



Planning fears for meadows after 'green chain' status removed

CAMPAIGNERS fear they could lose future planning fights if the council chooses to remove green chain status from meadows they are fighting to protect.

Under part two of its local plan, Hillingdon Council proposes to designate King's College Playing Fields, – which make up part of the Pinn Meadows in Ruislip – as metropolitan open land (MOL), but at the same time take away its green chain designation.

This has worried members of the Friends of Pinn Meadows (FOPM) who work to protect and enhance the open space which runs from Bury Street to Elmbridge Drive in Ruislip.

The group has so far fought off Eastcote Hockey Club's plan to build a second pitch in the playing fields, off King's College Road, Ruislip, and is disappointed with the proposal because

members feel it will offer less protection against planning applications.

A petition signed by more than 5,000 people earlier this year, asking the council to designate Pinn Meadows a village green, was unsuccessful.

FOPM chairman, Rob Cousins, said: "We weren't aware that the council were planning to remove the green chain designation when the village green petition was presented.

"We believe that the current green chain policy provides greater protection than metropolitan open land from the immediate threat of another floodlit and fenced Astro turf pitch and has already been used to refuse planning permission for such a development."

Mr Cousins, deputy chairman Mike Grimmel and committee member Martin White met with the council's community

engagement director, Jales Tippell, and head of planning and green spaces, James Rodger, at the end of November.

"Jales Tippell advised us that she had been asked by the cabinet to provide Pinn Meadows, and all green chain areas, with the highest level of protection possible," said Mr Cousins.

"Other London boroughs such as Merton have green chain areas located within MOL, as we are requesting for Pinn Meadows. This would give Hillingdon Council the maximum protection for Pinn Meadows that they desire."

A public consultation on the local plan will not take place until spring. A council spokesman said the change in status would actually give the playing fields more protection, under both the council's Local Plan and London Mayor Boris Johnson's London Plan.