

Committee: **Regulatory
Planning and Highways Sub Committee**

Date: **12 May 2004**

Report by: **Director of Transport and Environment**

Proposal: **Construction of all weather games surface with surrounding 2.75 metres fencing for school and community use**

Site Address: **Little Ridge C.P School, Little Ridge Avenue, St Leonards on Sea, Hastings**

Applicant: **Director of Education and Libraries, East Sussex County Council, County Hall, Lewes**

Application No. **HS/2284/CC**

Key Issues: **i. Loss of playing field
ii. Effect on residential amenity
iii. Waste minimisation**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To grant planning permission subject to conditions.**
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CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

1. The Site

1.1 Little Ridge County Primary School is situated on the northern edge of St Leonards on Sea. It has vehicular access off Hare Way and limited parking within the site.

1.2 The school includes a large playing field to the south of the school building and playground area. The grassed playing field is set 2 metres below the level of the playground and covers 3,200 m². Two thirds of the playing field is level, surrounded by a 2.4m high fence on two sides. The field slopes down to the west, south and southeast with the steepest gradient, a 4 metre drop in the southern corner. There are houses adjacent to the western and eastern boundaries of the school and more houses slightly further distant to the south.

2. The Proposal

2.1 The proposal is to construct a 1,120m² all weather surface on the north-east section of the playing field measuring 40m X 28m. This will be surrounded by a 2.75m high rebound fence system with Weld mesh netting with a 1.2m high section of kickboards to the base, which will be laminated for outdoor use. The site will incorporate a locked gateway 2.4metres wide. The area will have a 1:100 gradient to allow water run off and is partially sunk into the field with tapering embankments to the western and eastern sides and a larger cutting adjacent to the existing playground. Surface water will be channelled to an existing balancing pond to the east of the playing field. A new footpath will be laid to link the new pitch to an existing path to the north.

2.2 Excess soils from the construction of the all weather pitch will be laid in the southern corner of the site where it will be used to regrade a small area of the field.

3. Consultations and Representations

3.1 Hastings Borough Council raises no objections.

3.2 The Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of consent.

3.3 The Environment Agency has no objection in principle.

3.4 Hastings Borough Council Leisure and Amenities Services have confirmed that it is acceptable to discharge surface water from the development into the pond.

3.5 Sussex Police Community Safety team does not identify any unnecessary crime risks.

3.6 Sport England is aware of the difficulties of the site regarding the waterlogged nature of the playing field and the shortage of available hard play area. It is satisfied that the proposed development can be considered as an exception to their playing fields policy E5 which opposes the grant of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field.

3.7 Three letters of representation have been received concerning noise, disturbance and nuisance from parking, potential light pollution, lack of need and potential impact on neighbours.

4. The Development Plan policies of relevance to this decision are:

4.1 East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011: Policy EN1, S1, W10
Hastings Local Plan Adopted 14 April 2004: Policy SP1

5. Considerations

Loss of Playing Field

5.1 Policy SP1 of the Hastings Local Plan states planning permission for the reduction in size or number of playing fields or sports pitches will not be granted unless the proposal meets several requirements. The proposal is for the conversion of part of a grass playing field to an all weather sports pitch. It should serve to upgrade facilities for the site and achieve essential facilities for educational purposes, which cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere. Because of the poor physical condition of the existing grass pitch and its limited availability, the school is unable to meet the government's guidelines for two hours high quality PE or sport for every pupil per week. The proposal will assist in the provision of an outdoor recreational facility, which can be more widely used throughout the year by the school and the local community. It is therefore considered to comply with this policy.

5.2 The Playing Fields Policy of Sport England is that there should be no loss of playing fields. It considers, however, that this proposal falls within an exception to policy E5 and enhances an outdoor facility. Its provision is of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the loss of part of the playing field.

Effect on residential amenity

5.3 Policies S1 and EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 are concerned with development being environmentally sustainable and minimising the impact on the environment, including residential areas. The proposal is in keeping with the existing educational use of the site and associated sports and recreation use. The enclosed fencing is 2.75m high including 1.2m solid boarding base, which are necessary to contain the variety of sports use that could be expected. These fences are generally seen against rising ground reducing their visual impact.

5.4 Representations have been received regarding the possible impacts of the proposal arising from additional parking as a result of any community use. There is some separation of between 20m and 38m between the proposed play area and the closest of the surrounding properties, which includes screening vegetation. It is understood that any community use is likely to be by the immediate local community, thereby minimising any increase in access to the school by car. I consider that the potential for noise nuisance is limited and little different to that which could be expected from the existing playground or playing field use. Whilst residents have questioned the need for this pitch, in view of the large existing playing field, it is apparent that the drainage of the existing pitch is problematic and that the carrying out of amelioration measures is constrained as the field is rarely dry enough to take heavy machinery on the pitches, and to do so in the wrong conditions would cause compaction and worsen the situation. To minimise impacts on the local residents, I consider that their concerns can be addressed by restricting the hours of use and the exclusion of artificial illumination of the pitch.

5.5 The provision of an all weather play area in the northeast corner of the playing field, covering only one third of the pitch, is not considered to give rise to an unacceptable impact on local amenity subject to the controls indicated and is considered to comply with the requirements of policies S1 and EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

Waste Minimisation

5.6 Policy W10 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, seeks to reduce construction industry waste. Whilst the nature of the application makes the generation of soils inevitable, these will not be taken off site and are to be used to regrade a lower part of the site. This is considered to be acceptable subject to full details of the intended regrading operation and satisfactory restoration.

6. Conclusion and reasons for approval

6.1 This development is considered to be in accordance with Policy SP1 of the Hastings Local Plan (Adopted 14 April 2004) and Policies S1, W10 and EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. Conditions attached to the permission will secure the protection of local residential amenity. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

7. Formal Recommendation

7.1 To recommend the Planning & Highways Sub Committee to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions: -

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Development shall not commence until details of the construction access, hours of work, times and routes for the movement of construction traffic, which shall avoid conflict with the school use and a scheme for the restoration of land affected by the works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment. The details and scheme thereby approved shall be implemented in full and in accordance with the approved timetables.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory control of the development and to comply with Policy S1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011

3. Development shall not commence until a detailed drawing to a scale of 1:250 of the land on which the materials excavated in the course of the carrying out the development will be deposited as indicated on drawing number 03-014/D/1 has been

submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment. The drawing shall show the following:

- the arrangement of the contours at 1m intervals
- cross sections showing the existing and proposed finished levels of the land with no allowance for any settlement.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control the development in the interests of the amenity of the area and to comply with Policy S1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

4. Material resulting from excavations associated with the development shall not be deposited on the site other than in the area identified on drawing number 03-014/D/1 and approved in accordance with the details shown on the drawing detailed in condition 3 above.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjoining residents and Policy EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011

5. Within two months of the commencement of development a scheme for the seeding and maintenance of the tipping area identified on drawing number 03-014/D/1, including a timetable for the carrying out of the work, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved timetable.

Reason: To ensure the proper restoration of the site in compliance with policy EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

6. The development hereby permitted shall not be used other than between the hours of 08.00 to 20.00 on Monday to Friday inclusive and the hours of 09.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays, Public and Bank Holidays unless the use is by or in association with the school.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjoining residents and to comply with Policy S1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011

7. There shall be no artificial illumination of the site

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjoining residents and to comply with Policy S1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

INFORMATIVE:

Notwithstanding the difficulties involved the planning authority would wish to see improvement in the drainage of the remaining playing field to permit full use of the area.

BOB WILKINS

Director of Transport and Environment

4 May 2004

P&HSUB:P12MAY-HS2284CC

Contact Officer: Clare Farrands Tel. No. 01273 482394

Local Member: Councillor Scott

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

HS/2284/CC.

East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011: Policy EN1, S1, W10.

Hastings Local Plan Adopted 14 April 2004: Policy SP1.

Sport England: Playing Fields Policy.