

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

FAO: Laura Ashton

By email only

5 October 2026

Planning Practice Guidance: Non-statutory consultees – Paragraph 022

Reference ID: 15-022-20140306

Application Reference: 25/01192/FUL

Site: EMEB Sports and Social Club, Nutts Lane, Hinckley, LE10 0NT

Proposal: Erection of an industrial/logistics unit within flexible B2/B8 Use Class (General Industrial/Storage and Distribution) with associated landscaping, yard, parking, access and other supporting infrastructure

Sport England Reference: PA/25/EM/HIN/72693

Thank you for consulting Sport England on further information submitted for the above application.

Sport England has previously raised concerns about the proposal in its consultation response dated 15 January 2026.

The applicant has submitted the appeal decision for Land North of Rounds Gardens, Rugby (APP/E3715/W/25/3373251). In that case, the playing pitch had last been used some 23 years earlier. The Inspector found that it did not remotely read as having such a purpose as it now functioned informally as a “not insubstantial attenuation pond for the surrounding urban environment.”

In contrast, the playing pitches were marked out on the application site as recently as 2018 (see Google Earth image below). The site was included in the Hinckley and Bosworth BC Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) as having pitches.

Sport England’s Active Places Power database records the site (Hammond Park) as providing an 11v11 junior football pitch and a 7v7 football pitch for community use with changing facilities and car parking. The database, updated on 28 February 2025, states that the site closed in 2018.



As confirmed in the applicant's Planning Statement (December 2025) submitted with the application and information included on the application form, the existing use of the application site is a playing field as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. There is no evidence or argument put forward of any other lawful land use. The recent planning permission granted at the site for a solar array has not been implemented.

The Planning Statement also notes that most of the site is designated as Site HIN45 in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016) – as outdoor sports facility designated within Policy DM8 (Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities).

The site's lawful use therefore remains a playing field as not material change of use has occurred. Policy HC7 of the NPPF (2026) states that "*development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments*" unless one of four exemption criteria applies. Policy HC7 does not differentiate between used or unused playing fields or between public or private ownership.

The proposal would result in the loss of the entire 1.3 hectare playing field and the amendments do not explain how this resulting loss would be replaced. Sport

England therefore has no further comments on them. The conclusion section of our response dated 15 January 2026 has been updated below solely to reflect changes to national planning policy arising from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026.

Having assessed the further information, including the appeal decision, Sport England confirms that the amendments do not alter its previous consultation response.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, Sport England maintains its **non-statutory objection**. The proposal would not accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's playing fields policy or with Policy HC7 of the NPPF (2026) in that the proposal would lead to the loss of playing field land in an area where a surplus in the provision of playing fields cannot be demonstrated. There would also be conflict with the Council's Development Plan Policies which provide equivalent protection to playing fields.

Sport England would be pleased to comment on any further documents/amended plans which address the above comments. 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 pre-application submission and its associated audit trail. The local planning authority can then consult Sport England on receipt of this information.

Yours sincerely,

Sharron Wilkinson, MRTPI
Planning Manager, Sport England