

**PROPOSED
FENCED AND FLOODLIT
ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH
PAVILION EXTENSION
WITH IMPROVED ACCESS
AND PARKING**

AT

**TOP PARK
RAMSBOTTOM**

FOR



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

OCTOBER 2023

PREPARED BY



PROPOSED FENCED AND FLOODLIT ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH, PAVILION EXTENSION WITH IMPROVED ACCESS AND PARKING AT TOP PARK, RAMSBOTTOM, BURY

1. INTRODUCTION

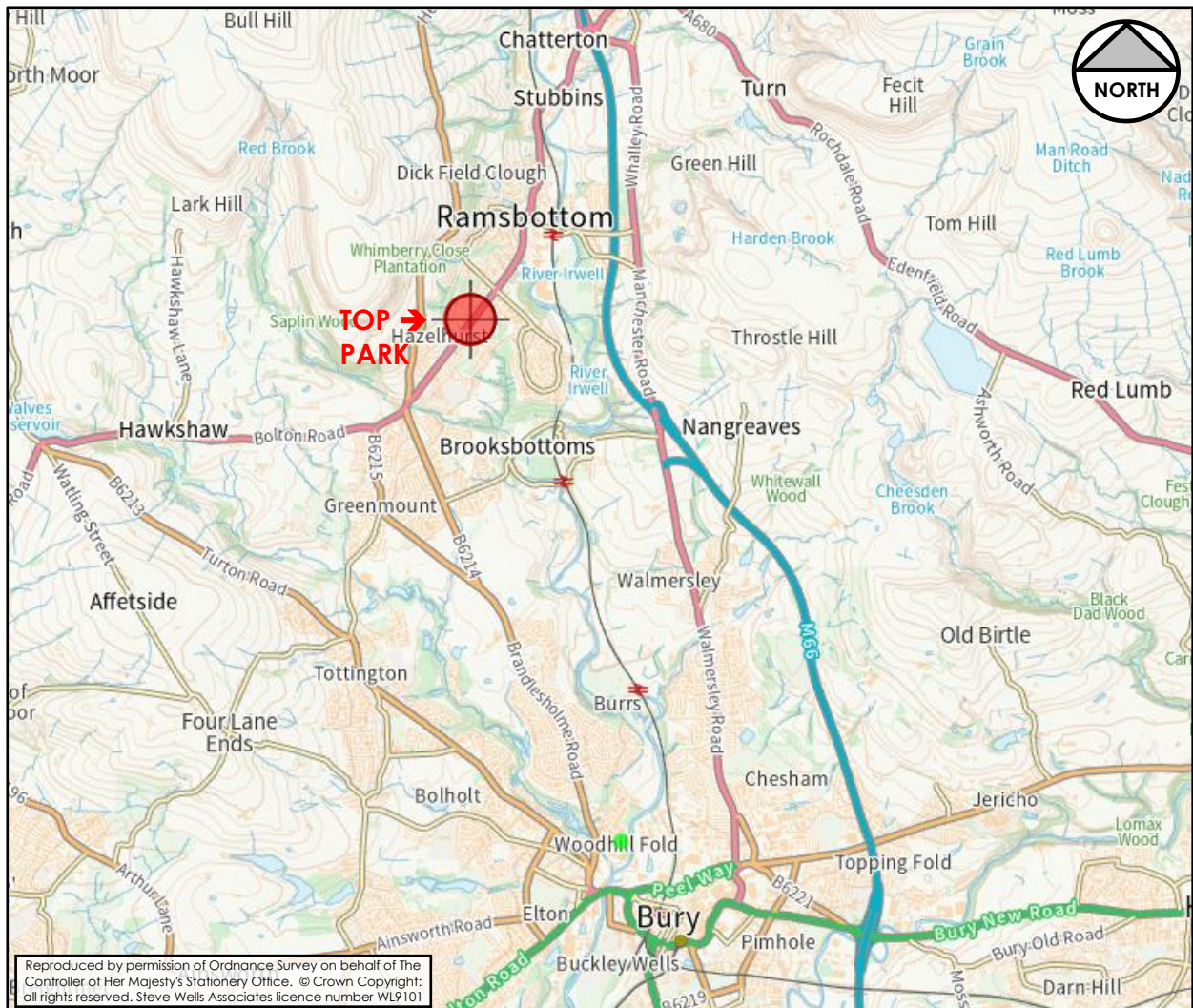
- 1.1. To support improved sporting opportunities for Ramsbottom United Junior Football Club and the wider sporting community, Bury Council will be making an application to the Football Foundation to secure funding for the development of a full sized (91m x 55m) fenced and floodlit 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and improvements to associated ancillary facilities.
- 1.2. The proposed development is at Top Park Playing Fields, off Bolton Road West, Ramsbottom, Bury. The development will be wholly within the grass playing pitch site mostly used at present by Ramsbottom United JFC. While the AGP itself will be enclosed and controlled, the wider playing field area, existing Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), and play park will remain open and accessible for other casual sporting and recreational activity.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The scope of the proposed development at Top Park and the subject of this planning application is the construction of a new full sized, fenced and floodlit AGP along with a traditionally built, single storey extension to an existing changing pavilion, with accompanying access improvements and an extension to an existing macadam parking area.
- 2.2. The floodlit AGP will extend the playing day and allow continued use of a synthetic surface during all but the most inclement weather. AGPs offer an excellent playing surface - particularly for football - across a wide range of recognised game formats and will provide a base for football match play, training and, as programming allows, for other sports for which this surface is suitable.
- 2.3. This in turn will reduce the load on the remaining natural grass areas at Top Park, leaving them in much better condition for match-play and training.
- 2.4. To support the AGP, and to be located immediately adjacent this facility, the Applicant wishes to construct an extension to an existing pavilion in order to improve changing room provision for players and officials, and incorporate separate toilet facilities for non-playing visitors.
- 2.5. Given an increase in use on this site, proposals also include improved access and the extension to the existing parking provision to provide a combined, formally marked out, 71 space metalled car park. This will include two DDA compliant parking spaces and two marked spaces supported by EV charging points.
- 2.6. These proposals have been the subject of ongoing discussions with the Football Foundation to whom a funding application is currently being prepared seeking a substantial capital investment. Additional partnership support is to be committed by Bury Council.

3. LOCATION

- 3.1. Top Park Playing Fields is located off Bolton Road West approximately 3.5 miles north of Bury and 0.5 mile south-west of Ramsbottom town centre (OS Grid Ref. SD 786160, X: 378680, Y: 416020). The nearest post code is BL0 9PD.



4. CURRENT USE

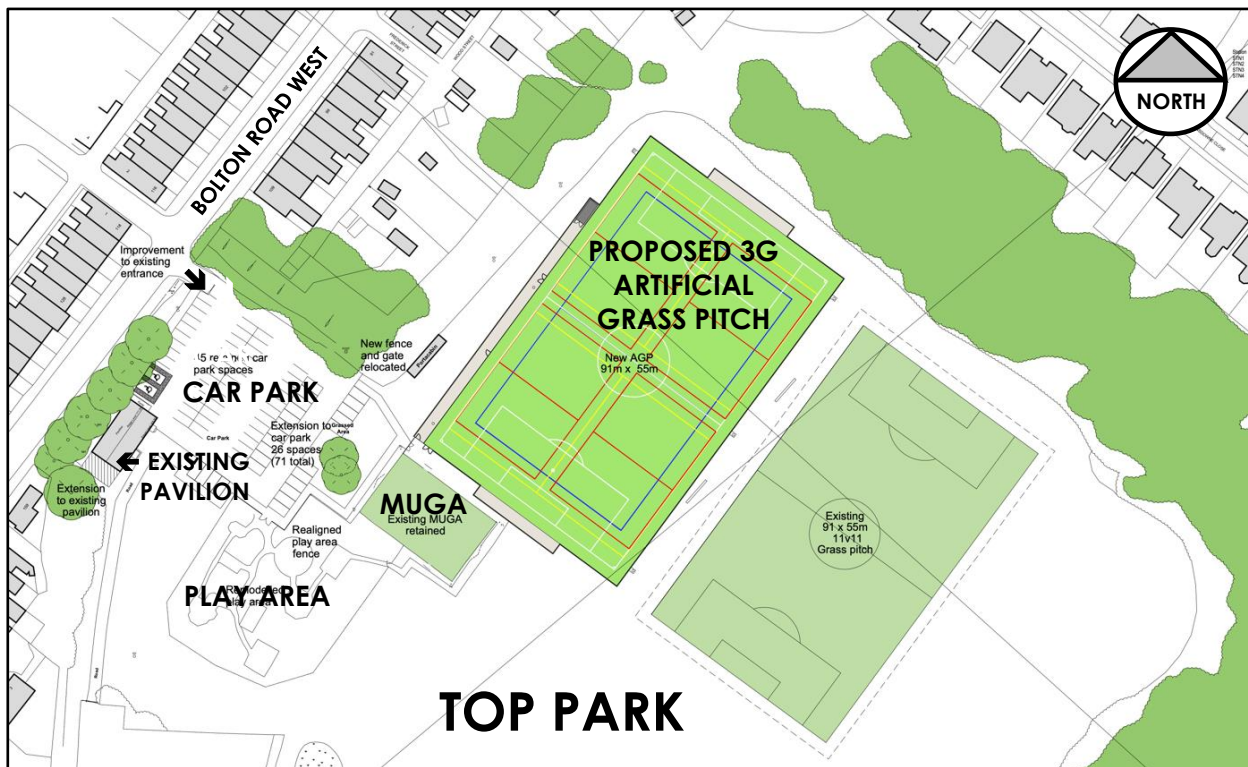
- 4.1. The site of the proposed development is home to Ramsbottom United JFC and is part of a larger grass playing field area maintained to a basic standard, with two pitches marked out primarily for football.
- 4.2. This site is also used for casual recreation and informal activities by the wider community and includes an open access MUGA and a children's play area.
- 4.3. The natural grass football pitch that will be covered by the footprint of the AGP is currently used by Ramsbottom United JFC as their home match-day pitch.
- 4.4. The proposed development of an AGP in this location will provide the club and the wider community with a more consistent, floodlit, all-weather surface which will be available throughout the year.



Source: Google Earth

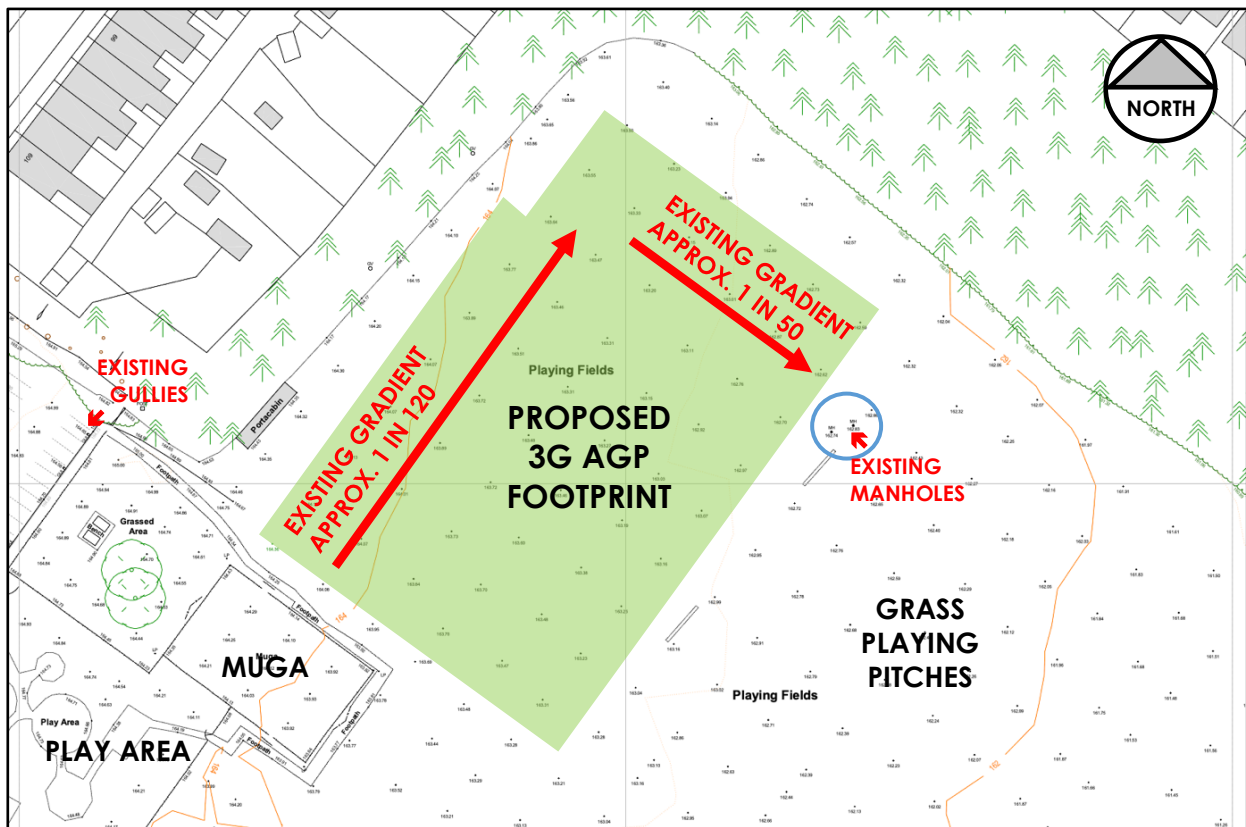
5. GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1. The following plan sets out the general arrangements of the proposed development, with the AGP occupying the footprint of the current main grass pitch used by Ramsbottom United JFC.
- 5.2. The AGP footprint will include recesses to accommodate space for goal storage, as well as a spectator hardstanding which runs along the north-west length of the AGP. This hardstanding will also incorporate container storage for the AGP's specialist maintenance equipment.
- 5.3. The site entrance is to be improved to allow for easier and safer ingress and egress, with a clear separation between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The existing macadam car park is to be extended to the south-east to provide an additional 26 bays, taking total parking provision to 77 spaces (including dedicated accessible and EV spaces).
- 5.4. The existing pavilion is to be extended to the south-west, in order to provide additional and better quality changing room provision with integral showers and toilets, while other internal remodelling will bring these facilities in line with current guidance.



