
From: Katy Walker
Sent: 20 March 2015 16:35
To: LDF
Subject: Local Plan: Site Allocations - Development Plan Document

Sport England representation: SA 55: Alexandra Palace

Sport England Comments:

Further clarity is required around allocation SA 55: Alexandra Palace. The allocation includes existing playing field land yet the policy allocation is unclear on exactly what is intended for these areas, and whether they are to be protected in line with Paragraph 74 of the NPPF or if it intended that there be some loss of playing field land as part of this allocation.

Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community. To achieve this our objectives are to seek to PROTECT sports facilities from loss as a result of redevelopment; to ENHANCE existing facilities through improving their quality, accessibility and management and to PROVIDE new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet demands for participation now and in the future. We work with the planning system to achieve these aims and objectives, seeking to ensure that they are reflected in local plan policies, and applied in development management.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear about the role that sport plays in delivering sustainable communities through promoting health and well-being. Sport England, working with the provisions of the NPPF, wishes to see direct reference to sport in local planning policy to protect, enhance and provide sports facilities, as well as helping to realise the wider benefits that participation in sport can bring.

Sound policy can only be developed in the context of objectively assessed needs, in turn used to inform the development of a strategy for sport and recreation. Policies which protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities should reflect this work, and be the basis for consistent application through development management. Sport England is not prescriptive on the precise form and wording of policies, but advises that a stronger plan will result from attention to taking a clearly justified and positive approach to planning for sport.

Policies could be included in a separate chapter on sport and recreation or, following the NPPF, be part of a chapter on health and well-being. In all cases, however, policies for sport and active recreation must be properly justified, include criteria against which development proposals will be judged and be based on a robust and up-to-date assessment of need as required by paragraph 73 of the NPPF.

In this way, planning authorities will be able to demonstrate that their plan has been positively prepared (based on objectively assessed needs), is consistent with national policy (reflecting the NPPF), is justified (having considered alternatives) and effective (being deliverable). Without such attention there is a risk that a local plan or other policy document could be considered unsound.

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, section 8), meaning that local authorities must plan and provide accordingly through policy and development management. Without a robust and up-to-date assessment of need (as required by paragraph 73 of the NPPF), there is a risk that a local plan document could be considered unsound.

Sport England will resist the allocation of any playing field site for development unless there is a robust assessment (Playing Pitch Strategy to Sport England methodology: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>) in place at the point of allocation which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements.

Sport England would expect any policy to be very explicit on the need to retain and not prejudice the use of Alexandra Park Cricket and Football Club and any other formal sporting uses of the site.

Katy Walker

Principal Planning Manager

Sport England's London office has moved to 1st Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3HF



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