



Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation

Guidance on Sport England's
Aspirations and Experience

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Spatial Planning: New Opportunities & Challenges

Introduction

Sport England aims to provide support, guidance and advice to enable the development of high quality sports facilities in the right place, to meet the needs of all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. In *Sport Changes Lives*¹, Sport England sets out aspirations for the delivery of sport and recreation opportunities and performance, in particular through:

Strategic leadership: Sport England will provide strategic leadership to help people start, stay and succeed in sport at every level.

Making it happen: Sport England will focus efforts on working with appropriate partners to achieve the objectives set by *The Framework for Sport in England*², the Government's vision for sport and active recreation (increasing and widening the base of participation in sport; improving international sporting success; and reforming the delivery structures in sport).

Sport England recognises that the planning system is undergoing a fundamental change of philosophy and organisation. The advent of spatial planning creates opportunities for addressing the needs, and wider contribution, of sport and active recreation through:

- the development of cross-cutting policies and plans;
- multifaceted development proposals which include sports-related elements;
- increasing recognition of the role of community interests in shaping space; and
- greater partnership working in policy development and delivery.

The Role of Sport England

Sport England is the statutory agency responsible for leading the development of sport in England by influencing and serving the public, private and voluntary sectors. Its aims are to: get more people involved in sport; secure more places to play sport, and achieving more medals through higher standards of performance in sport. Specifically, Sport England seeks to:

- develop and improve the knowledge and practice of sport and physical recreation in England;
- encourage and develop higher standards of performance and the achievement of excellence;
- foster, support and undertake the development of facilities;
- carry out research into sport and physical recreation; and
- advise, assist and co-operate with other government departments and local authorities.

A key element of Sport England's work encompasses planning the provision of facilities and

¹ Sport England (2004) **The Framework for Sport in England: Making England an Active and Successful Sporting Nation: A Vision for 2020**

² Cabinet Office/Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2002) **Game Plan: A Strategy for Delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity Objectives**

helping to ensure that they are fit for purpose and attractive to users. In recent years, Sport England has channeled significant Lottery funds towards the development of high quality facilities that are accessible to everyone.

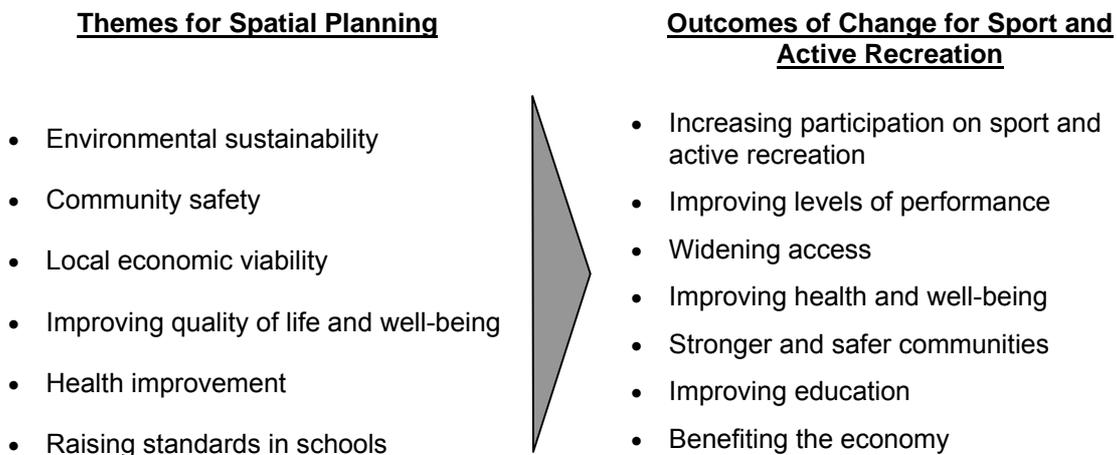
Through policy advice and a network of town planners in each of our regions, Sport England provides advice on what type of sports facilities are needed and where by communities in the future. We also advise on how to protect and improve the current stock of facilities. In particular, Sport England has a specific remit to protect playing fields. Other key areas of work are:

- advising and liaising with central government and other national agencies on the development of planning policy and the planning process insofar as it affects sport and active recreation;
- contributing to the development of Planning Policy Statements and other policy guidance;
- advising strategic and local planning authorities on matters affecting sport and active recreation in development plans and related documents;
- advising local planning authorities on statutory and non-statutory consultations on planning applications affecting sport and active recreation; and
- advising sports bodies on national and local planning issues.

Sport England’s Interpretation of Spatial Planning

Sport England takes the definition of spatial planning as set out in PPS1 as its starting point. This states that: *“Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function”* (PPS1 p.1). Spatial planning is concerned with the physical aspects of location and land use, but also factors that make places attractive to live in: health provision, education choice, employment opportunities, crime prevention etc. and, in spirit, a wider, more inclusive approach to decision-making. Spatial planning implies partnership, through the development of shared aspirations and a willingness to make creative use of land use planning in combination with a range of other policy instruments, such as Community Strategies.

Specifically, *The Framework for Sport in England* identifies six themes which form a basis for spatial planning activity. In turn these contribute to the realisation of seven ‘outcomes of change’. These are:



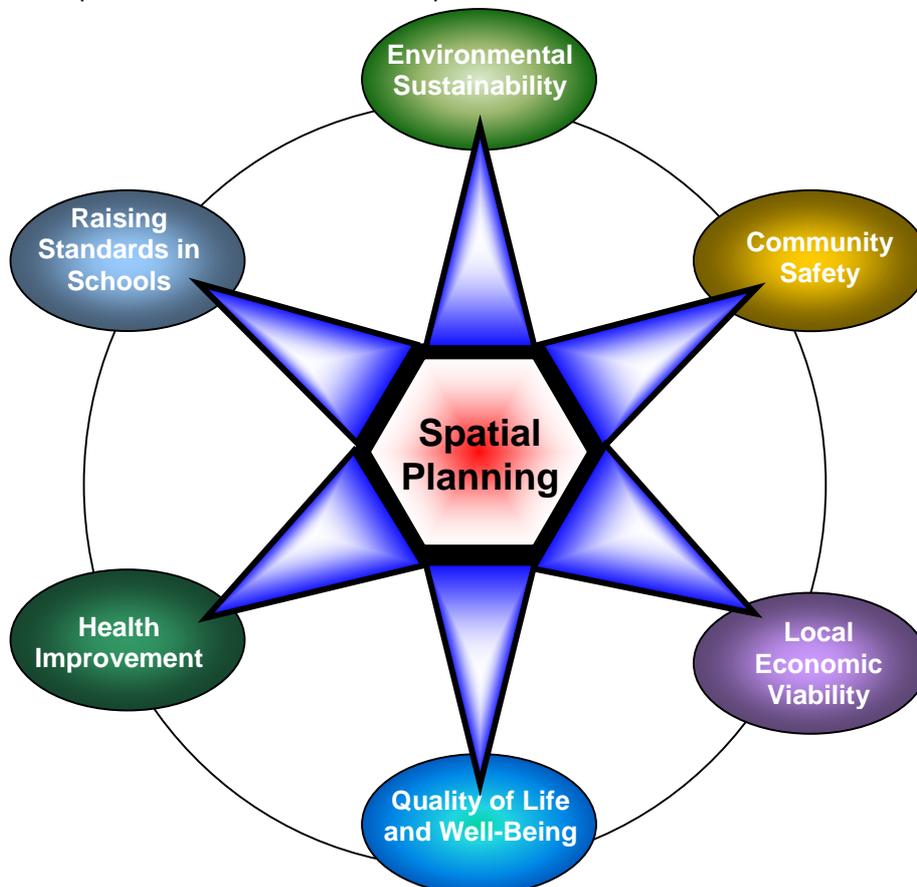
A Vision for Spatial Planning and Sport and its Guiding Principles

Sport England is committed to the spirit and purpose of spatial planning. The integration of policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes chimes with the potential of sport and active recreation to make a contribution across a range of policy areas. Through partnership working, Sport England seeks to engage with planners at regional and local levels to help ensure that the interests of sport and active recreation are well represented, actively promoted and appropriately developed in the interests of all.

Sport England sees the emergence of the spatial planning system as an opportunity to deliver both its own aspirations for sport and active recreation, whilst contributing to the aspirations of its partners in public, private and voluntary sectors. Here there is the prospect of delivering a planned approach to the provision of facilities, and in doing so adding value to the work of others and helping to deliver sustainable development goals. In practice, this might mean:

- Taking a broader view of the role of spatial planning as an enabling function which goes beyond the setting and delivery of land-use policy.
- Identifying opportunities for delivering an enhanced quality of life for communities, in the short, medium and longer term.
- Recognising and taking full advantage of the unique ability of sport and active recreation to contribute to a wide array of policy and community aspirations.
- The development of partnership working stimulated by, and perhaps centred on, sport and active recreation as a common interest.
- Using sport and recreation as one of the building blocks of planning and delivery of sustainable communities.

The following six principles will inform how Sport England seeks to engage with the planning system in the promotion of the interests of sport and active recreation.



1. **Environmental Sustainability** – sport and recreation can demonstrate and contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources.
2. **Community Safety** – sport can help to directly reduce social exclusion and disaffection.
3. **Local Economic Viability** – sport directly and indirectly contributes to local and national economic vibrancy.
4. **Quality of Life and Well-Being** – physical activity contributes to peoples' perceptions and experience of well-being and sense of attachment to their surroundings.
5. **Health Improvement** – physical activity should be a natural part of everyday life.
6. **Raising Standards in Schools** – the foundations of life-long health and sporting excellence lie in early opportunities for taking part in sport and active recreation.

The six principles complement the intentions of various other strategies and programmes for change. For instance, in respect of community strategies, crime and disorder reduction strategies, neighbourhood renewal strategies and corporate plans, sport and active recreation can be recognised within delivery and action plans as a contributor to objectives such as:

- eliminating discrimination and improving community cohesion;
- strengthening community identity and pride;
- tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour;
- reducing fear of crime;
- neighbourhood renewal;
- local economic development;
- improving the quality of the built and natural environment; and
- encouraging sustainable travel.

These policy objectives can be delivered through a variety of means: consultation with partner agencies, the development and application of policies in LDFs (through the Core Strategy and supplementary planning documents), pre-application negotiations and the application of conditions and obligations. In all cases, policy and practice should be rooted in a firm evidence base which takes account of local, and where appropriate regional, needs. There is a growing suite of resources developed by Sport England³ which can help with this task, from local needs assessment to policy development. Using practical examples where available, the following sections explore how the six spatial planning principles might be, and have been, interpreted in practice through the planning system.

³ see http://www.sportengland.org/kitbag_front_page

Spatial Planning Principle 1: Environmental Sustainability

What is the Issue and Why is it Important?

Increasing emphasis, in the planning system and elsewhere, is being placed on sustainable development and the reconciliation of its environment, social and economic dimensions. The core principles for sustainable development have been set out in a recent government policy statement⁴ and form the reference point for policy development in other arenas. These are being translated into the development of policies in LDF Core Strategies which reflect the principles of sustainable production and consumption, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement and the development of sustainable communities. Sport and active recreation have a significant part to play in contributing to these aspirations, both directly (through facility development, for example) and indirectly through changes in habits and attitudes.

Sport can play a significant role in contributing to sustainable development objectives in issues such as resource protection, equity and participation, and economic development. Sport and active recreation are also an important means of connecting environmental, social and economic priorities, contributing to aspirations for building sustainable communities, the regeneration of neighbourhoods, and increasing participation in activities which use community resources. Equally there are various indirect contributions such as providing opportunities for sport near to where people live thus reducing the need to travel. Sport and active recreation accordingly make an important contribution to shared aspirations for improvements to quality of life and its sustainability.

What Role is Sport England Playing?

Sport England recognises that the principles of sustainable development along with their priorities should be used to guide the development of policies for sport and active recreation at both strategic and local levels. Sport England has long promoted the sensitive development and improvement of sport and recreation facilities⁵. Sustainability appraisals of the regional Plans for Sport are being undertaken⁶. These will help guide and adjust strategic policies such that there is greater conformity between the intentions of the various tiers of plan-making, covering aims such as:

- efficient use of resources now and in the future;
- promotion of ways of living that minimises negatives environmental impacts;
- protection and improvement of natural resources and biodiversity; and
- due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions.

⁴ HM Govt. (2005) **Securing the Future: The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy** http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/documents/publications/strategy/SecFut_complete.pdf

⁵ see Sport England (2005) **Planning for Sport & Active Recreation: Objectives and Opportunities – Interim Statement**

⁶ see http://www.sportengland.org/sustainability_appraisal_of_yorkshire_plan_for_sport_final-7.pdf

How Can Spatial Planning Enable Sport and Active Recreation to Play its Role in Securing Environmental Sustainability?

Sport has been identified as playing an important role in contributing to sustainable communities, particularly in helping to regenerate neighbourhoods. To achieve sustainable development objectives in respect of the provision and management of places for sport, there is a need to reconcile environmental protection with economic, equity, and participation issues and the needs of future generations. For example, providing opportunities for sport near to where people live can make a contribution to reducing the need to travel, but also benefits access by disadvantaged groups. This is addressed in PGG17, which has amongst its planning objectives for sport “ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly in urban areas) are easily accessible by walking and cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned for locations well served by public transport”.

In order to help meet aspirations for environmental, social and economic sustainability, Sport England is seeking the inclusion of policies within development plans, and elsewhere, that:

- Seek to maintain the quality of the environment in which leisure takes place and which prevent the irreversible loss of protected areas such as SSSIs. This includes the promotion of management solutions to resolving conflicts of interest between users.
- Support the provision of facilities which are accessible by public transport, bicycle and on foot.
- Minimise the impact on the environment by reducing the impact of the ‘footprint’ of the building, and promoting biodiversity opportunities where possible.
- Encourage the wise use of non-renewable resources in the development of new facilities for sport and by making good use of existing buildings, including re-use and dual use.
- Advocate facilities which use sustainable construction techniques and materials which are durable and long lasting. The design for sport and active recreation facilities should pay heed to best practice in respect of energy efficiency, the use of appropriate construction materials and opportunities for minimising travel distances for users. In the design and construction of facilities, a minimum expectation might be the employment of BREEAM⁷ standards.
- Support the development of facilities which will improve the quality of life of local residents and participants and create job opportunities. This includes the protection and enhancement of existing facilities and promotion of the allocation and provision of new sites and opportunities for sport, including access to natural resources for countryside activities.
- Seek to maximise accessibility to opportunities for sport and recreation for all sections of the community.

⁷ The Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) is used to assess the environmental performance of both new and existing buildings. It is regarded by the UK’s construction and property sectors as the measure of best practice in environmental design and management. BREEAM assesses the performance of buildings in the following areas:

- management: overall management policy, commissioning site management and procedural issues
- energy use: operational energy and carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- health and well-being: indoor and external issues affecting health and well-being
- pollution: air and water pollution issues
- transport: transport-related CO₂ and location-related factors
- land use: greenfield and brownfield sites
- ecology: ecological value conservation and enhancement of the site
- materials: environmental implication of building materials, including life-cycle impacts
- water: consumption and water efficiency

- Help to create awareness of, and appreciation for, the environment through promotion of opportunities for sport.

An example is the provision of green infrastructure⁸ in both existing urban areas and the planned growth areas (where there are opportunities to plan for such facilities from scratch). Here, the provision of walking and cycling routes which are both functional and perceived to be safe and attractive to use is a particular challenge. This represents not only a design challenge but also an opportunity to make the most of what spatial planning is seeking to achieve, namely: integrated thinking and practice between planners, communities, designers and organisations such as Sport England who seek to realise their corporate objectives through the provision of such facilities.

Building on this appreciation, Sport England suggests that there are a number of ways of implementing the policy approaches identified above:

- Recognising cross-linkages with wider government agendas such as sustainable communities.
- Developing links with parallel strategies such as biodiversity and environmental protection (see **Box 1.5**).
- Offering specific guidance on how sustainability objectives could be met through good practice, such as enhancing biodiversity and other opportunities through good planning and management of facilities (see **Boxes 1.1** and **1.4**).
- Acting as a 'broker' in securing effective co-ordination between different interests, using sport and recreation as a point of common interest.
- Recognising that attention to sport and recreation can help secure multiple objectives across the core themes of environment, society and economy (see **Box 1.2** and **1.3**).
- More generally, sport and recreation developments play a role in the development of physical infrastructure, for instance, helping to link communities, shops, workplaces and other services.

