

FAO: Joseph Fleetwood

By email

13th August 2024

**Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England)
Order 2015**

Application Reference: 24/00711/FUL

Site: Air source heat pumps and solar array

Proposal: Sport in Desford, Peckleton Lane, Desford

Sport England Reference: PA/24/EM/HIN/68389

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Sport England – Statutory consultee role and policy

We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 103, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within our 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document':

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, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions. A summary of the exceptions is provided in the annex to this response.

The Proposal and its Impact on the playing field

The proposal relates to the provision of external air source heat units located in the car park to the north of the existing sports centre building. Internal air source heat pumps would be provided within an existing boiler room along with solar array attached to the north-west apex of the sports centre's roof.

The definition of playing field in the NPPF relates to the whole of the site which contains a playing pitch. The application site would be classed as playing field as defined in the NPPF.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

The proposal would be sited on playing field. Sport England considers proposals of this nature against exception 2 of our playing fields policy which states:

'The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.'

In assessing whether a proposal meets exception 2, facilities should be of an appropriate scale and comply with relevant Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport design guidance. They should also have no impact on the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

The siting of the air source heat pumps and solar array would not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches at the site and would comprise of ancillary facilities which would support the principal use of this site as a playing field.

Conclusion

Based on the above, Sport England has **no objections** to the proposal which would meet exception 2 of our playing fields policy and the requirements of paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this response further.

Yours sincerely,

Sharron Wilkinson MRTPI

Planning Manager, Sport England

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Annex

The Five Exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy

Exception 1

A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

Exception 2

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

Exception 3

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site;
- or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

Exception 4

The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

Exception 5

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.

The full 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document' is available to view at:

www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy