

Barnsley Metropolitan Council

FAO: Bradley Sargeson

By email only

Date: 7th August 2026

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

Application Reference: 2026/0548

Site: Carlton Park, Church Street, Carlton, Barnsley, S71 3HG

Proposal: Renovation of existing sports pavilion, including the demolition of existing sports hall and erection of new single storey activity hall, new external terrace and steps.

Sport England Reference: PA/26/Y/BA/74540

Thank you again 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. The exceptions are provided in the Annex to this response.

The proposal and impact on playing field

When reviewing the proposals, it appears that the impact relates to the proposed loss of changing rooms to facilitate a meeting room. Additionally, a spectators terrace together with landscaping is proposed adjacent to the sports pitches.



2022 Google Aerial Image showing sports pitches and pavilion building

It is understood that the sports pavilion is currently not in active use and the playing field is currently used for football.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 defines a playing field as 'the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch' the definition refers to the whole of a site and therefore does not just cover land which is currently laid out as pitches. Sport England sought legal advice on how the term 'whole of a site' should be interpreted when an outdoor sports facility such as bowling green (which did not themselves meet the definition of a playing pitch) was adjacent to the playing field. The legal advice was that any outdoor sports facility which in functional and physical terms was attached to the playing field would form part of the playing field under the term 'whole of the site'.

If it had been Government's intention that planning policy should protect just pitches and not playing field, then The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order could have been readily drafted in that manner to make it specifically clear.

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.

As part of this assessment, Sport England has again 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. Where necessary, the comments of the NGBs which have been received have been summarised and included in the assessment below.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)

- *Last recorded cricket activity is back in 2002.*
- *Given it appears to be still used by football I will defer to the Football Foundation.*

Football Foundation (FF) in consultation with the County Football Association (CFA)

Pitch Power shows Carlton Sports Club to have 6 grass pitches, with community use, and changing rooms. Football understands that the building, including changing facilities, is not currently in use as it is in a bad condition. Football Foundation records show that the changing rooms are not accessible to wheelchair users, and the layout provided shows an outdated changing room design.

Barnsley FC Ladies use this site for their junior teams. The club previously leased the building but only to use the toilets. The club has confirmed that they do not need or use changing rooms but would benefit from access to new toilet provision. It is understood that the club have already received permission to use these facilities.

Barnsley PPS shows a need for quality ancillary facilities on football sites, of 72 sites that are actively used for community football, only nine sites (13%) are currently serviced by good quality ancillary facilities, 18 sites (25%) by standard quality ancillary facilities and 19 sites (26%) are serviced by poor quality ancillary facilities, with the remaining 26 sites (36%) are not serviced by onsite clubhouse/changing room provision.

The Football Foundation recognises that there is a need for updated ancillary facilities in the area, that the current building is not useable, and that these plans would benefit current football activity at the site. The Football Foundation would not object to the plan's, provided football clubs/users of the grass pitches have usage of the facilities. The Football Foundation would, however, recommend that

plans look to accommodate changing facilities to address potential future footballing needs and replace previous provision.

While it is regrettable that the proposal would result in the loss of changing facilities that previously supported the use of the playing field, it is acknowledged that the existing changing rooms no longer meet modern standards. Furthermore, it appears that their removal would not prejudice the continued use of the grass playing field. Sport England would welcome the applicant exploring whether the proposed sports pavilion could be designed with sufficient flexibility to allow for future adaptation, enabling the provision of appropriate changing facilities should a need arise at a later date.

Clear site plans showing the proposed spectator stand and associated landscaping measures in relation to the sports pitches and their safety run-off areas have not been provided. However, Sport England is satisfied that the development would not adversely affect the provision or use of the playing field's sports pitches.

Sport England recognises that the proposal would secure the refurbishment and reopening of a pavilion that is currently unusable. The inclusion of a kitchen, flexible community space and improved facilities for sport would help create a more sustainable and viable building, ensuring it is maintained and actively used. On balance, the proposal would continue to support the use of the grass playing field, with no significant prejudice to its sporting function, whilst delivering wider community benefits

Consequently, Sport England are of the view that the proposal broadly meets exception E3 of our playing fields policy, in that:

'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.'*

Sport England's position

Given the above, Sport England raises **no objection** to the application because it is considered to broadly accord with Policy Exception 3 and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

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).

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. In providing any further information, Sport England would ask that the applicant submits this to the Local Planning Authority and not to Sport England directly. That way it forms part of the application submission and its associated audit trail. The Local Planning Authority can then consult Sport England on receipt of this information. Sport England request that the Local Planning Authority send any additional information to [REDACTED] and not the Planning Manager directly.

Yours sincerely,



Christopher Carroll

Planning Manager

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