

**From:** [Roy Warren](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Cc:** [David Elmore](#)  
**Subject:** App Ref: 6/2019/0085/FULL - Chancellors School, Pine Grove, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, AL9 7BN  
**Date:** 05 March 2019 17:16:44

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For the attention of David Elmore

Dear Mr. Elmore

**App Ref: 6/2019/0085/FULL - Chancellors School, Pine Grove, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, AL9 7BN (Sport England Ref: PA/18/E/WH/51286)**

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 5 of our adopted Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 97 of the NPPF subject to two planning conditions being imposed relating to the following matters as set out in this response:

- Multi-Use Games Area Design Specifications;
- Community Use Agreement;

The application is supported as a non-statutory consultee and advisory comments are made on design issues

### **Sport England - Statutory Role and Policy**

It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, 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 light of the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular Para. 97), and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or

land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped,  
or

- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.' Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can be viewed via the below link:

[www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy](http://www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy)

### **The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field**

In summary, it is proposed to site a sports hall building and additional car parking on the site of Chancellors School's existing multi-use games area (MUGA) and provide a replacement MUGA on the north west area of the adjoining natural turf playing field.

### **Assessment against Sport England Policy/NPPF**

As the application relates to the provision of new indoor and outdoor sports facilities on the existing playing field, it therefore needs to be considered against exception 5 of the above policy, which states:

- 5 - 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 5.

### *Sports Development Benefits*

The key potential sports development benefits of the proposed development are considered to be as follows:

- Sports Hall: A new four (badminton) court sports hall would provide a modern indoor sports facility for meeting the Chancellors School's current and future curricular and extra-curricular PE and sport needs. At present, the school only has access to two small dated 1960s gyms in the main school building which was not designed for meeting the school's current indoor sports needs and has a number of deficiencies including its size which would not be suitable for meeting the dimensions required for many of the most common indoor sports and its design would not meet current sports hall design guidance. Furthermore, the gyms would not have the capacity to meet the requirements of an expanded school. The sports hall would provide a modern fit for purpose sports hall which

would address all of the existing deficiencies and allow the school to use it for a wide range of sports and physical many of which cannot be satisfactorily delivered at present. In addition to the sports hall itself, a new set of changing rooms would be provided for supporting the sports hall and the outdoor sports facilities which would be superior to the school's existing changing facilities. The design of the building would also allow one of the new classrooms to be used for social events linked to school and community sports use due to proposed external terrace overlooking the playing fields.

The facility would be made available for community use outside of school hours which would offer potential to meet unmet local community needs. In this regard, Welwyn Hatfield Council's Sports Facility Strategy (2012) assessed community sports facility needs in the area and in response, identified a need for 2-3 additional sports halls to be provided in the district by 2026 to meet future needs (although the needs assessment is currently being reviewed by the Council). While a new sports hall with community access has recently been provided at Bishops Hatfield Girls School to help meet part of this identified need, an additional sports hall on the Chancellor's School site would offer potential to meet the remaining part of this need. Furthermore, there are no community accessible sports halls in Brookmans Park village itself. Residents therefore need to travel to either Queenswood School or facilities in Hatfield to use a sports hall. The additional car parking proposed, while principally intended for meeting the school's needs, would be well located to support community use of the sports hall, MUGA and playing fields.

- MUGA: While the proposed MUGA is replacing the existing one that would be displaced by the sports hall building and car parking, it would be superior in quality in terms of the surfacing and line marking being new and it being designed in accordance with current guidance. It would also be fenced around the entire perimeter which would be superior to the existing facility which is only partially fenced.

### *Impact on Playing Field*

In terms of the impact on the playing field, the replacement MUGA would be sited in the north western area of the playing field. While this area is partially used for marking out a rugby pitch in the winter and a softball pitch in the summer, due to the extensive playing fields available to the school, the existing pitches could be realigned further to the south. Consequently, there would be no impact on existing playing pitch provision although the capacity of the overall playing field area to accommodate playing pitches would be reduced.

### **Conclusion**

Given the above assessment, Sport England **does not wish to raise an objection** to this application as a statutory consultee it is considered to meet exception 5 of the above policy as the benefits to sport are considered to outweigh the detriment caused by the impact on the playing field. This position is strictly

**subject to the following conditions** being attached to the decision notice should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application:

- MUGA Design Specifications: A condition requiring the detailed design and layout of the proposed MUGA to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of the facility. The condition should specifically require details to be provided of the court dimensions, surfacing, fencing, and court markings. This is justified to ensure that the facility is fit for purpose and delivers the benefits to sport identified above which mitigate the impact on the playing field. At present, this detail is not yet available. When developing the specifications for the detailed design of the MUGA, attention should be given to the relevant Sport England and national governing body design guidance referred to in the informative below. It is requested that the following condition and informative be imposed on any planning permission to address this matter which is based on condition 9 of our model conditions schedule <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/>:

*“No development of the multi-use games area shall commence until details of the multi-use games area design specifications including the dimensions, surfacing, fencing and line markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The multi-use games area shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*

*Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the multi-use games area should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England and National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to: Sport England’s Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports’ guidance note.*

- Community Use Agreement: A condition requiring a community use agreement for the school’s sports facilities to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority (in consultation with Sport England) prior to first occupation of the sports hall building in order to ensure that community access to the sports facilities is secured in practice. A community use agreement sets out a school’s policy and arrangements for community use of its sports facilities and covers matters such as hours of use, types of bookings accepted, restrictions on community use etc. The agreement is usually between a school and the relevant local authority (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield Council) but other bodies can be parties such as sports governing bodies and the Hertfordshire Sports Partnership. Sport England regularly secures the completion of such agreements through planning conditions on planning permissions for school developments. Such a condition is

justified to avoid a scenario where community access (outside of school hours) to the proposed facilities does not take place (or is significantly restricted) following the implementation of the proposed development and to ensure that the community use arrangements are safe and well managed. Without suitable community access being secured over a long term period in practice, one of the principal sports development benefits of the proposals which mitigates the impact of the development on the playing field would not be realised. Furthermore, securing community access to the facility would help deliver the Council's Sports Facility Strategy priorities. A community use agreement also provides clarity and formalisation with respect to community access arrangements for all parties. Community use agreement templates, examples of completed agreements and further advice can be provided upon request although advice should be sought from both Welwyn Hatfield Council and Sport England before an agreement is prepared. For information, Sport England's guidance for schools on preparing for and delivering community use is available at <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/>. The following condition is requested to be imposed to address this which is based on model condition 16 of our conditions schedule:

*“No occupation shall commence of the sports hall building hereby permitted until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the sports hall, multi-use games area, playing fields and supporting ancillary facilities and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, and anything else which the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England considers necessary in order to secure the effective community use of the facilities. The development shall not be used at any time other than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.”*

*Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility/facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.*

## **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 assesses this type of application in line with its planning objectives

and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England's planning objectives are to PROTECT existing facilities, ENHANCE the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and to PROVIDE new facilities to meet demand. Further information on Sport England's planning objectives can be found here: <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/>. The PROVIDE objective relates to ensuring that the provision of facilities and opportunities for sport and recreation meets the needs of the local community which includes new facilities and the enhancement of existing facilities.

The proposed development would provide a new sports hall that would offer potential to make a contribution towards meeting community sports facility needs in the Brookmans Park area for the reasons 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.

### Facility 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 has developed detailed guidance on expectations for good facility design. Further information on design is detailed on our website at <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>. Advisory comments based on the submitted floor plans are set out below which I would be grateful if the applicant could be asked to consider before the internal design and layout is finalised to ensure that the facility meets the school's needs and is broadly in accordance with our design guidance.

### Entrance / Reception / Kitchen

- Draught lobby – Sport England recommend a draught lobby on sites that will have regular community use. Without a draught lobby the reception area (where the office is proposed) is likely to have significant highs and lows in temperature.
- No reception point – while there is a foyer and a circulation area, there is no drop level reception point which would be expected for facilitating community use.
- The lack of viewing area from outside the hall is also likely to be an issue for both school and community users. For both school and community use having an ability to have a viewing area into the hall from the reception/foyer is likely to be an important factor.
- If the external decking area and one of the classrooms on the first floor is to be used for social events, consideration should be given to providing a small kitchen facility to serve refreshments on the ground floor as it is unclear how the building will support social events without a kitchen facility.

### Sports Hall

- A single point of internal entry in to the hall space is not recommended as this would not allow separate access when the hall is split 2 into two areas.
- Storage - for a facility of this size the store should be just over 74 sqm the current proposal is for 30sqm (SE recommends that storage area is equivalent to at least 12.5% of the sports hall floor area) This may cause management issues. Also, storage is preferable along both parts of the side of a sports hall to allow equipment to be moved for one part of the hall without affecting activity on the other part when it is split into a 2x2 court format. The current location of the storage one side of the hall will disrupt activity on the court area adjoining it when equipment serving the other end of the hall is moved.
- Cricket – consideration should be given to designing the sports hall to facilitate indoor cricket through the provision of suitable flooring, lighting and nets. As well as helping to meet the school's cricket needs, this would may meet community needs. If applicable, the detailed design should accord with the ECB's TS3 design guidance <https://www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/club-support/club-facility-management/surface-types>.

#### Toilets / Change.

- The general flow of the change area is positive and accords with our guidance.
- Vanity – more and more sites are including vanity areas to assist in encouraging participation from students.

In order to help ensure that the detailed elements (such as internal flooring and lighting specifications) of the design of the sports hall are fit for purpose, it is **requested** that an informative be added to a decision notice if the application is approved advising that the sports hall should be designed in accordance with Sport England's relevant design guidance notes.

*Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the sports hall should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to the "Sports Hall Design & Layouts" design guidance note <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/sports-halls/>.*

Sport England would also 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

**Roy Warren**

Planning Manager

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We have updated our Privacy Statement to reflect the recent changes to data protection law but rest assured, we will continue looking after your personal data just as carefully as we always have. Our Privacy Statement is published on our [website](#), and our Data Protection Officer can be contacted by emailing [Gail Laughlan](#)

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