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Development Control Service
Southampton City Council
Ground Floor, Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LS

23rd December 2009

Your Ref: 09/01163/R3OL/4783
Our Ref: SE/SU/2009/

Dear Mr. Harrison

App No: 09/01163/R3OL

Proposal: Redevelopment of the site. Demolition of the existing building and erection of a replacement school building (up to 9,000 square metres gross floorspace) with associated parking and vehicular access form Weston Lane (outline application with means of access for consideration at this stage)

Site: Chamberlayne College, Tickleford Drive, Southampton

Thank you for your letter dated 7th December 2009, inviting Sport England to comment on the above planning application. Sport England wishes to **object** to this application for the reasons set out below.

Playing Field Policy

The site of the proposed development forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in Article 10(2) the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended by SI 1996/1817 and SI 2009/453). Sport England's adopted Playing Fields Policy, 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England (1996)', sets out a policy presumption against development that would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area (whether the land is in public, private or educational use). This policy objective is also embodied within 'Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'.

Sport England will, therefore, oppose development on playing fields in all but exceptional circumstances. Full details of our adopted policy and the specific circumstances attached to this letter and can be viewed via our website: www.sportengland.org > Facilities and Planning > Handy links > Our policy on playing fields. Sport England would expect any planning application to be accompanied by sufficient information to justify the 'exceptional circumstances'.

BSF Strategy for Change for Physical Education and Sport

You may be aware of Sport England's Strategy 2008-2011. The focus of the strategy is on the creation of a world class community sport system in England which will ensure that:

- a substantial, and growing, number of people from across the community play sport;
- talented people from all backgrounds are identified early, nurtured and have the opportunity to progress to the elite level; and
- everyone who plays sport has a quality experience and is able to fulfil their potential.

The strategy is available on our website at: www.sportengland.org. In summary, Sport England is committed to delivering:

- 1 million people doing more sport by 2012-13;
- A reduction in post-16 drop-off in at least five sports by 25% by 2012-13;
- A quantifiable increase in satisfaction;
- Improved talent development systems in at least 25 sports; and
- A major contribution to the delivery of the Five Hour Sport Offer engaging more 5-19 year olds in sport.

The Council has made a similar commitment to raising participation in sport and physical activity by all people in Southampton. This is set out in the Active Southampton 2009 Action Plan (www.activesouthampton.co.uk). Southampton will be measured on its ability to increase, by 1% every year, the number of adults achieving 3 x 30 minutes of moderate activity every week. This commitment is highlighted in the City Council's BSF document 'Vision for Change for Physical Education and sport'. Paragraph 2.2 states:

"Schools will provide environments and contribute to the campaign of ensuring that all adults are participating in 30 minutes exercise everyday."

The Vision for the Strategy explains (paragraph 7.2) that *"improvements to the environments and delivery of PE and Sport through BSF must contribute to the wider community benefit."*

A further aim of the Strategy is:

"To promote and widen community access to the use of school sports facilities in partnership with Active Southampton."

The School is located next to the City Council owned 'Chamberlayne Leisure Centre'. The redevelopment of the School provides an important opportunity to provide additional community sport facilities that can compliment the existing offer of the Leisure Centre. The building design and management strategy for the redeveloped School should therefore be influenced by the BSF PE and Stakeholder Group.

Pre-application advice

For your information, I enclose a copy of my pre-application advice to the Applicant (Southampton City Council) dated 16th October 2009. This advice is summarised as follows:

- Where a School is to be relocated onto its existing playing field, then an assessment should explain which options were considered and why they are not feasible.
- Sport England requires a detailed assessment of the ground conditions where new playing field land is proposed (including drainage and topography) to identify constraints which could affect playing field and pitch quality. This assessment should have regard

to Sport England's 'Natural Turf for Sport' guidance note. Based on the results of this assessment a detailed scheme of works should be developed to ensure that the playing field land and pitches will be provided to an acceptable quality and within a set timescale.

- To ensure that the benefit of the sporting provision at the site is maximised Sport England would expect the development and adoption of a Community Use Agreement.
- The School is located adjacent to a Council owned Leisure Centre. The proposal provides the School with a new access alongside the Leisure Centre. The proposed tree line and car park represent a physical barrier between the School and Leisure Centre. The proposals therefore present a missed opportunity to improve the physical relationship between the two buildings and maximise the opportunity for the community to access sports facilities.
- The proposed MUGA should be moved away from the residential properties on the School's Eastern boundary as it may be difficult to secure planning permission for floodlighting.
- The proposals have the potential to meet in part specific circumstances E4 and E5 of Sport England's Playing Field Policy (explained further below). However, further work is required to demonstrate that the relocation of the School onto the playing fields is the most appropriate option and that the proposed replacement playing fields will be of an equivalent or better quality and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.
- The Council should take the opportunity to consider how the sports offer at the School can compliment the nearby Leisure Centre and encourage community access to the School's sports facilities. As currently drafted, the proposal may have a negative impact on the neighbouring Leisure Centre rather than a positive one.

It is understood that there is no current community use of the School's sports facilities.

The Proposal

The Applicant has made some minor changes to the proposals in response to our advice. The revisions show:

- The MUGA has been moved a few metres further from the boundary with neighbouring properties and additional landscaping has been introduced;
- A pedestrian link is shown between the relocated School playing fields and the playing fields adjacent to the Leisure Centre;
- Some of the landscaping between the existing playing field land and the car park has been removed.

