

CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH REGARD TO DEVELOPMENT THAT AFFECTS PLAYING FIELDS

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this advisory note is to provide you with some early advice on how best to engage Sport England's planning advisory service to your benefit. Consultation with Sport England at an early stage in the project planning process ensures that sport and active recreation is included in any development scheme. Without early consultation, unnecessary delays may arise when the application is submitted for consideration. Contact details are set out at the end of this advice note.

1.2 Since August 1996 Sport England has been a 'statutory consultee' on planning applications affecting playing fields (by virtue of Statutory Instrument No. 1817 of 1996). This means that Sport England must be consulted by the local planning authority (LPA) when a relevant planning application is received, and any objections we raise as a statutory consultee are given significant weight in the decision making process. Failure to consult Sport England before determining a planning application may lead to a challenge through Judicial Review that could result in the quashing of the planning permission.

1.3 Where there is a Sport England objection to a planning application on land owned by a local authority or used by an educational institution, and the Local Authority are minded to grant permission, the 1998 Playing Fields Direction requires local planning authorities to notify the Government Office to enable the Secretary of State to determine whether the application should be called in for decision.

1.4 Sport England would also like to be consulted on a range of sporting proposals other than those affecting existing playing fields. Annex B of DoE Circular 9/95, General Development Order Consolidation, as amended in 1995, advises local planning authorities to consult Sport England on a range of proposals which would lead to either the creation of, or loss of, major sports facilities. The views of Sport England should be sought on applications for significant new housing (300+ dwellings) proposals which create sport and recreation demands, and for minerals proposals where sport and recreation may be an after-use.

2. Information Required By Sport England

2.1 There are a number of pieces of information, which Sport England will need in order to be able to respond to consultations on individual planning applications. The following 'checklist' provides a clear idea of the information required – the absence of such information may lead to Sport England having to object to the planning application until this information is received.

2.2 For all applications, the following information is required:

- Covering letter from Local Authority indicating timescales and contact case officer details (telephone number & e-mail address), an accurate description of

the proposed development and site location address including ordnance survey grid reference of the site and postcode.

- Copy of application form, stating size of site, ownership details and the existing use of site.
- Location plan, preferably on an OS base at a minimum scale of 1:2500, with proposed site clearly identified in red and other land within the applicant's ownership edged in blue.
- Copy of any relevant correspondence, supporting statement or submission, including when last used, used by whom, in addition to what formal sports provision is being proposed (if any), including replacement facilities.
- Copies of site plans at a legible scale, external and internal details of any sporting/recreational facilities (sports halls, changing facilities, court markings etc) and elevational drawings.

2.3 For applications specifically involving playing fields the following information is required in addition to that required in the above paragraph:

- The size of the existing playing field and how much of the playing field is affected by the proposal (in ha or m²).
- Existing site plan, clearly showing the layout of the winter and summer pitches including safety margins at a minimum 1:1000 scale.
- Proposed site plan, showing how any proposed new buildings and other works are likely to impact on the existing pitch layout. Any realignment of pitches should also be shown.
- Any information of alternative sport and recreational provision.

3. Consultation Periods

3.1 Consultation periods vary depending on the LPA involved. It would be beneficial to Sport England if we are given a minimum of 21 days to respond and that documentation is posted first class on the date of the covering letter. This will enable Sport England to provide a more detailed and complete response rather than submitting an objection letter on the basis of insufficient information.

4. Monitoring The Outcome

4.1 Sport England is required to monitor its involvement on planning applications and report decisions involving playing fields directly to Government. We would ask local planning authorities to advise us on planning decisions; usually a copy of the decision notice, free of charge, will suffice.

5. Who To Contact At Sport England

5.1 Sport England can provide early planning advice and guidance in relation to the development of sports projects. Should you wish to discuss any of the above issues relating to a specific project, please contact you relevant Sport England regional office: