

London Borough of Haringey

FAO: Zara Seelig

By email only

20th September 2024

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

Application Reference: HGY/2024/2070

Site: The Hornsey Club, Tivoli Road, Hornsey, N8 8RG

Proposal: Installation of four de-mountable InstantPadel courts on the site of the existing hardstanding tennis court for a temporary period until 31st October 2024.

Sport England Reference: PA/24/L/HR/68593

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Sport England – statutory consultee role and policy

We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order since the Tennis Courts, in physical and functional terms, form part of the wider Hornsey Cricket Club site. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 103, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within our 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document': www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land 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. The exceptions are provided in the Annex to this response.

The proposal and Impact

The application seeks permission for four de-mountable Padel courts that would result in the loss of three Tennis courts. The Padel courts would be in position until 31st October 2024. Sport England understands that the Padel courts are already in situ.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

The submitted documents do not set out a local need/demand for Padel courts at the site nor do they explain the existing use/demand of the Tennis courts at the site, therefore the current and future strategic need for the Tennis courts and Padel courts are not fully understood.

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), who are the Governing Body for Padel and Tennis, have indicated that there is a significant demand for Tennis in the area but, unfortunately, they do not have usage data on these specific Tennis courts. They have also recognised that there are currently limited Padel courts within the area with the closest being at Regents Park and Hazelwood Sports Club. That said, Sport England and the LTA are aware of a current planning application proposing Padel courts in the vicinity to this application site.

Since the demand for the Tennis or Padel courts are not fully known it is difficult to fully understand the benefits of the proposal compared to the harm that would be caused to Tennis. In this respect, the LTA are not supportive of the loss of the three Tennis courts. They have also highlighted a concern whether the proposed Padel courts required fixtures that would have damaged the courts surface.

Sport England share these concerns and are therefore unable to support the proposal however it does acknowledge that the Tennis courts do not appear to have been in the best condition, that the proposed temporary period is only for approximately six weeks, that there are pay and play Tennis courts locally where Tennis players could/have used during the temporary period and that a new sports facility is being proposed. Given these specific circumstances, Sport England would take a pragmatic position and not object to the application provided the Local Planning Authority impose a condition requiring the Tennis courts surface to be returned to, at least, its quality prior to the temporary loss. For the avoidance of doubt, this means to the same playability therefore if the temporary facilities have required fixtures that required drilling etc. through the Tennis court surface, then infilling any holes would not be acceptable and the whole Tennis courts would need resurfaced to be safely playable.

Sport England's Position

Since at the time of writing there are no other Padel facilities locally, the Tennis courts do not appear to have been in the best condition, the temporary period is

only for circa six weeks, that there are pay and play Tennis courts locally where Tennis players could/have used during the temporary period and that a new sports facility is being proposed., Sport England will not object to the application as it could be considered to broadly align with the spirit of Exception 5 of Sport England's Playing Field Policy, its 'Provide' objective of its Planning Policy and Paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

The absence of an objection is subject to the following condition being imposed on a grant of planning permission:

01) The development hereby permitted shall be removed from the site by 31st October 2024 and the Tennis court surface returned to, at least, its previous playable quality and available for Tennis immediately thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the long-term impact on Tennis is not affected.

Informative: If the Tennis court playing surface has been damaged by the development hereby permitted then the entire Tennis court facility would need refurbishing to be safely playable, i.e. not infilled. Please liaise with the Lawn Tennis Association to discuss an appropriate surface.

If the Council is minded to approve the application without imposing the above condition, then Sport England objects to the application as it is not considered to accord with our Policy or paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

If you wish to amend the wording of the condition or use another mechanism in lieu of the condition, 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.

Further Advice to the Applicant

The LTA have indicated that they do not oppose Padel facilities on the site but are concerned with the loss of Tennis facilities. In this respect, if the applicant wishes to introduce Padel permanently to the site please contact the LTA for advice.

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

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