

Katherine Snell
Hampshire County Council
County Office
The Castle
WINCHESTER
SO23 8UG

23 January 2013

Our Ref: SE/HCC/2013/30707/S

Dear Katherine,

App Ref: PLAN/KS/WRE006
Site: Westgate School, Cheriton Road Winchester SO22 5AZ
Proposal: Expand the existing secondary school with a 420 place two form entry Primary school, making an 'All Through' education provision, proposals include the reprovision of a 55 place nursery unit which is to be retained on site, additional car parking and landscaping are also included within the proposals, part demolition of an existing boarding house and annexed nursery unit is required to facilitate the proposal at The Westgate School and Rotherly House, Cheriton Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 5AZ

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

The site is not considered to form part of, or constitute a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (Statutory Instrument 2010 No.2184), therefore Sport England has considered this a non-statutory consultation.

The application proposes the expansion of the existing Westgate secondary school with a 420 place two form entry primary School. The proposals also include the reprovision and relocation of a 55 place Nursery unit which is to be retained on the Westgate site. Additional car parking and landscaping are also included within the proposals.

Planning Policy Objective 2 of Sport England's Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation: Development Control Guidance Note (2009) (Appendix 2) states that Sport England will seek:

“To prevent the loss of facilities or access to natural resources which are important in terms of sports development. Should redevelopment be unavoidable, an equivalent (or better) replacement facility should be provided in a suitable location.”

Paragraph 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

“To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- *plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;”*

Paragraph 72 states:

“The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- *work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”*

The Westgate Badminton Centre is located in the Centre of the Westgate School site. The Centre contains 5 good quality badminton courts and ancillary facilities. The Westgate Badminton Centre is home to the Hampshire Badminton Association and the Centre is recognised as one of only a few centres of excellence for badminton in the country. The courts are regularly used by the school, the local community and badminton players from further afield who take part in competitions and tournaments at the Centre. Further information about the Badminton Centre is available from the following website: <http://www.westgatebadmintoncentre.co.uk/>

Sport England and Badminton England are concerned that the proposal will adversely affect access to the Badminton Centre, through restrictions to parking and access. These proposed changes may deter people from using the centre.

For example, the number of parking spaces close to the Badminton Centre will be substantially reduced. The existing two car parks adjacent to Centre Car Parks A & B contain 15 spaces (plus 1 accessible space with motorcycle parking) and 22 spaces (plus 2 accessible spaces) respectively. As part of the proposals, car park A will only

contain 11 spaces (plus 3 accessible spaces and no motorcycle parking) and car park B will be replaced with landscaping.

The plans appear to indicate that parking for the Badminton Centre will instead be made at location D, adjacent to the main Secondary School buildings, much further away from the Centre. For example, paragraph 4.15 of the Applicant's Transport Assessment states:

'The car park adjacent to the current main secondary school entrance will be modified to contain 29 'standard' spaces and two wheelchair accessible 'disabled' bays. Out of hours, this car park will be available to users of the Badminton Centre.'

This raises a potential safety concern for Centre users as to get to and from parking area D pedestrians would have to walk some distance past closed school buildings at night. This could mean that some users are reluctant to visit the Centre after hours.

It is not clear where Badminton Centre users will park during School hours. Paragraph 4.14 of the Transport Assessment further states:

"Eleven 'standard' bays will be retained outside the Badminton Centre, with three wheelchair accessible 'disabled' bays. This will be available for secondary staff parking during school hours."

There is no mention of where staff for the Badminton Centre will be able to park either during or after School hours. Although paragraph 3.4 of the Transport Assessment acknowledges that the Badminton Centre has 5 paid staff and volunteer staff.

Sport England is also concerned that proposals for a gate on Green Lane may further restrict vehicle access to the Badminton Centre and the proposed car parks nearest the Centre. For example, paragraph 4.22 of the Transport Assessment states:

"Green Lane lies between the existing school and the proposed Primary Element. It currently provides access to a 35 space car park, the Westgate School car park and the Badminton Centre. The number of spaces accessed from Green Lane, and therefore the level of vehicular traffic, will decrease following the proposals"

This statement appears to suggest that vehicular access to the Badminton Centre will be actively discouraged. It is not clear how the proposed gate on Green Lane will be operated. Will Centre users need to get out of their cars to open the gate? When will the gate be locked at night? How will the gate be operated – manually or from the centre? If a gate is necessary, could a barrier be introduced that allows vehicles in but requires a code to exit? The code could then be made available at the Badminton Centre reception.

In conclusion, the Applicant's Transport Assessment does not appear to have given any consideration to the parking and access needs of the Badminton Centre Users or staff. In addition, the proposed changes to the landscaping, parking and access arrangement appear to actively discourage access to the Badminton Centre.

No consultation with Badminton Centre Users or Staff appears to have taken place and it is recommended that the Applicant does this as soon as possible.

As explained above this is an important Centre of Excellence for Badminton nationally as well as being a key facility for School and Community users. It is disappointing that the needs of all users of the School's facilities have not been considered in the preparation of this application, as encouraged in national planning policy.

A substantial amount of public money from a number of sources including the County Council, Sport England and the Badminton Association of England and the Hampshire Badminton Association was invested in the Centre and Sport England/Badminton England are concerned that the Applicant has not adequately considered the needs of users of the Badminton Centre in the proposals to accommodate the new School buildings.

In light of the above and the lack of evidence of any other exceptional circumstances Sport England **objects** to the proposal.

Sport England will remove its objection to this application if amendments are made to the proposals that will address the concerns raised above. Sport England would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and the School.

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.



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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicky Aston".

Vicky Aston
Planning Manager

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