Consultation Response on behalf of
Private Sector Housing and Environmental Health

Planning Application DC/26/1430/FUL

a. multi-use games area (MUGA)
b. 3 metre high perimeter fencing
c. shallow grassed swale for surface water runoff

Churchill Special Free School, Chalkstone Way, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 0LB

Regulatory Officer (Name): **Dom Stagg, Environmental Health Officer**

Regulatory Reference Number: **WK/202613096**

Date: **22 October 2026**

I have reviewed the above application and on behalf of the Private Sector Housing and Environmental Health (PSH & EH) Team can confirm I have **NO OBJECTIONS** to the proposed development subject to the Conditions below being attached to any permission granted.

In coming to this opinion I have had regard to the 'Design & Access Statement' submitted in support of this application (dated August 2026), specifically that:

"*The proposal is intended to provide improved sports and recreational facilities for the school and will be used principally by pupils and staff as part of the school's existing educational and sporting activities.*

The courts will not operate as a public or commercial tennis facility. No public membership, commercial court hire or separate spectator facility is proposed.

No floodlighting or other external sports lighting is proposed."

These statements indicate that the likelihood of any adverse impact from the proposed development on residential amenity is low in my opinion.

This is though subject to conditions to ensure residential amenity is protected. I therefore recommend the following conditions be attached to any permission granted:

1. The hours of use for the multi-use games area hereby approved shall be limited to Monday to Friday from 07:00 to 18:00 hours only. No use of the area shall be permitted on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank / Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties from noise and disturbance, in accordance with Policies SP4 and LP7 of the West Suffolk Local Plan (July 2025), and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. There shall be no artificial lighting for the development hereby approved without first notifying the Local Planning Authority / applying and being granted permission for such as necessary.

Reason: To prevent light pollution and protect the amenities of occupiers of properties in the locality, in accordance with Policies SP4 and LP7 of the West Suffolk Local Plan (July 2025), and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. All perimeter fencing for the multi-use games area hereby approved shall be fixed to the support posts with a neoprene isolator installed to fully isolate the panels from the posts and a maintenance regime shall ensure panels do not become loose so as to reduce the 'rattling' noise associated with ball impacts on metal fencing.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties from noise and disturbance, in accordance with Policies SP4 and LP7 of the West Suffolk Local Plan (July 2025), and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Prior to first use of the multi-use games area hereby approved for any wider community use, a Noise Management Plan (NMP) for any such community use of the facility shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. As a minimum, the Plan shall include the following:

a) a method of informing users that any anti-social behaviour including swearing is unacceptable and that the operator reserves the right to dismiss users from the pitch and ban future use if this is the case;
b) information regarding a 'no-whistle' policy in relation to community use in the evenings;
c) confirmation that it will be a booking term / condition of use for users to abide by the above and that they understand their booking / use can be terminated with immediate effect for any breach;
d) arrangements for neighbours to be given a facility to report excessive noise or anti-social behaviour directly to the operator;
e) details of how any complaints received will be investigated and addressed quickly;
f) details of likely action to be taken where necessary and how any complainant will be kept informed of progress, especially where it is not possible to address or resolve complaints straight away;
g) provision for a written action plan to deal with complaints and confirmation that this will be provided to staff on site and that they will be made familiar with it;
h) confirmation that staff will have the ability and authority to warn or ban user groups from the pitches if any user(s) are in breach of the NMP.
i) a template form to log complaints received and the action(s) taken in respect thereof, including (as a minimum) the day, date and time of complaint, nature of complaint, member of staff receiving complaint, action taken, who by, and when and how complainant updated;
j) arrangements for the safe storing and ready access to the complaint log, and confirmation that this will be provided to officers from the Council's Environment Team upon reasonable request.

All community use bookings / hirers of the pitch shall be made in accordance with the above.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties from noise and disturbance, in accordance with Policies SP4 and LP7 of the West Suffolk Local Plan (July 2025), and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Note: I acknowledge the LPA may consider the above unnecessary in the context of the actual application but I recommend it here to cover a potential future scenario of the proposed facility being made available for wider community use to raise funds for the school, which in my opinion could be more likely to give rise to an adverse impact in terms of residential amenity if not properly controlled in a way commensurate with this condition.

If no community use is proposed, no action is required in respect of the above. But if any such use is proposed in the future, this would be subject to the above (if the LPA agree).

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to touch on another matter that is only hypothetical at this time but just for the record.

In recent years it hasn't been uncommon for tennis courts to be changed into padel or pickleball courts, both of these becoming increasingly popular sport activities.

It is now widely acknowledged that both padel and pickleball are noisier than tennis, likewise both padel and pickleball have significantly different sound characteristics than tennis does, which experience nationally has indicated means padel and pickleball noise is more annoying than tennis.

Furthermore, a standard tennis court can fit 2 padel courts and 2, 3, or even up to 4 pickleball courts depending on layout and safety space.

Therefore, while having no objections to the tennis courts proposed by this application, I wish to place on record here that I would likely have strong concerns in the event there was a proposal at a later date to change one or more of the tennis courts into padel or pickleball courts.

In this context, if the LPA think it necessary, I would recommend a suitably worded condition that the three tennis courts approved (if they are) are restricted to tennis only i.e. prohibiting any padel or pickleball in the interest of protecting residential amenity. Of course, if any such change would require a formal change of use application to be submitted and approved beforehand, such a condition would not be necessary.

ENDS

Kindest regards,

Dom

Dom Stagg
Environmental Health Officer (PSH & EH)