

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

FAO: Matthew Marsden

By email

Date: 25th February 2026

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

Application Reference: 2026/0061

Site: Rabbit Ings Country Park, Lund Hill Lane, S71 4BB

Proposal: Installation 2no. storage containers to serve the 3no. football pitches and storage of football equipment.

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. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 104, 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. A summary of the exceptions is provided in the annex to this response.

The Proposal and its Impact on the playing field

Installation 2no. storage containers to serve the 3no. football pitches and storage of football equipment.



■ Proposed Location of 20ft x 8ft x 8.5ft Storage Containers.

Storage Containers to be located on a level aggregate base with access doors facing the roadways.

Application submission of an aerial image appearing to show the position of containers outside the 'mown areas' that are assumed to be used as sports pitches

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

Playing field policy is a restrictive policy based on a presumption against any development which results in the loss of playing field (in whole or part) or prejudices its use. As such, for development not to encounter an objection from Sport England it must be shown to be of a form covered by one of the exceptions (to the presumption against) set out in the Annex.

After reviewing the proposal, it is considered that policy exception 2 to the Playing Fields Policy is most pertinent (Please see below Annex).

As part of this assessment, Sport England has consulted the relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding. The NGBs act as Sport England's technical advisors for their relative sports. The comments of the NGBs which have been received have been summarised as follows:

Football Foundation (FF) in consultation with the County FA

- *Sheffield and Hallamshire FA are not aware of this proposal specifically, but they have had some recent enquiries from the site regarding grass pitch developments/improvements.*
- *There is a club house/changing room space on the site on the top car park, however there is limited space for storage, hence the need for these containers.*
- *It does not appear that the containers would negatively impact the football pitches, and that the purpose of the containers would be to support football at the site. However, as plans are not scaled, FF would recommend that the Design and Access statement include assurance that the container locations will maintain the 3 metre safety run-offs required for football.*

Sport England generally supports the provision of new or enhanced ancillary facilities. They can play an important role in helping people to become and stay active as well as improving the use and viability of the playing field for sport. Along with enhancing the experience for existing users, they can make use of the playing field a more attractive proposition for potential new users.

When reviewing the submission it appears that the proposed containers would be located on an area of playing field not maintained for sports pitches and would have no significant detrimental impact on the principal use of the site as a playing field and its ability to accommodate the football pitches.

The FF has not objected but Sport England notes their request for reference to safety run off zones to be included in the Design and Access Statement. Sport England uses the planning system as an opportunity to enhance the design of sport facilities. Sport England would not wish to see the applicant go to the expense of erecting facilities, which due to their current design, may create problems for the football club or result in additional costs to make further alterations after it is constructed. The current design may also impact upon the ability to seek grant funding, if it does not accord with design guidance (these comments are made without prejudice to any decision that a grant funding body may make). Sport England would be grateful and satisfied if these comments are passed onto the agent for their consideration.

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises **no objection** to the application because it is considered to accord with exception 2 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF. However, it is strongly advised that the Design and Access Statement is amended to address the FF's comments, prior to determination.

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.

Sport England would be pleased to comment on further details that address the above comments.

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