

Eastleigh Borough Council

FAO: Rachel Morris

By email

1st November 2023

**Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England)
Order 2015**

Application Reference: F/23/95881

Site: FLEMING PARK LEISURE CENTRE, Passfield Avenue, SO50 9NL

Proposal: Erection of ball stop netting (6m high X 45m long).

Sport England Reference: PA/23/SE/ET/65977

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Summary

Statutory consultee role

Sport England raises **no objection** to this application as it is considered to meet exception 2 of our Playing Fields Policy and to accord with Paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Sport England – Statutory consultee role and policy

We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 99, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within our 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document': 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, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land 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. A summary of the exceptions is provided in the annex to this response.

The Proposal and its Impact on the playing field

The proposed development is for ball stop netting designed to prevent footballs from leaving the field of play and entering the bowls club to the north.

Sport England has consulted the FA and Football Foundation on the proposal and we have received the following comments. Hampshire FA have been working with Eastleigh Borough Council and Fleming Athletic Youth to bring the grass pitches back into use. The pitches have been reorientated to accommodate 9v9 pitch provision. The proposed solution of ball stop netting is sensible to alleviate the risk of stray balls entering the bowls club directly behind the goal location. The technical specification of ball stop netting is sufficient and meets FA requirements. The information provided is adequate to ensure that the netting would mitigate the risk of footballs leaving the pitch area. The FF and Hampshire FA are supportive of this proposal.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

Sport England is satisfied that the proposal does not impact the playing field or prejudice its use and will support the use of the playing field and pitches for sport. Sport England notes the FA/FF comments in respect of the technical specification of the netting solution and that it will effectively mitigate the risk of footballs leaving the field of play.

Sport England considers that the proposal accords with exception 2 of our playing fields policy. E2 states:

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises **no objection** to the application because it is considered to accord with exception 2 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 99 of the NPPF.

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 agenda(s), report(s) and committee date(s). Please notify Sport England of the outcome of the planning application.

Please note that this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

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Annex

The Five Exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy

Exception 1

A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

Exception 2

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

Exception 3

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site;
- or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

Exception 4

The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

Exception 5

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.

The full 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document' is available to view at:

www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy