

A consultation for the proposed All Weather Pitch at Paxman Academy Application: CC/COL/100/19

Essex County Council (ECC) is seeking to engage with local residents about the proposal to install a new All-Weather Pitch (AWP) at Paxman Academy, Paxman Avenue. AWP's are also known as multi-use games areas (MUGA) and this was how it was described in the original planning application, made in early 2020. The application (CC/COL/100/19) can be found online at <https://www.essex.gov.uk/topic/minerals-waste-county-council-planning-applications>

Representations about the application were received from statutory consultees, technical consultees, and neighbours. The application was deferred by ECC's Development and Regulation Committee on 24th July 2020, with a request to engage with neighbours on the following key points:

- The proposal did not include specific time restrictions for use, particularly evenings and weekends.
- Confirm whether all possible locations for the MUGA had been considered.
- Explain why the acoustic fence did not extend beyond the southern limit of the MUGA although it did enclose the northern boundary.

ECC, The Sigma Trust (which runs the school) and Barnes Construction (who would install the MUGA) have reviewed these points. We hope that the explanations below are helpful and we would welcome your views on them. Barnes Construction, with their planning consultant Strutt & Parker, are acting on behalf of ECC in respect of this matter.

Time Restrictions for Use of MUGA

The Paxman Academy playing field currently has no time restrictions on the use of the field for sports either during weekday evenings or at the weekend; historically this was also the case for the former Alderman Blaxill School.

The Sigma Trust do not plan to use the AWP for students past 5pm on weekdays and currently have no plans to run any weekend sessions.

However, the community may wish to use the AWP through an arrangement with the school. If that is the case its use will be restricted to 8pm at the latest on any weekday, and until 6pm on any weekend. No floodlighting is proposed so this will restrict its use in the winter months to the availability of daylight.

The proposals for the AWP do not seek a formal community use agreement. However, community use of playing fields is strongly encouraged and sought by Sport England and through planning policies, with community use also forming a component of the original planning permission for the school.

The Sigma Trust wish for the school and its facilities to be a key resource to the community, like Alderman Blaxill. Having an all-weather games area will bring an added advantage to the community by creating opportunities and benefits to physical and mental wellbeing for any clubs using it. The opportunity for community use is a benefit and cannot be restricted in planning terms. However, the

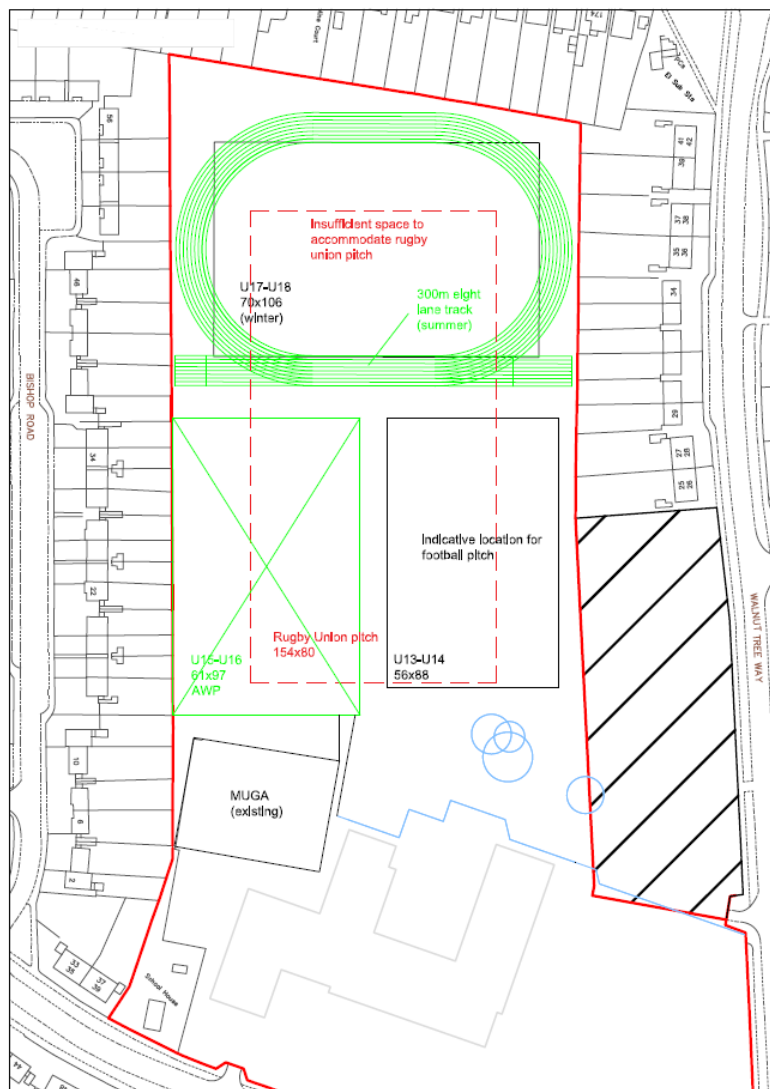
proposed hours of operation will limit the potential impact that the AWP could have on immediate residents.

Locations of the MUGA

The position of the MUGA has been chosen for a number of reasons. ECC, Barnes Construction, and the Trust undertook an exercise to look at all options to ensure the location of the MUGA achieved the most desirable outcome for stakeholders.

Alternative positions were considered but none allowed the site to function as effectively as the current proposal. Alternative positions would have compromised other pitch layouts on the site, such as the running track and rugby pitch. The school must provide for all elements of the PE curriculum so the MUGA must fit in with the other uses of the playing fields. Sport England was consulted on the proposal and considered that this was a sensible location.

This is illustrated on the plan below:



Acoustic Fencing

The proposed acoustic fencing is the result of extensive technical work by Applied Acoustic Design (AAD) who provided the acoustic advice which guided the proposals.

The proposed 2.4m (8ft) high acoustic fencing around two sides of the MUGA will dampen noise levels to avoid harmful noise output on neighbouring residents. The proposed fencing is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Proposed Screen for MUGA Pitch



A revised Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out. AAD's Addendum Report (which should be read in full in conjunction with this letter) demonstrated that the noise impact of the MUGA with the proposed acoustic screening should be 'none/not significant'. This is illustrated in the summary table from the Report:

Table 5: Summary of Noise Impact Assessment – Maximum Noise – With MUGA Screen

Noise sensitive Receptor	Range of Predicted Noise Impact – Maximum Noise Levels (dB) – West 1	Range of Predicted Noise Impact – Maximum Noise Levels (dB) – West 2
Residential properties on Bishop Road	-20.2 to +0.1	-20.1 to -1.6
Residential properties on Shrub End Road	-18.1 to -0.1	-15.9 to -1
Residential properties on Walnut Tree Way	-4.9 to +1.1	-1.6 to +1.3

The proposed acoustic fencing design does not include an acoustic screen along the southern boundary of the MUGA nearest to the school. The technical evidence does not suggest that one is needed to reduce noise output to Bishops Road to very low levels. Jacobs, who are ECC’s noise consultants and a statutory consultee on the planning application, found this acceptable.

Given this evidence we therefore consider that there is no need to introduce additional acoustic screening along the southern boundary at unnecessary extra cost to ECC. The Addendum Report, additional information and specification of the proposed acoustic fencing is available for review on the planning application page of the County Council’s web site for application CC/COL/100/19.

Summary

We welcome your views and thoughts on the proposals, and hope the information provided in this letter addresses the key concerns raised by the Development and Regulation Committee. We have tried to provide sufficient clarity and understanding on the design choices made, and why the latest proposals represent the most desirable outcome for all stakeholders, whilst avoiding and minimising adverse impacts on residents.

The AWP will be used for football, touch rugby, fitness, cricket and athletics lessons as well as moving forward GCSE and BTEC components. The space will also be used frequently during extra-curricular times for clubs and sports fixtures to ensure the AWP captures and maximises all potential opportunities and uses.

The AWP will support and enhance Paxman Academy’s ability to teach a full, broad and balanced curriculum. The facility can be used all year round, even when poor weather conditions frequently render a significant portion of the existing playing field unusable, with flooded pitches and frozen ground conditions. The AWP is therefore hugely important for the school.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch to discuss the issues in greater detail, or if you have any queries you would like to raise, we would be more than happy to respond as part of the consultation.

We look forward to receiving your comments from 1st June until the 14th June via an online form using the following details:

Website:

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/infrastructure-delivery/consultation-for-paxman-academy>

or

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/>

Alternatively, ECC, Barnes Construction and the Sigma Trust are able to engage with you at the school on the evening of the **10th June**. Due to the continuing Covid pandemic, we are only able to support this by meeting outside and with the use of facemasks. To ensure we do not exceed any prescribed limits and to ensure appropriate track and chase systems are in place please register your interest beforehand with the school by emailing: consultation@paxmanacademy.school



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