

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Sport England – Non Statutory Role and Policy

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications.

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities/>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to a residential development of 300 dwellings or more.

Sport England assesses this type of application in line with its planning objectives and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England's planning objectives are to PROTECT existing facilities, ENHANCE the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and to PROVIDE new facilities to meet demand. Further information on Sport England's planning objectives can be found here:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/>

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

Sport England considers that from a sports and recreation perspective, the principal matters in this reserved matters application relate to the proposed development of an outdoor MUGA (marked out for football and basketball) and a grassed area identified as "kickabout space for informal sports".

Sport England has concerns about the proposed siting of the outdoor MUGA in an isolated section of the park in the south away from the other main sports facilities to the north. Furthermore it is unlikely that a MUGA in such a location would meet community needs for sports where no ancillary facilities are proposed or are easily accessible. It is also unclear whether any fencing and floodlighting is proposed. Again, this will have a bearing on the suitability of a facility to meet community sport needs. Floodlighting will help to ensure that community usage can be maximised during the evenings. Unless the facility is well-managed and access can be securely controlled, there is risk of misuse, damage and vandalism. No details are provided in relation to compliance with Sport England's technical design guidance on MUGAs/Artificial surfaces, which can be found here:

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/>, and no details are provided in connection with the proposed management and maintenance arrangements for the facility.

In relation to the "kickabout space for informal sports", it is unclear as to what is actually proposed as distinct from open, green space and any potential benefits for sport. Is the intention to mark out football pitches for casual play and/or install a single set of goalposts? Again, it is unclear as to the management and maintenance arrangements for this area/pitch(es).

Sport England would expect to find supporting information underpinning the identified need for these facilities as part of the planning application. No such justification has been included within the supporting documents which accompany this application, and Sport England is unaware of any other local justification for its provision. As such, it is not possible to conclude that this proposal will be of benefit to the development of sport.

Conclusion

In light of the above considerations Sport England considers that further work is needed to ensure the proposed outdoor sports facilities to which this application relates will have real benefits for sport. Such considerations will need to focus on how the proposal will meet community needs; the proposed siting/location of the MUGA; the specification and design of the facilities including ancillary facilities (changing rooms/toilets) and effective management and maintenance arrangements. On this basis, Sport England wishes to **object** to this application as it is not considered to meet Objective 3 (provide new facilities to meet demand).

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Neal

Planning Manager

T: 02072731913

M:

F: 01628 472 410

E: Owen.Neal@sportengland.org