Against the Co-op’s destruction of Rugby’s limited Amenity Green Space
The development is contrary to Planning Policy LR4 which states…

“Planning permission for the development of Open Space shown on the Proposals Map for non-sport and recreation uses will be granted provided that the open space is no longer needed or of value for its current or other open space use now and in the foreseeable future.”

- The Co-ops Open Space Report is full of highly misleading statements and illustrations (see next untruth slides).

- The Co-ops Open Space Reports (both version 1 and version 2) repeatedly stretches recognised boundaries to present a misleading picture.
The Co-op claims that Oakfield is surplus to requirements by inventing their own classification. They have combined the Local Authority target for ‘Amenity Green Space’ with ‘Parks & Gardens’.

RBC’s November 2015 policy document stipulates 1.1 hectares of ‘Amenity Green Space’ for every 1,000 people, and 1.5 hectares of ‘Parks & Gardens’. The Co-op says that these are much the same and should be combined:

\[
\begin{align*}
1.1 &\text{ Amenity Green Space} \\
1.5 &\text{ Parks & Gardens} \\
\text{Combined} &\text{ Suggested!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The proposal would destroy nearly a third of the existing Amenity Green Space in the ward.

But bizarrely, they then halve this figure and claim we have more than enough provision!

*Source: https://www.rugby.gov.uk/downloads/file/886/part_four_-_open_spaces*
THE TRUTH...

Clearly they can’t read! Merttens has a restrictive covenant that prevents adults from using the field.

The Co-op also fails to show the RBC dog control order WARNING sign - max fine £1,000 and a telephone number to report offences.

In addition, the Co-op still uses Merttens in the ‘Amenity Green Space’ provision figures (#1) which is incorrect.
UNTRUTH #3

“There are other Outdoor Sports Facilities within the area.”

The Co-op claims that Oakfield is a poor quality Outdoor Sports Facility that is hardly used.

The Co-op seems to be hoping that Sport England will withdraw their objection to the development because of the RBC recent Playing Pitch Strategy (Nov 2015).

They fail to recognise Oakfield’s use for informal:

- 11-a-side Football matches
- Football training
- Rugby training
- Cricket training
- Rounders
- Frisbee
- Informal games & kite-flying etc.

THE TRUTH...

These are precisely the types of activity that can help keep the people of Bilton and New Bilton fit and well.

The proposed Multi-use Games Area will not serve this purpose at all as its size is comparable with that of a tennis court.

Rugby’s Open Space Audit 2008 specifies the standard walking distance to an Outdoor Sports Facility as \(850\text{m}\).

Losing Oakfield will make this impossible for many residents in New Bilton.

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Rugby’s Open Space Audit 2008 specifies the standard walking distance to an Outdoor Sports Facility as \(3,500\text{m}\) (Rugby’s Open Space Audit 2008), at \(5,600\text{m}\) away.

There are **NO** suitable nearby Outdoor Sports Facilities.
Housing to the North of Oakfield Rec, is mainly high-density terraced.

For the social health and well-being of this large section of the community, Oakfield Rec provides a vital Amenity Green Space, actively used for exercise, walking, jogging, football, cricket, rounders, frisbee-throwing, kite-flying, and many others.

With a current deficiency of public open space in this area of Rugby, we cannot afford to lose Oakfield or any more recreation land.
These facilities are **heavily used by the Community**

As well as regular Sunday morning football practice, Oakfield Recreation ground is routinely enjoyed by other sporting teams for kickabouts, or use by the community during the week, on an ad-hoc basis.

*These pictures demonstrate that Oakfield Rec. is regularly used by Sporting Clubs*

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...are all against the development and loss of pitch facilities at Oakfield

Rugby practice

Casual Cricket

Football practice
The health and well-being of families and recreational users with access to Sports and Leisure facilities

Sunday 28/6/2015 – A time-lapse ad-hoc video* shows the large number of recreational users within a 3 hour period –

There is a definite need to keep this valued Open Green Space

https://goo.gl/qz0a5d

*Source: https://goo.gl/qz0a5d
This housing development will not serve the local community

Despite the scheme requiring upto 40% affordable housing, in the supplementary application document ‘Planning Statement’, page 20, item 3.5.2, the Co-op’s agent says*...

“The Applicant has submitted a viability appraisal to demonstrate that the Site is incapable of meeting the affordable housing requirement.”

The local Planning Department has confirmed [8/6/2015] that the Co-op claims their financial viability figures are commercially sensitive and MUST NOT be disclosed to the public.

Since the Co-op already owns the site and does not have to buy the land at a commercial price, this seems highly irregular that they will neither include affordable housing, nor disclose the justification.

Neither is there a Section 106 Agreement** in place to off-set the development impact on the locality, like School place shortage.


**Source: http://www.pas.gov.uk/3-community-infrastructure-levy-cil/-/journal_content/56/332612/4090701/ARTICLE
Oakfield Recreation Ground is on the Asset of Community Value register*

Section E17 of the Saved Local Plan Policy states that...

*Planning permission will not be granted* for development, which would adversely affect the character, appearance, or setting of a:

- Parks or gardens of acknowledged local importance
  - Oakfield Recreation Ground is acknowledged as an *Asset of Community Value*, that *enhances the social wellbeing* and interests of the local community.
  - No mitigation has been made for the loss of this Asset of Community Value.
  - As Oakfield Rec is on the Rugby Borough Council list of community assets, we can therefore conclude that it is a *park of acknowledged local importance* and therefore Section E17 of the Save Local Plan Policy is not being complied with.

It therefore follows that *Planning permission should not be granted*.

The SAVE OAKFIELD Community

#9
Development of the site has failed many times before due to the importance of amenity green space!


“I consider that the construction of any new access to a main road must produce a new traffic hazard”

REFUSED

1968 – Planning application for residential development [P3509-20267-68/9/27]

“It is considered that the site occupies a strategic position in the town where its present use is particularly appropriate and that it contributes significantly to the amenity standards of the area”

REFUSED

1973 – Planning application for residential development [1570/A/73/14148]

1975 – **Appealed**, and **REFUSED** again!

“open land near the town centre must become that more important”
Government National Planning Framework*

The Co-op’s Planning Application fails against a number of areas in the Government Framework. Below are the key points.

Page 17: **guard against** the unnecessary **loss** of **valued facilities** and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs.

Page 18, item 73: **Access to high quality open spaces** and opportunities for **sport and recreation** can make an important contribution to the **health and well-being of communities**. Planning policies should be based on **robust** and up-to-date assessments of the **needs for open space**, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

Page 18, item 77: Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for **special protection green areas** of particular importance to them.

Ease of Planning Regulations to build homes on brownfield sites

4/7/2015 – **PM and Chancellor announce ‘one nation’ plans to spread homeownership across the country***. 

“A package of housing measures will accelerate home building and deliver more homes.”*

“With just 10% of England developed, **there is enough brownfield land available for 400,000 homes**. The government will take forward plans to unlock land and build as many homes as possible on **suitable** land, while continuing to **protect** the green belt for local people”*

**With new Government plans in place, we do NOT need to destroy open space like Oakfield Rec. to ease the housing demand.**

An Ethical Stance? The Co-op’s vision...*

“SAVING OUTDOOR SPACES...
Because the likelihood of children visiting any green space, as well as the countryside, has halved in a generation”

In summary, the TRUTH...
Despite the Co-op’s alleged ethical policy and cynical support with saving outdoor space* (see web link below) and the large online petition AGAINST the development to destroy the **Amenity Green Space** and **Outdoor Sporting Facilities** at Oakfield Recreation Ground, the Heart of England Co-operative, led by Chief Executive Ali Kurji, is determined to **put profit before the community**, and **sacrifice** this essential and well-used Open Space.

How can the Co-op justify this Planning Application with their alleged ethical policy?

* Live on the Co-op website until 20 July 2015, but now archived at:
Overwhelming community and public body support to keep Oakfield Recreation Ground for the benefit and well-being of the people of Rugby

Online Petition
you.38degrees.org.uk/p/SaveOakfield

1666 VOTES*

Local MP – Mark Pawsey

SPORT ENGLAND

RUGBY & DISTRICT LEAGUES

TheFA

facebook.com/SaveOakfield
twitter.com/SaveOakfieldRec

*Source June 2015: https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/SaveOakfield
Council department and other feedback*

Historic England - **Objection**
RBC Environment & Waste Services - Some points on issues, requiring additional information.
RBC Green Spaces - **Objection**
RBC Housing and Property - items of concern
RBC Parks & Grounds - **Objection**
RBC Sports Development - **Objection**
RBC Tree Officer - **Objection**
Severn Trent Water - No objection, subject to condition
Sport England - **Objection**
Warwickshire County Council Archaeological Information and Advice - Potential archaeological impact
Warwickshire County Council Ecological Services - **Objection**
Warwickshire County Council Highways - No objection, subject to condition
Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service - No objection, subject to condition
Warwickshire Police - No objection, but a number of design considerations
Western Power - two existing distribution substations to consider

*Source: Public review of planning file 17 July 2015*