

From: Jane Cooper <Jane.Cooper@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 September 2025 15:54:34 UTC+01:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <Stefan.Galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Cc: "Emily Wade" <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1185

Hi Stefan,

I have assessed the report, and I acknowledge the absence of specific national guidance for padel tennis noise assessments. The use of Sport England guidance for artificial grass pitches, and levels mentioned in BS8233 is a reasonable approach, but I have the following comments and queries:

1. The assessment appears to focus solely on residential façades. I'm wondering why the communal gardens serving Southdowns Park, especially the bandstand area, which is closer to the proposed courts and regularly used by residents, haven't been considered as receptor locations. These spaces are important for community amenity and, being outside and closer to the proposed courts, will be more impacted. Is there a reason these outside spaces have not been included in the assessment?
2. I'm not convinced that LAeq alone captures the true impact of padel noise although I appreciate the inclusion of worst-case LMax predictions in the report and agree that these do not represent continuous levels. From my recent visit to padel courts in Cuckfield, the soundscape is characterised by frequent, sharp, and impulsive impacts, particularly from ball strikes against bats. Compared to other sports played on artificial grass (typically football/rugby/hockey) where ball impacts are less acoustically prominent and/or more sporadic, padel produces a pattern of regularly recurring high-impact noise events. This character of sound may be perceived as being more intrusive than the report would suggest by using predicted LAeq and a single LMax value over an hour. Would the acoustic consultants consider whether a BS4142-style assessment, incorporating character corrections for impulsivity and intermittency, might offer a more representative view of the potential impact?
3. The report indicates that noise from padel will be audible at noise sensitive receptors but counters this by stating that noise from the currently permitted tennis courts would also be audible. They do however concede the following differences in the noise produced through playing padel and tennis:

"It is clear that Padel features longer, more frequent extended rallies involving exchanges of volleys. Serving is always underarm in Padel, requiring less preparation and the contained court reduces time spent retrieving balls. Tennis features more forceful hitting and more powerful serves, but less frequent impact sounds. Singles tennis features less frequent rallies of volleys than doubles. Padel is always played as a doubles sport by default. Padel allows rebounds from the glass walls, and occasionally the ball is struck directly against the wall to rebound into play."

Given the above, I'm not entirely convinced that the argument regarding the existing use of the land carries weight, as the acoustic character of padel differs notably from tennis. While there may be some noise associated with tennis, it's not directly comparable to the impact sounds

generated during padel play. It's also worth noting that the current tennis courts are not floodlit, which naturally limits their hours of use. This makes direct comparisons with the proposed padel courts less straightforward.

Additionally, in section 7.6 of the acoustic report, the overheating standard has been referenced rather than the levels outlined in BS8233. Both standards relate to nighttime noise thresholds that should not be exceeded more than 10 times per night. However, there is no equivalent guidance for daytime L_{Amax} levels, and my concern is how repeated impact sounds, potentially thousands throughout the day, might affect residential amenity, both indoors and in the garden spaces.

Impact sounds from bats hitting balls, from balls striking perimeter screens and vocal noise from players and spectators are likely to affect how local residents use their gardens and may result in them having to close their windows. Where there is likely to be an observed adverse effect, it falls to the developer to mitigate noise and to reduce it to a minimum, and I would invite the acoustic consultant's comments on this matter.

4. It has been brought to my attention that flats at Southdowns Park are only permitted to have single glazing, has this been considered by the acoustic consultant. My concern is that even if residents choose to keep their windows closed during the summer, the level of sound insulation provided by single glazing may be insufficient to prevent noise intrusion.
5. The report mentions monitoring carried out between 07.00 and 22.00 however in the submitted NMP it states that if noise complaints are received the club will consider adjusting hours of use to 07.00 indicating that an earlier start time is being sought. Please can the applicants confirm the hours of operation applied for.
6. I have not received the information relating to lighting that I requested in my email dated 25 June 2025. The conservation officer may also wish to comment regarding the proposed flood lighting.

I am looking to protect both local residential amenity and the applicant's long-term interests. If the development proceeds as currently proposed, I feel it is likely to generate noise complaints, and the Council would then be duty-bound to investigate under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. If a statutory nuisance were found to exist, this could lead to the service of an Abatement Notice, potentially requiring further mitigation works, or significant restrictions on hours of use. Such outcomes could be more costly and less flexible than addressing the issues now at the planning stage and it is therefore in the applicant's interest to try to resolve these matters proactively. I would therefore like to propose a meeting with the acoustic consultant, possibly at the padel courts in Cuckfield, to discuss the issues with this application to try to find a mutually acceptable solution.

I look forward to hearing the applicant's response.

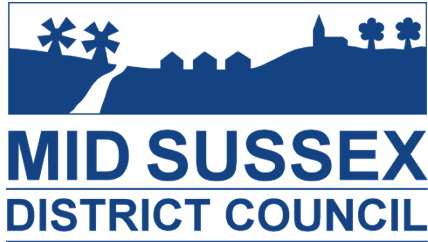
Kind regards,

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