

Bury MBC

FAO: Helen Pressley

By email

17th October 2023

Application Reference: 71043

**Site: HOLCOMBE BROOK SPORTS CLUB, HAZEL HALL LANE, RAMSBOTTOM HAZEL HALL
BL0 9FS**

Proposal: Alterations to existing tennis court to create 2 no. padel courts

Sport England Reference: PA/24/NW/BUR/68847

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

Sport England – Non-Statutory Role and Policy

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to the creation of a padel tennis facility on non-playing field land.

Sport England 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 Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

The proposal seeks permission to create a two padel tennis court provision, which would result in the loss of one existing tennis court. It is considered that padel can

increase the opportunity to access tennis as a sport, regardless of the padel sport itself. However, whilst this is acknowledged and the court loss is only one, the Council's evidence base is clear on the recommendations for tennis as outlined below and no additional justification has been provided.

Strategic/Local Need for the Facility

In order to be received Sport England support the proposal is required to demonstrate that there is a strategic requirement for this facility in this location.

Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS):

The Bury PPS 2023 is the relevant evidence base document. At the time it concluded that there was sufficient supply of tennis courts in Bury to cater for demand where that was known. However, that it was likely that informal demand would continue to increase following the improvement to courts. There were no padel tennis facilities in the area.

The PPS recommendations with regard to tennis included the following:

- ♦ *Support opportunities to provide padel courts given its growing demand, providing that no existing in-use traditional courts are lost as a result.*
- ♦ *Protect existing quantity of courts.*

Sport England would expect to find the strategic need for a facility of this sort to be provided as part of the planning application. No such justification has been included within the supporting documents which accompany this application, and Sport England is not aware of any other local justification for its provision. As such, and given the recommendations of the PPS, it is not possible to conclude that this proposal will be of benefit to the development of tennis in this area.

Facility Design

Sport England does not currently have technical standards for Padel Tennis as it is a relatively new sport.

An LTA technical document has been provided with the application however as yet, the response from the Lawn Tennis Association has not been received but this will be forwarded.

Availability for Community Sport

Sport England considers that the applicant should consider making sports facilities available for community use and enter into a community use agreement, as the facility can offer significant benefits to the delivery of community sport in the locality, and the additional income generated could assist the long-term

sustainability of the facility. There is no information presented that expressed any intentions in this regard.

Conclusion

In light of the above, Sport England wishes to **object** to this application as its strategic need has not been demonstrated and as such at this point the proposal fails to meet the requirements of paragraph 98 of the NPPF.

Possible Resolution

- Submission of information to demonstrate the need for the facility in this location. It is recommended that the applicant discuss this with the NGB, in this case the Lawn Tennis Association and the Council's Leisure Services officers.

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.

Any further information should be sent to planning.north@sportengland.org

Yours sincerely

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