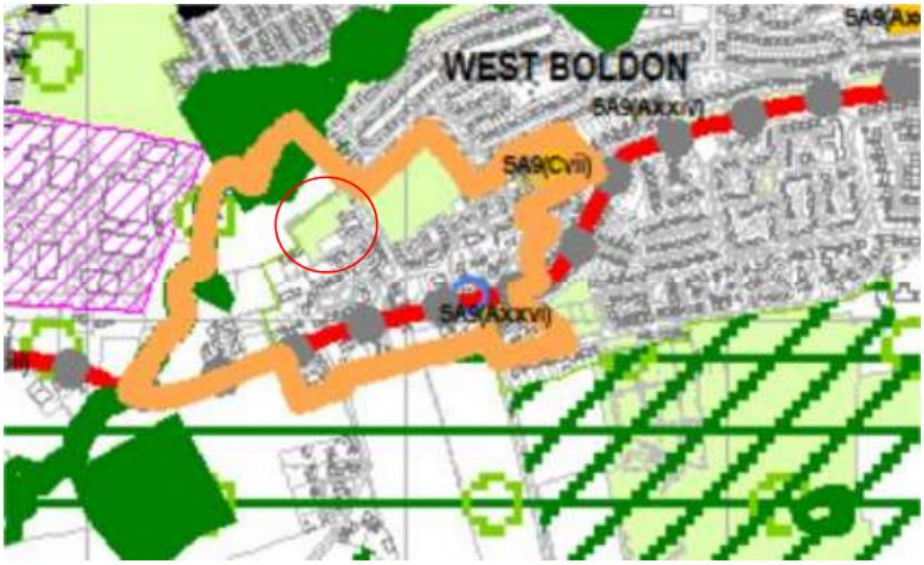
GEORGE F.WHITE

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

The planning application comprises the change of use of an area of grassland formerly associated with the now demolished Primary School. The Former School included associated buildings, yard and a playing field. Playing fields are currently designated as recreational open space within the local plan under the provisions of policies SC6 and SC7 which are designed to protect and improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space on the Borough.

The extract below is taken from the local plan which illustrates the surrounding playing field to be designated as open space. The red line boundary of the application site comprises two small sections of this land however it is not considered the proposed development will adversely impact the use and accessibility of the designated open space. Further details of the proposed development can be viewed on the submitted plans and documents.



The emerging local plan (extract below) further illustrates the land which is subject to the open sapce designation.



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It is understood that following the Schools closure and subsequent demolition (circa 2016) the site was secured with no public access made available. The open space designation measures approximately 5,200m2 and largely relates to the playing pitch adjacent to the application site. As identified small sections of the land are proposed for a change of use to enable provision of additional residential amenity space. The table below provides further clarification on the proportion of land to be included within the development boundary.

Extent of Application Site Designated as Open Space	**Extent of Existing Open Space on the surrounding land**	**Proportion of designation removed by development**
Approximately 798sqm	Approximately 5,200sqm	Approximately 15%

Current adopted Policy SC6 of the South Tyneside Local Development Framework (2011) sets out the following vision;

- We will promote the provision of high quality recreational open space, playing fields and outdoor sporting and play facilities by:

- Implementing and supporting schemes that will protect and improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and outdoor sports, leisure and children's play facilities throughout the Borough, in accordance with our adopted standards and other relevant legislation;

- Remedying deficiencies in open space provision and quality, including through the reuse of previously-developed 'brownfield' sites, particularly within the Tyne riverside regeneration corridor, the inner-urban areas of South Shields, and Cleadon village;

- Supporting schemes that extend the Borough's strategic Linked Open Space System into the wider countryside, assist the implementation of the Great North Forest's recreational framework, or broaden the range of opportunities for recreational pursuits within the Great North Forest and the River Tyne and coastal corridors.

In support of Policy SC6 is Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD 3) Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 however, the evidence sitting behind this document has been superseded by more recent documents, discussed below.

South Tyneside is currently in the process of formulating a new Local Plan and as part of that process there are a number of evidence base documents that provide more up to date information particularly in relation to playing pitch strategy and open space.

The Local Plan policies map (2012) highlights the existing school playing pitch as an area of "Strategic Open Space/ Playing Pitch." This allocation pre-dates the closure and subsequent demolition of the school and therefore also pre-dates the loss of access to the playing pitch.

The Council commissioned Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) references this specific playing pitch stating the pitch should be retained for community use ensuring developments to not impact its presence or quality. The South Tyneside Open Space Assessment Report (2015) and other supporting provide the basis for, and sets out strategies to support the protection of valuable public green spaces and, based on a review of minimum standards, inform the case for new provision or for rationalisation where appropriate.

The most recent Google Earth images (July 2021) show no pitch markings, however two goal posts. Previous aerial images illustrate a pitch of approx. 46mx34m, and those dating back to 2001 demonstrate the pitch was not "marked up" and therefore was unlikely to be in community use.

Based on a review on the open space and planning pitch assessment it is considered teams can be accommodated within existing pitches.

The open space addendum report goes on to state that there has been no change in provision from 2015 to 2018/19. The application site includes only a small proportion of the land designated as open space and will have no bearing on the wider playing field use.

The NPPF states that; Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

(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

In this instance the development site boundary includes a small proportion of land which is washed over by the open space designation, however it is not considered to impact the wider site use as the pitch can still be available for use by local residents. Further the proposed development seeks to include approximately 15% of the wider designation area. In this instance the land can be considered surplus to requirements, with the economic and social benefits of new residential development and car parking which is it providing considered to outweigh the loss of this small area of land.

The proposed development will enable provision of additional amenity space associated with the approved residential development to the east. In addition, the applicant is ensuring the future use of the pitch as part of the wider development, providing access and parking provision. It is therefore considered there are numerous economic and community benefits associated with the overall development which outweigh the loss of a small area of designated open space.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the criteria set out within the NPPF are met, in that the loss of the small parcel of land will not result in a current or likely shortfall in the plan period.

It is also worth exploring the impact in qualitative terms. Having viewed the parcel of land and its relationship with the wider extent of open space and indeed the provision available within the vicinity, it is apparent that its value is limited. This is due to its relatively narrow shape and position on the edge of the site.

It is therefore considered loss of the land will not be detrimental in either quantitative or qualitative terms.