6. EXISTING DRAINAGE

- 6.1. A desktop study of the site (including reference to existing nearby BGS borehole data) shows that the soils at Top Park comprise a thin layer of topsoil, below which is 'made ground'. Open-source Environment Agency landfill mapping data indicates the site forms part of a historic landfill with no knowledge of waste deposit type.
- 6.2. This made ground (of unknown depth) sits on a substrate of Devensian Till which is predominantly clay-based and is of low permeability; thus, a soakaway solution as a surface water drainage strategy would not be effective on this site.
- 6.3. There is no evidence of any historic land drainage across the playing field site at Top Park, which currently drain poorly.
- 6.4. However, there are three surface water gullies along the southern boundary of the existing car park, and two inspection chambers in the middle of grass sports pitches. These have been jetted and cleaned followed by a camera survey to understand their value. The car park gullies issue eastward and are connected to the first of the inspection chambers. This issues into the second chamber which is over 7m deep.
- 6.5. Despite prolonged efforts to clear silt, no proof was established that this chamber presented an opportunity as a positive drainage outfall,
- 6.6. Existing gradients on the site of the proposed AGP indicate a fall from south-west to north-east at around 1:120 and then from the north-west to south-east at around 1:50, as illustrated on the following drawing.

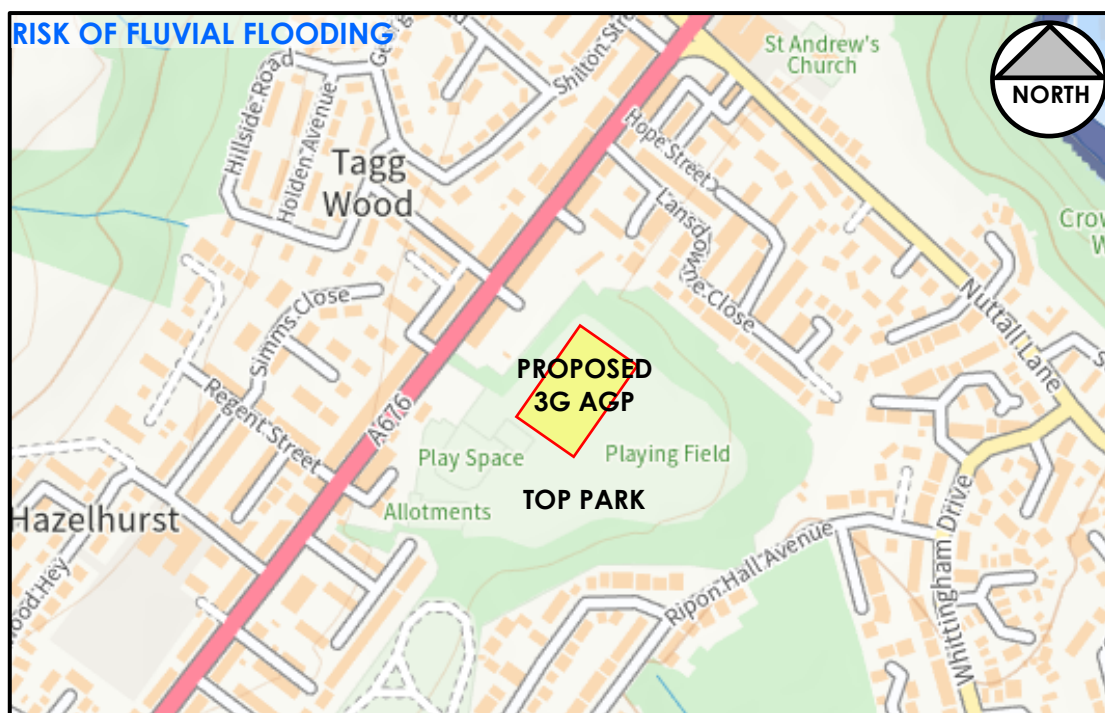


7. PROPOSED DRAINAGE

- 7.1. For the AGP construction, a formation level is created generally at 350mm below finished levels. A piped drainage system is installed below this formation with 80mm dia. laterals at 10m centres leading to a 160mm dia. main carrier drain running the length of the AGP.
- 7.2. The formation is covered by a geotextile and a compacted Type 3 (reduced fines) stone sub-base over which a level, open-textured porous macadam base is laid to support the artificial grass playing surface. Rainwater falling onto the AGP will percolate down through these porous layers to the piped drainage below and then to the surface water outfall.
- 7.3. The drainage strategy proposes that the main carrier drain running north-east to south-west along the boundary of the AGP issues into a restricted flow chamber on the western corner of the AGP.
- 7.4. New road gullies will be installed into the existing car park and its extension and will connect via a petrol interceptor to the carrier drain from the AGP. This main runs north to join the existing combined sewer in Bolton Road West.
- 7.5. Although there are no other surface water drainage options, United Utilities consent will be required. A **Drainage Strategy** drawing is included with this application.
- 7.6. The proposed gradients on the AGP will not exceed 1:100 in any one direction and will thus slow the rate of run-off. In addition, with a positive drainage system underlying the AGP to ensure the best surface playing characteristics, surface water run-off from the site will be improved.

