

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SPORT REVISITED

PLANNING BULLETIN 15



The nation's biggest supporter

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INTRODUCTION



Since the original Planning Bulletin on this subject was published in May 1998, much has happened in sport in England. The Manchester Commonwealth Games of 2002 demonstrated the nation's capacity to plan for and successfully stage a major international event. The centre piece of the Games, the City of Manchester Stadium, is now used by Manchester City FC and the surrounding Sport City has been central to the regeneration of one of the Country's most deprived communities.

The success of the Commonwealth Games was built upon effective strategic planning at the local, regional, national and international level. More modest schemes also require effective strategic planning. The revised PPG 17, Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation emphasises in its very first paragraph that effective planning must be based upon an assessment of the needs of local communities.

This bulletin looks first at advice contained in national and regional government guidance and then at "The Framework for Sport in England," Sport England's new national strategy and vision. It then draws together the various strategic planning tools, which are available to local authorities, and others involved in formulating new facility developments and protecting and enhancing existing resources.

PLANNING POLICY

Government Guidance

The main source of government guidance on strategic sports planning issues is contained in PPG 17. Underpinning the whole PPG is a requirement for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities. Such assessments will normally be undertaken at a district level but the PPG acknowledges that strategic facilities should be assessed at a regional or sub-regional level.

Since the introduction of the revised PPG 17 in July 2002, assessments of community needs for open space, sports and recreational facilities have generally been required for any proposals involving the loss of such facilities. The absence of such an assessment has been considered by the Secretary of State to be grounds to dismiss on appeal (see below).

IT IS NECESSARY TO CONVINCING THE COMMUNITY THAT ANY REPLACEMENT OR COMPENSATORY OPEN SPACE OR SPORTS FACILITIES ARE SUFFICIENT TO OVERCOME ANY INITIAL OPPOSITION.



Furthermore, Inspectors and the Secretary of State are following the advice in paragraph 10 of PPG 17 that developers who are promoting proposals which involve the loss of open space, sports and recreation facilities must demonstrate the support of the local community for their proposals. It is therefore incumbent on the developers to undertake thorough and effective community consultation to seek to achieve wide community support for their proposals. To do this, it is necessary to convince the community that any replacement or compensatory open space or sports facilities are sufficient to overcome any initial opposition to the loss of an open space or facility.

Fundamental to this process is the identification of what constitutes "the local community". Clearly, in most cases this will include not just immediate neighbours to a development site but also other residents and users (past, existing and potential) of the existing, new or improved facilities.

The Companion Guide to PPG 17, Assessing Needs and Opportunities, advises developers undertaking their own independent assessment to agree the methodology in advance with the relevant local planning authority and to keep the council and the local community informed as the assessment proceeds.

One measure of the success of PPG 17 will be how many local authorities undertake thorough and robust assessments of their local open space, sports and recreation facilities and how much involvement the local community has in this process. In the absence of local authority assessments, it is inevitable that developers will seek to undertake their own assessments to seek to demonstrate that their proposals are acceptable and supported by the local community.

PPG 11 (Regional Planning) notes that most sports and physical recreation developments will serve primarily a local catchment but that some will have regional or sub-regional significance. Regional planning guidance should, it states, examine the region's key sports and physical recreation resources. Regional planning bodies, in producing regional planning guidance, should provide strategic guidance to planning authorities on the scale and broad locational options for major new sports developments of regional or sub-regional importance.

REGIONAL PLANNING BODIES SHOULD PROVIDE STRATEGIC GUIDANCE TO PLANNING AUTHORITIES.



PLANNING OBLIGATIONS CAN BE USED AS A MEANS TO REMEDY LOCAL DEFICIENCIES IN THE QUANTITY OR QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE OR SPORTS FACILITIES.



This advice is carried through into individual regional planning policies in a variety of ways. In the North West Policy EC10, Sport (see overleaf) supports the development of major sports facilities in East Manchester, based upon the successful Commonwealth Games in 2002. It also encourages local authorities to undertake a definitive audit of sports facilities, in line with PPG 17.

RPG for Yorkshire and Humberside, published in October 2001, similarly encourages, in Policy SOC4 (see overleaf), local planning authorities to carry out local audits and to identify sites to meet identified need. The supporting text (also included overleaf) provides an idea of the type of facilities which may be of regional or sub-regional importance.

Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG 13)

Policy EC10 Sport

This RPG supports the development of major new sporting facilities in East Manchester as part of Sport England's proposals for the English Institute of Sport network.

Development plans should support Sport Action Zones in the North West by encouraging the development of new sports facilities in the following broad locations:

- South Liverpool;
- East Manchester;
- West Cumbria; and
- As part of Regional Park resources (identified in Policy UR12).

Local authorities across the North West should undertake a definitive audit of sports facilities, underpinned by the Playing Pitch Strategy, to assess local requirements for a range of indoor, outdoor, organised and informal sport in order to maintain a quality environment supporting and encouraging a range of sport, recreation and leisure activities. Provision of facilities should be promoted in accordance with the Core Development Principles.

Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and the Humber (RPG 12)

Policy SOC4 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation

The contribution which sport and recreation makes to the health and well being of the community in the region should be reflected in development plans. Local planning authorities should:

- a) Carry out an audit of their local communities to establish the type and range of formal and informal recreational and sporting provision required in their area, in consultation, as necessary, with neighbouring authorities where recreational or sporting provision has wider significance and having regard to future trends including demographic changes and the needs of the operators/occupiers of future development.
- b) Identify areas of deficiency of sport and recreation provision.
- c) Identify sites to meet the identified need, where appropriate, and provide policies to ensure that proposals for new or extended recreational and sports facilities:
 - i) are located wherever possible within urban areas and in locations which are accessible by public transport and other non-car modes or, where these need to be located near to existing facilities which are not well related to public transport, seek measures to increase access to the site by sustainable transport modes and minimise the impact of traffic and car parking;
 - ii) make use of previously-developed land wherever possible;
 - iii) take account of the need for appropriate provision in rural communities;
 - iv) are of an appropriate scale to meet the particular need and avoid damaging environmental impacts;
 - v) are designed to take account of efficient energy use.
- d) Include policies which aim to safeguard and enhance existing sport and recreation facilities of national, regional, and sub-regional importance.

Criteria (d) refers to facilities of international, national, regional and sub-regional importance. There will be considerable overlap between these categories. They will include major stadia (e.g. Elland Road and Hillsborough football grounds; the Don Valley Stadium; and Headingley rugby league and cricket ground); indoor facilities (e.g. Ponds Forge international swimming pool and Sheffield Arena); major countryside recreation features (e.g. Pennine Way, Wolds Way, Dales Way and Trans-Pennine Trail and the environment through which they pass); racecourses (e.g. Doncaster and York); and other facilities such as specialist sports colleges. Local authorities should consider including all Significant Areas for Sport (SASPs) and the English Institute for Sport National Centres. The Regional Sports Board's Regional Statement for Sport will provide relevant information about facility provision and participation in sport and should assist local authorities in implementing this policy.

THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING AND SIMPLIFYING THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF PLANNING OBLIGATIONS.

PPG 17 notes (paragraph 33) that planning obligations can be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space or sports facilities. Although local authorities may be justified in seeking planning obligations in certain circumstances, the guidance notes that such obligations can only be justified where local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities and have set appropriate local standards.

The Government is committed to improving and simplifying the present system of planning obligations and consequently issued a consultation paper on the topic in November 2003. One aspect of the new system which seems likely to be implemented is a requirement for local planning authorities to publish their formulae for calculating the scale of certain predictable contributions, such as payments for open space provision. Some authorities do this already, many in the form of supplementary planning guidance which sets out, for example, required contributions for off-site open space provision for new residential developments.

The intention of the Government is to provide developers, local communities and local authorities themselves with greater certainty as to the scale of contributions, which will be sought, and to reduce the time taken to negotiate Section 106 agreements. The Planning Obligations Kitbag which Sport England is developing and which is examined below, will also assist in the process of simplifying the planning obligations process.

A National Strategic Vision

Sport England's national strategy is set out in "The Framework for Sport in England – Making England an Active and Successful Sporting Nation: A Vision for 2020". Published in early 2004, the strategy is based upon an extensive consultation exercise undertaken in 2003 and establishes a new vision for sport in England which is "To be the most active and the most successful sporting nation in the world".

Providing a framework for the next 16 years, the national strategy will be delivered through nine regional Plans for Sport and 20 Whole Sport Plans (see below for the 20 priority sports).



UK Wide Priority Sports

- ATHLETICS
- SWIMMING
- CYCLING
- ROWING
- SAILING
- CANOING
- TRIATHLON
- JUDO
- GYMNASTICS
- EQUESTRIAN

England Priority Sports

- FOOTBALL
- TENNIS
- CRICKET
- RUGBY UNION
- RUGBY LEAGUE
- GOLF
- HOCKEY
- BADMINTON
- SQUASH
- NETBALL

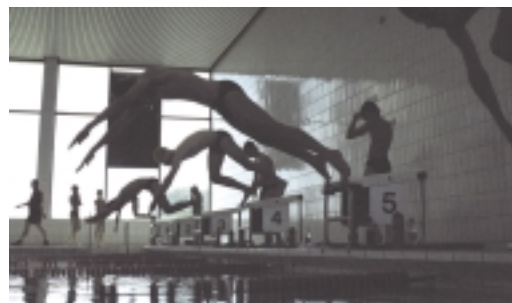


STRATEGIC PLANNING TOOLS

Within an all-embracing conceptual framework, the strategy identifies key drivers of change and priorities for action, one of which is strategic planning and evidence, which is itself broken down into the following six elements:

- **Integrated planning** - the whole sport plans must clearly connect with the nine regional plans for sport, which should be developed with reference to regional spatial and cultural strategies.
- **Data collection** - this should be standardised around a core set of outcome indicators.
- **Making the case** - building evidence showing the benefits of sport and physical activity to social cohesion, community safety and crime reduction, economic regeneration and environmental sustainability.
- **Economic modelling** - a shared and credible model for the economic benefits of sport and physical activity is to be developed.
- **Non-participant** - in-depth research is to take place to examine the motivations of those who are not currently participating.
- **Facilities database** - a new and comprehensive database of sports facilities is to be developed (see the Active Places project below).

The strategic planning tools which are referred to below will all contribute towards achieving the 2020 vision.



Active Places

The Government's Strategy for Sport "A Sporting Future for All" was published in April 2000 and identified a requirement "for a nationwide audit of sports facilities to determine where the need is greatest..."

In August 2001, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Tessa Jowell, announced a proposal for a Domesday Register of Sports Facilities with the following objectives:

- (i) to provide an audit of sports facilities;
- (ii) to allow for the subsequent use of the audit (supply) with demand information for facilities to undertake strategic and local assessments of need to identify gaps in provision and priorities for future investment;
- (iii) to provide information to the general public on where to play sport and get active.

Now called the Active Places, it is intended to provide an authoritative and accessible source of information, which will draw upon the existing numerous partial and specialised databases which are kept by various organisations.



The following core facility types will be covered:

- Sports Halls: 1 badminton court size and over
- Swimming Pools: over 100 m²
- Synthetic Turf Pitches: carpeted, over 75 x 45m
- Indoor Bowls: permanent
- Indoor Tennis: permanent and seasonal (airhalls)
- Athletics Tracks: 6 lane +, synthetic
- Playing Fields (including Natural Turf Pitches): sites not covered by the Register of English Football Facilities (REFF) e.g. rugby, cricket and Hockey
- Health and Fitness: minimum 20 stations or 100m²
- Golf Courses: Minimum of 9 holes, plus driving ranges with a minimum of 10 bays

The project will include sites in the public sector (e.g. local authority and education facilities), the voluntary sector (e.g. sports clubs) and the private/commercial sector (e.g. private health clubs).

Other facility types, such as outdoor tennis courts, bowling greens, squash courts, skateboard parks etc. may be included in a future phase of development.

'ACTIVE PLACES' IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE AN AUTHORITATIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

'ACTIVE PLACES' WILL ALLOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO 'BENCHMARK' THEIR PROVISION AGAINST OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE SAME ONS FAMILY CLUSTER.



RELATIVELY FEW LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE UNDERTAKEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENTS.

The development of the project will be divided into two distinctive user groups:

- Public users – who will be able to undertake simple queries to find local facilities
- Power users – who will be able to undertake more complex analysis of the data

The power user site will allow access for local authorities, Central Government departments etc., to carry out more detailed analysis. This will include allowing local authorities to 'benchmark' their provision against other local authorities within the same ONS family cluster, use thematic maps to examine provision against a wide variety of Census variables and carry out some simple supply and demand analysis e.g. populations within catchments.

The timetable for the project is as follows:

- July 2004 – launch of the public access interface for all pay and play facilities except playing fields
- October 2004 – launch of the Power User site, including additional facility types. Information will be rolled out on a regional basis, starting with London, and Yorkshire
- April 2005 – addition of playing fields data

The Playing Pitch Strategy

The original Playing Pitch Strategy was published in 1991 and its methodology was further clarified in 1994 in a Facilities Factfile. Despite the robustness of the methodology, relatively few local authorities have undertaken comprehensive playing pitch assessments, due to a perceived lack of resources and a relatively low priority being given to this type of strategic planning work.

