

Bury MBC

FAO: Helen Leach

By email

10th February 2025

Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Application Reference: 71525

Site: RADCLIFFE LEISURE CENTRE (CLOSED), SPRING LANE, RADCLIFFE M26 2SZ

Proposal: Variation of condition nos. 1 (temporary time period) and condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 70002 to extend the temporary time period allowed for the use of temporary school facilities up to 28th February 2027 and alterations to fencing and cycle shelter.

Sport England Reference: PA/25/NW/BUR/69730

Thank you for consulting Sport England in relation to the additional information for the above application.

Summary: Sport England **objects** to this application as it has not been demonstrated to meet our adopted Playing Fields Policy and NPPF Paras. 104 (*formerly 99, then 103*) 96 and 98 with reference to our responses sent in relation to the original proposal.

A full summary is set out below.

Sport England – Statutory Role and Policy

It is understood that the site forms part of, or constitutes land last used as playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595).

However, as the playing field has not been used for at least five years, the consultation with Sport England would not be a statutory requirement.

Notwithstanding the non-statutory nature of the consultation Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 104) and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England's will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.' *Attached as an annex to this response*

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can be viewed via the below link:

https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#playing_fields_policy

Sport England' applies its policy to any land in use as playing field or last used as playing field and which remains undeveloped, irrespective of whether that use ceased more than five years ago. Lack of use should not be seen as necessarily indicating an absence of need for playing fields in the locality. Such land can retain the potential to provide playing pitches to meet current or future needs.

Sport England also assesses this type of application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and against its own planning objectives, which are Protect – To protect the right opportunities in the right places; Enhance – To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision; Provide – To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations. Further information on the objectives and Sport England's wider planning guidance can be found on its website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport>

The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field

As set out in our responses sent in 2023 in relation to the original application 70002 Sport England Ref: PA/23/NW/BUR/65457 and which is attached for your reference.

The proposed changes identified through the submissions and Cover Letter from Tetra Tech ref: 784-B070523 does not alter Sport England's original position with regard to the proposal.

Assessment is made against the Playing Fields Policy Exceptions E1- E5 as follows:

As set out in responses sent in 2023 and which are attached.

Consultation with National Governing Body's for Sport

Sport England has a memorandum of understanding with the pitch sport National Governing Bodies and consults with them on planning proposals. On this occasion, in relation to the submitted addition information, Sport England has consulted with the Football Foundation; ECB; RFU; RFL, England Hockey; LTA; Basketball England; England Netball; England Athletics; Volleyball England; Badminton England; Swim England. None of the responses received indicate that they original comments have been altered.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Whilst Sport England is aware of the overall Council ambition to deliver a permanent new secondary school on the site – which would include sports facilities and pitches – and deliver the Civic Hub in Radcliffe town centre; Sport England has objected to the permanent school planning application (Ref:70071) as it did not meet Sport England's Playing Field policy, nor did it provide sufficient replacement of the school sports hall and provide appropriately for other replacement and new sports facilities within the site; It is noted that a start has been made in the delivery of the Radcliffe Hub, which will provide a replacement for the swimming provision, but this facility is not as yet open and as such does not provide a continuity of sports provision for that sport.

Given the previous objections raised, Sport England will need to **object** to the current S.73 application for the demolition of the existing school buildings/temporary leisure centre and the erection of a temporary school building and associated infrastructure.

The proposal does not meet the requirements of the Playing Field Policy Exception 4 in terms of lost playing field and paragraph 104 of the NPPF and Sport England's objective to 'Provide' appropriate sports facilities where they are needed and paragraphs 96 and 98 of the NPPF.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

Please note that this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.

Any further information or correspondence should be forwarded to planning.north@sportengland.org

I would be happy to discuss any of the above with you if it is of assistance to do so.

Yours sincerely

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Annex

The Five Exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy

Exception 1

A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

Exception 2

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

Exception 3

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

Exception 4

The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

Exception 5

The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

The full 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document' is available to view at:

www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy