the height and if the spectators will be able to see straight in to our gardens.

The proposed 3 metre buffer zone, we would like to request that this be increased to 5metres at least with perhaps hedging or small trees to protect our privacy but still allowing natural light through.

The point regarding the fact that the current Homeowners acknowledged that we had all bought houses next to a school with a sports playing field is a bit disingenuous to say the least. There is a vast difference between a green field used for occasional sports to a hard surfaced, brightly coloured, multi-sport venue open to all.

As we have said we are not against the improvement of general sporting facilities at Belmont but we unfortunately, cannot agree to the plans in their current form so hereby formally submit our objection.

Yours sincerely

Comments: 12th February 2024

8 Bournside Close, Cheltenham Glos , GL51 3AR -(Objects)

Having reviewed the latest planning documentation containing even more surveys, costing goodness knows how much to produce, it is evident, that unfortunately it has not provided us with any further reassurance to the concerns raised previously and our objection to this proposal still stands.

The Flood risk and Drainage report, whilst assesses the potential risk of the nearby Brook flooding and the water table levels, it has not considered that our weather has changed dramatically in the last decade and that flooding is more likely, the proposed changes to tackle the problem including a tank, various gravel filters and manholes around the perimeter of the field is extensive, and would be entirely unnecessary without this development. It is noted that the network of foul sewer joins run right across the site but there is still no acknowledgement that this would cause extensive problems if built upon or redeveloped.

The noise impact statements just do not make sense and admit that further long-term assessments would need to be made in real life, at the proposed site. What you will have, is the potential of the normal noise from the playground, which at the time of writing has increased exponentially in the last 12 months with even more banging and shouting, bad language and loud music than before, on top of the noise from the new resin pitches and tracks. There is absolutely zero input from any members of staff to try and reduce

this noise, which makes the proposal of having a formal complaints process for Homeowners to report to the school, frankly laughable, it will just be ignored.

The environmental health response is also worthy of note and reiterates the 'loss of amenities to the neighbours along with an increase of noise and disturbance'. Although one of the five a side pitches have been removed with plans to add a Play Area, this will not alleviate the noise in fact if anything it will make it worse as more students will congregate in this area, and any buffering attempts with acoustic fencing or planting will not blot out the increase in noise pollution.

The Operational plan mentions the normal school core hours which we have disputed before and there is still no evidence of many activities taking place between 15.30 and 19.30 in the week, and at the weekends. The proposed increase in opening hours is nonsensical just for usage by the students at Belmont and with so many nearby facilities available for other SEN students would they attract the numbers they are expecting? EH are even suggesting a reduction in the times proposed and questioning if the new times are for existing contracts and if any conditions are imposed on the current application?

The subject of Lighting (floodlit or otherwise), has reared its head again after receiving reassurance in past paperwork, that at no time will this be considered in the future, it now seems to indicate that 'external lighting is not being considered unless first submitted to and approved by local planning', which rather begs the question has it already, will it be approved, if not now but in the future? We need guaranteed confirmation this will not at any point be requested or considered.

In conclusion, this could have been such a good opportunity for Belmont to fully engage with its neighbours, and come up with a mutually agreed plan for the improvement of the existing space. Perhaps by utilising some of the field for a proper track for cycling or running, and keeping the majority of the green space for sports events and nature studies. The primary difference being, this would be for the benefit of all students, including those who are not able or interested in sport, to appreciate and enjoy. Sadly, this opportunity has been missed leading to strong opposition from the majority of the neighbours surrounding this site.

Comments: 6th October 2023

8 Bournside Close, GL51 3AR - (Objects)

Further to our comments raised on 18/03/23 having read the revised plans and additional supporting documentation added, we can confirm our position and comments remain the same and our objection to the purposed planning application still stands. This is due to the fact that our initial concerns have not been resolved and if anything, now more detail is available, our concerns have increased as summarised below: -

- In the planning and management statement where more detail is provided surrounding the hours of operation, we would dispute the finishing time of 10.00 p.m. Whilst we have witnessed some later sporting activities after school there does not appear to be any late activities unless it has been extremely occasional, so why the need to operate this late in the evening. Confirmation is still required that Bournside Close will not be used as a further exit point for vehicles using these facilities.

- The noise levels have increased dramatically in the last 6 months with play time now so noisy with the students dragging bins across the playground, banging on the lids and shouting through parking bollards and there has been no attempt by staff to try and stop

this. More hard standing surfaces will only increase the noise levels. The proposed acoustic fence is not shown in any detail on the plans, only that it is along the north western border and is to be 2m high. More information is required on the material, density and the exact location and height compared to existing garden fencing running along the back of this location.

- The Noise impact assessment appears to back up that the level of decibels in their study could well exceed the 50 dba and are suggesting in some areas the monitoring was limited. A more stringent study to determine the exact impact of the noise levels especially in the evenings would be recommended.

- Now it has been established that the size of the pitches is too small for even a 5 a side match it does seem to be a lot of effort and money spent with no great benefit. As suggested before we would support the enhancement of the cycling and running tracks to improve on the current facility. This would be of benefit to the existing students and for Betteridge who I understand already have their own hard standing pitch. This will leave more green field space for the students who do not want to participate in sport in their playtimes, to have access to. It will also have less impact on the surrounding wild life and insect population.

- We need assurance that there will be no floodlights or any other lighting of a similar nature to be installed in the future.

- The flooding risk assessment has not fully taken in to account the past flooding of the brook and breach of its banks. Although acknowledged this is a rare event, the risk can only increase with the impact of climate change. The maintenance work suggested by the report surely backs up the potential problems. There needs to be further drainage studies to assess the location of any sewers as highlighted by another Homeowner in the location of the development.

In summary, whilst in principle we can see the benefit of improving the sports facilities at the school in order to help nurture and develop the students, this development does seem to be far too ambitious for the 'normal' running of the school and the potential interest from surrounding schools.

We trust our comments and recommendations will be given full consideration.

Ostlers Yard
Bournside Drive
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AP

Comments: 28th February 2024

Dear Lucy

I have just read the latest comments of the EHO inviting details of lighting to be submitted so that this can be agreed with the Council before any permission is issued. As previously stated, I remain concerned about ANY form of lighting and consider that no lighting at all should be permitted as stated within the comments of the EHO submitted on 6 February 2024 in which it is stated that: 'Any kind of lighting/floodlighting in this particular area for this scheme is unlikely to be considered acceptable by the Council'. It is unclear why there should be any need for lighting at all given that the proposed hours

of use likely to be considered acceptable for the amenity of local residents are limited to daylight hours only.

If any form of lighting is permitted against this advice, please can any condition require this to be COMPLETELY SWITCHED OFF from dusk onwards both for the amenity of residents and for the local wildlife. I am recording some truly amazing birds visiting Hatherley Brook at dawn (kingfishers, owls, song thrushes, bullfinches etc) as well as badgers visiting at night and it is imperative in this wildlife depleted world that these birds and animals are afforded as much protection and as little disturbance as possible.

Regarding noise, please can I also ask that, if the application is permitted, users of the site are not permitted to play music as this can be more intrusive than voice noise. Please can this also be restricted by a suitably worded condition?

Yours sincerely

Comments: 21st March 2023

Dear Ms White

I have already submitted an objection to this application but feel I must make some additional comments, having now had sight of the additional sports strategy submitted by the headmaster and several of the statutory consultee responses.

LIGHTING

I am relieved that the EHO has requested that, should the development be granted, a condition should be imposed which provides 'There is to be no floodlighting installed as part of this development, this shall be the case for the lifetime of this development'.

Should the development proceed, such a condition would clearly be necessary, would address a main concern, and would be a huge relief to all neighbours of the site.

However, I am alarmed that the response from the County Ecologist states the following: "The ecologists state that no new lighting that could cause light spill is planned and that the flood light will be replaced by downlighters, however we would need to see a lighting plan to confirm this statement".

Where is this new downlighting proposed?? It does not appear on the plans submitted by the applicant and for residents to find out about the potential for such lighting to be included as part of the proposals through a comment submitted in response to an ecology report is inappropriate and procedurally unfair, to say the least.

It is evident, given the location of the proposals next to sensitive receptors (both residential and ecological), that no new lighting should be erected as part of any development proposed. If lighting is necessary, operationally, for the proposals to be able to be fully utilised, then it is clear that the development is located in the wrong place, and that it should be refused.

Nonetheless, if the development does go ahead, please could the condition proposed by the EHO be amended to read: 'There is to be NO FLOODLIGHTING OR OTHER

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING installed as part of this development; this shall be the case for the lifetime of this development'.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE LOSS OF THE PLAYING FIELD AND CREATION OF TWO MINOR OVALS

The headmaster's suggestion in his additional response to Sport England that many of Belmont's children find it impossible to engage in sports like rugby and football begs the question as to why two five a side pitches are therefore proposed. In similar vein, the suggestion that the minor ovals are needed for children who cannot yet run 200 metres should be afforded little weight; surely, a 100m line can be marked on to the 200m track for these children? Thirdly, the suggestion that 'The design will also allow for the school or community groups to offer running/athletics at the same time as accessible cycling' is to ignore Sport England's concern 'about the conflict of different surfaces in such close proximity which could lead to accidents'. In my opinion, it does nothing to justify the extent of what is proposed and therefore fails to address the concerns raised. Indeed, it raises further worries as the latest suggestion is that the facilities will also be open to all the children attending Bournside School - numbering approximately 1,800!

BLEACHER SEATING

I would concur with the comment submitted by 72 Bournside Road that the installation of bleacher seating could result in visual intrusion of the type envisaged in the recent Tate Modern case. It is evident that tiered seating in a school playing field is not necessary for the common and ordinary use and occupation of the land and its construction does not confer proper consideration for the interests of neighbouring occupiers.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Cheltenham Borough Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019. It seems counterintuitive in the current climate to be replacing a grass playing field with artificial pitches which can only increase surface water runoff. Whilst the school site itself may be in Flood Zone 1, Hatherley Brook into which surface water will drain is shown on the government website to be in Flood Zone 3 which is at high risk of flooding. I would remind you of Policy INF2 of the Joint Core Strategy which provides that proposals must not increase the level of risk to the safety of occupiers of a site, the local community or the wider environment either on the site or elsewhere (full text reproduced below).

Policy INF2: Flood Risk Management 1. Development proposals must avoid areas at risk of flooding, in accordance with a risk- based sequential approach. Proposals must not increase the level of risk to the safety of occupiers of a site, the local community or the wider environment either on the site or elsewhere. For sites of strategic scale, the cumulative impact of the proposed development on flood risk in relation to existing settlements, communities or allocated sites must be assessed and effectively mitigated 2. Minimising the risk of flooding and providing resilience to flooding, taking into account climate change, will be achieved by: This policy contributes towards achieving Objective 6. i. Requiring new development to, where possible, contribute to a reduction in existing flood risk; ii. Applying a sequential test for assessment of applications for development giving priority to land in Flood Zone 1, and, if no suitable land can be found in Flood Zone 1, applying the exception test; iii. Requiring new development that could cause or exacerbate flooding to be subject to a flood risk assessment which conforms to national policy and incorporates the latest available updates to modelling and climate change data

and historic data and information and guidance contained in the authorities' Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and Supplementary Planning Documents, in order to demonstrate it will be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere; iv. Requiring new development to incorporate suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate in the view of the local authority to manage surface water drainage: to avoid any increase in discharge into the public sewer system; to ensure that flood risk is not increased on-site or elsewhere; and to protect the quality of the receiving watercourse and groundwater. Where possible, the authorities will promote the retrofitting of SuDS and encourage development proposals to reduce the overall flood risk through the design and layout of schemes which enhance natural forms of drainage. Developers will be required to fully fund such mitigation measures for the expected lifetime of the development including adequate provision for ongoing maintenance; v. Working with key partners, including the Environment Agency and Gloucestershire County Council, to ensure that any risk of flooding from development proposals is appropriately mitigated and the natural environment is protected in all new development.

The Cheltenham Plan provides at paragraph 10.1 as follows: 'Although often perceived as an essentially man-made environment, the town of Cheltenham contains many habitats that harbour a rich array of wildlife. Ponds, railway cuttings, hedges and verges, small copses, parks, cemeteries, school playing fields, allotments and even old buildings all host a wealth of species ranging from larger mammals like foxes and badgers to wild flowers and butterflies. 10.2. The rural areas of the Borough also contain some very significant habitats; the limestone grassland flora of Leckhampton Hill, which is rich in plant and insect species, and the ancient woodlands of the Cotswold escarpment being the most prominent features. Most areas of natural vegetation in the countryside support a great diversity of wildlife. 10.3. Many wildlife habitats are under severe threat from development and agricultural pressures; even a minor environmental change not requiring planning permission may radically alter the ecological balance and lead to the loss of valuable species.'

POLICY SL1 of the Cheltenham Plan states: **SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING**
Development will only be permitted where it would: a) not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of adjoining land users and living conditions in the locality; and b) not, by nature of its size, location, layout or design, give rise to crime or the fear of crime nor endanger public safety.

In light of these policies, which are there to protect both local residential amenity and the wildlife contained in places such as on the school playing fields and along the Hatherley Brook corridor (which, incidentally, has not been assessed within the submitted ecology report as the report has only considered the playing field up to the fence line above the brook), it is inconceivable that the current proposals should be permitted.

The applicant appears to be intent on alienating its neighbours by not being upfront about what this development entails. The applicant should be asked to submit a clear planning statement clarifying many details concerning lighting, proposed users of the site, realistic hours of use and potential traffic impacts, including where users are expected to park and how they would ingress into and exit from the site. The planning statement should consider the development's accordance, or otherwise, with planning policy and any material considerations the applicant feels may outweigh these.

It is clear at present that the applicant has not provided sufficient detail or justification for the proposed development, and therefore, in its current form, the application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

Comments: 4th October 2023

Dear Mrs White

Application reference 23/00117/FUL - development at Belmont School

I write in respect of the revised plans for the above application. I previously submitted comments in response to the original plans and would ask that my previous comments also be taken into account, please.

Floodlighting

I note that the headmaster affirms in the Planning and Management Statement that there are to be no floodlights as part of the development. Whilst this is to be welcomed (as floodlighting could have severely detrimental effects on both the local wildlife and on local residential amenity), I remain anxious that floodlighting may be applied for at a later date. For this reason, and as requested by the Environmental Health Officer in their response of 20 March 2023, I would ask that a condition be imposed on any permission granted as follows:

"There is to be no floodlighting installed as part of this development, this shall be the case for the lifetime of this development."

I am also concerned that "other lighting" could be applied for / incorporated which may, in itself, have a detrimental impact on ecology / local amenity. I would therefore ask that it be made clear within the reasoning for the imposition of the above condition that "floodlighting" includes any form of lighting. It is important to be aware that this site is pitch black at night and any lighting would disturb wildlife and residents, even if at low level.

Hours of use

I note the headmaster's comments that use of the new facilities will be limited by daylight hours but I consider that, in order to provide appropriate protection to residential amenity, a condition should be imposed formally limiting out of school usage to specific times - say, until 8pm on weekday evenings, until 4pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or bank holidays.

Acoustic fence

I note that a new 2m high acoustic fence is to be erected along our fence line (we are situated at the point overlooking the north west corner of the site). I do not take issue with this but I would ask for the following points to be borne in mind, please:

a) I would suggest that a maintenance easement of at least 50cm be left between our fence line and the new acoustic fence so that we are able to maintain / repair our own

fences. Such a gap would also provide a wildlife corridor for small mammals, particularly hedgehogs;

b) I would ask that hedgehog holes be created at intervals along the new acoustic fence to facilitate hedgehog highways;

c) I would also request that the ash sapling which abuts our fence (but on the school's side) be left in situ as this provides our property with significant screening from the development.

3m buffer planting

I previously commented on the 3m planting buffer which is to be erected along the length of our fence (running along the western edge of the development). I asked if this could be 5m, if possible, but I note that it remains as 3m on the revised plans. I would request that this be planted with a mix of broadleaved native species, ideally hawthorn dominant (eg 60%), for both reasons of security and to facilitate safe nesting habitat for birds, especially sparrows. In order for the buffer to become a more rapid and effective screen from the development, standard native tree planting should also be incorporated. A suitably worded condition requiring submission of a detailed scheme of landscaping would be appropriate. It is also important to ensure that this planting should be effectively managed and maintained for the lifetime of the development, and a further condition requiring a landscape management and aftercare plan to this effect would therefore be appropriate.

MUGA pitches

I note from the plans that the proposed pitches are coloured green and I would ask that these remain green, please, as Google Earth pictures of nearby schools which have allowed blue pitches to be created demonstrate just how much of an eyesore they are. A suitably worded condition to this effect should be imposed.

I trust that the above comments will be taken into account in your consideration of the application.

Yours sincerely

Comments: 26th January 2024

Dear Mrs White

Application reference 23/00117/FUL - development at Belmont School

I write in respect of the revised plans for the above application. I have previously submitted comments twice in response to the original and subsequent versions of the plans and would ask that my previous comments also be taken into account, please.

Floodlighting

I remain particularly concerned about floodlighting. Whilst I noted in my last letter that the headmaster had affirmed in the Planning and Management Statement that there were to be no floodlights as part of the development, I note in this latest iteration within Appendix B of the document entitled 'Operational Plan' the ominous statement that, 'There shall be no external lighting associated with the running track, multiple use games area, and BMX

pump tracks, unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority'.

To me, this indicates a clear intention to apply for floodlighting at a later date. I would reiterate that the Belmont school playing fields are completely pitch black at night and used by a multitude of wildlife (as described in my previous letters) and the introduction of ANY LIGHTING would have a hugely detrimental impact on the visiting wildlife and on local residential amenity.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has recognised the risk that ANY FORM of lighting at this site poses in its response to the last consultation in which it was stated:

"Lighting:

It has been noted in the full submission that there is no floodlighting applied for in this development. Floodlighting is likely to cause a disturbance to neighbouring residential properties as well as a loss of amenity for them. This department also has concerns about the use of any other form of lighting at this site. The proposed end time of 22.00 with no lighting proposed, gives rise to concern about the possible introduction/use of any other form of lighting on this site which could allow the later use of the site throughout the year."

I would therefore implore the Council to adopt the approach of the Environmental Health Officer in its response of 20 March 2023 and to impose a condition on any permission granted which would prevent the installation of floodlighting AT ANY TIME during the lifetime of the development, as follows:

"There is to be no floodlighting installed as part of this development; this shall be the case for the lifetime of this development".

I also continue to share the concerns of the EHO that "other lighting" could be applied for / incorporated which may, in itself, have a detrimental impact on ecology / local amenity so would ask that this also be expressly prevented, please.

Proposed Play Area

I note from the plans that a new play area is proposed in place of one of the previously proposed MUGA pitches. The plans indicate that this will have a polymeric surface. Whilst I mourn the loss of the grass and have continued concerns about drainage from a man-made surface, if this proposal is allowed, I would ask that the polymeric pitch be green, please, to minimise the visual impact. A suitably worded condition to this effect would be appropriate.

I trust that the above comments will be taken into account in your consideration of the application.

Comments: 14th March 2023

Dear Mrs White

Application reference 23/00117/FUL - development at Belmont School

I write in respect of the above application about which I wish to express some concerns.

Impact on wildlife and biodiversity net gain

Our house (Ostlers Yard on Bournside Drive) directly overlooks the north west corner of Belmont's playing field. Hatherley Brook runs alongside the northern edge of the playing field and then runs through our garden. As I am sure you are aware, the brook constitutes a significant wildlife corridor acting as a green lung linking the countryside at the edge of the escarpment on Leckhampton Hill, passing through the centre of Cheltenham, before extending onwards to the Severn Vale floodplain near Longford. As such, it attracts a significant amount of wildlife, much of which regularly visits our garden, including foxes, badgers, hedgehogs, deer and, of particular note, bats. It also supports a plethora of birds - owls, redwings, fieldfares, mistle thrushes, songthrushes, woodpeckers (green and greater spotted), many of the finches and even nuthatches and tree creepers on occasion, to name but a few.

It is concerning that no ecology report has yet been uploaded onto the CBC webpage and I wonder if this means it has still to be submitted. This would seem curious as it was referred to by the applicant's agents at the public meeting in January when I was advised that the report had referenced a number of interesting species located along Hatherley Brook. I did ask for a copy of the report at that time, or at least a list of the species mentioned, but nothing was ever sent on to me. I consider it imperative that you and the County Ecologist have sight of this report at the earliest opportunity. In the same vein, has the applicant provided details of potential biodiversity net gain which may result from the application?

On the basis of the importance of the wildlife referred to above which would, without doubt, be detrimentally affected by night-time lighting, our main concern regarding the proposals relates to the potential for there to be floodlighting. In this regard, it is understood that the initial proposals for the development did include floodlighting. Whilst the consultation in January confirmed that no floodlighting is currently proposed (and I note that this is reiterated within the submitted Design and Access Statement), in order to ensure both the protection of the abundant local wildlife as well as our amenity and that of our neighbours, I would ask that a condition be imposed preventing the installation of any floodlighting (or lighting at all) without specific planning permission.

Loss of playing field

I have read, and agree with, the comments made by Sport England querying the justification for the complete loss of the playing field. It appears that the applicant is trying to be too ambitious and to squeeze too many facilities into a space which cannot support it. Loss of the playing field will inevitably have an impact on surface water run off into Hatherley Brook and will remove an open feeding area for various bird species (particularly mistle thrushes and green woodpeckers) which can be seen foraging on the field at weekends.

Impact on residential amenity through noise

I note from the Design and Access Statement the school's intention to allow the new facilities to be used by the community and I am somewhat concerned about the resultant potential for increased noise and possible antisocial behaviour, particularly during the evenings and at weekends. Whilst I note that the Statement indicates that Sunday is included within the school's current opening hours, and that during the week these hours extend until 10pm, I am not aware of activities currently taking place on the field on Sundays nor late into weekday evenings. Should such activities occur, I consider that this would impact negatively on the residential enjoyment of our properties, particularly our gardens. For this reason, I would ask that a condition be imposed limiting out of school usage to specific times - say, until 6.30pm on weekday evenings, until 4pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or bank holidays.

Planting buffer

The current plans suggest that a 3m planting buffer will be erected along the length of our fence (running along the western edge of the development). I would prefer this to be 5m, please, and planted with deciduous trees (best case would be if tree types could be agreed with residents first). Another option would be to include planting further into the site within the margins between the athletics track and the perimeter access / cycling track. This would provide additional cover as well as a contribution towards biodiversity net gain and would also provide additional interest for those using the track. I understand that some residents would like to retain a clear view into the site but that does not include us; as we are closest to Hatherley Brook where the need for planting for wildlife is greater, I would ask that our section be planted for privacy, please.

Colour of track

I would question the need for the track to be a red colour; it would be more in keeping with a sports field for the track to be green, if possible, please.

General

Finally, I would like to express some general concerns about the overall nature of this application. It appears that the proposals have changed since pre-app from something supported by Sport England to something which appears to be designed to generate maximum revenue. Until it was pointed out at the public consultation, the indicative plan on the school's website still retained references to floodlighting whilst the failure to supply the ecology report rings alarm bells. It would be interesting to have sight of the information submitted at pre-application stage and, in particular, CBC's consideration of the question of floodlighting at that point.

In the circumstances, I feel I have no option but to object to the application in its current form.

Yours sincerely

72 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 10th March 2023

I write as a resident of 72 Bournside Road - a property adjacent to the Belmont School playing field. As a retired secondary school teacher I support, in principle, the wish to provide enhanced sports facilities for schools and would be keen, perhaps with other Bournside Road residents, to work with the school and the planning team to ensure that the plans meet some of the school's aims but also protect the residents' privacy and quality of life.

I have endorsed and signed a letter to be submitted by *****, 56 Bournside Road but would ask that the following points be considered in the Planning Application process:

1. Floodlights: Please ensure floodlights are not allowed to be added as a separate application in the future.
2. That use of the facilities is restricted to the children of Belmont School and partner schools of children with additional needs.
3. Careful management of the additional "community use", ie. usage outside normal school hours, will be absolutely vital if the development is to receive and maintain the support of local residents. This covers areas such as time restrictions, noise, public access and possible anti- social behaviour.
4. Screening: additional fencing, hedging and trees will be needed to maintain the privacy of the houses / gardens in Bournside Road and other roads adjacent to the school field. Residents should be involved in the decisions about this screening.
5. The siting of the proposed bleacher seating is a concern - how long / high is this to be? Is it really needed? Does this not actually turn the facility into a sports arena?
6. Possible flooding: Drainage and land levelling will need to be considered carefully to ensure that the environmental impact upon the river separating the school land from Bournside Road gardens is not seriously compromised.
7. I believe the proposals are seriously over ambitious. Will the proposed facilities really bring in the income required to make the development viable? I think not. Perhaps a more modest plan including a single, multi - purpose hard activity / play area plus a cycle track would be more sensible.
8. Following on from point 7 it seems a great shame that the proposal removes the vast majority of the Belmont School field. Green areas are of huge, and increasing, importance and if drainage of the school field is a problem that restricts its use in winter then perhaps some thought should be given as to how this can be improved without removing it altogether.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my points.

Yours faithfully,

Comments: 10th March 2023

I write as a resident of 72 Bournside Road - a property adjacent to the Belmont School playing field. As a retired secondary school teacher I support, in principle, the wish to provide enhanced sports facilities for schools and would be keen, perhaps with other Bournside Road residents, to work with the school and the planning team to ensure that the plans meet some of the school's aims but also protect the residents' privacy and quality of life.

I have endorsed and signed a letter to be submitted by Mr. David Almond, 56 Bournside Road but would ask that the following points be considered in the Planning Application process:

1. Floodlights: Please ensure floodlights are not allowed to be added as a separate application in the future.
2. That use of the facilities is restricted to the children of Belmont School and partner schools of children with additional needs.
3. Careful management of the additional "community use", ie. usage outside normal school hours, will be absolutely vital if the development is to receive and maintain the support of local residents. This covers areas such as time restrictions, noise, public access and possible anti- social behaviour.
4. Screening: additional fencing, hedging and trees will be needed to maintain the privacy of the houses / gardens in Bournside Road and other roads adjacent to the school field. Residents should be involved in the decisions about this screening.
5. The siting of the proposed bleacher seating is a concern - how long / high is this to be? Is it really needed? Does this not actually turn the facility into a sports arena?
6. Possible flooding: Drainage and land levelling will need to be considered carefully to ensure that the environmental impact upon the river separating the school land from Bournside Road gardens is not seriously compromised.
7. I believe the proposals are seriously over ambitious. Will the proposed facilities really bring in the income required to make the development viable? I think not. Perhaps a more modest plan including a single, multi - purpose hard activity / play area plus a cycle track would be more sensible.
8. Following on from point 7 it seems a great shame that the proposal removes the vast majority of the Belmont School field. Green areas are of huge, and increasing, importance and if drainage of the school field is a problem that restricts its use in winter then perhaps some thought should be given as to how this can be improved without removing it altogether.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my points.

Yours faithfully,

Comments: 6th October 2023

The comments I submitted on 10/03/23 remain and I wish these to be considered when the application is discussed - thank you. The comments made in points 7 and 8 are particularly relevant .

However, I wish to add that the promised engagement and consultation with the school's neighbours has not taken place.

The letter received on 15/09/23 from the headteacher was patronising in tone and did not address any of the concerns raised in the comments from residents other than let us know that we have misunderstood the use of the proposed facility and to put the burden of responsibility for monitoring noise and behaviour onto us. Mr. Day's letter also contained a significant error concerning the siting of the proposed acoustic fence. This error has since been acknowledged and corrected - fine, but this lack of attention to detail is a concern.

Finally I would like to stress that I consider this proposal, for what amounts to a sports arena, to be an over ambitious vanity project. A more sensible approach would have been to have worked with a group of residents to produce a workable and affordable scheme that would have improved the provision for Belmont's students. A great shame that Mr. Day and his consultants have failed to recognise this.

