

**From:** Sharron Wilkinson <Sharron.Wilkinson@sportengland.org>  
**Sent:** 04 January 2024 16:21  
**To:** Planning Folder New  
**Cc:** joseph.fleetwood@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk  
**Subject:** App No: 23/01164/FUL - Sports Hall with changing facilities, classrooms and car parking at Redmoor High School Academy Trust, Hinckley - Sport England ref: PA/23/EM/HIN/66445

Dear Joseph,

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

### **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 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 considers proposals affecting playing fields in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (in particular paragraph 103 that playing fields should not be built on) and against its own playing fields policy, which is presented within its 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document:' [www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy](http://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 would prejudice the use of all/part of a playing field. Exceptions to this policy are contained in the Playing Fields Policy Document.

### **The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field**

The proposal relates to the construction of a two storey sports hall building. Comprising of a 4-court sports hall measuring 34.5m x 20m with an internal ceiling height of a minimum of 7.5m, two changing rooms, equipment store, reception and fitness suite would all be provided on the ground floor. There would be four classrooms provided above the changing rooms. The proposed building would be sited on playing field land and would lead to the loss of part of this playing field which amounts to a loss of approximately 0.2 hectares.

### **Assessment against Sport England Policy/NPPF**

The proposal would lead to the loss of playing field land. The proposal therefore needs to be considered against the exceptions in Sport England's policy which accord with the specified justifications included in paragraph 103 of the NPPF. Sport England has assessed the proposal against exception 5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy (which is in accordance with paragraph 103 c) of the NPPF) which states:

*The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.'*

An assessment of the benefits of the indoor sports facility is thus required. In seeking to balance the potential loss of playing field against the provision of a new indoor sports facility, Sport England takes into consideration, amongst other matters, the following factors:

- The need for the facility – has this been identified in a local sport and recreation strategy, a governing body facility strategy or similar document?
- Technical suitability – does the proposed facility meet the specifications set out in Sport England's Guidance Notes or a relevant National Governing Body of Sport's Guidance Notes?
- Community availability – will the facility be available to the community and if so, will the terms of availability be clearly set out in a community use agreement?
- Sports development – will the facility be linked into the local sports development network?

- Local level of pitch provision – does the local area have a shortfall of playing pitches that would be exacerbated by the current proposal?
- Can replacement playing field be provided on the site and/or existing outdoor sports facilities enhanced to compensate for the loss of the playing field?

#### Need for the Facility

The application is accompanied by a “Sport England Summary Document” submitted by the agent. Information contained in this report states that the sports hall and additional classrooms are required to allow the number of school spaces to expand. Confirmation is provided on how the existing gym and changing rooms would be retained. Information is provided on the need for the new facility both for the school’s use and for a community use. Therefore, this bulleted point has been met.

#### Technical Suitability

With regards to technical suitability, the information submitted confirms that an internal measurement of 34.5 x 20 metres (690m<sup>2</sup>) would be provided. There would be an internal height over the sports hall of at least 7.5 metres. As such the sport hall would comply with Sport England’s technical guidance on the measurements for a 4-court community sports hall. A large equipment store is proposed accessed via two double doors from the hall. Further information has been provided on the floor surface and lighting scheme proposed for the sports hall. Technical guidance has been produced on the design of sports buildings - <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>. Further information on the technical design of the building is contained in the “Sport England Summary Document” which accompanies the planning application along with the markings for the sports which the hall would be used for. Therefore, it is considered that this bulleted point has been met.

#### Community Availability

Information contained in the “Sport England Summary Document” confirms that a community use agreement (CUA) will be submitted which includes community use of the sports hall in the evenings and weekends. This CUA should include access to car parking and spaces for disabled users close to the building along with a pedestrian access for use by the community from the car park to the sports building. Access to the changing rooms and toilet provision for community users of the grass pitches, the non turf cricket wicket and netball/tennis courts should also be included. Sport England has produced guidance on drawing up a community use agreement - <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>.

Confirmation is provided that no existing spaces or facilities would be demolished and so a construction phasing plan would not be required. It is considered that subject to the contents of the CUA, which should be submitted as part of a planning condition, then this bulleted point on community availability has been met.

#### Local Level of Pitch Provision

The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report (March 2019) (PPS) provides the evidence base for playing fields as required by paragraphs 102 and 103 of the NPPF. The playing fields at Redmoor High School are included in the PPS and at paragraph 10.65 it is stated that the school playing fields are particularly important to community use. The proposed siting of the sports building would result in the loss of a football pitch. There are 4 football pitches of standard quality included in the PPS for the site which are all used by the community. The issue raised at the site is that there is no spare capacity at peak time and that the youth pitch is overplayed when also taking into account curricular activity.

The PPS concludes that there is a need to protect existing pitches if football participation is to be retained. There are a high number of teams using pitches and this is generating overplay as experienced at the Redmoor High School site. The pitches at Redmoor High School were existing at the time of writing the PPS and so are included in this statement that they need to be protected.

The Information contained in the “Sport England Summary Document” relates to the current community use of the school site for football. Three pitches are used comprising of a 9v9 pitch, 11v11 youth pitch and 11v11 pitch. Summer and Winter Sport Pitch Layout Plans are provided showing how these three football pitches/one rugby pitch would continue to be marked out on the remaining playing field land in the winter and how cricket and athletics would be provided in the summer. The information acknowledges that the proposed sports hall would result in the loss of an informal pitch which is used during break times. However, the benefits of an indoor sports facility that can be used for 5-a-side football and other sports and the provision of additional toilet and changing facilities would outweigh the loss of this informal playing pitch. Therefore, it is considered that this bulleted point has been met.

### Replacement Playing Field

Sport England has been involved in a pre-application enquiry for this proposal. In the response sent, it was suggested that an alternative location for siting the sports hall should be assessed which would have involved land not being used as a playing pitch. Information has been submitted by the applicant justifying why this alternative location for siting the sports hall is not possible. It is considered that this bulleted point has been met.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the application submission and the above assessment it is considered that the benefits to sport from the proposed sports hall would outweigh the loss of playing field when assessed against Exception E5 in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 103 c) of the NPPF. Therefore, Sport England has **no objections** to this proposal provided the following planning conditions are attached to the decision notice if the local planning authority is minded to approve the proposal:

### **Protection of Playing Field**

**Condition** ....Prior to the commencement of any development on the site, a construction fence shall be erected along the western boundary of the proposed building as shown in red on the Location Plan (Drw No: 01 rev P2) . This construction fence line (limit of works) shall remain in place throughout the duration of the construction activity and no works/storage shall take place on the playing field area which lies outside of this fence.

**Reason** .....To ensure that there is no impediment to the ability to use the retained playing field at the site during construction of the approved development in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (2023).

A pre-commencement condition is required to ensure that this construction fence is in place prior to any development commencing on site to ensure that the construction activity does not encroach onto the adjoining playing field and impact its use.

### **Community Use Agreement**

**Condition** ... No development shall commence above foundation level of the building hereby approved until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the local planning authority. The agreement shall include use of the sports hall, fitness suite, changing rooms, external grass playing pitches, non turf cricket wicket and external netball/tennis courts along with access to the car park and shall include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

**Reason** ... To secure well managed safe community access to the sport facility and the remaining playing field land to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with the NPPF (2023).

Informative:

More information on Community Use Agreements including a model template is available on Sport England's website: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>

If you wish to amend the wording or use another mechanism in lieu of the above conditions, please discuss the details with the undersigned. Sport England does not object to amendments to its recommended conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and it is consulted on any amendments.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, Sport England would like to be notified in advance of the meeting date and the publication of any committee agendas and report(s). Sport England would also like to be notified of the outcome of the application through the receipt of a copy of the decision notice.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Sharron Wilkinson MRTPI  
Planning Manager, Planning & Active Environments

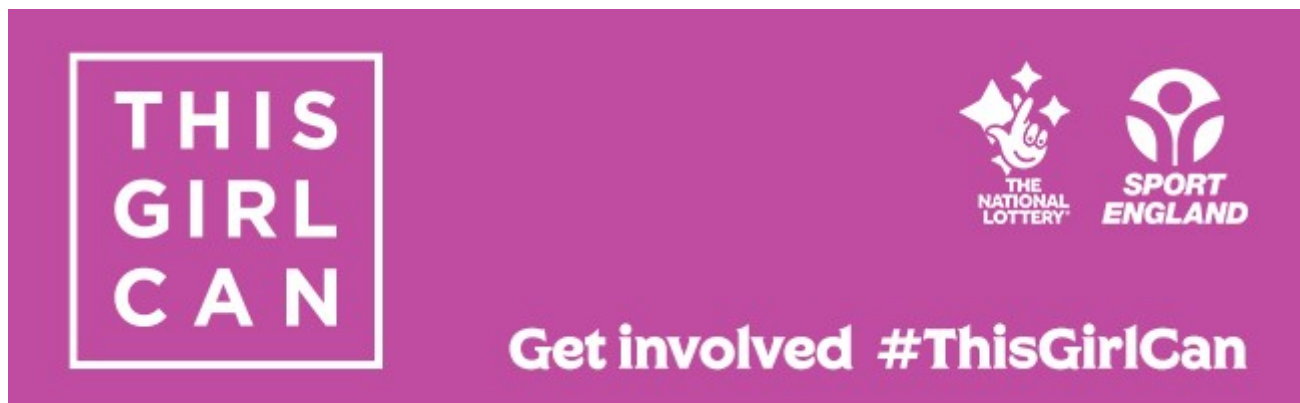
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