With the publication of the revised PPG 17 in 2002, the need to produce robust assessments of the need for open space and sports facilities at a local level was made very clear. To assist local authorities and others in preparing playing pitch strategies, updated guidance, in the form of "Towards a Level Playing Field – Introducing a guide to the production of playing pitch strategies", was published in 2003. The revised methodology contains the following changes to the 1991 model:



- more holistic view of pitch provision as one element of open space;
- concept of 'team equivalents' and 'match equivalents', to reflect the requirements of small-sided games;
- refinement of team generation rates (TGR);
- revised definition of a pitch;
- refined quantitative audits of pitches by the use of multiplication factors for:
- availability/accessibility



- quality (to include importance of ancillary provision at pitch sites as well as pitches themselves)
- carrying capacity
- revision of the role of synthetic turf pitches and multi-use games areas;
- electronic calculators to help calculate TGR and apply the Playing Pitch Model.

The electronic calculator is referred to as the Playing Pitch Model (PPM) and is an Excel spreadsheet containing six tabulated sheets. Basic information is entered into the spreadsheet, from which team generation rates and number of teams (now and in the future) can be automatically provided. Guidance on how to use the calculator is provided on the Sport England website, as is the calculator itself.

Local authorities are urged to adopt the revised methodology, to enable cross-border comparisons to be undertaken, to assist with benchmarking (see below) and to provide an easily understood approach which can be adopted in the planning system. This last aspect can be particularly important when dealing with planning appeals involving the potential loss of playing pitches.

One recent example of a local authority which has effectively used the revised methodology to undertake a playing pitch assessment is Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. Using consultants PMP, the Council analysed playing pitch provision on a borough-wide, township and ward level. The work was set in the context of the Council's Cultural Strategy, Unitary Development Plan Review and the borough-wide sport and recreation strategy. At a wider level, the assessment took into account Manchester and Lancashire County Facilities Strategies for Football which were produced as part of the Register of English Football Facilities (REFF) Survey.



LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE URGED TO ADOPT THE REVISED METHODOLOGY TO ENABLE CROSS-BORDER COMPARISONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN.

The assessment culminated in a series of key issues, including the following:

- an apparent surplus of adult football pitches, which was significantly reduced when their quality and carrying capacity was taken into account;
- a shortfall of junior football, rugby league and rugby union pitches and cricket pitches;
- relatively high team generation rates, indicating a low latent or unmet demand.



The key issues led to a number of priorities for action and recommendations, including the need to protect all pitches from development, to secure the community use of pitches which were presently used on an ad hoc basis, improvement of the quality of pitches and support facilities and improvements to pitch management systems.

The final part of the report identified a local standard of provision for each of the townships in the Borough, plus a Borough-wide standard. It is interesting to note that the Borough-wide figure which emerged was 0.71 ha of playing pitches per 1000 population, just over half the long-standing NPFA standard of 1.21 ha per 1000 population.

PLAYING PITCHES ARE ONE ELEMENT OF THE OVERALL OPEN SPACE PROVISION.

As noted above, playing pitches are one element of the overall open space provision in an area. The Annex to PPG 17 adopts a slightly amended version of the open space typology recommended by the Urban Green Spaces Task Force report published in 2002. The PPG 17 typology below includes a range of open spaces that may be of public value. The Companion Guide to PPG 17 (Assessing Needs and Opportunities) provides further guidance on the typology.

- (i) parks and gardens – including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
- (ii) natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces – including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits);
- (iii) green corridors – including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way;



BEFORE ANY OPEN SPACE CAN BE BUILT ON, IT MUST BE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT IS SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS.

- (iv) outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned) – including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas;
- (v) amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens;
- (vi) provision for children and teenagers – including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. ‘hanging out’ areas, teenage shelters);
- (vii) allotments, community gardens and city (urban) farms;
- (viii) cemeteries and churchyards;
- (ix) accessible countryside in urban fringe areas; and
- (x) civic spaces, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians;

Paragraph 10 of PPG 17 requires that before any open space can be built on, it must be demonstrated that it is surplus to requirements, not only in terms of its existing use, but also in respect of any other functions of open space which it can perform.

Consequently, if an area of playing fields is conclusively demonstrated to be surplus to requirements, it is then necessary to show that the area is not needed to perform one of the other open space functions, as set out in the Annex.

For example, the land may be suitable to serve as a habitat for flora and fauna, or as a visual amenity. Clearly, not all sites are suitable to accommodate all functions of open space and a common sense approach should be followed.

Other national organisations have produced their own guidance targeted towards the provision of other forms of open space. For example, English Nature has published “Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities : A Practical Guide to Assessing the Resource and Implementing Local Standards for Provision” and Greater London Authority (2004) Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies (www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/planning.jsp). Therefore, an effective and robust open space assessment should recognise and seek to identify all types and functions of open space.



A COMMON SENSE APPROACH SHOULD BE FOLLOWED.

National Benchmarking Service

An essential part of the strategic planning process is the measurement of performance, in order to determine how well a strategy has achieved its intended goals. Such measurement can use qualitative tools, such as focus groups and customer panels and quantitative tools, such as Sport England's National Benchmarking Service for sports halls and pools.



The aim of the National Benchmarking Service is to provide local authorities with rigorous and robust information on the performance of their sports halls and swimming pools, compared with that of equivalent 'family' facilities in similar locations elsewhere in the country.

The service is normally for centres with one or both of the following:

- at least one sports hall of at least four badminton courts' size
- at least one swimming pool of at least 20m length

Clients to the service receive a performance report for each relevant facility, based upon specific information including user surveys, programming and financial returns. Advice on carrying out the necessary elements of the process is provided in the Sport England document "National Benchmarking Service for sports halls and swimming pools : Guidance and survey documentation".

Reports on each facility are provided by consultants at the University of Sheffield. These comprise:

- a contextual introduction
- the centre's scores for all the performance indicators compared with 25%, 50% and 75% benchmark scores for centres nationally. These benchmarks are selected to represent similar type and size of facility and a similar socio-economic profile of facility catchment area
- a 15 minute drive-time catchment area map for the centre
- frequency distributions for all the questions in the user survey



In addition to the basic benchmarking service, Sport England can also act as a point of liaison for a network arrangement, putting clients in touch with 'best performing' centres for selected performance indicators.

AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS IS THE MEASUREMENT OF PERFORMANCE.

'BETTER PLACES FOR SPORT' HAS BEEN PRODUCED TO HELP ORGANISATIONS PLANNING A SPORTS FACILITY TO DEVELOP A BETTER PROJECT.

Better Places for Sport

Individual buildings and sports facilities can also benefit from the strategic approach. The joint Sport England and CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) publication "Better Places for Sport" has been produced to help organisations planning a sports facility to develop a better project, combining high quality facilities with good buildings and landscape design and value for money.

The document identifies four stages which a project moves through:

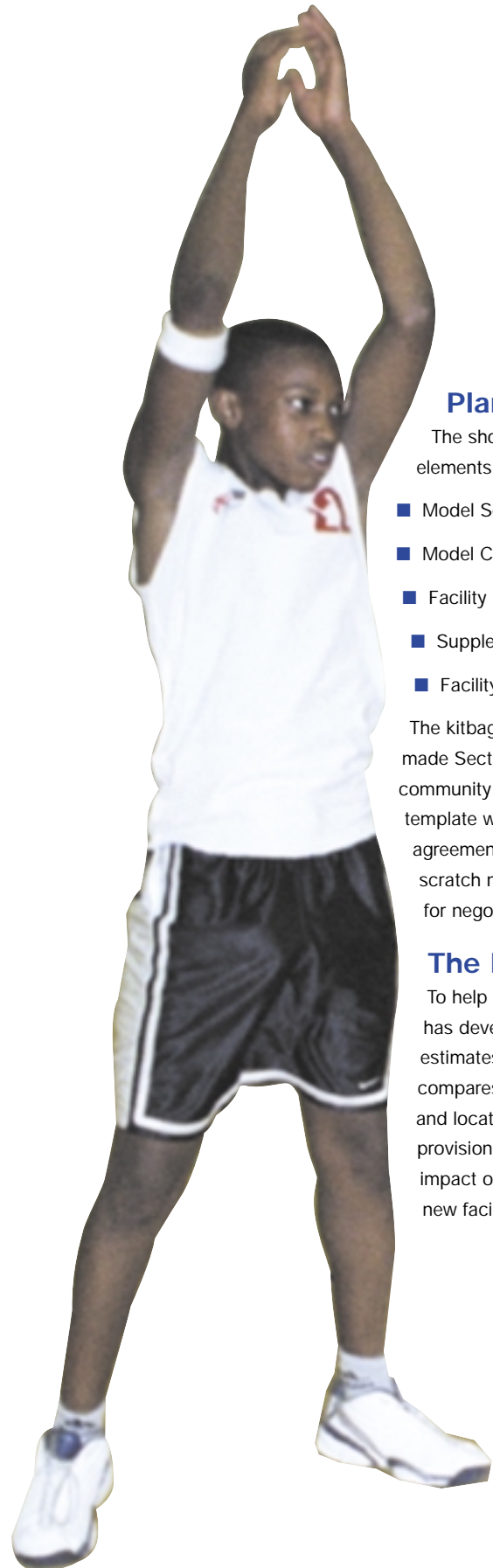
- Preparation - from first ideas through to a point where the project takes shape
- Design - initial concepts are tested against the client's aims and business case
- Construction - work on site
- Use - a process of keeping the facility fit for purpose commences

To conclude the document and to summarise the main points to consider in a successful project, a checklist is provided, under the following headings:

