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Cherwell District Council
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BY EMAIL ONLY
01 February 2011

Our Ref: SE/CL/2010/22709/S

Dear Andrew

Application Number: 10/01642/OUT
Site Address: FORMER RAF UPPER HEYFORD, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire
Proposal: Outline - Proposed new settlement for 1075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure

Thank you for meeting with us and the Applicant at Heyford Park on 18th January to discuss the above application and visit the site.

Following on from our discussions and as set out in our letter of 4th January, Sport England's key concerns regarding the planning application included:

- 1) Provision to support the proposed new housing development.
- 2) Proposed loss of existing sport building (Building 583) and adjacent baseball/softball facility.

As explained in our letter, Sport England required further information if we are to remove our objection to the proposed development. Further information was provided and discussed at our meeting. I deal with each of the key issues in turn below:

(1) Provision to support new housing development

The discussion at our meeting confirmed that:

- Outdoor sport provision on the site will be provided in two locations.
- The Applicant is willing to provide a pavilion/changing facilities at both playing field locations.
- The playing fields and tennis courts outside the red line boundary (but within the blue line), to the west of Building 583, will be retained.
- Indoor provision will be made through a contribution set out in the Section 106 of £326,000 to meet the needs of the proposed housing in line with the Council's development plan policies.

In light of the above Sport England considers that the proposals should be sufficient to meet the needs of the new homes proposed within the application. The Applicant's willingness to retain and improve the existing outdoor sports facilities including the tennis courts and playing fields to the west and south of Building 583, in addition to providing new playing field land elsewhere on the site is welcome.

Whilst it would be preferable for all of the sports facilities to be located together on the site, it is understood that the historical layout of the site makes this difficult. The provision of changing facilities at both playing fields sites would therefore allow this problem to be overcome. This would also meet a local need for additional football facilities in the area identified by the FA.

In order to ensure that the above facilities are delivered, Sport England requests a number of conditions/additions to the Section 106/unilateral undertaking to ensure the above is delivered. These are set out at the end of this letter.

(2) Proposed loss of existing sport building and playing field

The discussion at our meeting confirmed that:

- The proposals will result in additional playing field land; new playing field land will be created to accommodate a large football pitch and community cricket square, which will form the 'village green'. 2 existing baseball/softball pitches will be lost 2 will remain. The football pitch, athletics track and tennis courts near to Building 583 will be retained.
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of Building 583 has already been granted. The sports hall was granted a temporary planning consent for five years that requires regular renewal.
- Building 583 is in a poor state of repair, with some areas no longer safe to use e.g. squash courts. The building's long-term viability is questionable, regular repairs to the roof are required.
- The Applicant is considering the submission of a further planning application to retain the sports hall. The sports hall was removed from the planning application due to concerns regarding traffic movements, expressed by the Local Authority. The proposed Masterplan for the site shows the location of Building 583 as open space.

The retention of the existing playing fields and outdoor tennis courts and the provision of new playing fields with ancillary changing rooms meets Exception 4 of Sport England's policy in quantitative terms, in that:

"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."

The Applicant's willingness to provide changing rooms in this location or retain those within Building 583 is welcome, as this will enable the outdoor facilities (the football pitches, softball/base ball pitches and tennis courts) in this location to remain in use and enable them to continue to be used by local teams.

However, Sport England remains concerned that the proposal includes an application for conservation area consent to demolish Building 583. As highlighted in my previous letter, the sports hall building (including 8 court sports hall and changing facilities) is linked to the four softball/baseball pitches and football pitch/athletics track adjacent to it. The loss of the 8 court hall therefore does not accord with the guidance in PPG17 which states that:

"Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space or buildings and land to be surplus to requirements."

Notwithstanding this concern, conservation area consent has already been granted for the demolition of Building 583 (decision issued on 11th January 2010 following an appeal).

In addition, the Applicant has confirmed that a separate application will follow for the retention of the Sports Hall. This would allow for the sports hall to potentially be maintained by a proposed School on the site. Sport England welcomes this intention, as it could secure the long term future of the facility.

