



Pirton Sports and Social Club Ltd.

www.pirtonssc.co.uk

Please reply to:

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20th September 2026

OBJECTION / FORMAL CONSULTATION SUBMISSION: PLANNING APPLICATION [25/01696/OP](#)

Site: Land South East of Holwell Road and North of Hambridge Way, Pirton

Proposal: Outline application for up to 130 dwellings

Submitted on behalf of: Pirton Sports and Social Club Ltd. (PSSC)

Dear Sirs,

Sport, recreation and Section 106 mitigation

Pirton Sports and Social Club Ltd (PSSC) objects to the application in its present form because it does not clearly identify, justify or secure the sport and recreation provision necessary to mitigate the additional demand generated by up to 130 dwellings.

This is inconsistent with Local Plan Policy HC3. A development of this scale should be informed by an understanding of the associated need for improvements to community and sports facilities and should provide the facilities or contributions necessary to make the development acceptable. In determining the appropriate provision, Policy HC3 requires account to be taken of existing levels of provision and relevant national standards and guidance. It also requires conditions and planning obligations to secure timely delivery, so that the necessary facilities are available when the development, or an agreed proportion of it, is occupied.

The applicant's Playing Pitch Calculator identifies additional demand for football, cricket and associated changing provision. The application also identifies an off-site requirement for

Registered in England; Company No, 16597334.

Registered Office: The Recreation Ground, Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3PX

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equipped play. However, the proposed Heads of Terms refer only generally to “offsite sports provision”. They do not identify:

- the facilities or projects to be provided;
- where they would be located;
- whether provision would take the form of land, works or financial contributions;
- the value and purpose of each contribution;
- the organisations responsible for delivery;
- the delivery and payment triggers;
- arrangements for public access, ownership, management and maintenance; or
- how the proposals relate to the needs and priorities identified in NHDC’s Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy.

Policy HC3 permits necessary facilities to be provided either on site or through contributions to off-site improvements. It does not, however, support selecting an off-site approach without first understanding the development-generated need, existing local capacity and the relative ability of the available options to meet that need. The reference to “offsite sports provision” appears to assume the outcome without any submitted assessment explaining who determined this approach, what facilities or locations were considered, why provision within the application site was discounted, or how the proposed approach responds to the existing overplay and physical constraints at Pirton Recreation Ground.

This is particularly concerning because the nearest established facility, Pirton Recreation Ground, is already physically constrained. It contains four physical football pitches, with a fifth youth pitch overmarked on the principal adult pitch, alongside cricket and other recreation uses. NHDC’s own evidence identifies the adult football pitch and cricket square as overplayed and assigns the site’s football and cricket actions a high priority. There is no available space within the Recreation Ground for another properly configured full-size football pitch without displacing or conflicting with existing uses.

The proposal is for up to 130 dwellings on land outside the defined village boundary and, in PSSC’s view, contrary to the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan and adopted Local Plan. If this land is nevertheless released for development, the layout must recognise that it represents the last realistic opportunity for Pirton’s principal sport and recreation hub to expand. Developing the site for housing, drainage, landscaping and other uses without safeguarding a suitable area for development-related sport and recreation provision would effectively landlock the Recreation Ground: it would permanently remove its ability to expand while adding substantial new demand to facilities that are already physically constrained and overplayed. Suitable land for sport and recreation must therefore be incorporated into the development design before the outline parameters are fixed.

An undefined off-site contribution would not provide the additional land or capacity needed to mitigate that impact. Nor should the Recreation Ground be expected to accommodate further

demand through more intensive use of pitches that are already constrained and overplayed. Suitable land must therefore be incorporated into the development design before the outline parameters are fixed.

PSSC considers that sufficient suitable land should be safeguarded for an additional full-size floodlit grass football pitch, including the necessary drainage, safety margins, supporting infrastructure, parking and access. A safe connection should be provided to the existing Pavilion, which already contains modern changing rooms and toilets. The land and infrastructure should also be designed so that a future upgrade to an appropriate artificial surface is not unnecessarily precluded.

The application does not demonstrate that this opportunity has been properly assessed. If the proposed housing, drainage, landscaping and open-space parameters are approved without safeguarding the necessary land, the opportunity may be permanently lost. The PSSC therefore considers it premature to approve the application or finalise its planning obligations while the form and location of the required sports mitigation remain unresolved.

The PSSC has prepared the **PSSC Pirton Recreation Ground and Pavilion Sport and Leisure Investment Strategy**, submitted alongside this representation and available as a separate submission titled "PSSC Pirton Recreation Ground and Pavilion Sport and Leisure Investment Strategy". The strategy:

- documents the existing use and capacity constraints at the Recreation Ground and Pavilion;
- assesses the additional demands and opportunities arising from this application and application 25/02064/OP;
- identifies a prioritised programme of football, cricket, play, multi-sport, parking, access and community-recreation projects;
- distinguishes between provision sought within the development and proportionate improvements to existing facilities;
- explains how the projects would create additional usable capacity; and
- sets out the further feasibility, design, costing and apportionment work required before individual obligations are finalised.

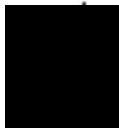
The strategy is not a request for either development to remedy every existing deficiency. Each obligation must remain necessary, directly related to the relevant development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. It does, however, demonstrate that there is a credible local programme against which the development's calculated requirements should be assessed before contributions are allocated elsewhere.

PSSC therefore requests that, before the application is determined or the Section 106 agreement is completed, NHDC should:

1. require the applicant to provide a clear and consolidated schedule of all proposed sport, play and recreation obligations;
2. explain the evidential basis for treating the sports requirement as off site, including who proposed or accepted that approach and why on-site provision has not been identified;
3. demonstrate how the proposed provision has been informed by the development-generated need, existing levels of provision in Pirton, NHDC's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and relevant Sport England and other national guidance, as required by Policy HC3;
4. undertake, or require the applicant to undertake, a feasibility and options assessment for securing recreation land and delivering a full-size floodlit grass football pitch within the development;
5. safeguard sufficient land, access, parking, drainage, services and connections through the outline parameters and subsequent reserved-matters process;
6. assess the local projects identified in the accompanying investment strategy before directing any relevant contribution to facilities elsewhere;
7. consult Pirton Parish Council as landowner, PSSC as Pavilion operator, the relevant sports clubs, Sport England and appropriate governing bodies before the sports obligations are finalised; and
8. include clear project purposes, specifications, financial amounts or delivery duties, triggers, indexation, community-use requirements and long-term management arrangements in the Section 106 agreement, with delivery or payment triggers ensuring that the necessary capacity is available when the development, or an agreed proportion of it, is occupied, in accordance with Policy HC3.

Until these matters have been addressed, the application does not demonstrate that its effects on local sport and recreation can be adequately mitigated. The PSSC therefore objects to the application in its present form.

Yours faithfully
Pirton Sports and Social Club Ltd.



Stephen Smith, B.Sc., CiLCA
Chairman

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