- Objections
- Use
 - Managing the project
 - Site and location
 - Design, appearance and image
 - Accommodation
 - Orientation
 - Security and personal safety
- Storage
- Maintenance and management
- Energy consumption



THE AVAILABILITY OF MODEL AGREEMENTS WILL HELP AVOID DELAYS IN THE PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS



Planning Obligations Kitbag

The shortly to be published, planning obligations kitbag will contain the following elements:

- Model Section 106 Agreements
- Model Community Use Agreements
- Facility Cost List
- Supplementary Planning Guidance Template – based upon South Hams DC pilot
- Facility Demand Estimator (see below)

The kitbag will allow local authorities, developers and other stakeholders to use ready-made Section 106 agreements and community use agreements to facilitate the provision of community sports facilities associated with new residential developments. Although each template will have to be adapted to reflect local circumstances, the availability of model agreements will help to avoid the delays which the preparation of these documents from scratch normally entails. They will also help to provide a level playing field (in all senses) for negotiations between local authorities and developers.

The Facilities Planning Model

To help assess the level of community sports facility provision in an area, Sport England has developed a strategic modelling tool - the facilities planning model. This technique estimates the level of demand for sports facilities within the local population, and compares this with the supply of facilities within that local area. Taking account of the size and location of the facilities, the technique highlights any inadequacies in facility provision. The technique can also be used to model 'what if' scenarios, for instance, the impact of increases in population, the closure of individual facilities and the opening of new facilities.

THE 'FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL' ESTIMATES THE LEVEL OF DEMAND FOR SPORTS FACILITIES WITHIN THE LOCAL POPULATION.

The database used includes details on over 26,000 facilities across England including local authority, school, club and voluntary facilities. The level of demand for use of facilities has been estimated through user surveys carried out at a number of sites across the country.

Whilst any modelling technique cannot provide a definitive answer, this technique is invaluable in building up a picture of the facility provision and providing evidence on which policies can be based. This modelling technique can be currently used to look at swimming pools, sports halls, synthetic pitches, indoor bowls centre and will be developed for indoor tennis centres.

Sports Facilities Demand Estimator

This will provide a relatively quick and simple way of showing how many community sports facilities are demanded by a chosen population. The population profile can be chosen from an existing local authority population or built from scratch to allow the impact of major new residential developments to be assessed. The demand for each facility type is expressed in facility units, such as pools in m2, halls in badminton courts.

The estimator uses the demand parameters established through the Facilities Planning Model. These assumptions on community participation of sports facilities are derived from data from the Benchmarking service, the National Halls and Pools Survey and General Household Survey.



THE DEMAND FOR EACH FACILITY TYPE IS EXPRESSED IN FACILITY UNITS, SUCH AS POOLS IN SQUARE METRES, HALLS IN BADMINTON COURTS.

PLANNING APPEALS DATABASE PERSPECTIVE

Population profiles for each local authority are taken from the 2001 Census data. In addition, the users can create their own population profile and this could help to test scenarios where a younger or older population profile may be created, which differs from the existing one.

The current facilities which are covered are listed below. The estimator only looks at demand for community sports facilities. This list of facilities should not be seen as exhaustive as there will be other facilities which are demanded by the community, such as playing fields, MUGA's, outdoor tennis courts, etc, which may be added at a later date.

The Facilities Demand Estimator currently covers:

- Swimming Pools
- Sports Halls
- Synthetic Turf Pitches
- Indoor Bowls Centres
- (Indoor Tennis Centres – to be added)

The demand estimator can also put a cost to this demand. These costs are for "normal" community sports facilities that are endorsed by Sport England and exclude the following:

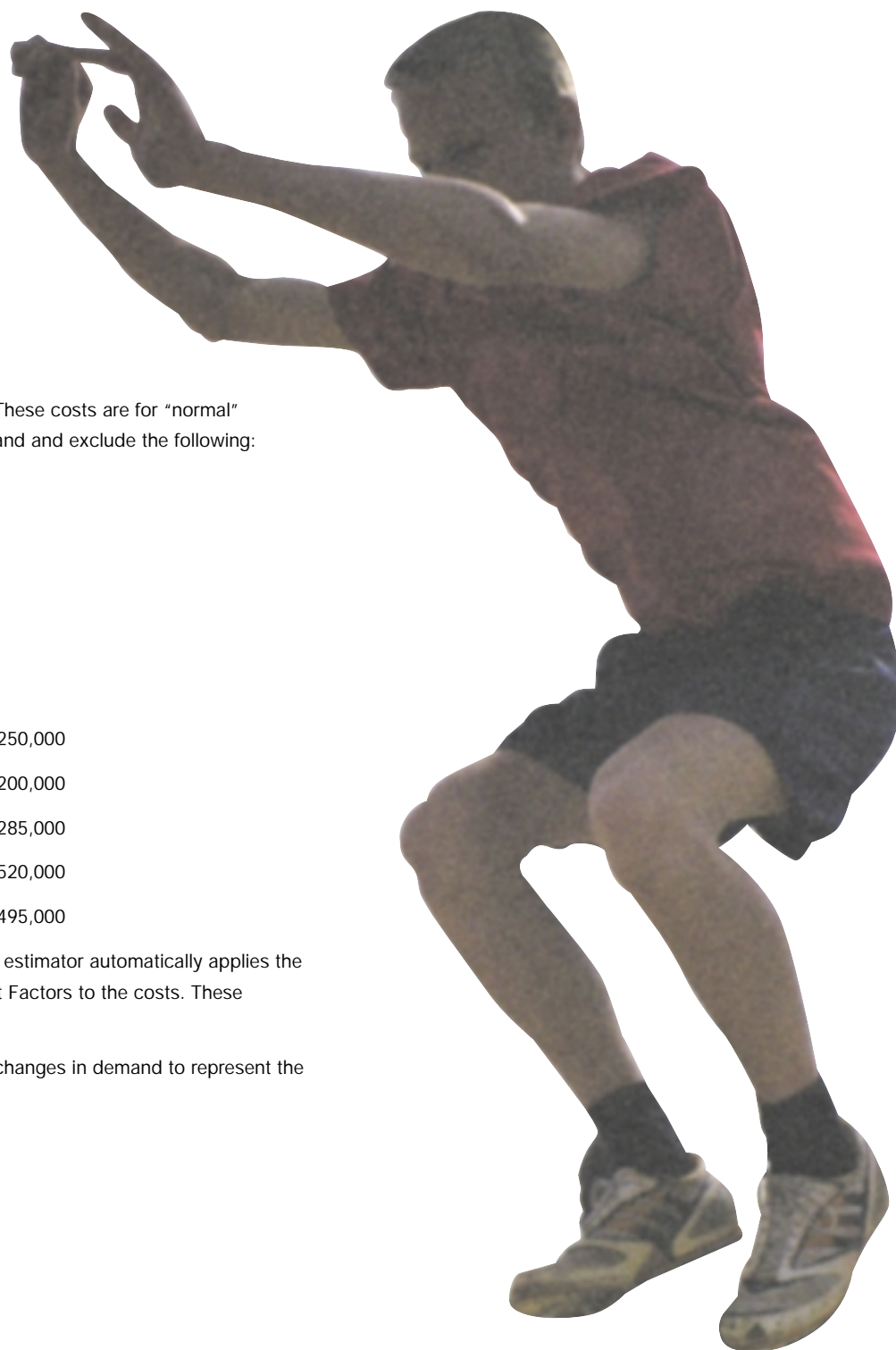
- Site abnormalities such as ground conditions, difficult access, long service connections
- VAT
- Land costs
- Regional variations

These costs are currently:

4 court sports hall	£2,250,000
25m pool (5 lane)	£2,200,000
6 lane indoor bowls	£1,285,000
3 court indoor tennis	£1,520,000
Synthetic Turf Pitch – sand based 100 x 64m	£495,000

These figures will be kept up to date on a regular basis. The estimator automatically applies the RICS Building Cost Information Service's Pricing Adjustment Factors to the costs. These variations are on a County and London Borough basis.

The estimator also allows the user to introduce percentage changes in demand to represent the effects of sports development initiatives.



The planning appeals database now contains some 3,150 appeal or call-in decisions, from January 1990 to the present day. Very few of these decisions have included the consideration of strategic sports planning issues, perhaps because such issues may be resolved before proposals reach the planning application/appeal stage. Alternatively, such proposals may meet with fewer planning policy or other objections and thus generally receive planning permission at the local level, rather than at appeal.

Although there are no recent planning appeal decisions to show the use of strategic sports planning tools, the following two cases show differing interpretations of paragraph 10 in PPG 17 and are worthy of mention.

Residential Development and Alteration of Existing Sports Ground at BAC/EE (Preston) Sports and Social Club, Preston – March 2003

Preston City Council

Reference: APP/N2345/A/02/1097166

Decision: Appeal Allowed and Planning Permission Granted

35 apartments were proposed on the site of a disused bowling green, car parking and dilapidated timber buildings. The appeal site made up around 11% of the total sports ground site and was located in a corner of the site.

The improvements to the existing sports ground consisted of a new 4 team changing room block, a 40m x 18m floodlit multi-use games area (MUGA), the re-siting of a bowls pavilion and cricket score box and the extension of an existing car park. Both parties took the view that the proposal did not conflict with paragraph 15 of PPG 17, which sets out criteria against which development on playing fields should be judged. No assessment of recreational provision, required by paragraph 10 of PPG 17, had been carried out.

The appellants sought permission for the proposals to secure a long term (35 year) lease on the premises and to finance the proposed improvements to the facilities. The club had been experiencing difficulties in changing from a traditional 'works' sports club, to a community facility and the quality of facilities then on offer was very poor.

The Inspector considered that the proposed MUGA was of considerably greater community benefit than the disused bowling green and would encourage new members. The improved security of tenure would also allow the club to secure loans to further improve their facilities. No other means of achieving the security of tenure or the finance for the new facilities was available.

A unilateral undertaking would secure the long term lease for the site and was regarded as the only way in which the future of the club could be ensured.

THE CLUB HAD BEEN EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN CHANGING FROM A TRADITIONAL 'WORKS' SPORTS CLUB TO A COMMUNITY FACILITY AND THE QUALITY OF FACILITIES THEN ON OFFER WAS VERY POOR.



Two matters are of particular interest in this case. Firstly, the Inspector's view that a "paragraph 10 assessment" was not needed, as the criteria in paragraph 15 were met and secondly, the fact that the proposed new sports facilities were not like for like replacements of the facilities to be lost. In terms of the first issue, it will be seen that the Secretary of State took a different view in dismissing the Morpeth case (see below). It is not surprising that the Inspector was satisfied with the proposed replacement facilities, as they were quantitatively and qualitatively superior to those to be lost and more in keeping with modern day requirements.

Residential Development, Open Space and Associated Infrastructure of Land South of County Hall, Southgate Wood, Morpeth, Northumberland – March 2004

Castle Morpeth Borough Council

Reference: APP/T2920/A/03/1113900

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

This was an appeal against non-determination of a planning application for 187 dwellings, open space and associated infrastructure on a site on the southern edge of Morpeth. The site is immediately to the south of the County Council's offices (County Hall) and part of the site had formerly been used as a football pitch, although more than five years previously.

The main issues which were identified by the Inspector and the Secretary of State in determining the appeal were whether the site was required to meet the Borough's need for new housing, whether or not the site as a whole consisted of previously-developed land and the value of the site as open space. In fact, the Secretary of State disagreed with his Inspector on each of these three issues.

In terms of housing need, the Secretary of State took the view that, as the site was not allocated for housing in the Local Plan, allowing 187 dwellings on it would hinder the planning authority's ability to monitor and manage, as required by PPG 3.

Turning to whether the whole of the site could be defined as previously developed land, the Secretary of State came to a different conclusion to the Inspector, who felt that the whole of the site could, indeed, be so defined. The Secretary of State's view was that, apart from a small part of the site which was a disused business centre, the appeal site did not form part of the curtilage of County Hall, as they were open areas which had not been developed and had no functional, physical or other connection to any buildings.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE CAME TO A DIFFERENT CONCLUSION TO THE INSPECTOR...

On the issue of open space and its value to the local community, the Secretary of State considered that the advice in paragraph 10 of PPG 17 that open space should not be developed unless it had been demonstrated to be surplus to requirements was applicable. He noted that no such assessment had been carried out and attached "considerable weight" to the fact that the proposal would mean the loss of an area of open space that was used by the local community for recreational purposes. The Inspector had felt that the loss of the community's informal access to the site would be compensated by the provision of formal areas of open space with guaranteed public access within the housing site.

The Inspector gave limited weight to a planning obligation, entered into by the appellants and the Council, which would have provided new football pitches and changing accommodation on a nearby (20 minute walking time) Council playing field site. Sport England had supported the proposed replacement facilities.

This case is particularly interesting as it confirms the Secretary of State's view that, even when compensatory open space facilities are being provided to replace those lost on an existing site, a paragraph 10 assessment is still required.



APPENDICES

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FURTHER READING

- HMSO
Assessing Needs and Opportunities : A Companion Guide to PPG 17
London : ODPM; 2002
- HMSO
Contributing to Sustainable Communities : A New Approach to Planning Obligations (Consultation Document)
London : ODPM; 2003
- SPORT ENGLAND
Towards a Level Playing Field : Introducing a Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies
London : Sport England; 2003
- ENGLISH NATURE
Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities : A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation (English Nature Report 526)
Peterborough : English Nature; 2003

WEBSITES

- Sport England
www.sportengland.org
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
www.odpm.gov.uk
- English Nature
www.english-nature.org.uk

COMPANION TITLES IN THE PLANNING BULLETIN SERIES

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