

From: Michael Bond
119 High Street
Chesterton
Cambridge
CB4 1NL

1st April, 2012

To: Mr. Tony Collins, Planning Officer, The Guildhall, Cambridge

Copied to: Members of the Planning Committee and all other City Councillors

Dear Mr Collins

I am writing to you as a member of Fields in Trust (formerly National Playing Fields Association) and on behalf of the committees of Old Chesterton Residents' Association and Chesterton Community Association to express our astonishment that the primary condition imposed on the applicant has not been complied with. We are also dismayed to read about significant plans for recreation space in Chesterton that have apparently been discussed in detail with the applicants but not been made known to the residents of East Chesterton who have for a number of years expressed a strong interest in and desire to be part of planning and future operation of our open spaces.

The officers' report is completely wrong in almost every particular as regards open space. My understanding has always been that no development would be permitted until a new permanent home for Cambridge City Football Club had been provided. This is acknowledged in paragraph 8.2 and covered by Local Plan Policy 6/1 Protection of Leisure Facilities. The point here is that the City Ground provides for football at senior standard and Cambridge City Football Club is strongly supported by its local community.

Chesterton Recreation ground is devoted to junior football pitches that are already heavily over-subscribed. There are teams that cannot progress because of the lack of senior standard playing pitches. This is a need that will not go away and makes the City Ground open space of recreational importance so should not be lost until Policy 4/2 can be complied with. Exiling Cambridge City Football Club to Newmarket and ousting the juniors from Chesterton Recreation Ground is not compliance by any stretch of the imagination. The officers' conclusion in paragraph 8.7 and 8.8 are simply wrong.

The land at Logan's Way is part of the active flood plain of the River Cam whose level cannot be raised which makes it unsuitable for permanent pitches. Although the drainage of the surface can and should be improved it cannot be regarded as a replacement of the Milton Road Ground as the only times it can be reliably used is during the summer and in a normal winter is mostly unusable as a playing surface during the peak football season.

It is important to note that prior to redevelopment the area east of the new bridge provided a senior pitch that was used for training by Cambridge United Football Club and some local as well as the works clubs. This has now been partly built over. The land west of the new bridge provided a permanent cricket strip which we wish to see restored to enable us to bring cricket back to Chesterton. The redevelopment of the Pye factory estate actually resulted in a net loss of open space and associated sports and recreational facilities in East Chesterton that had been available for local use.

The improvements to Chesterton Recreation ground have been outlined at meetings organised by Old Chesterton Residents' Association and Chesterton Community Association and I understand that the City Council has included them in its capital programme but no detailed proposals have been discussed with either organisation. We are keen to see improvements that benefit the local community. As stated above this existing facility is already under severe pressure and most definitely cannot in any way compensate for the loss of the Milton Road Football Ground. I also doubt whether residents of this development would actually make much use of Chesterton Recreation Ground.

It appears to me that the application should be refused as it fails to comply with the key precondition for development as set out in paragraph 8.2 of the officers' report. It should also be refused for its failure to provide adequate open space for new residents. West Chesterton already has a deficit of open space and this proposal makes that deficit worse. Such spaces as are provided are fragmented and in practice unusable for any play or recreation purpose for the residents.

This view is unambiguously supported by Section 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework:

74. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- 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
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

This application meets none of these requirements and the applicants are seeking to impose additional pressure on existing facilities that are already under extreme pressure which would actually result in a reduction of open space available to local residents and still leave Cambridge City Football Club homeless.

The proposal for a new stadium at Trumpington is not even at a stage of basic acceptability that allows any evaluation of whether or not it could provide a new home for Cambridge City. With a rapidly growing population we need more actual open space and dedicated sport and leisure facilities not a reduction in both quantity and quality of both that this would represent.

The applicants should not be allowed to avoid their obligations to the city.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R Bond". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Bond