Box 1.1 The Application of Best Practice in the Design and Construction of Sports Facilities

Setting Sustainable Design Objectives for Project Design

- Are the sports development outcomes clear, and consistent with strategic plans?
- Have the relevant sporting National Governing Bodies, Local Authorities etc been consulted?
- Has design quality been given due importance?
- Has a whole life cost approach been incorporated?
- Are the design brief and objectives fully thought through and clearly stated?
- Have any potential hidden agendas or conflicting aims been resolved?
- Are the objectives compatible with local development plans etc, and likely to receive necessary permissions?

Characteristics of a Well-Designed Sports Facility

- A location allowing convenient use of all means of transport, and clearly identifiable entrances;
- Welcoming, accessible buildings which encourage both existing and new users to use the facility;
- Easily understood building organisation;
- Design for clear, easy, safe movement for all users of the facility;
- Positive contribution to the public realm, breaking down the scale and mass, and using social spaces such as café/bar or foyers to interface with the public realm;
- Good functional fit with the specific technical requirements of the particular sports use;
- Ease of cleaning/maintenance – robust, durable fixtures and finishes;
- Easily accessible storage;
- Careful control of daylight in internal spaces.

Sport England/Cabe (2004) **Better Places for Sport: A Client Guide to Achieving Design Quality**

⁸ see **East Midlands Assembly** (2005): East Midlands Green Infrastructure Study

Box 1.2 Spondon Cricket Club, Derbyshire

This case study provides a good example of how the relocation of a cricket club was used to improve the environmental quality of the Derby greenbelt. Spondon Cricket Club are a well established club which over the years became surrounded by houses creating a very small and tight pitch. Due to persistent complaints from the surrounding residents about cricket balls going in to the adjacent gardens, the club wanted to move to a new ground where it would enable a full sized pitch to meet its sporting need.

The preferred location identified was in the Derbyshire greenbelt on the site of a disused nursery on Locko Road to the North of Spondon. The local planning authority at Derby City Council saw the move into the greenbelt as removing a non-compatible use (disused nursery) in to a compatible use compliant with greenbelt policy. The old ground was used for a housing development which funded the move, however in order to comply with playing field policy, the move was not permitted until the new ground was ready. Sport England considered it to be a good move, where although a sports facility was being lost, a larger, better facility was being developed. Permission was granted 24th December 2003 for the change of use of land.

Box 1.3 Arnold Town FC, Arnold, Nottinghamshire

Arnold is a town within Gedling Borough, to the North of Nottingham. It is home to Arnold Town Football Club, a semi-professional club, and Arnold Boys Football Club, a flourishing youth set up. There were problems with the grounds of both teams: first, Arnold Town FC's current ground didn't meet the league requirements, and second Arnold Boys FC were spread across five playing fields in the Borough of Gedling, which was increasingly becoming a problem especially in trying to gain FA Community Club Status¹. Their recent sports development growth has necessitated using a number of different grounds as no one ground had the capacity to support the existing club.

Planning Background

Sport England first became involved with Arnold Town FC in October 2002 when the Club approached Sport England for help in finding an alternative ground. A meeting was held in which representatives from Arnold Boys FC also contributed outlining the nature of their problem. It was decided that the best way forward would be to find an alternative site to meet the league requirements of Arnold Town FC, and the pitch requirements for Arnold Boys FC. Suitable land was suggested on the outskirts of Arnold for the change of use of land to 12 football pitches and associated car parking, which was subject to a planning inquiry held on 23rd and 24th November 2004. The case was called in to the Secretary of State, whose decision and report was issued on 16th March 2005.

The proposal conflicted with development plan policy in a number of ways, and the report outlined that although the application would accord with some of the aims of the development plan, it was contrary to development plan policies in terms of accessibility and sustainability, as it would be dependant on travel by car. Development within the greenbelt was also seen as inappropriate in terms of local plan policies. However it was seen that Arnold Town FC and Arnold Town Youth are well supported clubs that make a significant contribution to the sporting and community life of Arnold. Failure to secure a suitable ground would have significant consequences for both football teams which may force the clubs into decline. It was agreed that this would be a major loss for the community and would conflict with wider local and national objectives to encourage participation in sport. This was seen as a material consideration of significant weight.

Planning permission was granted. Although weight was placed on the inappropriateness of the development within the greenbelt, and accessibility issues by other modes of transport than the car, the substantial benefits that would arise from the proposal would only be achievable on that particular site. On balance the Secretary of State concluded that the strong need for the proposal and the benefits that would arise, together with the lack of alternative sites, were sufficient to outweigh the material considerations against the development.

Aspects of Spatial Planning Considerations

This case study shows the consideration of the wider benefits of sports for the local community can outweigh the disadvantages outlined through non-compliance of development plan policy. The football club's role in community life, along with the recognition of the wider benefits such as a reduction in car journeys by concentrating facilities in one area, are evident in the Secretary of State's Decision.

¹ FA Community Clubs are recognised clubs at the pinnacle of the club development pathway that have a high quality, multi-team (10 minimum) set up with excellent social, training and playing opportunities for all. They must present opportunities for players irrespective of age, gender, religion and ability. In order to become a community club, there must be evidence of a commitment to providing a sporting facility for use by the entire community.

Box 1.4 Recreational Driving in the National Parks

There are longstanding concerns over the impact of recreational motor vehicles such as four wheel drives and trail bikes on the conservation and enjoyment on some of the National Parks. A survey found that several National Park Authorities consider this to be one of their most pressing issues and contrary to National Park purposes of conservation and enhancement of their natural and cultural heritage, and understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. The legal and illegal use of recreational motor vehicles on rights of way and on open country is having a significant impact on the Brecon Beacons, Exmoor, Lake District, Northumberland, North York Moors, the South Downs and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.

The impacts range from physical damage to green lanes and adjacent land, danger to and conflict with non-motorised users and land managers, and disturbance to the tranquillity, landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Parks. The reports of conflict and damage continue due to very few direct powers available to the Park Authorities, the difficulty of enforcing the law in remote rural areas, as well as confusion over the legal status of many routes. There are plans to change the law and introduce better guidance on enforcement.

Council for National Parks (June 2005) **Off-road or off-limits? Recreational driving in the National Parks**

Box 1.5 The Ecology of Golf Courses

One in every 20 golf courses in England is an important wildlife site and SSSIs now cover all or part of nearly 100 courses in England. Nevertheless, golf courses have long attracted attention for their perceived unsound approach to ecological husbandry. Royal & Ancient have published research studies which seek to demonstrate that, given appropriate management, the ecology of golf courses can be enhanced and promoted as a positive characteristic. There are clearly opportunities for the planning system to ensure that early discussions in the planning process address these issues and, through the application of conditions, for example, an appropriate management regime is put in place. Several examples of management plans have been established (contact tom.tew@english-nature.org)

Source: Royal & Ancient course management at:

<http://www.randa.org/index.cfm?action=coursemanagement.promotion>

Spatial Planning Principle 2: Community Safety

What is the Issue and Why is it Important?

Wherever possible, there should be opportunities for people to take part in sport and active recreation with the confidence that they can participate safely, without fear of crime. This also involves reducing barriers to access which might arise through geographical location, income or lack of information or confidence. Through positive policies and actions, issues of social exclusion, disaffection and disinterest can be tackled, particularly if considered as part of the wider planning and design process for facility development.

The principal contribution of sport to community safety is through crime reduction, particularly youth offending. Whilst no direct relationship between participation in sport and crime reduction has been established there is anecdotal evidence of its contribution⁹. Sport provides a sense of purpose and distraction to those more inclined to take part in harmful or anti-social behaviour, and is one component of a series of measures which help to manage these problems.

What Role is Sport England Playing?

Engaging young people to take part in sport and active recreation, both for its own sake and as a contribution to social cohesion, is fundamental to Sport England's aspirations. Through development of policy and practice and national, regional and local levels, Sport England seeks to contribute to the achievement of wider goals set by partner and other organisations, particularly where a catalyst, such as the development or improvement of sport or recreation facilities, might be helpful.

How Can Spatial Planning Enable Sport and Active Recreation to Play its Role in Delivering Community Safety?

Beyond enabling the provision of built facilities, spatial planning has an important role to play in ensuring that there is adequate provision across a wide range of types of open space through partnership between delivery agencies and local communities. PPG17, for instance, encourages planners to consider the form and function of open space, including: parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural urban green spaces, green corridors, outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces), amenity green space (mostly in housing areas), productive urban green spaces, burial sites, green urban/rural fringe and formal civic space. All these spaces demand integrated planning and design, especially where they are intended to be part of a wider approach to delivering sustainable communities. Complementing references made in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents might be developed which address facility design issues, as well as Area Action Plans which seek to translate these aspirations into site-specific circumstances.

The actual or perceived absence of safety and security is consistently cited by the public, and especially particular sectors of the public such as women, as a prime reason for not visiting parks and other open spaces. If concerns over safety can be allayed through better design¹⁰

⁹ see a review at http://www.sportengland.org/spip_safe_strong.pdf

¹⁰ see <http://www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/SBD-principles.pdf>

and a reduction in the likelihood of crime occurring (such as through the diversion of those who might commit offences), then this represents genuine joined-up delivery, of which spatial planning could be a significant part.

The creation of informal play and sports areas has been identified as a means of addressing challenges of limited access to facilities. For instance, the Bolton Reczones project¹¹, as part of a wider Neighbourhood Renewal Area initiative has sought to turn existing under-used play areas into modern recreation zones, catering for formal and informal sports. The areas are flood-lit, enabling night and year-round use, and a sports development programme has been established. The spatial planning process can contribute to realising the development of such local sports facilities through:

- Ensuring that there is adequate consultation, with the local community and particularly the intended users, over proposals.
- Tailoring facilities to local needs and not necessarily the standards and expectation set by National Governing Bodies for Sport.
- Paying particular attention to the demands associated with intensive use of the facilities, such as floodlighting or the creation of noise.
- Building-in conditions to planning approval which cover issues such as the ongoing maintenance of facilities in order that they are more likely to be sustainable.

On a wider scale, the successful provision of green spaces, ranging from formal parks to more informal areas, which have genuine community buy-in can be centred on a number of common principles¹² (**Box 2.1**).

Box 2.1 Delivering better green spaces: watch points

<p>Create higher aspirations</p> <p>Champion the need for better green spaces.</p> <p>Build creative partnerships</p> <p>Involve stakeholders from a range of public and private bodies in green space planning to create successful partnerships.</p> <p>Involve the community at every stage</p> <p>Local knowledge is essential in developing an effective design. Involvement can build a sense of ownership, and reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Celebrate successes</p> <p>Use the numerous award schemes to highlight the best green spaces.</p> <p>Develop skills</p> <p>Skills and knowledge in planning, design, maintenance and community involvement are essential for long-term success.</p> <p>Start now</p> <p>Green spaces can provide quick wins and show that change is possible. Early investment in improving the public realm can create confidence for other investors.</p> <p>Source: Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [cabe] (2005) Start with the Park - Creating Sustainable Urban Green Spaces in Areas of Housing Growth and Renewal p.95</p>
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Whilst the principles presented in **Box 2.1** are necessarily generalised, the aspirations of spatial planning as an integrative process mean that there are opportunities for contributing to

¹¹ See <http://www.sportengland.org/local.pdf> and <http://www.renewal.net/Documents/RNET/Overview/Toolkits/Sports/Sportcommunitysafety.DOC>

¹² Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [cabe] (2005) **Start with the Park - Creating Sustainable Urban Green Spaces in Areas of Housing Growth and Renewal**

these 'higher order' themes. Critical here is the taking of a proactive lead, developing a long term vision, linkages between interests and capacity-building to realise more ambitious developments than otherwise might have happened.

Box 2.2 offers a range of practical design approaches to problems associated with the provision of recreational facilities and spaces. These embrace broad community planning issues, and specific design and management approaches, which could be incorporated into policy and design guides.

Box 2.2 Principles for the Planning, Design and Management of Play Areas

Community Planning issues

- Show clear intended use related to age group. This should be considered relative to other local play facilities for other age groups in the community - it is important in avoiding potential abuse that all age groups in the community are provided for adequately and the need for youth gathering and socialising recognised with appropriate facilities included in a positive way.
- Provide adequate space for the activity proposed on the playing area complete with a buffer zone between the activity and adjacent dwellings and other occupied buildings.
- Relate intended playing area use to immediate infrastructure e.g. to allow adequate road, cycle/foot path access and secure parking nearby.
- Locate play areas for young and very young children within the protection of the built community to provide adequate natural surveillance and supervision.
- Ensure that ownership and management of the proposed facility is in place with adequate resource available for maintenance and improvements that will be required.

Play Area Design Issues

- Boundaries clearly defined with features to prevent unauthorised motor cycle/vehicle access.
- Boundary fences and landscape to allow natural surveillance across playing areas from public areas, roads and footpaths.
- Lighting as appropriate provided to facilitate natural surveillance at night and reduce fear of crime.
- Public rights of way through playing areas discouraged.
- Control informal public access to playing areas to prevent dog fouling and littering of playing surfaces.
- No structures or landscape feature to compromise boundary security providing climbing over points.
- Natural landscape used for 'adventure' play shall have limited/ designed hiding places only with precedence given to clear natural surveillance and no opportunities for rubbish to accumulate.
- Additional security features as necessary to reduce threat from particular local crime patterns.
- The effect of other associated structures on play area security to be considered and taken into account i.e. public toilets, changing pavilions.
- Youth gathering shelter designed in, avoid the provision of inappropriate unsafe youth gathering places.

Management Issues

- Regular maintenance routines demonstrated, i.e. grass cutting, pruning, painting repair and replacement.
- Use of play areas and facilities provided monitored and recorded including community consultation.
- Crime and anti social behaviour patterns recorded and appropriate action considered
- Improvements and / or changes planned to block crime and anti social behaviour and encourage use.

Source: Secured by Design Award: Playing Areas at:
<http://www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/playareas.pdf>

Box 2.3 Case Study: Tuckingmill Skate Park Development

Opened in June 2004, the £150,000 project was designed by Kerrier District Council's Landscape Architects and Engineers, with assistance from local skating experts. The park was funded by eight agencies, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Kerrier and Cornwall Councils and the Regional Development Agency, as part of a wider strategy to regenerate Tuckingmill. Local people were also consulted over the exact site for the Skate Park.

Kerrier worked closely with a number of partners, including the Youth Offending Team and Youth Service, who enabled local young people to visit similar facilities outside the County to ascertain what features they would like to see in the new Park.

www.kerrier.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6388

Box 2.4 The Severn Centre, Highley, Shropshire

The Severn Centre was opened in September 2004 becoming the first fully operational Active England project. The objective of the facility was to provide a multi-activity, community sports facility in an area where public transport and sports provision were limited. Over £1.3 million of lottery funding was invested by Sport England in a scheme where the overall funding provision exceeded £3.5m and provides a good example of how joint working can achieve the wider principles set out by Sport England. Facilities include: Library; Crèche and child care facilities; IT suite; West Mercia Constabulary; Fitness suite; Outdoor swimming pool; Floodlit football and cricket pitches; and Sports hall.

The full application was approved in May 2002. In planning terms the development was seen as a focal point for the regeneration of an old mining village by renewing the old facilities that had been built up over the years. There was no objection to the application, and as there was no change of usage, the policies used were very much in terms of renewal and enhancement. As it is council-owned land, no Section 106 agreement was necessary.

Elements of Spatial Planning

This development has a wide variety of occupants, but what stands out is the facility's contribution to community safety. With the local constabulary in the facility it works in close connection with the youth group to alleviate issues associated with crime and disorder. A large crèche that supports a maximum of 59 children is open from 8am-6pm every weekday contributes towards local peoples' quality of life. Educational advantages relate to the availability of ICT services and a library.

Spatial Planning Principle 3: Local Economic Viability

What is the Issue and Why is it Important?

A diverse local economy is one of the building blocks of a sustainable community, and the promotion of economic vitality is a central concern of regeneration initiatives which are seeking to tackle multiple challenges associated with declining industries, changing consumer demand, unemployment, skills gaps, under-investment. Sport has a potential role to play in all these, some of the direct and indirect contributions being:

- Investment in physical fabric;
- Catalyst for investment and regeneration;
- Employment (400,000 [2% of all employment]);
- Image enhancement for living, working and visiting;
- Reducing workforce absence due to ill health;
- Improving skills and qualifications.

At local and sub-regional scales, sport and recreation is increasingly providing a focal point for distinct economic activity. These 'sport clusters' include traditional hubs of activity such as sailing, but also increasingly activities such as mountain sports.

What Role is Sport England Playing?

Sport and active recreation have been recognised as, and through research¹³ proved to be, important contributors to national, regional and local economic health. Sport England seeks to promote this role through advocacy of the inclusion of sport-related policy in key strategy documents, developing links with regeneration initiatives, identifying funding sources and identifying where there might be spin-offs from the development of regionally or nationally significant sports facilities.

How Can Spatial Planning Enable Sport and Active Recreation to Play its Role in Delivering Local Economic Viability?

"Social enterprises are a key component in the development of sustainable communities and will increasingly contribute to our success, employment and skill levels and in improving the quality of life of our residents. Sport provides an ideal backdrop for social enterprises: it has many social benefits and the need for accessible sports facilities is common to all communities. Sport can lead regeneration, whether urban or rural, by engaging the communities in the improvement of their area and can create employment and training opportunities for a wide range of interests and skills."¹⁴ Sport is widely used as a reference point in a variety of strategies and programmes, recognising the unique role of sport to cross topic boundaries. Strategies and plans commonly referring to sport and recreation include:

¹³ Cambridge Econometrics (2003) **The Value of the Sports Economy in England** at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/economy2003.html>

¹⁴ East Midlands Development Agency (2004) **Sport in the East Midlands: the Role of Social Enterprises** at: http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/social_enterprise.pdf

- Community strategies
- Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration strategies
- Economic development strategies
- Learning and skills plans
- Corporate plans

In the north west regional economic strategy, for example, sport is identified as one of the sectors in the 'cluster development programme' which aims to support and grow businesses in the region. An action plan¹⁵ has been developed to identify growth opportunities, barriers to growth and a route map to co-ordinate the actions of the North West Development Agency and other partners. Sport is also recognised as having a key contribution to make to the image of the region. A key action identified to further enhance the north west's reputation and boost visitor numbers is to enhance existing major events, develop new ones and support and promote bids for major cultural, business and sporting events.

The Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has focused specifically on the contribution of sport to promoting the regeneration of urban areas. Sport England have helped to develop a series of guidance notes which set out principals and experience relating to renewal activity. For example, key principles identified cover:

- Focussing on local needs and values, avoiding a purely 'top-down' approach to provision;
- Developing a local infrastructure (of facilities, individuals and groups) and building partnerships between interested parties.
- Organising sport and physical activity projects, developing a Sport and Physical Activity Development Plan, for example.
- Monitoring and evaluation, built into projects.
- Demonstrating the success of projects through active dissemination to professionals and communities.
- Accessing long-term funding to ensure the sustainability of projects.

A variety of publications have been produced to substantiate the application of these principles¹⁶.

¹⁵ Sport England et al (2005) **Sport and Active Leisure Skills and Productivity Plan for England's Northwest 2005 – 2010** at: <http://nwda-cms.amaze.co.uk/DocumentUploads/SportActive.pdf>

¹⁶ for instance, **Designing and Implementing Sports and Physical Activity Projects** and **Sport, Physical Activity and Renewal** at <http://www.renewal.net>

Box 3.1 The Economic Impact of Large Scale Sports Development

“Sports stadia and facilities are not a panacea that will address all the regeneration issues within a town or area; they can however play a significant role in facilitating financial and social improvements and opportunities if they are implemented within a strongly defined strategy”.

Primary factors accounting for the disappointing regeneration returns associated with stadia development are:

- Insufficient critical mass of complementary services in out of town locations to attract visitors before and after events.
- Over-provision of car parking which encourages attendance and ready departure.
- Periods of vacancy between events which restricts opportunities for full-time employment, limited community identification with development, and detracts from investment in other facilities.
- Insufficient infrastructure to attract further investors.

However, unrealistic expectations can be placed on the direct impact of a particular development, and indirect economic uplift (which is harder to quantify) can be significant. Unsurprisingly, location is critical to the economic success of a particular venture and its environs, especially when combined with the predominant means of transport. Walking is critical, with evidence from the USA demonstrating economic benefits in inverse proportion to the percentage of fans that drive to the stadia and park on site.

Factors contributing to securing more successful stadia developments include:

- Agreement that the stadium managers will provide community leisure and health facilities within the stadium complex.
- Significant private sector funded improvements in transport infrastructures in and around stadia to allow new development corridors to be opened.
- Significant private sector funding of land remediation costs in and around stadia.
- Innovative funding agreements whereby a direct local benefit is derived from in-stadia sales.
- Private sector funding of stadia-sited community training facilities and on-site incubation centres

Source: British Urban Regeneration Alliance [BURA] (2003) **BURA Guide to Best Practice in Sport and Regeneration**

Sport and active recreation have long been the focus of regeneration activity, principally in respect of physical development, but increasingly through social and economic renewal. The emergence of Community Strategies has provided an instrument for developing a rounded approach to regeneration. The Wakefield Community Strategy 2001, for instance, is used by the Sport and Recreation Unit as a focus for delivery against a range of criteria, namely:

- Improve health and social care – using outreach programmes in partnership with SRB partners.
- Improve community safety – targeted programmes run in partnership with SRB partners.
- Reduce disadvantage and inequality – using a Sports Strategy to target specific groups.
- Develop communities and neighbourhoods – active promotion of facility improvement.
- Improve skill and educational attainment – through outreach programmes.
- Improve the natural and built environment – using facility improvement and development.
- Increase cultural and leisure opportunities – through facility improvement.

There are clear demands on the spatial planning system to help deliver appropriate facilities and other opportunities which contribute to these widely drawn aims. On a wider scale, the designation of Sports Action Zones (SAZ) has been instrumental in directly addressing both inequalities in provision and the opportunities for making better use of the potential of deprived areas. Twelve SAZ were designated in 2000 with the remit of engaging with local communities, partnership working and a demonstration of the role that sport can play in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. In the Liverpool SAZ, for instance, physical regeneration activity has centred on new build facilities (community sports centres, recreation

grounds), refurbishment of community facilities and general facility improvement in schools. Contact with the local authority (through planning and leisure services departments) was sought in the early stages of development proposals in order to establish a dialogue and smooth the delivery of facility-based schemes. These have totalled some £8m of £11m received in external funds. The role of facility development in leading increased participation has been central to the success of the SAZ programme in Liverpool, and it is unlikely that this scale of development would have been forthcoming in the absence of the SAZ. The challenge is now to replicate the experience through mainstream work, along with ensuring that facility management is addressed.

Box 3.2 summarises how facility development has been secured through opportunities associated with housing renewal. The issue of on-going maintenance is highlighted and the role of s106 monies in funding this.

Box 3.2 Kendray Youth Play, Barnsley: Provision of a range of new facilities including play equipment, amphitheatre and informal games areas

Background

For many years there have been no community play facilities for young people on the Kendray estate. Large-scale housing demolition however, provided the opportunity to create a new open space in the heart of the neighbourhood. The Kendray Youth Play project started in 2002 with a series of events to identify young people's priorities for the area. The events were held in different venues and included detached youth work to engage young people hanging around on the streets. The initial consultation found that young people wanted a place for activities like football and skateboarding and somewhere they could hang around and meet friends. Two sites were identified – one on Farm Road recreation ground for sports-based activities, and one in the Central area as a performance space and hang-out spot. A series of workshops were held to develop the design and trips were organised to give young people a chance to experience different parks and playgrounds.

Project Description

Lottery funding has enabled a range of play and arts facilities to be provided. This has increased opportunities for skateboarding, rollerblading, informal team games, girl's activities and socialising. The detached Youth Work team will provide coaching, play and arts activities and maintenance and inspection will be provided by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. Funding for the on-going maintenance will come from Section 106 Agreements linked to the adjoining housing developments and young people will be actively involved in maintaining the site through the Groundwork Dearne Valley Stewardship programme.

Total Project Cost: £419,416, **Lottery Award:** £253,875

Spatial Planning Principle 4: Quality of Life & Well-Being

What is the Issue and Why is it Important?

Sport and active recreation are fundamental to the promotion of a good quality of life, enabling people to better appreciate their surroundings and develop a sense of community through social activity. Equally, sport and active recreation contribute to the creation of better places to live and work as part of the planning process. Quality of life is a widely used, yet often highly personal notion, which expresses an amalgam of factors such as:

- Personal health – in particular exposure to pollution.
- Cost of living - accommodation/travel/council tax/foodstuffs.
- Social and environmental setting - crime/vandalism/social issues/litter, etc.
- Availability of services - availability and diversity of shopping facilities/restaurants.
- Availability of relevant work close-by.
- 'Soft', perhaps immeasurable aspects such as scenery or the presence of a milieu that appeals to people - artistic/fashion/intellectual/historical setting/cultural.

These are often distilled into specific indicators which are measured as part of efforts to improve the quality of life of inhabitants of a particular locale, and indeed measure the performance of the delivery of services through Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs). Spatial planning is being drawn into the process of delivering a better quality of life through supporting efforts to address particular deficiencies. Improvements in access to services and visual amenity through infrastructure development are important contributions to this process and one in which sport has a significant role to play, both as a complement to other activities and as a focal point in its own right.

What Role is Sport England Playing?

Sport England has long promoted the development of facilities which not only help improve sports participation and performance but also contribute to community character and vitality. In turn, Sport England is committed to ensuring that sports facilities are accessible and welcoming to all sectors of the community and will promote the development of suitably designed and managed facilities in appropriate locations. These aspirations will be sought as part of the strategic planning work of Sport England in the regions, contact with local authorities and liaison between governing bodies of sport to ensure that opportunities for the promotion of sport and active recreation are taken (see **Box 4.1**).

Box 4.1 Delivering Community Sport in the South West

Sports clubs in the South West are generally small in size and singular in activity and focus. The Regional Plan for Sport supports the development of multi-sport hub and spoke club. This requires clubs coming together to provide joint opportunities to a much larger membership. Support from the Community Investment Fund will only be considered a priority for multi-sport hub club proposals.

Sports clubs and other facilities are generally under-utilised in the local community setting. They are busy during the weekend and some evenings but daytime use is negligible. The Regional Plan for Sport gives a priority to integration of these facilities with other important community services. A clubhouse could accommodate a small GP practice where health clinics could be provided, a library service which could be put behind doors when not in use, internet services which could act as an internet café and/or opportunities for Adult Education services. Potential applicants need to engage with other community requirements and come forward with proposals for integrated facilities.

Sport England South West (2005) **Regional Plan Bulletin No.3: Community Investment Fund**

How Can Spatial Planning Enable Sport and Active Recreation to Play its Role in Enhancing Quality of Life and Well-Being?

The character, causes and consequences of disappointing rates of participation in sport and active recreation, particularly amongst certain sectors of society, are well understood, both nationally and in certain locations such as in the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas¹⁷. The principle function of spatial planning in assisting with nurturing a culture of participation is two-fold. First to ensure that there is a planned approach to provision of facilities for sport and active recreation. This involves detailed assessments of need through local survey work. This follows the demands of PPG17 which emphasises that effective planning policies for open spaces, sport and recreation are necessary to deliver broader government aims associated with improving quality of life, health and well-being. The protection and provision of sports pitches and open spaces is critical here, and there is evidence¹⁸ that the rapid erosion of these particular assets has been halted. Using Planning Obligations¹⁹ to enable facility provision is likely to be a central part of the approach, and Sport England has produced detailed guidance²⁰ on the achievement of these aspirations in relation to new housing development.

A second, related, area is ensuring that there is complementary provision, balanced in quantity, quality and type. In support of this aspiration, the promotion of dual and multi-use facilities where appropriate and feasible is important, in turn contributing to more efficient provision. This also involves ensuring that facilities are accessible to those who will readily use them and those who might be encouraged to do so (see **Box 4.2**).

The adoption of spatial planning principles in local government coincides with the refinement of approaches to measuring corporate performance. From late 2005, the delivery of shared priorities²¹ by local authorities will form part of a wider corporate assessment under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime. Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) and their means of measurement (Best Value Performance Indicators [BVPIs]) will be tuned to deliver LPSA priorities, reflecting local circumstances and objectives. The potential contribution of sport and active recreation to these has been set out in Sport England guidance²², and reflects the broadening and more integrated nature of the delivery of public services.

Box 4.3 details core principles to be adopted when planning for sport and recreation in growth areas, and **Box 4.4** details the way in which Supplementary Planning Documents might begin to take account of the wider quality of life issues of which sport and active recreation are a significant part.

¹⁷ see <http://www.renewal.net/toolkits/sportstoolkit/>

¹⁸ DCMS (2005) **More Sports Playing Fields Created Than Ever Before** at: www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms100_05.htm

¹⁹ ODPM (2005) **Circular 05/2005 Planning Obligations** at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_039133.pdf

²⁰ Sport England (2001) **Providing for Sport and Recreation through New Housing Development: Good Practice Guide** at: http://www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/resource_ps/kitbag_front_page/kitbag_providing_for_sport_through_new_development.htm

²¹ the shared priorities of central and local government are: raising standards in schools; improving quality of life for older people and for children; young people and families at risk; promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities; creating safer and stronger communities; transforming our local environment; meeting local transport needs; and promoting the economic vitality of localities.

²² ODPM/LGA/DCMS/Sport England (2004) **Sport and Physical Activity in 2nd Generation Local Public Service Agreements: Guidance Notes** at: http://www.sportengland.org/16327_guidance_exec_summ.pdf

Box 4.2 Milkwood Open Space, Lambeth, London

Milkwood Open Space within the Borough of Lambeth was created at the cost of £324,993, of which £250,993 came from the Sport England Lottery Fund. Facilities include a cable run, a grass sports pitch, a multi use games area, a shelter for teenagers, a children's play area, a meeting and an activity area for adults.

The Problem

Milkwood Open Space was previously un-cared for open space in the middle of a high density housing estate. It was avoided as it was the focal point of antisocial behaviour and was regarded as an unsafe eyesore that let down the community. There was an ambition by the local residents association to combat these issues and make the area an asset to the community to enhance the quality of life by addressing antisocial behaviour, health and the quality of the environment.

Good Partnerships

Good partnerships were paramount in this project, and regular meetings were held involving the community, local schools, the church, the police, young people and businesses to establish what the community wanted and to ensure that everyone was on board. The project composed of mainly of representatives from Milkwood Residents Association, PopUlar Youth Association, London Borough of Lambeth, Sport England, Quadrant Community Investment, Jessop Primary School and Willowfield Secondary School.

Planning and Regeneration Background

Lambeth Borough Councils draft Unitary Development Plan recognises that there are serious crime problems in the Borough, and recognises and supports the need for a co-ordinated approach toward the re-use of derelict sites. Lambeth's Youth Strategy, Play Strategy, and Sports Strategy highlighted the need for facility provision to help develop children and young people's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and communication skills. The project also showed synergy with a range of community and regeneration initiatives including the Health Action Zone, Education Action Zone, Lambeth's Inner Area of Need and Brixton Town Centre Regeneration Area. More generally, local planning policy and council strategies have recognised the potential of sport and active recreation to combat problems of antisocial behaviour, health, education, the environment and quality of life.

Evidence of Sustainability

There is evidence that the leisure and sports facilities provide benefits to health, and the pathways through the park encourage workers to walk through to the industrial estate. The environmental area forms parts of school activities, and the open space as a whole has improved the environment of the area. Most importantly with the help of a park ranger there has been a reduction of antisocial behaviour and community development issues with the park.

One of the main successes of the park is that it has raised the profile of the area, developing the skills to lead the development of the park and manage the park as an asset for the community and further developing the project. This project is a good example of residents taking on a project and making it a success for themselves and the community by using sport and active recreation to combat wider social issues characterising the area previous to the park's existence.

