

# Planning for Sport Development Management

Guide 3 of 4



## Summary

### Considering Sport in Development Management

Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. To achieve this, our planning objectives are to seek to **PROTECT** sports facilities from loss as a result of redevelopment; to **ENHANCE** existing facilities through improving their quality, accessibility and management; and to **PROVIDE** new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet demands for participation now and in the future.

Protecting, enhancing and providing opportunities to participate in sport is fundamental to creating sustainable communities. Therefore, Sport England seeks to ensure that the needs of sport are given appropriate consideration and significant weight in the development management process.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework makes the need for such consideration clear in its requirements to: deliver community and cultural facilities to meet local needs; protect existing sports and recreational buildings and land; guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services; promote mixed developments; plan positively to provide opportunities for outdoor sport in the Green Belt; and ensure that decisions are based on robust and up-to-date assessment of need.

This Guide provides advice on how sport should be considered by all those involved in preparing, assessing and determining planning applications which either affect or propose sporting provision.

### Sport England's Role in Development Management

Sport England is a **statutory consultee** on planning applications affecting playing field land. The requirement to consult Sport England covers all playing field land regardless of ownership and all playing pitches regardless of their surface (i.e. natural and artificial grass pitches). Sport England is also a **non-statutory consultee** on a range of other sport-related planning applications along with those for major residential developments. Sport England encourages and welcomes early discussions with interested parties in the development management process at the pre-application stage. Full details of Sport England's statutory and non-statutory consultee roles are provided within the Guide and on its website at: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications)

### Further Guidance

Further guidance on Sport England's approach to planning for sport is set out in the following complementary documents:

- Aims and Objectives
- Forward Planning
- Supporting Advice





## Sport and Development

The opportunity to participate in sport is a fundamental part of sustainable communities and the needs of sport should be given appropriate consideration and significant weight in the development management process. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes the need for such consideration clear in its requirements to:

- deliver community and cultural facilities to meet local needs;
- protect existing sports and recreational buildings and land;
- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services;
- promote mixed developments;
- plan positively to provide opportunities for outdoor sport in the Green Belt; and
- ensure that decisions are based on robust and up-to-date assessment of need.

Sport England's planning objectives are to seek to **PROTECT** sports facilities from loss as a result of redevelopment; to **ENHANCE** existing facilities through improving their quality, accessibility and management; and to **PROVIDE** new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet demands for participation now and in the future.

This Guide sets out how these objectives can be met through the development management process. Advice is provided on the areas to consider in relation to i) proposals affecting existing sports facilities, and ii) proposals for enhanced and new sporting provision. Further detail is then presented on a number of particularly important areas for sport in development management, along with Sport England's role as a statutory and non-statutory consultee on planning applications.

## Protect Existing Sports Facilities

The NPPF (para 74) makes it clear that existing sports facilities (i.e. those which are used for sport, have been in the past or could be used in the future) should be protected unless specific conditions can be met. Fulfilling these conditions demands a proper understanding of the current and future needs and opportunities for sports facilities which will put the proposals into a wider context, providing the reference point for change and the basis for a reasoned justification to accompany a proposal.

### NPPF para 74.

*Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

In light of para 74, local planning authorities and applicants should take into account the following key considerations in relation to proposals for development affecting land and buildings used currently or historically for sport:

- The justification for a proposal must be underpinned by the findings and recommendations of a robust and up-to-date assessment of need and an understanding of the detriment to sport. (see [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance)).
- The support from (or absence of) development plan policy and the objectives, recommendations and action plan of a local sports facility strategy.



