



### Summary

#### What is Sport England seeking to achieve through guidance and advice?

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 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; to **PROVIDE** new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet demands for participation now and in the future. We work with the planning system to achieve these aims and objectives, seeking to ensure that they are reflected in local plan policies, and applied in development management.

### Supporting Advice

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of evidence to underpin policy and its application. Sport England has extensive experience in providing advice and guidance to assist with the understanding of peoples' needs and demands for sport and recreation facilities, and the practicalities of delivery. Drawing on these resources will assist the efficient and effective delivery of soundly based plans, policies and proposals, as well as informing how to ensure that the interests of sport are best represented in development. This guidance note summarises material available on Sport England's website relating to:

- Understanding how people participate in sport.
- Developing and implementing robust and up-to-date needs assessments and strategies for sporting provision.
- Dealing with planning applications and securing the best interests of sport through planning contributions.
- Design and cost advice for new facilities.



### 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
- Development Management





## Planning for Sport: Key Guidance and Sources of Evidence

The need for sufficient and robust evidence to justify policy and its application means that it is important to clearly establish what is being planned for and why. For sport and recreation this means demonstrating, through a needs and opportunities assessment, the adequacy of current provision to meet current and future demands, in turn linked to the preparation of a strategy for sport (or equivalent, such as a leisure strategy) and deliverable actions in place to improve provision.

### NPPF para 73.

*“Planning Policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.”*

### NPPF para 158.

*“Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area.”*

Sport England has developed a comprehensive suite of supporting advice, guidance and tools to assist with the preparation of needs assessments, complementary strategies and a better understanding of community sport.

Use of these tested resources will assist the delivery of robust policies and development proposals, ensuring the best outcome for sport and the wider benefits that well-planned and developed facilities bring to communities.

### Planning Practice Guidance

In relation to the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph 73, the Government points readers of their [Planning Practice Guidance](#) to Sport England’s guidance on assessing the need for sports and recreation facilities.

### Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide

Fundamental to understanding the place and potential of sport in sustainable communities is an up-to-date assessment of needs and understanding of participation. This could be adapted from past work (typically a ‘PPG17 Assessment’),

but will need to be re-visited where information is dated, and should include an audit of facilities (both quantity and quality of provision), data on usage, capacity and projections of fitness for purpose for future needs. Guidance on developing a robust needs and opportunities assessment is available at:

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

### Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

Sport England believes that to ensure there is a good supply of high quality playing pitches and playing fields to meet the sporting needs of local communities all local authorities should have an up to date playing pitch strategy. The development and implementation of an up to date and robust playing pitch strategy will help to ensure that informed planning, investment, management and sports development decisions are made.

A strategy will also provide valuable evidence to help guide the development and implementation of relevant policies, programmes and actions. A playing pitch strategy can take the form of a stand-alone document or be part of a wider sports facility strategy.

Sport England’s latest guidance on developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy is available at:

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

### Sources of Evidence

#### The Active People Survey

The Active People Survey is an annual survey of sport and active recreation and provides by far the largest sample size ever established for a sport and recreation survey, allowing levels of detailed analysis previously unavailable. It identifies how participation varies from place to place and between different groups in the population. The survey also measures the proportion of the adult population that volunteer in sport on a weekly basis, club membership, involvement in organised sport/ competition, receipt of tuition or coaching, and overall satisfaction with levels of sporting provision in the local community. A diagnostic tool is available to help analyse the results.

[www.sportengland.org/research/who-plays-sport](http://www.sportengland.org/research/who-plays-sport)



## Market Segmentation

Sport England has developed nineteen 'sporting segments' to help understand the Nation's attitudes to sport and motivations for participation (or not). The market segmentation data builds on the results of Sport England's Active People Survey, the Dept of Culture, Media and Sports' Taking Part survey and the mosaic tool from Experian. The segmentation data can be explored through an interactive web tool, pen portraits and index tables. The information can be used to help answer a number of questions including:

- What are peoples' sporting habits in a particular geographical area?
- What is the dominant segment in an area?
- Which segments live within the catchment of a sports centre or proposed new site for a sports facility?
- Where are people located who would like to play more of a particular sport?

