

# Borough's first padel courts

## To replace two five-a-side pitches

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PLANS to replace two football pitches at a Romford playing field with padel tennis courts have been approved.

Havering Council has granted planning permission to Powerleague Romford to build four padel courts, with canopies and floodlighting, at King George Playing Fields, Eastern Avenue West.

The courts will replace two existing five-a-side football pitches at the Powerleague site, which border the parking.

Only one letter of representation was received after the proposal was submitted in October last year, raising concerns about "parking provision" and potential "adverse impact" on the surrounding roads.

Sport England also objected to the plans, arguing that it would result in the "loss of football provision which is needed".

The organisation can sometimes be a statutory consultee - meaning they must legally be consulted about plans - when a development is likely to result in the loss of a playing field.

However, Powerleague said that statutory consultation with Sport England was "not required" for this application, arguing that the plans covered a specific playing pitch rather than the whole field.

The planning officer's report revealed that, due to this dispute, the case will be referred to the secretary of state via the National Planning Casework Unit if approved, "as a precautionary measure".

Other stakeholder comments included the Lawn Tennis Association, who were supportive of the proposals, saying that there is a need for 19 courts across Havering.

The plans have been approved with a set of conditions, including that the work must start within three years and that the colour and finish of the padel courts must be submitted to the council's planning department for further approval.

Padel is a fusion between tennis and squash, and is played on smaller courts than tennis with solid racks.

Powerleague already has three padel locations at Birmingham, Manchester and Shoreditch.

The Romford courts will be the first padel courts in Havering.



Parents have been invited to dine with their children at Larchwood Primary

Image: Supplied

## Primary invites parents to try school dinners

PARENTS have been invited to eat with their children at a school in Brentwood to dispel myths about school dinners. In an effort to encourage more pupils to take up the option of school dinners, Larchwood Primary School is inviting parents to sample the food on offer to

their children.

At the first two events, 89 out of 120 children had a parent join them - greeting them at the door and queuing up together to collect their meals.

Headteacher Steve Bowsher, who eats a roast dinner with pupils each week,

said: "People have an idea in their head of what school dinners are like. "If school dinners were like this when I was at school, I would have had them a lot more."

Every year group will get the experience each year from now on.

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