

London Borough of Haringey

FAO: Samuel Uff

By email only

10th February 2026

Application Reference: HGY/2023/0338

Site: Mallinson Sports Centre, Highgate School, Bishopswood Road, Hornsey, London, N6 4NY

Proposal: Redevelopment of Mallinson Sport Centre, to include: 1) Partial demolition of existing structure, squash and fives buildings; 2) Refurbishment and extension of the remaining facilities, comprising new part single basement, new double height sports hall and new entrances, new teaching classrooms, offices, gym and exercise studios, circulation and ancillary accommodation; 3) New basement level outdoor covered fives courts; 4) External sunken oval sports pitch; and 5) Associated landscaping and improved provision for emergency services and servicing.

Sport England Reference: PA/23/L/HR/64077

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the amendments to the above application. As highlighted in Sport England's original comments submitted on 6th April 2023 (see Annex), we understand to be a non-statutory consultee. Sport England assesses this type of application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and against its own planning principles which, along with its guidance notes, can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport>

Assessment against Sport England's Planning Policy and NPPF

Squash

The revised proposal now intends to replace the existing Squash Courts. As noted in Sport England previous comments, England Squash considered there to be a need to retain the number of Squash Courts on the site to meet current and future local needs. Sport England welcomes the principle of including the Squash Courts within the proposed development as this reflects the requirements of the NPPF, paragraph 104, and its Planning Principles.

The proposed design, however, is a concern. The proposed Squash Courts appear to contain rooflights which is not in accordance with England Squash technical guidance consequently the proposed courts may not be fit for purpose. Sport

England therefore advise that these are omitted from the scheme to ensure the courts are designed and constructed to a sufficient quality to be playable.

Previous Comments

The proposed amendments to other elements of the proposal do not appear to affect Sport England's previous comments consequently its comments submitted on 6th April 2023 are still applicable.

Sport England's Position

Sport England's objection regarding the loss of Squash Courts has now been overcome however the design raises concerns which should be addressed. Furthermore, the design concerns and community use comments previously raised do not appear to be addressed, albeit Sport England recognises that community use could be secured via a Planning Condition if the Local Planning Authority are minded to approve the application.

Determining the Application

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).

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

Yours Sincerely,

Mark Furnish

Planning Manger
Sport England

Annex – Sport England Comments submitted on 06/04/2023

Thank you for consulting Sport England

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. More detail can be found at <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>

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; and
- 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 at <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 application seeks improvements and extension of Mallinson Sports Centre. In relation to sport these broadly involve the construction of a new sports hall, relocation of Eaton Fives courts, works to the existing sports hall, new gym, new studios and a new football pitch. The loss of squash courts and a hard court/Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) are also proposed.

Strategic/Local Need for the Facility

Sport England are unaware that the Council have an up-to-date and robust Built/Indoor Sport Facility Strategy therefore the need for the proposed new facilities and/or the need to retain the facilities to be lost are not fully known. That said, Sport England's Facilities Planning Model indicates that the borough has current unmet demand for sport halls however the highest concentration of unmet demand is to the centre and east of the borough. England Badminton appear to support the need for sports hall space as they have highlighted that badminton demand in the area is high and facility access is an issue. Furthermore, there are coaches in the area who want to increase coaching hours but are having difficulties in finding a venue.

In relation to the squash courts, England Squash, whilst indicating they are unaware of any clubs using the existing facilities, have stated that there is a need for squash courts noting that they advise a ratio of 1 court per 10,000 people and current squash provision falls below this need. Sport England, therefore, would have concerns with the loss of the squash courts at this stage especially given the lack of provision and that the application suggests that the schools usage would be relocated to local facilities. This would add demand to these local facilities and could prevent existing users and clubs being able to use the courts when they require them now and into the future, especially given that England Squash have highlighted deficits in the area.

The Council do have a Playing Pitch Strategy, albeit could arguably be considered out of date, that does not highlight that any new football pitches are required at this particular site. The Football Foundation have also indicated that they are not anticipating any community/club usage of the proposed pitch if community access would be granted.

The existing hard court/MUGA area appears (from aerial photographs) to be akin to a leisure facility rather than a facility for more formal sport. If this is not the case, this would also need to be identified as surplus to local need to align with Sport England Policy.

Notwithstanding the above, the school have set out a need for the proposed development from a curriculum and school growth aspiration perspective in the documentation. Sport England has no reason to dispute this as the school would be best placed to understand this need.

Overall, Sport England recognises that there is a school need for the proposal but it is not clear if there is wider sporting need at this stage for all the new (i.e.. not replacement) facilities proposed, except potentially the proposed sports hall, therefore it is not fully clear whether these aspects meet Sport England's 'Provide' objective above. It does, however, have concerns that the proposal would result in the loss of a facility where there are deficits of provision which is contrary to its 'Protect' objective.

Facility Design

The submitted documentation indicates that the proposed development would be designed and constructed in accordance with Sport England's Guidance. In this respect, it is advisable that the rooflights intended for both sports halls are reconsidered as this could limit the level of play of some sports within the sport hall(s), such as badminton, and would, therefore, avoid any future limitations on use if school or community priorities change.

In relation to the proposed football pitch, Sport England would like to highlight that this would require sports agronomist advice to ensure the pitch installed is of

sufficient and may require notable maintenance, especially as this is to also be an area for surface water run-off. If this area becomes too wet and is well used then this could erode the playing field quality and render the pitch of limited value to sport if it's not well managed and maintained. However, since there does not appear to be a local need for the pitch, Sport England would not object to the proposal solely on this basis.

Availability for Community Sport

Sport England would encourage that the facilities would be available for the community, especially those where there is an identified local need, as this would ensure that the proposed development would provide opportunities for the community to engage in sport and physical activity as well as those attending the school. It is advised, therefore, that the intended hours of operation reflect the peak time for community use and that any community use is secured in the long-term by a Community Use Agreement.

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

The application has articulated the school need to enhance Mallinson Sport Centres' facilities but the wider sport need is unknown, with possible exception of the proposed sports hall. As a result Sport England is not clear whether there is an overriding need for the proposed facilities to align with its objective to 'Provide'. The proposed loss of the squash courts, in an area where England Squash have suggested there is a deficit of provision, could be detrimental to squash locally therefore Sport England, at this stage, would consider this to not align with its 'Protect' objective and the NPPF, paragraph 99. However, this position could be reconsidered if the need for squash is fully examined and the benefits of any new sports hall, in particular, are fully understood in terms of need, design and community use.

The proposed facilities are stated to align with Sport England guidance although the proposed rooflights are a concern and it's recommended that these are removed to future proof the use of the facilities.

Conclusion

In light of the above, although on the whole there are positives to the proposal it would result in the loss of a facility where there appears to be a local deficit therefore Sport England wishes to **object** to this application due to this loss. It will happily review this position if the impact of the loss of squash courts are fully understood in terms of local need and whether there is any spare capacity locally to accommodate existing and potential future users of the courts, the provision of rooflights in both resultant sports halls are reconsidered and community use of the proposed development can be secured.

There is a free online resource from Sport England (Use Our School) that offers further guidance and information for local authorities and other education providers on how to make the best use of school facilities for the benefit of the local community. It is especially useful for those who have responsibility within a school for establishing, sustaining and growing community activity on school sites. 'Use Our School' can be accessed at www.sportengland.org/useourschool

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.