

From: Sharron Wilkinson <Sharron.Wilkinson@sportengland.org>
Sent: 08 April 2024 16:05
To: Planning Folder New
Cc: Matt Jedruch
Subject: App No: 23/01139/REM - Approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to condition 2 of 15/00188/OUT (sports pitches) at Land North East of Triumph Motorcycles, Hinckley - Sport England ref: PA/24/EM/HIN/67198

Dear Matt Jedruch,

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the application submitted for approval of reserved matters pursuant to condition 2 (landscaping) of outline planning permission ref: 15/00188/OUT for the delivery of sports pitches and associated landscaping. The application also relates to details submitted as required under conditions 11 (Details of Walls, Fences and Gates) and 12 (Existing and Proposed Ground Levels).

The site is not considered to form part of, or constitute a playing field as defined The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). Therefore, Sport England has considered this a non-statutory consultation.

The provision of new sports facilities should be assessed against Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) which aims to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places through the provision of sports facilities. The development proposal should also be assessed against Sport England's planning objectives which are to protect, enhance and provide opportunities for sport as follows:

- Protect - To protect the right opportunities in the right places;
- Enhance - To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision;
- Provide - To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Further information on the objectives and Sport England's wider planning guidance can be found on its website: <http://www.sportengland.org/planningforsport>

The Proposal

Outline permission ref: 15/00188/OUT required the provision of 3.28 hectares of formal sport pitch provision along with a community facility building on the site. One hectare of this playing field land was to be provided for use by the school.

The submission includes a revised Landscape Masterplan (ref: DE_155_SP_002), Landscape Sections, Tree Survey Plan and Proposed Cut and Fill Plan. The Landscape Masterplan shows the proposed layout of 3 adult football pitches on this area of land proposed for formal sport pitch provision. The legend included on the plan states that the football pitches would have a grass surface suitable for game situations, a 0.2 wide perimeter ditch and would be of a specification and construction to Sport England standards or similar approved.

Sport England is unable to view the covering letter mentioned by the Green Space Manager in their consultation response dated 14 March 2024. This consultation response makes reference to a land drain being proposed to be installed to the south of the eastern playing pitch. However, the two pitches to the west would not have a land drain to intercept surface water run-off.

As part of the assessment of the details submitted Sport England has sought the views of the Football Foundation (FF) who act as Sport England's technical advisors in relation to their sport and its facilities. Their comments are summarised below:

- *The FF requires an agronomist report to be submitted to assess the condition of the pitches. Pre-construction, the FF recommends the following guidance for grass pitches:*

- **Design** - A qualified and suitably experienced sports turf consultant, agronomist, soil scientist or land drainage engineer must be employed to carry out a feasibility study, design and specification of the Natural Turf Pitches.
 - **Construction** – The construction of Natural Turf Pitches should be project managed and/or signed off by the same registered agronomist or sports turf consultant that produced the design. The pitches should be constructed by a specialist pitch contractor and not a general civil engineering contractor.
 - **Quality** – Pitches should pass a PQS assessment to a ‘Good’ standard for football as defined by the Grounds Management Association (GMA) Pitch Grading Framework before they are used. The assessment should be carried out, by the site owner/operator/maintainer via the Football Foundation’s PitchPower app. The on-going quality of the pitch/es should then be tracked using the PitchPower app twice a year. Please follow this link to PitchPower <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/pitchpower/how-it-works>
 - **Maintenance** - In order to keep the quality of the pitches, an appropriate maintenance programme is agreed in-line with the design consultant recommendations. A 12-month defect period which includes contractor led/priced maintenance should be included within the construction contract.
 - **Site maintenance staff/volunteer's qualifications** - it is highly recommended that any individual involved with the maintenance of a site should become qualified through a recognised training provider such as the GMA, please follow this link to the courses available online - <https://www.thegma.org.uk/learning/training> Any individual groundskeeper could also sign up to the Groundskeeping Community: <https://footballfoundation.hivelearning.com/join>
- Leicestershire & Rutland FA is unaware of any clubs that have been consulted on the use of the site. The Hinckley & Bosworth Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is now at Stage B so the outcomes of this may determine what is needed with this development.
 - The FF has no further information on the proposal for the clubhouse. Consultation is recommended with the County FA and local clubs to ensure that their requirements for the clubhouse are met.

Assessment against Sport England’s Objectives and the NPPF

As included in the comments made by the Football Foundation, the application submission lacks a detailed agronomist’s report to demonstrate the suitability of the site to support pitches along with the programme of work/specification to deliver the pitches identified in the plan provided. An Agronomist Report would provide the evidence that the pitches would be designed in accordance with Sport England’s *Natural Turf for Sport Design Guidance Note (2011)* and so should include details on the type of soil to be used, whether drainage is required (and the drainage system proposed), the cultivation and seeding of the surface and the management regime for the pitches. Without this information Sport England is unable to advise the Council on whether the proposal would secure a good quality sports facility which is “fit for purpose” and so would not result in additional costs being incurred in the future to make further alterations after the pitches had been constructed.

Conclusion

As discussed above, this proposed new sports facility has the potential to create a new opportunity for sport to meet the needs of current and future generations. To ensure that the playing pitches are constructed and maintained to a good quality standard and so are “fit for purpose” and available for community use, Sport England would advise that the local planning authority secures the following information for assessment before determining the planning application:

1. An agronomy report which undertakes a detailed site survey and provides evidence that the pitches are to be designed and maintained in accordance with Sport England’s *Natural Turf for Sport Design Guidance Note (2011)*.

In providing any further information, Sport England would ask that the applicant submits this to the local planning authority and not to Sport England directly. That way it forms part of the application submission and its associated audit trail. The local planning authority can then consult Sport England on receipt of this information

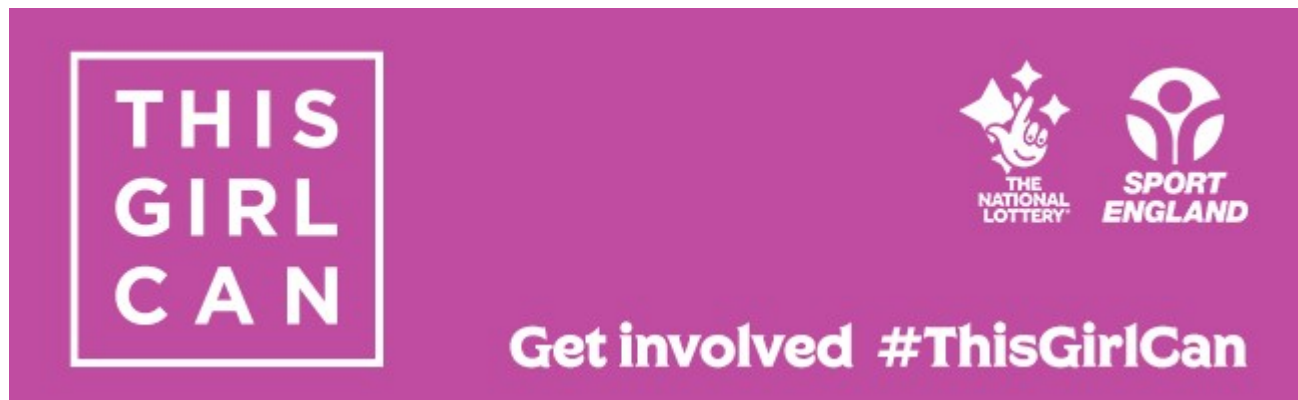
Yours sincerely,

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