

COMMENT

Blues' pitch battle becomes farcical

THE argument about whether Wycombe Wanderers, the area's premier football team, should be allowed to have a training pitch next to their new stadium in Sands is turning from controversy to farce.

Originally, Wanderers wanted a synthetic surface, but this was deemed unacceptable by Wycombe District Council's planning committee. Changes were made in the scheme, but the second application was also rejected.

Then the soccer club jettisoned the plastic pitch altogether and applied for permission to construct a conventional grass pitch.

Last week, the planning committee voted down the idea by a narrow majority because of its apparent intrusion into the Green Belt. The decision, in this newspaper's opinion, was arrant nonsense.

As Cllr Len Hampton, perhaps the most experienced member of the committee, told his colleagues: "All we are doing is replacing a little bit of Green Belt with another bit of green. I can't see anything wrong in that."

Neither can we. If the club doesn't have a training pitch, its capacity for expansion will be severely limited. Further, it will be hampered in its admirable plans to encourage the young of the community to become more involved in its activities.

The council must think again — and quickly. The dream of Wycombe Wanderers to win promotion to the Football League proper, is a dream shared by all who recognise the additional prestige and prosperity it will bring to the town.