
From: Roy Warren
Sent: 01 September 2023 12:30
To: Development Management - Planning
Subject: [External] App Ref: 3/23/1447/OUT: Land East Of The A10, Buntingford, Hertfordshire

For the attention of Amit Patel

Dear Mr. Patel

App Ref: 3/23/1447/OUT: Land East Of The A10, Buntingford, Hertfordshire (Sport England Ref: PA/23/E/ER/65505)

I refer to the consultation on the above application.

Summary:

An **objection** is made to the proposals for community sports facility provision to meet the needs of the proposed development in its current form due to the lack of confirmed provision. This position would be reviewed if it was proposed that appropriate financial contributions would be made towards off-site indoor and outdoor sports facility provision, secured through a section 106 agreement, as set out in this response.

It is requested that a planning condition is imposed requiring subsequent reserved matters applications to demonstrate how Active Design principles have been considered in the detailed design of the development as set out in the response.

Sport England – Non Statutory Role and Policy

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>. This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to a development of more than 300 dwellings and the creation of one or more playing pitches.

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. Sport England’s Planning for Sport guidance can be found here: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-for-sport-guidance/>

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England’s Objectives and the NPPF

Community Sports Facility Provision

Introduction

The proposal is an outline planning application for a mixed use residential led development of up to 350 dwellings on land to the east of the A10 in Buntingford. The population of the proposed development at East of Stevenage is estimated to be up to around 840 based on an estimated dwelling occupancy of 2.4 persons per dwelling. This additional population will generate additional demand for sports facilities. If this demand is not adequately met then it may place additional pressure on existing sports facilities, thereby creating or exacerbating deficiencies in facility provision. In accordance with the NPPF, Sport England

seeks to ensure that the development meets any new community sports facility needs arising as a result of the development.

The development makes provision for a range of green infrastructure including amenity space, children's play and allotments but there would not appear to be any dedicated community sports facilities proposed within the development. In this context, I would wish to make the following comments on the community sports provision aspects of the planning application.

Evidence Base and Policy Context

The evidence base and local planning policy context for community sport can be summarised as follows:

- The adopted East Hertfordshire Local Plan includes policy CLFR1 which expects residential development to make provision for indoor and outdoor sports facilities to provide for the needs arising from the development. It also requires facilities to be provided in accordance with the Council's latest evidence and in consultation with Sport England.
- East Hertfordshire District Council Open Spaces & Sports Facilities Assessment Technical Study– Built Facilities Strategy provides detailed guidance on the approach to indoor sports facility and non-pitch outdoor sports provision in new development. In summary, detailed guidance is provided in the strategy on the approach to developer contributions and a calculator is included for estimating demand and financial contributions. The justification for securing developer contributions towards indoor sports facilities is justified by the range of quantitative and/or qualitative deficiencies identified in the needs assessment that supports the strategy.
- East Hertfordshire District Council Open Spaces & Sports Facilities Assessment Technical Study– Playing Pitch Strategy like the Built Facilities Strategy provides detailed guidance on the approach to developer contributions and a calculator for estimating demand and financial contributions in relation to pitch sport facilities. Again, this is justified by the significant deficiencies that have been identified in the needs assessment that supports the strategy for all pitch sports.
- East Hertfordshire District Council's Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation SPD - the SPD provides advice based on the above evidence base documents which explains when the Council will seek planning obligations to address the impact of development on open space, sport and recreation and sets out how calculations for the provision and cost of new provision should be worked out. In particular, as set out in section 5.3 of the SPD, standards derived from the above evidence base documents are used for estimating demand from new development and uses the Playing Pitch Calculator for estimating demand for the playing pitch sports.

In view of the local planning policy and evidence base context, it is considered that in accordance with Government policy in paragraph 98 of the NPPF, a robust local basis exists for justifying the provision of outdoor and indoor community sports facility provision to be made by this development.

Proposed Sports Provision

As set out in policy CLFR1 of the local plan, facilities should be provided in accordance with the Council's latest evidence which is the Built Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy referred to above. The Council's Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation SPD includes calculators which can assess the demand for sports facilities generated by the population in a new residential development and the capital costs of meeting this demand. It is apparent from the calculator outputs that the development would not generate sufficient demand to justify on-site outdoor or indoor sports facility provision as there would be insufficient demand for any of the facility types to justify a facility being provided on site. Furthermore, in practice it would not be desirable from an operational perspective to provide small scale facilities that are difficult to maintain and less responsive to user needs. A financial contribution being secured towards off-site provision in the Buntingford area based on the use of the calculators used in the SPD would therefore be considered appropriate on this occasion rather than on-site provision as part of the development. Advice should be obtained from East Hertfordshire District Council's on appropriate projects for using financial contributions.

Conclusion

The Draft Heads of Terms for the Section 106 Agreement refers to potential contributions being sought towards sport and recreation in accordance with the Council's SPD. While the potential inclusion of contributions to sports provision is welcomed at this stage, as there are no confirmed proposals at this stage for meeting the development's formal outdoor or indoor sports facility needs, an **objection** is made to the planning application in its current form. However, I would be willing to withdraw this objection in due course if it is confirmed that appropriate financial contributions, secured through a planning obligation, will be made towards the provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities and the expected level of the contributions is confirmed together with the projects that the contributions will be used towards.

Active Design

Sport England, with support from Active Travel England and OHID, has produced 'Active Design' <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design> a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design which is consistent with section 8 of the NPPF. Sport England commends the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments.

The development proposals offer opportunities for incorporating the active design principles such as the walking and cycling routes, the co-location of employment/local centres and the range of open spaces proposed. As the planning application is in outline form it would be inappropriate to provide detailed comments on the Development Framework Plan if this has only been submitted for illustrative purposes. The Active Design guidance includes a checklist that can be applied to developments and it is recommended that the checklist is used in the preparation of subsequent reserved matters planning applications if the application is permitted to ensure that opportunities for encouraging active lifestyles have been fully explored in the detailed planning and design of the development. It is therefore **requested** that a planning condition be imposed requiring the submission and approval of details to demonstrate how the reserved matters applications have considered Active Design principles. Sport England would welcome discussions with the applicant in due course to provide further advice on how Active Design can be considered in the detailed proposals. A suggested planning condition is as follows:

"For each parcel/phase of development for which Outline permission is granted, no development in relation to that parcel/phase shall commence until details have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate how Active Design principles have been met.

Reason: To promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity and to accord with Development Plan policy.

Informative: Consideration should be given to using the Active Design checklist in Sport England's Active Design Guidance to assess reserved matters planning applications"

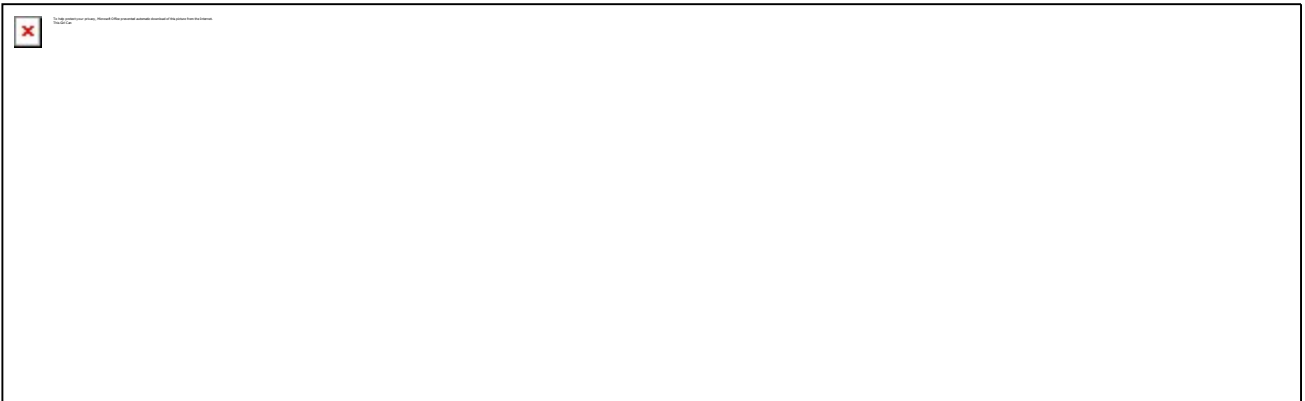
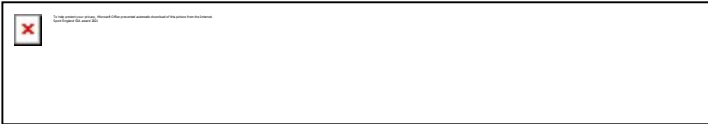
I hope that these comments can be given full consideration when a decision is made. I would be happy to discuss the response with the local planning authority and/or the applicant as the determination of the application progresses. Please contact me if you have any queries.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Warren

Planning Manager – South Team & Active Environments



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](#)



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