

**From:** [Jo Edwards](#)  
**To:** [PL Planning Applications](#)  
**Subject:** F.A.O. Chris Bartlett - App Ref: WSCC/055/20 - Woodlands Meed, Birchwood Grove Road, RH15 0DP - Sport England Ref: PA/20/SE/WSC/57158  
**Date:** 22 December 2020 12:46:20

---

Dear Chris,

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

### **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:  
[https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing\\_fields\\_policy](https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy)

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

The proposal is to construct a new two storey SEND school building on part of the existing school playing field and to provide new improved sport and activity facilities including a floodlit All Weather Pitch (AWP), MUGA, sports hall and hydrotherapy pool. The existing playing field has a football pitch delineated on it by two goal posts. However it is recognised that due to site topography, the pitch is excessively sloping and of limited accessibility to many of the pupils. Due to this and also because the college site lacks suitable indoor facilities, pupils currently have to travel to the local public leisure centre to participate in sport activities.

### **Assessment against Sport England Policy**

This application relates to the provision of a new indoor/outdoor sports facility or facilities on the existing playing field at the above site. It therefore needs to be considered against exception 5 of the above policy, which states:

'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.'

I have therefore assessed the existing and proposed playing fields against the above policy to determine whether the proposals meet exception 5.

Sport England will assess the potential benefit of the new or extended sports facility by taking into account a number of considerations. As a guide, these may include whether the facility:

meets an identified local or strategic need e.g. as set out in a local authority or NGB strategy (rather than duplicating existing provision);

- fully secures sport related benefits for the local community;
- helps to meet identified sports development priorities;
- complies with relevant Sport England and NGB design guidance;
- improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites; and
- is accessible by alternative transport modes to the car.

The school is split over two sites. The college application site caters for pupils between the ages of 14 and 19 years old. The other part of the school is located on a separate site some distance away, and provides a better range of sports facilities that are also used extensively by the wider community. The school has identified that there is further latent demand within the community for the use of its facilities, including to promote and extend opportunities for disabled people to participate in sporting and recreational activities. The proposed indoor and outdoor facilities will help to meet that demand. They will also improve the delivery of sport and physical education for pupils of the school, specific to their requirements.

In preparing my response I have consulted the ECB and FA.

The ECB has commented;

*The ECB and Sussex Cricket Foundation support this application which will enhance the cricket facilities at the college for the benefit of both students and the local community.*

Existing Use

*The Sussex Cricket Foundation currently run a Super 1's club for Lord's Taverners in the school hall, consisting of 30 weekly sessions annually. This is the best attended of seven Super 1's clubs across the county with 12-15 regular participants. They also provide lunchtime taster sessions to students.*

Proposed Use

*As space is tight within the school hall, the Foundation would welcome the opportunity to utilise the new outdoor AWP and MUGA, as well as the sports hall at the school which will allow competitions to take place between Super 1's clubs and further growth of the club.*

*There is also potential for local clubs such as Ansty CC and Burgess Hill CC to utilise the new facilities, as they are in discussions with Sussex Cricket Foundation regarding becoming Disability Champion Clubs.*

The FA, recognising that the AWP has a specific accessible surface, has no comment to make.

## **Conclusions and Recommendation**

Given the above assessment, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application as it is considered to broadly meet exception 5 of the above policy. The absence of an objection is subject to the following condition(s) being attached to the decision notice should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application:

### Condition 1

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that order), the All Weather Pitch and the MUGA shall not be used other than for sport.

Reason: To protect the sports facility from a change of use to a non-sporting use that would be inappropriate to justify the loss of the grass playing field land in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF, and to accord with Development Plan Policy \*\*.

### Condition 2

Use of the development shall not commence 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 All Weather Pitch, MUGA, sports hall

and hydrotherapy pool and associated change and WC facilities; and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise 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 \*\*.*

*Informative: Guidance on preparing Community Use Agreements is available from Sport England. <http://www.sportengland.org/planningapplications/> For artificial grass pitches it is recommended that you seek guidance from the Football Association/England Hockey/Rugby Football Union on pitch construction when determining the community use hours the artificial pitch can accommodate.*

If you wish to amend the wording of the recommended condition(s), or use another mechanism in lieu of the condition(s), please discuss the details with me. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments.

Should the local planning authority be minded to approve this application against the recommendation of Sport England; then in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 the application should be referred to the Secretary of State via the National Planning Casework Unit

There is a free online resource from Sport England (Use Our School) that offers further guidance and information for local authorities and other education providers on how to make the best use of school facilities for the benefit of the local community. It is especially useful for those who have responsibility within a school for establishing, sustaining and growing community activity on school sites. 'Use Our School' can be accessed here; [www.sportengland.org/useourschool](http://www.sportengland.org/useourschool)

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, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement.

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

Yours sincerely,

**Jo Edwards**

Planning Manager

**T:** 07826 354343

**M:** 07826354343

**F:** 020 7273 1704

**E:** [Jo.Edwards@sportengland.org](mailto:Jo.Edwards@sportengland.org)

Sport England



We are undefeatable





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 [Gaile Walters](#)

The information contained in this e-mail may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Additionally, this email and any attachment are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom they are addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, be advised that you have received this email and any attachment in error, and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing, or copying, is strictly prohibited. If you voluntarily provide personal data by email, Sport England will handle the data in accordance with its Privacy Statement. Sport England's Privacy Statement may be found here <https://www.sportengland.org/privacy-statement/> If you have any queries about Sport England's handling of personal data you can contact Gaile Walters, Sport England's Data Protection Officer directly by emailing [DPO@sportengland.org](mailto:DPO@sportengland.org)