70 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 10th October 2023

70 Bournside Road
Cheltenham GL51 3AH

10 October 2023

Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council My e-mail and by hand
P.O. Box 12
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

Planning Application 23/00117/FUL

Additional Sports facilities at Belmont School.

We believe that it is very significant that Sport England, the body with statutory responsibility for such matters, does not support even the amended version of this application.

Like diamonds, planning permissions are forever. Professional knowledge gained from working on planning matters tells us that planning permissions have to be right from Day 1.

Reference should be made to our letter of 8 March 2023, please. This application, as originally submitted, was totally devoid of any limitations on use, times or days and totally devoid of any concessions about the effect that this proposal would have on the neighbourhood, other than some trees on the Eastern boundary.

There have since been expressions of intention from the School, in the form of a Management Plan and otherwise, about how and when the facilities are to be used. No doubt they are made in good faith, but they can only be based on the perceptions existing in 2022 and 2023. Intentions can and do change. They can change because of a change in management: they can change as a result of pressures from various sources - one group may complain that a similar group is allowed to use the site - "Why can't we?". Financial pressures, such as construction and maintenance costs, can bring changes of intention - sponsors may say "We are paying for this - we want to use it".

If this had been a commercial enterprise, rather than Belmont School, the initial application would have been opposed outright. So in March we made suggestions for conditions, supported by evidence - conditions about times, days, no lighting, limits to sound, limits to the effect on wildlife, and so on. Others have made broadly similar requests.

A letter from the School dated "September 2023" makes the point that local residents may not know who the parties are that already use "the site" - it is unclear if this means the presently grassed area lying between the School buildings and the boundaries, or just the School buildings themselves. Speaking for ourselves, we do not know every user, but what we do know is what hours of the day, what days of the week and what weeks of the year, the presently grassed area leading down towards the Brook has been used for recreational purposes over the past 45 years..

The application does not even suggest a condition of there being no floodlights.

A detailed Sound Report has been submitted. What its author does not have is the experience of living by the School for 45 years and experiencing the times of the day, the days of the week and the weeks of the year during which use has been made of the grassed area leading from the School buildings down to the boundary by the Brook. What happens inside the School does not affect us. What matters is the proposed changes to the times of the day, the days of the weeks and the weeks of the year that this proposal would bring about in respect of that grassed area, as well as the nature of the intended activities on it. The report also fails to take account of the fact that the human ear is attuned to the sound of the human voice, not just to the existence of X number of decibels.

The only change of any significance in the amended version of the application is the intention to construct an acoustic fence. In a circular letter dated "September 2023" it is stated that the acoustic fence is to be on the "North-Eastern boundary", which suggests the boundary by the Brook. This is misleading. Close examination of the revised plans and enquiry of the School reveals that it is proposed that the acoustic be only by the properties on Bournside Close. The School has on 5 October, six days before the deadline, made a correction after we pointed the error out to them.

The properties by the proposed acoustic fence are the only properties shown on the revised plans as "Residential Overlook" What, then, can we see from the windows at the back of our house and from our garden?

Despite the School's publicly stated aims of safeguarding its pupils, the revised plans submitted in September still do not make any proposal to safeguard against an accident occurring by reason of the proximity of the proposed cycle track to the existing metal paling fence above the Brook with its pointed tops designed to be harmful to an intruder climbing in from outside, but potentially more harmful to a cyclist in an accident while "letting off steam" or otherwise engaging in the cycling activity intended to benefit the School's pupils and other users. Such an omission is difficult to understand. The occurrence of an accident of the type envisaged will have to be brought to the attention of the authorities appropriate to the nature of the event.

Conditions in a planning permission are legally binding, set out clearly and accessible to all. They can be monitored and enforced. They can actually help management by enabling pressures to be resisted.

In the absence of binding formal planning conditions to deal adequately with the issues that have been raised by ourselves and other residents, the "conditional support" mentioned in our letter of 8 March 2023 must, regrettably, turn to outright opposition, and the application should, we respectfully submit, be refused.

Yours faithfully,

Comments: 14th February 2024

70 Bournside Road
Cheltenham GL51 3AH

14 February 2024

Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council My e-mail and by hand
P.O. Box 12
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

Planning Application 23/00117/FUL

Additional Sports facilities at Belmont School.

Please refer to the submission made in February and October 2023 for relevant facts and background. This submission will be shorter.

It cannot be disputed that if this application is granted at all, it will cause a significant change compared to what has been happening on the grassed area between the School buildings and the boundaries to our knowledge for 46 years. That change will impact on the amenities of the neighbouring residential properties. It is our respectful submission that this application should be refused, although we realise that others may think differently, particularly in light of the School's aims.

At last, there is some recognition by the Applicant that activities on that area need to be determined by binding conditions decided by and subject to monitoring by the local Planning Authority rather than being determined solely by the School, if this application is to be granted at all.

The present suggested wording of the Conditions limiting periods of use is capable of being misunderstood or misinterpreted. What does "used" mean? Does it mean whistle to whistle or gathering on site beforehand or remaining after physical activities have ceased? Precision of wording is essential so that all concerned understand what is and what is not permitted, as battles in Court have shown. Our suggested wording for any Condition about times and days should read:

"Other than for the purposes of inspection and maintenance there shall be no entry on to the area where (list the facilities for which permission may be granted) are situated before (time and days) and that area shall be vacated no later than (time and days)".

It is disappointing to see that the risk of injury - or worse - arising from the closeness of the proposed cycle track - especially the overtaking area - to the spike-topped boundary fence near to the Hatherley Brook continues to be ignored by the Applicant. If this application is to be granted at all, the following Condition is suggested.

"The perimeter cycle track shall not be used for cycling (as opposed to walking or running) until there has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority a professional Risk Assessment and all requirements arising therefrom have been fully implemented".

In light of the first paragraph of this submission, we respectfully suggest that the hours of permitted use, if this application is granted at all, should be Monday to Friday in School term time 08.30 to 16.30, Monday to Friday out of School term time 08.30 to 13.00, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays all year round 10.00 to 13.00, so that the residents of neighbouring properties within sight or sound of the site may be afforded some respite to enjoy the amenities of their properties when they are most likely to be used and appreciated.

Lastly, if this application falls to be determined at a meeting which members of the public are permitted to attend and speak, we would wish to be afforded such an opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

.....

Comments: 9th March 2023

70 Bournside Road
Cheltenham GL51 3AH

8 March 2023

Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council My e-mail and by hand
P.O. Box 12
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

Planning Application 23/00117/FUL

Additional Sports facilities at Belmont School.

We are writing to express our views on this proposal. May we start by saying that we support the aims of the application, but that support is, in a quite literal sense, conditional. We attended the 2012 Paralympic Games in London - a memorable and moving occasion- and we are aware of the ongoing efforts in the U.K. to make sport more inclusive.

Background.

What is now all Bournside Road began to be developed in the 1930s at either end. The majority of the houses, mainly detached with some semi-detached, were built in the space between during the 1950s, with only a few being built since. Many of the houses have been extended considerably, including No. 70. The road is the quintessential English suburban tree-lined residential avenue. Many of the houses on the South- West side, i.e., the side nearest the site of the present proposal, have larger gardens than would probably have been the case had they been built even a decade later. It is clear to us as local residents that the gardens are used, tended and enjoyed, as is ours. Some residents, we know, work from home.

We bought No. 70 in January 1978, aware that there was a schools complex nearby, and we have lived here ever since. We raised three children here and the house is still "H,Q."

for the three generations of our family. It is clear that other properties are similarly used. We have in recent years made various changes aimed at enabling us to remain here.

The present activities in and around Belmont School are mainly Monday to Friday during school term time. Such activity as takes place at other times (leaving aside building and maintenance work which necessarily spill over) can be lively - even raucous on occasion - but it is usually brief and confined to relatively short periods of the day Monday to Friday, with noticeably less activity at weekends and in holidays, and it is in any event mainly confined to the paved area adjacent to the school building, perhaps 100 or more metres from our boundary; this proposal would bring that activity to within about ten metres of our boundary. There are sometimes sports activities which can be noisy and intrusive, especially when sound amplification systems and a klaxon are used, but they are brief and infrequent. We hope we are reasonable as neighbours - we offered access via our garden when some items were thrown or kicked over the fence onto the School side of Hatherley Brook, and we have never complained about the droning noise of the School's central heating system when it is kept on overnight during cold spells although it is audible inside our house despite our modern double glazing. All of this, so far, is in line with what one expects, having chosen to live near a schools complex.

The present proposal goes much further, because it is for extensive sports facilities covering the whole of what has hitherto been grassed field. It appears to be the intention to extend the activities to almost all of the year, seven days a week and for long hours, more akin to a commercial sports complex.

We attended the consultation on 10 January. It was difficult to find from any one of the three persons attending on behalf of the School and the engineers a comprehensive view of what the proposal involved, although the plans shown were helpful. It emerged that there were no proposals to alter in any way the metal, spike-topped paling fence on the North-East boundary, i.e., adjacent to No. 70 and other houses from about No. 40-something to No. 72 or 74, and please see the concerns below about this. Some intentions about use were mentioned. We have examined the application on line. It is just for change of use with no mention of any limitations. Intentions can change; planning conditions do not.

No locality, unless it be in an area specifically protected by statute, can be expected to remain unaltered over the passage of time. Please see footnote 1 below.

How the proposal may be funded is not any of our business, but mention was made at the consultation on 10 January of approaching local businesses. It is a short step to sponsors expecting that their staff and families be permitted to use the facilities; the greater the activity the greater the impact, particularly if, as we understand from a letter from Councillor Chelin, it is intended to allow other groups to use the facilities whenever they are not booked by the priority groups which are to have first pickings after the School itself. Without appropriate conditions the site could be used indiscriminately to generate revenue.

Suggested formal conditions, with reasons

No. 70 is almost the last property in the row along the North- East boundary of the subject site. The bottom of the garden is, perhaps, ten metres from the site fence. The Hatherley Brook flows between, with varying amounts of land separating. That area has many mature trees, but of the 20 or so which can be distinguished from No. 70, all but two are deciduous, so providing no screen for several months of the year. The area either side of the Brook is, and always has been, a habitat for wildlife. Foxes have earths and they rear their cubs in and around; some 25 species of birds of various sizes from owls to wrens frequent it and our garden, and squirrels are ever-present. Even the local cats hunt there. We have seen fieldmice, hedgehogs, frogs and slow-worms. Birds and foxes forage on the existing grassed area when it is quiet. It is inevitable that any increase in activity on the subject site will cause greater disturbance to wildlife. We notice less wildlife activity when the outside area of the School is being used as at present. A condition limiting the days and times of use will benefit wildlife as well as reducing the detrimental effect on the amenities of the nearby residences.

Our suggestion is that formal planning conditions be imposed requiring activity on the subject site be limited to 08.30 (sunrise if later) to 17.00 (sunset if earlier) on Monday to Friday, 10.00 to 15.00 on Saturdays, 10.00 to 13.00 on Sundays, with no activity on Bank Holidays. We understand that no floodlights are to be installed. We ask for a formal condition that no lighting at all be permitted. Similarly, we ask for a condition that no amplification of sound above 85 - 90 decibels (about the volume of a garden lawnmower) be permitted. All persons using the site should be required to conduct themselves in such a way that these conditions are not breached.

One aspect caused us particular concern. The cycle track is to run in part next to the metal fence previously mentioned, with a wider section for overtaking. Any overtaking cyclist is likely to be on the outside and will be moving faster. We see that some of the present pupils of Belmont School are of near-adult stature. Very little would have to go wrong for a rider to be thrown against or onto the top of the metal palings, with the potential for very serious injury or worse. Please see footnote 2 below. A suitable evergreen hedge about 1 metre wide and 3 or 4 metres high would provide a much more forgiving surface for the unfortunate rider(s) to be propelled onto. We lack the knowledge to suggest a particular species of shrub, but hopefully others can suggest one whose foliage extends from ground level. This would also lessen the noise and visual intrusion on to the adjoining properties and would have the incidental benefit of providing a habitat for insects and perhaps small birds as well as something of a screen for the wildlife corridor either side of the Brook. We ask that a formal planning condition to this effect be imposed.

Other considerations.

Security out of school hours is another concern. How will unauthorised access to the site be prevented? Hatherley Park suffers, on occasion, anti-social behaviour, now that it is left unlocked. Unfortunately, the Police cannot be expected to treat trespassers on Belmont School as a late-night priority. To whose attention would such occurrences be drawn, and how?

Drainage of the artificial surfaces, we understand, is to be by catchment tanks which allow gradual seepage to Hatherley Brook. The flow characteristics of the Brook have altered over the years, with more rapid upsurges in flow during heavy rain, especially since the development at Merestones around the former education facility, and it is predicted that the extensive development further upstream on the far side of Shurdington Road will add still more to the variations in the flow of the Brook. The rate of water flow from the site into the Brook requires to be monitored.

A good number of years ago, when the development of the area part of which became Castanum Court was being considered, there was talk locally of some parts of the area around that site having at some point in the past been used for landfill; methane was mentioned. It might seem unlikely that such use would have extended as far as the subject site, but perhaps it would be prudent for trial borings to be undertaken.

Conclusion.

In short, not NIMBY, rather YIMBY, B; Yes, In My Back Yard, But - managed and with conditions and limitations enshrined in law to lessen the impact on the local residents and the environment.

We make no apology for the length of this submission. This proposal is the biggest change to the area around our property for at least forty-five years, probably a good deal longer. We bought near to a schools complex, not a near-commercial sports complex, which is what this proposal will produce unless appropriate conditions are attached and complied with.

Sincerely,

Footnote 1 from ALM. In my professional work on some 50 occasions it fell to me, as one of the regulators of the road transport industry, to preside over Public Inquiries, to receive oral and written evidence, to consider that evidence and produce a written Decision, with

findings of fact and reasons, for allowing, often with some conditions, or refusing, consent for the proposed use of a site as a road transport base. The subject-matter may be different; the principles are the same - how best can one allow the proposed activity to take place without undue adverse effects on the residences within sight and sound of the site, inside the confines provided by the law.

Footnote 2 from ALM. From 1988 to 2005 I was H.M. Coroner for this area, conducting some 1500 Inquests. Although none were in circumstances such as are envisaged here, I think I can recognise a potential hazard when I see one; something which can go wrong, one day will go wrong, as emerged so often in Court.

cc. Cllrs Beale, Oliver, Harman and Chelin

Letter Attached.

62 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 9th October 2023

Dear Lucy,

I'm writing regarding the planning application for amendments to Belmont School and I'm told you are the person to write to.

My family and I live at 62 Bournside Road and our garden backs onto the school over the brook, so I believe that we are considered the northern boundary.

During the school term, there is noise from the school whenever the playing field is in use, and also at weekends when events are being run, especially those which use a PA sound system. Although loud at times, we accept that this is part of living next to a school and don't object.

However, most weekends it is quiet and we appreciate the peace and value during those times.

I have learned this week that there is no longer an acoustic fence along the northern boundary within the plans for amendments to Belmont School.

This is most frustrating as we were given to believe that one would be installed, and so, like many of my neighbours, I am now in a position where I object to the planning application.

This is most disappointing, I was in full support of the application as we value any local improvements to sporting facilities for young people, but only when measures to limit noise or sound pollution are put in place.

We were notified that there would be an acoustic fence and we hope that one will be included in the plans. Yours sincerely

Comments: 20th March 2023

Like my neighbours on Bournside Road, I support the original plan to provide new and additional sporting facilities for the children of Belmont and Bettridge Schools, but add my voice to the concerns already voiced regarding any future extracurricular facilities which may compromise the private and peaceful setting of our homes. Particular concerns are the future use of floodlights, flooding risks into Hatherley Brook without sufficient drainage and any loud antisocial behaviour, especially after hours.

60 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 10th October 2023

My family and I live on Bournside Road, no 60, our garden backs onto the school over the brook, so I think we are considered the northern boundary.

During the day there is noise from the school when the playing field is in use. Whilst at times loud, I accept that is part of living next to a school. At weekends it is quiet and we value that time.

I am given to understand there will not be an acoustic fence along the Bournside Road boundary, as we were given to believe. I am now in a position where I want to object to the planning application. I do not accept the schools position that this is not a change a change of use of the site, it clearly is.

I find this disappointing, I was given to support the application when notified there would be an acoustic fence. It appears to me that the most sensible way forward would be to include one in the plans

58 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 9th October 2023

Dear Lucy,

I am writing to object to the lack of acoustic fencing bordering Bournside rd houses. I totally agree with my neighbours,60,62 and 56, I live at no 58.

There have been occasions when the noise level has been unacceptable, as stated by no 60, we do relish the weekends as a quieter time.

So on that basis I objective to the latest planning for Belmont school.

56 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 15th March 2023

Letter attached.

Comments: 13th March 2023

I posted a hard copy letter today, along with a number of signatures from my immediate neighbours who live in properties adjacent to the Belmont sports field. I am copying the contents of the letter below via the online portal for convenience.

Since posting the letter I noticed the additional detail of bleacher seating, which will face directly into our properties. Please can this seating be removed entirely from the plans as it is unnecessarily intrusive.

BEGINS

FAO: Planning, Cheltenham Borough Council

RE: Objection to Belmont School proposed sports development

We write as residents of Bournside Road with properties adjacent to the Belmont School playing field.

Belmont School wrote to inform us of their proposed sports development before Christmas and held a consultation on 10 January.

We are, of course, supportive in principle of the intent to provide improved sports facilities for children with additional needs. We are keen to work with the school and planning team to ensure the plans meet their requirements.

Based on the information we have received so far we are obliged to object to the plans and consider them too expansive and intrusive. If the below points are considered and reasonable adjustment is made then we will be able to reconsider our objection:

1. The current plans do not include floodlights. It will be very tempting to introduce these in future. Please could you stipulate that a criteria for approval is that floodlights can not be added in future?
2. We understand the school's intent is to make the facilities available throughout the evenings (when daylight allows based on current plans) and for weekend usage. Can this be limited to specific times and frequency? For example, as the facilities are for children please could they close after school hours and be available for a limited number of Saturday mornings (i.e. not Sundays or Bank Holidays) only per year? We were informed at the consultation that current usage is approximately one weekend per month. If the

facilities are used throughout the summer evenings and weekends our gardens, one of the most attractive features of the road, will be impacted.

3. I understand the intent is to make the facilities available to Belmont School children and Belmont's existing partners with additional needs. However, if the school deem it necessary to generate extra revenue to maintain the facility the intent is to also make it available to the general public at a charge. This changes the usage significantly and detracts from our support, which is based upon the provision of sports and educational facilities for the children of the school. Please can you introduce criteria that limits the usage to specific groups of people i.e. Belmont school pupils, pupils or members of equivalent schools or organisations with additional needs. Bournside Road has many young families and we would like to avoid the possibility that our children overhear adults or teenagers shouting and using foul language, which is inevitable when sports facilities are used by those demographics.

4. Belmont School have removed a large amount hedge and tree material in the new year, which has impacted on our privacy. The current plans put a cycle and running track adjacent to the border. Please could new planting be included and the current fence style, position and height be maintained. Please could individual residents be consulted on planting that directly affects their border?

5. The proposal removes a lot of natural grass and therefore natural drainage. This presents a flooding risk to all of us, a risk that will only increase over the next few years. Please could you review the plans and significantly reduce the use of artificial surfaces. Please could you consider the flooding and drainage survey very carefully and please could the residents have sight of both the survey and your analysis of it. From the documents online I note the site is assessed to be in zone 1, a low risk flood zone. This is surprising as the Government's published flood risk data places the location in zone 3, a high risk flooding area.

We hope that you agree these 5 points are both reasonable and justified. If they are addressed satisfactorily then we will support the development. If they are not then we will be obliged to continue objecting to it.

Please could you confirm how the application is being treated? Is a Planning Committee handling this or is it being delegated to officers to handle under delegated powers? If a planning meeting is due to sit please could we send a representative?

We have copied this letter to Councillor Jackie Chelin. Please could you confirm whether she will be on the committee itself and/or able to speak on our behalf so that we can ensure we provide her with the appropriate detail?

We have also copied this letter to the County Counsellor Tim Harman for consideration of the waterways and wider flood risk that obviously span beyond our Ward and Borough.

We have coordinated this letter as a group but individuals have also made their own representations, which we fully support.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our points and look forward to working together in order to meet all of our needs.

Yours faithfully,

ENDS

Comments: 11th October 2023

My letter in March raised five reasonable points for which we were seeking reasonable adjustments to the proposal. I am maintaining my objection because they have not been satisfactorily mitigated, and in most cases not addressed at all.

I would like to make the following additional observations as a neighbour to add perspective and detail to consultee comments.

1. Management process. The letter to residents on 5 October points to a management process that will be implemented to ensure concerns are dealt with positively. The level of engagement so far (2 letters and a consultation on 10 January) does not give me confidence this management process will have sufficient rigour or inclusion.
2. Hours and scale of use. As a neighbour I observe use of outdoor facilities at the site only takes place during school hours, a cycle club for a short period on Sundays and one or two set piece events per year. During the 10 January consultation the Headteacher told me current usage was only one weekend per month. On this basis the proposal is contradictory. It is a large development that requires large scale investment for the construction and large scale usage to generate the revenue necessary for ongoing maintenance. If the the current users and hours of use remain the same then who is going to pay for it?
3. Tree border and bleacher seating. Large ash trees line the Hatherley Brook border, they shed their leaves in winter and all of these will likely die from Ash dieback in the next 10 years. Two border my property, one of these died last year and the tree surgeon who rendered it safe advised the other won't last much longer. This needs to be considered when assessing the impact on neighbours privacy, noise, amenity, and visuals. Users of the development and those sitting on the proposed bleacher seating will look directly into my bedroom window and that of my baby daughter.

Comments: 16th February 2024

Having reviewed the latest documents all of the points in my previous comments still stand. The operational plan lacks specifics, includes inconsistencies and lacks accountability. That gives me little confidence that the concerns that have been registered by multiple objections will be taken into account throughout the life of the development.

In the original correspondence it was suggested that we consider the following when making comments; noise or disturbance, traffic, visual impact, privacy, and amenity. I have significant concerns in each category and these have been reflected by my previous comments and a range of comments from other objectors.

54 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 12th March 2023

We are strongly opposed to this proposal.

The provision of facilities on this site must be exclusively for the use of children attending Belmont School and Belmont's existing partners with additional needs. They must not be made available on a commercial basis to any other user group.

Noise and light pollution are of serious ecological and environmental concern. The flooding risk is significant as identified by the Flood Risk Assessment which places this site in zone 3, a high risk zone.

Providing enhanced facilities for the children at Belmont School is to be encouraged and supported. These plans go way beyond that and therefore are opposed.

Comments: 17th September 2023

As a neighbour I have received a letter from Mr Kevin Day, headteacher at Belmont School. Other than stating 'September' it is not dated but suggests that more information relating to this application will be submitted within the week. Given the content of the letter I continue to object. My concerns are heightened by his acceptance of them. I will respond to Mr Day directly and comment on this site when more information is available.

Comments: 26th September 2023

Dear Mr Day

I am writing in response to your letter, dated September 2023, entitled 'UPDATE ON OUR PLANS'.

I am surprised it has taken so long for you to contact your neighbours given that it was back in June when Cllr Jackie Chelin told us you were keen to re-engage. Jackie noted that you acknowledged our concerns and were keen to improve communications.

I am disappointed that the CEO of The Sand Academies Trust has not been in touch since writing to us on 4th May. Martin Hughes suggested a catch up at school to discuss any concerns. Despite writing that he was 'acutely aware that support from the community is vital' we have heard nothing.

This lack of engagement however did not prepare me for the tone and content of your letter which only heightens our anxiety. You acknowledge our concerns but fail to address the cause of any of them. A survey has found that noise pollution is an issue that requires mitigation but instead of dealing with it at source you plan to mask the rise in volume with an acoustic fence. A fence through which we are expected to monitor whether users' behaviour is aligned with your vision, values, and ethos. It beggars belief

that your management plan relies on the goodwill of those whose views you continue to ignore.

Complex biodiversity challenges are not simply resolved by additional planting. You seem oblivious to the fact that our gardens are already impacted by flooding. Your proposal will increase the likelihood of further damage to our land and property.

Nothing, it would appear, has changed including your approach to unified working. You have not commented on the layout, nor have you given any revised estimate on user numbers. You have not referred to operational hours. This is insulting given our stated willingness to collaborate with the school and our agreement with the principle of improving provision for your students.

I will respond to the application and reiterate all my existing concerns. I have copied this letter to elected members, CBC officers, The Sand Academies Trust and other interested parties.

Comments: 5th February 2024

As residents of Bournside Road, whose property overlooks the field intended to be used for this development, we object to the proposal.

We again highlight the complete lack of communication from the headteacher and academy trustees despite a commitment from them to engage with stakeholders and local residents with whom they claim to have a good relationship. This does not engender a spirit of trust.

External lighting clearly remains a possibility, indeed a bat sensitive lighting plan is referred to. A statement that no lighting will be incorporated for the lifetime of the project is essential.

The scale of this proposal remains inappropriate, unnecessary and ecologically unsustainable. How can this be justified? Seating that faces private gardens is intrusive. The expensive drainage plan is only required as a result of the development itself.

The hours of use, although scaled back, must be strictly controlled. User behaviour cannot be monitored by those whose land is adjacent to the site as previous plans have indicated. The revised submission provides no assurance that local residents will be respected and the limited supporting voices come from those whose homes are not impacted.

We remain opposed to the proposed development and revised management plan but supportive, in principle, of improved provision for Belmont pupils.

48 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 18th March 2023

We are submitting an objection to this application which proposes intensification from the current use as a sports field / open play space exclusively for the use of children attending Belmont School, into a much larger and diverse multi games /sport/activity facility serving 'thousands of people' (according to the schools web site).

This represents a change of use and will have a substantial negative impact on the amenity & peaceful enjoyment of our home, damage the overall residential character of Bournside Road & introduce a scale of use not sympathetic to its setting as a school located in and surrounded by private homes and gardens.

Specifically, the school currently operates its outside space during term time, Monday - Friday 8.30 - 5pm. The application proposes operation of the new facilities 7 days a week until 10pm enabling multiple groups of 'external users' to participate in noisy, organised team pursuits with spectator facilities, precisely when neighbouring residents want to peacefully enjoy their properties and gardens.

The lack of planting on the site will exacerbate this negative impact - especially on residents' privacy with overlooking directly into properties by multiple users who are not part of the school community. In these circumstances safe, private & quiet enjoyment of the numerous residential gardens adjacent to the school will be impossible - with inevitable impacts on health and wellbeing & security of residents.

It will be impossible to operate the facilities as proposed without flood lighting for most of the year. This will cause significant light pollution into the adjacent properties on Bournside Road - this is now a recognised health hazard & must not be allowed.

The application proposes the complete loss of the natural open field currently in situ & replaces this with surfacing to allow multiple activities. This will not be supportive of the ecology and nature of the riverside location which at present supports significant wild & bird life.

The application does not make any reference to flood impact of the Hatherley and indeed states it is not in a flood plain. This is incorrect. The Hatherley flows between the school and Bournside Rd properties and floods at this point into Bournside Rd gardens. The hard surfacing proposed, replacing grass and planting currently allowing natural drainage will negatively increase that risk and impact - especially as the application says the watercourse is assumed as "run off" for the new proposals. This is unacceptable.

No reference is made to traffic impact. School traffic already negatively impacts the Bournside Rd during term time - used as a favourite 'rat run' for car and taxi drop off to the school. Currently within a limited school use window, intensifying and increasing school use for non-pupils will add to a system already at capacity serving existing school

traffic and visitors to Hatherley Park. This will further impact Bournside Rd residents' quiet enjoyment and amenity.

