

20221293 Cascades Leisure Centre

Sport England 5 January 2023

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Sport England – Non -Statutory Role and Policy

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to the creation of a major sports facility.

Sport England assesses this type of application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and against its own planning objectives, which are Protect - To protect the right opportunities in the right places; Enhance - To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision; Provide - To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations. Further information on the objectives and Sport England's wider planning guidance can be found on its website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport>

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

The Council's Indoor Sports Strategy 2016 identifies the need for improvements to the Borough's two main sports centres. It recognises a need for significant improvements in the quality and quantity of fitness and club swimming provision up until 2028 and a small increase also in the amount of sports hall space. The strategy identifies that the existing leisure pool at Cascades is very limited in its ability to satisfy existing and future demand, 'due to its form it feels dated and tired for a 21st century physical activity opportunity'.

In light of the above Sport England supports the proposal as we consider the proposal addresses an identified need for this facility type and has the potential to be of benefit to the development and encouragement of increased participation in community sport and recreation within the Borough. Particular support is given to,

The continuity of sport and recreation on the site during the construction period

The reinstatement within the new centre of a larger and more flexible sports hall that will be able to accommodate a wide range of sports to competition level and wider community events. We welcome the inclusion of indoor cricket practice nets within the hall and would also recommend that the hall is marked out for futsal as this is an identified priority within the Gravesham Local Football Facility Plan 2019 prepared by the FA in partnership with the Council <https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/gravesham/gravesham-local-football-facility-plan/>

The provision of an 8 x 25m competition pool together with training pool with removable floor to maximise flexibility and community use in accordance with identified need.

The refurbishment of one long disused outdoor tennis / netball court with sports lighting.

Conclusion

This being the case, Sport England offers its **support** for this this application, as it is considered to meet the Provide and Enhance Objectives as set out above.

Sport England's support to this application, in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement.

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.

Gravesham Borough Council