

[REDACTED]

From: jools . [REDACTED] >
Sent: 29 May 2026 13:28
To: Planning (HPBC)
Cc: Planning for Sport; planning.central@sportengland.org
Subject: Feedback on Squash Court / Planning Application. MyActive New Mills redevelopment.

[REDACTED]

HPK/2026/0169

Pre - Feedback on Planning Applications impacting 'SQUASH'.

Further to the Facebook post yesterday, I wish to offer some feedback and comments as requested, but wished to send my feedback directly as I wish to cc Planning for sport at (Sport England), and may forward my response to others. Feel free to share my email as appropriate.

Firstly, I wish to say what a great job the Council has done in gathering feedback (Nov 29 2024 - Jan 10th 2025, and the open public meeting Dec 3rd 2024) (see below for analysis of some consultation feedback.). Also more generally, what an impressive Council High Peak is. I would describe the local environment and local consultation mechanisms it as exemplar.

However, I wish to frame my feedback in **planning and equality, best value, cost terms and health.**

Please see Sport England's "Planning for Sport Guidance," originally published in June 2019 and updated in April 2024.

It outlines 12 core "Planning-for-Sport Principles" designed to help the planning system protect, enhance, and provide sports opportunities. This ties in with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidelines and it specifically details how Sport England acts as a statutory consultee and provides guidance for local authorities dealing with planning applications.

Planning for Sport (2024)

1. The Core Protection: Principle 4

Principle 4: "**Protect and promote existing sport and physical activity provision** and ensure new development does not prejudice its use."

I hope you agree this translates to you should not convert this squash court.

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#): (last updated Feb 25)

Paragraph 98. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

- c) guard against the **unnecessary loss of valued facilities** and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

The Councils consultation was effective in demonstrating para c. (e.g. They are valued).

I hope you agree this translates to you should not convert this squash court.

Best Value.

Under the 1999 Act, local authorities must legally deliver what is termed '[Best Value](#)' – a council must be able to show that it has arrangements to secure continuous improvement in how it carries out its work. This is a statutory duty. See the 7 overlapping themes of good practice - Continual Improvement being one of them.

I hope you agree, there can be no better use (in terms of Best Value) for a Public Sector Squash Court than to use it for Squash (as a public sector Squash Court). Especially as one as valued and at New Mills, as described on the website.

I hope you agree this translates to you should not convert this squash court.

The community has suggested an additional Squash Court. This would definitely in my view meet the theme of continual improvement. I think that may have been an option 4. The LGA may also be able to advise of Best Value if needed.

Equality.

Before a council (or it's operator) can change a service, it must typically carry out an equality impact assessment to demonstrate its public sector equality duty. I have never seen one that has passed such an impact assessment (juniors/pathways/ access/ community/ women/ men/ age/ sport/ access/ cost/ distance and other protected characteristics etc). Please attach yours for any planning committee report.

I hope you agree this translates to you should not convert this squash court without such an assessment.

Cost

Fortunately, I understand councillors have statutory immunity from personal liability (under the Public Health Act 1875) as long as they are acting in good faith. However, please note: The *Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004*, councils are legally forbidden from indemnifying councillors for deliberate wrongdoing, or recklessness. So please protect those by following any rules or laws. Feedback also requested a squash membership. This makes regular play more affordable and accessible, and would help demonstrate continual improvement of the local service and help meet the PSED for Squash. More consultation with the local squash community on this is recommended.

I hope you will review the cost to play regular squash, as requested by the Squash Community.

Health

Squash is one of the very best racquet sports for [improving and maintaing health](#), movement etc. Please consider the use of Health Referrals to the local squash club (possibly for a fee) and plan to build the benefits of squash into any local Health Improvement plan.

I hope you agree Squash helps meet the councils aspirations to support health.

Note: Please see

facebook

Open app

Log In



High Peak Borough Council

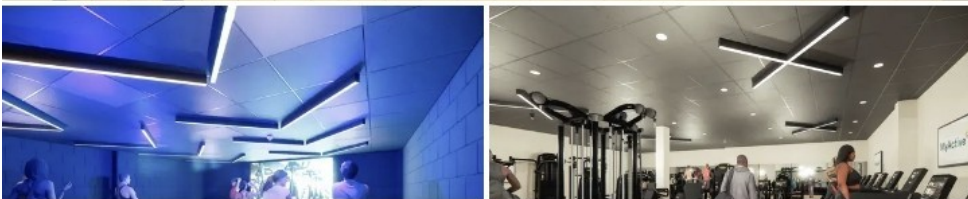
20 May · 🌐

The planning application for the MyActive New Mills redevelopment has now been submitted.

You can view and comment on the application online by visiting

<http://planning.highpeak.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=271426>

Comments on the planning application must be received by 8 June 2026.



Kind Regards

Jools (part of the Squash Community)

Feedback on the Squash Court Proposals from Consultation with Key Stakeholders.

The proposal to repurpose the squash court into a wellness facility or expanded gym area was met with overwhelming resistance from survey respondents. The community presented several detailed arguments for retaining and investing in the facility:

Community Heritage and Funding: Multiple respondents emphasized that the squash court was originally built in the 1970s using funds raised directly by the local community, townsfolk, and the carnival committee. Removing it is viewed as a betrayal of that historical community effort.

Lack of Alternative Facilities: The New Mills court is cited as the only remaining public squash facility in the High Peak area, especially since the courts in Glossop have closed or are unavailable.

Residents noted that forcing players to travel to Marple or Hyde discriminates against those without cars, including children and the elderly.

Olympic Status and Growth: Respondents repeatedly highlighted that squash will be included in the 2028 Olympics, which traditionally sparks a surge in local interest. Removing the court right before this global exposure is heavily criticized as short-sighted.

A Thriving Local Community: Contrary to the idea that the sport is dying, users reported a vibrant and growing squash scene in New Mills. This includes a local box league that recently grew from 20 to over 50 members, a newly established ladies' Cheshire League team, two men's North West Counties League teams, and highly popular junior coaching sessions.

Multi-Purpose Versatility: A recurring practical argument is that a squash court can easily be adapted for other uses—such as Pilates, yoga, table tennis, and chair-based exercises—when not booked for squash. Conversely, a dedicated fitness studio or expanded gym cannot be used to play squash.

Health and Inclusivity: Squash is praised by respondents as an incredibly intense cardiovascular workout and a vital physical outlet for children who may not be interested in standard gym workouts or traditional team sports.

Disputed Usage Statistics: Many residents challenged the council's claims that the court is "unsustainable" or severely underutilized. They pointed out that while daytime usage is naturally lower because most people work or attend school, evening and weekend demand remains high. Furthermore, some respondents noted that staff confirmed 2024 was actually a bumper year for squash revenue and usage.

Alternative Solutions Proposed: Instead of demolition, residents suggested improving the court's acoustics, installing moveable walls for greater flexibility, heavily promoting the sport in local schools, or introducing squash-specific memberships to guarantee revenue.



Sent from [Outlook for Android](#)