

From: Sharron Wilkinson <Sharron.Wilkinson@sportengland.org>
Sent: 15 August 2023 17:04
To: Planning Folder New
Subject: App No: 23/00355/FUL - Proposed Office Block and Parking at Leicester Road FC, Hinckley - Sport England ref: PA/23/EM/HIN/64566

Good afternoon Matt,

Thank you for your email dated 4 August 2023 containing additional information on the above proposal. The additional information relates to an email and attachments from the Chairman of Hinckley Rugby Club containing evidence of access rights and land ownership over parts of the application site.

As part of the assessment of this information Sport England has sought the views of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the Football Foundation (FF). The RFU and FF act as Sport England's technical advisors in relation to their sport and its facilities. A summary of their comments is provided as follows:

RFU

- The RFU confirm that they have spoken to the Rugby Club and have viewed the letter from Louise Ingram at Shakespeare Martineau (12.12.21) which is referenced in the additional information;
- The solicitor's letter seems to clarify that the Rugby Club has a right of access along the roadway adjacent to the football stadium.
- The proposed office development would appear to be sited on this right of access.
- The applicant should look at relocating the proposed new office development away from this right of access.

FF

- Clarification should be sought that emergency access is available from the AGP to the Leicester Sports ground access.

Assessment of Additional Information against Sport England Policy/NPPF

Exception 3 in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy allows developments which 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.*

The concerns raised by the Football Foundation and the Rugby Football Union are that the siting of the office building and parking spaces would impact on the current emergency access for the artificial grass pitch (AGP) and access to the rugby pitches. As such, the scheme could result in the inability to use these playing pitches due to a health and safety risk to users and so the proposal would prejudice the use of the remaining area of playing field on the site. Therefore, the proposal would not meet the requirements of exception 3.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Sport England continues to **object** to the layout of this proposal which does not meet any of the exceptions in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or any of the specified criteria in paragraph 99 in the NPPF in that the proposal would have a prejudicial impact on the use of existing playing pitches.

Possible Resolution

1. Submission of an amended Site Location Plan showing the land within the ownership of the applicant outlined in red and other land owned by the applicant outlined in blue.

2. Evidence that the access routes from the playing pitches (including the emergency access from the AGP) would not be obstructed by the proposed development scheme.

Yours sincerely,

Sharron Wilkinson
Planning Manager

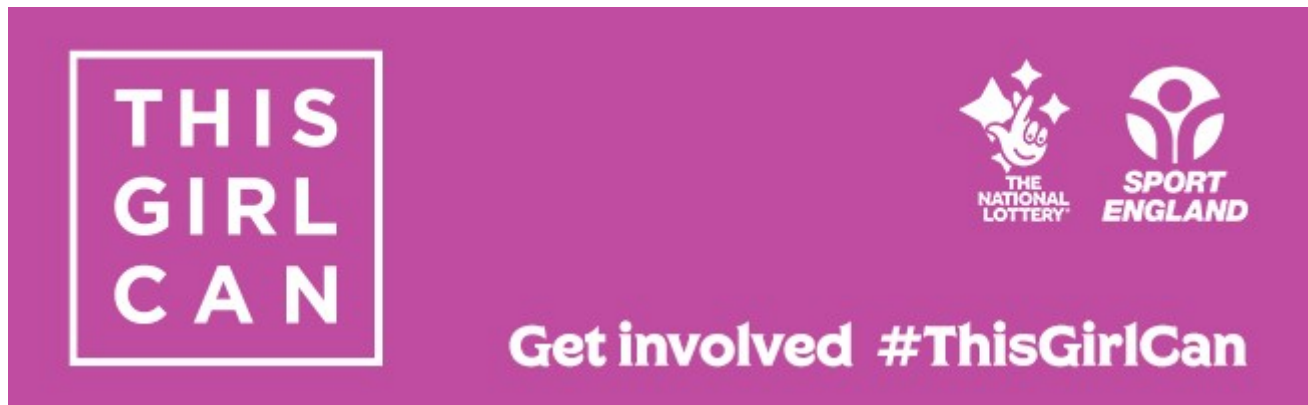
Sport England

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WINNER



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