BARNSLEY PARTNERSHIP FOR LEARNING

DEARNE ALC, GOLDTHORPE, BARNSLEY PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM AGRICULTURE TO SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD AND OPEN SPACE.

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

JANUARY 2009

TURLEYASSOCIATES

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LPA Ref:

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Date of Issue: January 2009

1. Introduction

1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application by Laing O' Rourke Construction North for the change of use of agricultural land to playing fields. This is to form an extension to the existing/proposed playing fields at the proposed new Advanced Learning Centre (ALC) at Dearne High School, Goldthorpe, Barnsley which was approved in outline under decision reference 2006/1024, for which reserved matters are currently being considered under application reference 2008/1819. Whilst this application is a stand-alone consideration in the legal sense, this proposal should also be considered within the context of the Reserved Matters application that is currently under consideration.

1.2 This planning statement sets out the relevant planning policy and material considerations associated with the change of use. The proposed changes to the site are also outlined and justification given as to why the proposals are acceptable and planning permission should be granted.

2. Site Description and Context

2.1 The site lies to the south-east boundary of the Dearne High School site, Goldthorpe, adjacent to the existing school playing fields.

2.2 The site is bounded to the north and west by the school playing fields. To the south and the east lies open agricultural land. Far Moor Dike lies to the south of the site and some fishing ponds are located beyond the south-west site boundary.

2.3 A public footpath, which is a registered PROW, currently crosses the site from the south to the north-east corner. The public footpath links to a track to the north of the site, which runs along the eastern boundary of the existing school site. To the south of the site, the footpath runs westwards to Goldthorpe Road. An application site boundary is shown in red on the site layout plan presented at Appendix 1.

2.4 Historically the site was formally a landfill. The site has subsequently been left with minimal management. The site currently contains a small area of hardstanding to the northern boundary and semi-improved grassland and scrub vegetation to the southern boundary.

2.5 The site is currently elevated above the surrounding land to the north, west and south (Figure 2.2).

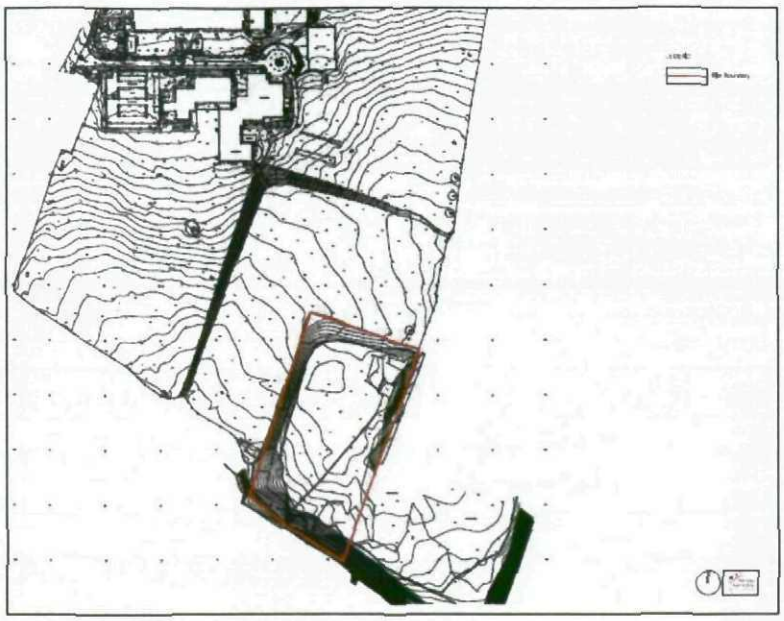

Figure 2.2: Topographical Survey of the proposed site: Dearne High School

2.6 The site is located within Green Belt, under Policies DE7/GS6 of the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan. This designation is considered further in Sections Three and Four of this statement.

3. Policy Context

3.1 Planning policies that are relevant to the consideration of the application are set out in national planning policy, together with the adopted development plan.

National Planning Policy

PPS1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2005)

3.2 PPS1 outlines the Government's vision for the planning system and the key policy principles which should underpin it. These key policy principles include sustainable development and a spatial planning approach.

3.3 Key policies contained in the Guidance include support for sustainable economic growth, regeneration and creating linkages between places, greater accessibility to local facilities and services and the re-use of previously developed land.

3.4 A key feature of PPS1 is the promotion of the importance of good design in new development. It affirms that good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.

Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (January 1995; Amended March 2001)

3.5 PPG2 outlines the fundamental aims of the Government's Green Belt policy as the prevention of urban sprawl and safeguarding greenfield land. Green Belts shape the pattern of urban growth, ensuring that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans.

3.6 PPG2 outlines there as being give purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.7 Paragraph 1.6 of PPG2 sets out appropriate and positive uses of land identified within the Green Belt as follows:

- To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- To retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- To secure nature conservation interest; and
- To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

3.8 PPG2 imposes a strict presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. PPG2 states that:

'Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances'[1].

3.9 PPG2 outlines that the construction of new development in the Green Belt is inappropriate in principle, unless it is for the following purposes:

- Agriculture and forestry;
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt;
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- Limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing for community needs under development plan policies according to PPG3;
- Limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites.

3.10 Of these exceptional circumstances, PPG2 requires that 'essential facilities' should be genuinely required for uses of land that preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

[1] PPG2, Paragraph 2.6

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002)

3.11 PPG17 emphasises the importance of well designed, open spaces, sport and recreational facilities for improving quality of life and wellbeing. The guidance states that outdoor recreational facilities can: be a focal point for community activities; support an urban renaissance or rural renewal; promote health, well-being and community cohesion and promote sustainable development.

3.12 PPG17 states the importance of understanding the needs of local communities in order to ensure effective planning for open space, sport and recreational facilities. Local authorities should recognise opportunities for the development of open space, sports or recreational facilities to remedy deficiencies in provision.

3.13 PPG17 requires that local authorities ensure that sufficient and appropriate provision is made for local sports and recreational facilities where planning permission is granted for new developments. This should either be through an increase in the number of facilities or by improvements to existing facilities.

3.14 PPG17 states that Local Authorities should consider several criterion where identifying where to locate new areas of open space, sports and recreational facilities. The most applicable of these to the proposed development of the site includes:

- Ensuring that facilities are accessible;
- Avoiding any significant loss of amenity to residents, neighbouring uses or biodiversity;
- Adding to and enhance the range and quality of existing facilities;
- Meeting the regeneration needs of areas, using brownfield in preference to greenfield sites;
- Considering the scope for using any surplus land for open space, sport or recreational use, weighing this against alternative uses.

The Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber (May 2008)

3.15 The RSS for Yorkshire and the Humber was published in May 2008 and replaces the 'Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber to 2016' which was issued in December 2004.

3.16 Policy YH9 states that the Green Belts in North, South and West Yorkshire have a valuable role in supporting urban renaissance, as well as conserving countryside. Policy YH9 requires that the general extent of the Green Belt should not be changed, but recognises that there may be a *'localised need'* to reconsider its extent and use in certain locations.

3.17 The RSS identifies Goldthorpe as a Principal Town within the Barnsley District. Policy YH5 sets out that principal towns should be the main focus for a range of facilities, including leisure and educational amenities. Policy SY1 requires that the regeneration of South Yorkshire's principal towns, including Goldthorpe, are maintained.

Saved Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (December 2000)

3.18 The Barnsley UDP (2000) constitutes the Council's statutory development plan whilst the Local Development Framework (LDF) is under preparation. Only the Local Plan policies 'saved' by the Secretary of State in September 2007 have been considered as part of this appraisal.

3.19 The site is identified UDP Policy DE7 as Green Belt land.

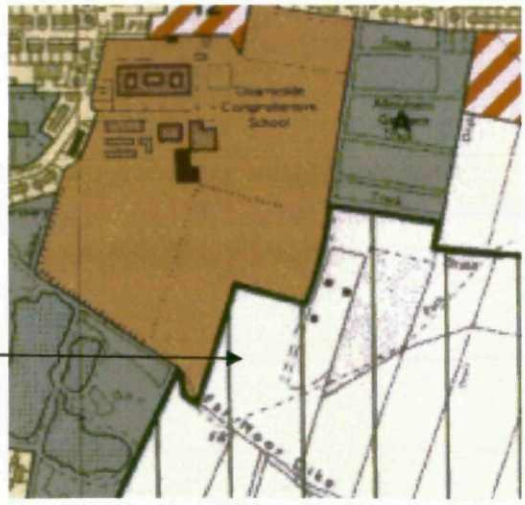

Figure 3.1: Green Belt Designation for the Proposed Site - Extract from UDP Proposals Map

3.20 UDP Policy GS6 requires that Green Belt land is safeguarded from inappropriate development.

3.21 UDP Policy GS7 states that new development within the Green Belt will not be permitted unless it maintains the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. New development should therefore be limited to uses which preserve the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

3.22 Policy GS8 is aligned with PPG2, stating that the construction of new buildings will not be permitted within the Green Belt except in very special circumstances, unless it is for the following purposes:

- Agriculture or forestry
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, or for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it
- The replacement of existing dwellings in compliance with policy GS8e.

