

Benjamin Bailey

Subject: LA Ref: PLAN/2019/1176; Site Address: Woking FC Lathwaite Community Stadium GU22 9AA; SE Ref: PA/19/SE/WOK/54370

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From: Owen Neal

Sent: 26 March 2020 17:25

To: Benjamin Bailey ; Thomas James

Subject: LA Ref: PLAN/2019/1176; Site Address: Woking FC Lathwaite Community Stadium GU22 9AA; SE Ref: PA/19/SE/WOK/54370

Dear Ben/Thomas,

Sport England lodged a holding objection on the 8th January 2020 to the above application for the redevelopment of the site following demolition of all existing buildings and structures to provide a replacement stadium with ancillary facilities including flexible retail, hospitality and community spaces, independent retail floorspace (Classes A1/A2/A3) and medical centre (Class D1) and vehicle parking plus residential accommodation comprising of 1,048 dwellings.

Sport England supported the application in principle under our E4 exception policy but asked for clarification on a couple of points. In summary, this included the future of the gymnastics club (Woking Gymnastics Club) and the snooker club; as well as the phasing of development with respect to continuity of pitch/sports facility provision during the construction process.

Since then, further information has been submitted by the agent/applicant as well as Woking Borough Council. This has included:

- Information from the council on the gymnastics and snooker clubs in respect of their current leasing arrangements and future plans;
- Information from Woking FC regarding alternative or interim matchplay/training arrangements during construction.

Sport England is satisfied that some clarification has been provided in respect of these above issues. Although no detailed plans have been shared in relation to groundsharing or alternative interim arrangements for Woking FC during construction, Sport England is reassured that the club are fully supportive of the plans. Sport England does not consider there is any need to object on this basis.

Clarification has been provided on the current and future leasing and accommodation arrangements for both the gymnastics and snooker clubs. Sport England notes that the gymnastics club has planning permission for replacement facilities at Ten Acres Farm site (app ref: PLAN/2017/1063), although it is understood that these facilities have yet to be constructed and are therefore not currently available for use by Woking Gymnastics Club. Sport England would therefore wish to secure the delivery of these replacement facilities, or at least suitable temporary alternative facilities, before any development occurs which leads to the loss of the existing facilities enjoyed by the club. Sport England has worked with the council and the agent/applicant to draft a suitable grampian condition which achieves this aim.

I should add that Sport England has consulted the Football Foundation on behalf of the FA (the national governing body for football) on the proposal and they comment that they are fully supportive of the plans.

Conclusion

On that basis, Sport England is content to withdraw its holding objection as it is satisfied that the proposal as a replacement stadium pitch broadly meets our E4 exception policy which states:

'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.'

This is subject to the following condition:

- No development which restricts the operation and use of the gymnastic club shall commence until the replacement facilities permitted under PLAN/2017/1063 (or as amended) are operational and available for use, unless alternative temporary facilities are provided as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, following consultation with Sport England.

*Reason: To ensure the satisfactory quantity, quality and accessibility of compensatory provision which secures a continuity of use [phasing provision] and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.*

Yours sincerely,

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