

App Ref: APP/17/01327 - HOOKS LANE, Hooks Lane, Havant, PO9
3DR - Sport England Ref: SE/HV/2018/47724/S

Owen Neal <Owen.Neal@sportengland.org>

Wed 17/01/2018 17:21

To: Planning and Development Shared Mailbox <planning.development@havant.gov.uk>;

Dear Daphney

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Summary: Sport England raises **no objection** to this application which is considered to meet exception E5 of our adopted Playing Fields Policy.

Sport England –Statutory Role and Policy

It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 74) and Sport England's policy on planning applications affecting playing fields 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (see link below): www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply.

The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field

The proposed development of a World Rugby Compliant floodlit 3G artificial grass rugby pitch (AGP), along with associated hard and soft landscaping, fencing, ancillary storage container and dugouts will result in the loss of the main grass rugby pitch at the site. Sport England notes that the topsoil bund around the 3G facility will require one of the remaining grass rugby pitches to be moved 5-6m north of its present location, but the playing field is considered capable of accommodating a reconfigured existing pitch layout so that there is no adverse effect on the sporting capability of the site. Havant Borough Council is currently developing a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for the area. While the draft assessment has yet to be agreed with the steering group and national governing bodies for sport, the initial findings show that there are quality issues with the current grass pitches and the site is overplayed as a result of significant use by Havant Rugby Club for both matches and training. The draft assessment work identifies the rugby club's plans to develop a rugby compliant artificial grass pitch; as well as the ancillary provision. The draft findings indicate that across the borough, there is a deficit in rugby pitch provision to meet demand.

Sport England has consulted the relevant national governing body, the RFU, on the proposal and has received the following comments. The RFU comment that Havant RFC is a priority site for the RFU, and the proposed AGP is supported through the RFU's new AGP strategy: rugby 365 which aims to deliver 100 new AGPs across the country with RFU support. The new facility will address overplay at the site and will also benefit other local clubs and partner organisations. The targeted clubs, who will be offered access to the new AGP, have been mapped onto the RFU People and Places Continuum and have been identified as having a need for additional capacity for both matches and floodlit training provision due to either the number of pitches they have on their sites and/or the quality of the pitch provision on their sites. The RFU can confirm that the AGP

has been designed to meet World Rugby regulation 22 performance standards and it will be delivered through the AGP framework to ensure the pitch meets World Rugby reg 22 and floodlighting standards in line with RFU guidance.

The RFU further comment that the key priority for the RFU is to grow the number of players in Hampshire and specifically the Havant / Portsmouth and Fareham area. Based on this current pitch capacity of Havant RFC it is the RFU's view that a World Rugby compliant AGP would provide a solution and mitigate the loss of a natural turf pitch. The RFU fully supports this application.

Assessment against Sport England Policy

This application relates to the provision of a new indoor/outdoor sports facility or facilities on the existing playing field at the above site. It therefore needs to be considered against exception E5 of the above policy, which states:

- E5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

I have therefore assessed the existing and proposed playing fields against the above policy to determine whether the proposals meet exception E5.

Sport England notes that the proposal will lead to the loss of one grass pitch at the site. However, the pitches are known to have quality issues and the initial findings from the borough's PPS show that the site is overplayed. The proposal, supported by the RFU, will help to alleviate these overplay issues as well as meet the matchplay and training needs of other local clubs in the area. Sport England therefore considers that the benefits to sport arising from the new outdoor facility outweigh the harm caused by the loss of playing field.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Given the above assessment, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application as it is considered to meet exception E5 of the above policy.

Sport England would also like to be notified of the outcome of the application through the receipt of a copy of the decision notice.

The absence of an objection to this application, in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement.

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact me at the address below.

Yours sincerely,

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