Taking into account the special circumstances set out above, Sport England withdraws its objection to this Application provided that the provisions below are included within the planning consent/section 106 agreement.

Proposed conditions and changes to the Section 106

Sport England requests the following conditions are included on any forthcoming planning consent:

Playing field protection

- Prior to the commencement of development details for the phasing of development, including the provision of and improvements to the existing playing fields (including all those within the blue line see Site Location Plan D.0291_42), sports pavilions/changing facilities and tennis courts shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory quantity, quality and accessibility of compensatory provision which secures a continuity of use and to accord with Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 Policy R7a.

- The playing fields and tennis courts shall be used for Outdoor Sport and for no other purpose (including without limitation any other purpose in Class D2 Town and Country Planning (Use Class) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To protect the playing field and tennis courts from loss and/or damage, to maintain the quality of and secure the safe use of sports pitches.

New pitches

- No development shall take place unless and *until (or insert other appropriate timescale)*:
 - i) A detailed assessment of ground conditions of the land proposed for the new playing field land (as shown on drawing number D.0291_38-1) shall be undertaken (including drainage and topography) to identify constraints which could affect playing field quality; and
 - ii) Based on the results of this assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) above of this condition, a detailed scheme to ensure that the playing fields will be provided to an acceptable quality (including appropriate drainage where necessary) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.

Reason: To ensure that site surveys are undertaken for new playing fields and that any ground condition constraints can be and are mitigated to ensure provision of a new/replacement playing field of at least an equivalent or better quality and to accord with Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 Policy R7a and paragraph 15 of PPG17. The playing fields shall be made available for use on substantial completion of the works.

Informative: It is recommended that the drainage assessment and improvement scheme is undertaken by a specialist turf grass consultant.

The applicant should ensure that any new or replacement playing field is fit for its intended purpose and should have regard to Sport England's technical design guidance note entitled Natural Turf for Sport and relevant design guidance of the National Governing Bodies for Sport e.g. performance quality standards produced by the relevant pitch team sports, for example the England & Wales Cricket Board.

Community use

- Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a scheme setting out expected community use of the indoor and outdoor facilities shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The report shall include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users/non-members, management responsibilities and include a mechanism for review. The approved scheme shall be implemented upon commencement of use of the development and shall thereafter be retained and maintained'.

Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport.

Built sports facilities

- Prior to commencement of the development/use details of the siting, design and layout of the two pavilions to be provided on site, which shall comply with Sport England Technical Design Guidance Notes to include; Pavilions and Clubhouses, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The sports pavilions shall be constructed in accordance with the approved design and layout details.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose, subject to high quality design standards and sustainable and to accord with Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 Policy R10a.

In addition, we request that no conditions are attached to the planning consent requiring the demolition of Building 583.

Sport England also recommends that the following provision (or similar) is made within the unilateral undertaking or Section 106 agreement:

- Provision of two pavilions or changing facilities to support the proposed new playing fields adjacent to Upper Heyford Airfield and the existing playing fields to the south of Camp Road.
- The option for the provision of indoor facilities on site to serve the development or an off-site contribution towards indoor sport. The size of contribution should accord with the Local Authority's development plan documents relating to planning contributions.

Conclusion

In light of the above Sport England withdraws the objection set out in our letter of 4th January 2011. However, if the Council decided not to attach the above conditions/inclusions with the Section 106 agreement, Sport England would wish to lodge a statutory objection to this application. Should the Council be minded to approve the application without the above conditions, then in accordance with The

Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, the application should be referred to the Government Office.

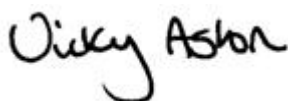
If you wish to amend the wording of the conditions or use another mechanism in lieu of the conditions/suggested changes to the S106 agreement, please discuss the details with the undersigned. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments.

The absence of an objection to this application in the context of the Town and Country Planning Acts, does not in any way commit Sport England's or any National Governing Body of Sport's support for any related application for grants funding.

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.

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

Yours sincerely



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Planning Manager

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Cc: Philip Rolls – Cherwell District Council
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