- Evidence of consultation with interested parties such as sports clubs, County Sports Partnerships, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and Sport England should be presented.
- The requirement for any replacement provision to be of an equivalent or better quantity and quality and suitably located in relation to the current users. Planning conditions and/or legal agreements should be used to facilitate, secure and enhance the replacement provision, along with ensuring it is available before the loss of the existing provision.
- The benefit to sport of any alternative sports and recreational provision, how it meets the sporting needs of the area and any identified deficiencies, along with the detriment to sport from the loss of any existing provision. Proposals should ideally be justified through a planned approach to provision underpinned by a robust and up to date needs assessment.
- The need for any replacement or alternative sporting provision to be well designed and fit for purpose. Such proposals should have regard to the relevant Sport England and NGB design guidance ([www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/)).
- Opportunities to support a mix of facilities which comprise strategic, local and specialist facilities. These should take account of the priorities set out in local sports strategies, NGB facility strategies, and, where appropriate, cross-boundary issues for major or specialist facilities which have extensive catchment areas.
- Good design which ensures any enhanced and new provision is fit for purpose. Proposals should have regard to the relevant Sport England and NGB design guidance ([www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/)).
- The need to plan positively to provide opportunities for sport including appropriate facilities for outdoor sport in the Green Belt.
- The circumstances in which developer contributions might be sought should be identified, such as where development will create additional demand and/or place additional pressure on existing sports facilities. Where it is not practicable to provide new facilities as an integral part of a new development, contributions towards off-site provision or enhancement which is directly related to the development should be sought.
- Promoting community use of existing sports facilities, particularly on school sites and other educational establishments, and where appropriate the development of sports facilities which will serve multiple sport and active recreational users.
- Recognising the benefit to sport of maximising the use of existing provision by enhancing ancillary facilities e.g. changing accommodation and the addition of sports lighting.

## Enhance and Provide for Sport

Proposals to provide for enhanced and/or new sports facilities exist in their own right or as part of wider development proposals where developer contributions and conditions can be used to help deliver community benefits. When bringing forward or appraising proposals to provide for enhanced and/or new sports facilities, local planning authorities and applicants should take into account the following key considerations:

- The benefit to sport of the proposal and how it meets the sporting needs of the area and any identified deficiencies. Proposals should ideally be justified through a planned approach to provision underpinned by a robust and up to date needs assessment (see: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance/)).







## Specific Areas of Importance for Sport

There are a number of areas that are of particular importance to sport in relation to how they are considered within the development management process. This section of the guide presents these areas and advises on how they should be considered.

### 1. The Design of Sports Facilities

Sports facilities need to be fit for purpose and have specific design requirements. The development management process should have regard to Sport England's detailed guidance on how good design for sport can be achieved. Proposals to enhance existing or provide new sports facilities should have regard to this guidance as a means of responding to the NPPF's emphasis in section 7 on ensuring good design.

Sport England's Design and Cost guidance brings together our best practice design advice and requirements for a wide range of sports facility and building types. Developed by Sport England's Facilities and Planning Centre of Excellence in liaison with the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), all the information is free to download at: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/)

The specific guidance sections are currently:

- Accessible sports facilities
- Artificial sports lighting
- Artificial sports surfaces
- Natural turf for sport
- Pavilions and club houses
- Sports halls
- Swimming pools

Within each of the sections there is design guidance, audit/check lists, case studies, cost guidance and downloadable CAD drawings. For instance guidance on sports halls includes:

- Design and layouts
- Floors for indoor sports
- Comparative sizes of sports pitches and courts
- New section on developing the right sports hall
- Links to capital and lifecycle cost guidance
- Downloadable sports hall facility AutoCAD drawing templates

### 2. Sport in Major Developments

In line with the NPPF, significant development opportunities (e.g. residential developments) should take full account of the role of sport in delivering sustainable communities (see paras 17, 70 and 73 in particular). The occupiers of new developments will generate additional demand for sporting provision which will need to be accommodated through the enhancement of existing facilities or the provision of new ones.

The development management process should ensure that such developments have regard to:

#### Masterplanning & Design

Attention to sport in the early masterplanning and design of developments will help secure a better outcome through improving the quality of the scheme as a whole whilst contributing to the benefits to be gained from participation in sport. To assist with this thinking, Sport England's Active Design Guidance sets out masterplanning principles and a criteria-based approach to help create environments that maximise opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity (see: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/active-design](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/active-design))



### Assessments of Need

The scale and nature of sports provision should have regard to up-to-date local assessments of need and a sports facility strategy. This planned approach will help to ensure the demand from such developments is met in the most appropriate way, helping to provide increased opportunities for people to participate in sport and complementing existing provision. This will include determining the balance between on and off-site provision to provide the best solution to specific needs and in doing so providing the right facilities in the right places (see: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance)).

### Green Infrastructure

It is important to recognise that provision for sport and green infrastructure can be closely related. There should be a strategic approach to provision through greenspace strategies and masterplanning which recognise and provide for the various users of greenspace.

### Funding Sports Facilities

It is important to secure the long term sustainability of facilities so that they continue to provide for the sporting needs of an area. The development management process should ensure adequate provision of capital and revenue funding to construct and maintain facilities, either on-site or off-site (see the Developer Contributions section below).

## 3. Educational Sites and Community Use

### School and Educational Sites

School and educational sites often provide important or potentially important sports facilities to local communities. In line with the NPPF para 74, Sport England seeks to protect sports facilities (including school playing fields) unless strict exceptions can be satisfied.

Sport England's role as a statutory consultee on development affecting playing fields is separate from the process for the disposal of school playing fields set out under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act (see: [www.education.gov.uk/aboutndfe/advic/f00216527/adviceschool-playing-field-protection](http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutndfe/advic/f00216527/adviceschool-playing-field-protection)).

Therefore, simply stating via Section 77 that a sports facility including playing field land is no longer required by the school does not meet Sport England's Playing Fields Policy (Exception Test E1 – see Sport England's role in development involving playing fields below) or the NPPF guidance in paragraph 74.

Thus when developing and considering related proposals on school sites at the planning application or pre-application stage, the wider community needs for sporting provision must be assessed. Full guidance is available at: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance)

### Community Use

There are many proven opportunities to enhance the quality and frequency of participation in sport through combining educational and community use of sports facilities. Based on Community Use Agreements (CUA), Sport England encourages increasing accessibility through the development of dual use arrangements. These can be an important part of ensuring viable provision as well as satisfying wider objectives of greater community participation. For example, a large number of sporting facilities are located on school sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the school and local clubs.





The development and implementation of CUAs can help support well-managed and safe community access to sports facilities on educational sites. As well as widening access to facilities and providing clarity on their use CUAs can help to enhance links between educational establishments and sports clubs. Sport England has developed a template for a CUA which provides a clear basis for drawing up agreements for individual schools, colleges and academies. The template covers how the CUA is intended to operate, covering such matters as hours of availability, management arrangements, pricing policy etc. CUAs can be secured through the use of planning conditions or preferably a s106 Agreement.

The template CUA is available at:

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/community-use-agreements/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/community-use-agreements/)

Sport England has also produced toolkits to help open up school sites for community use. The toolkits are available at: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/)

This approach is supported by the NPPF (para 70) which requires that policies and decisions “*should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.*”

#### 4. Sport in the Green Belt

In line with the requirements of the NPPF (Para 81) the development management process should ensure that it plans positively for sport in the Green Belt: “*...local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation...*”

The NPPF (para 89) specifically identifies that appropriate new or enhanced buildings and structures for outdoor sport and recreation are an acceptable use in the Green Belt: “*the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.*”

The provision of appropriate facilities should include those which help to secure the long-term sustainability of a sports facility, or enhance their quality and/or accessibility thereby maintaining and increasing participation where they do not conflict with wider Green Belt objectives.

#### 5. Amenity Issues

##### Sports-Lighting

By extending the hours a facility is available, along with improving its viability, the lighting of outdoor sports facilities can provide enhanced opportunities for people to participate in sport. This can help a local area to secure the wider benefits that sport can provide by improving health and well-being. In line with the need to plan positively for sport the development management process should recognise the benefits of lighting outdoor sports facilities. The significant advances in such technology over recent years should also be recognised which can minimise any adverse affects on local amenity.

Further guidance on dealing with sports lighting issues is set out in Sport England’s Guide to Making a Planning Application: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/making-a-planning-application-a-guide-for-sports-clubs](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/making-a-planning-application-a-guide-for-sports-clubs)

Technical guidance on sports lighting is available at: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-facilities](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-facilities)





## Noise

The Development Management process should plan positively for all sports, including those noise-generating sports such as shooting, motorsports, powered air sports, water skiing and the use of personal water craft.

The appropriate siting and use of conditions can help to positively mitigate for any adverse impacts in line with the guidance within the NPFF (Para 123). Other potential development management approaches include early anticipation of potential conflicts with other users and interests, and seeking to utilise, wherever possible, existing degraded or brownfield sites where the environmental impact can be minimised.

The treatment of locational and amenity issues relating to sport can be identified through Sport England's sports appeals database which has over 3,000 appeal decisions relating to planning for sport. ([www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/sports-appeals-database/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/sports-appeals-database/)).

**The 14/28 Day Rule:** It is important to note that a number of sporting activities rely on the so-called '14/28 day rule' set out in the Government's General Permitted Development Order. The Order permits the use of any land (subject to a number of specified exclusions) for any purpose for not more than 28 days each calendar year, of which not more than 14 may be for 'motor car and motorcycle racing, including trials of speed, and practising for these activities'. For motor sports this allows the temporary use of open land for 14 days for racing are related practice and a further 14 days for other motor sports activities such as training or other non-competitive events. Sport England's Planning Bulletin 6 has more detail on this issue.

## 6. Use of Conditions

Planning conditions have an important part to play in ensuring that an appropriate planning permission is granted. To be valid conditions must be: necessary; relevant to planning; relevant to the development to be permitted; enforceable; precise; and reasonable in all other aspects. Sport England has developed a set of model conditions to assist with determining planning applications affecting existing, and proposing new and enhanced, sporting provision. These model conditions cover:

1. Protection/new provision of sport and recreation facilities
2. Compensatory provision, continuity of use and phasing of development
3. Built design and layout
4. Playing field provision
5. Operational matters (e.g. sports-lighting, community use agreements, sports development plans)
6. Restoration

Sport England's model conditions are available at:

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications)

## 7. Developer Contributions

### The Community Infrastructure Levy

'Sporting and recreational facilities' are included within the definition of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) infrastructure in the 2008 Planning Act (section 216). This means that money raised from CIL can be used to fund new or enhanced sports facilities. Justification for the inclusion of sports facilities in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), and the Regulation 123 List of projects or types of infrastructure, should be made through a needs assessment which underpins prioritised deliverable projects to improve the sporting infrastructure and meet local needs in the area (see [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance/)).





Where CIL is in place the relevant Local Planning Authority sets the CIL for their area and which types of development will be charged. In order to promote investment in sport and ensure sporting development is viable Sport England advocates that sporting uses should not be liable to pay CIL (i.e. charged a £0 rate).

In any case the Government's CIL Regulations specifically exempt charges where planning permission involves the following:

- Outdoor facilities and structures such as artificial grass pitches, fencing and sports-lighting because only buildings are potentially liable to pay CIL (s209, Planning Act 2008).
- Where buildings are under 100m<sup>2</sup> (for example changing rooms or pavilions) (Regulation 42).
- Buildings used for plant or machinery where people do not normally go (including equipment stores for pitch maintenance) (Regulation 6).

### Section 106 Agreements

Section 106 Agreements still have an important part to play in securing the protection, enhancement and provision of sports facilities. Even where specific sports infrastructure is mentioned in the Regulation 123 List, a S106 agreement may still be requested to ensure replacement or new facilities are delivered, where it is clear that these are not being funded by CIL. Where sports facilities are not specifically identified on the appropriate Regulation 123 List, it is critical that sports requirements are secured through a S106 agreement. Here the tests of Regulation 122 need to be borne in mind, which provides that *"a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if the obligation is:*

- necessary to make to the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- directly related to the development; and*
- fairly and reasonably related to the scale and kind to the development."*

New development will often generate increased or different demands for sport which should be provided for through on or off-site provision. These could take many forms including direct and indirect contributions, protecting and enhancing existing provision, replacement of facilities or the negotiation of a Community Use Agreement (see **Educational Sites and Community Use** above).

## Sport England's Role in Development Management

### Development Involving Playing Fields

Sport England is a **statutory consultee** on planning applications affecting playing field land (as set out in SI 2010/2184 (The Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010).

This includes development which:

- is likely to prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field; or
- is on land which has been (a) used as a playing field at any time in the 5 years before the making of the relevant application and which remains undeveloped; or (b) allocated for use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement; or
- involves the replacement of the grass surface of a playing pitch on a playing field with an artificial, man-made or composite surface.

### SI 2010/2184 Definitions

**'Playing field'** means the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch. The reference to 'the whole of a site' applies to all areas of a playing field not just those which happen, for the time being, to be laid out as pitches.

**'Playing pitch'** means a delineated area which, together with any run-off, is of 0.2 hectares or more and which is used for football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.





The requirement to consult Sport England covers all playing field land, regardless of ownership and all pitches (of 0.2ha or more) regardless of their surface (i.e. natural and artificial grass pitches). Sport England will assess any planning application affecting playing field land against its **Planning Policy Statement: A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England**.

This policy states that: *Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field or land allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, specific circumstances apply.* The five specific circumstances are:

**E1:** A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

**E2:** The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.

**E3:** The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facilities on the site.

**E4:** The playing field or playing fields, which would be lost as a result of the proposed development, would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development.

**E5:** The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

Sport England's policy statement is in line with the requirements of the NPPF (para 74) in relation to the protection of sports facilities.

Where a local planning authority is minded to grant planning permission for an application, despite receiving an objection from Sport England, then the requirements of the Government's Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 may apply. This Direction instructs local planning authorities to notify the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government of an application if the land is owned by a local authority or used by an educational establishment (currently or within the five years prior to receiving the application), and where Sport England has objected due to a current or resulting deficiency of playing field land in the area or because the replacement to be provided is inadequate. Further details on the Direction are provided within the Government's **Planning Practice Guidance**.

Where deemed appropriate Sport England will seek comments from the relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport to help inform its assessment of an application.

Full details of Sport England's statutory consultee role and its policy statement are available at: [www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications/playing-field-land](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications/playing-field-land)





## Consultation with Sport England on Other Development

Sport England seeks to ensure that the interests of sport are given appropriate consideration and significant weight in the development management process. Alongside its statutory consultee status the Government, within their [Planning Practice Guidance](#), advises local planning authorities to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to:

- loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility;
- proposals which lead to the loss of use for sport of a major body of water;
- creation of a major sports facility;
- creation of a site for one or more playing pitches;
- development which creates opportunities for sport (such as the creation of a body of water bigger than two hectares following sand and gravel extraction);
- artificial lighting of a major outdoor sports facility;
- a residential development of 300 dwellings or more.

Sport England responding as a non-statutory consultee will assess these types of applications in line with its planning objectives and the NPPF (in particular the provisions of paragraph 74). Further information on Sport England's non-statutory role is available at:

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/development-management/planning-applications)

## Pre-Application and Information Requirements

Pre-application discussions with Sport England provide the most effective means of ensuring a mutual understanding of development proposals (see contact details at the back of this Guide). Potential constraints to development can be identified at an early stage in the design process, as can opportunities for incorporating new and improved sport and active recreation provision through good design.

Sport England primarily assesses applications against its planning policy objectives to Protect, Enhance and Provide (see Aims and Objectives Guide). These seek to ensure that a planned approach to the provision of facilities and opportunities for sport is taken by local planning authorities in order to meet the needs of the local community. In line with the NPPF, the level of provision should be determined locally, based on local assessments of need, and take account of wider than local requirements for strategic or specialist facilities.

In support of providing quicker and more predictable development management decision-making, planning applications need to be supported by sufficient detail to enable the potential impacts on existing sport and recreation facilities to be readily understood, as well as describing how the development has been designed to maximise the opportunities for sport and active recreation. This should include details (if applicable) of the need for the new facility and the sport-related benefits offered by it for users as well as opportunities to secure community use. A detailed consultation guidance checklist is set out below.



## Consultation Guidance Checklist

A copy of the following information should be made available to Sport England with a covering letter (including timescales, contact details, grid reference and postcode) to ensure that a substantive response can be made to a consultation. Particularly when Sport England is a statutory consultee, it is strongly advised that pre-application discussions are undertaken.

Sport England would prefer to receive consultations electronically via the addresses provided on the following page. However, any on-line database referred to in a consultation should ensure that all relevant documents and plans are clearly titled and presented.

### A. The completed application form

### B. Plans and photographs (drawn to an identified scale with north marked on plans). Where these are produced in colour, a coloured copy is essential.

- a. Location Plan (preferably OS-based)
- b. Existing Site Plan to include (where appropriate):
  - i. Existing buildings
  - ii. Extent of playing fields (as defined by SI 2010/2184 – see above)
  - iii. Location of sports facilities (summer & winter including pitches)
  - iv. Significant features e.g. trees, slopes, sewers, paths, fences
  - v. Siting of any alternative locations
  - vi. Existing levels
  - vii. Location of photographs
- c. Proposed site plan to include:
  - i. Proposed development
  - ii. Extent of any playing field land to be lost
  - iii. Revised location of any pitches or other sports facilities
  - iv. Location of any alternative provision, buildings to be removed or land to be re-instated within the site
  - v. Proposed levels
  - vi. Landscaping affecting a playing field
- d. Detailed Plans – elevations and internal layouts are only necessary for that part of the development relating to sports facilities or facilities with potential for such use.
- e. Photographs
  - i. Site of proposed development
  - ii. Aerial photograph of site (optional)

### C. A copy of the completed and dated Ownership Certificate

### D. Design and Access Statement (if required). On large schemes it may be appropriate to provide us with an extract or to highlight those parts of the statement considered relevant to our consideration of the application.

### E. Supporting Planning Statement

The following information should be included where appropriate:

1. Reason for development.
  2. Reason for location of proposed development.
  3. Alternative locations considered.
  4. If applicable, a reasoned justification to state why in the applicant's opinion development affecting a playing field should be allowed.
  5. Details of the actions taken on behalf of the applicant to comply with the advice in paragraph 74 of the NPPF where development affects open space, sport and recreation.
  6. Relevant Development Plan Policies and Government Guidance.
  7. History of the development proposal and playing field including use of the site e.g. when and who by including any community use of an educational site.
  8. Area in hectares of playing field land to be lost, if applicable.
  9. Area in hectares of any replacement playing field land, if applicable.
  10. Information on any assessment considered to support a view that the open space, sports and recreation facilities affected by the development are surplus to requirements.
  11. With respect to developments of new housing or employment sites a statement assessing the sports and recreation needs of the new development and how these are to be accommodated.
  12. Where replacement or alternative sporting provision is proposed details are needed to enable a comparison of the proposed loss of provision against the proposed replacement or alternative sporting provision. This information needs to cover the quantity and quality of provision, its accessibility to users, management arrangements, the timing of the replacement or alternative provision and how it will be secured. For alternative provision details are also needed to help understand the detriment to sport that will be caused by the loss of provision and the benefit to sport of the alternative provision. This should include reference to any relevant needs assessment and playing pitch and/or sports facility strategies. These details are required to help assess such proposals against the second or third bullet point of NPPF paragraph 74 and specific circumstances E4 or E5 of Sport England's Planning Policy Statement on Playing Fields.
- ### F. Developer Contributions – draft heads of terms for a Section 106 Agreement or unilateral undertaking.





## Complementary Guidance

This guidance on Sport England's approach to Development Management is complemented by guidance on our Aims & Objectives, our approach to Forward Planning, and the provision of Supporting Advice in the use of available evidence base tools and further guidance on needs assessments and sport-specific matters.

### Aims and Objectives

Sport England seeks to ensure that planning policy and practice will protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities and opportunities to take part in sport. This guidance note sets out how these objectives are supported by the National Planning Policy Framework and the key outcomes expected.

### Forward Planning

The importance of developing robust policies relating to sport and recreation which reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities is clearly set out in the NPPF. This guidance note sets out how local policies can be developed in order to help secure the best interests of sport.

### Supporting Advice

Sport England provides a comprehensive range of advice on the assembly of evidence to help support the development of policy for sport and its application. This guidance note summarises the material on our website including:

- Evidence-gathering to understand local needs and provision and to help justify policy.
- Design and cost advice for new facilities.
- Dealing with planning applications and securing the best interests of sport through planning contributions.
- Detailed technical advice on the needs of specific sports and facilities.

## Sport England's Role and Contact Details

Sport England:

- advises on the development of planning policy and the planning process insofar as it affects sport and active recreation;
- contributes to the development of policy guidance;
- advises local planning authorities on matters affecting sport and active recreation in development plans and related documents;
- advises on the development of assessments of need and strategies for sporting provision;
- advises local planning authorities on planning applications affecting sport and active recreation; and
- advises sports bodies on planning issues.

**Planning consultations and any correspondence relating to a consultation should be sent direct to our Planning Administration Team using one of the following email addresses:**

**North (North West, North East, Yorkshire)**  
[planning.north@sportengland.org](mailto:planning.north@sportengland.org)

**Central (West Midlands, East Midlands, East)**  
[planning.central@sportengland.org](mailto:planning.central@sportengland.org)

**South (London, South East, South West)**  
[planning.south@sportengland.org](mailto:planning.south@sportengland.org)

**General enquiries should be sent to:**  
[planningforsport@sportengland.org](mailto:planningforsport@sportengland.org)

**Planning Team, Sport England,  
3rd Floor, Victoria House,  
Bloomsbury Square, London WC1B 4SE**