



**TOWN PLANNING &
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Ms R McMurray

Planning Department

Havant Borough Council

(NB this letter sent only by email attachment)

11 October 2018

Our ref – SRL.061.18

Dear Ms McMurray

PLANNING APPLICATION APP/18/00877: PARK LODGE HOOKS LANE BEDHAMPTON

I write to respond to some of the comments posted on line to application APP/18/00877, [REDACTED]

The Club's application certainly seems to have roused strong passions in this local resident, although I am pleased to note this is the only letter that our application seems to have generated.

Grouping [REDACTED] comments together, the following topics appear to be being raised, although not all are relevant to application APP/18/00877:-

- (a) A general statement about what is sustainable development in terms of the Club's activities and development aspirations.
- (b) An assertion that the application APP/18/00877 site is in the council's ownership and control and an almost libellous statement about the local MP Alan Mak.
- (c) Observations about the level of disruption generated by the implementation of planning permission APP/17/01327 and slippage which has occurred in bringing the project to a conclusion with allegations that the hours of construction planning conditions have not been met by the contractor.
- (d) Observations on the temporary period sought for use of the APP/18/00877 application site, asserting that such development will lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area, somehow linking the proposed development to drug dealing in the area or users of the club causing general disturbance when leaving the premises.
- (e) Reference to a 'side path' being of inadequate width, as a safe alternative route to using the public footpath between the stand and the 1st XV pitch, when home matches are in progress and suggesting that the proposed use will exacerbate congestion on that public footpath.



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Chartered Town Planner

- (f) An assertion that use to retail hot food for up to 20 times in any one calendar year would be unacceptably disturbing to local residents.
- (g) An assertion that people smoking in this area will be injurious to public health and that odours from food cooked would unacceptably harm residential amenities, when such cooking could easily take place in the Club's kitchen and extra activity be accommodated for in the clubhouse itself.
- (h) Observations about public use of Pitch 1 and the true health benefits that might be derived from this new playing surface, versus the more social aspects of the Club.
- (i) Repeated allegations that the Club does not tidy up the public footpath after home matches, not evidenced in any way and an assertion that selling of hot food from the application site will exacerbate such problems.
- (j) A suggestion that the club monitors noise coming from its premises to show more consideration to neighbours.
- (k) An accusation that the Club lacks integrity in terms of its commitment to the wider community and local residents and indeed its commitment to promoting the core values of the sport of rugby football union.

The Club is disappointed that this single resident has chosen to write this letter and has not engaged in any sort of dialogue with the Club Board, who are always open to meeting its neighbours and understanding their concerns.

I respond as follows to each point –

- (a) The submitted design and access statement demonstrates that the proposals would be compliant with the NPPF definition of sustainable development, given fuller meaning through the Havant Core Strategy and not be so harmful to the character of the area or the immediate neighbours in Park Lodge, to warrant the with-holding of planning permission, especially where safeguarding planning conditions could be imposed to mitigate any perceived impact. The proposed development needs to be put into perspective in terms of the limited number of times in a calendar year that it would be sought to retail hot food during home matches.
- (b) & (j) The council does not own the application site relating to application APP/18/00877. No 'behind the scenes' influence is at play. The council will assess the merits of the proposed development (only sought for a temporary period) and make its decision. Mr Ayles has had his opportunity to influence that decision in the usual way. The fact that Mr Ayles has not evidenced his assertions – using photography or any sort of diary of 'events' and any sort of paper trail audit relating to them, in terms of correspondence with the Club or Officers of the Council or Constabulary, leads me to conclude only limited weight can be attached to his comments, when reaching a decision on the Club's application.
- (c) Comments about the implementation of permission APP/17/01327 are not relevant to the consideration of application APP/18/00877. To suggest that the implementation of works if application APP/18/00877 receives temporary planning permission is at the scale of impact and logistics/vehicle movements from providing the artificial turf pitch is wholly misleading. I have not been made aware of any investigation by council planning enforcement officers as to a breach of conditions in implementing permission APP/17/01327.
- (d) & (f)/(g) If the council is concerned about general disturbance from the retailing of hot food, it can limit the operation of such activities by a planning condition – for example between the hours of 12 noon to 17.00 on home match days. If evening matches are to be held – for example special events like Hampshire cup matches – the Club could rely upon its kitchen to

service those customer food needs, but would prefer the flexibility of an expanded cover and serving area outside to avoid undue congestion in the Clubhouse.

- (e) & (i) Having been at the Club since 1986, I can honestly say that I have never seen any member of the public being prevented from using the public footpath during a home match. Certainly, sometimes supporters are requested to let them pass, but such requests are always courteously acceded to. If the writer means the path between the clubhouse and Park Lodge, this is more than a metre wide and again I have never seen it congested during any home match, should members of the public wish to use it as an alternative to the public footpath between the Clubhouse and the 1st XV pitch. The space in front of the containers will also effectively ease congestion on the public footpath by allowing people to step off that path alleviating the perceived problem, not exacerbating it.
- (h) & (k) The English RFU has made a community commitment to healthy lifestyles by making a significant investment in healthy lifestyles through rugby and other sports playable on the new playing surface. It is not unreasonable that such investment should be recouped by charging to use the new pitch, where such revenue is a form of sustainable development helping to fund its maintenance. One wonders what Mr Ayles is doing in this regard to promote healthy lifestyles, when the Club caters for over 300 children, operates 3 senior men's sides, two colts teams with a youth Academy, a ladies side and 3 other girls age group teams to engage in rugby. Certainly there is a social aspect to the sport, which is part and parcel of its cherished history and culture, but that too is part of the Club being a community facility, providing for social engagement and enjoyment through recreation. A summer of exceptional, but relative disturbance has taken place to produce a state of the art sports facility which the Borough can be justly proud of.

The Club trusts the council will put [REDACTED] comments into perspective and grant the temporary planning permission sought under Officer delegated authority.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Steve Lawrence MRTPI

Director - ACHIEVE