



# PLAYING FIELDS POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Sport England's policy and associated guidance  
on planning applications affecting playing fields

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# THE PLAYING FIELDS POLICY

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

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and 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.

## 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.

## THE FIVE EXCEPTIONS

### 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 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.

**Sport England Playing Field Guidance**

**Exemption Grid**

| <b>Option</b> | <b>Location</b>                                  | <b>Exemption 1<br/>Excess<br/>Playing Field</b> | <b>Exemption 2<br/>Ancillary Use<br/>Supporting<br/>Field</b> | <b>Exemption 3<br/>Uses land<br/>incapable of<br/>forming<br/>playing pitch</b> | <b>Exemption 4<br/>Playing Field<br/>Replacement</b> | <b>Exemption 5<br/>Indoor or<br/>Outdoor<br/>Sport Facility</b> |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b>      | <b>Build on<br/>Tennis Courts</b>                | Red                                             | Red                                                           | Red                                                                             | Red                                                  | Yellow                                                          |
| <b>B</b>      | <b>Build on<br/>playing field</b>                | Red                                             | Red                                                           | Red                                                                             | Red                                                  | Yellow                                                          |
| <b>C</b>      | <b>Build on<br/>existing<br/>space/convert</b>   | Red                                             | Green                                                         | Green                                                                           | Red                                                  | Green                                                           |
| <b>D</b>      | <b>Build on<br/>bottom of<br/>playing field</b>  | Red                                             | Red                                                           | Red                                                                             | Red                                                  | Yellow                                                          |
| <b>E</b>      | <b>Build<br/>downside of<br/>footpath</b>        | Red                                             | Red                                                           | Red                                                                             | Red                                                  | Yellow                                                          |
| <b>F</b>      | <b>Build on<br/>playing field<br/>by Library</b> | Red                                             | Red                                                           | Red                                                                             | Red                                                  | Yellow                                                          |
| <b>G</b>      | <b>Build next to<br/>Pavilion</b>                | Red                                             | Green                                                         | Green                                                                           | Red                                                  | Green                                                           |
| <b>H</b>      | <b>Build on<br/>Crowtree<br/>House</b>           | Red                                             | Green                                                         | Green                                                                           | Red                                                  | Green                                                           |

**Key**

**Red** = Sport England would oppose the development.

**Yellow** = Sport England would most likely oppose the development because of its impact on existing sporting facilities or pitches OR because it would remove existing facilities or pitches.

**Green** = Sport England would not oppose the development because it provides an enhancement or improvement to facilities and does not remove or impact existing facilities.