

**From:** Paul Daly [mailto:Paul.Daly@sportengland.org]  
**Sent:** 29 July 2014 16:27  
**To:** BUCHANAN, John  
**Subject:** RE: PSBP NW3 - Saddleworth School

Hi John,

Thank for your email below.

In terms of the site now under consideration for the proposed school (Pallet Works site), there appear to be no existing playing field(s) or other sports facilities within the site boundary. The key consideration for us therefore remains whether the proposed school development represents equivalent replacement to the existing Saddleworth High school site. On a matter of detail, I would point out that the existing site layout Drg L(9-)002-P1 shows an area of playing field in the south of the drawing. However, I understand this land comprises of open fields and that the playing field label relates to a proposed feature as opposed to an existing feature.

Previously I had said I was comfortable with control option L(SK)002 Rev P8 subject to caveats. The alternative control option for the Pallet Works site (Drg L(9-)005-P1) shows the proposed pitch layout as being the same as the previous control option. The sports block is now relocated and would appear better placed to serve the playing pitches as a result. Three separate MUGAs are now shown, but the exact dimensions are not clear (I can't seem to get a consistent scale from the drawing).

Assuming the previous information remains applicable to this control option, I would again be comfortable with control option B, Drg L(9-)005-P1 subject to the comments made previously.

In terms of the detail, I would add a new comment that some tree canopies are shown overhanging MUGAs / playing pitches and that this should be avoided. Playing pitches and their runoffs would not be regarded as fit for purpose with overhanging branches, and there is also significant potential for root incursion into the playing surface and maintenance issues with leaf / sap drop.

For the sake of clarity, the previous information supplied by the EFA in support of the previous control option is included below:

- The initial EFA proposal was to provide one full size grass pitch, one  $\frac{3}{4}$  size grass pitch, and retain the use of the existing AWP at Uppermill for the school's sports provision.
- The basis of this being that whilst the PSBP programme does not fund AWP provision, by retaining the existing AWP provision at Uppermill, this would provide an overall increase of one  $\frac{3}{4}$  size grass pitch compared to the existing provision of one full size grass pitch, and one  $\frac{3}{4}$  size AWP pitch;
- Oldham MBC have separately committed to EFA to fund the upgrade of the proposed  $\frac{3}{4}$  grass pitch on the Diggle site to an AWP to include perimeter fencing and floodlighting. The proviso being however that the size of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  size AWP will exactly match the existing AWP facilities at Uppermill;

- The size of the AWP as indicated on Control Option is 83.5M x 45M which is the size of the existing AWP at Saddleworth School;
- The EFA Control Option proposal includes for perimeter fencing and floodlighting to the new  $\frac{3}{4}$  size AWP to Sport England standards;
- The revised EFA proposal is to provide one full size grass pitch, one  $\frac{3}{4}$  size AWP pitch with perimeter fencing and floodlighting (matching the size of the existing AWP at Saddleworth School) , and retaining the use of the existing AWP at Uppermill for the school's sports provision;
- EFA confirm that the larger grass pitch would be designed and constructed in accordance with Natural Turf for Sport.
- The EFA Control Option is proposing a new 4 court sports hall of 594 M/2 (larger than the existing sports hall at Saddleworth)

I also include my comments / caveats on the previous control option which remain applicable to the alternative control option:

### **AGP**

The control option 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/runningclub/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.

**Larger grass pitch**

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

**Sports Hall**

Based on information supplied confirming the size of the existing sports hall, 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**

Planning Manager

**T:** 07920 701425

**M:** 07920 701425

**F:** 01132 422 189

**E:** [Paul.Daly@sportengland.org](mailto:Paul.Daly@sportengland.org)

**Sport England's London office has moved to 1st Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3HF**