The application shows no consideration or care for the impact of its plans on the neighbourhood or residents within it. An information evening held by the school Headmaster only partially revealed the proposals, but appears to have served as a 'tick box' to facilitate the planning submission. This directly opposes the true localism principle that should involve local residents, underpin any planning proposals and decisions about them.

This application is a blatant attempt to expand the sports facilities at a specialist education facility which is well embedded and accepted in its local community, into a commercially motivated sports operation reaching well beyond the school community. This is in complete defiance of the needs and the right to enjoy a good quality of private amenity of us, its neighbours. If permitted, it will render the peaceful enjoyment of our homes and this amenity impossible.

Comments: 10th October 2023

We are writing to object to the above application.

We have noted the recently submitted information and clarifications and the minor improvements proposed to site planting and screening.

These do nothing to remove our objections as this remains an overdevelopment & to all intents & purposes a change of use to the development area sitting within the school site immediately adjacent to many residential properties.

The development will increase noise nuisance, loss of amenity and cause harm to those residents in the adjacent homes.

We accept we have a school on our boundary and there are realities associated with that & we understand the assertion about the current school premises hours and current ancillary users as set out in the planning statement & management plan.

What is misrepresented however, is the current use of the specific proposed development site - currently undeveloped immediately adjacent to Bournside Road and other residential properties.

Specifically, at present the school & outside users DO NOT use the full extent of the area proposed for development for any sports or other noisy group activities.

We can clearly see the school and hear any activity on this land from inside our house and garden (which runs down to the boundary with the Hatherley). We are thus acutely aware whenever anyone is present on the proposed development site or of any activity on any part of it. Based on actual disturbance to our peace & quiet - not desk top study - we know that most use and so noise reaching us from proposed site is - critically - confined to pupil use within the school day.

This can be evidenced because during term time noise levels from the existing school including the development site rise from about 9 am until about 3.30pm with specific large peaks mid-morning and lunchtime (at break times), also during school team sports

on the existing small pitch; and in the better weather outdoor lessons next to the Forest School; and then the annual sports day. (The latter being very intrusive because of the spectators, the music and the headmaster using a megaphone to encourage noisy excitement giving a depressing taste of what the school has in mind for its future).

Evenings and weekends and school holidays we can see and hear that there are no visible lights and no detectable human activity or noise intruding across the boundary into our home or garden from the site.

Actual noise levels are generally well below 50 decibels in our house/ garden - usually 30-40db - when there is no activity on the development area & with no real detectable activity or noise from the school as noted above.

During the weekday, in term time, noise levels at our property rise well above 50 decibel - 70 db to 90 db & beyond if outdoor games are being played on the existing field or playground.

Thus, external school activity noise is already more than the 50db noted as being harmful to health by WHO. This is only tolerable to us as a noise intrusion since it is time limited and almost exclusively contained within school term, Monday to Friday 9.30 - 3.30pm.

However, if permitted the proposed development would not only destroy this precious urban open green space but create a new location for noisy group and individual sport activities at hours and days when it simply doesn't exist across that area of the site at present. To suggest otherwise shows either a lack of awareness by the school of their impact now or represents a disingenuous attempt to ignore the future effect on neighbouring residents.

The development as proposed will bring loud noise sources closer to neighbouring residents whilst simultaneously expanding the capacity for more non-school users to make more noise outside core school pupil hours & so cause irrevocable harm to residents' privacy, amenity, quiet enjoyment, health and wellbeing.

To exacerbate all the above the school have designed into their scheme 2 BMX tracks. We assume this is to attract external users since educational need seems hard to justify - certainly not to the extent proposed on this site. This activity is known as a generator of noisy group use and often most associated with indiscipline and anti-social behaviour. Bizarrely to create these the school propose to destroy one of the most peaceful areas of open spaces on their land, next to their nature area & the Woodland School area. This area appears to offer a place of refuge some pupils who seem to regularly & gladly retreat there. It offers an amenity so rare in urban environments - many schools would be envious of such an amenity. This site is completely the wrong place for BMX tracks.

All the above equates to overdevelopment in relation to the size of the school and its location bounded as it is by residential properties and represents a change of use of the development land away from education to sports facility.

We are in little doubt, given what has been published in various posts about school ambitions for the site that if development proceeds we will experience longer hours of noise & a creep of permission with many outside clubs and users on site out of current pupil hours just to make the facilities viable (it seems to be unfunded at present) & expect it will only time before floodlighting is sought to support that.

No screening or greening - let alone the inadequate current proposals - will offset the harm that will be caused by the scale of the current proposals and how close they will have to be to be to currently quiet homes & gardens.

We do not accept or trust that the school will consider or consult residents openly or will fairly listen and take account of views or concerns over any management plan etc (they have failed so far after all) and have little confidence residents will be a concern when they are running any such facilities. Proposing acoustic fencing to only one boundary illustrates the schools disingenuous and misleading attempts at addressing concerns of residents.

Our wider concerns about traffic impacts and flooding as previously expressed remain.

Comments: 15th February 2024

We are writing to object to the proposals submitted January 2024. The excessive scale of the development, potential intensity of use, & proposed hours of use are still such that we will suffer significant loss of our current amenity - through a direct harmful impact on our quiet enjoyment and well-being through noise nuisance, and intrusions into our privacy. The development still proposes a change of use from a natural grass surface playing and amenity field, used within limited hours, to an artificial surfaced outdoor sports facility to be at such a scale that would result in significant noise intrusions and privacy loss to our home.

The scale of development means no space is left for any consideration or attempt at a sufficient planting buffer or noise screen. The proposals are simply overdevelopment of the site. The developer choosing to maximise development on this open space to shoehorn in their 'check list' of activities - with no consideration for the realities of the site or its residential neighbours.

Specifically:

1. The whole, currently naturally surfaced area is to be replaced with artificial surfaces for designated (noise generating) activities not just by school pupils but by outside clubs and critically to be used outside school core hours and at weekends and school holidays.

2. Currently there is no activity on the site post 3.30pm; during school holidays nor at weekends - just peace and quiet which offers a significant & welcome period of respite for neighbouring residents from the intense pupil noise & traffic disturbance from this School - part of the combined School sites in that location, which includes Gloucestershire's largest school, with all the disruption that causes now.

3. The management statement submitted still gives no assurance of such future respite but instead gives only indicative activity, allowing much freedom of interpretation on actual operation hours, concurrent uses, and numbers of proposed users on site at any one time. In addition, the Plan demands any condition must only relate to part of the facilities (MUGA)! This alongside again raising the possibility of future flood lighting gives rise to further cynicism about intended site operations and we would still see the site in operation for 52 weeks, seven days a week, from morning until night. All this must reasonably also put into question the revised noise assessment.

4. The newly designated play 'pitch' & the remaining designated, MUGA track are both in fact to be developed in the same location, and at the same shape & size as previously submitted. They could therefore be used for anything after development - our concerns about intensity of use and noise generated from the site remain. Additionally, the MUGA pitch still includes a rebound fence following the boundary with Bournside Road with Bleacher seating facing the houses and along that boundary an overtake track is included for the extensive cycle track. All this will just exacerbate noise disturbance events at this sensitive point for adjoining neighbours.

5. The Pump track remains at the scale originally proposed & close to residential properties. This use is especially known for noise generation and antisocial verbal behaviour. Indeed, the updated Acoustic report acknowledges the potential for unpredictable noise levels from this use. The track is at a scale completely inappropriate to a modest suburban school site intended for educational use. Our cynicism about future users of this is thus not abated.

Surely such substantial development for this use should be strategically considered for location away from residential properties. It should not be positioned at the bottom of people's back gardens.

6. The noise assessment has been revised but is confusing and relies heavily on assumptions from other sites and uses. It is heavily caveated about the effect of uses on this site. It still does not reflect our own experience of the current noise levels.

7. The report is questionable as it does not recognise any impact on, nor offer any attempt to protect the privacy and quiet amenity currently enjoyed by properties along two substantial residential boundaries -with Bournside Road & Sir Charles Irving Close. This even though the MUGA & Pump tracks will be closest to those properties, and despite there currently being clear sight and acoustic lines from these properties into the school - and so out from it to the houses all year. The fact that the plan attempts to mitigate noise on one boundary only (Bournside Close) is inconsistent and unfair, some residents are recognised others not.

We suggest this is simply because the development is so large no space is left for a 'noise buffer' although the need for one is recognised - a fact mentioned by other consultants in relation to landscaping for example.

8. The management statement seems to make no mention of traffic impact. Strange, since attendees at the school mostly rely on buses, taxi, or vehicle transportation with this already seen in large numbers to and from the site at school start and close. Increasing hours will increase traffic and consequential road damage exacerbating local traffic challenges we already are subjected to.

9. The Flood risk and Drainage report, assesses the potential risk of the nearby Hatherley flooding concluding with an elaborate expensive proposal, requiring ongoing maintenance, to pump the inevitable run off from a below surface tank into the Hatherley from the artificial surfaces- Only necessary because of the overdevelopment on current naturally draining surface. There is little acknowledgement of over spills & risk of downstream flooding to properties already at risk. Leaving more open space on site would surely allow better natural ground absorption.

Finally, it is disappointing and concerning that the school continues to ignore good practice and avoid any direct engagement with its neighbouring community. Instead obfuscating behind expert reports which we residents - lay people - are supposed to either be able to interpret or simply accept. Not the behaviour of a responsible inclusive developer and definitely not a way to build trust with a community it seems to expect will be the monitors of behaviour on their site, and who are expected to believe that concerns post development will be taken seriously and swiftly resolved.

We continue to object to the proposals submitted.

Comments: 11th October 2023

We are writing to object to the above application.

We have noted the recently submitted information and clarifications and the minor improvements proposed to site planting and screening.

These do nothing to remove our objections as this remains an overdevelopment & to all intents & purposes a change of use to the development area sitting within the school site immediately adjacent to many residential properties.

The development will increase noise nuisance, loss of amenity and cause harm to those residents in the adjacent homes.

We accept we have a school on our boundary and there are realities associated with that & we understand the assertion about the current school premises hours and current ancillary users as set out in the planning statement & management plan.

What is misrepresented however, is the current use of the specific proposed development site - currently undeveloped immediately adjacent to Bournside Road and other residential properties.

Specifically, at present the school & outside users DO NOT use the full extent of the area proposed for development for any sports or other noisy group activities.

We can clearly see the school and hear any activity on this land from inside our house and garden (which runs down to the boundary with the Hatherley). We are thus acutely aware whenever anyone is present on the proposed development site or of any activity on any part of it. Based on actual disturbance to our peace & quiet - not desk top study - we know that most use and so noise reaching us from proposed site is - critically - confined to pupil use within the school day.

This can be evidenced because during term time noise levels from the existing school including the development site rise from about 9 am until about 3.30pm with specific large peaks mid-morning and lunchtime (at break times), also during school team sports on the existing small pitch; and in the better weather outdoor lessons next to the Forest School; and then the annual sports day. (The latter being very intrusive because of the spectators, the music and the headmaster using a megaphone to encourage noisy excitement giving a depressing taste of what the school has in mind for its future).

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Thus, external school activity noise is already more than the 50db noted as being harmful to health by WHO. This is only tolerable to us as a noise intrusion since it is time limited and almost exclusively contained within school term, Monday to Friday 9.30 - 3.30pm.

However, if permitted the proposed development would not only destroy this precious urban open green space but create a new location for noisy group and individual sport activities at hours and days when it simply doesn't exist across that area of the site at present. To suggest otherwise shows either a lack of awareness by the school of their impact now or represents a disingenuous attempt to ignore the future effect on neighbouring residents.

The development as proposed will bring loud noise sources closer to neighbouring residents whilst simultaneously expanding the capacity for more non-school users to make more noise outside core school pupil hours & so cause irrevocable harm to residents' privacy, amenity, quiet enjoyment, health and wellbeing.

To exacerbate all the above the school have designed into their scheme 2 BMX tracks. We assume this is to attract external users since educational need seems hard to justify - certainly not to the extent proposed on this site. This activity is known as a generator of noisy group use and often most associated with indiscipline and anti-social behaviour. Bizarrely to create these the school propose to destroy one of the most peaceful areas of open spaces on their land, next to their nature area & the Woodland School area. This area appears to offer a place of refuge some pupils who seem to regularly & gladly retreat there. It offers an amenity so rare in urban environments - many schools would be envious of such an amenity. This site is completely the wrong place for BMX tracks.

All the above equates to overdevelopment in relation to the size of the school and its location bounded as it is by residential properties and represents a change of use of the development land away from education to sports facility.

We are in little doubt, given what has been published in various posts about school ambitions for the site that if development proceeds we will experience longer hours of noise & a creep of permission with many outside clubs and users on site out of current pupil hours just to make the facilities viable (it seems to be unfunded at present) & expect it will only time before floodlighting is sought to support that.

No screening or greening - let alone the inadequate current proposals - will offset the harm that will be caused by the scale of the current proposals and how close they will have to come at that scale to currently quiet homes & gardens.

We do not accept or trust that the school will consider or consult residents openly or will fairly listen and take account of views or concerns over any management plan etc (they have failed so far after all) and have little confidence residents will be a concern when they are running any such facilities. Proposing acoustic fencing to only one boundary illustrates the schools disingenuous and misleading attempts at addressing concerns of residents.

Our wider concerns about traffic impacts and flooding as previously expressed remain.

10 Sir Charles Irving Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2DS

Comments: 26th September 2023

I am broadly in support of the school improving it's amenities, however, in this instance the scale & impact of the proposals upon all the neighbouring parties is excessive & disproportionate to the needs.

There are 4 parts to my objection, and further information is required regarding the proposed levels for the development.

1. As a direct result of the noise impact assessment carried out it is noted that there is now a proposal for a 2m high acoustic fence along the northern boundary. Whilst this is not along the boundary of our property this fence will have a significant impact upon all of the properties along that boundary by excluding light into their rear gardens. Rights of Light matters must be taken into consideration & a sun path trajectory impact plan for this fence should be provided for the Planning Council to consider in respect of how it would affect the use of the rear gardens for those affected.
2. The revised drawings now show a long jump pit in the southern corner of the site where currently there is an existing workshop/shed. At a previous public presentation the Headmaster advised that this shed would be remaining. I would highlight that the designers have failed to consider the orientation for this long jump pit, as at all times of the day the jumper will be running & jumping directly into the sun!
3. New Trees 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. All of these trees are located directly on top of existing crucial surface water drainage that comes from St.James school playing field, Sir Charles Irving Close & Betteridge School. There was previously a large beautiful horse chestnut tree exactly where tree 4 is proposed, however, this was brutally cut down when the surface water drainage to Hatherley Brook was blocked & had to be repaired. If the scheme is to proceed then the Planning officers & committee need to stipulate mature 4m trees in these locations for immediate privacy & the drainage will need to be diverted accordingly.
4. Levels for the BMX track. The information presented does not give sufficient relative levels to the existing ground levels from any topographical survey of the areas and so it is not possible to ascertain how high the track will actually be from the current ground levels. It can be seen that the track itself is relatively modest with a highest point of

+1.2m, however the perimeter cycle track which circumnavigates the whole school is shown at -0.5m. On the principle that the perimeter cycle track is at existing ground level (and not cut into the ground by 500mm) then that would imply that the BMX track's highest point will actually be 1.7m above the current ground level. This would create a significant breach of privacy to all properties along the southern boundary & increase the potential for noise transfer above the existing fences. Please can the actual highest point of the BMX track above current ground level be identified for the Planning Committee to consider in relation to the comments above.

In my view the scale of the scheme is too much. A single MUGA in the centre, with all the other facilities (BMX & perimeter cycle track, Long Jump pit) brought further into the site away from the boundaries will provide a good compromise that will protect the existing rights of light, acoustic (Environmental) & privacy that is currently the status quo whilst also providing improved facilities for the students. No development should unduly impact the adjacent parties and this proposal clearly does, on many levels.

Comments: 26th September 2023

Reference Severn Trent Water response in March 2023 about public sewer (Foul) drain.

The location of the Sprint Track & Long Jump Pit is directly over the existing live public sewer that comes out from the rear garden of our property.

Severn Trent Water advise in their comments that nothing can be built above the public sewer.

Is there an easement in place for this at present & can this matter be considered by the Committee. The impact upon my property if the public sewer is to become blocked would be massive as the inspection chamber collects all the foul from the properties in Sir Charles Irving Close before discharging into the drainage in the playing field.

8 Sir Charles Irving Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2DS

Comments: 11th April 2023

Objection to proposed Belmont School Sports Development

I would firstly like to say that I broadly support the intention to improve the sports facilities for the school, however the changes proposed by this application are a drastic change compared to what currently exists.

For context of my comments, my property backs directly on to the southern end of the playing field, overlooking the current forest school area.

The change in hours of use

The proposed hours do not seem to align with the existing school hours, with the grounds being open for far longer than they are currently. I have a small child, and if there are spectators or people using the field after their bedtime, then this will disturb their sleep

and mean the windows cannot be left open during the summer. If the BMX track is open all hours of the day and at weekends too, then there will be no respite from the noise. If the facilities are also open to the public then there will also be more noise/usage than if it was constrained to the schools? Access to several hundred school children vs several thousand residents are very different proposals.

Loss of Privacy

The raised BMX tracks will be overlooking my garden and into my living room. Would it be possible to have some kind of hedge planted to provide screening, without loss of light? The bleacher seating is also a similar concern.

Security Concerns

With the extended opening and wider use allowed, how will the security of the site be maintained?

I think if we are talking about a running track and football pitches that are open to the wider school community and during school hours then that is OK, but if we are talking about BMX tracks that are open until late at night and weekends then that would have a big negative impact on our day to day lives.

7 Sir Charles Irving Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2DS

Comments: 11th February 2024

After reviewing the revised plans i would like to put forward my objection. I shall try and keep any emotion out of this albeit hard.

The revised plans, although marginally smaller, fails take into account the residents' main concerns at all. Everyone's main issue here, apart from the long list of others, is times of use, the MUGA and BMX track. Our house is adjacent to Bettridges playground. The noise that comes from the children is loud. Due to it being a special needs school the shouting (often with explicit language) is much louder than a regular school due to behavioral traits of the children that go there, however this is tolerable because the school operates in school hours. From 3pm we then have the noise (albeit muffled) from Bournsides astros until 10pm. However, again this is tolerable because the noise is mainly heard at the front of the house. Our house then backs on directly to Belmont playing field.

The revised plans for the green space directly behind our garden is absolutely devastating. Our house will be immediately affected. Last night, I visited the MUGA at Bournside which they book out to a group of SEN adults. The noise of the ball ricocheting off the fence was intolerable as were the mens loud voices screaming obscenities when a goal was missed or scored, that coupled with the coaches constant shouting it would be unbearable to live like that. Adults were present with them and did nothing to stop the language or screaming. They also had a ghetto blaster playing music very loudly, when I asked what this was for, I was told it's common with SEN people to calm and focus them. With permission from the coaches I have video evidence on my phone. The only communication we have had from Belmont is a letter addressing anti social behavior,

which concluded that they are expecting it, which they will and have asked us as residents to complain of any foul play through an online management system but we know full well this will be ignored and we shall end up taking it to Environmental Health. It will be a constant battle and no one should be asked or expected to live like that.

The noise assessment creates a completely false assessment and scored 49/50. 50 being intolerable. This is an insignificant significance, 49 may as well be 50 as the difference is of such small scale, which I find odd in itself and does not address the proposal at all nor does it take into consideration the impact of INCREASED noise. The green space simply isn't big enough to protect residents from the level of noise this will create. This is a small space for what is required and the noise will simply be amplified. .

The hours of use are absolutely abhorrent. We, as residents, will be subject to constant disruption. We have 2 sons, one who is in bed by 7pm and the other studying for GCSEs in a few years time. Both sleep on the back of the house. The level of noise will be relentless, even weekends/bank holidays and school holidays. The residents will get zero rest bite. How anyone could suggest these times and think they are acceptable is unfathomable.

We support anything that is for the children of the school within school hours but opening it up to the wider community because there is a need opens the question as to why The Prince of Wales isn't being looked at to provide this need? Other sites that are bigger and not surrounded by houses that people have paid substantial sums for and will become far less desirable. An acoustic fence and trees will do absolutely nothing to block the noise.

Bournside and St James have always put the residents first and we have a strong connection with the school because of this, however the Headmaster at Belmont does nothing to support local residents, even removing his email address off the one piece of communication we have received. I have lost count of the times residents have had to call because the alarm is going off at all hours and no one responds, therefore residents have resulted in calling the police. This project won't be policed in any shape or form and any complaints we make will fall onto deaf ears. And i'm pretty sure should this go ahead, any constraints placed on usage won't be adhered to. We occasionally have rubbish thrown into our garden (we have complained but don't ever get a response) so I can only imagine the eye sore this is going to be in years to come as it won't be maintained, Forest school for example, is a mess, with plastic chairs thrown in and overturned bins. I appreciate it's Forest School but take a look at St James and see the difference! Again we have supporting photos of this.

Betteridge have a full size tennis court which is never in use and is now becoming a significant eye sore, why can't the MUGA go on here? I appreciate that this is a different school but one that supports the offering. Why aren't the schools making better use of the facilities they currently have? The poly tunnel is now without its cover and exposed to the elements - again, never used and a dumping ground.

Belmont currently offers an astro facility and we have also been informed by Bournside that they have offered Belmont the use of its facilities making adaptations where needed.

My comments on the wildlife have already been documented as have the importance of green space for SEND children however I will reiterate those here. SEND children thrive and regulate with the use of green space, this is a proven fact and continues to be explored by many world class pediatricians and children specialists. Children with neurodiverse needs including dyspraxia, autism and adhd to name a few, especially need

the open natural space. Children with these needs can experience hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to sensory experiences such as hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, feeling and visual processing. Taking neurodiverse children with over sensitivity issues to connect with natural environments through sight, sound and touch can enhance their abilities to cope with a wider range of stimuli, reducing their experiences with sensory problems. Under sensitive children experiencing nature with focus on sight, sounds and smells can increase sensory stimulation. By the children having these exposures to nature, it will inevitably lead to them gaining life skills and their own unique way and ability to cope with day to day scenarios. These are not things that a child can learn within a classroom or via the use of construction materials ie: a gravel running track or concrete muga. It is also notable that some of these children, of which are transported via taxi to the school may not have the use of a garden or outside space, and this is their only source of access to a natural space.

These plans are cruel and completely over the top. If this is passed I will have no faith in CBC Planning department and question that this is a town i want to reside in as any green space is deemed vulnerable in a residential area.

Opening this out to outside users is a gateway to disaster for all concerned with no thought to residents at all.

If this really is for the children of the school and only in use 9-3pm Monday to Friday without the addition of the MUGA/BMX track and the green space is kept with the running track added, we would support the plans.

Comments: 8th October 2023

Dear all,

I am truly appalled by this planning application. Our house is currently surrounded by 4 schools all of which we support. My children being pupils of *****. However my ** year old son sleeps on the front of the house and we have a fair bit of noise coming from the bookings on the astro at Bournside which goes on throughout the weekend and now to see this directly at the back of our house is an utter travesty. We will be surrounded by constant disturbance. My older son is ** and he sleeps on the back. The disturbance to him and us (we also sleep on the back) will be huge. He will be studying for his GCSEs next year making revision impossible. We received a letter from the school on Tuesday outlining the noise reducing fence and how they would manage anti social behaviour. It was laughable, who is going to police this anti social behaviour? All this did was confirm that they indeed anticipate anti social behaviour on the pitches. Both my son's play football and we are only to aware of the foul language/shouting these bring. We are absolutely devastated this could even be considered. This will have a direct impact on our house, our view will be visibility reduced as will the value. We have plenty of bookable offerings in Cheltenham and the pump track at the Burrows. We are at huge risk of losing all our green space and not to mention the wildlife that currently resides there. Foxes/badgers and bats. Leckhampton High school also now offers additional astros to hire out. More and more people will want to park in what is already an over crowded space in our cul de space because they will drop off at the cut through to Bournside. If this gets approved we shall lose all faith in CBC. I understand the school

wanting to develop its opportunities but this is more than unreasonable with so many people effected.

The Gloucestershire Resource
Centre Ltd
City Works, Alfred Street
Gloucester
GL1 4DF

Comments: 9th October 2023

I am writing to lend Active Gloucestershire's support to the proposed development of outdoor sport and physical activity facilities at Belmont Special School.

We very much support the Belmont Community Sport project being developed by the school, its partners and stakeholders and believe they will provide a welcome and much needed opportunity for the development and delivery of accessible cycling and athletics within Cheltenham and Gloucestershire.

Firstly, the new facilities will greatly enhance the ability of children and young people to access cycling and athletics coaching and facilities, particularly those with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities. While opportunities to participate in cycling and athletics do currently exist with the county, they are limited in terms of facility availability and in providing a safe and welcoming space for children with special needs. The facilities propose address these shortfalls directly and as such offer genuine 'access for all'.

Secondly, at Active Gloucestershire we believe that physical activity can have a transformative impact on the lives of people and their communities. It is the single biggest thing that can be done to improve a person's health. Cycling and athletics are popular and accessible activities, particularly among children and young people outside of school hours, and Belmont's scheme can therefore contribute greatly to our vision that everyone in Gloucestershire is active every day.

For these reasons we fully endorse the project and will continue to be actively engaged in its development and delivery.

17 Hillside Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AS

Comments: 21st September 2023

Since the initial proposal I must bring to your attention the increase in noise and disturbance caused by the school during the whole of the summer holidays and especially at weekends outside of normal school hours.

Over the last months during weekends the school is being used for extra activities which causes a large noise disturbance in our road and garden.

Over the summer a marquee has been erected that I presume required no approval with what appears to be a swimming pool inside located in the car park behind our garden and Hillside Close.

This has been used over the summer holidays and weekends... as you can imagine the noise for this facility creates makes it unbearable to sit in our garden or even have the windows open.

In the last few weeks, I received a letter from the headmaster of Belmont School which honestly was appalling and reiterated the fact the school has no respect for the local neighbourhood or residents and whatever happens is pressing on with the project.

With the further amendments to the planning for the running track and BMX track, I'm appealed that the installation of the facility is continuing.

Without any doubt this will cause mass noise and traffic pollution outside of school hours and over weekends for the local community and especially the residents who's gardens back onto the school.

Being able to sit peacefully in your own back garden is a simple pleasure that is now being taken away from the residents due to the increased noise and pollution from the enterprise activity of the school.

I must reiterate I strongly oppose this scheme to make the school more of a commercial facility.

Respect of people's houses and environment should be as important as making money.

72 Bournside Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AH

Comments: 9th October 2023

Installation of 200m oval running track, with a 100m straight and run-off, 2no. smaller 100m ovals, a campus-wide 2 metre wide cycle track and a long jump pit. Erection of 2no. MUGAs (to include five-a-side football pitches), 2no. BMX pump tracks (advanced and beginner) and bleacher seating.

Belmont School Warden Hill Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 3AT

With reference to the above planning application I wish to re-affirm my strong objection to this proposal.

I very much support the comments made in the letter from 9 Bournside Close

As far as I am aware see there has been very little response from the school to allay the main concerns raised by the residents who are most affected by this application just an inaccurate newsletter from the head teacher, which has been amended. I still feel strongly that an open meeting for those affected would be a positive step forward

The main points in my objection are:

Loss of privacy in our garden and house.

I am concerned for my own emotional and mental well being if such a drastic change to our evenings and weekends occurs.

Intrusive and increased noise level at weekends and outside school hours,

Little consideration has been made as to the impact of the running track and long jump to houses on the northern boundary.

Loss of green space.

Environmental impact

Damage to the large, mature trees.

Loss of green playing area for pupils which they appear to love using on a daily basis.

How much use these new facilities will actually be used by the pupils of Belmont during the normal school day?

Flooding impact to the properties on the northern boundary

The impact of lighting if added in the future.

Additional negative impact to traffic which is currently awful at the start and end of school day

It is the wrong site for such an ambitious plan.

