

**From:** Nick Evans  
**Sent:** 12 November 2012 12:16  
**To:** Illingworth, Cllr John  
**Subject:** Sports Provision for Disadvantaged communities

Dear Cllr Illingworth

Thank you for your correspondence to Kay Thomson that has been passed onto me regarding Sport England's Planning Policy and Health.

As you are aware Sport England has a clear remit from Government in terms of raising participation in sport and this is set out in our 2012-17 Strategy – Creating a Sporting Habit for Life. In addition we are a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect playing fields and our policy on this is set out in our policy document – A Sporting Provision for the Playing Fields of England

[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/putting\\_policy\\_into\\_practice/playing\\_fields.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/putting_policy_into_practice/playing_fields.aspx). We have no statutory remit for Health matters although we recognise the impact that regular participation in sport can have on health and well-being and work closely with Health agencies to advocate the value and role of sport. Kay may have mentioned that we are currently putting in place funding focusing on those least active and are looking at how we can deliver sporting programmes in a way that has a positive impact on public health priorities.

When we assess applications we consider the impact on sport as that is our remit, consulting clubs and national governing bodies of sport where appropriate. As a statutory consultee we apply our policy across all local planning authorities, always seeking to ensure that there is consistency between offices through regular meetings, peer review and discussions with our legal advisors. However while Sport England focuses on the sporting impacts of a planning application and responds accordingly, local authorities can and should consider the wider impacts that any application may have on open space or health as is pointed out within our policy, and is reflected under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 74. All of these factors should be included as material considerations with other factors when a local authority assesses any planning application and ultimately makes a decision. Sport England do not make decisions on applications; we can only comment in line with our policy and on matters within our remit and feed this into the planning authority decision making process.

The new NPPF has moved planning policy forward with regard to healthy communities (see paras 69-70). A key part of this is to ensure that sport plays its part, that planning policies are based on up to date needs assessments and to plan positively to provide sport facilities and opportunities.

Our North Hub team have been working and will continue to work with Leeds City Council on developing their research and evidence base to plan effectively for sport. This follows from Sport England's developing partnership with the five Core Cities including Leeds where we are piloting a 'place based' approach to delivering sport. In terms of strategic planning we will be meeting officers in November to offer support, both in time and money, to deliver a city wide playing pitch strategy. It is then the local authority's responsibility to make use of this evidence on sport in the context of public health.

Yours sincerely

**Nick Evans**  
Head of Planning

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