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Principal Planning Officer (Major Developments)
Development Management
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
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BANBURY
OX15 4AA

5 May 2015

Our Ref: SE/CL/2015/39037/S

Dear Andrew,

App Ref: 15/00153/REM
Site: Heyford Park, Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Bicester, OX25 5HD
Proposal: "Reserved Matters to Outline application 10/01642/OUT - Village green including sports provision."

Thank you for consulting Sport England on additional information submitted as part of the above named application.

The additional information comprises:

1. 'Village Green – Detailed Landscape Proposals' (drawing numbered Bir.4322_18G)
2. A Review Note, prepared by Pegasus Group and dated 9th April 2015, containing relevant extracts from the s106 agreements and Deed of Variation.
3. A covering letter from Pegasus Group dated 17th April 2015.

The revised drawing shows replacement of the four grass wickets with one artificial wicket, an increase in the distance to the boundary of the outfield and the provision of ball stop nets adjacent to the footpaths on the east and west sides of the proposed village green. The drawing is annotated with a note that reads:

"Location of ball defensive barrier. Fixed posts with netting hoisted into position during cricket match situations. 5 to 6 metres in height, netting colour – green, posts positioned at 10m intervals. Cricket/Football ground perimeter protection net system, as supplied by Stadia-sports.co.uk or similar approved."

In preparing its response to consultation on the additional information, Sport England has sought the views of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). The ECB has advised that a non-turf pitch, compliant with ECB specifications, would "provide the

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right level of facility for this development". A copy of the relevant ECB technical specification is attached.

The ECB also recommends that provision be made for ball stop netting, when required, and that a company such as Labosport Ltd be consulted to provide a technical assessment of the detailed requirements.

From the additional information provided and the views of the ECB, it is considered that the site would be capable of satisfactorily accommodating a single artificial wicket and an outfield of a size that accords with published guidance. However, it is still likely that the proposed development would give rise to a conflict between the use of the village green for cricket and the neighbouring uses, particularly housing. Ball stop netting on posts has been proposed to mitigate the risk of cricket balls leaving the site, but the height of the netting needs to be determined by an independent risk assessment. It also needs to be clearly understood who will have control over it and who will be responsible for its maintenance.

A risk assessment, by a company such as Labosport Ltd, could be undertaken prior to a decision being taken or, if the Council is minded to approve the application, in accordance with a suitably worded planning condition. In the case of the latter, the Council will first need to be satisfied that there will be no harm to the amenities of the locality in terms of the appearance of the posts and the netting irrespective of their potential height.

A further Deed of Variation of the s106 Agreement is also likely to be required as the cricket pitch would no longer accord with Sport England's Design Guidance Note, Natural Turf for Sport.

In light of the above, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to the revised proposal, **subject to** the following conditions being attached to the decision notice (if the Council is minded to approve the application):

Condition 1

The cricket pitch hereby permitted shall not be constructed other than substantially in accordance with the ECB's Performance Standards for Non-Turf Cricket Pitches Intended for Outdoor Use [TS6] Revised November 2007.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.

Condition 2

- a) No development shall commence [or other specified time period] until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]:

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- (i) A detailed assessment of the risk of cricket balls leaving the ground and potential solutions to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
 - (ii) Based upon the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) above, a scheme that is designed to prevent balls from leaving the playing field area. The scheme shall include full details of all structures to be erected, who will have control over them and who will be responsible for their maintenance.
- b) The approved scheme shall be carried out in full before first use of the cricket pitch. The land shall thereafter be maintained and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme.

Reason: To minimise the risk of cricket balls leaving the playing field and causing damage to property or personal injury and to ensure that the development is fit for purpose and sustainable.

If you wish to amend the wording of the conditions or use another mechanism in lieu of them, please discuss the details with the undersigned. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and it is involved in any amendments.

If the Council decides not to attach the above conditions, Sport England would wish to maintain its objection to this application.

Sport England is aware of the comments made by the Council's Arboricultural Officer, in an e-mail dated 28 April 2015, which highlight the difficulties presented by the size of the available site. If the primary purpose of the village green is to meet specified requirements for amenity open space, ecology and biodiversity, rather than sport, other land will need to be identified within the outline application site boundary to provide a playing field that is capable of accommodating a fit for purpose cricket pitch.

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

Yours sincerely

Raymond Cole

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