

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

FAO: Joseph Fleetwood

By email

7th February 2025

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

Application Reference: 24/00980/FUL

Site: RATBY SPORTS CLUB, DESFORD LANE, RATBY LE6 0LE

Proposal: Change of use of existing north sports pavilion (F2 Local community) to educational facility (F1 Learning and non-residential institutions). Including the external alterations, the addition of block paved hardstanding and a new access gate to the north sports pavilion and the addition of an external staircase and a lift to the south sports pavilion.

Sport England Reference: PA/24/EM/HIN/69110

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the additional information submitted in relation to the above application.

Sport England commented on this application by formal response dated 26th November 2024. Sport England raised a statutory objection to the application because it was not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to our Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 103 (now 104) of the NPPF. Our comments recognised that while the proposal does not comply with any of the exceptions, there was potential for the completion of the unfinished southern pavilion to provide a benefit to sport which may be of sufficient benefit to overcome Sport England's objection. Additional information was requested to address the following points:

- A suitable mechanism be put in place to secure the completion of the southern pavilion within an agreed timescale.
- Additional information be provided to confirm whether any sporting use remains in the northern pavilion and to demonstrate that suitable facilities would remain in place for the sports clubs during the time taken to complete the works to the southern pavilion.

Additional information has been submitted which provides ground floor plans for the northern pavilion (former cricket pavilion) and the southern pavilion. We

understand that the northern pavilion has now been converted and is used by the school and the four changing rooms in the southern pavilion have been completed and are used by sports clubs.

The plans provided shown the northern pavilion had one small changing room with a total floorspace of 13.5 m² and changing area of 9.4m². The pavilion also included a clubroom, kitchen and toilets.

In total the 4 changing rooms in the southern pavilion have a floorspace of 98.2m² with a changing area of 62.3m². The proposed floorplans for the southern pavilion show that a community/ club room and toilets would be provided on the first floor along with 2 meeting rooms. These areas are shown on the existing plan as open areas. In addition, amendments are proposed to the ground floor to enable an officials' room to be provided.

While they don't result in an overall increase in the floorspace of the southern pavilion, the amendments proposed will go some way to replacing the facilities which have been lost through the conversion of the northern pavilion. While this would not provide a replacement for the northern pavilion in accordance with exception 4 of our Playing Fields Policy, in principle we are satisfied that the completion of the unfinished southern pavilion with the amendments proposed would be of sufficient benefit to sport to overcome our objection. This would however be reliant on ensuring that the completion of the pavilion is secured within a suitable timeframe.

Sport England's Position

In principle we are satisfied that the completion of the unfinished southern pavilion with the amendments proposed would be of sufficient benefit to sport to overcome our objection, however the need for a mechanism to secure the completion of the pavilion within a suitable time frame needs to be resolved before we can remove our objection. As such, we currently maintain our objection but anticipate that this could be removed once this matter is resolved.

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact the undersigned

Yours sincerely,

Julia Baish

Planning Manager

E: Julia.baish@sportengland.org

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