Interpretation

As highlighted above, the proposals could have the potential to meet in part specific circumstances E4 and E5 of our policy:

E4 - The playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better

quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of the development.

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.

This is because:

- The playing field land that will be lost on the site will be replaced;
- Overall there will be an increase in the amount of playing field land on the site;
- The replacement playing field land should be of an equivalent or better quality and subject to better management arrangements;
- The scheme includes a new School 4 court Sports Hall that will be made available to the Community.

However, there are a number of disadvantages to the scheme:

- The School's playing fields will be out of use for 2-3 years. This means that the School will need to undertake outdoor sports activities in another location.
- The School's existing MUGAs will be replaced. However, the replacement MUGA will be located adjacent to residents on the School's eastern boundary. The planning application scheme shows additional landscaping on this boundary. However, this may not be sufficient to reduce the impact on the neighbours' amenity. The MUGA should be at least as large as the existing MUGAs at the School.
- The Scheme shows a new access to the School alongside the Leisure Centre and amendments to the car parking layout. This could impact upon the ability of the Leisure Centre to expand.
- The expanded playing field area may not be able to accommodate a senior cricket pitch. This is because the wicket should run from North to South (the opposite of that shown on the plans).

The following information is required before Sport England is satisfied that this proposal is acceptable:

- A more detailed explanation as to why relocating the playing field is the most appropriate option, in particular why decant is not an option for this School, in the context of the wider BSF programme;
- How long the playing fields will be out of use and confirmation of where the School will undertake their outdoor sports activities whilst the playing field is unavailable. It is important that there is no adverse impact on the use of nearby playing field from the School's use.
- Confirmation that the applicant is willing to undertake a detailed assessment of the ground conditions where new playing field land is proposed (including drainage and topography) to identify constraints which could affect playing field and pitch quality. This assessment should have regard to Sport England's 'Natural Turf for Sport' guidance note. Based on the results of this assessment a detailed scheme of works

should be developed to ensure that the playing field land and pitches will be provided to an acceptable quality and within a set timescale.

- That the School is willing to enter into a community use agreement for the new indoor and outdoor facilities and how it will be managed.
- Confirmation from the Council's Leisure Team that the new access will not adversely impact upon the operation of the Leisure Centre or any future plans for the Centre's expansion.

In the event that Sport England is satisfied on the above points, Sport England may maintain a non-statutory objection to the current proposals. This is because the layout of the proposed School could adversely impact upon the adjacent Chamberlayne Leisure Centre. For the benefit of the Applicant, our concerns are set out below.

School's relationship with the Leisure Centre

Sport England supports the principle of the shared access with the Leisure Centre where it can help to facilitate and encourage evening use by the Community of the School's new sports facility. However, the Council should be certain that locating the access on land adjacent to the Leisure Centre will not restrict the future expansion of the Leisure Centre. If the Leisure Centre is to be expanded in the future would this land be required, for example for new tennis courts? Will the proposed joint access impact upon the operation of the Leisure Centre? For example, will traffic associated with the School cause difficulties for Leisure Centre users and deter them from visiting? The size of the Sports Hall should also be given further consideration, how will it compliment the facilities at the new Leisure Centre?

It is understood that very limited consultation has taken place to date with the Leisure Centre and that the BSF PE and Stakeholder Group (see Group's Meeting Minutes dated 27th November 2009) has discussed similar concerns to those raised in my letter to the Applicant in October. The input of the BSF PE and Sport Stakeholder Group should be influential in determining scheme design.

In order to overcome these issues, it is suggested that the following should be considered (although this list should be influenced by the input of BSF PE and Sport Stakeholder Group):

- The size of the Sports Hall – what size Sports Hall could compliment the neighbouring Leisure Centre? For example, could the Hall be larger or smaller to accommodate different types of sport? Pupils from the School and the wider Community could then benefit from a different range of sports. How can ICT improve the facilities?
- Relocation of the Sports Hall and MUGA closer to the Leisure Centre, so that they can be easily managed by the Leisure Centre outside School hours, particular during the evening. A footpath could continue to provide a link with the playing fields to the rear of the School buildings.
- The relocation of the MUGA to ensure that it can be floodlit.

An important part of the BSF process is the input of the BSF PE and Stakeholder Group. This Group should also be able to further advise the School on the most appropriate size of Sports Hall that could compliment the facilities at Chamberlayne Leisure Centre.

Further information on the type of facilities that the Community requires is also available from the following documents:

- Southampton City Council - Sports Facilities Improvement Plan
- Southampton City Council - Playing Pitch Strategy

For your information, Sport England will be consulted on these proposals by Partnerships for Schools following the submission of an Outline Business Case. If the proposals have not been amended to address the concerns set out above, these will be expressed to Partnerships for Schools in due course.

Conclusion

In the absence of the information required (as set out above) it is Sport England's judgment that the application as it currently stands does not meet with any of the five specific exceptional circumstances set out in our policy or accord with the development plan government policy objectives set out in PPG17.

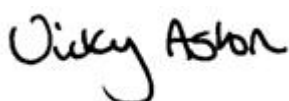
Consequently, Sport England wishes to register its objection to the application.

Should your authority be minded to grant planning permission for the proposed development despite the above objection then I trust you will refer the application to the Government Office for the South East in line with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction, 2009.

Sport England would be willing to reconsider its statutory objection to the application should the further information outlined above be forthcoming which demonstrates that the application may meet with one of the above specific circumstances.

We are happy to meet with the Council and the applicant to discuss the contents of this letter if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely



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cc. Kieran Humphrey - Southampton City Council

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