The UDP states that 'positive' development of the Green Belt includes the provision of opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation and the improvement of damaged and derelict land around settlements.

3.20 UDP Policy GS9 requires that development within the green belt, or conspicuous from it, should not by reason of its siting, materials or design result in significant harm to the visual amenity of the green belt.

3.23 The UDP sets out a number of 'greenspace objectives'. Those that are most applicable to the proposed site include:

- Reclaiming derelict land for new development wherever possible and feasible;
- Comprehensively improving major tracts of derelict, despoiled and neglected land in the urban areas, and provide open space and recreational facilities;
- Protecting the open character of land around and between settlements;
- Improving the quality and provision of open space within the urban areas;
- Protecting and enhancing the provision of both indoor and outdoor sport and leisure uses;

- Maximising opportunities for community and individual environmental involvement and action;

- Maximising public access to, and awareness of, recreational open space.

Sport England: Playing Fields Policy

3.24 Sport England was appointed as a statutory consultee under the General Development Procedure Order (1995) for development proposals which affect playing fields and sports facilities. Sport England should be informed by both the Local Planning Authority and the applicant as to proposals to develop on land which is, or has been recently used as playing fields[2].

A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England (1997) - Planning Policy Statement

3.25 Sport England has established a series of policies that aim to ensure that there is no reduction in the supply of conveniently located, quality playing fields for current and future demand[3].

3.26 In accordance with Policy P1, Sport England will oppose planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field. Sport England will only alter its stance if, in the judgement of Sport England, specific circumstances apply. The specific circumstances are outlined by Policies E1-E4:

- E1: 'A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to Sport England that there is an excess of playing provision in the catchment and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport' – Sport England requires that such an assessment should make allowance for other development upon sport land for which planning consent has been or is likely to be granted.

- E2: "The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use."

[2] Sport England, Planning Policy Statement (1997) Paragraph C1
[3] Sport England, Planning Policy Statement (1997), Paragraph 11

- E3: "The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facilities on the site."

- E4: 'The playing field or playing fields, which would be lost as a result of the proposed development, would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of a equivalent or better quantity, in a suitable location...prior to the commencement of development'. This should be confirmed by a legal agreement between the applicant and local planning authority.

4. The Proposals

4.1 This planning application seeks the change of use of the site from agricultural land to recreation space/sports field as an extension to the existing sports fields associated with the school.

4.2 The site will be used for educational and sporting activities.

4.3 The proposals for the site and associated context are presented at Appendix 1. The specific proposals are as follows:

- Realignment of the existing school fence to include the application site as part of the school playing fields;

- A new grassed sports pitch will be created to the north of the site. To accommodate a playing pitch in this location, the levels of the site will be increased by approximately 600mm at this location to create a playing field platform with suitable gradients;

- An informal cross country/cycle training route will be located within the southern part of the site. Some mounding, no greater than 0.5m in height, will be located within this area to create level differences and to vary the cross country route;

- A trim trail/orienteering station will be located to the south of the informal cross country/cycle training area;

- Additional trees will be planted to the east and south boundaries of the site to create a woodland area;

- The perimeter of the site will be developed as a wildlife resource, through appropriate management, to provide an educational facility for the school;

- The footpath which currently crosses the site will be diverted around the boundary of the proposed site, under section 247 of the T&CP Act 1990, consequent upon the grant of planning permission. A new footbridge and steps will be provided over the watercourse to the south of the site.

5. Planning Justification

5.1 Sections Two and Four of this statement set out the planning policy context that is relevant to this site. In this respect the key considerations are as follows:

- Whether the change of use is considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt and;
- Whether the proposal will make a positive contribution to the aims and objectives of Sport England as statutory consultee.

Green Belt Considerations

5.2 The purposes of the Green Belt are set out in paragraph 1.5 of Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts, published in January 1995 (amended March 2001) and this is supported by paragraph 1.6 which sets out associated land use objectives. The approach in the UDP is also reflective of this approach.