[www.sportengland.org/research/encouraging-take-up/participant-profiles](http://www.sportengland.org/research/encouraging-take-up/participant-profiles)

## Facilities Planning Model

The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) is a strategic modelling tool used to help estimate the level of provision of key community sports facilities, such as sports halls, swimming pools, artificial grass pitches and indoor bowling rinks. It does this by estimating the demand for these sports facilities within the local population and comparing this with the supply of facilities within a given local area. Taking account of the size and location of the facilities the model 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. This is a chargeable service, available to local authorities and can be arranged through Sport England offices.

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

## Sports Facility Calculator

The Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) is a planning tool which helps to estimate the amount of demand for key community sports facilities that is created by a given population. The SFC covers Swimming Pools, Sports Halls, Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) and Indoor Bowls Centres. The SFC has been created by Sport England to help local planning authorities quantify how much additional demand for the key community sports facilities is generated by populations of new growth, development and regeneration areas. The SFC helps with quantifying the demand side of the facility provision equation. It helps to answer questions such as, "How much additional demand for swimming will the population of a new development area generate, and what would the facility cost be to meet this new demand at today's values?" It is designed to be used to estimate the facility needs of discrete populations of, for example, a new housing development.

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/sports-facility-calculator](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/sports-facility-calculator)

## Active Places Power

Active Places Power is a website to help those involved in providing sport provision with a series of tools to guide investment decisions and develop sport provision strategies. Primarily for Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies of sport it can help to build an evidence base when identifying and planning where to target interventions for facilities, clubs or other activities.

The website is underpinned by a single database that holds information on sports facilities and clubs (pilot data) throughout England. The tools within the website have a range of capabilities from quick searches and simple reports to a series of push-button analytical tools that aim to make complex modelling techniques as user friendly and intuitive as possible. Each tool is supported with a guide and outputs can be downloaded for use in reports or local systems for further analysis. Registration is required to access Active Places Power.

[www.activeplacespower.com](http://www.activeplacespower.com)







## Planning Applications

To support the preparation of planning applications for new and/or enhanced provision of sports facilities, consideration should be given to:

- Sport England's planning objectives and the National Planning Policy Framework (see companion guides: Aims and Objectives, Forward Planning and Development Management).
- A robust and up-to-date needs assessment and strategy for the local area (e.g. Playing Pitch and/or Sports Facility Strategy or wider open space strategy).
- Plans and strategies from the relevant sports National Governing Bodies.
- Information available from Sport England's planning tools and guidance (e.g. Active Places Power).
- Active Design Guidance which provides an innovative set of design guidelines to promote opportunities for sport and physical activity in the design and layout of development.
- Sport England's design, cost and procurement guidance to ensure the new or enhanced provision is fit for purpose.

Alongside its planning objectives and policy statement on Playing Field Land, Sport England provides a range of other useful information, guidance and tools which can assist with the preparation and determination of planning applications. These include advice on the community use of educational provision, the application of valid planning conditions, the Sports Appeal Database and the Making a Planning Application Guide.

### Sports Appeal Database

Planning Appeals provide a valuable insight into: the application of policy, the impacts of development on sensitive and designated areas; and trends in development activity. The Sports Appeals Database contains decisions relating to appeals and called-in planning applications from 1990 until present (some 3,500 cases). The database is searchable by key words, providing a flexible and powerful resource with which to pinpoint specific issues, cases or emerging trends. The Database is available at:

[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)

### Community use of Educational Provision

Many educational sites, including schools of all kinds, academies and sports colleges, have very good sports facilities which are often underused out of normal school hours. Sport England provides advice on the best possible and simplest approach to opening up school facilities, as well as aiming to help head teachers, business managers and potential school partners understand and secure the benefits of community use.

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools)

Sport England has developed a template for a Community Use Agreements which provides a clear basis for drawing up agreements for individual schools, colleges and academies.

[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)

### Application of Valid 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 sets of model conditions to assist with determining planning applications affecting existing and proposed new and enhanced sporting provision. These 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

The model conditions are available on Sport England's 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)



## Making a Planning Application Guide

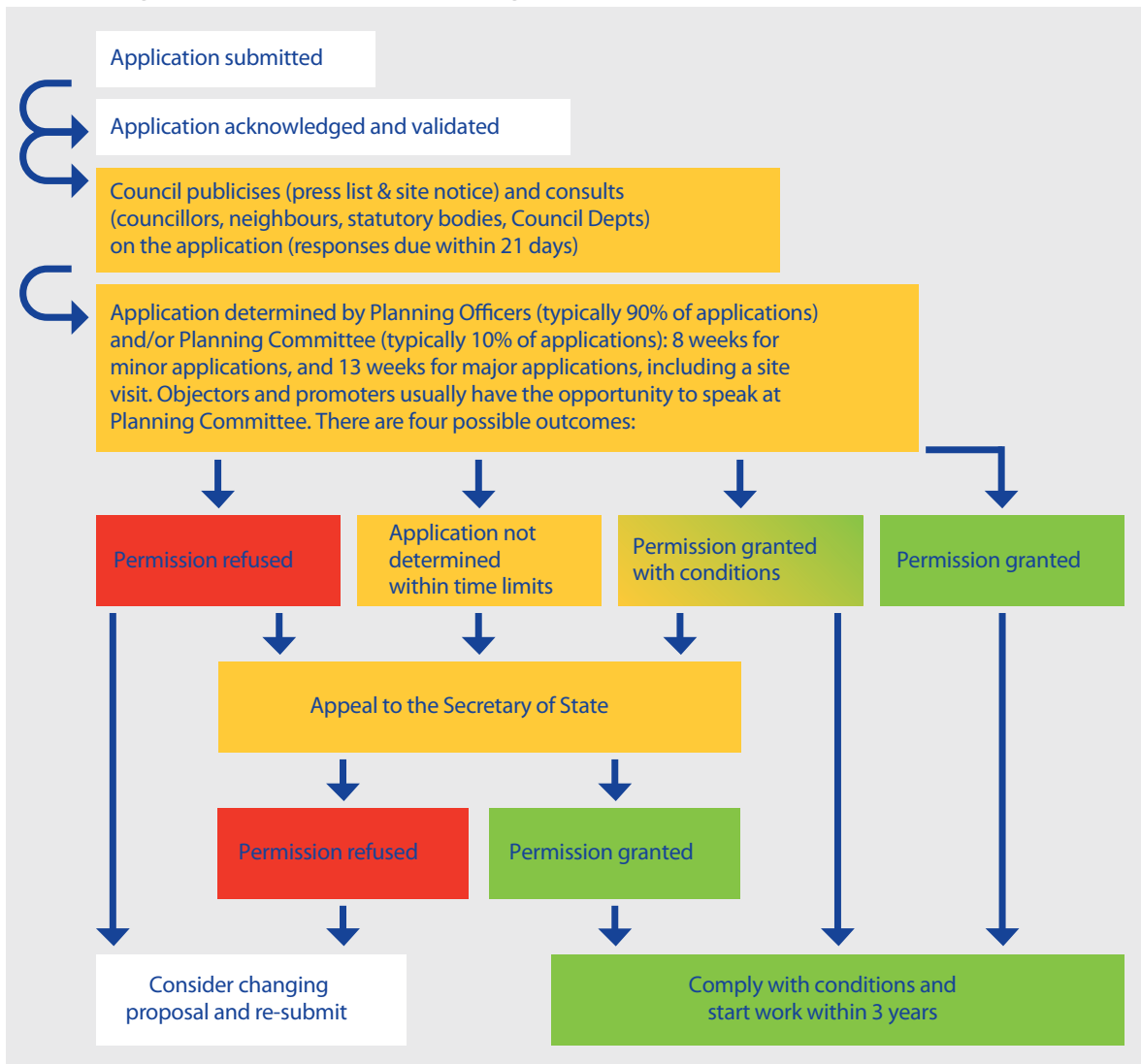
This document provides a step-by-step guide to help sports clubs apply and obtain planning permission for new sports facilities. The guide aims to help sports clubs better understand the planning application process, from the early consideration of options through to implementing the planning permission. The guide is practical in character, summarising what can appear from the outside to be a complex process, such as the stages from submission of the application with possible outcomes at determination stage.

Additional guidance and tools to assist applicants in preparing planning applications for new or enhanced sporting provision are:

- Selecting the right artificial surface
- Sustainable community sports hubs toolkit

[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)

### The Planning Application and Decision Making Process





## Good Design

Securing good design in sport and recreation facilities is seen by Sport England as fundamental to the provision of quality facilities which are fit for purpose. This is also a significant theme of the NPPF (section 7) which says that:

*“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”*

Sport England has developed detailed guidance on how activity can be designed into new development through masterplanning and individual building design, and has an extensive technical library relating to the design of specific facilities.

## Active Design

Active Design is a criteria-based guide to promoting sport and activity through three key Active Design principles of:

- improving accessibility (provision of easy, safe and convenient access to a choice of opportunities for participation);
- enhancing amenity (promoting environmental quality in the design and layout of new sports and recreational facilities); and
- increasing awareness (highlighting the prominence and legibility of sports and recreation facilities and opportunities).

The principles are applied through three masterplanning categories:

1. **Activity Destinations** – these are those places where people spend most of their time and which are essential to meeting people’s day to day needs. They include schools, workplaces, shops, homes and community facilities and, importantly, the linkages between them.
2. **Informal Activity and Recreation** – this includes sport and physical activity provision that might be used more spontaneously such as children’s play areas, multi-use games areas and skate parks.
3. **Formal Sports and Leisure Activities** – these are those facilities where sport or physical activity will be the deliberate and primary purpose of the visit. This includes swimming pools, fitness clubs, formal pitches and Sports Halls and athletics tracks, along with provision for water sports.

[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)







## Design and Cost Guidance Notes

The Design and Cost Guidance Notes provide best practice design, cost and procurement advice and requirements for a wide range of sports, facility types and sports facility topics. The guidance is intended to promote sports facilities that are designed, constructed and managed to an appropriate standard and will be accessible to everyone. The Guides include design guidance, audit/check lists, case studies, cost guidance and downloadable CAD drawings.

The guides currently cover:

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

The Sport England Design and Cost Guidance Notes are intended to:

- Provide an understanding of sports facility design concepts;
- Give an appreciation of the key technical issues and other critical factors that need to be considered when developing solutions for projects for example in Developing the Right Sports Hall;
- 'Signpost' people to NGB sport specific guidance and emphasise the importance of meeting these standards;
- Give an understanding on the technical vocabulary used by experts;
- Advise people of other relevant guidance, advice, risk and regulations;
- Provide guidance on the expertise that is required to deliver different types of sports facility projects;
- Provide advice on the appropriate level of specification to achieve a value for money and a financially sustainable solution;
- Provide advice on making planning applications;
- Provide advice on specific sports facility topics such as the new Affordable Community Swimming Pools concept.

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance)





## Complementary Guidance

This guidance on Sport England's Supporting Advice in Planning for Sport is complemented by guidance on Aims & Objectives, Forward Planning and Development Management.

### 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.

### Development Management

Sport England, a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing field land, works with local authorities, developers, National Governing Bodies, sports partnerships and sports clubs to help ensure that the interests of sport are properly and fairly recognised in the development management process. This guidance note summarises how Sport England and other parties can seek to achieve this in relation to particular types of development and through the different stages of development management (pre-application, submission, determination and implementation).

## 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:**  
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