

Ribble Valley Borough Council  
FAO: Ms L Walker  
By email

12<sup>th</sup> August 2026

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

**Application Reference:** 3/2026/0562

**Site:** Blackburn Rovers Academy Training Ground Brockhall Village Old Langho  
Blackburn BB6 8BA

**Proposal:** Proposed floodlighting and new covered seating.

**Sport England Reference:** PA/26/NW/RV/74665

Dear Lucy

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 exceptions 2 and 3 of our Playing Fields Policy and to accord with Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**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](http://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 proposals are for new covered seating and sports lighting, which will result in the loss of a limited amount of playing field, but will impact an existing playing pitch.

The proposal also includes necessary prerequisites to meet the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

## **Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF**

As part of our assessment, we have consulted with Lancashire Football Association/the Football Foundation. They have made the following comments:

*The stand will remove the required 3m run-off from the youth pitch, and although this doesn't affect current community usage given the professional nature of the site FF encourage the applicant to either move the pitch (if possible) or review the marked pitch dimensions to ensure the site is safe for users*

Looking at the site via Google Earth, it is possible to relocate the pitch to achieve the necessary run-off areas.

We are content that this element of the proposal would meet planning policy exception 2 in this instance.

With regard to the proposed location of the BNG, it is situated in an area that would comply with planning policy exception 3.

## **Sport England's Position**

Given the above, Sport England raises **no objection** to the application because it is considered to accord with exceptions 2 and 3 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

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

**Bob Sharples** RIBA ARB MRTPI

Principal Planning Manager - South Team Planning & Active Environments



cc P Ashton Esq. FF

I Hunt LFA

S Burke Esq. FF

## **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](http://www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy)