

Bury MBC

By email only

13th May 2025

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

Planning Application: 71709

Site: EDDIE DAVIES ACADEMY, OX HEY LANE, LOSTOCK BL6 4AW

Proposal: PROPOSED ACCESS GATES AND SECURITY HUT

Sport England Reference: A/24/NW/BO/69294

Thank you for consulting Sport England with reference to the above application.

Summary:

Sport England raises **no objection** to this application as it is considered to broadly meet Exception 3 of our Playing Fields Policy.

An assessment is set out below.

Sport England – Statutory Role and Policy

It is understood that the proposal would prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595) Sport England's role as a consultee is a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered this pre-application submission in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular Para. 104), and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England 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 appendix 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

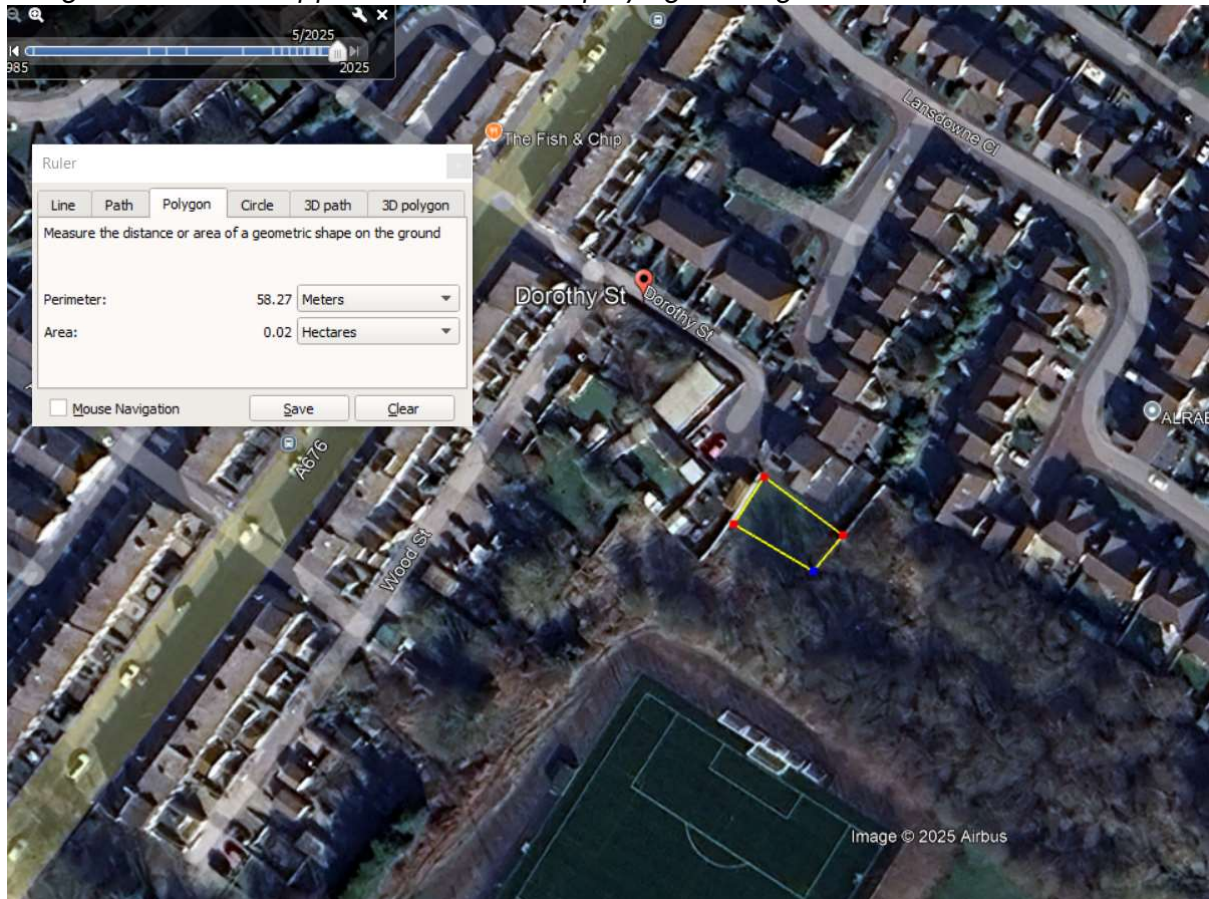
The Proposal and Impact on Playing Field

The proposal affects land located at the northeast of the existing playing field and artificial grass pitch. The site known as Top Park, has been recently developed with an AGP (97m x 61m) and the site has a remaining area of natural turf pitch area to the southeast of the AGP. The site is used by Radcliffe Borough Juniors and the AGP was delivered through Football Foundation funding. The application site is separated from the nearest pitch, the AGP, by approximately 37m.

Google Extract 2025: approximate extent of playing field:-



Google Extract 2025: approximate extent of playing lost to garden area = 0.02ha:-



Google Earth Extract 2000;



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, Sport England has consulted with; -the Football Foundation (FF) and their responses are summarised as follows: -

FF:-

- *FF has no significant comments to make and accepts Sports England's view that given the position of the AGP and the historical existence of the mature landscaping, the proposal could be considered under Exception 3 of the Playing Fields Policy.*

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

Where proposals do not result in impact on the capability to mark out sports provision and pitches, Sport England can consider them with regard to Exception 3:

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.*

The Council will still need to consider the proposal against the requirements of The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 104 in terms of open space, which states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Sport England's Position

It should be noted that Sport England does not encourage the change of use of playing field for residential purposes.

The area identified as garden is at the edge of the playing field. Historically, as evidenced by Google Earth and shown in the 2000 extract above, the area has been covered by dense landscaping and not used to support the wider use of the playing field for sport. The closest playing pitch is 37m from the garden and is now an AGP. There have been no concerns raised by the Football Foundation in terms of ball strike or potential for future use of the area as a playing pitch. In terms of the latter, there is insufficient space to realistically provide for pitches. It appears that the area has been unused for purposes of supporting the use of the wider playing field and the Football Foundation have made no objections.

Sport England therefore in this particular case, raises **no objection** to the application because it is considered to broadly accord with Exception 3 of our Playing Fields Policy.

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 agenda(s), report(s) and committee date(s). Please notify Sport England of the outcome of the planning application.

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact planning.north@sportengland.org

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

