



Creating sporting opportunities in every community

Policy and Strategy Team
 Selby District Council
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Dear Sir/Madam

Selby Sites and Policies Local Plan

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above document.

Unfortunately, Sport England was unable to save a copy of the completed PDF response form, so we had no way of saving the PDF form so that it could be attached to an email. We have therefore sent this letter containing our comments.

General Comments:

Sport England has an established role within the planning system which includes providing advice and guidance on all relevant areas of national, regional and local policy as well as supporting local authorities in developing the evidence base for sport.

Sport England's role is focused exclusively on sport, although it is recognised that sport can, and does, play an important part in achieving wider social, community and economic benefits (most notably in the context of health). Sport England recognises the vital role that the planning system can play in assisting with the delivery of our strategy. In addition, the development of sport within a local area can provide sufficient benefits to assist local authorities with the implementation of Local Development Frameworks (LDF). In this, well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to deliver broader Government objectives.

Question 59 Evidence Base:

The NPPF explains that Local Planning Authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area, including strategic policies to deliver (inter alia) the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities.

Paragraph 171 falls within the section of the NPPF that sets out advice on the evidence base that Plans need, and deals with Health and Well-Being. It advises;

"Local planning authorities should work with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population (such as for sports, recreation, and

places of worship), including expected future changes and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being."

This advice is amplified in the section of the NPPF that deals with promoting healthy communities. Paragraph 73 states;

"Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. 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."

The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required."

In light of the above, it is Sport England's policy to challenge the soundness of Local Plan and Local Development Framework documents which are not justified by;

- an up to date playing pitch strategy (carried out in accordance with a methodology approved by Sport England)
- an up to date built sports facilities strategy (carried out in accordance with a methodology approved by Sport England).

For a playing pitch strategy to be considered "up to date", it should have been undertaken within the last three years. For a built facilities strategy to be considered "up to date" it should have been carried out within the last five years.

Sport England has guidance on the production of Playing Pitch Strategies and other indoor and outdoor sport facilities studies and they can be viewed on this links:
<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>
<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-guidance/>

As the evidence base to inform the policies in relation to sport has not been completed, Sport England objects to the progression of the Local Plan on the basis that it does not have an appropriate evidence base for sport, and must therefore be considered unsound. We would therefore encourage the authority to complete the evidence base.

Question 30

Paragraph 73 of the NPPF states:



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"Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. 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."

Sound policy can only be developed in the context of objectively assessed needs, in turn used to inform the development of a strategy for sport and recreation. Policies which protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities should reflect this work, and be the basis for consistent application through development management.

Sport England is not prescriptive on the precise form and wording of policies, but advises that a stronger plan will result from attention to taking a clearly justified and positive approach to planning for sport. In this way, planning authorities will be able to demonstrate that their plan has been positively prepared (based on objectively assessed needs), is consistent with national policy (reflecting the NPPF), is justified (having considered alternatives) and effective (being deliverable).

Paragraph 74 of the NPPF offers clear advice on how sport facilities should be considered in the planning system. It states:

"74. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including

playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing field land. The requirement to consult Sport England covers all playing field land regardless of ownership and all playing pitches regardless of their surface (i.e. natural and artificial grass pitches). We assess planning consultations against the five exceptions in our Playing Fields Policy. These exceptions are:

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

- E2 The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.
- E3 The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing area of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facilities on the site.
- E4 The playing field or playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development.
- E5 The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.'

Sport England exceptions above, reflect paragraph 74 of the NPPF. Sport England suggests that any planning policy is consistent with the NPPF and our playing fields policy exceptions. Where a robust evidence base shows that a site is genuinely surplus to sporting requirements, then it can be redeveloped. However, without such an assessment, there is no way of demonstrating that a site is surplus. This reiterates the need for the Local Authority to undertake an up to date evidence base.

It should also be noted that Paragraph 74 of the NPPF makes reference to sport buildings and land – therefore this covers facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts etc. as well as grass playing field. Local Plan policies should be very clear that they also include sport buildings and other outdoor sport facilities as well as playing fields.

Every year hundreds, if not thousands, of sports events take place that rely upon the natural environment. Many are the transient, peripatetic sporting events that the organising club sets up, the competition takes place, and afterwards any equipment (e.g. signage, fences, ropes, show jumps) are dismantled and the land reverts to its original use. These events can include equestrian activities, motorsport, cycling, running, canoeing and climbing events.

What all these sporting activities tend to have in common is a control point (often the start and finish) where participants will assemble and register for the event, prior to it starting. Because of the transient nature of these type of events, they tend to operate outside the planning system and rely on permitted development rights because:



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- Events are mostly low-key and non-profit generating. The peripatetic nature of these sport events results in them using a number of different sites during the year.
- There are often no alternative sites with planning permission available at an economic price.
- The short-term simplicity of using Permitted Development rights suits the organisers, many of whom are volunteers.
- Landowners of these sites show reluctance to become involved in the formal process of seeking planning permission, leading to the loss of sites even where there is reasonable prospect of planning consent being granted.

Occasionally some events do require planning permission and this tends to be where permitted development rights do not apply, or that the events have taken place more than 14 or 28 days per year and therefore exceed their permitted development rights.

Local Plan documents generally lack positive policies for formally dealing with such sporting events - because the use is temporary, the forward-looking planning processes is essentially incapable of recognising, acknowledging and safeguarding that temporary use as a valuable recreation asset.

Policies should therefore be positively worded to protect and encourage peripatetic sporting events as well as permanent sport facilities.

We trust you will take the above comment into account in the next stages of preparation of the plan. If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on the details below.

Yours sincerely,

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