

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/08886
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning Permission
SITE ADDRESS:	RECREATION GROUND, LEAFY LANE, CORSHAM, SN13 0JT
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Creation of a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) with perimeter fencing, hardstanding areas, storage container, floodlights, an access footpath and associated bund
RECOMMENDATION:	Consent be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

This application is requesting permission for the creation of an artificial grass pitch (AGP) at an existing recreation ground. No change of use is proposed but a reconfiguration of some existing grass pitches at the wider site will be necessary to accommodate the AGP.

The pitch will be located south-west of the existing sports pavilion and will include the provision of floodlights, storage container, fencing, hardstanding and access path. A bund is also proposed adjacent to the pitch, north of 'Boxfields Road', as a visual mitigation measure and area for on-site biodiversity net gain (BNG) provision.

Materials proposed are:

- Steel open mesh fencing – moss green
- Grey/black porous macadam vehicle access and hard standing
- Steel column and aluminium head floodlights
- 3G artificial grass system

The container is proposed to be located east of the pitch, measuring no higher than 2.6m; floodlighting will measure 13m; perimeter fencing is proposed to vary in height depending on the location and will either measure no more than 1.2m or no more than 4.5m high.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises an area of approximately 1.8 acres associated with multiple sports pitches west of Rudloe, a large village part of the Corsham community area which has a defined framework boundary but is outside of an area which benefits from a made neighbourhood development plan (NDP). The site comprises an existing artificial pitch and parts of adjacent grass pitches. The existing artificial pitch is surrounded by wire fencing and has some existing floodlights.

The site is outside of any framework boundary but has an established use as recreational playing fields which will be unchanged by the proposal. The pitches, as existing, are highly visible from classified C-road 'Boxfields Road' by virtue of the low-level drystone walls which serve as boundary treatment. The site can also be partially viewed from some parts of classified C-road 'Leafy Lane', where vehicular access to the site exists, and existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) 'Box107A' which runs along the western boundary of the fields but does not cross the area to be developed at any point.



Figure 1: map view of site (red)



Figure 2: aerial view (2024)



Figure 3: street view (google, 2024) from boxfields road

The site is not listed or within a conservation area but is on greenbelt land and within the Cotswolds National Landscape (NL) area – formerly area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) – identified as being part of the wider area which has the 'enclosed limestone valley' character. The site is within a consultation zone for Bechstein's bats, Greater Horseshoe bats and Lesser Horseshoe bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The site is identified by the Environment Agency as being within flood zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and is not considered to be at high risk of flooding from surface water sources; furthermore, the Councils Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) does not indicate that the site is at high risk of flooding from groundwater sources.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Relevant planning history at the site: (inter alia)

- N/97/01620/FUL approved the *construction of all weather training area/tennis courts and associated fencing and floodlights* [...] on 01.09.1997
- N/99/00389/FUL approved the *erection of improved lighting to outside all weather training area and lighting of grassed area* on 26.04.1999

Recent, relevant planning history associated with the wider playing fields

- PL/2021/08369 approved the *resurfacing of existing car parking and new overflow car park extension* [...] on 19.01.2022

Recent, relevant planning history associated with the wider setting

Springfield Recreation Ground:

- PL/2021/09177 approved the *variation of condition 2 of application 10/03912/FUL. Therefore changing the wording [...] to 'the floodlights hereby permitted shall not be illuminated outside of the hours 23:00pm and 07:30am'* on 15.11.2021

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Though considered as a whole, applicable Development Plan policies are listed below along with relevant legislation and guidance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

- CP1: Settlement Strategy
- CP2: Delivery Strategy
- CP11: Spatial Strategy for the Corsham Community Area
- CP38: Retail and Leisure
- CP41: Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy
- CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP51: Landscape
- CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- CP60: Sustainable Transport
- CP61: Transport and Development
- CP64: Demand Management
- CP67: Flood Risks

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP)

- NE14: Trees and the Control of New Development
- NE18: Noise and Pollution
- CF2: Leisure Facilities and Open Space

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP4)

- Parking standards (LTP3)

Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG)

Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2024

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW)

Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

- LCT 4: Enclosed Limestone Valley

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

ISSUES

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Principle / Sustainable Development
- Impact on Leisure Facilities
- Impact on the Greenbelt
- Design and Impact on the National Landscape Setting
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Highways and Rights of Way Impact
- Biodiversity / Geodiversity and Trees
- Flood Risk / Drainage

CONSULTATION

Box Parish Council: No objection

Box PC has no objection and commends the excellent ecology input.

Councils Archaeology Team: No Comment

Councils Drainage Team: No Objection

The proposed development is minor in nature (<1 ha) and will not result in a significant increase in impermeable area or corresponding flood risk when compared to the existing baseline scenario. [...]

Councils Ecology Team: No Objection Subject to Condition

[...]

Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC): Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The application site is located within a consultation zone for Bechstein's bats, Greater Horseshoe bats and Lesser Horseshoe bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of that site. Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects. [...]

As required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) an Appropriate Assessment has been completed by the LPA with a favourable conclusion. The AA has been sent to Natural England (20/03/2026) and the application must not be determined until they have agreed with the LPAs conclusion.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

[...]

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted.

[...]

Note to case officer: The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation (27 February 2026. V4) does not provide information on how the development will achieve 10% BNG.

Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured.

Core Policy 50

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and for major applications the expectation is that development will deliver biodiversity gains. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 180 d). CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements, such as bird and bat boxes. Further details should be provided on the number and types of bird and bat boxes to be included, and the location of these enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission. Bird/bat boxes will continue to be available for bats/birds for the lifetime of the development. [...]

Councils Highways Team: No Objection Subject to Condition

The proposal for an upgrade to the all-weather sport facility at Leafy Lane does not meet with a principal objection, provided the lighting does not cause light intrusion into neighbouring streets particularly Boxfields Road.

There have been no details provided on any additional traffic movements associated with the upgraded facility, but as the proposal seeks to upgrade an existing offering I have not been made aware of any highway concerns with the existing facility that will be affected by the proposal.

I therefore raise no highway objection subject to [...] condition.

Councils Landscape Team: No Objection Subject to Condition

[...] The development site lies within the North Wiltshire Green Belt designation and also lies at the eastern edge of, but wholly within, the 'Cotswold National Landscape' (CNL) previously referred to as the 'Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB). As such, Wiltshire Council as a 'Relevant Authority' has a statutory duty under the 'Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000' (CRoW Act 2000) to seek to further the statutory purpose of the national landscape designation which is to 'conserve and enhance' natural beauty, as part of its LPA planning function, evidenced through its deliberations /considerations and ultimately its final planning decision/s.

The application site is located within the southeastern corner of the existing Leafy Lane Playing Fields in Rudloe. The existing playing fields are bordered by Boxfields Road to the south (single width rural road with passing places) with some agricultural building's opposite, and by Leafy Lane to the east (double width road denoting the western

settlement edge of Rudloe) linking the A4 Bath Road to the north with B3109 Bradford Road to the south. [...]

Conclusion

The proposed development site is located within an area of long-established sports playing fields with associated car parking and a sports/community building. Approximately quarter of the proposed development site area is already covered by an artificially surfaced Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) including associated floodlighting scheme. In my opinion the most important landscape and visual matters for the LPA to consider as part of their overall planning considerations for this proposed development, are the resulting physical and / or visual change effects impacting upon the existing special qualities of the CNL/AONB designation and the public's appreciation / views of natural beauty within, towards, and from the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). This includes resulting change from the proposed new flood lighting scheme.

In relation to the floodlighting scheme, I note the lighting design information has been devised based on 'Environmental Zone 3' requirements. Given the site lies within the CNL (AONB) and one of the CNL special qualities highlighted within the AONB management plan is its 'Dark Skies', which it seeks to conserve, together with known importance to bat populations, I would have anticipated that 'Environmental Zone 2' would have been more appropriate in this instance (but I defer to Public protection and ecology officers to further advise). However, I accept this is an edge of settlement location with some existing artificial light sources emanating from Box Hill and Rudloe housing areas and from some local roads.

The most important thing in relation to landscape and visual matters for this application is for the LPA to ensure that the design of the flood lighting scheme is limited to that which is only essentially required and is designed to reduce as far as possible any upward artificial light spill and obtrusive light impacting upon adjoining countryside. This is necessary to minimise impact upon the 'dark skies' special quality of the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB).

[...]

Recommendation

No Landscape Officer Objection subject to a condition requiring implementation, successful establishment and future maintenance/management of the proposed soft landscaping proposals / BNG proposals.

Councils Public Protection Team: No Objection Subject to Condition

I would recommend [...] condition relating to artificial lighting. The assessment provided indicates that there will be no adverse impact on amenity from the lighting and the condition [...] met. [...] The proposed Noise Management Plan of the facility is supported, in event that any complaints are received.

Councils Rights of Way Team: No objection

Sport England's Comment: No Objection Subject to Condition

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the application [...]

Sport England notes that the proposal will be located on playing field at the site and will result in the loss of natural turf playing pitch(es). Sport England has consulted the relevant national governing body for sport and we have received the following comments.

The proposed AGP is located close to the non-turf pitch for cricket (NTP). The impact is that it will compromise the ability to use and mark out the pitch for cricket, as there would be no space to mark out an appropriate boundary. Discussions with the ECB (national governing body for cricket) and the FF/FA have taken place at pre-application stage with the aim to mitigate the impact on cricket with the preferred solution identified as replacing the non-turf artificial pitch at the St. Barnabas Church site in Beanacre. It is understood that funding is available to invest in a replacement artificial cricket pitch and that following discussions with Wiltshire planning authority, planning permission is not required to install the replacement pitch.

The Football Foundation comments that the proposal is a priority project for Football Foundation (FF) and Wiltshire FA. The pitch design fully complies with the standard information below and would be delivered via the FF's AGP Framework.

*The Football Foundation comments that AFC Corsham, who are the primary user of the site are an England Accredited 3 * Club and has 39, teams. This includes 5 women and girls teams and the project seeks to provide growth in this area in particular. This project would provide opportunities to further grow the female game, as well as disability provision, walking football and recreational football. This project is listed in the Wiltshire Local Football Facilities Plan, which identifies the need for an additional 13 full size 3G pitches.*

The Football Foundation adds that Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) refers to aspirations to extend the current smaller sized 3G pitch at Leafy Lane Playing Fields to a 11v11 pitch. This would meet requirements in the area. Demand from neighbouring towns should also be taken into account Melksham (shortfall of AGP provision equal to 2no. facilities) and Bradford on Avon (shortfall of 1no. 3G AGP).

The FF adds that discussions and agreement are in place to mitigate the loss of the cricket wicket with an artificial wicket at St.Barnabas, should the 3G development proceed at Leafy Lane. ECB and Corsham Cricket Club are in full support of this.

The FF considers that as the proposal will follow the AGP framework, it will all be compliant in relation to:

- Construction Quality

The pitch is constructed to FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf – FIFA Quality standard or equivalent International Match Standards (IMS) as a minimum.

- Testing

Any 3G pitch to be used for FA affiliated football in England must be on the FA 3G pitch register. Teams hosting matches on a pitch that is not on the register are at risk of the league or competition imposing sanctions. For pitches used outside of the National League System the minimum level of testing required is the FA Register Test. If a pitch is tested and accredited by FIFA, or has been found to comply with BS EN 15330-1:2013, these pitches will also automatically be added to the 3G pitch register.

- Pricing

Pricing policies must be affordable for community/grass roots football clubs and should be agreed with the local County Football Association. This should include match-rates at weekends equivalent to the Local Authorities price for natural turf pitches.

Pitch Replacement Fund – Pitch Replacement Fund will be in place (alternatively referred to as a sinking fund, formed by periodically setting aside money over time to cover the resurface and replacement lifecycle costs) is in place to maintain 3G pitch quality in the long term. The Football Foundation recommend £27,000 per annum for a Football 11v11 (97m x 61m) pitch and this should be index linked.

The Football Foundation fully supports this planning application, based on the following:

- Strategic Need for additional 3G pitches in the area;*
- Strong outcomes and related to the growth of girls and women's football and disability football;*
- Fully compliant designs.*

The ECB comments that the Football Foundation actively consulted both the ECB and Wiltshire Cricket ahead of this application. Whilst both the ECB and Wiltshire Cricket are supportive of this application it is in the knowledge that the proposed off-site mitigation (a new non-turf match pitch) be installed at St Barnabas Church. This is specifically mentioned within the Design Access Statement (page 25) & on the basis that this is delivered, then the ECB has no objection to this application.

[...] Sport England is satisfied that the proposal will bring benefits to sport and there is an identifiable need for new 3G AGP provision. It will be important that the facility is managed and maintained effectively to ensure it remains fit for purpose and sustainable into the long term. Sport England would also wish to secure either a condition or a planning obligation which provides for the off-site financial contribution to replace the artificial cricket wicket at St. Barnabas.

Subject to the above, Sport England considers that the application is capable of meeting the E5 exception and paragraph 104 of the NPPF and we do not wish to raise an objection. This support is contingent on [...] conditions being attached to any permission. [...]

We welcome discussion with the Local Planning Authority about how we can secure the mitigation for the loss of the artificial cricket wicket.

Natural England: No Objection Subject to Condition

Natural England notes that your authority, as competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment of the proposal, in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Regulations. Natural England is a statutory consultee on the Appropriate Assessment stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

Your Appropriate Assessment concludes that your authority is able to ascertain that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area for Conservation (SAC). Having considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for all identified adverse effects that could potentially occur as a result of the proposal, Natural England is satisfied and thus we have no objection to the proposals, providing that all mitigation measures and recommended conditions are appropriately secured in any permission given.

The operating hours of the floodlights and operational period during the year should be agreed with your Authority's ecology team and this should be conditioned with any granted permission.

It is noted that a lux contour plan to demonstrate post development light spill has been provided. It is recommended that a post development lighting survey is undertaken to confirm compliance with the submitted plan and remedial measures should be agreed with your Authority's ecology team should post development light levels be in excess of the agreed levels. In addition, we recommend that a condition for no lighting during construction should be secured with any planning permission.

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing over 100 public representations of support have been received, raising the following summarised comments relevant to the planning merits of the scheme:

- Positive addition to Corsham community
 - o providing social value
- Positive leisure facility supporting grassroots clubs
 - o providing health and wellbeing value
- Compliant with Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy (December 2024)
- Positive accessibility measures proposed
- Sensitively designed
- Appropriate location
- Much needed expansion/enhancement of existing service facilities

ASSESSMENT

Principle / Sustainable development

CP1 and CP2 of the WCS relate to the spatial strategy for Wiltshire, setting the policy foundations for sustainable development within the county. CP11 of the WCS expresses that development in the Corsham Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in CP1. CP2 outlines that, other than in circumstances permitted by other policies within the WCS, development will not be permitted outside the limits of development, as defined on the policies map.

Paragraphs 90 - 95 of the NPPF have the aims of 'ensuring the vitality of town centres' and guides that planning policies and decisions to support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. CP38 of the WCS sets a threshold (of 200m² gross floorspace) for when retail and leisure proposals outside of a town centre to comply with the sequential approach and for such development to be accompanied by an impact assessment.

The site is located outside of any defined settlement limits; however, proposes the creation of an AGP and associated works at an existing recreation ground. As the site has an established leisure use, and no change of use is proposed, the operational works in connection with that existing use is acceptable in principle subject to assessment of other planning matters.

Furthermore, whilst the proposal is for a leisure use, and will result in improvement of existing leisure facilities which may result in an intensification of use of the leisure facilities, the scheme does not propose an extension to the facilities and as such, on this occasion, the requirements for an impact assessment and sequential test is not triggered.

Impact on Leisure Facilities

Paragraphs 103 – 108 of the NPPF relates to 'open space and recreation' with paragraph 104 setting the expectation that *existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless set one of the following set criteria applies:*

- (a) *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- (b) *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- (c) *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

The scheme proposes the creation of an AGP; the location of which will result in a changes to the breadth of facilities at the playfields, requiring some general rearrangement of all football pitches at the playing fields (mostly outside of the application site – red line - but still within the applicant's ownership – blue line) and the removal of the existing cricket wicket at the application site. For the avoidance of doubt, plans have been provided (extracted as figure 4) to show how the

development will impact the layout of facilities at the leisure site. The location plan has also been partially extracted (as figure 5 below).

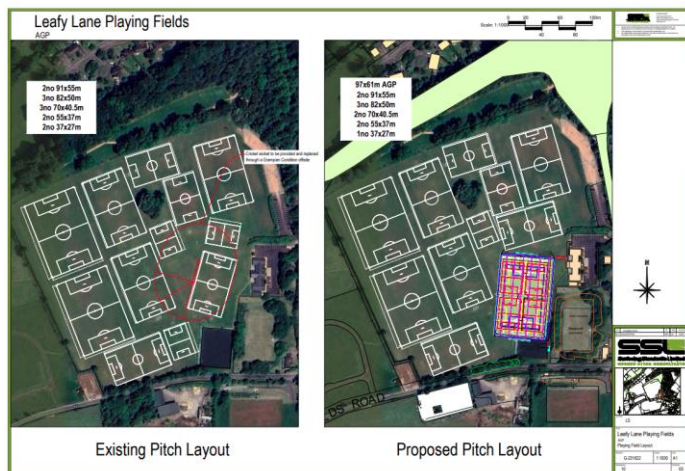


Figure 4: extract of plan showing existing and proposed pitch layouts



Figure 5: Partial extract of location plan showing application site (in red) and full leisure site within the same ownership (blue line)

The application has been submitted with a comprehensive design and access statement (prepared by surfacing standards limited, dated 31.10.2025) which includes comments on the loss of *non turf artificial cricket wicket on site* which includes how *the applicant is committed to providing a replacement non turf artificial cricket wicket on a nearby site at Beanacre Cricket Ground*.

Given the above, further assessment is needed to establish whether planning controls are necessary to ensure that a replacement cricket wicket is provided in the interest of mitigating the impact that granting planning permission for the AGP would have on that local leisure provision.

Consultation with Sport England has been carried out which resulted in support of the scheme with the explicit understanding that the cricket wicket be provided off-site at St Barnabas Church and a request for conditions to be applied to any permission granted. The representation, when taken as a whole, provides a clear steer that the development of a AGP represents alternative sports and recreation provision, the benefits of which – when taken together with the benefits of the replacement cricket wicket at an alternative site – outweigh the loss of the current or former use, inline with the aims of paragraph 104(c) of the NPPF.

The provided design and access statement suggests that the applicant would be *happy for a Grampian Condition to be added* to secure that installation *before the first use of the AGP facility*. Whilst it is acknowledged that Grampian style conditions must be used with care, on this occasion such an approach is appropriate and justified; this is because the replacement facilities, whilst on third-party land, is not on third-party land of uncertain availability and the requirement does not relate to speculative future agreements. The application clearly demonstrates a defined mitigation scheme which is supported by governing bodies for sport, the condition would not seek to regulate the development beyond the proper scope of planning control, but instead would ensure

that the 3G pitch would not come into use until the LPA is satisfied that adequate replacement provision is in place.

Alternative mechanisms, such as planning obligation, has been carefully considered and discussed with the applicant; however, given the level of clarity on the mitigation proposal, the lack of need for complex financial triggers, and the fact that the replacement facility is required prior to first use rather than at a later stage, a negatively worded condition is proportionate. A carefully worded condition which is clear that the condition will not require the LPA to deliver the mitigation itself, but only confirm its adequacy once delivered, would meet the condition tests on this occasion and would provide a robust safeguard to ensuring no net loss of cricket provision arising from the proposed development. With such a condition, the scheme is acceptable in principle.

Impact on the Greenbelt

Chapter 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land and expresses how the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts.

Paragraph 142 expresses that:

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 143 expresses that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas*
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*
- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*
- (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*
- (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*

Paragraph 153 directs that *inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.*

Paragraph 154 instructs Local Planning Authorities to regard development in the Green Belt as inappropriate unless set exception apply, summarised below:

- (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry*
- (b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.*
- (c) the extension or alteration of a building [...]*
- (d) the replacement of a building [...]*
- (e) limited infilling in villages*
- (f) limited affordable housing [...]*
- (g) limited infilling or complete redevelopment of previously development land [...]*
- (h) other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
 - (i) mineral extraction*
 - (ii) engineering operations*

- (iii) local transport infrastructure [...]*
- (iv) the re-use of buildings [...]*
- (v) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
- (vi) development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order*

The scheme is for the provision of an AGP in connection with the existing use of land for outdoor sport; whilst the AGP will result in some degree of visual change to the site, taking into account the existing site situation an AGP in this area does not represent development which would harm the openness of the Green Belt, nor is the development contrary to any of the five Green Belt purposes defined under NPPF paragraph 143.

Exemption (b) of paragraph 154 is engaged for this proposal, and the scheme is consequently understood to not be inappropriate development in the greenbelt.

Design and Impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape

Policy CP41 of the WCS relates to sustainable construction and low-carbon energy and encourages development including building conversions to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand.

Policy CP51 of the WCS requires development to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character, expressing that any proposals for development within AONBs shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in relevant management plan(s).

Policy CP57 of the WCS requires high quality design and place shaping for all new development including extensions, alterations and changes of use.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF places great weight on the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and NLs.

The site is within the Cotswolds NL; detail within the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidance identifies the wider character area as 'Enclosed Limestone Valley'.

Part 4.1 of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines relates to *development, expansion and infilling of settlements including residential, industrial, leisure etc [...]* and identifies the following potential landscape implications and strategies/guidelines which are potentially relevant to the scheme:

Potential landscape implications
- Spread of lit elements up the valley slopes
- Urbanisation of the valley floor
- Increase in noise pollution and loss of tranquility
- Degradation of the view from the valley sides and rim and from neighbouring areas of dip-slope and plateaux
Landscape strategies and guidelines

- Avoid development that will intrude negatively into the landscape and cannot be successfully mitigation [...]
- New development should be concentrated within existing built up areas, and be of a density reflecting the characteristic linear settlement form
- Ensure new development is proportionate [...]
- Ensure that development does not adversely affect settlement character and form
- Avoid cramming development right up to the boundaries [...]
- Conserve dark stretches of the valleys and valley slopes forming the backdrop to settlements
- Adopt measures to minimise and where possible reduce light pollution
- Plant trees and hedges within and around new development [...]
- Retain existing trees, hedges etc [...]
- Consider the impact on local PROW [...]

The site forms part of an established recreational ground with existing sports infrastructure which includes some floodlighting, and the proposed development will upgrade these facilities, introducing a 3G pitch. The provided D&A does not reference any intention to provide on-site renewable energy generation, which is regrettable; however, the D&A is clear that sustainable construction and environmental measures will be integrated into the scheme in the following summarised ways:

- Reuse of on-site materials
- Use of energy-efficient lighting
- Permeable construction
- Locally sourced sub-base aggregates
- Long-term management – e.g. cradle-to-cradle AGP lifecycle

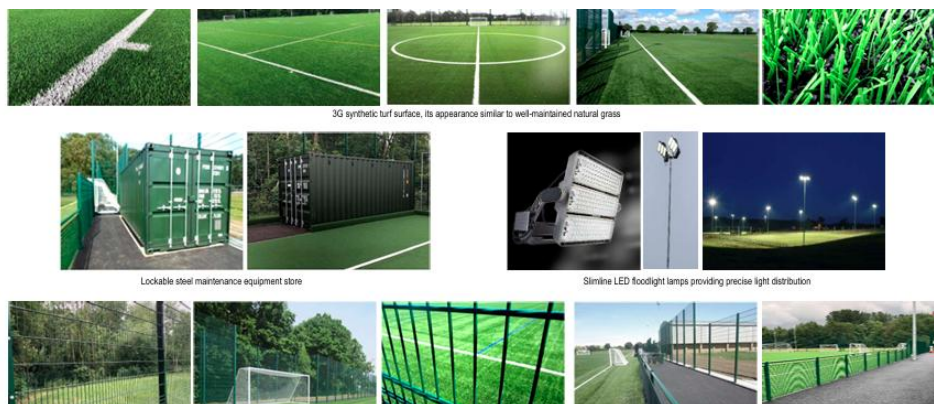


Figure 5: partial extract of appendix E of the D&A - proposed materials & appearance

The application submission has also included detail on the proposed materials and lighting, indicating that the lighting scheme has been carefully designed to reduced light spill etc. The Council's landscape team have been consulted and their representation concludes that, given the establish recreational context of the site and its strong physical and visual containment, the development would result in little or no harm to the wider NL landscape character.

There is no landscape objection to the stationing of the proposed storage container at the site and, overall, the use of dark green fencing, retention of existing boundary vegetation, and introduction of low earth bunding are welcomed mitigation measures for the full scheme – with conditions ensuring that these mitigations are provided the development will not result in unacceptable impact on the NL setting.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CP57 of the WCS further requires development proposals to have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

With the understanding that there is a long-established use of the site as a sports facility, the provided D&A acknowledges that the site is near existing housing and indicates that the scheme has been carefully designed to minimise impacts on the amenity of these sensitive receptors.

The proposed siting for the 3G pitch will be located approximately 100m from dwellings to the east. Supporting detail indicates that noise mitigation has been designed into the scheme which includes acoustic measures such as neoprene washers to perimeter fencing to reduce vibration and rattle from ball impacts, and a noise management plan controlling hours of use etc.

Consultation with the Councils public protection team has been carried out and their specialist review of the noise management plan and lighting information resulted in a representation of no objection subject to conditions. The recommended conditions are necessary and an informative can be included with any permission granted explaining that, notwithstanding planning permission, there are separate regulatory controls related to noise etc. which will need to be adhered to.

Overall, the proposal represents an upgrade to an existing facility – subject to conditions, it is not considered that the development will result in an unacceptable change to the level of amenity currently enjoyed by occupants of nearby residential units.

Highways Safety and Rights of Way Impact

Policy CP61 of the WCS requires new development to be served by safe access to the highway network.

Policy CP64 of the WCS relates to demand management measures which includes car parking management and standards.

The scheme does not require new or revised vehicular access and consultation with the Councils Highways team has been carried out which resulted in a representation concluding that *as the proposal seeks to upgrade an existing offering I have not been made aware of any highway concerns with the existing facility that will be affected by the proposal*. Their representation recommends the inclusion of a condition requiring the submission and approval of a construction management statement (CMS) to ensure the safe operation of the highway in the lead into the construction phase of the development – this condition is reasonable and necessary.

Given that an existing PROW runs through the northern and western edges of the playing field, consultation with the Councils rights of way team has also been carried out; their representation concluded no objection to the scheme. Whilst the application site is contained within a part of the wider playing field where the PROW does not cross, for the avoidance of doubt an informative will, nonetheless, be included with any permission granted advising the applicant that the PROW should not be blocked or obscured during the construction phase of the development.

Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Trees

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats and ensures that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

Policy CP50 of the WCS outlines that Wiltshire's natural environment is one of its greatest assets and identifies protection measures necessary for consideration when assessing the impact of development on biodiversity and geodiversity.

The site is within the consultation zone for the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC, and the application has been submitted with ecological supporting detail, including a preliminary ecological appraisal and BNG detail. The application has also been submitted with an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (prepared by tetra tech, dated 20.11.2025) which confirms that the development will not require the removal or pruning of trees and that there will not be any works carried out within root protection areas.

Consultation with the Councils Ecology team has been carried out, and guidance has been provided by the team throughout the course of the application; their final representation resulted in confirmation that the site offers *significant suitability for foraging and commuting bats in the form of boundary hedgerow, scrub, scattered trees and woodland* along with confirmation that an appropriate assessment has been completed and favourably concluded. Natural England was consulted on 20.03.2026 and have confirmed their agreement with the appropriate assessment. Mitigation measures identified as necessary within the representations made by the Ecology Team and Natural England are necessary to ensure that the development will not result in significant adverse impacts on protected species associated with the SAC.

The Ecology team's representation further confirms that BNG is required, agreeing with the baseline value of the site that the applicant has provided. An informative will be included with any permission granted explaining next steps regarding BNG.

Flood Risk / Drainage

Policy CP67 of the WCS relates to flood risk and provides direction for development proposed in flood zones 2 and 3 and includes the requirement for development to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off and to improve rainwater infiltration to soil and ground, unless site or environmental conditions make these measures unsuitable.

The site is on land in flood zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and seas, and is not at high risk of surface water or ground water flooding. The scheme has, however, been submitted with a drainage strategy and the Councils drainage team were consulted for their specialist review of that technical detail.

The drainage team's representation confirms that the development will not result in a significant increase in impermeable area or corresponding flood risk, concluding that they have no objection to planning permission being granted.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The application proposes the development of a 3G artificial grass pitch and associated works on an established recreation site located outside of the defined framework boundary on Green Belt land and within the Cotswolds NL. The scheme does not require a change of use of the land, and development is limited to that which is associated with an existing leisure use; as such, the development is acceptable in principle and not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

The proposal would result in the loss of the existing artificial cricket wicket at the site; however, a clearly defined and deliverable mitigation scheme has been put forwards which would involve the provision of a replacement wicket at a nearby off-site location. This approach is supported by Sport England and, subject to a negatively worded Grampian-style condition securing delivery prior to first use of the AGP, ensure that there would be no net loss of cricket provision.

The scheme has been carefully designed to incorporate mitigation measures that would address any potential impacts on the NL setting and neighbouring amenity. The scheme raises no objection on highway or PROW matters, and drainage matters have been satisfactorily addressed. Ecological matters, including impacts on the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC, have been comprehensively assessed; the Ecology team and Natural England have confirmed that, subject to mitigation and BNG matters to be secured by condition, the proposal is acceptable.

Overall, the development represents an appropriate and publicly desired enhancement of existing recreational facilities. The applicant agreed to necessary pre-commencement conditions being applied on 16.04.2026. Subject to conditions and informatives, the proposal is acceptable and planning permission is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

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

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

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

Site Location Plan - G-231622 02;
Proposed Elevations - G-231622 05;
Proposed AGP Drainage Layout - G-231622 08;
Proposed AGP Drainage Strategy - G-231622 09;
Proposed Field Layout - G-231622 10;
Infill Containment Measures - G-231622 11;
Arboricultural Impact Assessment - 5413-RPS-XX-XX-RP-AR-9104-AIA P01;
Design and access with planning statement;
Design and access with planning statement – Appendix D – Proposed Materials and Appearance;
Design and access with planning statement – Appendix E – Drainage Strategy;
Design and access with planning statement – Appendix H – Infill Retention Measures;
Design and access with planning statement – Appendix P – End of Life Recycling Procedure;

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

Proposed Site Plan - 231622 03;
Proposed AGP Plan - G-231622 04;
Floodlighting Scheme - G-231622 06;
Spillage Comparison - G-231622 07;
BNG Areas - G-231622 12;
Inspection for Roosting Bats at Leafy Lane Playing Fields, Corsham - 07 November 2025 - BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors - Ref. GLE_2513;
Section 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Extended) Report - 17 October 2025 - BJ Collins;
The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - 27 February 2026 - V4;
BNG Cover Report V4 - 27 February 2026 - BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited;
UKHab Habitat Map – BNG Baseline V4. 27 February 2026 - BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited;
UKHab Habitat Map – BNG Proposed V4 - 27 February 2026 - BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited;
Sections 7 and 8 and Appendices C, D and E of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment - 20 November 2025 - RPS Group Plc - 5413-RPS-XX-XX-RP-AR-9104 - Version. P01;
Proposed Lighting Scheme - 13 June 2025 - Surfacing Standards LTD - Project Code G-231622;
Design and access with planning statement – Appendix C – Sports Lighting Statement

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

4. No external lighting shall be used during the construction phase of the development

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats.

