

**From:** Paul Daly [mailto:Paul.Daly@sportengland.org]  
**Sent:** 19 February 2014 16:11  
**To:** BUCHANAN, John  
**Subject:** RE: PSBP NW3 Capital Batch - Saddleworth School

Hi John,

Thank you for your email relating to the above.

My comments in response to the matters set out in your email / as discussed this morning follow:

**1.Link between new school in Diggle and existing Saddleworth school in Uppermill**

I note your points relating to the EFA's position and understand why you consider the two sites as separate. I also recognise that there is a degree of uncertainty with regards to the future of the Uppermill site (eg planning permission would be required to develop the site, Secretary of State would have to approve disposal of the site etc.). This is often the case at this stage, though, when schemes which require replacement playing field or other sports facilities are being worked up.

From our perspective, and for the reasons set out previously, we continue to regard the two sites as linked unless / until some alternative replacement is identified or the local authority intentions for the existing Saddleworth school site change.

**2. Control Option for the Diggle Site**

The revised control option (HLM Control Option L(SK)002-P8) now includes a fenced and floodlit AGP on the Diggle site. According to the information you have provided, this is exactly the same size as the existing AGP on the Uppermill site. This would meet the policy requirements of being "at least equivalent quantity". Clearly, the detail would need to be worked up going forward (eg nature of the surface) to demonstrate that it would be also of equivalent quality, but at this stage I am satisfied that the control option gives enough confidence for us to say that our policy requirements could be met.

That said, we would strongly recommend that consideration be given to changing the dimensions of the AGP so that it can accommodate a pitch which complies with current Football Association guidance (although I recognise here that the provision of the AGP is outside of the EFA's control). The size of the pitch which is shown on the control option does not meet with any of the Football Association's published dimensions for pitches. Indeed the largest of the FA pitch sizes it could contain would be a pitch for U9-U10 use. Based on the size shown on the control option, the pitch would be unlikely to be able to accommodate any competitive games, even at an inter school level. As a significant level of investment would be needed to construct a new AGP, it would appear to be something of a missed opportunity for it not to cater for the age of children at the school.

Given the age of the children at the school, it would seem more appropriate to include a pitch for use up to U15/U16 (97m x 61m including runoffs). Such a pitch would allow for more flexible use (eg can contain pitches for younger age groups). It would also make the facility more attractive to community users which in turn could help to make the facility more financially sustainable in the longer term.

Further details on FA pitch dimensions can be found at:

<http://www.thefa.com/my-football/football-volunteers/runningaclub/yourfacilities/technicalstandards>

For the sake of clarity, I should also add that Sport England would not consider a runoff of less than 3m on an AGP as acceptable, and floodlights must be positioned outside of the runoffs.

Finally, in relation to the AGP, should it transpire that the existing AGP on the Saddleworth School site in Uppermill is retained and continues to be available for use in the future (say if consent for disposal from the SoS is not given) then Sport England's playing field policy would not require a replacement AGP to be provided on the Diggle site.

### **3. Larger grass pitch**

Confirmation that the grass pitch will be designed and constructed in accordance with Natural Turf for Sport is noted and welcomed.

### **4. Sports Hall**

Thank you for confirming the size of the existing sports hall. In light of this information, I am comfortable with what is being proposed in terms of the dimensions of the proposed sports hall.

In conclusion, I can confirm that I am comfortable with the control option at this stage in the design process, and have reasonable confidence based on it that the final scheme would accord with our playing field policy. However, I would reiterate our strong recommendation with regards to the size of the AGP and the pitch or pitches it contains.

Kind Regards

#### **Paul Daly**

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