

Horsham District Council

FAO: Matthew Porter

By email only

9th July 2026

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

Application Reference: DC/26/0322

**Site: STEYNING GRAMMAR SCHOOL, UPPER SCHOOL SHOOTING FIELD BN44
3RX**

**Proposal: Part-demolition of existing teaching buildings, MUGAs and all-weather pitch. Construction of replacement 2-storey and 3-storey teaching buildings, flood-lit all-weather pitch and hard surfaced sports courts, with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure.
Sport England Reference: PA/26/SE/HO/73425**

Thank you for reconsulting Sport England on the above application.

Impact on playing field

Sport England notes the response from the agent dated 19th June setting out the position regarding the playing pitch layout and the impact on cricket. We are satisfied that whilst there is encroachment onto the playing field from the proposed redevelopment this does not adversely affect the sporting capacity of the site and its ability to accommodate existing pitches. We also need to consider and balance that loss of playing field against the overall sporting benefits of the development, which includes new/replacement sports facilities accessible to the community. It will be essential that these facilities and supporting ancillary provision is designed

with community use in mind as well as education use. We therefore consider that this element of the proposal broadly meets a combination of the E3 and E5 exceptions in our playing fields policy. These state:

E3 – 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.*

E5 – 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.

Phasing of development

Sport England welcomes the changes to the proposed redevelopment to ensure that hockey is retained on the site in the long term. We also understand that the phasing must primarily work for the school – the pupils and the staff. Sport England accepts that position, and we welcome the changes to the scheme to ensure that it will meet hockey's needs once constructed.

The outstanding matter relates to the provision of suitable alternative, interim training and matchplay arrangements for both clubs (South Downs

and Southwick Hockey Clubs) during the construction phase which will last for an extended period, approximately 4 years. The provision of suitable arrangements is especially important given the length of time the clubs will face away from the site. This poses a significant risk to the long-term future and sustainability of both clubs, particularly, where the membership must travel greater distances out of the catchment to play hockey.

Sport England understands that the agent has been working to source suitable alternative venues to host the hockey clubs and that there has been progress made towards a temporary solution for both clubs. However, as it stands, our understanding is that confirmation from the other education institutions contacted which have similar suitable facilities onsite as well as sufficient capacity to accommodate both clubs' training and matchplay requirements has not yet been secured.

Conclusion

Sport England welcomes the amendments to the proposed school redevelopment to secure replacement hockey facilities and lighting as well as security of access/use through a community use agreement.

We welcome the efforts that the agent has undertaken to source alternative playing provision for both hockey clubs during the construction period, even though we are currently without confirmation that such alternative provision is in place at this time.

Considering this, Sport England wishes to maintain its objection to the application. This is on the basis that we consider this element of the proposal is capable of meeting some, but not all, parts of the E4 exception in our playing fields policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

The E4 exception 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.*

Sport England is satisfied that the criteria in relation to the qualitative; quantitative; location and accessibility elements of the exception are met, however, the replacement provision cannot be implemented prior to the loss of the existing facility; and the proposed phasing represents a significant risk to the future sustainability of the hockey clubs. Sport England can be flexible over the phasing, but we do need certainty that suitable alternative provision is in place to support the clubs over such an extended period of time.

Should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application despite Sport England's objection, then we would ask that the following conditions are attached to the planning permission:

Conditions

1. Prior to commencement of development on the existing hockey artificial grass pitch (AGP), a temporary hockey impact mitigation scheme, including details of the phasing of development on the hockey AGP and its replacement; and how the temporary impacts on

the use of the site for hockey would be mitigated off-site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented and complied with in full throughout the phasing of the development hereby approved.

Reason: to secure suitable, alternative interim playing arrangements for the hockey clubs on the site during construction to provide continuity of provision and ensure the sustainability of both hockey clubs.

2. Use of the development shall not commence until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the sports hall; hockey artificial grass pitch (AGP); natural turf playing field/pitches and the 2no. Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

*Reason: To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility/facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.*

3. No development of the replacement hockey artificial grass pitch (AGP) shall commence until details of the design and layout of the replacement AGP have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.

The AGP shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details and meets FIH regulations.

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

Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the replacement hockey AGP should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to: <https://www.fih.hockey/about-fih/fih-quality-programme/resources-hub/facilities-guidance-resources/11-a-side-hockey-facilities> and FIH Gen 2 multi-sports areas Sports Pitch Design Guidance. On completion, FIH certification should be provided by an approved pitch tester.

If you require any further advice on any issues raised within this correspondence, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

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