

**Draft Policy BG/PO (Protecting open spaces) in respect of site 40425 (Objection):** The proposed policy has no specific criteria for assessing the loss of open space (which would include sports pitches). However, the proposed policy direction recognises that, in some cases, development on open space may be appropriate if it has limited qualities and would lead to overall quality or quantity improvements. We consider that Policy 67 of the adopted Plan is unduly restrictive in that it states a specific distance within which replacement facilities should be located. The stated distance of 400 metres stated in criteria (b) has no apparent evidential basis and “a short walk” is not otherwise defined. Future iterations of the emerging Plan must include policy wording which has specific criteria against which the loss of any recreation or sports facilities would be assessed. This should not include a specific, mandated distance or rigid criteria. Rather, it should have a range of criteria which relate to the need of a proposed development. If a need for a replacement facility is demonstrated, the wording should include flexible criteria for accessibility and suitability of an alternative site, against which a proposed development can be assessed. Different facilities may have different catchment areas, or its users may not live immediately in the area of the facility. A planning application should allow for an appropriate assessment to be made in that case, to take account of the matters relevant to that case and what impacts and benefits could be generated.

Most Cambridge University colleges, including Gonville and Caius College, do not have their own hockey facilities. Individual college grass hockey pitches have been replaced with a three [1] pitch facility at the University’s Wilberforce Road Sports Ground which enables University and club hockey to play the modern game. The facilities have been expanded into an international standard hockey centre that has increased participation and the diversity of participants in the game, improved the standard of play and facilitated club growth throughout Cambridge. This hockey hub as well as shared use of pitches in other colleges fulfil the College’s hockey needs. The Council needs to be mindful of the changing trends in how university sports facilities and wider provision of sports facilities are managed. Emerging planning policy should take account of this and not be unduly restrictive. This is in line with paragraph 98 of the NPPF which takes a far more balanced approach to changes to sports pitch provision. Please see further information in the site representation document for site 40425.