Comments: 16th March 2023

72 Bournside Rd.

Cheltenham. GL51 3AH

16.03.2023

Belmont School, Cheltenham - Proposed development of Sports Facilities

To the Panning Committee

I must strongly object to the current, over ambitious, proposed sports development plans for the highly respected Belmont School. The planned development is for a sports arena, intended for the use of 2000 special school pupils in Gloucestershire, therefore, this will no longer be the sports field of our local school. I fully agree with the concerns raised in the comments already published by our neighbours objecting to the development.

My main concerns and questions are:

I have lived with my husband at 72 Bournside Road for the past 11 years. We are retired secondary school teachers and do appreciate and understand a school is always looking to improve its facilities for the benefit of its pupils. We also understand the importance of a school's relationship with its local community. Sadly, we were not informed of the development nor invited to the meeting of 20th January, finding out about the plans by a chance remark from our neighbours asking us what we thought of the plans! We hurriedly arranged to see the plans but without the chance to really have our questions answered. Our house will be directly affected by this development and I was disappointed we were not included in these initial discussions. This is such a huge change of use I don't think this is an acceptable approach. Our garden is very close to the proposed cycle track and the end/beginning? of the 100 metre track(more noise) and is directly opposite surface water discharge pipe (flooding?).

I would support the development of a cycle track, but away from the fence and banks of the stream. A cycle track around the school would be a good idea and would be well used but the positioning needs to be rethought, both in terms of safety of the pupils and damage to the environment. I would also support the creation of one MUGA pitch. The pupils at Belmont appear to love the recently acquired cycling equipment and it is uplifting to see them benefitting from its use in lesson time and at break times.

We have lived in harmony with the three local schools during our time here and have enjoyed hearing and seeing the children playing and participating in their lessons, knowing peace will prevail after 3p.m. and it will be quiet at weekends and out of term time. This appears about to be turned on its head.

The planning committee must be mindful that the residents of all the homes around the proposed development live there for 365 days a year and we have been tolerant of the noise from the school's day to day activities and continuous building works. The privacy of our homes is a major concern for all of us. I am not aware of any representatives from the school or the design team have visited Bournside Road to get an understanding of the site views and elevations of our homes in relation to the school. We are overlooked directly into our homes and gardens and I believe this is of real concern to us all if the development means usage 14 hours a day, 363 days of the year! I would like to those making the final decision, regarding these plans, of the recent court ruling which found in favour of the residents privacy against the viewing platform of the Tate Modern. The proposed bleacher seating would be totally inappropriate looking directly into family homes and gardens, especially at weekends and evenings which appears to be when it would be used.

The Residential Overlook on the north side of the development is not considered on the plans. The houses on the north side are overlooked from the school for a good proportion of the year and vice versa. The trees do not block the view completely at any time of the year. A 3 metre planting buffer is planned for the north west boundary, this should also be considered for the northern boundary.

The impact on the environment with the removal of the schools largest, living green space to be replaced by a very large area of solid surfaces. The school environment already consists of large areas of tarmac, paving and concrete. For much of the school year the pupils use the field at break and lunchtimes for recreation and during lessons for some sports activities. Where will the pupils play if this area is removed? Having taught in several education authorities I am not aware of any school having a permanent athletics track. Cheltenham is well provided for, with a wonderful Prince of Wales Athletics stadium for extra-curricular activities and athletic clubs. I would suggest further development at the Prince of Wales stadium to include diversity and inclusivity would be a far better use of the monies. During the normal school day, how much time will pupils actually spend using the athletics track, when there is so much to cover in the formal curriculum? What happens to all the other sports? Athletics in most schools happens only for a short period in the summer term, so is this very expensive track development could be a white elephant. There is a small problem with items being thrown over the current fencing, which is difficult to remove and recover due to the steepness of the bank, this may be more of a problem with a greater number of people using the school.

Included in the reports there is a suggestion any development should not be closer than 8 metres from the stream bank so how can the cycle track be placed so close to the fence? Which would then suggest that the plan is too large for the available space.

It will be crucial that the tree report is carefully followed if the trees on the riparian strip are to survive and not have their roots damaged, therefore causing weakness/death of tree and the potential to fall in either direction onto the school or private gardens. The debris which falls from the trees throughout the season will surely create a caretaking/maintenance headache. Tree roots also cause distortion of the ground as the trees grow,

will this not cause on- going problems with the tracks? Take a walk or drive along Bournside Road to see what happens.

The impact on the wide range of wildlife living along this river bank must be a major consideration. Will the fox den in the river bank be damaged when the field is levelled? The school site might not be vulnerable to flooding but on the north side of the stream we do have issues when we have heavy rain. I have video footage of the stream becoming a fast flowing torrent and reaching the top of the river bank on the north side. As we have the discharge point opposite the bottom of our garden, the water coming off the harder surfaces of the development could increase the damage to the banks at this point and to other areas of the gardens. This has happened at least twice in 10 years, so not a 1 in a 100 event!

I really don't think this is the right site for this development, although I understand the benefits of physical activity and do not object to the principle of improving of facilities for Belmont and Betteridge pupils. I think a public Q & A meeting of all parties should be held before the plans are considered any further.

Thank you for your consideration.

Allsorts
Brunel Mall
Third Floor
London Road
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 2BP

Comments: 10th October 2023

Letter attached.

10 Flint Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3JE

Comments: 26th October 2023

I am the lead coach for Cycle Stars, we are a youth cycling club in Cheltenham, providing opportunities for children to learn to ride bikes safely, compete, meet friends and have fun.

We have been providing coaching at Belmont School for two years.

We fully support Belmont School in their application to improve the facilities. There are very few locations that children can ride their bikes safely. Without the support of places like Belmont School, Cycle Stars couldn't operate and provide the opportunities for children. Enhancing the facilities at the school can only improve the experience for young riders and providing exercise and social benefits which will help with mental health for our children.

All Saints Academy
Blaisdon Way
Cheltenham
GL51 0WH

Comments: 11th October 2023

Good afternoon Lucy,

I am writing to express my support for planning reference 23/00117/FUL at Belmont School. Move More, the charity that I work for, currently delivers physical activity and health interventions in every primary school in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, we also deliver holiday camps, community provision and family support services and are therefore aware of and strong advocates of the benefits that being physically active can bring to children and young people. We have worked with Belmont School for several years, through in school delivery, events and competitions and funding support. The school has a real positive, can-do attitude to ensure their pupils can access a variety of enrichment opportunities, however due to the needs of some of their pupils, access to facilities with appropriate provision can be a real challenge. The proposed development will remove many of the barriers that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities encounter when participating in physical activity as it will provide a variety of opportunities of on a specialist site, where additional features such as adapted equipment and a changing facility with a hoist are also present. Belmont are strong advocates of partnership working and are keen to ensure that children with SEND from mainstream and other Special Schools can utilise the proposed development, therefore benefitting children from across Gloucestershire. The facility would also enable Move More to further expand our growing SEND provision for schools, allowing more children to experience the social, emotional and physical benefits of being physical active.

The proposed development would be real asset to sport and physical activity infrastructure in Cheltenham and further across Gloucestershire, where they are very few specialist facilities with a variety of adapted equipment for children and young people with SEND.

Best wishes,

Hill House,
Parkside Close,
Churchdown
GL3 1JR

Comments: 9th February 2024

As a parent of a child who attends Belmont I would like to fully support this planning application.

I believe this development will benefit the children of Belmont enormously. By not only by providing a safe and accessible outdoor space for our children to access and enjoy in all weathers. But by giving our children the opportunity to partake in inclusive and accessible outdoor sports and activities, which may otherwise not be available to them in the wider community.

The sad reality is that there are not enough inclusive and or accessible sports facilities available for children with additional needs.

I therefore ask you to please consider all of the above and what this may mean for our children when making your final decision.

3 Bushel Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 3NA

Comments: 14th February 2024

I would like to support this planning application for Belmont school.
I think it's a great idea. My daughter ***** attends this school and I think she and other children will benefit greatly from all these amenities that are being proposed.
It would be a wonderful addition to the school and it will definitely help all the children with their physical and mental development.

Walnut House
Frog Lane
Ilmington
CV36 4LQ

Comments: 7th February 2024

I am amazed this application is to be considered.

Of course activity amenities should be available to disabled children. However this application is not solely for the use of the children but is to be made available to non pupils outside of school times.

The proposed site is small open space...a breathing space, enjoyed by wildlife along with current pupils in the midst of housing development.

The amount of amenities to be constructed are far too many to be arranged in such an area.

The space is currently used by the school only and is thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils (and rightly so) without any disturbance to those living on the perimeter. Its a very happy place!

The proposed application would make the site available every day of the week. Residents would not be able to enjoy full and uninterrupted use of their gardens at weekends

To make the space available to outsiders would be of no benefit to the pupils whatsoever, and they should be the priority. There are already extensive sport facilities right next door for people to hire/ use.

I desperately hope this application is refused or made only available for pupils during school time only allowing this precious piece of green to remain in its current form.

141 Fairview Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 2EX

Comments: 27th January 2024

I believe that this would be a fantastic sports development especially for those with special educational needs. There are not many opportunities for children and adults with a disability to be able to access sport

70 Bournside Road
Cheltenham GL51 3AH

8 March 2023

Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council
P.O. Box 12
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

My e-mail and by hand

Planning Application 23/00117/FUL

Additional Sports facilities at Belmont School.

We are writing to express our views on this proposal. May we start by saying that we support the aims of the application, but that support is, in a quite literal sense, **conditional**. We attended the 2012 Paralympic Games in London – a memorable and moving occasion- and we are aware of the ongoing efforts in the U.K. to make sport more inclusive.

Background.

What is now all Bournside Road began to be developed in the 1930s at either end. The majority of the houses, mainly detached with some semi-detached, were built in the space between during the 1950s, with only a few being built since. Many of the houses have been extended considerably, including No. 70. The road is the quintessential English suburban tree-lined residential avenue. Many of the houses on the South- West side, i.e., the side nearest the site of the present proposal, have larger gardens than would probably have been the case had they been built even a decade later. It is clear to us as local residents that the gardens are used, tended and enjoyed, as is ours. Some residents, we know, work from home.

We bought No. 70 in January 1978, aware that there was a schools complex nearby, and we have lived here ever since. We raised three children here and the house is still “H.Q.” for the three generations of our family. It is clear that other properties are similarly used. We have in recent years made various changes aimed at enabling us to remain here.

The present activities in and around Belmont School are mainly Monday to Friday during school term time. Such activity as takes place at other times (leaving aside building and maintenance work which necessarily spill over) can be lively – even raucous on occasion – but it is usually brief and confined to relatively short periods of the day Monday to Friday, with noticeably less activity at weekends and in holidays, and it is in any event mainly

confined to the paved area adjacent to the school building, perhaps 100 or more metres from our boundary; this proposal would bring that activity to within about ten metres of our boundary. There are sometimes sports activities which can be noisy and intrusive, especially when sound amplification systems and a klaxon are used, but they are brief and infrequent. We hope we are reasonable as neighbours – we offered access via our garden when some items were thrown or kicked over the fence onto the School side of Hatherley Brook, and we have never complained about the droning noise of the School’s central heating system when it is kept on overnight during cold spells although it is audible inside our house despite our modern double glazing. All of this, so far, is in line with what one expects, having chosen to live near a schools complex.

The present proposal goes much further, because it is for extensive sports facilities covering the whole of what has hitherto been grassed field. It appears to be the intention to extend the activities to almost all of the year, seven days a week and for long hours, more akin to a commercial sports complex.

We attended the consultation on 10 January. It was difficult to find from any one of the three persons attending on behalf of the School and the engineers a comprehensive view of what the proposal involved, although the plans shown were helpful. It emerged that there were no proposals to alter in any way the metal, spike-topped paling fence on the North-East boundary, i.e., adjacent to No. 70 and other houses from about No. 40-something to No. 72 or 74, and please see the concerns below about this. Some intentions about use were mentioned. We have examined the application on line. It is just for change of use with no mention of any limitations. Intentions can change; planning conditions do not.

No locality, unless it be in an area specifically protected by statute, can be expected to remain unaltered over the passage of time. Please see footnote 1 below.

How the proposal may be funded is not any of our business, but mention was made at the consultation on 10 January of approaching local businesses. It is a short step to sponsors expecting that their staff and families be permitted to use the facilities; the greater the activity the greater the impact, particularly if, as we understand from a letter from Councillor Chelin, it is intended to allow other groups to use the facilities whenever they are not booked by the priority groups which are to have first pickings after the School itself. Without appropriate conditions the site could be used indiscriminately to generate revenue.

Suggested formal conditions, with reasons

No. 70 is almost the last property in the row along the North- East boundary of the subject site. The bottom of the garden is, perhaps, ten metres from the site fence. The Hatherley Brook flows between, with varying amounts of land separating. That area has many mature trees, but of the 20 or so which can be distinguished from No. 70, all but two are deciduous, so providing no screen for several months of the year. The area either side of the Brook is, and always has been, a habitat for wildlife. Foxes have earths and they rear their cubs in and around; some 25 species of birds of various sizes from owls to wrens frequent it and our

garden, and squirrels are ever-present. Even the local cats hunt there. We have seen fieldmice, hedgehogs, frogs and slow-worms. Birds and foxes forage on the existing grassed area when it is quiet. It is inevitable that any increase in activity on the subject site will cause greater disturbance to wildlife. We notice less wildlife activity when the outside area of the School is being used as at present. A **condition** limiting the days and times of use will benefit wildlife as well as reducing the detrimental effect on the amenities of the nearby residences.

Our suggestion is that formal planning **conditions** be imposed requiring activity on the subject site be limited to 08.30 (sunrise if later) to 17.00 (sunset if earlier) on Monday to Friday, 10.00 to 15.00 on Saturdays, 10.00 to 13.00 on Sundays, with no activity on Bank Holidays. We understand that no floodlights are to be installed. We ask for a formal **condition** that no lighting at all be permitted. Similarly, we ask for a **condition** that no amplification of sound above 85 - 90 decibels (about the volume of a garden lawnmower) be permitted. All persons using the site should be required to conduct themselves in such a way that these conditions are not breached.

