

Public Open Space and Recreation Comments

Comments 7th June 2020

It does look like they have provided a much better extent of woodland/tree planting to assist in screening and softening the impact of views from the south and east. We would obviously want to agree full details of this, should the application proceed to REM stage.

In terms of POS/play/sport, I am happy with the updated locations for a LEAP and NEAP, away from the main road. The applicant should perhaps be reminded that a NEAP (min overall size 1000m²) will also need to include at least 465m² of hard surfaced area for ball games (e.g. MUGA) or wheeled sport (e.g. skate ramps) - as per our New Housing and Open Space SPG/SPD or the equivalent Fields in Trust standard.

In terms of formal sport, it is disappointing that once again Hempsted misses out on getting more formal sports provision (such as grass pitches). If we accept no larger pitches can be accommodated then ideally there should be at least a small kickabout area provided within the informal on-site POS (a level grass area with some goalposts) and it would be nice to also secure something like an active fitness space (not a load of cheap 'outdoor gym' equipment that no-one will use but some multi-functional street workout/cross training/circuit training equipment set in a 'workout zone' type area – see examples below). This would help address the lack of other sports provision and provide an additional outlet for adult residents to exercise (it would need to be a separate space to the play facilities). In turn, the off-site formal sport contribution could be reduced accordingly. These fitness spaces, if properly done, with suitable surfacing, cost around £50-80k).







I was not able to find any details of proposed off-site S.106 contributions for formal sport for the revised scheme (up to 215 units). The Planning Statement is unchanged from March 2020 and does not detail any breakdown in the draft heads of terms (appendix). I have done an amended calculation (attached) and the formal sport element comes to £967k. As stated above, we would accept a reduction in the off-site sport contribution if an on-site active fitness space was included in the on-site POS.

Comments 3rd July 2020

Please see my thoughts below re: provision of POS on this site. I have copied in Mr Gooch re: the provision of formal sports facilities. Hempsted area lacks formal public grass sports pitches (there is just the one at Hempsted Rec, with no changing rooms, and private fields at Gordon League, so some form of new formal playing field or sports provision on this development would help address this imbalance. Having said that, the Playing Pitch Strategy draws together the more complex issues of playing field availability/current and future needs across the city and it may be considered that providing a formal sports pitch (with associated changing rooms) would not be necessary here and an off-site contribution to improve other existing sites would be more appropriate.

For a development of 245 units, the council would wish to see on site formal sport and play provision, in accordance with the council's previously adopted POS SPG. This would be in the form of a NEAP, a LEAP, a MUGA, formal full size winter playing pitch (football/rugby) with pitch drainage/changing rooms and a tennis court or equivalent. The number of units (estimated mix – see attached) generates a requirement of 2.87 hectares of open space. The nature of the site (lower parts within the flood plain) means that there is a larger percentage of the site proposed to be set aside for open space (4.81ha informal POS, plus 0.04ha LEAP, 0.1ha NEAP) and 0.87ha incidental green space, which would probably fall outside of the POS calculation (due to lack of size and suitability for POS).

The indicated position of the NEAP, close to the Hempsted Bypass, is not acceptable and the NEAP (with associated MUGA) should be moved further towards the centre of the site's green space, away from the A430 traffic noise. A formal full-sized sports pitch (and mini pitch) could be accommodated on the western field (changing rooms would need to be positioned out of the flood zone). There should be some on-site parking provided for pitch users as well. I would be happy to provide more detailed comments, but they may not be necessary at this stage.

Please note: the linear scale bar on the Framework Plan is inaccurate. The site measures around 430m across at the bottom of the site – see marked up plan attached. The plan is to scale 1:2500@A3, but the linear scale on the plan is wrong. I have indicated how sports pitches could fit onto the site. If the development were to be given consideration I would like to see the eastern site boundary to the A430 have a deep wooded landscape buffer planted, to screen views across the site (and for ecological benefits too).