



*Spatial Planning for Sport  
and Active Recreation*

**Sport and Recreation in  
Supplementary Planning Documents**

**Spring 2009**

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## 1. Background

The Core Strategy of a Local Development Framework sets out a vision and spatial objectives, strategic policies, and the monitoring and implementation frameworks for a suite of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) add further detail to the Core Strategy, but are subject to a lower degree of scrutiny. Both documents can deal with sport and recreation issues, to greater or lesser degrees, from being part of a general consideration of development issues such as the protection of open space, to the specific consideration of the delivery of sport and recreation facilities in a particular area.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are designed to amplify policies set out in their parent Core Strategy. Unlike DPDs, they are not subject to independent examination, meaning that whilst less evidence is demanded for their preparation they carry commensurately less weight in helping to determine policy. SPDs are replacing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), in some cases involving the 're-badging' of existing documents, in other instances the preparation of a new document.

The broad scope of demands associated with spatial planning – centred on securing better quality places through integrating land use considerations with partner strategies, plans and programmes – means that there are opportunities for recognising the role of sport and recreation in these documents. This can be either as a topic in its own right (for example a sport and recreation strategy which reviews and sets standards of provision) or as part of wider considerations (such as setting out expectations and guidelines for contributions from developers towards new or improved facilities).

A key reference point for the development of sport and recreation-related SPDs is the guidance set out in PPG17, which identifies the provision of open spaces, sport and recreation as fundamental to quality of life for individuals and communities. Three outcomes are sought from development plan policy and practice<sup>1</sup>:

- The provision of networks of high quality open space, sport and recreation facilities which meet the needs of residents and visitors;
- Striking an appropriate balance between enhancing existing facilities and new provision;
- Clarity and a reasonable degree of certainty for developers in relation to the requirements for the provision of open space and sport and recreation facilities.

An assessment of local needs and opportunities through a detailed audit provides the basis for setting local standards and hence appropriate contributions from developers<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Opportunities for promoting sport and active recreation through SPDs

How the interests of sport and recreation are best served will clearly vary according to the particular planning context within which the SPDs are being prepared. However, typically, the following considerations should be taken into account when scoping the need for a specific SPD on sport and recreation or its place within partner SPDs (**Box 1**).

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<sup>1</sup> **Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17** para 1.3

<sup>2</sup> Further detail is available at:

[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/planning\\_tools\\_and\\_guidance/planning\\_kitbag.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/planning_kitbag.aspx)

**Box 1: Checklist - Scoping the need for a SPD covering sport and recreation issues**

- What is the state of knowledge of the existing quantity and quality of sport and recreation facility provision?
- Specifically, has a PPG17-compliant assessment been undertaken which can underpin the development of a strategic approach to facility provision?
- Can the provision and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities be used to achieve wider goals such as improvements in health and quality of life?
- Can sport and recreation contribute to the development of an SPD which is focused on other issues, thereby helping to balance the presentation and delivery of those issues?
- Have existing strategies, plans and programmes been taken into account such that there is evidence of a joined-up approach to planning and delivery?

Three principal kinds of SPD can be identified within which sport and recreation is likely to, or could potentially, play a role:

- expectations regarding developer contributions to community infrastructure;
- the protection and enhancement of facilities expressed through a sport and recreation strategy with potential to be adopted as an SPD; and
- the role of sport and recreation in helping to deliver other policy aspirations.

These types are considered in more detail, with examples, below. It is not uncommon for guidance on the protection and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities to be combined with the specification of expected developer contributions.

## 2.1 Setting standards for provision

As part of a survey of sport and recreation provision in an area through a PPG17 Assessment, each local authority should be setting local standards of provision in accessibility, quantity and quality. The following example from the Vale of White Horse summarises the results of a typical survey

	Definition	Accessibility Standard	Minimum Size	Facilities & Features
<b>Activity Spaces</b>				
Multi-sport courts	Hard or synthetic surfaced courts intended for football, basketball, netball and roller/in-line skating; can have either controlled or open access, although the latter is more common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking 15 minutes/ 900 m</li> <li>• Cycling 15 minutes/ 2,250 m</li> <li>• Driving 15 minutes/ 5,625 m</li> </ul> <p>As multi-courts should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one multi-court within walking distance of all residents.</p>	36.5 x 18.25 m (court only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball hoops, if present, securely fixed with no sharp edges</li> <li>• Recessed 5-a-side goals</li> <li>• Surrounded by a rebound surface 1.2 m high if intended for 5-a-side soccer use (note, however, that this is not desirable if the court is close to dwellings because of the noise generated by balls hitting the rebound surface)</li> <li>• Ideally enclosed by netting which will prevent balls escaping from the court(s) area</li> <li>• Ideally floodlit to give at least 75 lux</li> <li>• Signage indicating ownership and who to inform of any maintenance requirements</li> </ul>

	Definition	Accessibility Standard	Minimum Size	Facilities & Features
<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>				
Artificial Turf Pitches	Artificial turf pitches for football, hockey and rugby/rugby training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving 15 minutes/ 5,625 m</li> </ul> <p>While it will be desirable for many users of ATPs to walk or cycle to them, they serve a wide area and therefore a driving distance threshold is appropriate.</p>	1 pitch with changing accommodation and parking	<p>As for grass sports pitches, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artificial surfaces to comply with relevant governing body requirements and BS 7044: Artificial Sports Surfaces</li> <li>All artificial turf pitches (and any safety surround areas) to be fully enclosed within lockable chain link, weldmesh or other see-through fence capable of withstanding ball impacts at least 3.0 m high along the sides of the pitch and 5 m high at the ends of the pitch</li> <li>Third generation artificial turf pitches for football to comply with the International Artificial Turf Standard</li> </ul>
Bowling Greens	Lawn bowls green meeting appropriate governing body standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking 15 minutes/ 900m</li> <li>Driving 15 minutes/ 5,625 m</li> </ul> <p>As bowling greens should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. The driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one green within walking distance of all residents.</p>	6 rinks plus banks and ditches, a pathway at least 2 m wide all round the green and a pavilion. This requires a site of not less than approximately 41 x 47 m, i.e. approximately 1,900 sq m (0.19 hectare).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green, banks and ditches to meet relevant governing body Standards</li> <li>Greens to have at least six rinks (to allow play along and across the green to even out wear)</li> <li>Changing pavilion with at least male and female changing rooms and social area</li> </ul>
Grass pitches – cricket, football & rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pitches for football (all codes), cricket, hockey, rugby (all codes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking 15 minutes/ 900 m</li> <li>Driving 15 minutes/ 5,625 m</li> </ul> <p>As pitches should be within walking distance of most potential, casual users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. However, the driving standard will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one pitch within walking distance of all residents.</p>	One or two pitches with changing accommodation and parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External lighting in car parking areas</li> <li>External lighting on pavilions with PIR detectors</li> <li>Signs indicating that no dogs must at any time be allowed on the pitches</li> <li>Shade trees in car parking areas</li> <li>Adequately separated from adjoining residential properties</li> <li>Adequate measures in place to control light spill from floodlighting to adjoining properties and related land</li> </ul>
Tennis Courts	Tennis courts, usually with a hard or synthetic surface, and with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking 15 minutes/900m</li> <li>Driving 15 minutes/</li> </ul>	36.5 x 18.25 m (court and safety margins) plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posts and tennis nets</li> <li>Clearly marked courts with</li> </ul>

	Definition	Accessibility Standard	Minimum Size	Facilities & Features
	or without floodlighting	5,625 m  As tennis courts should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one court within walking distance of all residents.	surround	adequate safety surrounds  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodlighting (if present) to meet governing body requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Sports Facilities</b>				
Sports Halls and Swimming Pools	Large scale indoor sports facilities operated by the public, commercial or voluntary sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving 15 minutes/ 5,625 m</li> </ul> <p>While it will be desirable for many users of indoor sports facilities to walk or cycle to them, they serve a wide area and therefore a driving distance threshold is appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports halls: 4 badminton court hall plus changing</li> <li>Pools: 25 m x 4 lanes (8.5 m total width) plus changing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 250m of entrance/access points</li> <li>Adequate parking for the range of facilities available, with a tarmac surface in good repair and at least two designated disabled spaces close to the main entrance</li> <li>Cycle parking</li> </ul>

Vale of White Horse (July 2008) **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision**

## 2.2 Developer contributions to community infrastructure

Developer contributions to community infrastructure are now a well established part of planning practice, and sport and recreation have been one of the notable beneficiaries<sup>3</sup>. SPDs are commonly used to specify precisely what contributions are expected (**Box 2**), and in some cases (see **Box 3** for example) this can be set out in considerable detail. In light of Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations, the purposes and parameters of planning obligations have been formalised, including consideration of both on- and off-site provision in order to address the cumulative impacts of development. This provides a much higher degree of certainty about expectations on all sides for the future provision of facilities, both in quantity and quality.

### Box 2: North Hertfordshire District Council: Planning Obligations SPD

In setting out the expectations for the provision of a suite of community infrastructure, sport and recreation are identified as significant resources which demand particular attention. In particular, the document notes that: *"New residential development places increased pressure on open space, sport and recreation provision within the District. The Council's responsibility is to enable and co-ordinate the provision of these, to ensure that they are located in the right places, are of high quality, offer opportunities for biodiversity and are well maintained to meet the needs of the community. Planning obligations play a role in ensuring that these facilities can cope with additional demand placed upon them by new development. This may be through contributions towards off-site provision and enhancement to take into account the cumulative impact of small schemes on the quality of the existing open space, or the provision of on-site areas of open space and a contribution towards their maintenance"*.

