

17 August 2022

Planning Services
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza,
Civic Centre Road,
Havant PO9 2AX

Dear Sir

**Land at The Cowplain School, Hart Plain Avenue, Cowplain, Waterlooville, Hampshire,
Drainage works**

Further to our pre-application discussions, on behalf of our client Frontier Estates (WAT) Ltd and The Cowplain School, we enclose a full planning application for drainage works to the playing fields at The Cowplain School. This application is submitted concurrently with an application for a care home and residential dwellings, also on land at The Cowplain School.

The description of development is "*Drainage Works to improve drainage of school playing fields*".

The application is submitted with the Planning Portal under reference PP-11499428 and comprises the documents listed below (submitted electronically via the Planning Portal):

Application Form and Certificate of Ownership;
Site Location Plan –4528-WRD-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0082 P01 S3
Existing topographical survey – ref CVUJ804-001 Sheets 1 of 2 and 2 of 2
Drainage Design GMA0930.27 Rev 5
Drainage Specification document
Sports Field Assessment, July 2022, prepared by Grounds Management Association

In addition, the contents of this letter should be taken into account in the determination of the application.

The fee of £2060 will be paid by BACS transfer referencing the Planning Portal Reference.

Background

As noted above, this application is submitted concurrently with an application for a care home and residential dwellings. That application relates to land currently identified as playing pitches and hardstanding (as former tennis court).

In response to pre application comments by Sport England, that application is justified in part by improvements to the school playing pitches. This application seeks full planning permission for those works, as they are considered to be an 'engineering option'.

Site and Current Condition

The Cowplain School is located on Hart Plain Avenue. The playing pitches are located to the south west of the main school buildings. The playing pitches are bound by Hart Plain Avenue to the north, and 2 dwellings,

to the east by the school, to the west by the adjoining primary School, and further to the south by dwellings beyond the southern boundary.

The subject of this application is the area of playing field that lies outside of the red line for the care home. The playing pitches as a whole are currently circa 2.5ha. The area of the application is 1.88ha. To confirm, the existing 3G pitch and remainder of the school grounds remains unchanged by the proposal.

The current playing field comprises turf with various pitch options and running tracks marked out. There is also an old cricket pitch strip which is no longer used.

The current condition of the pitch is set out in the accompanying pitch report which confirms that:

The soil is slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clayey soils mostly with brown subsoils. There are some fine loamy and fine silty over clayey soils. In addition to being poorly drained, these soils are also prone to significant shrinkage on drying and swelling on wetting.

The ground conditions, and specifically the Clay Loam topsoil provide clear evidence of waterlogging for much of most winters, to depths of at least 500 mm.

The area of playing field of the proposed care home has weed cover of circa 30% and a thatch depth of 23.83mm, both of which fall outside SE recommendations for natural turf pitches. The remainder of the playing pitch has a similar issue of weed cover of 22% and thatch depth of 27.5mm, again, outside SE recommendations.

Thatch is particularly problematic for holding water and releasing when walked on and depths like those seen on this site indicate very wet ground conditions for prolonged periods.

Ultimately the report concludes:

“The key limiting factor on the usefulness and carrying capacity of the playing field is poor drainage due to the presence of a clay-dominated subsoil. Water can infiltrate into the well-structured topsoil but cannot move into the subsoil and thus gradually fills up the pore space in the topsoil until it is saturated.

Depending on weather conditions this may happen as early as October or as late as December, but once saturated the soil is unlikely to dry appreciably until spring, typically in March / April, again dependant on the weather.

The result is a sportsfield that cannot be used for most of winter and sometimes from late autumn through to the middle of spring”

Proposal

The proposal seeks the installation of pipes beneath the school playing fields. This is to enable the year round use of the playing fields, which at present suffer from drainage issues, preventing them from being used during winter months.

It is proposed that the new drainage scheme would be installed across most of the existing playing field.

The drainage system would consist of the laying of a network of pipes approx. 0.5m below ground level. The pipes would be laid within drainage shingle, with a layer of sand, with soil and grass seed above which would infill to ground level. Pipes would be laid in regular intervals at a north-western/south-eastern orientation across the playing fields. Water from these pipes would feed into collector pipes with a perpendicular orientation around the perimeter of the drainage system, which in turn would feed the detention basin of approximately 115m³. It is proposed that high density polyethylene (HDPE) perforated land pipes would be used. The drainage will discharge into the public network as existing.

With regard to design, the proposed development would principally be underground. The submitted drawings indicate that the proposed development would be infilled with top soil, sand and grass seed. Over

time therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would blend into the landscape, and not readily visible in the streetscene. In this regard, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in visual appearance terms.

The pitches will be constructed to Type 4 Standard.

The soil to be removed will be retained on site. The total arisings from the drainage works is circa 339 m³. The proposal is for the arisings are spread over an area of 1000 m² around the detention basin (avoiding scrub and trees) then this will raise that area by around 34 cm. This is diminimus in the context of land levels.

Once drainage works are in place the following pitches will be marked out as follows (noting this does not require planning permission in itself):

- Adult 11 a side 100m x 64m football pitch (including safety area)
- Youth 11 a side 73m x 46m football pitch (including 3m safety area)
- 94m x 68m +6m for goals rugby pitch (including 5m safety area)
- 8 lane running track
- Jump lane for long jump

The cricket strip is removed, in favour of sports played more frequently at the School. However, it does not preclude cricket being played in the future.

Justification and Relevant Issues

The proposal seeks to enhance the usability of the playing pitches for both the School and Community Use.

Policy context - This responds directly to Policy CS1 which supports sports facilities generally across the borough and SC7 which seeks to provide for educational improvements. The proposal fully complies with the thrust and aspirations of these policies. Policy DM1 does not directly apply, as although the works are development, they are to deliver continued and sustained use of the playing pitch. The assessment of the care home and residential units against DM1 is undertaken in that application.

Justification - Whilst the proposed development would involve development upon existing playing fields, it would nevertheless seek to improve the recreational use of these playing fields, through enabling year-round all-weather use. In the long-term, it is considered that the proposed development would result in an improved playing fields provision at the application site. The accompanying ground conditions report confirms that once improved the pitches will support an average of 468 hours of sports use. This is a significant improvement (and more than compensates for the 130.5 hours lost on the care home land).

Ecology and trees – Such considerations are not directly relevant to the application as it relates only to drainage works in the existing playing pitches and no trees are lost or known habitats affected. A tree protection plan can be controlled by condition if required.

Highways and access – Whilst the proposals have the potential to increase use by the local community, such usage would not represent a significant impact to traffic levels, particularly within the peak periods. The proposal does not require significant importation / exportation of materials from the field – representing instead minimal extraction through excavation of grooves, and associated replacement with infill material. The impacts of construction on the local highway network are not expected to be significant.

Impact on neighbours – the works to the pitches themselves will have no impact on neighbouring amenity, as they are below ground works. It should of course be noted that the school is able to use the pitches unrestricted and evening use is encouraged by the community. As such, noise is very unlikely to be a consideration, particularly noting that the closest neighbour is the Primary School.

On this basis, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and cause no harm to the character and appearance of the area, but rather deliver significant improvements to the usability of the playing pitches.

I trust the enclosed reflects our discussions and I look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been registered. Should you require any further information at this stage, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Emma Patchell
Senior Planner