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**Subject:** GAA pitch standards  
**Date:** 22 August 2019 09:11:29  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Good morning,

Following the CA hearing yesterday I am informed that the minimum distance required between pitches is 7m, but best practice is to have a fence between pitches and a minimum of a 5m distance either side of the fence. It is also necessary for a 'substitution zone' to be included along the side of the centre of each pitch.

I can also confirm that the minimum length of pitches is 130m and maximum length is 145m. The minimum width is 80m and maximum width is 90m. Pitches used to host County matches are generally expected to measure 145m x 90m.

As explained yesterday, in any case where a facility is being re-provided under the rule of equivalent reinstatement, as is effectively the case here, the expectation is that the new facility will be built to modern standards and in compliance with best practice.

One of the primary objections of WGAA to the layout that has been put forward by the Applicant in document 8.21 is that it does not comply with best practice requirements and if a new facility was being built in any other circumstances it simply would not be laid out in the manner that the Applicant is proposing. The layout does not accord with the expectations of the GAA or the best practice design guidance of Sport England.

As an example, Sport England's design guidance states that clubhouses should be 'located perpendicular to the direction of play on long side of the pitch. This is to optimise the view and for safety reasons'. Their design guide also states that clubhouses should provide 'clear views of the pitch from the social space with full height glazing if possible'. It is inconceivable that anybody designing a new facility would locate a clubhouse over 120m away from the main pitch, as is the case in document 8.21. Such a design would be considered impractical from the perspective of spectators and players and, more importantly, unacceptable on safety grounds. As you will be aware, the layout of the existing facility is such that the clubhouse is next to two pitch used for County matches and very close to pitch 2.

In expectation that it will provide greater context to my client's representation I have copied below Rule 5 of Section 5 of the Land Compensation Act 1961.

*'Where land is, and but for the compulsory acquisition would continue to be, devoted to a purpose of such a nature that there is no general demand or market for land for that purpose, the compensation may, if the Lands Tribunal is satisfied that reinstatement in some other place is bona fide intended, be assessed on the basis of reasonable cost of equivalent reinstatement'.*

In the event that the Applicant is not able to (or fails to) deliver a reconfigured facility that meets with my client's approval my client would be entitled to claim compensation under this Rule. In that scenario the 'reasonable costs of equivalent reinstatement' would include the cost of acquiring a replacement site, planning costs, and the cost of constructing a replacement clubhouse and pitches built to modern specifications. Quite

clearly this would amount to a very significant cost for the project, which is unlikely to have been budgeted for.

In our discussions with the Applicant we are aiming to avoid that scenario being necessary. However, in the event that the Applicant is unable to deliver a reconfigured facility that accords with modern standards, that scenario would be unavoidable. As such, it remains my client's position that the DCO should not be granted until such time as an agreeable solution has been achieved. As I reported yesterday, we would hope that can be achieved by Deadline 6 and we would ask that you direct the Applicant to work towards achieving a resolution within that timeframe.

Kind regards,

Jon

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