

Project: Grand Union Village SEN School
Subject: Condition 17 – Community Use Agreement
Date: 2nd February 2023

Introduction

This application supports an application to discharge condition 17 of planning permission ref: 2020/1369. The condition states:

Prior to the occupation of the development, a Community Use Agreement, prepared in consultation with Sport England, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the School Hall and Hydrotherapy Pool and any other appropriate facilities and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review and the hours of use of the external lighting. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

REASON

To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility/facilities, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Policy S5 of the London Plan (2021).

As detailed in the condition the original intention was that the hydrotherapy pool would also be included within the scope of the Community Use Agreement however following detailed conversations with the School Trust it was determined that this wouldn't be viable. This report provides further explanation as to why the hydrotherapy pool cannot be included.

Discussion

The new GUV School is a specialist SEN school with a capacity of 80 pupils. The hydrotherapy pool is provided for use by the pupils and is considered to be an essential and beneficial facility for some pupils who will attend the school. There are a number of reasons why including it within the scope of the Community Use Agreement is not a viable proposition, as described below:

Financial Viability

The proposed GUV School is proposed to be an 80 pupil SEN school to be operated and managed by the Eden Academy Trust. It is a small school with a limited range of facilities, the facilities that it does have are specifically designed for its pupils. The school does not have a school caretaker or on-site facilities manager. The operation and management of any community use therefore requires the school to employ staff to manage the facility whilst being used by the community including carrying out set up and cleaning duties before and after the facility has been used.

Due to the limited range of facilities available and therefore limited number of possible community users the revenue anticipated is nominal and unlikely to cover the cost of employing staff to manage and clean after the community use. The facility is therefore unlikely to be financially viable and would place a burden on the school. This is particularly true of the hydrotherapy pool which has further specific requirements as described below.

Requirement of hire/use

Due to the specialist nature of the pool it is required to be operated and managed by specially trained members of staff. This would mean the facility would need to be operated managed by the

school itself employing and providing trained staff. Alternatively, all potential users would need to be fully trained and have their own insurance.

These specific requirements of use would mean that the hire of the facility would only be suitable for block bookings by established groups with trained members of staff. This type of arrangement would still be possible through a specific arrangement with the school but due to these specialist requirements it can not be opened up more widely and is not therefore suitable to be included within the Community Use Agreement.

Cleaning/Maintenance

The community use of the facility would place an increased burden on the school to clean the facility after each use. Staff would need to ensure the pool itself was clean as well as the changing rooms and surround spaces and surfaces. The requirement to employ staff members to clean the facility after use and the limited revenue secured through its hire would mean the hire of the facility would not be financially viable.

The viability of the proposals would be further impacted by the increased maintenance burden that would be placed on the facility. The hydrotherapy pool has a regular maintenance requirement to ensure filters and chemical levels are maintained which has to be performed by a specialist company. Increased use would result in increased maintenance and cost.

Conclusion

For the above reason the hiring out of the hydrotherapy pool to members of the wider community would not be a viable proposition, it would place an excessive financial burden on the school that would not be covered by the revenue received for the hire of the facility. The additional cleaning and maintenance requirements would also jeopardise the use of the facility by the school itself.