



Application No: 150972

Location: Essex & Suffolk Gliding Club, Wormingford Airfield, Fordham Road, Wormingford, Colchester

Scale (approx): NOT TO SCALE

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7.2 Case Officer: Jane Seeley

MINOR

Site: Wormingford Airfield, Fordham Road, Wormingford, Colchester

Application No: 150972

Date Received: 15 May 2015

Agent: Mr Raymond Stemp Associates

Applicant: Essex And Suffolk Gliding Club

Development: Application for the additional use of one Touring Motor Glider(TMG). All other existing uses to remain the same.

Ward: Fordham & Stour

Summary of Recommendation: Conditional Approval

1.0 Reason for Referral to the Planning Committee

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee because it was called in by Cllr Chapman. The reason for the call in is because the current use of the site for gliding is the result of Planning Inspectorate Appeal decisions and any change to this should be discussed in public. There are considerable concerns regarding the impact on the tranquility of the area if the application is approved.

2.0 Synopsis

- 2.1 This report gives consideration to the use of a Touring Motor Glider (TMG) in addition to the existing approved Gliding Club use at the application site. The proposal is assessed in light of policy, consultation responses and representations. It is concluded that, subject to a number of conditions, the use is acceptable.

3.0 Site Description and Context

- 3.1 The application site is on Wormingford Airfield. It is a predominantly grassed area with a range of buildings, including a hanger and club house facilities and parking for cars, glider storage and associated caravans. The site is screened from the road by hedging. There are views from public footpaths around the perimeter of the airfield. The site is surrounded by agricultural land. Approximately half a mile to the north is the Dedham Vale AONB and the Wormingford Built Up Area Boundary. There is sporadic housing around the edges of the airfield

4.0 Description of the Proposal

- 4.1 This application proposes the use of a motorised glider, known as a TMG, from the site 365 days per year. Currently, due to planning conditions motorised aircraft of any kind can only take off and land on four days a year (see 6.1 below).

5.0 Land Use Allocation

5.1 Unallocated

6.0 Relevant Planning History

- 6.1 There is considerable history (including enforcement action) relating to this site both before and since the Essex Gliding Club's use of the airfield. The history which is pertinent to the use of the site and the current proposal is:

COL/191/338 Use of land for gliding club and ancillary purposes. This application was refused and Enforcement Notices were issued. The use was allowed on Appeal subject to conditions including the following which relate to the use of the site:

1. This permission relates solely to the use of the site for the purposes of a gliding club and ancillary purposes, and excludes use for general aviation and other aero sports including parachuting and microlight aircraft or model aircraft flying.
2. Save in an emergency no powered aircraft of any kind (including tug aircraft and motorised gliders) shall land or take-off from the site except on four specified days per year, the dates of which shall have been notified to the Council at least two months in advance.
3. Except on the four days referred to in Condition 2 no glider shall take off from the site except between the hours of 9.00 am and 6.30 p.m.
4. Except on the four days referred to in Condition 2 above, no glider shall be launched from the site except on Saturdays, Sundays and one specified day of the week which shall have been previously agreed with the local authority in writing, and all such launches shall be by means of a winch.
5. There shall be no launches of any kind from the north-south runway or from within 50 metres of a public footpath.

COL/96/1085 Application to remove Conditions 3 and 4 of COL/91/0338, refused. Allowed at Appeal.

7.0 Principal Policies

- 7.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must also be taken into account in planning decisions and sets out the Government's planning policies are to be applied. The NPPF makes clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 7.2 Continuing the themes of the NPPF, the adopted Colchester Borough Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2014) adds detail through local strategic policies. Particular to this application, the following policies are most relevant:

SD1 - Sustainable Development Locations
ENV1 - Environment
ENV2 - Rural Communities

- 7.3 In addition, the following are relevant adopted Colchester Borough Development Policies (adopted 2010, amended 2014):

DP1 Design and Amenity
DP10 Tourism, Leisure and Culture
DP22 Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Planning Policy

“The two key issues arising from the above proposal are potential impacts on the Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley landscape which includes tranquillity and potential residential impacts on communities living in the vicinity of the airfield. Tranquillity is an important element of the landscape character of the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley as recognised in section 1.12.3.4 of the current Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2010-2015. The document highlights the potential threats that new development can have on the tranquillity of the AONB. This includes noise impacts from small aircraft using airstrips in and around the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley.

According to The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England’s tranquillity maps, the Stour Valley, is a relatively tranquil area and the management plan seeks to continue to protect this tranquillity. The protection of tranquillity is also an objective in the new emerging Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2015- 2020.

New development must make a positive contribution to the special landscape character and qualities of the AONB, must not adversely affect the character of the AONB, threaten public enjoyment of the area and support the wider environmental or social objectives of the AONB to satisfy development policy DP22.

Policy DP1 generally requires all developments to avoid unacceptable impacts on amenity. Criteria iii in particular, requires developments to demonstrate that they will protect existing public and residential amenity including from noise.

The proposal would introduce 1 new motorised glider on the edge of the Dedham Vale AONB and villages surrounding the airstrip. The airfield where the aircraft would take off from is located approximately 850m from the south westerly boundary of the AONB. Originally no information had been submitted with the application about the number of days/year that the plane planned to fly or the number of anticipated flights and hours of operation. This made it difficult to properly consider compliance with Local Plan policies with respect to impacts on the tranquillity of the AONB and/or on the amenity of residents living close to the site. The agent has since submitted additional information clarifying that ‘TMG’s flights will typically be of an hour or more, ranging over varying routes and, on returning, cutting the motor before descent towards the airfield and completing a circuit and landing in glider mode. The agent’s letter also implied that number of times that the TMG would be in use on any one day is likely to be less than double figures and that the TMG would be unlikely to be flown everyday given weather related constraints.

While approval of this application would introduce a new TMG at Wormingford Airfield, the fact that Environmental Health are satisfied that the noise generated by the TMG during take-off and landing is within acceptable levels and that there are likely to be quite a few days when the TMG will not be useable, the proposal is not considered to generate a policy conflict with either policy DP22 regarding impacts on tranquillity within the AONB or policy DP1 iii regarding noise impact on neighbouring communities”

8.2 Highway Authority

No Objection

8.3 Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Vale Project (received June 2015)

- The area potentially affected by the proposal is within the setting of the nationally designated Dedham Vale AONB. As such, development
- We would expect that consideration is given to the potential landscape impact of the proposal, i.e. visual, noise and other possible impacts on the special qualities of the AONB, including tranquillity.
- The Supporting Statement does not contain any detail relating to the proposed number of take offs/landings in a given period of time and therefore it is difficult for us to ascertain the level of impact that the proposal could have on the area, and in particular the nationally designated AONB.
- Without the detail of proposed activity from the site, including proposed flight paths that may impact upon the AONB, we are unable to give an informed view of the impact of the development on the character and special qualities of the AONB and Stour Valley.
- We note that the application includes a noise survey that states that “the TMG is significantly quieter than the winch during both ground running and take-off”. If the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that these results are robust, the Project would make no further comment on potential impacts of noise in relation to this development application.

8.4 Landscape Officer

The principal concern relating to this proposed development in landscape terms relate to impacts on tranquillity, particularly in relation to the area and setting of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to which the Touring Motor Gliders activity could have a potentially detrimental impact. This concern has been addressed by the Environmental Protection Officer. Consideration might therefore be given to exploring if the use of the Touring Motor Glider’s motor might be limited to the west and south of the Wormingford Airfield in order to help further protect the Dedham Vale AONB.

8.5 Environmental Protection

Extracts from consultation response/noise monitoring report amended 14/10/2015.

“When Environmental Protection were initially consulted in May 2015 a noise assessment report carried out on behalf of the gliding club by PaceConsult carried out on the 1st May 2015 concluded that noise from the use of the Touring Motor Glider (TMG) created less noise than the motor winch currently used to launch gliders from the airfield.

On the 10/06/2015 Environmental Protection made a subjective evaluation of noise from the TMG. Environmental Protection witnessed a full power take-off and landing plus low level powered over flights both into and out of the wind. Based on this and the noise report from PaceConsult and information supplied by the club on how the TMG will be used. The TMG will be used for the training of pilots to comply with new regulations about to come into force and that the TMG will normally take off and fly away and will not repeatedly take-off and land as we have asked for on this occasion. Environmental Protection did not object to the use of one TMG from this site.

Due to concerns from objectors that Environmental Protection had not witnessed the noise from the TMG at their properties it was agreed that Environmental protection would take sound level readings from two properties located at either end of the airfield. This report covers the findings from those two properties”

Conclusion and recommended condition:

Environmental Protection when assessing noise from premises in regard to a planning application must take into consideration not only the volume but the character, whines, clicks etc. the duration of the noise and the time. A noise at 15.00 may not be a problem, but the same noise at 03.00 may well be. The noise must have a significant adverse impact on the peaceful enjoyment of property. From the assessment carried out at these two properties, Environmental Protection does not believe that the use of one touring motor glider would have a significant adverse impact on residents flying at 1000ft or above. However, Environmental Protection recognises that the area is predominantly quiet and that repeated take-off and landings could combine to cause a significant adverse impact to local residents. Therefore Environmental Protection recommends that there should be a space of 90 minutes between each take-off.”

The suggested conditions were given further consideration by Environmental Protection:

“There should be a space of a least sixty minutes between take offs in any one direction. That is to say any take off less than 60 minutes from the last will be in the opposite direction.

Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is not detrimental to the amenity of the area and/or nearby residents by reason of undue noise

The above condition may be suspended on one day per calendar year, that day being the Club's open day to allow for trial flights.

The operation of the TMG to be restricted to the hours 08.00hrs to 21.00hrs. Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is not detrimental to the amenity of the area and/or nearby residents by reason of undue noise

Colchester Borough Council Environmental Protection should be given access to the flight log in order to investigate any complaints arising from the use of the TMG.”

8.6 Natural England

Statutory Nature Conservation Sites – no objection

AONB – do not wish to comment other than to advise that the view of the AONB authority should be sought

Protected Species – no assessment undertaken; draw attention to standing advice.

Local Sites and SSSI – standard comment

8.7 Civil Aviation Authority

Comment that they are not a Statutory Consultee.

8.8 Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society

Contrary to policy DP22, DP10 and Environmental and Rural Communities Policies of the Core Strategy and NPPF.

The Site is near (approximately 800 yards) to the Dedham Vale AONB; it will not make any positive contribution to the AONB or support the AONB Management Plan objectives; rather the noise will adversely affect the peaceful character of the area.

The number of TMG's is irrelevant to this application; the Applicant is in effect applying for permission to fly a TMG 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The suggestion by the Applicant that the TMG will not habitually be flown around the locality as it will take off and land at the airfield on each sortie.

If the number of flights is to be as small as suggested by the Applicant why have they not accepted a limitation on the number of flights or flying days?

8.9 Colne Stour Countryside Association

The existing AONB and the area proposed for extension are renowned for their tranquil unpolluted rural settings.

The application does not meet national or local planning policy. This application is not essential to the future of the Club.

The concerns of the large number of local objectors cannot be ignored.

It is likely, if the proposals were allowed, that there would eventually be a substantial increase in powered aircraft using the site throughout the year.

Concerned about submitted noise report.

There is no precise definition on what comprises a TMG.

It cannot be assumed that the engine will only be engaged on take-off as the noise test supposes. TMGs would then be able to fly over the existing and extended.

In social terms, the noise and disturbance that will be experienced by local residents will far outweigh the benefits to a small number of private members; the local community should not suffer at the expense of this proposal. The proposal detrimentally affects the many for the advantage of the few and does nothing to advance the environment of the sites rural location

8.10 Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

The present restrictions on motorised aircraft at Wormingford were imposed so as to safeguard the tranquil countryside of the Dedham Vale AONB and the countryside surrounding it; these restrictions are still fully justified.

National policy and local policies are clear that the tranquility and beauty of the Countryside in general and AONBs in particular are to be protected.

The club's proposal for unrestricted use of motorised gliders will damage the area's tranquility to the detriment of residents and visitors alike.

The noise survey in our opinion is seriously flawed.

The amenities of residents still protection from the adverse effects of motorised gliders.

The noise from these aircraft, in damaging the tranquility of the area, will also potentially harm rural tourism contrary to the applicant's assertion that their proposal will benefit tourism.

8.11 Dedham Vale Society

Noise is not an issue that is confined within a single parish but spreads over a large surrounding area. In the case of Wormingford Airfield is within a few hundred yards of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the area of the proposed AONB extension towards Bures and any increased noise levels would impact on the peace and tranquillity of the whole area.

NPPF Section 115 and DP22 are material considerations.

A key element in protecting AONBs is to preserve the peace and tranquillity of the countryside for those living there as well as those visiting for recreation.

No attempt to fully quantify the level of activity of the TMG or to quantify noise level when TMGs leave the airfield and are operating over open countryside and particularly the Dedham Vale AONB.

The noise from a TMG is intrusive and adds to the excessive noise from various forms of aircraft crossing the area.

In addition to the details reported above, the full text of all consultation responses is available to view on the Council's website.

9.0 Parish Council Responses

9.1 Wormingford Parish Council (comment received in June 2015)

After lengthy discussions with residents and the Gliding Club, Wormingford Parish Council resolved at their June meeting to OBJECT to this application in its current form.

Cllrs appreciate the new regulations that are coming into effect in 2018, and understand that the gliding club needs to amend its current operations to conform, however they feel that the current application is still lacking any appropriate information in relation to the proposed number and frequency of flights by TMG aircraft. We would encourage the Planning Department to take the Parish Councils and residents concern into account when making a decision on this application and to reject this application as it presently stands. If a further application were to be submitted it should contain proposals regarding reasonable restrictions of the amount of use of the TMG in order to allow more detailed considerations by interested parties.

9.2 Eight Ash Green Parish Council (comment received following reconsultation in November 2015)

No objections - based on the additional information provided which alleviated previous concerns, subject to the planning authority applying the appropriate conditions to restrict the use of the airfield to that stated in this application.

9.3 Mount Bures Parish Council (comment received in June 2015)

Object:

Concern about general lack of information including number and frequency of flights
Concerns about impact of TMG both now and in the future on the rural environment with many equine businesses.

9.4 West Bergholt Parish Council (comment received July 2015)

Unable to adequately respond to this application due to the lack of information on the timings and the number of flights and how the aircraft's noise would be monitored.

9.5 Nayland with Wissington Parish Council (comment received in June 2015)

Object - due to its unrestricted nature.

9.6 Chappel Parish Council (comment received in June 2015)

Residents are concerned about the airborne noises and would like to see a noise survey to include the airborne noise of the motorised glider.

Concerned about the lack of information on the number of flights that the TMG is likely to make and there should be restriction of number of movements and number of TMG's allowed to be used at any one time.

9.7 Little Horkesley Parish Council (comment received following reconsultation in November 2015)

One TMG being launched at 90 minute intervals would be acceptable – the Parish Council concurs with this assessment.

Given the chronic lack of trust between the Essex & Suffolk Gliding Club and the local community over many years, it is essential that the operation of the TMG is monitored on a daily basis and at the end of the first, and subsequent years, made available to interested local parties. Should the limits be exceeded planning permission should be withdrawn.

9.8 Wakes Colne Parish Council (comment received following reconsultation in November 2015)

Objection - wish to support parishioners' serious concerns about airborne noise from motorised gliders over a large area and the increased number of days that motorised gliders can be used by opposing this proposal.

10.0 Representations

10.1 142 Objectors (including SWAT "Stop Wormingford Air Traffic") to the scheme as originally submitted.

General comments on the submitted application

- The supporting statement is deliberately vague; there is little evidence of involvement with local community groups/schools.
- Lacking in details of use of TMG(s).
- Removes restrictions on 4 aero-tow days per year, could be seven days a week including early morning and late evening in the summer.
- Majority of club members aren't from the local area.
- Is in effect retrospective as TMG already flown.
- No mention is made of the hours for glider activity.

Noise

- There is noise from existing launching method.
- Continual or irregular noise pollution creates anxiety states and disturbs village affecting young and elderly alike.
- Why should the quality of life of local inhabitants in the surrounding area of the airfield should be so disrupted and disregarded for the sake of a small group of people. No benefit for local area.
- Noise disturbance Woodland Trust sites near Fordham and Wormingford Church Yard which has Constable Family graves

- The Gliding Club is a club primarily for providing enjoyment for its members. We sympathise with its desire to offer training but to suggest that the local residents should have to endure the inevitable noise pollution that the TMGs will create just so that the club can generate additional income is totally unacceptable.
- BS 4142: 1997 for noise control in the environment is exceeded.
- British Gliding Association has produced a handbook on TMGs in which it states (Page 7, section 12) that TMGs although quieter than most powered aircraft do have noise issues and can lead to complaints from residents.
- The use of these aircraft will have a significant impact on very large area given the range and speed of modern TMGs.
- Gliders make a noise when airborne.
- The fact the TMG's are quieter than aircraft is irrelevant they are noisier than gliders.
- Motorised gliders could be used for practising near-landings in a wide area beyond the airfield, using powered climbs several times on a single flight. The potential for low-altitude noise on each training flight is considerable and repeated.
- The airspace above Little Horkesley is already used by Stansted airport for circling and holding as well as the air traffic from Nayland Airfield. Any additional noise from aircraft will undoubtedly become a nuisance and detract from what defines this rural area.
- Currently can have 30 plus glides a day over garden – horrendous if these were powered.
- Have experience of motorised gliders flown elsewhere which caused a noise annoyance.
- There are already motorised gliders flying in the area which cause unacceptable noise.
- Application talks of the aircraft spending time away from the airfield environs, but not where this might be, might be over flying residential areas and therefore have more of an impact on residential amenity?
- There are existing issues with road noise, helicopter and Skip Hire lorries - we do not need any further noise.
- Noise levels can be measured objectively; the effect upon individuals is a subjective matter of which there is no measurement

- There is a vast difference between the use of a powered aircraft for 4 days per year, as currently permitted, in comparison to potentially 365 days a year dawn till dusk.

Submitted Noise report

- Serious concerns about appropriateness of noise report the survey has been conducted in order to reach that conclusion rather than examine the noise effect in areas other than in the immediate vicinity of the winch.
- The noise survey provided in support of this application has been sourced from three monitoring stations located only to the South and East of the application site. It should be specifically noted that the wind direction was East South East (into the airfield and away from residential areas). There was no monitoring away from the airfield such as Wakes Colne or Mount Bures where the aircraft spend most of their airborne activities. The report would thus appear inconclusive
- The Noise Survey/Assessment aims to give a comparison.....between the noise from the TMG powered take-offs and noise from the normal winch-launch take-offs. However the assessment only gives a comparison of noise from the airfield, not noise at local communities due to overflying craft
- From the information provided it is not unreasonable to deduce that TMG noise would be expected to give rise to nuisance in the local environment
- The Assessment applies to one TMG only, taking off and landing in a direction away from residents, which will not always be the case as, the application is for TMGs plural and the wind direction changes will alter the take-off direction. More than one TMG and their flying over people's houses will have a considerably different effect on noise and the annoyance factor to residents.
- No study of background noise (or ambient noise) has been shown, only the noise of three locations, on the day and at the time of the flights.
- The Assessment compares the single TMG noise with the existing winch. The winch exists due to the previous appeal ruling. What we are being asked to accept here is a new and very different and probably much more variable type and level of noise. The tonal nature of a two bladed propeller is very different to the winch noise and is a moving noise source too.
- No noise data has been presented to reflect what will be heard when the wind is in a different direction, requiring these aircraft to take off or to land over people's rooftops and gardens. There is no information of the rate of climb of the aircraft, the horsepower of the engines, what constitutes a powered glider in comparison to any other aircraft that is capable of gliding. The application is vague. A height of 300 metres is mentioned but with no idea at what distance from the take-off point this height is achieved.

Privacy/safety

- Issues with pilots performing aerobatics over nearby housing.
- Any increase in glider activity, which appears to be inherent in the proposal for more than one TMG, will impact on us through increased traffic low over our properties.
- Low flying already impinges privacy.

AONB

- Intolerable blight on peace and tranquillity.
- Judicial Review in 2005 prevented excessive routing of commercial aircraft over the AONB specifically due to noise intrusion conflicting with the "tranquil" designation environmental assessment.
- The AONB is of significant regional interest. It is of a rural character worth preserving and enhancing, not for burdening with noise and disturbance from the proposed operations. The proposed development will disrupt the tranquillity of the AONB and severely impact on the enjoyment, character and special landscape interest in the area.

Countryside/wildlife

- Area enjoyed by walkers there are footpaths around and near the airfield; cyclists. Horse riders.
- Adverse impact on animals - Livestock will be startled and disturbed, Wildlife in their natural largely peaceful noise free current environment will be disrupted and made anxious by the sudden aircraft noise which could affect breeding and use of current habitats. There are livery stables close by.
- Adverse impact on Essex Wildlife Trust site at Sergeant's Orchard.
- The current airfield and its traffic is already affecting beauty of this beautiful village. No indication of traffic generation; any increase would be dangerous.
- Threat to the rural nature of the local environment.
- It is a potential risk to the villagers, birds and wildlife. Increasing the traffic is the worst thing that can happen to our lovely village.
- The airborne activities cover a much wider geographical area than the site plan. These aircraft circle at relatively low level and powered flight would potentially be of detriment to these Parishes interfering with the peace and privacy of residents.

General

- TMGs do not actually glide very well and given the above specifications I believe they are use as light aircraft that do not require a CAA pilot's licence.
- Concerns over policing of existing controls.
- Adverse impact on air quality.
- Motorised gliders for training purposes can be met at other local gliding clubs, e.g. Rattlesdon.
- Reference to Great Oakley is irrelevant.
- Numbers should be controlled.
- Powered flight activities available from nearby Earls Colne and Nayland airfields.
- Supporting Statement talks of a "Business Need", is this not a leisure facility rather than a business.
- Would severely impact autistic child who is very sensitive to noise.

Traffic

- The proposal seeks to increase the attraction of the airfield to new members, which will travel to the site. The surrounding roads are narrow country lanes; even a protected lane is located on the North West side of the airfield. The additional traffic along these country lanes with persons travelling to and from the site potentially in large vehicles towing gliders would cause additional disturbance. This is considered to be potentially dangerous to other highway users and completely inappropriate in such a rural context

Potential for expansion

- Only the start could lead to further expansion of this gliding club's activities to include powered flights of all types.
- Attempt to ramp up activity could lead to further expansion – helicopters, microlights etc.

Community/economy

- Will not support local services/facilities.
- Threat to the local community.
- Will adversely impact on the tourism potential of the AONB.

Policy

- Contrary to:
- NPPF, section 3 supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy; proposal does not respect the character of the countryside; neither does it promote the retention and development of local services/community facilities, it is a privately run, members only flying club.
- DP10 Tourism, Leisure
'... In rural areas, locations suitable for tourism, leisure and culture development should help to support existing local community services and facilities.'; the proposal does not relate to a community service.
- ENV2 Rural Communities, which states;
'... Outside village boundaries, the council will favourably consider small-scale rural business, leisure and tourism schemes that are appropriate to local employment needs, minimise negative environmental impacts and harmonise with the local character and surrounding natural environment.'
- The use of motorised glider will cause unacceptable noise and general disturbance and therefore, the proposal does not harmonise with the local character and surrounding natural environment.
- Policy DP22
The use of motorised gliders will cause unacceptable noise and general disturbance, impacting on the pleasure of those seeking to enjoy the AONB.

General comments on the submitted application

- The supporting statement is deliberately vague; there is little evidence of involvement with local community groups/schools.
- Lacking in details of use of TMG(s).
- Removes restrictions on 4 aero-tow days per year could be 7 days a week including early morning and late evening in the summer.
- Majority of club members aren't from the local area.
- Is in effect retrospective as TMG already flown.
- No mention is made of the hours for glider activity.

10.2 36 objections following consultation in June 2015 (including reference You Tube clips) making the following ADDITIONAL comments:

- Proposal is too open-ended.
- Additional information does nothing to allay concerns already expressed.

- 1 TMG would still have an adverse impact on AONB.
- Need confidence that the club are committed to having 1 TMG.
- Whilst agent has indicated that TMG will usually land without an engine main concern is take off and climb to cruising level noise.
- The number of days the TMG will be used is still unclear and should be controlled
- The Applicants should afford residents the opportunity to gauge for themselves the likely impact of a successful application. This could be achieved by staging a live demonstration of powered flight of precisely the nature proposed so that necessary acoustic tests could take place.
- No evidence of necessity of flights is provided. The reasons given in support of the application remain vague, and the new reference to obtaining gliding qualifications is simply wrong. The BGA's own website explains that Bronze may be obtained with or without the use of TMGs.
- Concerned that more flights would be dangerous creating more opportunities for accidents.
- The terminology used to describe the frequency of use is vague and open to interpretation.
- Club suggestion that the demand for TMG use is low contradicts previous comments.
- There is no control over where the TMG would fly – it could be around the local area.
- If approved this would lead to the tug plane being used every day.
- Incompatible with existing conditions.
- Granting of this application is opening the flood gates for other powered craft and abolishing the confidence imposed by the original appeal decision.
- The noise will be audible during take-off and landing even if the TMG is flown away from the site.
- Frequency of use is vague.
- If planning permission is recommended conditions to control use are required.
- Concerns about comments of Council's Environmental Protection and Policy Officers.

10.3 18 objections received following consultation in November 2015 (including reference to You Tube clips and a sound file) making the following ADDITIONAL comments:

- Take-off and landing only small part of flight time.
- Once in air gliders circle to gain height.
- With 1 hour TMG could circle for 55 minutes using engine continuously.
- There is an increase in noise on powered days which would be unreasonable every day.
- Like having a lawn mower over the house.
- Gliders are by their very nature relatively quiet and serene. The addition of a motor does ruin the peaceful enjoyment of the local countryside which includes The Stour Valley AONB.
- If the application is approved, would be allowed to fly 365 days a year opens the floodgates for further applications to increase this powered flight use.
- 8 flights a day could lead to 56 launches a week which is intolerable; a compromise would be of 4 or 6 flying days per annum.
- There is video evidence of now the TMG is usually flown at a low altitude and full power; this I not now it was flown when the Nosie recording was undertaken.
- The gliding club have made it clear that the club have routinely used the TMG for powered soaring flight on days other than the 4 permitted days/year in contempt of their current planning permission. Their excuse for this behaviour is that they got away with it, as residents didn't complain. This ignores the obvious fact that as residents have never been informed when the 4 days of powered flight would take place, we would naturally assume on hearing powered flight it must be within the terms of their planning permission, as we had expected the club to adhere to the permission given them. Clearly they cannot be trusted to police themselves and in future their activities will require much closer monitoring.
- The unrestricted use of the TMG at the Club's open day violates the existing conditions and restrictions applied to the Club in 1992 and 1996. This is 'creeping planning variation'.
- It is neither necessary nor desirable for a TMG to be launched or landing using its engine. Take offs will be the most noisy part of the flight
- 8 flights a day could lead to 56 launches a week - intolerable.
- Use of the engine should be prohibited within several miles radius of the airfield.
- Control over number of TMG's that can be operated.
- Control over hours of operation required; suggest hours 8 – 9 are unreasonable as people will be using their gardens in the summer during these hours.

- How can the number of take offs be policed; this will be difficult and expensive to investigate.
- There is no commitment not to use the TMG as a tug plane. It is almost certain that the club will do so to circumvent existing restrictions on tug plane usage.
- There is no commitment that the TMG will NOT be used to train pilots or support them maintaining their Licence or only for the Clubs own purposes.
- If the Club is to make a meaningful concession to the many residents affected by their proposed TMG activities, they should follow the example of other Clubs and introduce their own regulations on the use of TMG.
- If the TMG was a cable launched, followed by powered flight to an area far from the launch site, and then use its engine to gain height, people might take a more supportive view of the application.
- Peace has been disturbed by pilot of the TMG starting its engine over garden.

10.4 Four representations supporting the application:

- Provides activity for teenagers in the village.
- The use of the TMG will not increase traffic in village.
- More damage to the environment by farming practices.
- Vehicles going through the village are far louder than a TMG particularly when it is 2,000ft above you.
- It is a privilege to have the gliding club so close and I thoroughly enjoy watching the gliders and support the additional use of a touring motor glider.
- The volume of objections is partly due to the well-organised nature of a minority of individuals who have worked to spread misinformation.
- Residents should be aware of the potential aircraft noise from airfields before they decide to purchase a house next to one.
- The noise levels are virtually non-existent compared to other local noise generating activities.
- General Aviation in the UK is under serious threat from these local NIMBY type objections. Landing aircraft will not be under power during their descent, so for residents of Wormingford the noise level of the 'lowest' aircraft will be no worse than the existing glider traffic.
- Encouraging general aviation will encourage business in the area.
- The airfield ought to be an excellent local resource for local children and air-cadets, who might choose a career in aviation.

- Objections regarding pollution are conjecture and unfounded.
- The submitted noise report seems to make it clear that the TMGs are significantly quieter in operation than the winch currently used.
- Number of flights/flying days per annum for TMGs needs to be clarified, however the quietness of the TMGs is in their favour.
- Lawnmowers are louder and carry on for longer than a passing TMG.

The full text of all of the representations received is available to view on the Council's website.

11.0 Parking Provision

11.1 Not a relevant consideration.

12.0 Open Space Provisions

12.1 Not a relevant consideration.

13.0 Air Quality

13.1 The site is outside of any Air Quality Management Area and will not generate significant impacts upon the zones.

14.0 Development Team and Planning Obligations

14.1 This application is not classed as a "Major" application and therefore there was no requirement for it to be considered by the Development Team and it is considered that no Planning Obligations should be sought via Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

15.0 Report

Current use of the site by the Essex and Suffolk Gliding Club

- 15.1 The Gliding Club has been operating from the application site since 1990. This use is controlled by planning conditions imposed at Appeal in 1992; two of the conditions were removed in 1996.
- 15.2 Records indicate that in the early 1990's there were issues relating to noise from the plane used to tow gliders into the air. Consequently one of the conditions imposed by the Inspector in 1992 was that the club could only launch gliders by tow plane on four days per year (These are known as the aero-tow days). The Club has to notify the Council in advance of the days to be used for this purpose. In recent years the club has also notified a number of interest groups/individuals (including SWAT) of the proposed days.

- 15.3 The proposed use of a TMG will enhance the Club's ability for the training of glider pilots and instructors.

Clarifications

- 15.4 The Gliding Club has clarified a number of points which were unclear from their submission and/or have been raised in the representations:
- 15.5 The TMG cannot tow gliders, it is not powerful enough, it does not have the relevant licensing and does not have the equipment to do so.
- 15.6 Non Club Members are not permitted to fly the TMG.
- 15.7 TMG's from other clubs/individuals will not use the airfield. The application is in respect of the operation of a single TMG owned by the Gliding Club.
- 15.8 The Club has code of conduct including flying orders, governing all its operations, which will as a matter of course, be amended to take into account a number of aspects relating to revised operation of the TMG resulting from the terms of any planning permission.
- 15.9 The TMG in order to have adequate take off power would take off in full throttle, as it reaches a safe height this would be reduced accordingly.
- 15.10 The TMG will always use the maximum length of runway available and therefore commence their flight from the take off point for whichever runway is in use at the time. The height at which it crosses the end of the runway is dependent on wind speed i.e. a higher wind speed enables any aircraft to climb more steeply in relation to its progress over the ground.

Noise

- 15.11 Noise from the proposed use of the TMG both on the nearby AONB and wider and on residential amenity is pivotal to the consideration of this application.
- 15.12 The application was supported by a Noise Survey and, due to the concerns expressed in the representations, noise monitoring has been carried out by Environmental Protection Officers at two properties close to either end of the runway.
- 15.13 National Planning Policies (including paragraph 115 of NPPF) and our Policy DP22 seek to protect the AONB. Tranquillity is an important element of the landscape character. Consideration in consultation with The Dedham Vale and Sour Valley Project and Council Policy Officers has therefore been given to the impact of the TMG. Given the advice of Environmental Protection the conclusion is that the use of a TMG, as proposed, will not have an adverse impact on the tranquillity of the AONB and wider countryside. It is also recognised that, as set out in the Policy explanation for DP22, the AONB is a living landscape which needs to adapt to changes such as recreational pressures from local community and visitors.

- 15.14 The Landscape Officer has suggested that consideration could be given to limiting the use of TMG's to the west and south of the Wormingford Airfield in order to help further protect the Dedham Vale AONB. The views of the Gliding Club on this suggestion have been sought and will be reported on the Amendment Sheet. However given the comments of the other Consultees on the impact on the tranquillity a condition to this affect is not considered reasonable.
- 15.15 DP1 requires that any use should protect residential amenity. The noise monitoring undertaken by Environmental Protection indicates that the impact on noise from the TMG both close to the airstrip and the wider area will not be unduly intrusive or have an adverse impact on the peaceful enjoyment of property. As the area is predominantly quiet it is considered that repeated take-offs and landings could combine to have a significant adverse impact on local residents. Accordingly, conditions have been suggested to limit the hours of use from 8am to 9pm and to require a space of at least sixty minutes between take-offs in any one direction. That is to say, any take-off less than 60 minutes from the last will be in the opposite direction. In discussion with Club a maximum of eight take-offs a day has been agreed.
- 15.16 The Gliding Club is in agreement with these proposed conditions and has indicated that the number of flights by the TMG will usually be lower than the conditions would allow. It has requested that the conditions be relaxed one day a year. This is for the Club's open weekend and will permit it to take visitors for short flights in the TMG. This is considered to be a reasonable request but it is suggested that a condition be imposed requiring the Council/other interested people/groups to be given notice of the date in the same way as they are required to give notice of aero-tow days.

Other Matters

- 15.17 There are numerous representations about the flying of the TMG once it has taken off. This is not something over which the Council can control. The Gliding Club is aware of this issue and has indicated that they seek to ensure that pilots fly appropriately. Any concerns about inappropriate flying activity and safety are matters for the CAA.
- 15.18 Privacy has been mentioned; the Gliding Club can fly traditional gliders without any restrictions and it is not considered that the additional use of a TMG will materially impact on the privacy of householders in the locality.
- 15.19 There have been concerns regarding the impact on livestock, horse and other animals. No evidence has been provided to support this suggestion. Given the assessment that the noise levels will not adversely impact on residential amenity it is suggested that the use of the TMG is unlikely to be an issue to animals.
- 15.20 Natural England has not raised any concerns about the application; its Standing Advice of Protected Species does not suggest an ecology report is necessary.
- 15.21 DP10 and ENV2 support Leisure facilities outside of village boundaries. A requirement of ENV2 is that new Leisure uses have a benefit to the environment/local economy. The Gliding Club does not contribute any obvious benefits to the local area. The use of the TMG will not change this situation. However the Club is well-established and any resistance to the use on this ground is likely to be difficult to sustain.

15.22 The level of use of the TMG is unlikely to have any significant impact on air quality or traffic levels.

15.23 This application must be determined on the information provided. Any future changes, if applied for, will be determined on their merits and in line the policy framework applicable at the time of any such application.

16.0 Conclusion

16.1 The proposed use of the TMG is acceptable subject to conditions to protect residential amenity and the tranquillity of the AONB/wider Countryside.

17.0 Recommendation

17.1 APPROVE subject to the following conditions

18.0 Conditions

1 - Time Limit for Full Permissions

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 - Non-Standard Condition/Reason

This permission does not in any way vary or remove the conditions 1, 2 or 5 of COL/91/0338 detailed in The Planning Inspectorate decision letter dated 17/8/1992. These conditions remain in force and shall continue to apply.

Reason: To avoid any doubt that this application varies the previous planning permission as referenced, in the interests of proper planning and so that the applicant is clear on the requirements they need to comply with.

3 - Non-Standard Condition/Reason

With the exception of one day per annum (the Essex and Suffolk's Gilding Club's Open Day) there must be a space of a least sixty minutes between take offs in any one direction. That is to say any take off less than 60 minutes from the last will be in the opposite direction.

Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is not detrimental to the amenity of the area and/or nearby residents by reason of undue noise.

4 - Non-Standard Condition/Reason

The Essex and Suffolk's' Gilding Club's Open Day shall not take place unless the Council is notified of its date at least two months in advance.

Reason: So that the Council and other interested parties are aware of the date that the normal restrictions on the spacing between take offs are suspended.

5 - Non-Standard Condition/Reason

The club must not operate or fly the TMG outside of the hours 08.00hrs to 21.00hrs.

Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is not detrimental to the amenity of the area and/or nearby residents by reason of undue noise.

6 - Non-Standard Condition/Reason

The club must not make any more than eight take-offs in the TMG per day.

Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is not detrimental to the amenity of the area and/or nearby residents by reason of undue noise.

19.0 Informatives

Non Standard Informative

Colchester Borough Council Environmental Protection and/or Development Management Team should be given access to the flight log in order to investigate any complaints arising from the use of the TMG.

20.0 Positivity Statement

- 20.1 The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.