5.
 - a) Lighting shall be installed in strict accordance with the lighting scheme hereby approved
 - b) Before the first use of the lighting scheme hereby approved, the applicant shall appoint a suitably qualified member of the institute of lighting professionals (ILP) to validate that the lighting scheme as installed conforms to the recommendations for environmental zone E2 or better in the ILP document "Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light - Guidance Note 01:20. A letter written by a suitably qualified member of the ILP confirming this shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
 - c) The scheme shall thereafter be permanently retained and maintained in accordance with the details approved.
 - d) No additional external light fixture or fitting shall be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details shall demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats and to ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

6. All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the completion of the development. All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. All hard landscaping shall also be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

7.
 - a) Prior to the commencement of the development, a construction management statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement will include the following details:
 - i) working times,
 - ii) types of vehicles,
 - iii) construction staff parking requirements, management of debris/mud from the site and a program of works.
 - iv) Pedestrian and cyclist protection

v) Employment of Banksman if access is open for the remaining facilities during construction

b) The approved statement shall be adhered to during the construction phase of the development.

REASON: In the interests of safe operation of the highway in the lead into the construction phase of the development.

8. a) Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancement features including bat and bird boxes shall be submitted to the Local Authority for approval.

b) The approved details shall be implemented before completion of the final works and for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To provide mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity.

9. Before the 3G AGP facility is first brought into use, a Management and Maintenance Scheme for the facility including management responsibilities, a maintenance schedule and a mechanism for review shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. This should include measures to ensure the replacement of the Artificial Grass Pitch within a specified period of 10-12 years.

b) The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the 3G AGP facility.

REASON: To ensure that a new facility is capable of being managed and maintained to deliver a facility which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport.

10. Use of the development shall not commence until the following detail has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

i) certification that the Artificial Grass Pitch hereby permitted has met FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf – FIFA Quality or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (IMS) and

ii) confirmation that the facility has been registered on the Football Association's Register of Football Turf Pitches

REASON: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable, provides sporting benefits.

11. Before the 3G AGP facility is first brought into use,

a) an alternative non-turf cricket wicket shall be installed and made available for use at St Barnabas Church, Beanacre, in accordance with a specification agreed in writing with the England and Wales Cricket Board.

b) Written confirmation that the cricket wicket has been installed and made available for use, together written confirmation from the England and Wales Cricket Board that the

installed pitch accords with their agreed specification, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development does not result in a net loss of cricket provision to the local community in accordance with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework

12. a) The development hereby permitted shall be operated at all times in full accordance with the approved noise management plan (project code G-231622, prepared by SSL), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
b) The supervision arrangements and noise management policy set out in the approved noise management plan shall be adhered to for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: Core policy 57, Ensuring high design and place shaping such that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

13. The external lighting hereby approved shall not be illuminated outside the hours of:
i) 08:00-22:00 Monday to Fridays
ii) 08:00-22:00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats and to ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

INFORMATIVES TO APPLICANT:

- The applicant is advised that pitches to be used for Step 1 and Step 2 level football matches should be built in accordance with FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf - FIFA Quality Pro and Steps 3 to 6 should be built in accordance with FIFA Quality as a minimum and tested annually as per league rules.
- The applicant is advised that compliance with the approved Noise Management Plan does not remove the need to comply with separate regulatory controls relating to noise and nuisance. The operation of the pitch remains subject to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, under which the Council has a statutory duty to investigate and, where necessary, take action in respect of any noise that may constitute a statutory nuisance. Should the complaints reporting/action plan, and code of conduct contained within the Noise Management Plan be subject to revision in the future, it is recommended that the Council's Public Protection Team be contacted to obtain guidance on reducing noise levels to a level that will protect the amenity of local residents.
- During the construction phase of the development, the public right of way shall not be obstructed; the route must remain open, safe and accessible for public use at all times unless an alternative arrangement has first been agreed in writing with the Public Rights of Way team.
- There is a low risk that bats may occur at the development site. Many species of bat depend on buildings for roosting, with each having its own preferred type of roost. Most species roost in crevices such as under ridge tiles, behind roofing felt or in cavity walls and are therefore not often seen in the roof space. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended) even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against

prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.

- The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:
 - (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
 - (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.