

Wokingham Borough Council
FAO:
By email

5th August 2026

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

Application Reference: 261695

Site: Luckley House School, Luckley Road, Wokingham RG40 3EU

Proposal: Full application for the expansion of the school curtilage into adjacent land and the creation of a cricket pitch, two rugby pitches and a 300 metre athletics track together with the extension of an existing footpath, construction of a permeable vehicle crossing, erection of boundary fencing, acoustic fencing, ball stop netting, rugby goal posts and associated external works.

Sport England Reference: PA/26/SE/WON/74574

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Summary

Statutory consultee role

Sport England raises **no objection** to this application as it is considered to meet exception 3 of our Playing Fields Policy and to accord with Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), subject to a restoration.

Non-statutory consultee role

The proposal of new playing fields meets our planning objective *provide*.

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

The proposal is to create new playing fields and associated access from the existing school playing field.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and the NPPF

There will be a minor loss of playing field land to facilitate the construction of an access road to the new playing fields. We consider this to accord with Exception 3 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

However, we expect plant and equipment to pass over the existing playing field during construction. It is therefore important that any affected playing field is properly reinstated following the completion of the works. Accordingly, this should be secured by condition.

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises no objection to the application, as it is considered to accord with Exception 3 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

Condition

Within three months of the removal of the works/contractors' compound, or during the first planting season thereafter, the existing playing field affected by the development shall be reinstated in accordance with the guidance set out in Sport England's Technical Design Guidance Note, Natural Turf for Sport (2025).

**Reason: To ensure that the site is restored to a condition fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy *.*

Informative: It is recommended that any restoration scheme affecting playing field land is undertaken by a specialist turf consultant.

Sport England - Non-statutory consultee role

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to the creation of new playing fields.

Sport England assesses this type of application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and against its own planning objectives, which are Protect - To protect the right opportunities in the right places; Enhance - To enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision; Provide - To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generation.

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

As the proposal includes the creation of new rugby pitches and a cricket pitch, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and Berkshire Cricket Foundation/England and Wales Cricket Board (BCF/ECB) have been consulted as the relevant governing bodies and technical experts for these sports. Their comments are reproduced verbatim below:

RFU comments:

The RFU would like to request the application considers the following areas -

- Pitch dimensions and run offs - guidance note attached - Runs offs being key to this discussion to ensure Cricket NTP and Rugby pitches can work together.*
- We would request the pitches are constructed to a min Sport England Type 5 to allow a robust NTP instillation which if well maintained should allow enough play for the school and additional community use.*
- Are the pitches to be have the addition of Sports lights? If so then the community use angle for mid week training would become a higher priority, however even without Sports Lights the most Local club Bracknell RFC (Significantly over capacity at Lilly Hill park) may be keen to access weekend (Sunday am) use for age grade rugby.*

The RFU would be keen to explore the community use agreement and to ensure a robust link between school and community clubs can progress.

We recommend that the applicant engages with the RFU and takes their advice into account. We suggest that the following condition be imposed should planning permission be granted. We have also attached the guidance provided by the RFU for the applicant's consideration.

BCF/ECB comments:

The ECB is pleased to support this application that, offers a contribution to cricket at the School.

However, based on the proposed pitch layouts as set out in drawing 7004:25:3, the orientation of the new cricket Non-Turf Match pitch needs revisiting. This should be north to south facing (or within a tolerance of 55 degrees of true N/S) so as play in

not affected by the setting sun. Further technical guidance can be found in the ECB's TS6 Guidance notes.

Therefore, before the ECB can fully support, a revised pitch lay out is required taking the above into consideration. Also, confirmation that the pitch will be installed by an ECB Approved Supplier – a list can be found on the ECB's website.

We note that the recommended pitch orientation cannot be fully achieved given the proposed layout and the size of the playing field. Sport England would support an increase in the size of the playing field, should this be feasible, to enable all pitches to be oriented correctly in accordance with best practice.

We also suggest that the school's existing Community Use Agreement be amended to include junior rugby and junior cricket to ensure appropriate community access to the proposed facilities.

By providing new pitches that could help address established playing pitch deficiencies, the proposal would meet objective 3, and therefore Sport England **supports** this application in principle.

Sport England recommends that a ground conditions assessment is undertaken by a sports turf specialist/agronomist who can recommend a scheme for preparing the playing fields to the required specification. The recommended scheme should then be implemented. Detailed guidance on the issues that require consideration is set out in Sport England's guidance 'Natural Turf for Sport', and a copy of this guidance can be found at:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/outdoor-surfaces>

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England offers its **support** for this this application, as it is considered to meet Objective *Provide* as set out above.

Sport England recommends, based on our assessment, that if the Council is minded to approve the application, the following planning conditions should be imposed.

1. No development shall take place unless and until:
 - a) A detailed assessment of ground conditions of the land proposed for the new playing field land as shown on drawing number 7004:25:3 shall be undertaken (including drainage and topography) to identify constraints which could affect playing field quality; and
 - b) Based on the results of this assessment to be carried out pursuant to (a) above of this condition, a detailed scheme to ensure that the playing fields will be provided to an acceptable quality (including appropriate drainage where necessary) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme within a timescale to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.

*Reason: To ensure that site surveys are undertaken for new or replacement playing fields and that any ground condition constraints can be and are mitigated to ensure provision of an adequate quality playing field and to accord with LP Policy ***

2. Prior to the bringing into use of the new playing field a Management and Maintenance Scheme for the facility including management responsibilities, a maintenance schedule and a mechanism for review shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the new playing field.

*Reason: To ensure that new playing fields capable of being managed and maintained to deliver a playing fields which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 104) and to accord with LP Policy ***

Please notify Sport England of the outcome of the planning application.

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

Yours sincerely,

Bob

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Enc.

cc J Bowers Esq. RFU
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N Higginson-Dark Esq. ECB
B Abrahams Esq. BCF

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



FACILITIES

ESSENTIAL GUIDE

PITCH DIMENSIONS

DESIGN AND SAFE USE OF RUGBY PLAYING AREAS

All areas used for rugby union activity must comprise either natural turf or artificial grass that is compliant with **World Rugby Regulation 22**.

For individual xv-a-side matches, pitch dimensions should be marked in accordance with **World Rugby Law 1**. Where full compliance cannot be achieved, the reasons must be clearly evidenced, and the match must only proceed following a suitable and current risk assessment undertaken by a competent person.

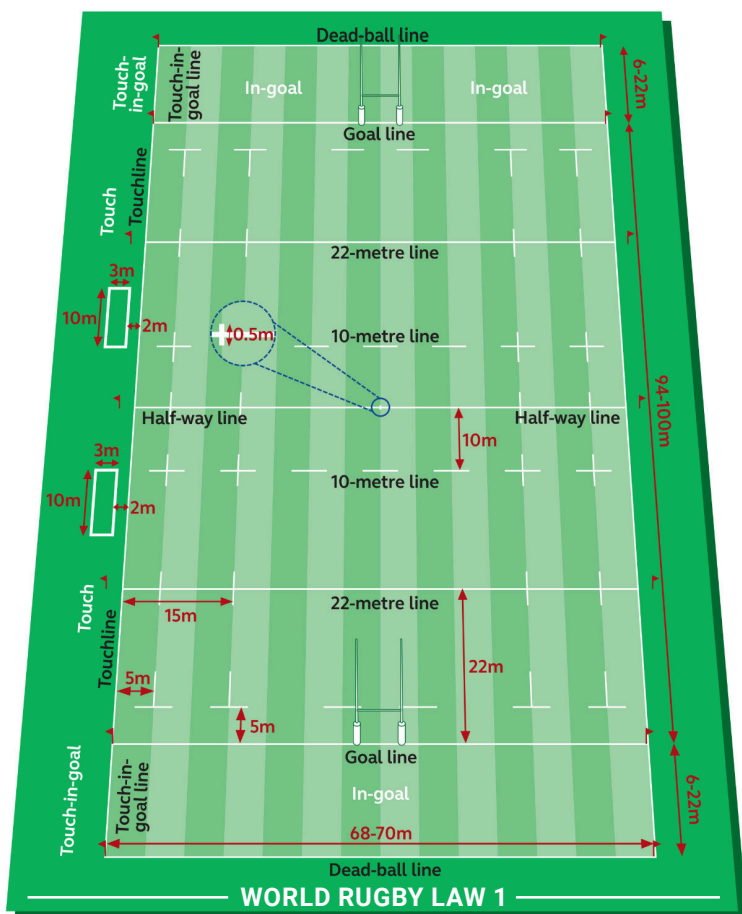
When designing, constructing, or permanently establishing a rugby playing area, a **5-metre run-off** should be provided wherever practicable. Where this cannot be achieved, the constraints must be evidenced, and every reasonable effort must be made to maximise both the available playing area and run-off within the limitations of the site.

A **3.5 metre run-off** represents the absolute minimum acceptable provision for any permanently established rugby playing area. This should only be considered in **exceptional circumstances** where it has been clearly demonstrated that a greater run-off cannot reasonably be achieved. It must not be regarded as a design standard or target.

For an individual xv-a-side **Women's match only**, World Rugby Law 1 permits a minimum **3 metre run-off** where necessary. This concession applies solely to the temporary marking of a pitch for a specific Women's match and **must not be used as the basis for the design or permanent establishment of a rugby playing area**.

World Rugby Law 1 pitch dimensions do not apply to training activities, and **training areas** do not need to be marked. The suitability and safe use of any training area, including run off, must be managed through a suitable and ongoing risk assessment undertaken by a competent person.

Risk assessments for matches and training will be unique to each venue and should consider a range of factors, including the safety of players, match officials and spectators, the integrity of the activity taking place, and the age, type, level and intensity of rugby being played. They should also take account of the available playing area and run-off, the type, location and proximity of barriers, fencing, floodlight columns and other fixed objects, as well as any changes in level, gradients, ground conditions or other environmental hazards.



Please note: whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this guide, any party who makes use of any part of this document in support of rugby post safety shall indemnify the Rugby Football Union (RFU), its servants, consultants or agents against all claims, proceedings, actions, damages, costs, expenses and any other liabilities for loss or damage to any property, or injury or death to any person that may be made against or incurred by the RFU arising out of or in connection with such use.