

Matt Jedruch and Lesley Keal
Development Management
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub
Rugby Road
Hinckley
LE10 OFR

9th July 2024

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Dear Matt and Lesley,

LAND WEST OF NORMANDY WAY, HINCKLEY: RESERVED MATTERS AND DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS APPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE DELIVERY OF SPORTS PITCHES (PLANNING APPLICATION REFS: 23/O1139/REMM AND 23/O1169/DISCON)

I write with reference to the related Reserved Matters (RM) and Discharge of Conditions (DoC) applications (refs: 23/O1139/REMM and 23/O1169/DISCON) that have been submitted by Bloor Homes Limited (BHL) to facilitate the delivery of sports pitches pursuant to the approved outline planning permission (OPP) for the Normandy Fields development (ref: 15/OO188/OUT).

We welcome the comments received from the Green Spaces Team regarding the updated detailed plans as submitted on 1st March 2024, and separately following an email sent by myself on 10th April 2024 in relation to Sport England's (SE) request for an agronomists assessment. For reference, the comments from the Green Spaces team were received on 21st March 2024 (via email from Lesley Keal) and 20th May 2024 (as uploaded to the Council's application portal).

In response to those comments, I attach alongside this letter an updated Landscape Masterplan (ref: DE_155_SP_001 RevE) and Landscape Sections (ref: DE_155_SP_003 RevD), as well as detail relating to the drainage strategy (ref: M1100-EN-261F). This letter summarises the amendments that have been made to the detailed proposals to address the comments raised, and provides clarifications in relation to the minor queries from the Green Spaces Team; which we trust will be sufficient to allow for the approval of the above RM and DoC applications.

Drainage:

We note that the Green Spaces Team have sought further clarity regarding surface water drainage, and have requested that land drains are shown on the detailed drawings. That detail is now shown in the updated Landscape Masterplan. The proposed land drains are also shown on the submitted Sports Pitch Levels Plan, which provides further detail regarding the drainage strategy and the construction of pitches.

As highlighted in those plans, two further land drains are proposed as requested. They are located on the western side of the western pitch, and between the western and central pitches. Both land drains will be orientated north-south and will connect to an east-west drain that will run to the south of the two pitches. Surface water will travel along those drains before outfalling at the south-western corner of the RM area, to the west of the public footpath. As requested by the officer, that will ensure that the footpath and proposed landscaping does not become flooded.

As highlighted on the updated Landscape Masterplan, a French drain is proposed at the southern end of the eastern pitch; reflecting the proposed levels strategy in this area. Surface water will then outfall at the south-eastern corner of the RM area.

We welcome the Green Spaces Officer's comment that the inclusion of additional land drains will "*greatly alleviate*" the potential flooding of areas surrounding the site, and trust that the amended proposals are acceptable. However, to provide additional comfort, I note that BHL have applied for land drainage consent for the discharge of water from the proposed land drains.

Construction:

It is noted that the Green Spaces Team have sought further detail regarding the construction of the pitches. To facilitate the construction of the pitches, an earthworks exercise will firstly be undertaken to create the subsoil formation. The pitches will then be finished by spreading 300mm of site won, clean topsoil to the levels indicated on the design. Sports pitch build-up details are also shown on the submitted 'Sports Pitch Levels' plan for reference.

Soft and Hard Landscaping:

We welcome the Green Space Officer's confirmation that the proposed amendments to the hard and soft landscaping are positive. Minor amendments have been incorporated within the Landscape Masterplan to ensure that this aligns with the Sports Pitch Levels details, but that relates only to a minor shift of the proposed footpath between the eastern and central pitches.

It is noted that there is a very small overlap between the area that is earmarked for the potential future expansion of the primary school (hatched in blue in the Landscape Masterplan) and the north-south footpath. It is not yet known whether the school expansion will come forward but, if the land is required in due course, pedestrians would be able to follow the tarmacked area to the east of the potential club house, and then follow the footpath to access the public right of way that travels east-west at the north of the RM area. We trust that this arrangement is acceptable to the Council.

Proposed Condition:

Comments were received from SE on 8th April 2024 seeking the submission of an agronomists report. As set out in my email dated 10th April 2024, our strong view is that the request is not justified. That is because (i) this is an RM application pursuant to an approved OPP, and the OPP did not require an agronomists report by condition, and (ii) SE are not a statutory consultee on this application (as they recognise in their response). We note the correspondence between Matt Jedruch and Ian Pinfold that has been uploaded to the Council's application portal (dated 20th May 2024), which appears to accept our position in that regard; which is welcomed.

However, within that exchange, a compliance condition was informally suggested for the pitches to be "*designed and maintained in accordance with Sport England's Natural Turf for Sport Design Guidance Note (2011)*." However, SE's guidance is not mandatory for all new pitches (as guidance rather than national policy), and compliance with that guidance was not requested by SE at the OPP stage, and is not required by condition or secured through the Section 106 agreement.

As highlighted by Ian Pinfold, that would require BHL to undertake an agronomist assessment (which, as above, is not justified), in addition to much more stringent requirements. Compliance with SE's guidance would require the pitches to be built to a much higher specification than is envisaged or required through the OPP. That would add quite significant costs at the assessment, design and construction stage; which are clearly unjustified.

SE's guidance also sets out significant maintenance requirements; in terms of employing specialist turf maintenance contractors, purchasing and use of equipment, the nature and frequency of the maintenance scheme, etc. It is envisaged that the playing pitches will be transferred to the Council in due course, and therefore there is a risk that there could be a significant maintenance burden; both in terms of cost and resource.

Clearly, the burden of additional information, site assessments, cost and resources associated with an SE compliant proposal would be very significant, and are simply not required by the OPP. On the other hand, the proposals as illustrated in the updated detailed plans proportionately reflect the requirements of the OPP, and would deliver well-designed and easily manageable sports pitches set in an attractive landscaped area. In that regard, the proposed condition is not justified, and should not be attached to the approval of these applications.

I trust that the amended proposals and above clarifications are sufficient for the approval of the pending RM and DoC applications. However, if you have any queries in the meantime, then please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Perkins." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sam Perkins
Senior Planner