

From: Bob Sharples <Bob.Sharples@sportengland.org>
Sent: 08 April 2022 14:50
To: Planning
Cc: Sharon Whiting; Thomas Darlington; Andrew Earnshaw; Stuart Lamb; 'Jason Bowers'; 'Neil Higginson'
Subject: App Ref: 22/00747/OUT - Land at Bicester Road Kidlington - Sport England Ref: PA/22/SE/CL/61234

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Dear Sir/madam

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

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#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to: creation of a site for one or more playing pitches;

Sport England assesses this type of application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and against its own planning objectives, which are Protect - To protect the right opportunities in the right places; Enhance - To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision; Provide - To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations. Further information on the objectives and Sport England's wider planning guidance can be found on its website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport>

The occupiers of new development, especially residential, will generate demand for sporting provision. The existing provision within an area may not be able to accommodate this increased demand without exacerbating existing and/or predicted future deficiencies. Therefore, Sport England considers that new developments should contribute towards meeting the demand that they generate through the provision of on-site facilities and/or providing additional capacity off-site. The level and nature of any provision should be informed by a robust evidence base such as an up to date Sports Facilities Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy or other relevant needs assessment.

The Proposal

The proposal is for outline planning application for the development of up to 370 homes, public open space (including play areas and woodland planting), sports pitches and pavilion, drainage and engineering works, with all matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) except for vehicular and emergency accesses to Bicester Road.

Assessment

I have been in touch with the various sports who have sat on the playing pitch steering group for several years to discuss the proposal. For clarity, we are only interested in the sports element in the first instance.

There is general disappointment about the amount of land allocated for formal sport. In the past the County Football Association along with the other national governing bodies of sport who attend the steering group made it very clear that they needed a site big enough for 1 no sports lit Artificial grass pitch; 2 no 11 v 11 ; 1 no 9v9 and 1 no 7v7 grass pitches along with a suitable level of infrastructure to meet current and future football demand/growth. We were under the impression that was accepted and supported by CDC officers.

I have had this confirmed in writing by the County FA and Football Foundation:

Cherwell Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) (2018) identified four years ago that there was current shortfall of 4ha of grass football pitches in Cherwell and the need for 1 full-sized floodlit 3G pitch. We have been in regular discussions with CDC about this site working together on the potential make up of it on the understanding that it was to provide a football hub. As a result of these talks the following detail was agreed with CDC and the LFFP steering group, of which they were a member, and subsequently featured in the priority project list of the Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) for Cherwell (2020):

'CDC have allocated land adjacent to the current Stratfield Brake site for football to accommodate the following facilities:

*1 x Full-size 3G
2 x 11v11 grass pitches
1 x 9v9 grass pitch
1 x 7v7 grass pitch
Pavilion and car parking'*

Added to this has been the discussion around the site providing the facilities for the relocation of the Oxfordshire FA offices as part of the building provided to support the management, business plan and overall sustainability of the site.

From the proposal much of this detail is missing with the site being flagged as providing generic community sports pitches with no reference to type, size or number with the 4ha proposed needing to accommodate the pitches, pavilion (with only changing rooms and a community room) and car parking for the site.

The proposed facility, even if purely for football use, falls short of the needs of the game in Kidlington identified 4 years ago and does nothing to accommodate the growth that has occurred since. All of this is before the development of Stratfield Brake is considered and the needs of football that will need to be addressed with that.

It is our understanding that Oxford United are working with the developers of this site and are looking to include the football hub within their overall plans for the development of Stratfield Brake and the surrounding mitigating additional rugby, cricket and football provision.

One final key consideration is that we are only a few months away from the findings and recommendations for winter sports from a new CDC PPS which will consider all of the above against the backdrop of up to date football participation figures.

Given all of the above football strongly objects to the current proposal and requests that the site and surrounding facilities are reviewed within the current PPS assessment to ensure any further proposal properly addresses the needs of sport in the town.

What is proposed is woefully inadequate as can be seen. Looking at the landscape strategy the area required would include all the informal area down to the road and railway line, which was what we thought we would get. NB we would not expect the developer to pay for all of the football requirements.

Given the emerging issues at Stratfield Brake Sports Ground, and the estimated current and future shortfall of football provision we cannot support this planning application because of the limited provision being offered up to accommodate football.

Conclusion

In light of the above Sport England objects to the application.

Our objection would be overcome if all the land east of the proposed football hub is reallocated to football use.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, Sport England would like to be notified in advance of the meeting date(s) and the publication of any agenda(s) and report(s). Sport England would also like to be notified of the outcome of the application through the receipt of a copy of the decision notice.

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

Yours sincerely,

Bob

Bob Sharples MRTPI RIBA

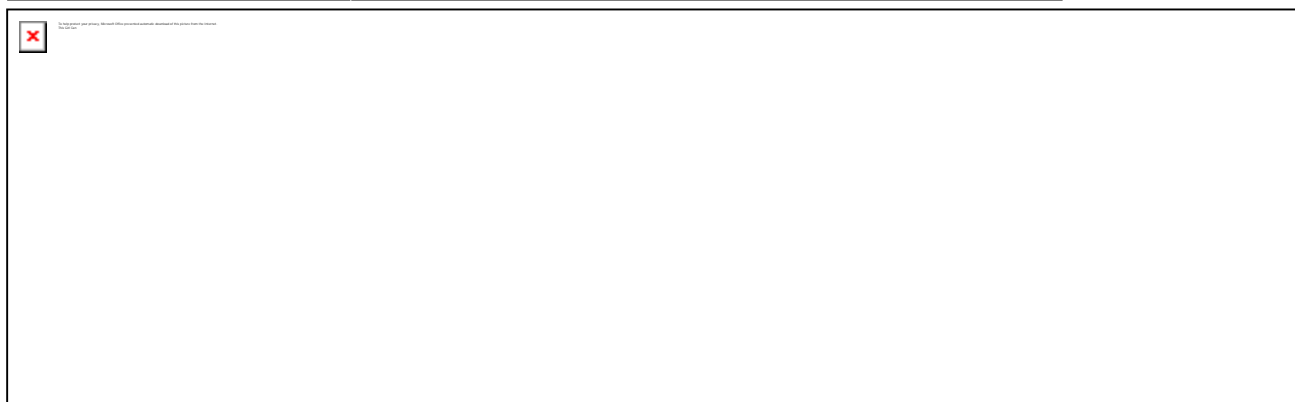
Principal Planning Manager - South Team

T: 07830 315030

M: 07830315030

F: 01509 233 192

E: Bob.Sharples@sportengland.org



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