A Green Space Strategy, based upon a PPG17-compliant assessment of the quantity and quality of provision of sport and recreation, is being drawn up to guide the provision of new and enhanced facilities, and associated negotiation on planning applications to secure appropriate obligations. The SPD sets out in detail calculations and indicative sums (capital expenditure and maintenance) for the cost of provision of particular kinds of sport and recreation facilities – from

<sup>3</sup> see Sport England's **Planning Contributions Kitbag** at:

[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/planning\\_tools\\_and\\_guidance/planning\\_kitbag.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/planning_kitbag.aspx)

a new leisure centre to children's play areas. Technical documents which support these figures are also available.

[www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk) > planning services > Local Development Framework > Planning Obligations SPD

Sport England has assembled a reference list of SPGs which are considered to be examples of good practice in setting out how the interests of sport and recreation can be met through the use of planning obligations<sup>4</sup>.

**Box 3: Aylesbury Vale District Council (August 2005) Supplementary Planning Guidance: Sport and Leisure Facilities**

This SPG on sport and leisure facilities recognises that good quality sport and leisure facilities can make a significant contribution to local attractiveness, the health and well-being of residents and the development of the local economy. In relation to sport and leisure facilities the Council have a number of key aims:

- To achieve safe, healthy communities and provide accessible services;
  - To manage the built and natural environment of a growing district in a sustainable way; and
  - To develop and promote the local economy and establish Aylesbury Vale as a vibrant economic centre.
- The guidance makes reference to the wider benefits of sport noted in PPG17 in achieving the government's objectives such as rural renewal, social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well-being and sustainable development.

A Sport and Recreation Ready Reckoner has also been developed which sets out expectations for developer contributions according to the type of facility and the size of the host community. A staged approach to determining the requirements for sport and recreation facilities is set out which sets out a protocol for:

- Establishing whether a particular development has a sport and leisure facility requirement;
- Detailing the calculations required to appraise the appropriate contribution according to the character of the development;
- Identifying whether provision should be on- or off-site
- Determining the number and type of facilities to be provided on-site
- The use of planning obligation agreements to secure contributions

A new SPD on developer contributions is currently being prepared.

[www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk) > planning and building > planning policy > publications list > supplementary planning guidance > Supplementary Planning Guidance on Sport and Leisure Facilities (August 2004)

**2.3 The protection and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities expressed through a Sport and Recreation Strategy (with potential to be adopted as SPD)**

The development of a Sport and Recreation Strategy (along with its possible adoption as a SPD) is a useful means of ensuring that the interests of sport and recreation are systematically considered (**Box 4**), including the development of a sound evidence base (via a PPG17-compliant assessment of facility provision) and policies which can be used as material considerations in development control. Local circumstances will dictate the form of the strategy and whether it is appropriate to adopt as SPD, or contribute to an SPD which focuses on developer contributions, for example (see section 2.1 above).

**Box 4: Chelmsford Borough Council Sport & Recreation Strategy**

Based on a full open space, sport and recreation facility assessment, this strategy maps out the intended evolution of recreational activity in the Borough over the next decade. The overarching aspirations are to:

- maximise the benefit for sport in Chelmsford as part of the London 2012 Olympic Games and contribute to this event;
- enhance sporting, recreational and health opportunities that will improve the quality of life and health of the local community.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/planning\\_tools\\_and\\_guidance/planning\\_kitbag.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/planning_kitbag.aspx)

- identify where resources will be allocated and how new and existing funding streams can be utilised; and
- seek to increase participation (measurement against Active People results).

The document is designed to be part of the evidence base for the preparation of the LDF and draws on the suite of resources developed by Sport England to promote a more coherent approach to planning for sport and recreation, specifically:

- Active Places Power – planning tool to assist in investment decisions for sports facilities.
- Active Places – a public database of sports facilities in England.
- Sports Facility Calculator – helps to estimate the amount of key community sports facilities required to meet the needs of the local population.
- A national benchmarking service – provide local authorities with comparative information on the performance and utilisation of their sports facilities.

Whilst this strategy will not be adopted as SPD, it does provide the basis for forging links between realising aspirations for enhancing opportunities for quality of life improvement through sport and recreation and the planning response through policy vehicles such as Area Action Plans (see Box 2.3).

[www.chelmsford.gov.uk](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk) > leisure, parks & tourism > sports and leisure > sport & recreation strategy 2006-2010

### 3. Sport and recreation helping to deliver wider policy aspirations

A principle aspiration of spatial planning is ensuring that there is a more rounded approach to policy making and application than hitherto. In practice this means seeking to make connections with partner policy as presented in strategies, plans and programmes, for example through cross-referencing and shared monitoring criteria. Recognition of the place of sport and recreation as part of the provision of a suite of community facilities is an important first step (**Box 5**).

#### **Box 5: Ealing Borough Council: Community Facilities SPD**

This SPD sets out how part of the aspirations for achieving sustainable development in Ealing Borough might be achieved. Using a core policy from the saved UDP, the SPD details how the needs of the community are expected to be considered as part of new development. Sport and recreation facilities are specifically identified as an integral part of this approach

Policy 1.8 of the UDP is the reference point and states an intention *'to encourage the provision of community facilities to meet the wide-ranging needs of people living, working, studying in and visiting the borough, and to ensure that these facilities are located where they reduce the need to travel and enhance town centres'*.

In response, the SPD provides:

- Guidance to developers and community groups on how to make the best use of new, vacant or under-used community facilities.
- Technical advice on the appropriate location and design of community facilities, and the relevant policies within the Adopted 2004 Plan for the Environment.
- Specific guidance on certain types of community facilities: meeting places and places of worship, facilities/services for the young, older people and disabled people, education facilities, open space, play and recreation facilities and health care facilities.
- Advice on where to go for additional advice or information.

Community facilities are defined as:

- Leisure and culture facilities (including arts, entertainment and built sport facilities)
- Community offices and meeting places (including places of worship, libraries)
- Facilities for children (from nursery provision to youth clubs)
- Education (including adult education)
- Social Services
- Healthcare facilities

In preparing development proposals, a suite of generic issues which merit particular consideration are identified: suitable locations, design issues, and transport and accessibility. A Green Travel Plan is cited as a potential requirement, in order to demonstrate how the travel needs of those who will use the development, and how encouragement to travel by means other than the car will be taken into consideration. The specific types of development likely to require a Green Travel Plan are:

- All major leisure and services developments (greater than 1,000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area).
- Smaller developments which would generate significant amounts of travel affecting the borough-wide air quality management areas, and in locations where there are local targets for the reduction of road traffic, or promotion of



public transport, walking and cycling. This requirement applies particularly to health and education uses.

- Where a travel plan would help address a particular local traffic problem associated with a planning application.
- New and expanded school facilities should be accompanied by a School Travel Plan; which promotes safe cycle and walking routes, restricts parking and car access at and around schools, and includes on-site changing and cycle storage facilities.

Of particular interest is the advice offered on preparing a Social Impact Statement, a requirement for all major developments. A series of overarching questions are posed covering the potential loss of facilities, the capacity and fitness of existing facilities and the potential cumulative impact of new development.

A re-iteration and expansion of the UDP policy approach to open space, play and recreation facilities is set out. Here the importance of the protection of open space is emphasised.

[www.ealing.gov.uk](http://www.ealing.gov.uk) > environment > planning > planning policy > Local Development Framework > supplementary planning guidance/documents > SPD2 Community Facilities

### 3. Conclusions and summary of key principles and checklist of actions

SPDs provide a means of amplifying policy presented in the parent Core Strategy and therefore could prove a useful tool in helping to clarify particular issues and promote the interests of sport and recreation. The specification of planning obligations is the commonest example of the consideration of sport and recreation issues (typically as community infrastructure), but there are other examples of the potential for taking a wider view on the contribution of sport and recreation to achieving improvements in quality of life for local communities. Sport and recreation issues in SPDs relate principally to guidance on developer contributions to the provision of community infrastructure. As such they are widely applicable, and sport and recreation issues are now typically considered as part of an authority's wider approach to planning obligations. **Box 6** presents a checklist to help inform the preparation of an SPD, either specifically focused on sport and recreation or one with significant implications for sport and recreation, such as a Planning Obligations SPD.

#### **Box 6: Checklist - Developing a sport and recreation-related SPD**

- Is there an opportunity or need for a SPD on open space, sport and recreation to expand upon policies set out in the Core Strategy and other DPDs?
- Does the SPD take a comprehensive view of sport and recreation issues, using an appropriate evidence base (specifically a PPG17-compliant assessment) along with making connections between policy areas?
- Are the interests of sport and recreation noted within a more general Planning Obligations SPD, particularly in terms of the opportunities the expectations for contributions to facility provision and enhancement?
- What are the arrangements for monitoring the implementation of SPDs that have been produced (such as through the setting of targets for open space) and can these outputs be used elsewhere to track the effects of policy?
- Have links with partner strategies, plans and programmes been identified, and opportunities for delivery of wider aspirations such as improvements to health and quality of life been identified?