

Cumberland Council

FAO: Sarah Papaleo

By email

22/04/2024

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

Application Ref: 4/24/2089/0F1

Site: Cleator Moor Activity Centre

Proposal: Community activity centre refurbishment and extension, and associated parking and landscaping

Sport England Reference: 67281

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 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. A summary of the exceptions is provided in the annex to this response.

The Proposal and its Impact on the playing field

The proposal at Cleator Activity Centre entails the provision of a running track around the perimeter of the 3G pitch. The track also provides a suitable surface to access the pitch and does not impact on the fencing or sports lighting associated with the pitch.

The proposal also incorporates the provision of additional car parking areas and changing rooms which will serve the 3G pitch alongside the indoor sports provision at the activity centre.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

Having assessed this part of the application, Sport England is satisfied that it would meet exception 3 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.'

This being the case, Sport England **does not wish to raise an objection** to this application.

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises **no objection** to the running track and car parking which form parts of the application because it is considered to accord with exception 3 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

Sport England – Non-statutory consultee role

The proposal also includes an extension and refurbishment to the existing Cleator Moor Activity Centre. The scheme also incorporates a separate set of facilities to accommodate the Copeland Occupational & Social Centre (COSC). This development would not be sited on functional playing field land nor on land capable of accommodating a pitch.

The additional facilities proposed at the activity centre entails the following:

- 18mx36m Sports Hall (within the repurposed Bowls hall)
- Fitness Suite
- Multipurpose Studio
- Cafe / Reception area
- Kitchen facilities
- Consultation and Admin office
- Group and Accessible changing
- Toilet facilities
- Changing places
- Storage rooms
- Parking facilities for Cars (EV & Accessible), Motorcycle and cycle
- Service Yard

The COSC element of the activity centre entails the following:

- Activity room
- Games Room
- Sensory Room
- Admin office
- Kitchen
- Storage
- Accessible WCs
- External garden area with garden store

In relation to the sports hall it is noted that due to it being under the existing bowls centre shell that there will be a height restriction, as such it would not meet Sport England's sports hall design guidance note recommended dimensions. However, the facility would be capable to accommodate community level badminton, basketball, netball, volleyball and 5-a-side football as well as a wide range of studio type and community activities. The sports hall is also proposed to accommodate short bowls.

Whilst there would be a loss of dedicated indoor bowls facility the proposed sports centre will be capable of being more intensively used for a variety of activity and fitness uses. The sports centre would assist in responding to local health and

wellbeing priorities and deliver increased opportunities for participation in physical activity and sport for clubs and the community, as identified in Copeland Borough Council's Indoor and Built Facilities Report 2020. The proposal will also provide a facility which is accessible by the local community (walking, cycling and public transport) as opposed to users having to drive, in an area of particular low car ownership, to the nearest sports facility.

Based on the above, Sport England on balance raise no objection to the extension and refurbishment to the existing Cleator Moor Activity Centre with it meeting Sport England objectives Provide and Enhance. This is with the proposal facilitating and encouraging participation in physical activities for the local community by upgrading and adding to existing leisure facilities.

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.

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

Yours sincerely,

Rajvir Bahey
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