5.3 The proposal is for the change of use from agricultural land to sports pitch and associated open space with recreational uses.

5.4 The site is well contained and its change of use forms a logical extension to the boundary to the school playing fields. Fundamentally, Paragraph 1.6 of PPG2 outdoor sports and recreational facilities are appropriate uses within the Green Belt. UDP policy also reflects that approach and at paragraph 3.30 of that document identifies that outdoor sport and recreation uses are appropriate and positive within the Green Belt. The principles of the proposed use is appropriate within the Green Belt and is acceptable.

5.5 The site is situated adjacent to the existing school playing fields and is relatively limited in scale. Nonetheless it will have a minimal impact in extending the urban development boundary and will in fact form a defensible boundary to the recreation uses associated with the school. It should be noted that the proposed development will incorporate a new woodland buffer to the east and south of the site which will define and contain the use whilst maintaining an open character.

5.6 The site is a low quality former landfill location and is poorly maintained. The proposed development will result in the reclamation of the land by making more efficient use of the land and the improve site's visual amenity, whilst maintaining the openness of the Green Belt via an appropriate development use in PPG2. The site will remain as open land, used for sports facilities, rather than buildings. This will retain the openness and therefore will meet Green Belt objectives and the

provisions of PPG2 and UDP policies GS6, GS7 and GS8. The change of use is therefore acceptable.

Sport England Considerations

5.7 The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure Order) 1995 defines Sport England was appointed as a Statutory Consultee for development proposals which affect playing fields and sports facilities.

5.8 Sport England were consulted on the outline application for the redevelopment of the school in the light of their playing fields policy and initially made objections to the outline proposals on the adjoining school site. This objection was later withdrawn in correspondence to Barnsley Council dated 5 September 2006 and attached at Appendix 2 of this statement. This letter confirms their satisfaction with the balance of positive change to sports fields and facilities which would flow from that outline proposal.

5.9 This application proposal represents a gain in the overall level of sports provision over and above what was proposed at outline and which was supported by Sport England and therefore should be supported.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The proposed use of the site will provide additional sports and recreation facilities to the proposed new school. The proposals will extend to the existing school boundary into area currently identified as Green Belt within the saved UDP..

6.2 When assessed against the objective of Green Belt set out within PPG2 and Saved UDP policy, the proposals represents appropriate development and consequently is acceptable.

6.3 When taken with the wider reserved matters application, the proposals will enhance sports facilities and space provision in terms of variety and quantity over and above that which was approved in outline under decision reference 2006/1024. It is considered that the enhancement to sports facility provision that will result from the proposals over and above that which was approved in outline should be taken fully into account when considering the proposals. It is considered that this is sufficient not to warrant the raising of an objection by Sport England in this respect.

6.4 In conclusion, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in planning policy and environmental terms and request that planning permission be granted.

Appendix 1 – Site Layout Plan

Notes

1. Main vehicular access
2. Main pedestrian access
3. Existing lesiure centre parking (18 no. Spaces and drop-off)
4. Bus drop-off zone (5 no. Spaces)
5. Main car park (160 no. Spaces inc. disabled)
6. Disabled parking (8 no. Spaces)
7. Service area/minibus drop-off
8. Grass reinforcement for fire tender access
9. Main entrance plaza
10. Secondary pupil access (cycle/pedestrian)
11. Potential location of sub-station
12. Exhibition green
13. Service yard access
14. Secure perimeter formed by fencing and new school building
15. Cycle Store (132 No. Spaces)
16. Reflection Garden
17. Kitchen Garden
18. Memorial Garden
19. Raised planters and location of potential greenhouse
20. Outdoor classrooms
21. Small external dining area – link to Food Technology
22. Sculptured Mounds – informal seating/display areas
23. External dining area including a variety of informal and formal seating
24. Location of potential lensile structure
25. Forum/performance area with tensile structure
26. Hard play area with ground graphics showing games/courts
27. Outdoor gym
28. Green screens
29. Service yard including bin store, biomass boiler and spinkler tank
30. Grass terraces for spectating
31. Habitat area including ponds/bog gardens, biomass banks, woodland planting and wildflower meadows
32. Orchard
33. Training grids
34. Hard games court (3 no. Tennis/3 no. Basketball/1 no. 5 a-side).
35. Medium rugby pitch (88x46m)
36. Trim trail/orienteering stations
37. Long/triple jump with space for high jump
38. Existing leisure centre
39. Existing hard games court
40. Shot put/discus circles
41. Rounders
42. Large football pitch (91x50m)
43. Javelin
44. 400m athletics track – 8 lanes
45. Hard games court (4 x no. Tennis, 3 no. Basketball/1 no. 5-aside)
46. Synthetic turf pitch
47. Small football pitch (75x45)
48. Mounding and informal track for training/cross-country/cycling
49. Potential area for archery – 180m longr ange
50. Medium rugby pitch (95x50m)
51. Cricket pitch