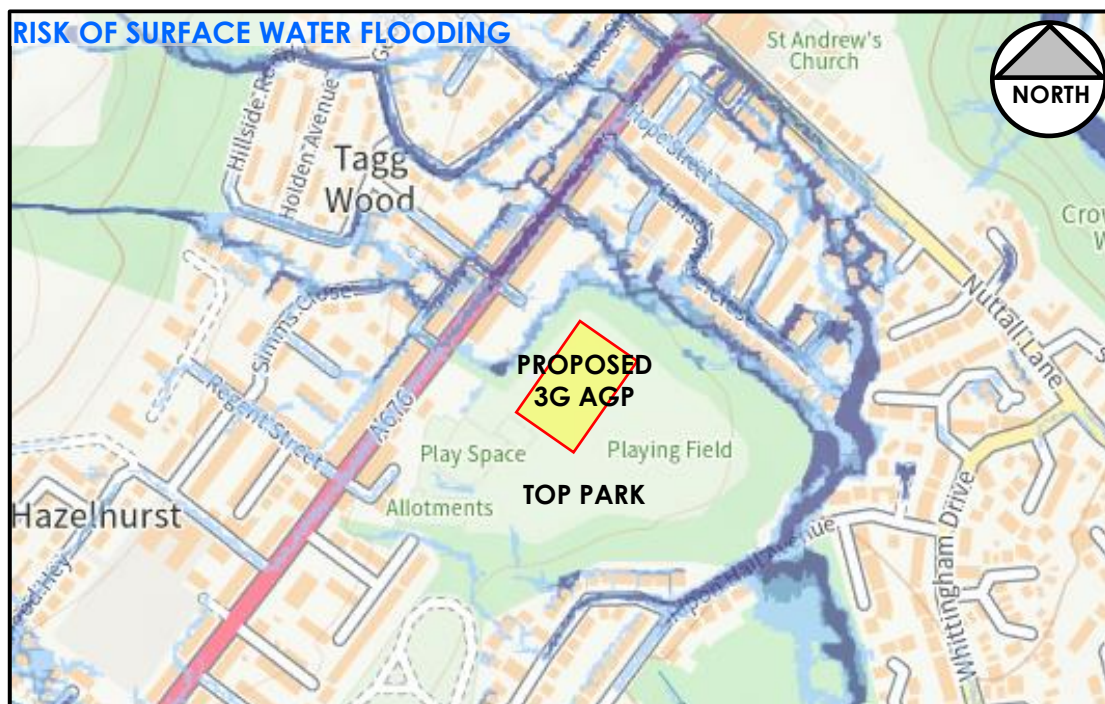
8. FLOOD RISK

- 8.1. Environment Agency web-based plans for the site of the proposed development (extracts below) show that Top Park sits within a Flood Zone 1 and is an area which is at a very low risk of flooding from local rivers. While the risk of surface water flooding on surrounding streets is exacerbated by run-off from surrounding higher ground, Top Park remains largely unaffected.



Source: Environment Agency

■ Flood Zone 3 ■ Flood Zone 2 ■ Main River Line



Source: Environment Agency

○ very low ○ low ○ medium ● high

- 8.2. The proposed development occupies a site of more than 1 hectare and as such a formal **Flood Risk Assessment** has been included with this application.

9. ACCESS AND PARKING

- 9.1. The only vehicular access to the Top Park Playing Field site is from the north-west off Bolton Road West. This existing macadam access has 45° kerbed splays which are fenced to either side. A lockable single leaf vehicular gate set back approximately 7m from the highway secures the site when the site is not in use. Casual recreational users and dog-walkers can still enter the site by an adjacent unrestricted pedestrian opening.



- 9.2. This existing highway access leads directly into an existing metalled car park with current provision for 54 vehicles.
- 9.3. Approximately 20m north-east of the park access, a recently installed signalled crossing with drop-kerbs and tactile paving provides safe pedestrian movement across Bolton Road West. This is in addition to a build out comprising dropped kerbs and tactile paving which has been installed across the Bolton Road West / Ada Street junction.
- 9.4. To improve the highway access into Top Park, proposed amendments include widening the vehicular roadway to 5.6m which will allow two-way traffic, and the corresponding relocation of the south-west kerb splay. The existing highway footpaths on Bolton Road West will be resurfaced to include tactile paving at the improved junction.
- 9.5. A new separate pedestrian access into the park will be created alongside the widened vehicular access. New gates and the relocation of existing barriers will complete the improvements all as shown on drawings accompanying this application.
- 9.6. These proposed improvements have been discussed with the Council's Highways Officer.
- 9.7. Typically, and for weekday winter evening training, the AGP is divided into four with each quarter capable of accommodating a junior football team's training needs. With team managers and other non-playing staff the likely maximum occupancy of the AGP at any one hour during a weekday evening will be around 70 to 80.

- 9.8. With a typical local planning authority assessment for participant to car ratio of 2:1, the parking requirements for these numbers will be 35 to 40 spaces. However, to accommodate numbers at change-over times between hourly sessions booked on the AGP, this number has been increased to accommodate up to 77 vehicles.
- 9.9. The proposals plans show a formally marked out, macadam surfaced car park extension off an improved access that can now accommodate 77 cars including two marked accessible parking spaces and two spaces with electric vehicle charging points, plus secure cycle parking.
- 9.10. Improvements in off-street parking are summarised in the table below.

Vehicle Parking	cars	disabled	cycles	Other (EV)
Existing	54	0	0	0
Proposed	73	2	12	2
Difference	+19	+2	+12	+2

- 9.11. A formal **Transport Assessment** has been prepared which deals with use and trip generation in detail. This Assessment is included as a supporting document with this application.

10. FLOODLIGHTING

- 10.1. To extend the playing day, and mostly between October and March, the AGP is to be floodlit when needed using 6no. 15m high galvanised steel 'base hinged' raise and lower columns which are to be located three to each side of the AGP and external to the pitch perimeter fenceline.
- 10.2. These columns will support 12no. flat glass LED luminaires which will provide a minimum maintained average horizontal illuminance of 200 lux across and within the AGP fenceline.
- 10.3. This light level is an FA recommendation and a Football Foundation requirement as set out in its *Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitch Design Principles and Layouts* and is sufficient for football training or match-play. The floodlighting design will also allow half of the AGP to be lit separately if required, or the illumination level reduced to 120 lux as needed.
- 10.4. The height of the columns and the alignment of the lamps - set in a plane as close as possible parallel with the playing surface - significantly reduces glare, allows light to be focussed directly onto the playing area, with a uniform illumination across the whole of the pitch, and keeps light spill to a minimum.
- 10.5. This planning application seeks permission to use and operate the AGP (including floodlighting as needed) between the hours of 08:00 to 22:00 hrs (Monday to Saturday) and 09:00 to 21:00 hrs (Sundays and Bank Holidays).
- 10.6. These hours of operation are generally consistent with other community accessible AGPs and other local authority or school managed sports facilities across the Council area.

- 10.7. The AGP luminaires all have LED cells fitted with **Back Light Control** (BLC). In addition, the floodlighting system will be fitted with a timer that will shut the lights off at the agreed curfew time. However, a low-level courtesy light will be attached to the column nearest the exit to the AGP and closest to the car park (column M3) which will be timed to stay on for 10 minutes after the floodlights have cut out to allow players to exit the site safely.
- 10.8. Details of the proposed **Floodlighting Design** with horizontal and vertical spill lux level plots are included with this application. These computer-generated calculations show that horizontal light levels will be less than 5 lux at around 20m from the AGP perimeter fence and zero at the nearest residential boundaries.
- 10.9. Calculations for vertical light spill at 3m above ground levels for the AGP floodlights show that luminance values are less than 2 lux and effectively zero at all neighbouring residential facades.
- 10.10. This design exceeds the requirements of Environmental Zone E3 which typically is how the neighbourhoods surrounding Top Park to the north, west and south-east would be described (i.e. a suburban location of 'medium district brightness') and where the pre-curfew vertical illuminance (i.e. light at neighbouring windows) should not exceed 10 lux.
- 10.11. The floodlighting design complies with the recommendations set out in the *Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light* as published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals 2021 (uploaded with this application).
- 10.12. The proposed AGP floodlighting is specifically designed to provide the correct illumination for a sports playing surface and rapidly limits horizontal light trespass beyond the AGP fence line. There is no upward light spill, with a calculated upward light ratio - or the maximum permitted percentage of luminaire lux that goes directly into the sky - of 0.0.
- 10.13. In addition, the car park will be illuminated by 5no. 6m high LED lighting standards producing a minimum average 24 lux.

11. NOISE IMPACT

- 11.1. To understand the likely impact on nearby properties by the use of the new facilities, a **Noise Impact Assessment** was commissioned. This measured existing background noise levels and, by using data from similar AGP developments, assessed the impact on nearby residential facades against recognised criteria.
- 11.2. In making their assessments, the criteria used by the acousticians took Sport England examples and criteria which were modelled on adult use. (The reality on this site is that the majority of users will be local junior football clubs with teams ranging from under 8s though to under 16s.)
- 11.3. The Noise Impact Assessment report summary concludes by stating that the specific LAeq,1hr noise level at the identified NSR is calculated to be **below the Sport England and WHO criteria** of 50dB LAeq,1hr **without requiring mitigation.**

12. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

BURY PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY 2019

- 12.1. The Bury Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was updated in 2019 (and adopted in April 2020) and provides an assessment of outdoor sport facility needs across the local authority.
- 12.2. Building upon the preceding Strategy, the updated Assessment Report sets out a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches and accompanying ancillary facilities.
- 12.3. The Assessment Report presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and other outdoor sports facilities in accordance with Sport England's own PPS Guidance.
- 12.4. The Strategy and Action Plan builds upon the Assessment Report to provide a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities. It recommends a number of priority projects for investment within the Council area which should be implemented over the coming years.
- 12.5. The primary purpose of the PPS is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meet the local needs of existing and future residents across Bury.
- 12.6. The PPS is a key document in demonstrating the need and demand for the proposed 3G pitch development at Top Park which sits in the Ramsbottom, Tottington & North Manor (RT&NM) area of Bury.

Bury PPS Findings for Football

Teams in Bury

- **In total there are 358 teams identified as playing competitive football matches within the Bury Council area.** This is made up of 58 men's teams, 3 women's teams, 155 youth boys', 23 youth girls' and 119 mini soccer teams.
- Team generation rates, based on population, indicate the likely future creation of seven youth 11v11 teams, with a number of clubs also highlighting clear and imminent plans to increase their number of teams, meaning that substantial shortfalls are already being experienced and are likely to increase.
- The Bury PPS expresses shortfalls as a loss of 'match equivalent sessions' (MES) per week and indicates a requirement for an additional 35 MES per week across different pitch types.
- Football pitches across the Bury Council area are already being overplayed on 21 pitches in the Borough, the majority being on youth 11v11 pitches.
- Top Park is one of four sites in the RT&NM area that are, in conjunction with the Bolton and Bury Junior Football League, in its second year (at the time of the PPS publication) of piloting summer football, **meaning the Top Park site is in use all year round.**

Grass Pitches

- There is sufficient current capacity for one adult MES and one mini 7v7 MES per week in the RT&NM area of Bury; with the future picture showing spare capacity for just one mini 7v7 MES per week.
- The future picture in the RT&NM area is one of shortfalls across all remaining pitch sizes and can be summarised as follows.
 - A. 5 adult MES per week
 - B. 4 youth 11v11 MES per week
 - C. 1 youth 9v9 MES per week
 - D. 3.5 mini 5v5 MES per week
- Top Park supports two youth 11v11 pitches, one of which is over-marked by one youth 9v9 and two 7v7 mini soccer pitches. The over-marked pitch is used for both for summer and winter football and is currently overplayed; in addition, the stand-alone youth 11v11 pitch is used to capacity.
- Both pitches currently drain poorly.
- Improvements to pitch provisions at Top Park are designated high priority in the Bury PPS.
- Given the costs of improving grass pitch quality, **alternatives also need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football.**
- Shortfalls can be reduced through changes to the current mode of play, including the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches and training. Not only can this alleviate over-play of the grass pitches, but it will improve natural grass pitch quality by reducing the intensity of use and allowing greater recovery time between games.

3G AGPs

- There are sixteen small-sided 3G pitches across Bury; 50% of these small-sided 3G pitches are in private ownership with just four each across the education and sports club/community organisation sectors.
- At the time of writing, the PPS noted that there were currently no full size 3G provision in Bury. However, with the support of the Football Foundation and a substantial capital contribution from Bury Council, a new full sized fenced and floodlit 3G AGP and accompanying pavilion and car park is currently being constructed at **Redbank Playing Fields** to the west of the Borough in Radcliffe.
- The PPS stated that the substantial shortfalls identified with reference to grass pitches are exacerbated because (at the time of writing the PPS) there were no full sized 3G pitches within the Borough, and as such, neither current nor future demand would be met.
- The PPS stated that nine full size floodlit pitches were required to meet current and future demand for affiliated football in Bury (if delivered within the right geographical areas).
- The PPS stated that **priority areas for future delivery of 3G pitches should be in the** Bury East (3 pitches), Radcliffe (2 pitches) - one of which is now being constructed (October 2023) and in the **RT&NM areas** (2 pitches). The Top Park proposals will help address some of the identified shortfall in the north of the Borough.

Bury PPS Recommendations

- Develop full sized 3G pitches with floodlighting to reduce evidenced shortfalls.
- Ensure new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA recommendation, so as to maximise opportunities for use for all formats of competitive play.
- Link the Bolton & Bury District Junior League to future use of 3G pitches during the off-peak summer months to alleviate year-round impact on grass pitches and allow time for required remedial works to be undertaken.
- **Explore the feasibility of creating a full size 3G pitch onsite at the Top Park site.**

BURY COUNCIL LOCAL FOOTBALL FACILITY PLAN

- 12.7. The Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has been driven by the Football Foundation, Bury Council, Lancashire FA, and consultation with football stakeholders, and was published in 2022.
- 12.8. The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change and improve football facilities across England.
- 12.9. The LFFP builds upon PPS findings regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small-sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The LFFP also incorporates consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities.
- 12.10. The purpose of the LFFP is to identify priority projects to enable investment in football facilities to be accurately targeted. The LFFP builds on local evidence and strategic plans and adopts relevant actions from the Bury Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 12.11. Targets in the LFFP are be aligned to the investment priorities set out in the National Football Facilities Strategy, which include the following.
- the development of 1,000 new 3G AGPs [or Football Turf Pitches (FTPs) as termed in the FA Strategy] in a mix of sizes and settings,
 - improvements to the quality of 20,000 natural-turf pitches,
 - 1,000 new changing pavilions / clubhouses on priority sites, and
 - the creation of small-sided facilities to help grow the small-sided game and for recreational and informal play.
- 12.12. The LFFP reports that there are 434 football teams in the Bury Council area, which is higher than other local authority areas of a similar size. **Indeed, there are 13 clubs with more than 10 teams, the largest of which is Ramsbottom United JFC which has 43 teams.**
- 12.13. The key strengths of local football in Bury include grassroots league provision which the LFFP recommends is sustained and encouraged to grow further. However, the LFFP also states that there are gaps in provision including for futsal and opportunities for Women & Girls' Football.

12.14. The LFFP recommends that the future football development priorities are ...

- Growth in recreational football with access across the borough at key identified parks and open spaces, community clubs etc.
- Further opportunities for growth in Futsal including reconfiguration / refurbishment of existing facilities, and development of new facilities
- **Significant investment into full size 3G FTPs and training facilities for clubs, with particular emphasis on the Ramsbottom and Radcliffe areas.**
- Development and investment in grass pitches for clubs and hub sites
- **Significant development and adaptation of existing changing pavilion facilities.**

12.15. The LFFP reviews existing football facility assets in Bury in line with the following four FA investment priorities.

- **3G FTPs**
- Improved grass pitches
- Changing room pavilions / clubhouses
- Small sided facilities

3G Pitches

12.16. The LFFP reviews the current provision for 3G pitches from the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment and the identified **shortfall of eight full sized 3G pitches.**

12.17. The geographical spread of existing facilities is uneven; facilities / provision gaps exist across the borough despite high levels of population. The LFFP recommends these be addressed.

12.18. Eight 3G pitch projects were identified as priorities by the LFFP.

- Goshen Sports Centre (now constructed)
- Broad Oak Sports College
- **Ramsbottom area 3G FTP**
- Elton High School
- Redbank Playing Fields (currently being constructed)
- New school site (Spring Lane, Radcliffe)
- Prestwich area 3G FTP
- Bury West 3G FTP

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

12.19. Notwithstanding the support offered by the Council's various policies and strategies, numerous sections and paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF - Feb 2019) also support this development.

12.20. In particular, NPPF Section 8: *promoting healthy and safe communities*, paragraphs 96 and 97 lend support to the Top Park proposals in that this development is based on a formal assessment of need, where any perceived loss would be mitigated by better provision - in this instance, the development of a new fenced and floodlit AGP (with a significantly higher carrying capacity) to replace one of two pitches on a current site that are already at capacity or overplayed.

12.21. Paragraph 99 of 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."*

12.22. While the development of an AGP at the Top Park site is supported by the LFFP and the PPS, these principles repeat Sport England's guidance for a development on a playing field in that betterment outweighs loss.

13. SPORT ENGLAND

13.1. Sport England will be a statutory consultee through the planning process for any development on a grass pitch site (over 0.2ha).

13.2. Playing pitches on the Top Park site are marked out from year to year and have varied over time according to need and preferred game formats. Having considered all options for the location of the proposed development at Top Park, the preferred siting occupies the equivalent footprint of one grass youth 11v11 football pitch currently used by Ramsbottom United JFC. Activity on this grass football pitch space can easily be accommodated on the new AGP.

13.3. The proposed AGP offers betterment through a modern, enclosed playing surface with floodlighting, as well as improved community access; hence, it is considered that this development would be permissible on the grounds of the following exemption as defined by Sport England ...

E5 *The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.*

13.4. Sport England's *Playing Fields Policy & Guidance* (March 2018) notes that, in looking to allow development on a playing field, this should:

- meet an identified local or strategic need
- fully secure sport-related benefits for the local community
- help meet identified sports development priorities
- comply with relevant Sport England and National Governing Body (FA / Football Foundation) design guidance, and
- be accessible by alternative modes of transport.

13.5. The proposed AGP development at Top Park, Bury is consistent with and compliant in all these respects.

- 13.6. The Football Foundation and Lancashire FA have made a strategic assessment of facility provisions including the demand for improved playing and changing facilities drawing on the PPS and LFFP.
- 13.7. Paragraph 75 of the Guidance looks to ensure that any new sporting facility on a playing field does not displace other sports and sports facilities on that site without equivalent replacement.
- 13.8. For the Top Park proposals, the footprint of the proposed AGP covers an area marked out for football. All football activities that used to take place on this area can easily be accommodated on the new AGP.
- 13.9. Paragraph 76 of the Guidance then discusses how AGPs developed on a grass playing field can meet with Exception 5 in that they must be able to sustain more intensive use than the grass they replace while still retaining flexibility in accommodating a variety of activities and differently sized playing areas. The Top Park proposals will meet these aims.
- 13.10. With managed, modern, secure and floodlit playing surfaces, the proposed AGP will allow a **far greater carrying capacity and a greater amount of use on the same area of natural grass playing field covered by the AGP footprint.**
- 13.11. The development of a Football Foundation and FA compliant 3G AGP designed and constructed through the Artificial Grass Pitches Framework, along with a well-designed and constructed pavilion extension that can be used throughout the year, will be a significant betterment to the range of facilities for football and other sports at the Top Park site.
- 13.12. While not on the grass playing field but on an adjacent area of amenity grass land, the provision of improved access, greater off-street parking and the extension of an existing pavilion to provide FA and Football Foundation compliant changing facilities complete with integral showers and toilets will all provide substantial betterment in supporting the AGP.
- 13.13. Consequently, the proposed access, parking and changing pavilion expansions and improvements are considered permissible under Exemption E2 as follows ...

E2 *The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise affect their use.*

14. CONSULTATION

- 14.1. In developing this project, the Applicant has sought the views of a range of stakeholders, including representatives from:
 - Bury Council : Neil Long, Assistant Director, Department of Operations
 - Bury Council : Helen Blythe, Project Lead, Department of Operations
 - Ramsbottom United JFC : Matthew Horne, Club Secretary
 - Ramsbottom United JFC : Gero Liotti, Club Chairman
 - Lancashire FA : Lee Boyer, Facilities and Investment Manager
 - Football Foundation : Shaun Burke, Senior Delivery Manager (North)

14.2. Through these processes, the Applicant has ...

- assessed the outdoor playing pitch training and match-play needs for Ramsbottom United JFC at Top Park in the context of the LFFP
- involved the Council, the County FA, the Football Foundation, and other agencies in the proposed developments at Top Park
- evaluated the options available in the context of local authority sports provision, policy, and land ownership
- located the proposed development to make the best of the space available, using an existing vehicular access, and leaving remaining grassed areas capable of being marked out for additional pitches
- applied Sport England, FA and Football Foundation criteria as well as current best practice to all facility designs

14.3. The following pages set out the design and access aspects of the proposed development in line with the guidance prescribed by CABE.

DESIGN

15. USE

- 15.1. The purpose of this development is to provide improved training and playing facilities for Ramsbottom United JFC as well as providing training and playing opportunities for the wider community. These facilities will offer first class, floodlit, secure, all-weather opportunities for weekday evening training and weekend match-play for local amateur football clubs - predominantly juniors - along with the extension to an existing single storey changing pavilion to improve its layout and provide improved changing and toilet facilities.
- 15.2. All developments will be supported by an improved access off Bolton Road West, and an extended new macadam surfaced off-street parking area.
- 15.3. The proposals occupy land already allocated to sporting and recreational use as playing fields and amenity open space; hence, this proposal is not considered incompatible with its present planning designation.
- 15.4. The Applicant seeks permission for the use and operation of the proposed pavilion and AGP with floodlights as needed between 08:00 to 22:00 hrs Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 21:00 hrs Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

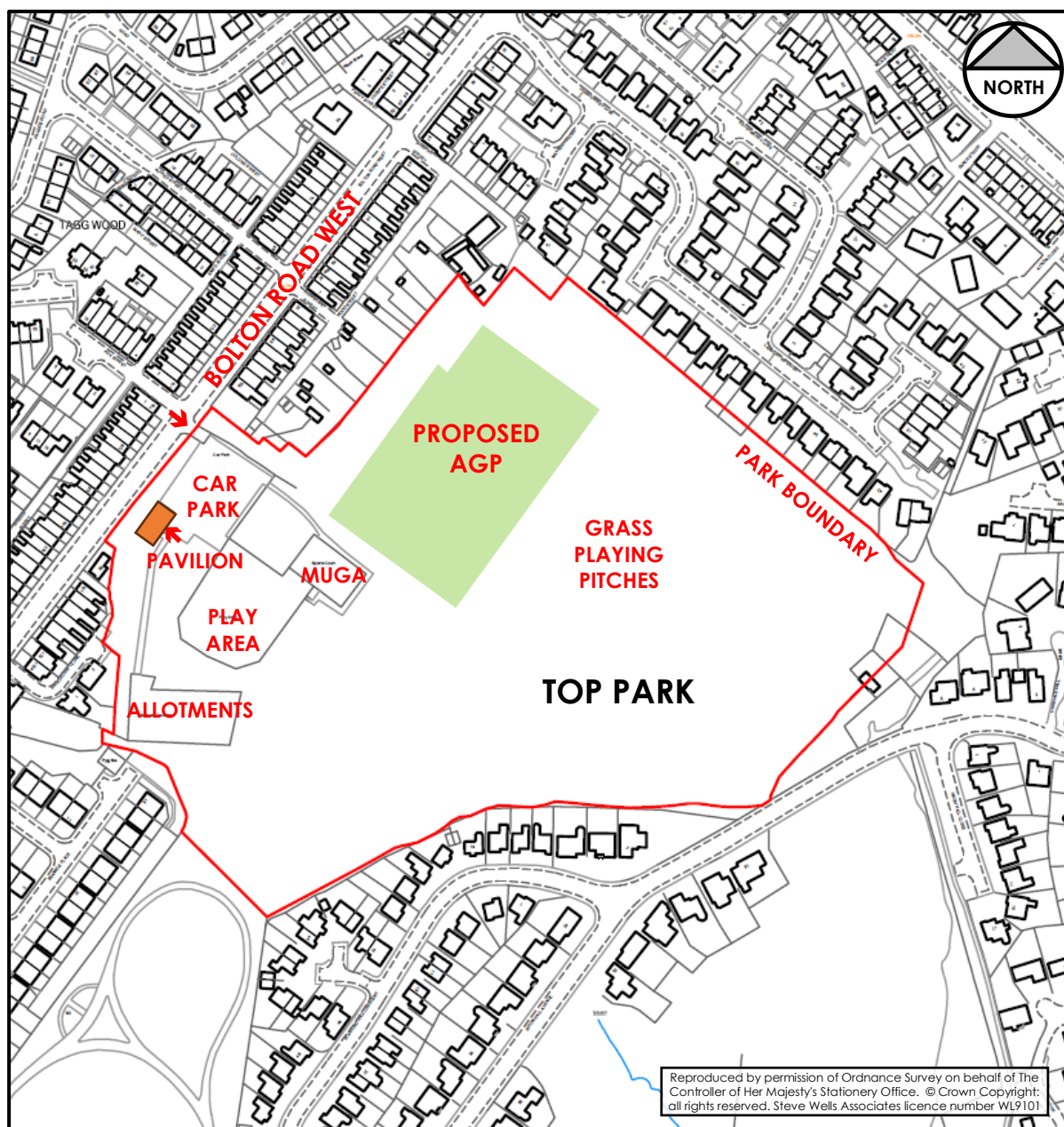
16. AMOUNT

- 16.1. The proposals comprise the development of a full sized fenced and floodlit artificial grass pitch (AGP), an extension to an existing single storey, traditionally constructed changing pavilion, and an extension to the existing parking area off an improved access providing an additional 26 spaces.
- 16.2. The AGP has an overall fenced enclosure of 97m long by 61m wide plus goal recesses all as shown on the plans accompanying this application. The playing area is to be illuminated by LED luminaire supported by 6no. 15m high galvanised steel floodlights columns - three to each side of the AGP.
- 16.3. The AGP will be able to accommodate a football pitch measuring 91m x 55m plus a 3m safety margin / run-off to all sides, as well as being marked out for small-sided games within that enclosure. Details of the proposed general layout and pitch markings are shown on the drawings.
- 16.4. A 4.0m wide macadam hardstanding is provided along one elevation of the AGP and outside the playing pitch safety margin. This hardstanding is separated from the AGP by a 1.1m high weldmesh barrier.
- 16.5. The Gross Internal Floor Area of the proposed changing pavilion extension is 61.5m² and provides the following Football Foundation compliant facilities.
 - a new entrance with modesty screen
 - a new changing room with 16 bench spaces and clothes hanging
 - a shower area with 4 cubicles (including 1 accessible shower)
 - a separate WC cubicle and a hand wash basin

- 16.6. Works to the existing pavilion also include some internal remodelling of the existing spaces to provide new visitors WCs (including 1 accessible cubicle), improved officials' changing and increased storage.
- 16.7. Externally, the pavilion's existing macadam surround and paths will be extended to allow clean access to the new changing room extension which will also be supported by an accessible ramp, landing, and handrail.
- 16.8. The proposed additions to the existing macadam car park will provide a total of 77 car spaces including two designated for disabled users and two with charging points for electric vehicles, plus secure cycle parking.

17. LOCATION

- 17.1. The proposed development is located wholly within the curtilage of the Top Park Playing Fields site. The OS extract below sets the Top Park Playing Fields in the context of its surrounding residential neighbourhoods.



- 17.2. Hard surfaced access paths link the new development to the access, car parking and circulation system to reduce the likelihood of mud and other detritus entering the artificial grass playing area.
- 17.3. The development site is maintained amenity grassland bordered by ...
 - A tree line and mature hedgerow to the north-west, with residential housing beyond along Wood Street
 - Existing car park, pavilion and access to the west, off Bolton Road West
 - An existing MUGA to the immediate south-west, with existing playing fields to the south and south-east with mature trees beyond
- 17.4. The proposed facility is compact and attempts to occupy as limited a footprint as possible leaving only space around the development for maintenance access and emergency vehicles. As much of the remaining grass playing fields as possible is left as one contiguous open area offering the greatest flexibility in its use and for casual recreation.
- 17.5. The scale of the AGP and changing pavilion development is determined by Football Association and Football Foundation guidelines, Sport England design criteria, as well cost and the constraints of the site. The proposed AGP playing area is 91m x 55m and is considered by the Football Foundation to be full-sized for Community Level match play.

18. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 18.1. A **Tree Survey and Constraints Plan**, along with an accompanying **Tree Protection Plan** have all been prepared and accompany this application.
- 18.2. A **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal** has been prepared for the area covered by the proposed development with recommendations. This is also attached as a supporting document to this application.
- 18.3. Because the facilities are to be illuminated to support weekday evening training, a **Floodlighting Design** is included as a supporting document with this application. The horizontal and vertical lux level plots show that light trespass is minimal beyond the AGP perimeter fence and that there will be no excessive light overspill beyond the site boundary. Floodlighting proposals meet or exceed the requirement set out in the *ILP Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light*.
- 18.4. A **Noise Impact Assessment** has been carried out to understand the potential impact of increased activity. This Assessment is included as a supporting document and concludes that no mitigation is needed for a development that will have minimal impact on the nearest residential properties.
- 18.5. While the site of the works is in Environment Agency Flood Zone 1 (or an area with a very low risk of flooding), and the proposals will not exacerbate any surface water issues in the surrounding streets, a **Flood Risk Assessment** (including a **Drainage Strategy**) has been prepared and is included as supporting information with this application.

19. APPEARANCE

- 19.1. The proposed **AGP** comprises a playing area capable of supporting a football pitch at 91m x 55m surrounded by a safety margin of 3m to all sides giving a total enclosure of 97m x 61m plus goal recesses and a 4.0m wide macadam hard-standing. Within the fenced enclosure, the AGP can also be marked out for small format games including 9v9, 7v7 and 5v5.
- 19.2. The AGP playing area is to be a green 55mm+ pile height synthetic turf carpet producing a *FIFA QUALITY MARK* playing surface.
- 19.3. The whole of the AGP and its hard-standing is to be protected by a welded mesh **perimeter fence** powder coated RAL 6005 (Moss Green) and to 4.5m high on all sides. The fence includes personnel and maintenance access gates along with recesses for goal storage.
- 19.4. Within this fenced perimeter boundary is another fenceline at 1.1m high along the long elevation of the AGP and defining the hard-standing. This fence extends to 2.0m high behind and for 2.0m either side of the adjoining cross-pitch goal recesses.
- 19.5. Six 15m high galvanised steel 'base-hinged' floodlighting columns are to be located on the perimeter of the AGP and external to the fenceline. Together, these columns support 12no. LED lamps which, in total, provide a minimum average horizontal illuminance of 200 lux to the playing surface within the AGP fenceline.
- 19.6. Details of the proposed **floodlighting design** with lux level plots is included with this application. Horizontal lux level plots have been interpreted as iso-lux contours outside the AGP fenceline to show the rapid reduction in light trespass.
- 19.7. Horizontal illumination levels are predicted at no more than 5 lux at no more than 20m from any part of the AGP perimeter and generally down to 2 lux well before any neighbouring residential boundaries.
- 19.8. Vertical illumination at 3m above ground level shows predicted light spill of an average 0.4 lux at the nearest residential facades with the highest predicted reading of 1.1 lux. There will be no upward light trespass.
- 19.9. Within the macadam hard-standing and supplied as part of a standard Football Foundation development, is a "20 foot" **storage container** (6.1m long x 2.4m wide x 2.4m high) painted Moss Green (RAL 6005) to match the fencing. This will be used to house the specialist maintenance equipment provided for the aftercare of the 3G surface.
- 19.10. For the extended **car parking** area off the improved Bolton Road West access will be two course dense macadam marked with white thermoplastic lines to delineate car parking spaces with yellow cross-hatched markings to the standard accessible parking bays. Two bays will be marked and signed specifically for electric vehicles and will be supported by EV chargers.

19.11. The proposed changing room extension to the pavilion will use materials to match or complement those employed in the construction of the existing pavilion.

19.12. The following table sets out the proposed materials and finishes for this pavilion extension.

External	
Walls	coursed reconstituted / natural sandstone blocks to match existing adjacent
Roof	- grey slate to match existing adjacent - anti-vandal aluminium guttering and rainwater goods polyester powder coated RAL 7016 (Anthracite Grey)
Doors	galvanised sheet steel polyester powder coated RAL 7016 (Anthracite Grey)
Internal	
Walls	- fair faced painted blockwork throughout. - white ceramic tiles with colour banding or 'whiterock' (floor to ceiling) to showers and wet areas - white ceramic tile splash backs to all hand wash basins.
Floors	- non-slip floor tiles to all shower and dry-off areas - on-slip vinyl floors with coved skirts and central gully to changing rooms - vinyl floors with coved skirts to other circulation areas
Ceilings	plasterboard ceilings throughout with paint finish
Doors	painted timber doors to wcs
Cubicles	solid grade laminate shower cubicles and doors
Sanitary Ware	- vitreous china WCs with concealed cisterns - vitreous china hand wash basins - drop down seat to changing room shower area - stainless steel shower fittings
Heating	hot water pipes beneath seating in changing area
Ventilation	mechanically vented changing area
Fixtures	- hardwood timber bench seating to changing room - hardwood timber clothes hanging rails with hooks - vanity shelving to hand wash basin

19.13. Externally, an accessible ramp, landing and handrail to the new changing room extension access.

19.14. Macadam paths and surrounds to link the car park, the pavilion, the AGP access and hardstanding.

ACCESS

20. VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

- 20.1. The proposals include improvements to the existing road access off Bolton Road West with separate pedestrian and vehicular gated entrances, which will further aid pedestrian access to the site in conjunction with the existing crossings detailed above.
- 20.2. The site is easily accessed from the local community and is within walking and cycling distance for many.
- 20.3. There are two bus stops within 200m of the site entrance to Top Park, which are serviced by the 474 and B1 bus routes between Bury and Ramsbottom. There are two additional bus stops further north and south of the Top Park entrance which in total provides up to seven services per hour along this stretch of Bolton Road West.
- 20.4. The accompanying Transport Statement sets out in greater detail alternative and public transport links to the Top Park site.
- 20.5. The proposals plans show formally marked out, macadam surfaced car parking off an improved access that can accommodate 77 cars including two accessible parking bays, two spaces supported by EV charging points, and secure cycle parking.

21. INCLUSIVE ACCESS

- 21.1. The proposed car park includes two marked and signed accessible spaces dedicated for disabled users and two marked and signed spaces supported by electric vehicles charging points, all close to the proposed changing pavilion.
- 21.2. Less able visitors and wheelchair users will be able to reach the proposed pavilion directly from this parking area via drop-kerbs and hard surfaced paths connecting the car park with the new pavilion, its surrounds, and access to the hard-standing adjacent the AGP.
- 21.3. All internal arrangements within the new changing pavilion will be DDA compliant with separate accessible changing accommodation and toilet provision.
- 21.4. All door widths will be DDA compliant with level thresholds on the new extension, while the internal colour scheme will reflect the needs of partially-sighted visitors where contrasting colours will be used to highlight potential hazards, e.g. door architraves, and 'sign-posted' access points.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The existing access looking towards Bolton Road West from the existing car park.



Looking north across the existing car park towards the Bolton Road West access.



Looking north-west from the edge of the existing play area towards the pavilion, with storage containers sitting in the location of the proposed pavilion extension.



Looking west across the site of the proposed car park extension back towards the existing car park.



Looking west across the site of the proposed AGP towards the existing pavilion.



Looking north-east along the length of the site of the proposed AGP.



Looking east from the site of the proposed car park extension across the site of the proposed AGP.



Looking north across the site of the proposed AGP.



Looking north-west back to the site entrance off Bolton Road West.

