

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: Warrington Submission Local Plan Consultation
Date: 17 June 2019 18:34:43
Attachments: [image003.jpg](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL - CONSULTATION ON SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN 2017 - 2037

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above Local Plan. Sport England is the Government agency responsible for delivering the Government's sporting objectives. Maximising the investment into sport and recreation through the land use planning system is one of our priorities. You will also be aware that Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields. 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.

Sport England is not a direct provider of sporting infrastructure, more an enabler through grant funding and advice, generally as a major partner with other agencies, community sports clubs and local authorities. For further advice see our current strategy on our [website](#).

The new Sport England Strategy 'Towards An Active Nation' (2016-21) identifies key changes in the delivery of the strategy:

- Tackle inactivity: more money and resources
- Invest in children and young people to build positive attitudes to sport and activity
- Help those currently active to carry on, but at a lower cost to the public purse
- Put customers at the heart of what we do/be welcoming and inclusive
- Help sport to keep pace with the digital expectations of customers
- Encourage stronger local collaboration to deliver a joined-up experience for customers
- Working with a wide range of partners, using our expertise and investment to align
- Applying behaviour change principles to encourage innovation to share best practice

Sport England has assessed this consultation in the light of Sport England's Planning for Sport: Forward Planning guidance <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/>

The overall thrust of the statement is that a planned approach to the provision of facilities and opportunities for sport is necessary, new sports facilities should be fit for purpose, and they should be available for community sport. To achieve this, our objectives are to:

- **PROTECT** sports facilities from loss as a result of redevelopment
- **ENHANCE** existing facilities through improving their quality, accessibility and management
- **PROVIDE** new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet demands for participation now and in the future.

Sport England believes that sport has an important role in modern society and in

creating sustainable and healthy communities. Sport and physical activity is high on the Government's national agenda as it cuts across a number of current topics that include health, social inclusion, regeneration and anti-social behaviour. The importance of sport should be recognised as a key component of development plans, and not considered in isolation.

The NPPF clearly recognises the role of sport and recreation as a fundamental part of sustainable development, and expects local authorities to plan positively for these needs and demands accordingly. The protection and provision of opportunities to participate in sport is seen as fundamental to the health and well-being of communities (NPPF), meaning that local authorities must plan and provide accordingly through policy and development management. Without a robust and up-to-date assessment of need, there is a risk that a local plan document could be considered unsound. Sport England advocates that planning for sport in communities should be based on a clear strategy for sport which sets out the case to protect, enhance and provide facilities. In doing so, it can be demonstrated how sport is important both for its own sake, but also how it contributes to complementary agendas.

Whilst the NPPF does not stipulate precisely how policies for sport should be presented in Local Plans, Sport England, following the NPPF, consider that as an absolute minimum, policy should cover the following issues:

Facility Protection - Policy needs to clearly state that sports facilities (built as well as pitches, open space and recreational land) will be protected from loss except where it is demonstrated that the site is surplus to requirements; or equivalent or better facilities will be provided; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Criteria to the policy could also include reference to opportunities for the shared use of facilities, and securing increased quantity and quality of provision in line with a robust and up-to-date assessment of need. Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and exceptions tests could be helpful in developing policy.

Enhanced and New Provision - Policy should identify the beneficial role that sport and recreation plays in existing and new development through the provision of new and enhanced formal sports facilities (including built facilities) and open space used for active recreation. Specific requirements for meeting the needs of new residents should be addressed, along with opportunities to overcome existing deficiencies.

Sports Lighting - By extending the hours a facility is available, along with improving its viability, the lighting of outdoor sports facilities can provide enhanced opportunities for people to participate in sport and secure the benefits that sports can provide, especially in terms of health and well-being. Planning policies should recognise the benefits of lighting outdoor sports facilities along with the significant advances in such technology over recent years. Technical guidance in sports lighting which will help with the preparation of policy is available within the Design and Cost Guidance pages of the Sport England website.

Sport in the Green Belt, Urban Fringe and Open Countryside - Where relevant, sport should be referenced in policies covering the Green Belt, urban fringe and wider countryside, recognising the need to plan positively to provide opportunities for facility development in these areas and recognising sport's role as a complementary land use, for example in green infrastructure provision.

The following comments are provided within the context of:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2019).
- Sport England's Planning for Sport webpages (2018).

Site Allocations

- Sport England considers that sites identified for development should be consistent with our Playing Fields Policy. This is especially important where Sport England would be a statutory consultee on developments that would prejudice the use of playing fields as defined by Article 16(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 in that it is on land that has been used as a playing field within the last five years, and the field encompasses at least one playing pitch of 0.2 ha or more, or that it is on land that allocated for the use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement.

Site Assessment Methodology

- When decisions are made about which locations will be brought forward and their potential dwelling capacity, it is requested that consideration be given to whether any of the sites contain existing sports facilities such as playing fields which justify protection under policies, Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, the Council's Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy, and paragraphs 96 and 97 of the NPPF. If they do, then the extent of development in these locations should account for the need to maintain such facilities and site policies should require the facilities to be protected or replaced.

The Council will be aware of Sport England's role as a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields and therefore it is important that consideration is given to the implications for existing sports facilities when decisions are made about site allocations. Sport England would wish to avoid having to make potential objections through the local plan process and the subsequent planning application process to address the impact of potential allocations on community sports facilities. Data is readily available from your own Playing Pitch Strategy or Active Places Power website.

Sport England advocates that the creation of healthy places requires the collaborative input of many partners. Active Design should be promoted through all planning activity including Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans using clear policy support within the National Planning Policy Framework and its supporting Planning Practice Guidance. Taking part in regular sport and physical activity is a key part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Too few of us are doing enough sport and physical activity to stay healthy. This could have significant long-term implications for the health, wellbeing and quality of life of millions of people. [Active Design](#) has been commissioned by Sport England to take a fresh look at the opportunities to encourage and promote sport and physical activity through the design and layout of our built environment, supporting a step change towards healthier and more active lifestyles.

Building upon the foundations set by the original guidance, published by Sport England in March 2007, Active Design provides up to date guidance to assist all parties engaged in shaping our existing and future built environments to maximise opportunities for communities to be naturally active as part of their daily life. Active Design is Sport England's contribution to the wider debate on developing healthy communities. Active Design is rooted in Sport England's aims and objectives to promote the role of sport and physical activity in creating healthy and sustainable communities. Clear linkages are

made to other sources of guidance from partners promoting this agenda across a broad spectrum of interests including planning, design, health, transport and sport.

There are 10 Active Design Principles. They draw from existing urban design practice and promote environments that offer individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles, and promote walkable communities, connected walking and cycling routes, network of multifunctional open space, attractive buildings, high quality streets, and spaces, etc.

Sport England would be happy to discuss any sports or playing fields related policy wording with you.

This concludes our comments at this stage. Sport England would be happy to discuss any of these points should you wish to do so.

Janet Belfield

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#FITGOTREAL



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