Client: Laing O'Rourke
Project: Barnsley BSF
Title: Proposed playing field extension, Dearne ALC
Reference: LAIY2003
Date: January 2009
Scale: nts

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Appendix 2 – Correspondence from Sport England

Board 12/9

SPORT ENGLAND
YORKSHIRE

Ms Jayne Hammond
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Planning & Transportation Service
Central Offices
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BARNSLEY
S70 2TN

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
ED | AD P | AD HE | AD REGS | AD CST
-7 SEP 2006
SS | RDA | SYMAS | WM | OTHER
COMMENT
J Hammond
DC

Our Ref: Y/BC/2006/10342/S
Your Ref: DC/JH/2006/1024

5th September 2006

Dear Ms Hammond

File

Application No: 2006/1024
Proposal: Erection of advanced learning centre (outline)
Site: Goldthorpe Road, Bolton-upon-Dearne

I refer to our recent meeting on the 30th August 2006 in relation to the above site and the updated drawing no. AL (O) 01 Revision 1 subsequently submitted to Sport England by Mr. Steve Fairhurst.

As stated previously, Sport England has considered the application in the light of its playing fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those, which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches. The Policy states that:

> **" Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field or allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, one of the Specific circumstances applies."**

Previously Sport England objected to the loss of playing field that would have resulted from the development, based on the information submitted with the application at that time. Sport England were of the view that none of the exceptions to its playing fields policy applied, in essence because the potential upgrade to the remaining playing fields and the new sports hall was not viewed to outweigh the significant loss of playing fields.

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www.sportengland.org
Chair: Lord Carter of Coles, Chief Executive: Roger Draper
Regional Sports Board Chair: Peter Price
Regional Director: David Gent

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Drawing no: AL (O) 01 Revision 1 now significantly reduces the amount of playing field land that would form part of the site, with new building restricted between the turquoise hash line and the existing access road into the site.

The points made in the original submission to the application are noted, in relation to the improvements to the playing fields, new indoor facilities, increase in multi use games area ('hard surfaced games courts') provision and a community access agreement. It is also understood the facilities at existing Barnsley Premier Leisure facilities building would be unaffected by the proposals.

Overall, the investment would be likely to benefit sport through better and more accessible facilities to improve participation and higher levels of attainment, whilst reducing the loss to the playing field to a minimum.

The following matters would need, in the view of Sport England, to be dealt with through planning conditions (or S106 agreement) on any planning consent:

1. The turquoise line boundary limit to new building and the area to remain as playing fields, as shown by drawing AL(0) 01 Revision 1.

2. Details of the phasing of the construction works, including the demolition of the existing school buildings, and the phasing of works to the playing fields/pitches and the provision of new sports facilities, to ensure continuity of sports facilities provision.

3. The sporting facilities to be made available for the local community though a Community Use Agreement, covering details of pricing policy, hours of use, access, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The Community Use Agreement to be implemented upon the completion of development.

4. The playing fields and pitches shall be constructed in accordance with standards and methodologies set out in guidance note Natural Turf for Sport (Sport England, March 2000) unless superceeded by specific sports governing body design guidance.

Subject to the above, Sport England are satisfied that the proposal meets one of the exceptions (E4) of its playing field policy in that:

The playing fields or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development

I can therefore confirm that Sport England **withdraw their objection** to the planning application. I will inform the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber of this.

The applicant would be advised to have regard to Sport England design/facilities guidance notes that can be found on the Sport England website (www.sportengland.org), in particular:

- Natural Turf for Sport (2000)
- Comparative Sizes: Pitches and Courts (2006)

- Design specification and construction of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)
- Sports Halls: Design (1999)
- Sports Halls: Sizes and Layout (2000)

The applicant is also advised to use the draft Community Use Agreement on the Sport England website, found under 'Planning Contributions Kitbag'.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact me at the address given.

Yours sincerely

pp

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cc. Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber