

Exeter City Council

FAO: C Cummings Esq.

By email

22nd May 2025

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

Application Reference: 25/0197/FUL

Site: King George V Playing Fields Topsham Road Exeter

Proposal: Refurbishment and extension of sports pavilion/changing rooms, provision of full-size 3G artificial grass football pitch with floodlighting, 2 fenced play-zone facilities, upgrading of 2 existing tennis courts to form 3 floodlit covered padel courts, improvements and extensions to car parking, new cycleway and footpath access from Bridge Road, new and enhanced footways/cycleways within site and provision of new trees, orchards and associated landscape enhancements

Sport England Reference: PA/25/SW/EX/70505

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for re-consulting Sport England on the above application with additional information.

We are disappointed to still see the new cycle/football paths created with the access from Bridge Road we do not support- with squiggly red line. As we said in our previous response, we require the formal cycle/footpath removed, as it impacts on the layout of playing pitches. We will require a condition showing a revised masterplan. If this condition was not attached, we object to the application. The purple route I have shown is acceptable.



We have reviewed the other additional information submitted and have no comments to make.

However, I should say that we did briefly discuss the application yesterday with some of your colleagues, including James Bogue and Cat Chambers a number of national governing bodies, including the LTA at the Exeter Playing Pitch meeting stage E.

The LTA reiterated their concern over the loss of tennis courts and suggest the padel courts could be relocated, which was supported by us and your park manager Cat. We would strongly advise that the applicants give this due weight.

Clarity on Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises **no objection** to the application because it is considered to accord with exceptions 2,3 and 5 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

Sport England recommends the following planning conditions are imposed/S106 agreement secured should the local planning authority (LPA) resolve to approve the application:

1. Within 6 months of the date of this permission, a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to outdoor sports facilities, and changing pavilion and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-Trust users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. 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 Development Plan Policy **.*

2. Within 6 months of completion, a Management and Maintenance Scheme for the 3G artificial grass pitch, play-zones, playing pitches, padel tennis courts and the pavilion including management responsibilities, a maintenance schedule and a mechanism for review shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. This shall include measures to ensure the replacement of the Artificial Grass Pitch within the manufacture's specified period. It should also include the required testing to comply with FIFA Quality certification. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the 3G artificial grass pitch.

*Reason: To ensure that a new facility is capable of being managed and maintained to deliver a facility which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.*

3. No development shall commence until details of the design and layout of the new footpaths have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority [after consultation with Sport England]. NB the footpaths should show the pitches c/w their run-off areas in context. The footpaths shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.*

If the LPA is minded to approve the application without imposing the above conditions then Sport England objects to the application as it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to our Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

If you wish to amend the wording of the condition(s) or use another mechanism in lieu of the conditions, please contact us to discuss. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments.

Should the local planning authority be minded to approve this application without the above condition(s), then given Sport England's subsequent objection the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 requires the application to be referred to the Secretary of State via the National Planning Casework Unit.

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.

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.

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact the undersigned

Yours sincerely,

Bob

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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