Source: **The National Lottery - Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Programme**

Box 4.3 Principles for Planning for Sport and Recreation in Growth Areas

A guide to developing green infrastructure in the Growth Areas¹ sets out the following principles which should guide the development of sport and recreation opportunities:

- Existing formal and informal sport and recreation facilities, including allotments, should be safeguarded from development.
- Opportunities must be taken to create new recreational facilities, particularly those that will link urban and countryside areas.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans in the individual growth areas must take account of new development and opportunities presented by Green Infrastructure (GI).
- The importance of linked up space and green routes for providing recreational opportunities that can enhance health and well-being should be recognised.
- Opportunities should be taken to secure contributions through planning obligations towards new provision and qualitative improvements to existing assets where such facilities will be expected to meet the needs of residents of the new development areas.
- Local authorities should carry out robust audits and assessments of need in relation to formal and informal open space for sport and recreation, in line with advice contained within Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17). Such assessments should consider fully the issue of future needs in areas where growth is expected.

¹ Planning Sustainable Communities - A Green Infrastructure Guide for Milton Keynes & the South Midlands <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GeAN0305BIWY-e-e.pdf>

Box 4.4 The Contribution of Supplementary Planning Documents

SPD on sport and leisure facilities in Aylesbury Vale recognises that good quality sport and leisure facilities can make a significant contribution to local attractiveness, the health and well-being of residents and the development of the local economy. At the centre of the council's key aims and objectives is "making Aylesbury Vale the best possible place to live and work." In relation to sport and leisure facilities the Council have a number of key aims:

- To achieve safe, healthy communities and provide accessible services;
- To manage the built and natural environment of a growing district in a sustainable way; and
- To develop and promote the local economy and establish Aylesbury Vale as a vibrant economic centre.

The guidance makes reference to the wider benefits of sport noted in PPG17 in achieving the government's objectives such as rural renewal, social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and sustainable development.

With these considerations the guidance systematically looks at stages in determining requirements which are put into context by the recognition of the wider benefits sport can bring to a community. However, despite many of the key principles of spatial planning being recognised, they are only briefly mentioned by way of introduction.

Aylesbury Vale District Council (August 2004) Supplementary Planning Guidance: Sport and Leisure Facilities

at: http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/ourenvironment/planning/news/sport_and_leisure.htm

Spatial Planning Principle 5: Health Improvement

What is the Issue and Why is it Important?

There is an intuitive link between regular physical activity and good health. Under the Government's target²³ of increased participation, there is a significant challenge of appropriate provision which both encourages and enables people to take part in sport and physical activity. This means the provision of appropriate facilities, underpinned by a thorough understanding of need, and offering opportunities for the inclusion of local communities in planning and design.

What Role is Sport England Playing?

Contributing to the health agenda is a relatively new area of engagement for Sport England. An accumulating body of evidence which demonstrates the immediate and significant linkages between sport and good health has recently been assembled²⁴, in turn highlighting the role of Sport England as an enabler in developing creative responses to community aspirations and needs. **Box 5.1** presents a similar example.

Box 5.1 Encouraging Active Lives

We need to impact on the way people live their lives and build in activity. Young people, in particular, need opportunities to access safe space to play and be active. Local Authorities need to develop simple plans for the provision of a hierarchy of open access play space. This hierarchy may range from a rebound wall up to a floodlit multi-use games area. All areas should have access to appropriate space and this is a priority, based on some strategic planning by the local authority. Workplaces are an important setting where the majority of people spend a great deal of time. We need to build activity into this setting. A priority is to support imaginative proposals, which enable people to be more active during the working day.

Sport England South West (2005) **Regional Plan Bulletin No.3: Community Investment Fund**

How Can Spatial Planning Enable Sport and Active Recreation to Play its Role in Delivering Health Improvement?

Spatial planning's role in delivering a healthier population rests with helping to deliver appropriate conditions within which sport and active recreation can take place. This means not only facility development, but acting as a focal point for a range of strategies and programmes which seek to deliver more cohesive and robust communities²⁵. With the overall aspiration of contributing to the emergence of a culture of inherently active lifestyles and life-

²³ HM Government (2002) **Game Plan: a strategy for delivering Government's sport and physical activity objectives**. The target is that 70% of the population should engage in moderate exercise for 30 minutes or more at least 5 times a week by 2020.

²⁴ Sport England (2005) **Sport Playing its Part: The Contribution of Sport to Community Priorities and the Improvement Agenda**

²⁵ such as at the national level: ODPM (2003) **Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future**; ODPM (2005) **Making it Happen in Neighbourhoods: The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal**; Home Office (2005) **Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's Strategy to Increase Race Equality and Community Cohesion** and at the local level: Community Strategies, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies and Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategies

long participation in sport, there are a number of opportunities for the spatial planning system to make a direct contribution. These centre on:

- Ensuring that the design of new developments addresses opportunities for activity (including the needs of all sectors of society) wherever possible. Masterplanning of new developments, for instance, provides a direct opportunity to design in activity²⁶.
- Using means such as Planning Obligations to promote the inclusion of sport and recreation facilities either directly into new developments or as off-site developments (see **Box 5.3**).
- Ensuring that every opportunity for promoting access to sport and recreation opportunities (such as informal recreation on the urban fringe) is taken when considering proposals for development.
- Advocating the use of health impact assessments²⁷ as part of the planning process, both for the evaluation of policy and the appraisal of planning applications (see **Box 5.2**).
- Liaising with organisations such as Primary Care Trusts who have a specific remit for health improvement, to explore opportunities for 'joined-up' delivery.

Box 5.2 The Principles and Practice of Health Impact Assessment

What is HIA?

HIA is the estimation of the effects of a specified action on the health of people in a particular community or area. Its purpose is to assess the potential health impacts - positive and negative - of policies, programmes and projects. Apart from the commitment to examine its own major new policies, the Government has stated that: *"Local decision-makers must think about the effect which their policies which their policies may have on health, and in particular how they can reduce health inequality. They will in future need to act much more as health champions at local level and ensure health is on the agenda of all local organisations and agencies outside the health field. An important part of their role will be to encourage all local agencies to make local health impact assessments when planning investment in, for example, amenities, buildings or local communities and in the location of services."* (Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation)

Applying HIA

HIA does not follow a standard path. It is a broad concept that may be interpreted in different ways by a range of different users and according to the kind of policy, programme or plan being assessed. There are many applications of HIA, including:

- Inclusion of human health in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA);
- Risk Assessment;
- Social Impact Assessment;
- Hazard Mapping; and
- Health Inequalities Impact Assessment.

HIA focuses on the underlying social conditions that affect health. It assists in identifying avoidable and unjust differentials in health status and reducing the deficits between those suffering poorer health outcomes. The most effective HIA is a prospective activity to ensure that steps are taken, at the planning stage, to maximise positive health impacts and to minimise the negative effects. The health impacts associated with the interventions have not occurred at the time of assessment. In practice it is not always possible to do this so HIA may also be carried out concurrently (during the implementation stage) or retrospectively (after it has finished) in order to inform the ongoing development of existing work. One may conduct a rapid appraisal or a more comprehensive study dependant on the time, resources and topic or health impact being assessed, using matrices akin to those employed in EIA and SEA.

²⁶ see <http://www.sportengland.org/activedesign.pdf>

²⁷ Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is recognised by Article 152 of the Amsterdam Treaty which calls for the European Union to examine the possible impact of major policies on health. The role of HIA was specifically highlighted in the Government's public health strategy: *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation*. The 1999 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations scope includes impacts on humans, as does the 2001 EC Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In February 2002 the European Parliament placed a duty on the European Commission to report on its proposals for applying HIA to transport policy by 2003 and how it could be combined with SEA.

Box 5.3 Using a Section 106 Agreement for the City of Manchester Stadium

The City of Manchester Stadium was built to host the 2002 Commonwealth Games and later to become the home of Manchester City Football Club. The stadium was financed by a significant amount of public money, £77 million of which was from the Sport England Lottery Fund.

Planning Background

Local planning policy concentrated principally on the economic advantages that the stadium could bring through its city marketing potential as both the host of the Commonwealth Games, and its iconic nature transforming the physical image as the centre piece for the 17th and 22nd most deprived electoral wards in Britain. Permission was granted for the stadium on 8th October 1999 pending a section 106 agreement between Manchester City Council and Manchester City Football Club to ensure community use of the stadium for 130 days of the year through sporting and non-sporting uses. The agreement emphasised the potential benefits the development would have on health and education in the area through joint working with the East Manchester Education Team, the Health Action Zone and North Manchester Primary Care Trust.

Application of the Principles

Since the stadium opened it has been successful in working in partnership with these different organisations in delivering educational programmes, most notably Bluezone for two hours per weekday, with an ICT suite additionally used for adult courses. In terms of health the stadium has contributed quite significantly with a number of successful health days, breast cancer screening days, and health walks within the stadium. Manchester City is currently looking in to setting up a regular clinic for the local community to provide a more regular facility for such uses.

Spatial Planning Principle 6: Raising Standards in Schools

What is the Issue and Why is it Important?

Participation in sport and active recreation is fundamental to developing lifelong good habits of physical activity as well as establishing the basis for sporting excellence. Whilst children must be encouraged to participate, appropriate opportunities must also be provided to complement this effort (see **Box 6.1**). These can include the provision of new facilities, multiple-use facilities and the setting of appropriate conditions of use such as through opening hours. Equally, the broader environmental context for participation is important, using tools such as safe routes and the location of facilities according to need. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme offers a massive opportunity for the provision of new quality sports facilities accessible by the community, linked into their needs and aspirations.

Box 6.1 The Role of Sport in Education

Current commitments to create Specialist Sports Colleges and a network of School Sports Partnerships, together with the drive to ensure that 75% of pupils aged 5 -16 years have access to two hours PE and school sport a week, will make a tremendous difference, creating the foundation stone for life-long participation. However, whilst some schools have an excellent track record in making connections with their community, there is wide variation across the country. Schools can be a major contributor to alleviating time pressure on family life, and in creating the bridge to participation after school, reducing the drop out with age. Facilities in further and higher education can provide similar opportunities. More students are entering higher education than ever before – from 100,000 in the 1950s to 1.7 million in 2000. Research suggests that those who participate in higher education are more likely to participate in sport, both in student life and in adult life. The challenge is to ensure that community capacity and infrastructure is put in place to provide opportunities post-school, and that school facilities and clubs work closely with the community. Extending current initiatives with primary schools will also help to strengthen sport and PE at Key Stage 2 (children aged 7-11 years), a critical age for developing patterns for life long participation.

Sport England (2004) A Framework for Sport p.14

What Role is Sport England Playing?

Sport England's principal role in engaging with the educational sector is through the promotion of participation and sporting excellence in schools. However, there is an increasing recognition of the function of the planning system to help enable and add value to this process. The protection of playing fields from development has been a significant focus of concern, but the provision of appropriate built sport and recreation facilities which serve a wider community function are of increasing interest.

How Can Spatial Planning Enable Sport and Active Recreation to Play its Role in Delivering Raised Standards in Schools?

Encouraging participation in sport is often based on the promotion of access to good quality facilities. This can be through physical proximity, the provision of a range of facilities and the development of dual or multi-use facilities. Planning practice can assist this process through:

- Ensuring that there is adequate provision of facilities, using a firm evidence base to ensure that this is related to need.
- Through pre-application negotiations, exploring opportunities for the provision of a range

of facilities such that there is complementary provision across a neighbourhood or sub-region.

- Using conditions applied to planning permission to promote the fullest use of facilities for community benefit (see **Boxes 6.3 & 6.4**), such as through the modification of opening hours, supported by the establishment of safe routes which help to encourage use by as wide a range of the community as possible.
- Using planning obligations to secure direct community benefits such as facilities which might otherwise not have been provided.

Spatial planning, in its widest sense, also concerns the development of a dialogue between partners to promote the delivery of shared obligations and aspirations. To this end, Sport England recognises the role which a variety of educational establishments can play in helping to provide a range of facilities which meet demand (both expressed and latent) and contributing to an emerging culture of activity (see **Box 6.2**).

Box 6.2 Community Access to Higher Education Sport Facilities

On average, Higher Education sports facilities are available for public use approximately 70% of the time that they are open and the best estimates are that an average of one visit in three is made by people other than the staff and students of the institution. Three quarters of institutions offer some sort of concessionary fees for sports facility usage to the wider community, predominantly to children and older people. Two thirds state that they run programmes aiming to increase access to / participation by the wider community, often through targeted taster sessions and children's summer schemes.

Two thirds (68%) of Higher Education institutions offer participation / access programmes aimed at specific sections of the local community. Children are particularly likely to be the focus of such programmes, with two thirds (64%) of institutions offering participation programmes to involve them in sport. A third (35%) offer access programmes to older (50+) people; a quarter (26%) offer participation programmes to women and girls; and a fifth (20%) to people with disabilities. In addition, 17% of institutions target participation programmes at people who do not usually participate in any sport: 15% at black and ethnic minorities, and 10% at people on low incomes.

Audit of Sports Provision in the Higher Education Sector

http://www.sportengland.org/audit-of-sports-provision-higher-education-sector_full-report.pdf

Box 6.3 Community Benefits at Minster School, Southwell, Nottinghamshire

Pre-application discussions can be important in recognising the impacts a sports development might have in raising educational standards, health, and improving quality of life.

Minster School is situated next to Southwell Leisure Centre and is within Newark and Sherwood District Council. The school won funding (£34 million) to be redeveloped as it was separated in to two areas of Southwell. This redevelopment would enable the school to be concentrated in one place, and would be linked to Southwell Leisure Centre.

Sport England were central to the pre-application discussions as the redevelopment of the school was seen as an opportunity to develop sports facilities and a replacement pitch to enhance sports facilities in the area, and was seen as an opportunity by the school to raise standards by enhancing the Physical Education curricular. However further benefits were recognised and pushed forward by Sport England as the playing field and sports facilities associated with the redevelopment of the school were seen as good opportunities to improve the health of pupils and the local community though links with sports clubs.

Permission for the application was granted 25th August 2005, with a view to completing the development in 2007. Notably, however, these wider issues were not mentioned in the planning permission.

Box 6.4 Benfield Community Sports Complex, Newcastle

Benfield School sports facilities were improved in November 2001 following an investment of £2.1m from Sport England towards a total project cost of £3.5m. The facility now includes:

- a regional gymnastics centre;
- a 6 court sports hall;
- a 20m swimming pool;
- two small gymnasia; and
- an outdoor sports pavilion.

Planning Background

The application for the development was on underused land with an unused building to be demolished. Sport England were a consultee as the development at Benfield encroached slightly onto the playing fields of the school, and their statutory duty to enforce Playing Field Policy brought them in to the equation. They came to the conclusion that the proposal met special circumstances in that its provision would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh any harm caused by the loss of land designated as playing fields. The application only took into account development plan policy over matters such as protecting the amenity of nearby dwellings, ensuring development would not harm any open space for outdoor sport, and that the development would not harm a wildlife corridor near the site. The application was approved as *“the proposed community sports complex would have significant benefits in providing a quality environment for the development of sporting skills.”* (Planning Committee Report).

Elements of Spatial Planning

Although it is evident that the wider benefits that sport and recreation can provide were not a consideration in the proposal, this case does provide an example of how a sports development can contribute to the following key themes:

- Raising the Standards in Schools - Benfield School and Sports College, during curriculum hours, has access to the facilities which in turn has increased their profile as an educational establishment with a good sports reputation.
- Local Economic Viability - Along with the creation of jobs, the facility has enabled the development of the Sports College in which young people can progress to careers in sport and PE, thus increasing the foundation for employment prospects in the area.
- Health Improvements - With the facility being open a total of 90 hours per week, it is accessible to all of the community. The facility is home to a Regional High performance Gym Facility and Northumbria Badminton Association as a county development centre, and an increase in interest in the facility is shown by the increase in number of coaches from 29 to 75.
- Improving Quality of Life and Well Being of the Community - The Sports College has extended links between families of schools, sports bodies and communities, sharing resources and developing and sharing good practice. The complex had the largest ethnic sports programme in the North East, and has an increased annual usage of 91,458 people (from 15,200).

This case study demonstrates the effectiveness of a sports development in delivering wider community objectives, but is also an example of how these aspects are not recognised or perhaps utilised in the planning process leading to its development as effectively as they might be.

Source: www.sportengland.org, www.benfield.newcastle.sch.uk, Mathew Atkins (DC, Newcastle City Council), Dave McGuire (Sport England), Development Control Committee Report (NCC, 18.02.2000)