One aspect caused us particular concern. The cycle track is to run in part next to the metal fence previously mentioned, with a wider section for overtaking. Any overtaking cyclist is likely to be on the outside and will be moving faster. We see that some of the present pupils of Belmont School are of near-adult stature. Very little would have to go wrong for a rider to be thrown against or onto the top of the metal palings, with the potential for very serious injury or worse. Please see footnote 2 below. A suitable evergreen hedge about 1 metre wide and 3 or 4 metres high would provide a much more forgiving surface for the unfortunate rider(s) to be propelled onto. We lack the knowledge to suggest a particular species of shrub, but hopefully others can suggest one whose foliage extends from ground level. This would also lessen the noise and visual intrusion on to the adjoining properties and would have the incidental benefit of providing a habitat for insects and perhaps small birds as well as something of a screen for the wildlife corridor either side of the Brook. We ask that a formal planning **condition** to this effect be imposed.

Other considerations.

Security out of school hours is another concern. How will unauthorised access to the site be prevented? Hatherley Park suffers, on occasion, anti-social behaviour, now that it is left unlocked. Unfortunately, the Police cannot be expected to treat trespassers on Belmont School as a late-night priority. To whose attention would such occurrences be drawn, and how?

Drainage of the artificial surfaces, we understand, is to be by catchment tanks which allow gradual seepage to Hatherley Brook. The flow characteristics of the Brook have altered over the years, with more rapid upsurges in flow during heavy rain, especially since the development at Merestones around the former education facility, and it is predicted that the extensive development further upstream on the far side of Shurdington Road will add still more to the variations in the flow of the Brook. The rate of water flow from the site into the

Brook requires to be monitored.

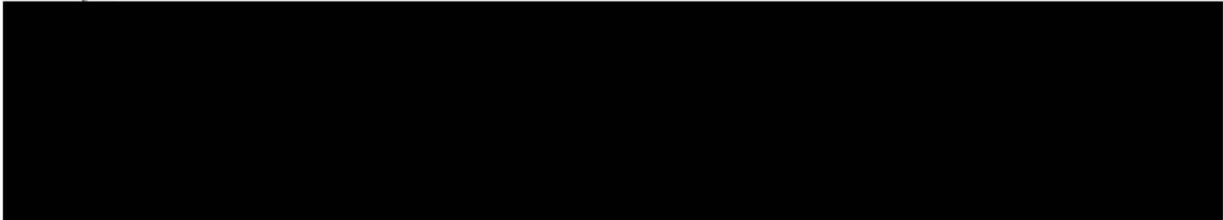
A good number of years ago, when the development of the area part of which became Castanum Court was being considered, there was talk locally of some parts of the area around that site having at some point in the past been used for landfill; methane was mentioned. It might seem unlikely that such use would have extended as far as the subject site, but perhaps it would be prudent for trial borings to be undertaken.

Conclusion.

In short, not NIMBY, rather YIMBY, B; Yes, In My Back Yard, But - managed and with conditions and limitations enshrined in law to lessen the impact on the local residents and the environment.

We make no apology for the length of this submission. This proposal is the biggest change to the area around our property for at least forty-five years, probably a good deal longer. We bought near to a schools complex, not a near-commercial sports complex, which is what this proposal will produce unless appropriate **conditions** are attached and complied with.

Sincerely,



Footnote 1 from ALM. In my professional work on some 50 occasions it fell to me, as one of the regulators of the road transport industry, to preside over Public Inquiries, to receive oral and written evidence, to consider that evidence and produce a written Decision, with findings of fact and reasons, for allowing, often with some conditions, or refusing, consent for the proposed use of a site as a road transport base. The subject-matter may be different; the principles are the same - how best can one allow the proposed activity to take place without undue adverse effects on the residences within sight and sound of the site, inside the confines provided by the law.

Footnote 2 from ALM. From 1988 to 2005 I was H.M. Coroner for this area, conducting some 1500 Inquests. Although none were in circumstances such as are envisaged here, I think I can recognise a potential hazard when I see one; something which can go wrong, one day will go wrong, as emerged so often in Court.

cc. Cllrs Beale, Oliver, Harman and Chelin

[REDACTED]

72 Bournside Rd.,
Cheltenham.
Glos. GL51 3AH
10th March 2023

Comments concerning Planning Proposal : 23/00117/FUL
Belmont School Warden Hill Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 3AT.
FAO : Planning Department – Cheltenham Borough Council.

I write as a resident of 72 Bournside Road - a property adjacent to the Belmont School playing field. As a retired secondary school teacher I support, in principle, the wish to provide enhanced sports facilities for schools and would be keen, perhaps with other Bournside Road residents, to work with the school and the planning team to ensure that the plans meet some of the school's aims but also protect the residents' privacy and quality of life.

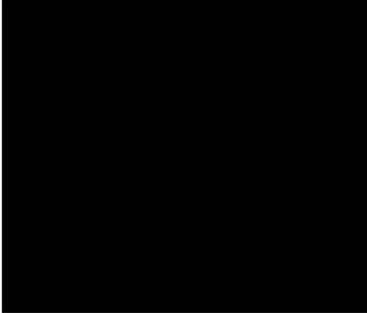
I have endorsed and signed a letter to be submitted by [REDACTED] 56 Bournside Road but would ask that the following points be considered in the Planning Application process:

1. Floodlights: Please ensure floodlights are not allowed to be added as a separate application in the future.
2. That use of the facilities is restricted to the children of Belmont School and partner schools of children with additional needs.
3. Careful management of the additional "community use", ie. usage outside normal school hours, will be absolutely vital if the development is to receive and maintain the support of local residents. This covers areas such as time restrictions, noise, public access and possible anti- social behaviour.
4. Screening: additional fencing, hedging and trees will be needed to maintain the privacy of the houses / gardens in Bournside Road and other roads adjacent to the school field. Residents should be involved in the decisions about this screening.
5. The siting of the proposed bleacher seating is a concern – how long / high is this to be? Is it really needed? Does this not actually turn the facility into a sports arena?
6. Possible flooding: Drainage and land levelling will need to be considered carefully to ensure that the environmental impact upon the river separating the school land from Bournside Road gardens is not seriously compromised.
7. I believe the proposals are seriously over ambitious. Will the proposed facilities really bring in the income required to make the development viable? I think not. Perhaps a more modest plan including a single, multi - purpose hard activity / play area plus a cycle track would be more sensible.
8. Following on from point 7 it seems a great shame that the proposal removes the vast majority of the Belmont School field. Green areas are of huge, and increasing, importance and if drainage of the school field is a problem that restricts its use in winter then perhaps some thought should be given as to how this can be improved without removing it altogether.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my points.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]



Planning,
Municipal Offices,
Promenade,
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire,
GL50 9SA

FAO: Planning, Cheltenham Borough Council

RE: Objection to Belmont School proposed sports development

We write as residents of Bournside Road with properties adjacent to the Belmont School playing field.

Belmont School wrote to inform us of their proposed sports development before Christmas and held a consultation on 10 January.

We are, of course, supportive in principle of the intent to provide improved sports facilities for children with additional needs. We are keen to work with the school and planning team to ensure the plans meet their requirements.

Based on the information we have received so far we are obliged to object to the plans and consider them too expansive and intrusive. If the below points are considered and reasonable adjustment is made then we will be able to reconsider our objection:

1. The current plans do not include floodlights. It will be very tempting to introduce these in future. Please could you stipulate that a criteria for approval is that floodlights can not be added in future?
2. We understand the school's intent is to make the facilities available throughout the evenings (when daylight allows based on current plans) and for weekend usage. Can this be limited to specific times and frequency? For example, as the facilities are for children please could they close after school hours and be available for a limited number of Saturday mornings (i.e. not Sundays or Bank Holidays) only per year? We were informed at the consultation that current usage is approximately one weekend per month. If the facilities are used throughout the summer evenings and weekends our gardens, one of the most attractive features of the road, will be impacted.
3. I understand the intent is to make the facilities available to Belmont School children and Belmont's existing partners with additional needs. However, if the school deem it necessary to generate extra revenue to maintain the facility the intent is to also make it available to the general public at a charge. This changes the usage significantly and detracts from our support, which is based upon the provision of sports and educational facilities for the

children of the school. Please can you introduce criteria that limits the usage to specific groups of people i.e. Belmont school pupils, pupils or members of equivalent schools or organisations with additional needs. Bournside Road has many young families and we would like to avoid the possibility that our children overhear adults or teenagers shouting and using foul language, which is inevitable when sports facilities are used by those demographics.

4. Belmont School have removed a large amount hedge and tree material in the new year, which has impacted on our privacy. The current plans put a cycle and running track adjacent to the border. Please could new planting be included and the current fence style, position and height be maintained. Please could individual residents be consulted on planting that directly affects their border?
5. The proposal removes a lot of natural grass and therefore natural drainage. This presents a flooding risk to all of us, a risk that will only increase over the next few years. Please could you review the plans and significantly reduce the use of artificial surfaces. Please could you consider the flooding and drainage survey very carefully and please could the residents have sight of both the survey and your analysis of it. From the documents online I note the site is assessed to be in zone 1, a low risk flood zone. This is surprising as the Government's published flood risk data places the location in zone 3, a high risk flooding area.

We hope that you agree these 5 points are both reasonable and justified. If they are addressed satisfactorily then we will support the development. If they are not then we will be obliged to continue objecting to it.

Please could you confirm how the application is being treated? Is a Planning Committee handling this or is it being delegated to officers to handle under delegated powers? If a planning meeting is due to sit please could we send a representative?

We have copied this letter to Councillor Jackie Chelin. Please could you confirm whether she will be on the committee itself and/or able to speak on our behalf so that we can ensure we provide her with the appropriate detail?

We have also copied this letter to the County Counsellor Tim Harman for consideration of the waterways and wider flood risk that obviously span beyond our Ward and Borough.

We have coordinated this letter as a group but individuals have also made their own representations, which we fully support.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our points and look forward to working together in order to meet all of our needs.

Yours faithfully,

 (on behalf of the following residents of Bournside Road)



October 4th 2023

To whom it may concern,

I write in support of the Belmont Community Sport project, which will increase opportunities for Belmont School students and the local community to access inclusive, engaging sport and physical activity.

Allsorts is a charity that supports children and young people aged 0-25 with additional needs, and their families, living in Gloucestershire. We have had the pleasure of working in partnership with Belmont School across numerous projects, not least through the delivery of specialist play schemes, PE provision and school sport for the school throughout the last five years. Belmont is a large, thriving school that will only get busier due to its excellent reputation as a specialist provider, but the PE and school sport facilities need to grow and develop to meet the needs and interests of the students.

As a provider of specialist PE, I can say with confidence that the facilities proposed through the Belmont Community Sport project will greatly enhance what the school are able to offer to students. Spaces will be larger, more accessible and offer greater versatility within the PE curriculum and across school sport. Surfaces will permit the usage of different types of equipment, broadening the experience of sport and exercise for students, who may not be able to experience safe and effective exercise outside of school, be that for financial reasons, various forms of accessibility, or otherwise. Belmont's existing facilities are limiting the opportunity that the site could provide for teachers and students, to deliver and receive experiences that generate positive physical, emotional and mental health, and a life-long love of being physically active.

As a community provider, we will also be able to provide inclusive sport and exercise for Belmont students after-school, weekday evenings and weekends, utilising the first-class facilities that this project will produce. The link between PE, school sport and community sport is a vital one, as it allows students to make friendships outside of school, and remaining physically active outside and beyond their time at school.

I would be very happy to discuss this project with any stakeholders who would like to understand how these facilities will benefit the students at Belmont School.



Best Regards,

Max Pemberton
Allsorts Head of Sport

70 Bournside Road
Cheltenham GL51 3AH

14 February 2024

Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council
P.O. Box 12
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham GL50 1PP

My e-mail and by hand

Planning Application 23/00117/FUL

Additional Sports facilities at Belmont School.

Please refer to the submission made in February and October 2023 for relevant facts and background. This submission will be shorter.

It cannot be disputed that if this application is granted at all, it will cause a significant change compared to what has been happening on the grassed area between the School buildings and the boundaries to our knowledge for 46 years. That change will impact on the amenities of the neighbouring residential properties. It is our respectful submission that this application should be refused, although we realise that others may think differently, particularly in light of the School's aims.

At last, there is some recognition by the Applicant that activities on that area need to be determined by binding conditions decided by and subject to monitoring by the local Planning Authority rather than being determined solely by the School, if this application is to be granted at all.

The present suggested wording of the Conditions limiting periods of use is capable of being misunderstood or misinterpreted. What does "used" mean? Does it mean whistle to whistle or gathering on site beforehand or remaining after physical activities have ceased? Precision of wording is essential so that all concerned understand what is and what is not permitted, as battles in Court have shown. Our suggested wording for any Condition about times and days should read:

"Other than for the purposes of inspection and maintenance there shall be no entry on to the area where (list the facilities for which permission may be granted) are situated before (time and days) and that area shall be vacated no later than (time and days)".

It is disappointing to see that the risk of injury – or worse – arising from the closeness of the proposed cycle track – especially the overtaking area – to the spike-topped boundary fence near to the Hatherley Brook continues to be ignored by the Applicant. If this application is to be granted at all, the following Condition is suggested.

"The perimeter cycle track shall not be used for cycling (as opposed to walking or running) until there has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority a professional Risk Assessment and all requirements arising therefrom have been fully implemented".

In light of the first paragraph of this submission, we respectfully suggest that the hours of permitted use, if this application is granted at all, should be Monday to Friday in School term time 08.30 to 16.30, Monday to Friday out of School term time 08.30 to 13.00, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays all year round 10.00 to 13.00, so that the residents of neighbouring properties within sight or sound of the site may be afforded some respite to enjoy the amenities of their properties when they are most likely to be used and appreciated.

Lastly, if this application falls to be determined at a meeting which members of the public are permitted to attend and speak, we would wish to be afforded such an opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

