

**Consultation Response from KC,
Sport & Physical Activity**

2020/90640 Holmfirth High School, Heys Road, Thongsbridge, Holmfirth, HD9 7SE

Formation of artificial grass pitch with associated features, including 8no. at 15m high floodlights, fencing up to 4.5m, pedestrian circulation and access route, vehicular maintenance and emergency access with Springwood Road, erection of store, grass mounds, retaining structures and landscaping works

Date Responded:

Responding Officer:

Responding Ref:

I acknowledge this application, and had been included in an early conversation about this project, and I am aware that they have been working with the Football Foundation and the County Football Association on this project.

The artificial pitch will increase the capacity and capability of the school to deliver football and rugby both as part of their curriculum PE, and also for schools sports teams. Furthermore, there is a large, unmet demand for a pitch of this type in the Holmfirth area from community sports teams, with there being a recognised shortfall of 3G pitches across Kirklees, and specifically including in this area. I understand that at least 1 local club have been involved in conversations with the school throughout this process. Whilst I am sure it will be part of any application, ensuring that a robust Community Use Agreement is in place so that this facility can be used outside of school times to support the community access is important. The school is also the seat of the Pennine Sports Partnership, which serves a significant number of local Primary Schools, who will no doubt also benefit through the hosting of festivals and School Games qualifiers by the High School, as part of the Partnership offer.

It is my understanding that this will complement the wider facilities at the school, and that the installation of an artificial pitch to replace a natural turf one would not be in contradiction with the planning guidelines in NPPF para 74. With an indoor sports hall, access to other grass pitches at the adjacent “Little Wembley” site, and the remaining on-site grass provision, not to mention the recreation ground next to the school, this will provide student and the community alike with a much needed and high quality mix of provision.

I am aware that there have been pressures on the wider school area linked to traffic and parking, and in addition there are residential properties in the area for whom both light and noise pollution, not to mention any increase in traffic and parking pressures and associated safety concerns that will need to be handled sensitively. I would suggest, therefore, that some sort of plan be sought from clubs who may use the site for training or matches setting out how they can limit any impact. It would be especially good if this could be linked to use of public transport and / or active travel (walking and cycling). This will be particularly important for the school's business plan, as either an early curfew and / or weekend restrictions could limit the suitability of the facility for teams, and thereby impact the potential viability of the investment.

In principle, and from a sport facility provision perspective, I am supportive of this application which will help to contribute to addressing the shortfall of this type of facility in Kirklees, subject to suitable arrangements being in place to ensure that no unnecessary or unintended disruption to local residents is demonstrated.