

Response to the LB Croydon's comments on Sport England's representations – Croydon draft Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule

In response to the Council's latest comments I would like to see greater priority given to the health and wellbeing of Croydon's residents by supporting development of sports facilities by exempting them from CIL.

Sports facilities provide community interaction and help residents meet the physical activity guidance for adults and children.

I would like to respond to the point made at the beginning of the examination about the existing operation of the charges, as one of the earliest charging schedules it is regrettable that Sport England possibly did not make sufficient representations on that early schedule. It is welcome that education has now been removed from the schedule.

The draft CIL Charging Schedule, if taken forward, it will mean that some applications for community facilities and for sports and leisure facilities may continue to rely on contributions from the same CIL pot which they will also be required to contribute towards through the proposed CIL charge. This will result in additional challenges to bringing these types of development forward. Sports facilities are community infrastructure.

With the significant population increase more sports facilities will be needed to meet the requirements of the community.

Sport England considers it is important that the Council supports sports facilities coming forward in the Borough, given that relatively few new facilities are included in the Council's General Fund capital programme. For 25/26 the facilities include leisure centres equipment. The other entries are tennis court upgrades and new playzones which are jointly funded by the Football Foundation and the LTA.

Important to note that the Borough is reliant on CIL it doesn't collect section 106 contributions to deliver new sports facilities.

Disappointed that in the response to our comments, no additional information has been added to the viability review that explains how community sports facility buildings or commercial sports facilities were viability tested by the Council to justify charging CIL on sports facilities.

I have some further responses to make in relation to the Council's response to Sport England. Firstly that commercial gyms/sports facilities in London can often charge similar rates to public sector facilities.

Referring back to the Council's response, I'm not certain that the Council is correct that a local rugby club (or similar) would be CIL exempt. For example, many sports clubs are CASCs – community amateur sports clubs. This status helps with gift aid, business rates relief and tax relief on donations

<https://www.gov.uk/register-a-community-amateur-sports-club>

Other possible legal structures for sports clubs and social enterprises can include; Community Interest Company (CIC), Unincorporated Association, company limited by guarantee etc. None of these structures are charities.

However, I do acknowledge that CIL is not collected from developments of less than 100 sq m so small scale extensions to a local club house would be less likely to attract a charge.

One example where I have concern is the replacement Purley Pool, that is mentioned in the Council's statement which requires replacement and that the pool floor space within this may be charged, which could impact it's delivery. This pool was closed during the pandemic and it has now been closed for 6 years.

I am aware that some other Councils agree with the position taken by the Council on wishing to charge commercial leisure facilities for CIL.

Sport England considers that if the Inspector and the Council considers this distinction is important Sport England would accept as a middle ground, that the charging schedule could be amended to include;

Sports facilities developed by a publicly funded or 'not for profit' organisation are exempt.

And; an exemption for 'public leisure centres'

Other examples where charging schedules have referenced leisure/community uses include:

- LB Barking & Dagenham's charging schedule 2014 provides an exemption to 'Municipal Leisure'.
- LB Islington includes an exemption for 'public leisure centres'.

Vicky Aston

Planning Manager

26 February 2026