

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: App Ref: 6/2015/2524/FULL - Stanborough School, Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6YR (Sport England Ref: E/WH/2016/41838/S)
Date: 08 February 2016 09:18:36

For the attention of Rachel Collard

Dear Ms. Collard

App Ref: 6/2015/2524/FULL - Stanborough School, Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6YR (Sport England Ref: E/WH/2016/41838/S)

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Summary: Sport England raises **no objection** to this application as a statutory consultee which is considered to meet exception E5 of our adopted Playing Fields Policy. The principle of the application is supported as a non-statutory consultee. It is requested that an informative be added to the decision notice regarding facility design.

Sport England –Statutory Role and Policy

It is understood that the site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 74) and Sport England's policy on planning applications affecting playing fields 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (see link below): www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply.

The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field

The proposal involves an extension to the existing netball courts at Stanborough School which would encroach onto the adjoining playing field area. In addition, the enlarged netball court area is proposed to be floodlit through the installation of 16 floodlighting columns.

Assessment against Sport England Policy

This application relates to the provision of a new outdoor sports facility on the existing playing field at the above site. It therefore needs to be considered against exception E5 of the above policy, which states:

- E5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the

loss of the playing field or playing fields.

I have therefore assessed the existing and proposed playing fields against the above policy to determine whether the proposals meet exception E5.

In terms of the benefits to sport, the school's existing netball court area can only accommodate six netball courts which meet the dimensions required for netball. Through providing a relatively modest extension to the area it will be possible to provide three further courts. The installation of sports lighting across the whole of the extended court area will allow the courts to be used in the evenings and other periods of poor daylight. While these proposals will help the school to meet its PE curriculum and extra-curricular needs, the main driver for the proposals is to meet community netball requirements. Netball is a high participation sport in Hertfordshire and Stanborough School is one of the key venues for the hosting netball leagues and tournaments in the county. However, the absence of lighting prevents evening use of the courts for the majority of the year which prevents evening matches and training taking place while the current size of the court area restricts the number of matches that can simultaneously take place. Community netball works operates on a central venue basis where a small number of sites are used for accommodating a significant amount of netball activity which takes place at the same time, hence the need to maximise the number of courts that the site can accommodate. I have consulted England Netball, the governing body, who have confirmed that this project is a strategic priority and if implemented will provide a venue for local and strategic netball activity. England Netball have been working closely with the school and the project designers to ensure that the design meets their technical specifications. Furthermore, as set out in Welwyn Hatfield Council's Sports Facility Strategy (2012), one of the strategy proposals is to ensure netball is integral to any new/upgraded multi-use games area (MUGA) by 2016 and in the action plan there is a specific action relating to securing additional netball facilities at two MUGAs in the Borough as part of their surface marking and lighting improvements in response to recent growth in netball demand in the area. It is therefore considered that this proposal represents a positive response to the priorities identified in the strategy and would help deliver its action plan. In summary, the potential sport related benefits of this project are considered to be significant especially to community netball.

In relation, to the impact on the playing field, the netball court extension would involve a 12.5 metre encroachment into a narrow strip of playing field between the courts and the site boundary. This area is considered to be too small to be used for pitch sports due the limited area available and irregular shape. Aerial photos indicate that the area is not marked out for playing pitches. Consequently, the impact on the playing field is considered to be minimal.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Given the above assessment, Sport England **does not wish to raise an objection** to this application as a statutory consultee as it is considered to clearly meet exception E5 of the above policy. On this occasion, no planning conditions are requested although an informative relating to design is requested as set out below.

Comments made as a Non-Statutory Consultee

As a non-statutory consultee, without prejudice to our position as a statutory consultee

set out above, Sport England would wish to make comments on the following issues:

Principle of the Development

Sport England has assessed the application in the light of its Planning for Sport Aims and Objectives Guide (2013) www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/ which is consistent with the NPPF. Objective 2 of this guide relates to enhancing the quality, accessibility and management of existing sports facilities.

The proposed development would provide a significantly enhanced sports facility that would help address local and strategic needs for community netball as set out above. The proposals are considered to meet the above objective therefore. Sport England would therefore wish to confirm its **support** for the principle of the proposed development as a non-statutory consultee. As set out above, I can also confirm that England Netball are fully supportive of the project.

Design

Detailed attention to facility design can make a significant difference to the utility and quality of a proposed sports facility. To this end, Sport England and the sports governing bodies have developed detailed guidance on expectations for good facility design. England Netball have advised that they are working closely with the applicant to ensure that the design of the courts and lighting meet their technical requirements so Sport England does not have any concerns about the design. However, to help ensure that the project does accord with the appropriate guidance, it is **requested that an informative** is decision notice if the application is approved advising that the proposals should be designed in accordance with England Netball's technical guidance which is on their website at http://www.englandnetball.co.uk/make-the-game/Facilities_and_Courts

Lighting

If the design of the proposed lighting scheme is material to the assessment of the planning application, I would recommend that consideration be given to Sport England's 'Artificial Sports Lighting' guidance note (2012) www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-facilities/. If planning permission is granted, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to the detail of any condition that may be imposed by the Council relating to the hours of use of the lighting or the courts in order to ensure that any restrictions do not prejudice the proposed evening use of the netball courts which in turn may restrict the ability of the school to secure external funding to implement the proposal. If the Council is minded to impose any such restrictions they should be discussed with the applicant to ensure that they do not compromise the delivery of the scheme. If the Council proposes to impose a planning condition on this matter, consideration should be given to using condition 15 from our model conditions schedule on our website at www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications/.

Sport England would like to be notified of the outcome of the application through the receipt of a copy of the decision notice.

The absence of an objection to this application in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, does not in any way commit Sport England or any National Governing

Body of Sport to support for any related funding application.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact me at the address below.

Yours sincerely,

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