



Sport England's Playing Fields Policy - 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'

Policy Exception E5:

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

When assessing an application against this policy exception Sport England is likely to require information which helps to answer the following questions:

- What is the impact on the existing playing field land in terms of the number of pitches the site can accommodate and their capacity?
- Will all existing users of the playing field land still be adequately accommodated within the site?
- What is the view of the sports national governing bodies whose playing pitch provision may be adversely affected?
- Is the playing field land proposed for development of a particularly high quality or of particular importance to the development of sport in the local area?
- Is there evidence that the proposed facility has been carefully located to minimise any adverse impact on the playing field land? For example, has an assessment of alternative sites been undertaken?
- Will the proposed facility help to meet an identified sporting need i.e. as set out in a needs assessment or Playing Pitch/Sports Facility Strategy?
- Does the proposed facility help to deliver the plans and strategies of the relevant sports national governing bodies and does the application have their support?
- Will the proposed facility duplicate any existing provision within the local catchment area?
- Does the proposed facility meet with Sport England's and the relevant sports national governing body design guidance?
- Will the proposed facility be available for use by the local community? Will this use be secured and managed on a formal basis i.e. through the development and implementation of a community use agreement?
- Does the design of the proposed facility allow for adequate storage, changing provision and access to allow for community use?
- Is the proposed facility supported by the existing and potential future users of the site e.g. local sports clubs?
- Is there evidence that the proposed facility will be linked into the wider sports development network? Will a sports development plan be produced and implemented for the facility?
- Has the applicant consulted the County Sports Partnership, Community Sports Network and relevant sports national governing bodies in the preparation of the planning application?
- For applications on school sites, is there evidence that the proposed facility will lead to an increase in PE in the curriculum and the development, or further development, of after school sports clubs and school club links?
- Are appropriate arrangements proposed to ensure the long term maintenance of the facility?
- Is there evidence to suggest that the sporting benefits that will arise from the proposed development are unlikely to be obtained in any other way in the foreseeable future?

For Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) Sport England may require information to help answer the following additional questions:

- What is the sporting rationale behind the choice of surface proposed and what sports and activities is it envisaged the facility will accommodate?
- How will the provision of the facility benefit the current sporting users of the paying field land (e.g. school and club use)?
- Will the provision of the facility help to enhance the quality of the remaining playing field land e.g. by moving training activity off a grass playing pitch and onto the artificial surface?
- Is sports lighting proposed and is it likely that its use will be restricted due to the proximity of residential properties or sensitive areas (e.g. Green Belt or Conservation Areas)?
- To ensure the long term benefit of the facility will a sinking fund be established to ensure the appropriate replacement of the artificial surface and/or sports lighting?

For further information on Sport England's role in assessing and commenting on planning applications please visit:

www.sportengland.org/planningapplications