SPORT ENGLAND

Making a planning application

A guide for community sports clubs

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This guide supports Sport England's wider guidance on how the planning system can help to provide opportunities for all to take part in sport and be physically active.

For more information visit
www.sportengland.org/planningforsport

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Making A Planning Application

The aim of this guide

This guide provides step-by-step advice to help community sports clubs apply and obtain planning permission for new and/or enhanced sports facilities.

The guide aims to help clubs better understand the planning application process, from the early consideration of options through to implementing a planning permission.

Is this guide relevant to you?

This guide is relevant to you if your club is thinking of doing one or more of the following:

- replacing or enhancing existing sports facilities
- building new sports facilities
- relocating to a new site
- holding a temporary or permanent sports event.

All these changes may need planning permission. This guide emphasises the importance of doing plenty of background research and thinking before preparing a planning application. Effort invested at an early stage will help to save considerable time, expense and potential frustration later. The key to this is seeking sound advice and this guide identifies various resources which can assist you with preparing your case.

Using the guide won't guarantee success. However, it should increase your chance of navigating through the planning application process successfully and with clarity, while ensuring the best use is made of your time and available resources.

The importance of the planning system

Community sports clubs and National Governing Bodies for sport (NGBs) regularly report that poor quality facilities are a significant barrier to making the most of opportunities for increasing participation, enjoyment and performance.

Whatever improvements are proposed to facilities it's highly likely that planning permission will be required. If, when seeking permission, you don't approach the planning system correctly it can lead to frustration, financial loss and damage to reputation and community relations.

The planning system is not a barrier to development but should be viewed as a means of helping to secure the best outcome for proposals.

As such, it can direct the way in which sports facilities are developed, control their day-to-day use (such as hours of operation) and act to resolve conflicts between sports and the environment in which they take place. Planning permission is not only needed in order to develop sports facilities but is generally required as a condition of funding applications for new facilities from NGBs or other sources.

The structure of this guide

This guide is structured into five steps:

Step 1	**Review**	Reviewing the options	Page 7
Step 2	**Prepare**	Preparing the application	Page 18
Step 3	**Submit**	Submitting the application	Page 23
Step 4	**Decide**	Making the decision	Page 28
Step 5	**Implement**	Implementing a permission	Page 33

Appendix A presents some **common considerations** that are often central to the assessment of planning applications for sport related development, along with tips and useful resources on how they can be addressed. **Appendix B** provides links to further **useful information** and **contact details**.

Overview of the planning application process

Step 1 Review

- Understand local needs and define your project
- Find out if you need planning permission
- Be aware of other types of approval you might need
- Develop and test your case by talking to the right people
- Be aware of and address the key considerations specific to your proposal

Step 2 Prepare

- Understand which type of application to submit
- Ensure your designs are fit for purpose and provide accesible facilities
- Ensure any new/amended buildings meet building regulations
- Prepare all necessary supporting information

Step 3 Submit

- Understand what you need to submit and how
- Ensure your application is valid
- Be aware of the costs of submitting an application

Step 4 Decide

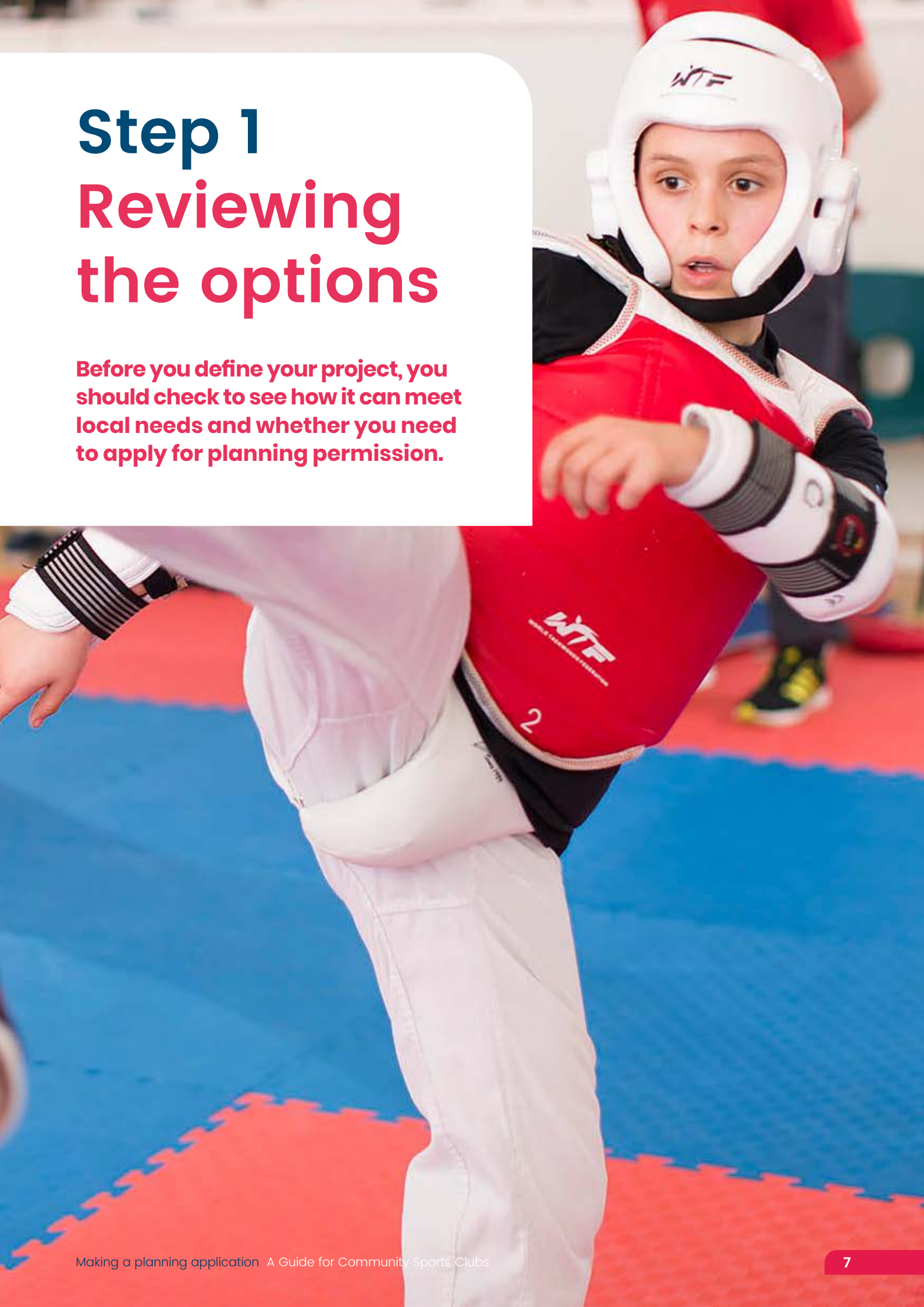
- Understand how your application will be determined
- Be aware what will influence the decision
- Understand the potential outcomes

Step 5 Implement

- Be aware of how long any permisisons last
- Understand any conditions attached to a permisson and how to meet them
- Comply with the permission and conditions to avoid enforcement action

Step 1
Reviewing the options

Before you define your project, you should check to see how it can meet local needs and whether you need to apply for planning permission.



If you do need to apply for planning permission, you should think carefully about how to do it, talk to relevant parties and gather evidence to help develop your case.

This will take time to do.

Understand local needs and define your project

The nature of your proposed development should respond to the needs of existing users of the site and/or those of the wider local community for sports facilities. For example, user's satisfaction with a facility and their use of it may be deteriorating due to poor changing facilities, there may be increasing demand locally for particular facilities for individual sports and/or a need for facilities or improvements to encourage particular groups to increase their levels of physical activity.

A good starting point to help with defining and/or refining your project would be to:

1. Consult with users of the site / facility

Gauge views and ask for ideas from people that use your site/facility, including your club members, those of other clubs or organisations that currently use the site/facility in question, and/or those who may be interested in using the site/facility once the proposed development is complete. Some members of your club or other users may also have knowledge or skills you could look to tap into to help develop and/or implement the proposal.

2. Look at any assessments of need and related plans / strategies your Local Planning Authority (LPA) has in place

Your LPA will normally be your local city, borough or district council, or national park authority. A LPA's planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreational facilities and opportunities for new provision (see paragraph 96 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework). Your LPA should be able to let you know what assessments and related plans/strategy documents exist for your area (e.g. a Playing Pitch Strategy and/or a Sports Facility Strategy) and how you can view them. Looking at the findings, recommendations and actions within these documents may help you to understand the extent to which your proposed project will help to meet identified current and/or future needs of the community or could be refined to do so.

To also help define your project it is important to reflect upon the full range of options which may be open to you. There may be solutions which achieve what you want which do not require a planning application, or for which a planning permission would be easier to secure. For example, you may wish to consider:

- meeting your needs by improving existing facilities
- considering shared use with other clubs or facilities
- looking at alternative sites
- researching different technologies which could achieve the same result
- identifying examples of how other clubs have tackled similar issues
- reviewing any past applications for development on or near your proposed site.

Do you need planning permission?

The legal requirements

There is a legal requirement to secure planning permission for most types of development. Development can take many forms and involve changes in use as well as physical works. It is therefore prudent to contact your LPA as soon as possible to discuss the proposal and to discuss whether you'll need to apply for planning permission.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (section 55) defines development as "*the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.*"

Whether you need planning permission often depends on what you are trying to do, and where you are trying to do it. For example, changing the use of a site or building such as a clubhouse to a function room for social events may require an application for planning permission, or changes to an existing planning permission. Generally, demolition does not constitute development unless it is a listed building, or the location is within a Conservation Area.

For any project that you have in mind, it is best to adopt a precautionary approach and assume that you will need to apply for planning permission, even for minor access works, repairs or improvements, unless and until formally advised otherwise by your LPA.

Sport-related development which requires an application for planning permission

Applying for planning permission is normally required for many types of sports related development.

While you should always check with your LPA first, examples of proposals requiring permission include:

- new or replacement outdoor sports lighting
- new or replacement fencing, gates or other security installations
- new clubhouses and changing rooms or extensions to existing provision
- new or additional car parking
- buildings for indoor sports
- new playing pitches, courts, greens or multi-use games areas (MUGA)
- replacing or changing playing surfaces e.g. replacing a natural grass pitch with an artificial grass pitch (AGP) or changing the type of artificial surface
- pontoons/jetties
- use of land for permanent or temporary sporting events
- change of use (e.g. agricultural land to create new playing pitches or adapting vacant commercial or retail buildings to provide new indoor sports facilities);
- new signs or advertisements
- changing hours of operation/use
- intensifying the use of an existing site
- earthworks to change site levels/topography
- introducing significant ancillary facilities
- new or improved site access
- use of containers as changing rooms or storage.

Change of use

A change in the use of land or buildings does not require planning permission if the proposed use falls within the same 'use class' as the current use, or if permitted development rights apply.

A list of the use classes can be viewed via the Government's Planning Practice Guidance. Even if the change in use doesn't require permission, external building works associated with the change in use may do so.

If you are looking to apply for a change of use discuss the description of what you are applying for with your LPA so it is clear and any resulting permission does not preclude uses you may want to put the land and/or buildings to.

For example, if you are looking to change the use of a building to a sports facility will this be used solely for sports or also for wider activities? If wider, then include details in your description.

Demolition, repair, replacement, and improvement

If you are looking to demolish a building, as separate works or part of the redevelopment of a site, you should also discuss this with your LPA before undertaking any work as planning permission may be required.

If permission is not required, you may still need to seek 'prior approval' from the LPA.

Also, be aware that some day-to-day work such as minor repairs, replacement or improvement to existing facilities may need planning permission (particularly if the external appearance is affected).

This can include fencing, lighting, surfacing, drainage and earthmoving. Again, if in doubt, it is worth checking with your LPA first to see if planning permission is required.

Permitted development

For some types of minor developments there is no need to apply for planning permission as these works may be permitted by national 'Permitted Development Rights' (PDRs).

For example, fencing and new access works can sometimes be undertaken without the need to apply for planning permission. It is worth checking with your LPA first to see if your proposals are allowed through PDRs.

PDRs depend on the scale and nature of the works involved and their location. However, a LPA may suspend or remove PDRs for certain areas/ cases e.g. in sensitive areas or for future works in relation to a development (through a condition imposed on an original planning permission).

There are also special rules (known as the 14- and 28-day rule) covering temporary events such as motor cross, motor car and motorcycle racing (including trials of speed), and practicing for those activities, where a certain amount of activity is allowed in any given year without needing planning permission.

These rules may also apply for non-sporting activities and events a sports club may look to host on their site such as markets and car boot sales. As with PDRs the activity allowed by these rules can also be suspended or removed e.g. for environmental or amenity reasons.

Other types of approval

Depending on the nature of your site and proposal you may also be required to seek other approvals in addition to requiring planning permission, or even if planning permission is not required.

These can range from more common approvals such as those relating to listed buildings and trees, to the more specific (for example, requiring a marine license if you will be carrying out operations in tidal or coastal waters).

Listed buildings

If your site includes a listed building, or is near a listed building, a separate consent will normally be required for the demolition of any buildings, or for works or alterations that could affect their character.

You should note that unauthorised works to a listed building is a criminal offence and can lead to prosecution.

Trees

Works to trees protected by a tree preservation order or in a conservation area may require a separate consent. In both instances, your LPA will have records of whether these apply to any trees at your site.

TIPS:

If you're unsure whether you'll need to apply for planning permission, and if you'll need any other approvals, check with your LPA first. Also ask them what assessments of need and related plans/strategies they have in place for sporting facilities and how you can view them.

Further information:

Link to the Government's Planning Practice Guidance – When is permission required? (to view the 'use classes' see the 'material change of use of land and buildings' link under the 'What is development?' heading.

Link to the Planning Portal – Includes a postcode based 'Find your Council' tool

Developing your case

If you need to apply for planning permission, then to help with developing your case it is worth:

Checking you have a good understanding of your site and its surroundings

It's important you have a good understanding of your site and its surroundings so you're aware of any relevant restrictions and/or considerations you will need to take into account as you develop your proposal.

For example, do you know if your site is within the green belt, a flood zone or a conservation area? Are any trees on the site covered by tree preservation orders? Are there any rights of way, overhead cables or underground pipelines/gas mains across or close to the site? What's the nature of neighbouring land uses and how close are any neighbouring properties?

Also, are there any covenants covering the use of the site and if you do not own the freehold are there any relevant restrictive clauses? Checking your deeds or lease agreement may help with this.

Further information:

Link to Sport England's Active Places Power website – you can use the quick site search tool to find a site and then the map function to look at a range of 'Environment Data' map layers e.g. flood zones.

Ask your LPA, during pre-application discussions to clarify any planning related restrictions and considerations for your site that you should be aware of (see below).

Meeting with your LPA for pre-application advice

Try to arrange a meeting with an officer from the Development Management section of your LPA to gain their initial views on the character of the proposal, the likely planning issues associated with it and how it may help to meet identified needs.

At this stage the officer should be able to highlight the LPA's planning policies relevant to your site (general policies e.g. on sports provision and health and wellbeing, along with any site specific policies e.g. green belt and flood protection), point you to any relevant supplementary planning documents[1] (SPD's), give you informal advice and suggest other council departments who it may be worth speaking to, such as highways (relating to traffic issues) and environmental health (relating to any noise and lighting issues).

These discussions may help to indicate if any technical studies may be needed to accompany an application (see the 'Other technical studies' section in Step 2 of this guide).

While no formal plans will be required at this stage, just the principles of what is proposed, make sure you go prepared. The more information you can provide (including any basic indicative plans and drawings) the more detailed feedback you are likely to receive from the LPA.

Sometimes, an LPA may wish to undertake the above discussion as part of their formal 'pre-application advice' service.

It is increasingly common for LPAs to charge for pre-application advice. The charges will not always apply to community sports clubs, but it is worth checking this before arranging to meet an officer.

These discussions could lead to the LPA providing a report with their initial view and any feedback on your proposals. This can be very helpful in understanding the next steps you may wish to take and matters which may be important in the determination of any planning application you submit.

You should also ask the LPA at this stage if they have a validation list. This will set out the information they require to be submitted with an application to enable them to register it as a valid application.

Consulting National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs)

Many NGBs have specific facility development plans and technical guidance which your project may benefit from. These include, for example, guidance on ensuring facility layouts meet minimum space requirements for their sport.

NGBs may also be able to provide advice on the financing of the project. Appendix B provides links to such resources for several of the NGBs.

1 Planning policies for an area will be set out in the relevant LPA's Local Plan. SPDs are used to provide further detail on specific Local Plan policies and/or provide guidance for development on specific sites or for particular issues e.g. design.

Contacting Sport England

LPAs must consult Sport England on applications for development affecting or prejudicing the use of a playing field. It is Sport England's policy to object to such applications unless they meet one or more of its five policy exceptions.

If your proposal is on or in close proximity to a playing field, it's strongly recommended that you contact Sport England early in the process rather than leave it to the LPA to consult Sport England at the application stage.

Along with advising whether your proposal could meet with any of its five policy exceptions, Sport England may also be able to point you to other useful guidance, tools and advice to help with preparing your application.

The Government also advises LPAs to consult Sport England on a range of other types of development (e.g. major sports facilities and residential development over 300 dwellings).

Further information:

Link to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document which provides full details on its statutory consultee role in the planning system, its policy and the five policy exceptions.

Appendix B to this guide provides contact details for Sport England's planning team.

Setting out the reasoning for your proposal

You should develop a sports development/ business plan which clearly sets out why the facility or works are needed, what they seek to achieve and what the benefits will be (including who they will benefit).

This will help to justify the need for the development and importantly ensure the LPA is fully aware of the benefits and can therefore give them appropriate weight in their consideration of the application.

The reasoning should present how the proposed development has been informed by and responds to identified needs of current users of the site/ facility and/or the wider local community (e.g. as set out in an existing assessment of need and related plan/strategy for the area – see the above 'Understand local needs and define your project' section of this guide).

Using specialist professionals

For large or complex schemes, you should consider appointing a specialist professional planning consultant or an architect to prepare the application and draw up plans.

Such professionals will know what is likely to be acceptable and their advice could end up saving you time and money.

Professional advice can be sought through the directory of planning consultants held by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the list of architects held by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

The RIBA website includes a referrals service which can help with appointing an architect with sports facility experience. It also presents details of the RIBA stages that architects work to. You may also be able to benefit from some advice from Planning Aid England.

Further information:

Link to the RTPI's directory of planning consultations

Link to RIBA's list of architects and referrals service

Link to the Planning Aid England website

Sharing your ideas with the local community

It will be useful to speak to your local community, including neighbours and relevant local Councillors, Town or Parish Councils, neighbourhood planning groups and/or local community groups about the proposals.

Any engagement should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed works and take into account any pre-application advice from the LPA.

Engaging and talking through the proposals with the local community at an early stage, perhaps by holding a public meeting or exhibition, will help you to gauge whether they may support or have concerns with your proposal. If they are made aware of the proposal at an early stage with a chance to input, they may be less likely to raise objections when consulted by the LPA at the planning application stage.

Objections at this later stage can often cause delay or sometimes lead to proposals being deemed unacceptable by the LPA. You may find that the local community could also assist in developing your proposals to enhance their benefits and/or in modifying them to help overcome any concerns.

Common considerations and how they can be addressed

There are some common considerations that are often central to the assessment of planning applications for new or enhanced sports facilities that it will be useful to be aware of. These include:

- The wider benefits of a proposal
- Noise
- Lighting
- Design
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Environmental sustainability
- Traffic and access.

LPAs are likely to have adopted planning policies related to these considerations which, where relevant to your proposal, will need to be taken into account.

Appendix A to this guide provides some details on these considerations including tips on how they can be addressed and links to useful resources.

There are also likely to be other key considerations that are specific to an individual proposal e.g. the need to maintain the flexibility of a site to provide for a range of sports, and/or the risk of balls going over the boundary of a site.

Discussions with your LPA, NGB, Sport England and the local community should help with identifying the key considerations specific to your proposal that you'll need to address as you develop your case and application details.

Testing your case

To help test your case, it is important to think about the possible impacts of your proposals. Generally, the LPA will consider the following types of issues when determining a sports facility related application:

- Is there a demonstrable need for the development (now and/or in the future)?
- Who is likely to be affected by the proposal, both positively and negatively?
- Could the proposal affect environmentally sensitive locations such as nature conservation areas, protected landscapes or historic sites?
- Will the proposal result in the facility being used for different or longer hours?
- Is there likely to be greater disturbance from more lighting, increased noise or traffic?
- Does the proposal lead to the need for more car parking and can this be provided on the site?
- Does the design of the building or facilities fit with its surroundings such as their location in relation to neighbouring properties?
- Could the uses be better provided on an alternative site?
- Could facilities be shared with other clubs or schools in the area?
- If the proposal will result in the loss of, or adversely affect other facilities, spaces and sensitive areas, along with local residents' amenity and/or their privacy, what measures are put forward to mitigate this?

Who else might it be worth talking to?

Depending on the nature of your proposal it may also be worth talking to:

Officers responsible for leisure services and sports development within your local council. They may be able to offer guidance and potentially lend their support to the development. For example, they may be in a position to advise on the extent a proposal will help to meet local needs and fits with wider leisure and sports development plans and programmes for the area, or how it could be amended to do so.

The Active Partnership for your area (previously known as County Sports Partnerships). They may also be able to offer advice on how your project could compliment and support wider programmes and activities in the area that are targeted at helping people to take part in sport and physical activity.

The highways department of your local council (or County Council) – if you are proposing new or increased access into your site then you will need to gain approval from the Highways Authority.

The environmental health department within your local council – if your proposal will increase external noise at the site and/or propose the lighting of outdoor facilities. If the noise or lighting is likely to impact on your neighbours, then early discussions will help to understand how your proposals can be developed to mitigate this.

Other agencies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England if the proposal is likely to have implications for a water body, a floodplain, nature conservation areas, sensitive landscapes or historic sites.

Planning Aid England who are a voluntary body that can provide planning advice to small charities, voluntary and community groups.

TIPS:

The following tips will help enable the best presentation of your case to the LPA and interested parties and the best possible outcome of a proposal for development:

Options: Be realistic and consider alternative options which could achieve the same goal. Remember, your aspirations for a site/facility may not be shared by others, including your neighbours who will remain your neighbours after the application. Some options may be more attractive to your neighbours and the LPA. Sharing and discussing these options and then showing how they have informed your proposals will help to demonstrate you are being reasonable and flexible in going about what you want to achieve.

Rationale: Be clear about why the development is needed and who will benefit.

Communication: It is better to discuss your proposal and articulate its benefits at an early stage rather than moving quickly to prepare plans. You should anticipate who the proposal may affect, who may have concerns with it and why and who might object to it, then look to discuss with them how any adverse affects could be kept to a minimum i.e. what mitigation measures could be put in place.

Proportionality: Recognise that there is a direct relationship between the scale and likely impact of what you are proposing and the amount of background work (technical and political) which will need to be done to support it, and the length of time it will take to develop and implement the proposals.

Time and effort: Don't underestimate the time and work involved in submitting a good quality application. Begin discussions early, find out how long each stage of the process takes and be realistic in terms of timescales.

Step 2
Preparing your submission

It's important to understand exactly what will be required in preparing the application through to its submission.

Types of application

You'll need to be clear on the type of planning application to submit. There are different types depending on the nature of the proposed development.

Full planning application: These are submitted for a new development or change of use when you have detail on all aspects of your proposal (e.g. full detailed plans and designs for a new clubhouse building).

Outline planning application: These are appropriate when you are seeking agreement 'in principle' to a proposed development, without being committed to a particular form of design or layout (e.g. approval for the scale, siting and means of access for a new clubhouse building but with all other matters reserved). This can be a cheaper option prior to committing to costly supporting studies. It gives the applicant time (generally three years) to work up the detail (so-called 'reserved matters') and therefore time to seek advice. It should be noted that outline consent is only relevant to new development and cannot be used for matters such as a change of use or engineering works.

Approval of reserved matters: This seeks permission for those aspects that were not dealt with in an outline planning permission such as detailed design and appearance (e.g. the layout of a new clubhouse building, external materials to be used and landscaping).

Change of use applications: These are submitted when you propose to change the use of the site or buildings to a use within a different use class or the change is not covered by permitted development rights (e.g. using agricultural land to create new playing pitches or adapting vacant commercial or retail buildings to provide new indoor sports facilities).

Advertisement consent: This seeks permission for hoardings, signs and adverts such as posters and placards.

Certificate of lawful use or development: These may do one of two things: certify that a proposed or existing use/development would be lawful if carried out without planning permission, or certify that an existing use is lawful by virtue of achieving immunity from enforcement.

Variation or removal of conditions: These applications, which you may hear referred to as section 73 applications, seek to vary or remove conditions attached to a current planning permission which due to certain circumstances may at a later date be felt to be inappropriate (e.g. applying to extend the hours a sports facility can be used from those set out in a condition to the original planning permission for the facility).

Building regulations and accessible facilities

Building regulations

In addition to planning permission, it is likely you will also need building regulation approval as this is required for many types of building work.

The planning system covers the use of land and buildings (including their appearance), highways access and landscape considerations along with considering the impact development will have on things like existing infrastructure and the general environment.

Building regulations ensure buildings are designed and constructed in line with set standards to ensure people's health and safety. These standards include matters such as fire safety, energy efficiency and access.

Talking to an officer in your council's building control services department at an early stage will help to ensure your proposed development meets all relevant current standards. This is particularly important for new standards around energy efficiency and sustainable development.

Accessible facilities

Building regulations set minimum functional access standards for buildings.

They do not, however, cover all the inclusive design issues which are important in the design of sports facilities, or to a high enough standard to create truly inclusive environments that are accessible to all.

Therefore, we recommend using our 'Accessible Sports Facilities' design guidance note to help ensure the design of facilities meet the needs of the widest range of potential users.

Use of the guidance will help applicants to demonstrate they are meeting their obligations under the Disability and Equality Act 2010 to provide reasonable access to services.

Early and effective consultation with key officers at your local council who are responsible for building control and disability equality access, along with access consultants, where relevant, is recommended.

Further information:

The building control section of the Planning Portal

Sport England's Accessible Sports Facilities design guidance note and supporting audit checklist

The national register of access consultants (NRAC)

Facility guidance notes

Along with meeting building regulations and ensuring inclusive access, the design of any new or enhanced sports facility should ensure it will be fit for purpose.

We, together with the NGB's, produce technical guidance notes on a wide range of sports facilities. All new facilities should be designed to meet the latest technical specifications for the sports they are proposed to accommodate.

More details on where to find latest technical guidance can be found in Appendix B to this guide.

Supporting information

You should prepare a planning statement to accompany your application and most applications will require a design and access statement. You will also need to prepare a set of plans showing the location of the site, existing uses and facilities and the proposed development (see the 'What you need to submit' section of this guide in Step 3 'Submit').

Planning Statement

Although not compulsory, it is highly advisable to submit a planning statement. This is your chance to 'sell' or make the case for your scheme to the LPA.

The statement should set out the basis of your application, how you have consulted and engaged relevant parties including the local community to help refine your proposals, the options considered and how your proposal meets and helps to implement planning policy (including any relevant supplementary planning documents e.g. on health and wellbeing).

It should also present why the development is required and the benefits and merits of the proposal e.g. how it meets local needs (now and/or in the future), provides for increased

participation in sport and compliments/supports the delivery of local programmes to help people take part in sport and be physically active.

If it has been identified that the proposal will create some adverse effects (e.g. on neighbouring uses) then proposed mitigation measures to help address and offset these should be set out within the planning statement.

Design & Access Statement

Design and Access Statements are now compulsory on most applications. For example, they are required for a building or buildings where the floorspace created will be of 1,000 sqm or more, and for development on a site of 1 hectare or more.

These statements are intended to clarify how a development will be of a suitable design and quality, both in appearance and function. The statement should be concise but explain the suitability of the development to its site and setting, including the nature of and reasoning for the chosen siting, layout, scale, design, appearance and landscaping.

It will include how the development:

- will be accessed by a range of transport modes including proposed access points
- will ensure inclusive access for all prospective users to and within the site and all relevant facilities
- meets relevant Local Plan policies regarding design and access
- has been informed by the options considered and consultation undertaken and how it's proposed design and accessibility has responded to any issues raised.

In some cases, depending on the scale of the application, Design and Access Statements and Planning Statements can be combined into a Planning, Design and Access Statement.

Further information:

'Design and Access Statement' section of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

The PPG provides further detail on the purpose of the statements and what they should provide, including details required for specific application types e.g. listed building consent.

Other technical studies

Depending on the size and scale of your proposed development and individual site issues, a range of reports may have to be prepared to support the Planning and Design and Access Statements.

These could include Biodiversity Survey/ Protected Species Report; Topographical Survey; Tree Survey; Flood Risk Assessment; Noise Assessment; Foul Sewage Assessment; Structural Survey; Green Belt Statement; Archaeological Assessment; Heritage Assessment; Lighting Assessment; Playing Field Assessment; Boundary/Ball Strike Risk Assessment; Open Space Assessment; Landscape Assessment; Transport/Parking Provision Assessment; Water Quality/Water Framework Directive Assessment; Crime Impact Study or risk assessments related to specific features within or close to the site (e.g. power or railway lines).

It is important that you seek early advice (during discussions with your LPA) on whether any such studies might be required to support your application in order to avoid unnecessary expense and potential delay.

Some biodiversity studies, for example, can only be undertaken at certain times of the year. Professional assistance will be required to prepare many of these studies.

Step 3
Submitting your application

Once you've developed and set out your case, prepared all the necessary supporting information and technical reports, you'll be ready to submit the planning application.

What you need to submit

There are minimum standards for the submission of a planning application which must be strictly adhered to.

These include basics such as a correctly completed application form and proper plans, without which the application cannot be determined. This is known as validation.

As a general rule, the following information will be required:

Completed application form

Don't forget there are different forms for different types of application.

The correct fee

Your LPA will tell you how much is payable. Alternatively, you can use the Planning Portal's online fee calculator. The amount varies according to the type of development proposed (some example fees are provided later in this section of the guide).

Further information:

Planning Portal's fee calculator.

Location plan

This must show the general location of the site and existing uses.

Site plan

Plans should be at a scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500 and the site to which the application relates should be clearly identified with a red outline and any adjoining land within the applicant's ownership/ control should be identified with a blue outline.

Further information:

The Planning Portal 'Buy a planning map' website page offers the option of purchasing location and site plans from one of the Portal's accredited suppliers.

Other plans and drawings

Other plans and drawings may be necessary to help describe your development. Your early discussions with an officer from your LPA should help with identifying which plans and drawings you will need to provide. They may include:

- Floor plans and elevation plans at 1:50 or 1:100 scale
- A block plan at 1:500 scale presenting the location of the proposed development in detail along with other features which should be understood e.g. site constraints
- Topography plans showing site levels e.g. for applications for the lighting of outdoor facilities.

All plans must show the direction of north, include a reference number, be dated and distinguish clearly, preferably in colour, between existing and proposed development.

Where appropriate, they should also be fully annotated with building and plot dimensions, the existing/proposed site boundaries and site access points.

Land ownership certificate

You'll need to provide this or evidence of serving notice on landowners of the proposed development if you do not own the entire site.

Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement

See the 'supporting information' section of this guide in Step 2 'Prepare'.

Ensuring your application is valid

Guidance on the type of application and what you need to include with your application should be sought from the LPA with reference to their validation checklist.

This specifies the information that needs to be provided by an applicant to enable their application to be considered 'valid'.

Pre-application discussions with an officer at your LPA will help to clarify precisely what information will need to be submitted with your application.

An application will normally be valid if:

- the application form and its certificates have been completed correctly (and ideally includes the full Ordnance Survey grid reference)
- the correct application form has been used;
- the necessary fee has been provided;
- the necessary plans, drawings and supplementary information have been provided.
- all plans and drawings are to a recognised metric scale;
- all plans and drawing have the scale clearly shown;
- all plans and drawings are consistent with each other; and
- all plans and drawings are readable and capable of being electronically copied.

Once validated by your LPA, your application will be assigned to a case officer who will begin to assess the application.

Further information:

Your application can be submitted on-line using the Planning Portal service.

Planning fees

Planning fees vary according to the type of development proposed. Once an application is submitted, the fee is non-refundable.

Some examples of fees provided by the Planning Portal are set out below, but you will need to check these with your LPA as they are subject to change.

It should be noted that there is flat rate of £462 for applications made by non-profit making sports clubs or other non-profit making sporting or recreational organisations, relating to playing fields for their own use.

The rate applies to applications for change of use to playing fields and purposes ancillary to the use of the land as playing fields (e.g. earthworks and levelling). It does not apply to the development of new buildings.

Further information:

The Planning Portal provides a comprehensive list of fees.

Planning Fees

Cost	Type of application/development
All Outline Applications e.g. establishing the principle of re-locating to a new site	£462 per 0.1 hectare for sites up to and including 2.5ha. £11,432 + £138 for each 0.1ha in excess of 2.5ha to a maximum of £150,000.
Full applications/erection of buildings e.g. new clubhouse	£234 if no more than 40sqm floorspace is created. £462 if >40m² but <75m² £462 for each 75m² for buildings between 75m² and 3,750m². £22,859 + £138 for each additional 75m² for buildings in excess of 3,750m², to a maximum of £300,000.
Other operations e.g. floodlighting	£234 for each 0.1ha (or part thereof) up to a maximum of £2,028.
Other changes of use e.g. change of use of agricultural land to sports pitches or adapting vacant commercial or retail buildings to provide new indoor sports facilities	£462
Advertisements e.g. new club sign on the site	£132
Variation of conditions and applications for non-material amendments.	£234
Car parks, service roads or other accesses	£234

Source: Planning Portal Guide to fees – apply from 17th Jan 2018 onwards.

TIPS:

Validation Checklist - Ensure that the validation checklist of your LPA is adhered to precisely, otherwise time and fees will be wasted.

Plans - Should be clear, drawn to a metric scale and the scale quoted on the plan. If consultees are unable to interpret your proposed development correctly there is a greater likelihood of delay or objection to your application.

Fee - Ensure you submit the correct fee. Always check with the LPA.

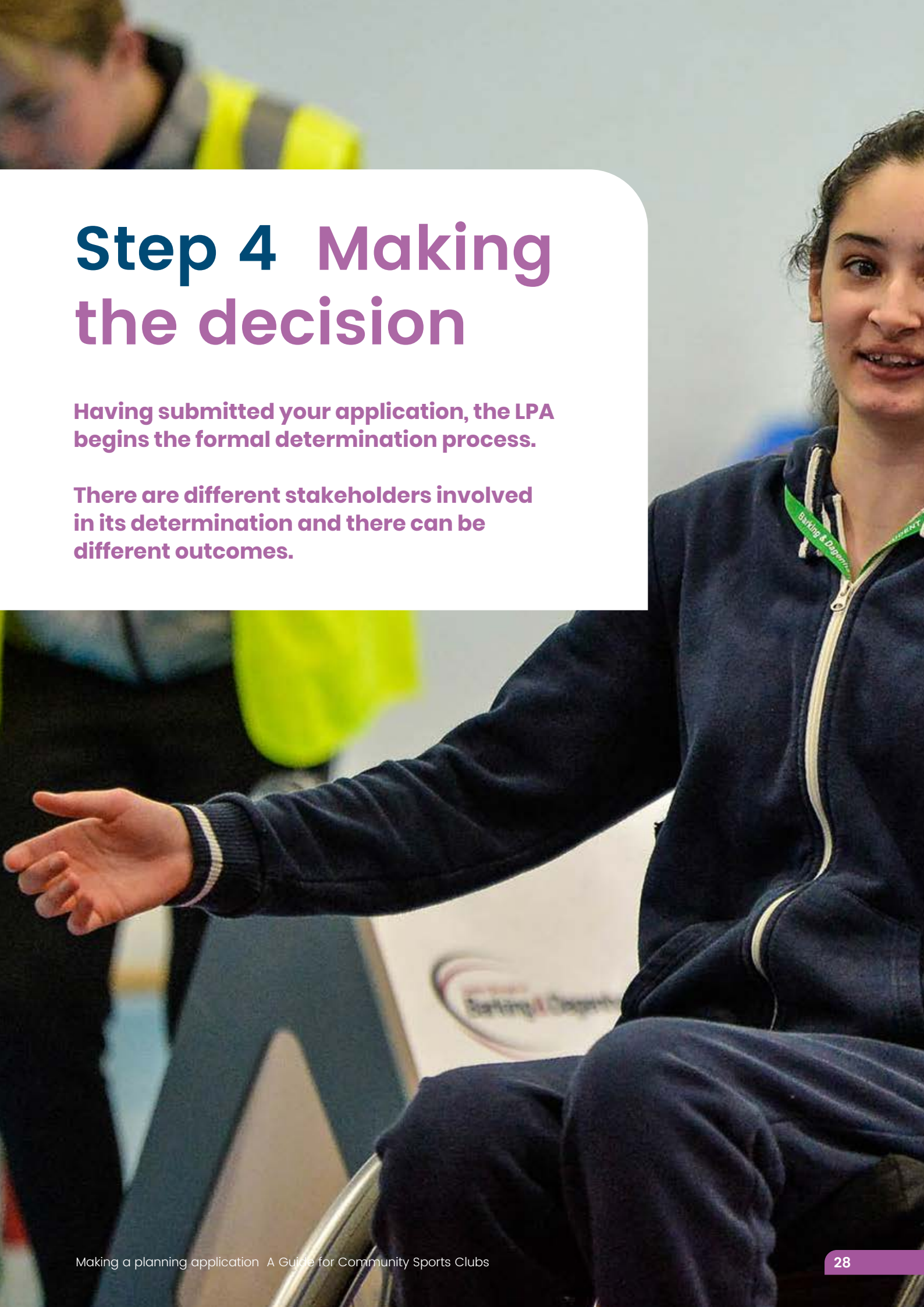
Track Progress - Once validated, track the progress of your application (e.g. on the LPA's website) so that key dates such as committee meetings can be identified and acted upon.

Make Best Use of Time - Use the time during which the application is being assessed to follow-up any specific issues, including keeping interested parties informed.

Step 4 Making the decision

Having submitted your application, the LPA begins the formal determination process.

There are different stakeholders involved in its determination and there can be different outcomes.



Who determines your application?

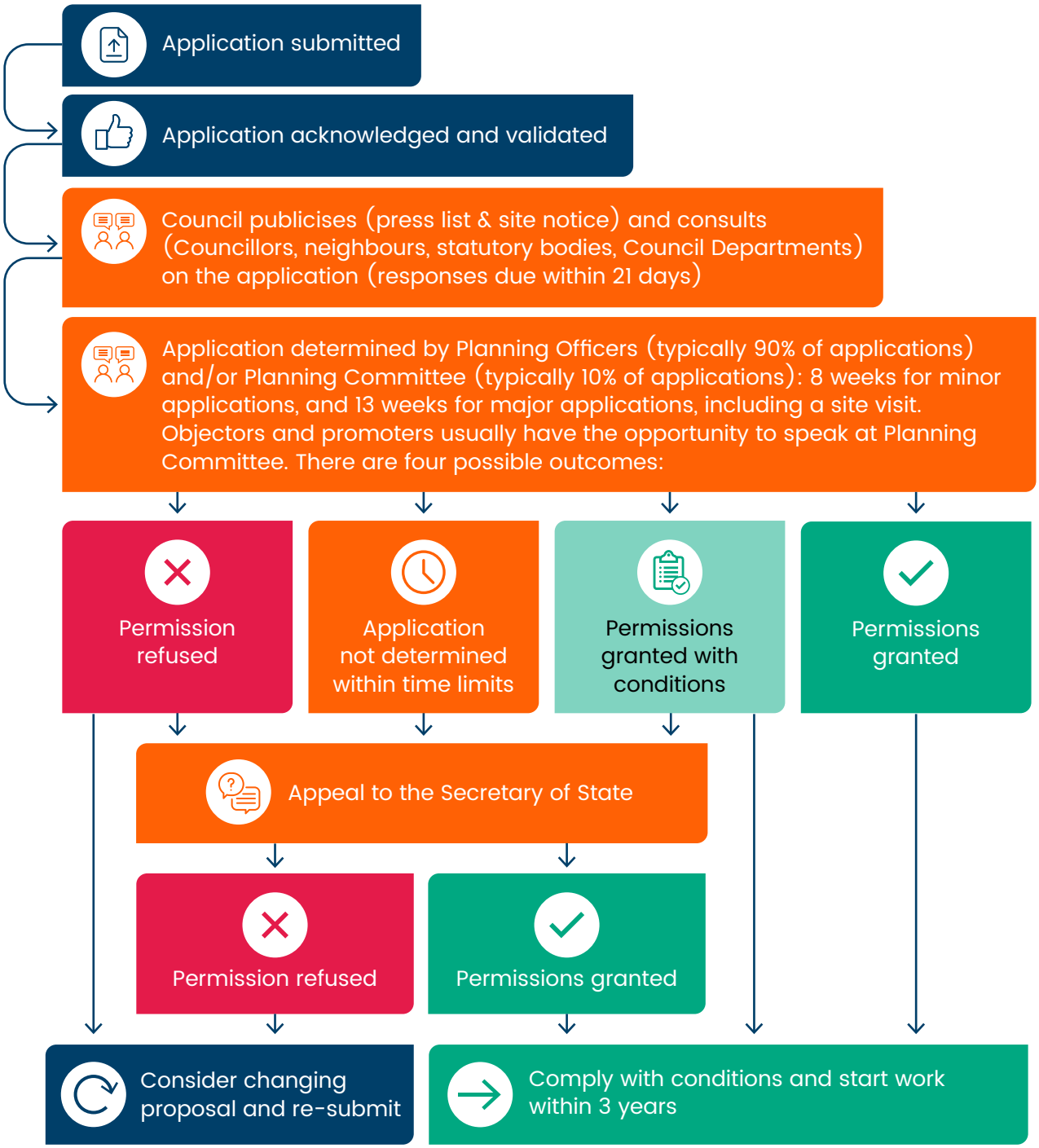
The responsibility for determining planning applications rests with the elected councillors. However, for most applications many LPAs give their planning officers delegated powers to take the decision on their behalf.

Large and/or controversial cases are more likely to be determined by the elected councillors themselves who make up the LPA's planning committee for the area.

In such cases the application will be presented to the committee with an officer's recommendation attached.

The members of the committee may decide to visit the site prior to determining the application.

There are set timescales for the determination of applications with the ability for the LPA and applicant to agree an extension where appropriate.



Influences on the decision

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan will consist of adopted planning policies set out in a LPA's Local Plan, any wider Spatial Development Strategy (e.g. the London Plan) and any Neighbourhood Plan in whose area the site is located.

Key material considerations include:

- Government planning policies and guidance (e.g. as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and its supporting Planning Practice Guidance)
- The views and comments of the public and neighbours, along with those of statutory consultees (e.g. Sport England and the Environment Agency) on relevant considerations.

Further information:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Section 8 of the NPPF contains policies promoting healthy communities. Paragraphs 96 and 97 promote the importance of opportunities for sport and physical activity and the protection of existing provision.

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Planning Portal provide guidance on what constitutes a material consideration.

PPG: Determining a Planning Application (see paragraph 8).

Planing Portal: 'What is a material consideration' FAQ

Applications affecting playing fields

As set out in Step 1 of this guide, we are a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields.

We do not determine applications but, as a statutory consultee, significant weight should be given to our response when the LPA for the area determines an application, or by a Planning Inspector or the Secretary of State in the case of appeals or 'called in' applications.

The LPA must refer certain planning applications to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government where they are minded to grant planning permission despite our objection.

This referral must take place prior to a LPA granting any planning permission, so the Secretary of State has the opportunity to decide whether to call in the application for their determination.

Types of outcome

A planning application can either be approved, approved subject to conditions or a legal agreement, or refused.

LPAs send a decision notice to the applicant notifying them of the reasons for approving or refusing an application.

Approved

If the application is approved, it is likely that there will be certain conditions attached to the planning permission.

You should check the conditions along with the reasoning given for their inclusion and decide if they are acceptable to you.

If you disagree with any conditions attached to the decision then you are entitled to appeal against them, re-submit a new application or seek to vary/amend the conditions.

Conditions and legal agreement

Conditions are frequently attached to a planning permission not only to ensure a development is carried out as approved, but also to control the impact of a development that otherwise would not be acceptable.

Conditions are generally split into three categories:

1. requiring action(s) prior to the commencement of development (pre-commencement conditions)
2. requiring action(s) prior to occupation or the development opening
3. controlling how the development is used once it is completed e.g. hours of use.

In almost all cases, a condition will also be applied which sets the time period in which the planning permission must be implemented.

The protection of the interests of neighbours is a common reason for conditions limiting the hours of use of the lighting of an outdoor sports facility.

Here, the need to protect residential amenity from additional play-related noise and disturbance should be weighed against the sport, physical activity and health benefits associated with greater use of a sports facility.

You may be aware of a similar development to yours being allowed at a nearby club/site. However, as each application is assessed on its merits taking into account its specific location the decision on your application, and if approved any conditions attached to the permission, may differ.

It is good practice for the LPA to agree proposed conditions with an applicant before planning permission is granted and you should actively work with the LPA to have sight of and agree conditions for your application.

In addition, some applications may be granted subject to the completion of a legal agreement (Section 106 agreement).

These agreements seek to ensure that any adverse impacts of a scheme are mitigated, and community benefits secured.

Further information:

Further information on the appeals process is available within the Government's Planning Practice Guidance and from the Planning Inspectorate.

Link to the Appeals section of the Governments Planning Practice Guidance

Link to the Planning Inspectorate's website

Refused

The LPA's decision on your application is not the final word on the matter. You may wish to amend the application and resubmit it, or appeal to the Secretary of State if you consider that you have sound planning reasons to do so.

An amended application must be significantly different from that which was refused (i.e. addressing reasons for refusal), or the LPA may refuse to register or determine the new application.

If you are thinking of resubmitting discuss this with your LPA as you may be able to do so free of charge within 12 months of the decision on the original application.

Right to appeal

If you are unhappy with the decision or if the application has not been determined within the specific timescales set by the LPA, you have the option of making an appeal to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate.

Professional advice should be sought if you are to pursue this option as this can be a costly and time-consuming process. Appeals can often take a long time (up to 6 months or longer) to be heard and decided.

TIPS:

Keep in touch - with the LPA and the individual planning case officer once the application is submitted to help respond to any issues as and when they arise, and ideally resolve these prior to the determination of the application.

Planning Committee - If offered, take the opportunity to appear at the planning committee. You will need to advise the LPA in advance if you wish to speak at the committee meeting. This can be useful in addition to relying on the submitted documents. However, any speaking time will be brief (normally 3 minutes) so be well prepared and focus on a small number of key points.

Take advice - If advised, withdraw your application and resubmit at a later date, or seek professional advice.

Step 5
Implementing the permission

Once you receive a planning permission issued by your LPA, you may not be able to start work immediately as you may need to comply with pre-commencement conditions attached to the permission and/or obtain other approvals such as building regulations.

How long does the permission last?

All planning permissions must be implemented within a certain timescale, which will be stipulated by a condition on the permission. The time period is generally three years unless the condition states otherwise.

If no works have been commenced within the time period attached to the granting of planning permission, then a new application will have to be submitted.

However, there are legal definitions as to what constitutes commencing/implementing a planning permission.

Typical conditions

Some conditions a LPA may place on a planning permission will require you to submit further information for approval while others may control how your development can operate.

Typical conditions cover matters such as:

- expiry date of the permission
- hours of operation
- materials to be used
- drainage details
- requiring certain matters to be undertaken prior to the commencement of development e.g. tree or hedgerow planting and mitigation works
- requiring certain matters to be undertaken prior to the occupation of the development e.g. traffic works
- requiring works to be undertaken in strict accordance with specific drawings and plans
- to control a construction period e.g. defining days/hours when work can be carried out.

Examples of conditions:

- The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.
- No development shall take place until further details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.
- The size of the clubhouse hereby permitted, in terms of its height, footprint and roof profile, shall not exceed that shown on the approved plans and drawings.
- The outdoor sports lighting shall not be used on any night after 22:00 hours.
- The lighting columns hereby approved shall not exceed a luminaire height of 6.7m.
- The outdoor sports lighting shall not be switched on more than 10 minutes prior to the commencement of any period of play on courts 7, 8 or 9; nor shall they remain switched on more than 10 minutes after the finish of any period of play unless within that period there has been the commencement of a new period of play.

Planning conditions last for the perpetuity of the development.

Pre-commencement conditions

An LPA may choose to attach pre-commencement planning conditions which must be complied with before any part of the development is begun.

However, these must be agreed in writing by you as the applicant before being attached to the planning permission.

Discharging your conditions

To confirm that you have satisfactorily discharged (complied with) a condition you will need to formally write to the LPA with details of how this has been achieved and the correct fee which is currently £116 per request.

For example, there may be a condition requiring details of the materials to be used and you will need to submit these materials to the LPA. Submitting an application to discharge all or several conditions at the same time may help reduce your costs.

Should you have concerns with any of the planning conditions then you may wish to consider an application to amend or vary a condition. Again, there is a fee associated with these types of applications (see the 'Planning Fees' section in Step 3 'Submit').

Amending your permission

Once planning permission has been granted you may wish or need to make amendments to what was approved.

If this is the case, you should contact your LPA before carrying out any related works otherwise you may end up in breach of your permission which could lead to enforcement action.

It may be that the LPA will consider the amendments to be 'non-material'. If so, you will need to apply with the correct fee (see 'Planning Fees' section in Step 3 'Submit') to the LPA to have this confirmed. The confirmation will sit alongside the original planning permission.
If the LPA decides the amendments are 'material' (i.e. substantial) then you will need to submit a new planning application.

Enforcement

If it is considered that a breach of planning control has occurred, the LPA can serve an Enforcement Notice in order to:

- stop development or operations that do not have planning permission or are in breach of their planning permission or
- impose conditions on a development or operation.

There are five main situations where enforcement action may be taken:

- Developing a site without planning permission;
- Having permission to develop a site but not complying with the conditions set out in the planning permission, or not following the approved plans
- Carrying out external or internal works to a Listed Building without consent
- Displaying a sign or an advert without consent
- Demolition of a building in a conservation area without consent

An enforcement notice will state clearly what action is required by the developer to correct the situation.

An appeal to the Secretary of State can be made before the notice is due to take effect.

A Stop Notice can be served by the LPA to immediately halt activity considered to cause long term and severe damage to a local area.

Your LPA will have a guide to planning enforcement which sets out in detail the procedures which are followed.

Further information:

Further information on conditions, amending your permission and the enforcement process is available within the Government's Planning Practice Guidance.

Click below to see the sections on:

Conditions

Amending a permission

Enforcement

Penalties for unauthorised tree work

If a protected tree is destroyed or damaged in a way which will destroy it, you could be fined up to £20,000 if convicted in the magistrate's court, or given an unlimited fine in the crown court. The court will consider any financial benefit arising from the work. For lesser offences there is a fine of up to £2,500.

Other notifications and local authority controls

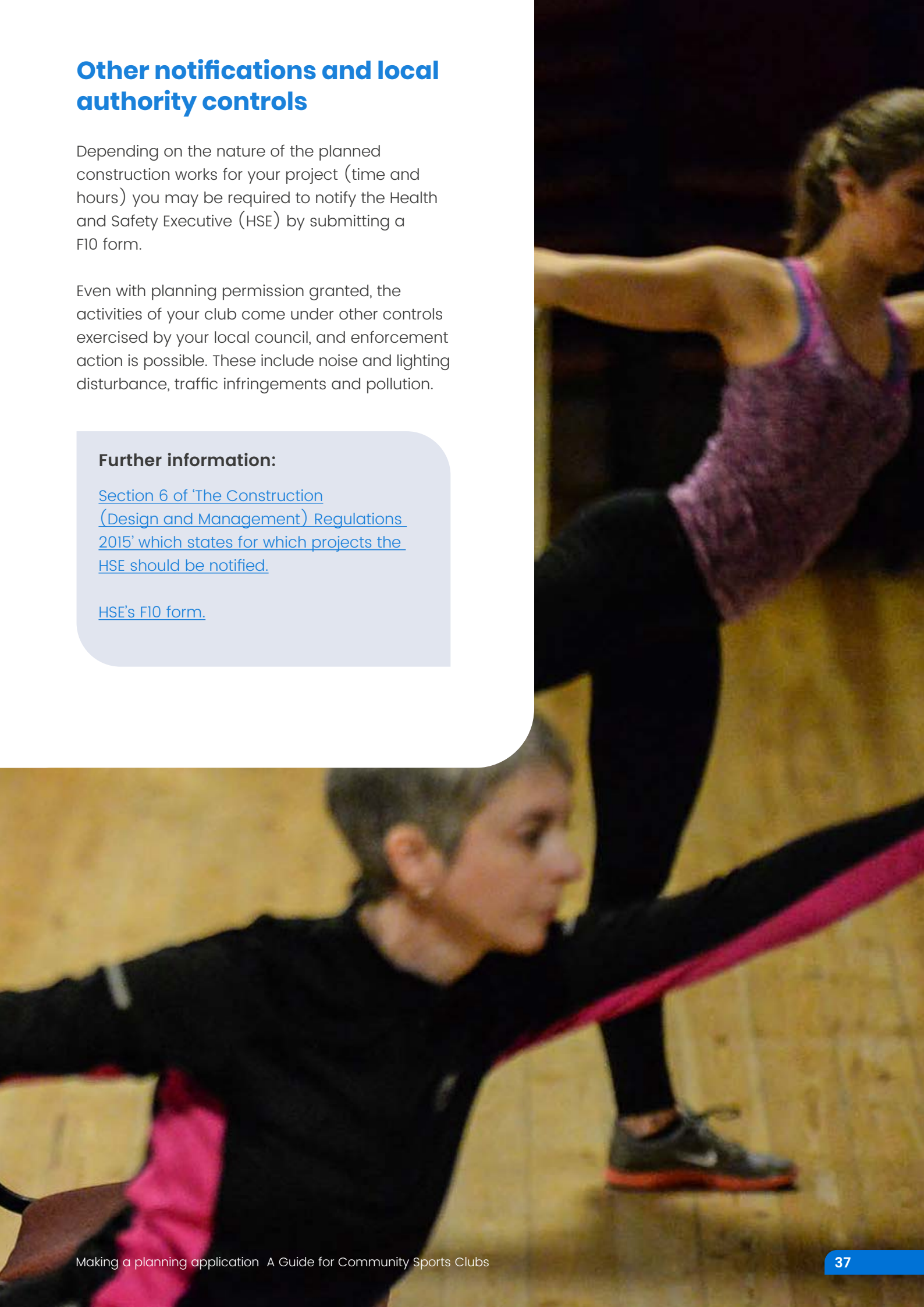
Depending on the nature of the planned construction works for your project (time and hours) you may be required to notify the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) by submitting a F10 form.

Even with planning permission granted, the activities of your club come under other controls exercised by your local council, and enforcement action is possible. These include noise and lighting disturbance, traffic infringements and pollution.

Further information:

Section 6 of 'The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015' which states for which projects the HSE should be notified.

HSE's F10 form.



APPENDIX A

Common considerations

This appendix presents some common considerations that are often central to the assessment of planning applications for sport related development.

Alongside the tips within the main guide, specific tips are provided here to help you proactively approach each consideration if they are relevant to your proposal.

Links are also provided to where you can find other useful resources for each consideration. Early discussions with your LPA and the local community, as recommended in Step 1 of the guide, should highlight which considerations you should look to proactively address within your application.

The details submitted with your application (e.g. plans, planning and/or design and access statement and any technical studies) should demonstrate how you have approached the considerations of relevance to your proposal. As several considerations may be related, the effect on one another and the tips provided should be considered together when seeking to address them. For example, mitigation measures to help address noise or lighting impacts may raise landscape and visual impact concerns.

Benefits

Often applicants for sports facilities do not clearly articulate to the LPA the benefits of their proposal e.g. helping to meet identified community needs for certain sports, providing greater opportunities for people to play sport and be active, and addressing local priorities e.g. around individual, community, social and economic development and wellbeing. Such benefits are relevant planning considerations which should be demonstrated to the LPA within an application and to which the LPA should give due weight when considering whether permission should be granted. Demonstrating how the proposal will benefit the local community is particularly important in circumstances where the proposal has given rise to some concerns related to wider matters.

TIPS:

- Highlight within your application the range of benefits the proposal will bring to your club and the wider community (including helping to meet identified local policies, priorities and issues e.g. around improving health and well-being).
- Engage early with a range of appropriate local groups (e.g. other clubs, schools and community organisations) to help develop your proposal and understand how it may benefit them.
- Demonstrate how your proposal will help to meet the recommendations and actions in the local authority's relevant assessment of need for sports facilities and related strategies where such documents are in place (e.g. playing pitch strategy and/or built sports facility strategy).
- Be aware of the Government's strategy for sport and Sport England's strategy and the outcomes they are seeking to achieve.
- Be aware of and demonstrate how your proposal helps to meet any policies in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework) which highlight and seek to secure the benefits of sport and recreation and support wider health and well-being measures.
- Discuss your proposal with the relevant sports national governing bodies to see how the proposal can tie in with the needs for wider provision, and may help to deliver other relevant policies, plans and programmes in the area.
- Consider where there are opportunities within your existing proposals or how it can be amended to provide indirect benefits beyond the particular sporting functions (e.g. community space, public toilets, footpath and cycleway links).

Useful Resources

The Government's Strategy for Sport 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for a Sporting Nation'.

Sport England's Strategy 'Towards an Active Nation'.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraphs 92 and 96)

Sport England's information on the benefits of being active

Sport England's Planning for Sport Guidance

Noise

Noise associated with sports facilities can range from engine noise from motorsports to the voices of players and balls hitting boards on artificial grass pitches.

With appropriate siting and suitable mitigation measures acceptable noise levels can be achieved for most noise generating facilities, allowing for their full operation without adversely affecting surrounding uses.

We've looked into how several artificial grass pitch planning applications were assessed by LPAs.

While the applications were often different in nature, ranging from new pitches to varying conditions to extend the hours of use, noise was the issue that arose most frequently and had the most significant influence on the outcome of the applications.

TIPS:

- Where possible, demonstrate how the siting of the proposed development has sought to minimise the impact of noise of neighbouring uses.
- Be aware of and demonstrate how your proposal may meet with any noise related policies in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework) that your application may be assessed against.
- Have an early discussion with an officer from your local authority's environmental health department to discuss the site, the proposal and the evidence that may be required.
- For particular noise generating facilities, including extending the hours of use of existing facilities, consider appointing a suitably qualified acoustics consultant to undertake an acoustics survey and recommend appropriate mitigation measures.
- Consider a range of appropriate mitigation measures which could, for example, include:
  - use of acoustic barriers and bunds;
  - a noise management plan (committing to monitoring noise levels once the development is in place and if required providing additional mitigation);
  - ensuring fencing panels are securely clamped with resilient fixings, and installing rubber inserts on fencing and goal panels/boards and posts, to reduce noise from the rattle and vibration from ball impacts;
  - siting the entrance and access routes as far away from nearby housing as possible;
  - implementing behaviour management measures for users of the site (especially where you plan to hire out any new or enhanced facilities to external users),
- Include appropriate mitigation measures within your application rather than leave them to be dealt with by way of planning conditions attached to any permission.

Useful Resources

Sport England's Artificial Grass Pitch Acoustics – Planning Implications Design Guidance Note

A list of acoustic consultancy companies on the Association of Noise Consultants website

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraph 170e)

Outdoor Sports Lighting

The lighting of outdoor sports facilities extends the hours a facility is available, especially in the winter months for evening use. This provides significantly enhanced opportunities for people to participate in sport and can be critical to the value of a facility to the local community and its long-term viability.

However, in some cases lighting can impact upon neighbouring communities or local biodiversity, particularly bats.

The types of lighting and technologies have advanced significantly over recent years and this should be recognised and highlighted within your proposals, including how impacts on local amenity, neighbouring properties and biodiversity can be minimised by using new lighting types.

LPAs will require information as part of a planning application which will enable them to assess the potential impact of any new or upgraded lighting on the surrounding area.

It's important that this matter is addressed prior to submission of a planning application. If not addressed to the satisfaction of the LPA it can often become a reason for refusal of a wider sporting proposal. This can be due to a variety of factors including light pollution, visual impact, disagreement about winter evening hours of operation and the effects on surrounding property.

TIPS:

- Where possible, demonstrate how the siting of any new outdoor facility which is proposed to be lit has sought to minimise its impact on neighbouring uses and biodiversity.
- Be aware of and demonstrate how your proposal may meet with any lighting related policies in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework - see link below) that your application may be assessed against.
- Be aware that alongside the impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses concerns may be raised regarding the impact of lighting on local biodiversity e.g. bats.
- Refer to Sport England and the relevant sports national governing bodies guidance on outdoor sports lighting.
- Have an early discussion with officers from your local authority's environmental health and ecology departments to discuss the site, the proposed lighting and the evidence that may be required.
- Consider appointing a suitably qualified consultant to help determine a suitable lighting system and appropriate mitigation measures.
- Propose appropriate lighting systems (including levels and height of lighting) for your facility based on the minimum recommended lighting levels for different sports, the standard of play, the size of the playing area and taking into account operational and maintenance considerations.
- Along with presenting the specification of the proposed lighting, clearly set out the reasoning for the chosen type and how it will help to address any likely impacts.
- Consider a range of appropriate mitigation measures which could, for example, include:
    - Automatic timing so the lights switch off to correlate with hours of use;
    - Slim masts, coloured appropriately, to be less intrusive during daylight hours;
- Include appropriate mitigation measures within your application rather than leave them to be dealt with by way of planning conditions attached to any permission.

Useful Resources

Sport England's design guidance on sports lighting

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraph 180c)

Design

Well-designed facilities that are fit for purpose can actively encourage and support people to maintain and increase their participation in sport and physical activity.

They can also help enable physically inactive people to be more active by providing a pleasant experience in a safe and welcoming environment.

However, the opposite is also true, with inappropriate and poorly designed facilities acting as a significant barrier to people being active, creating a negative experience of a sport and activity which can be difficult overcome, especially for people who are not regular participants.

TIPS:

- Engage early with and consider the views and requirements of a wide variety of potential users, including under-represented groups[2], to ensure the new or enhanced provision is designed to meet local needs and be as inclusive as possible.
- Take into consideration design guidance and good practice provided by Sport England and the relevant sport's national governing bodies.
- As far as is appropriate look to design to provide the maximum possible shared and community use, including opportunities for co-location of provision. Make sure to allow for future enhancements and modernisation.
- Be aware of and demonstrate how your proposal helps to meet any policies in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework - see link below) which highlight and seek to secure the benefits of good design, along with how it adheres to any accompanying design advice or guidance adopted by the LPA.
- Wherever possible, ensure opportunities are taken to embrace the principles of Sport England's Active Design guidance and demonstrate in your application the value these add to the proposals (e.g. linking access routes to the facility and site to existing wider cycle and walking networks).

Useful Resources

Sport England's Design and Cost Guidance

- Accessible Sports Facilities design guidance note and supporting audit checklist
- Clubhouse Design Guide

Sport England's Active Design Guidance

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see section 12)

2 Although anyone can be inactive, there are some groups in society who are less likely to take part regularly including women and girls, people from lower socio-economic groups, older people, disabled people, people from particular ethnic groups and those with long-term health conditions.

Landscape and visual impacts

Concerns regarding the visual impact of a sports facility could be cited as grounds for refusing planning permission and can be particularly contentious within designated areas. These concerns may refer to a building or structures such as fencing and lighting masts.

The extent of a proposal is also a key factor, in particular whether or not it is for the replacement of an existing facility and whether it incorporates significant amounts of additional ancillary development (e.g. fencing and car parking).

The Government, within its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), recognises the importance of the Green Belt as a beneficial resource for providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation.

The principle in the NPPF of planning positively for such activity in the Green Belt should also be extended to other designated landscapes (e.g. national parks and AONBs) and the countryside, especially within the urban fringe.

Designated landscapes and the urban fringe are often important locations for a range of sport and physical activities which cannot be easily undertaken elsewhere.

So long as they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, the NPPF indicates that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, and changes of use of land to outdoor sport and recreation, are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

We define 'appropriate facilities' as those that directly support participation in and help to secure the long-term viability and sustainability of outdoor sport and recreational activities, so long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

TIPS:

- If such impacts have been highlighted as an area of concern in your early discussions with the LPA and local community (see Step 1 of the guide), consider appointing a suitably qualified consultant to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment and recommend appropriate mitigation measures.
- Incorporate soft landscaping, particularly where acoustic fencing is proposed.
- Consider a range of appropriate mitigation measures to help obscure or soften the appearance of the proposal. For example, this could include:
  - the use of soft landscaping such as hedge planting;
  - colouring components of the development to blend in with surroundings; and
  - the use of slim lighting masts so they are less intrusive during daytime;
- Be aware if the site of your proposal (or any part of it) falls within any designed areas (e.g. Green Belt). If it does, demonstrate how your proposal meets with any relevant policies for these designations in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework), or clearly explain what very special circumstances apply to the proposal.

Useful Resources

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see Section 15 along with Green Belt paragraphs 141, 145b and 146e)

The Landscape Institute's list of registered landscape consultants

Sport England's Active Places Power (APP) Website – once registered you can search for your site on APP. On the map function you can then overlay several relevant 'environment' map layers to see which may be relevant to your site e.g. is the site located within land designated as Green Belt.

Environmental Sustainability

Proposals for new or enhanced sports facilities should take the opportunity to incorporate measures to enhance the environmental sustainability of their site.

By doing so, not only will it help meet with planning and wider priorities in the local area, it can reduce running costs thereby enhancing the viability of the facilities allowing greater funds to be fed directly back into providing sport and physical activity.

For example, energy provision is a major operational cost which can be reduced by 10-20% by making changes to become more environmentally sustainable.

TIPS:

- Be aware of possible measures your proposal could incorporate. These may include for example:
  - Generating electricity on site e.g. through solar panels and wind turbine installations;
  - Rainwater harvesting;
  - Passive heating and natural ventilation;
  - Improved heating/heat recycling;
  - Sustainable drainage systems
- Consider taking professional advice and look at appropriate guidance to help understand where best to focus sustainability efforts for your club and your proposed development.
- Incorporate any appropriate measures early in the design stage of any proposal.
- Be aware of and demonstrate how your proposal helps to meet any policies which highlight and seek to secure environmental sustainability in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework).

Useful Resources

Sport England's Sustainable Clubs website (includes 'Green Clubs' - an interactive tool suggesting possible actions to improve the environmental sustainability of sports clubs).

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraphs 148 - 153)

Traffic and Access

Impacts on the local transport network and how a site is accessed are almost always a critical consideration in any form of development proposal. It is particularly relevant where a new facility is proposed, or a facility is to be extended, as more users often lead to more vehicular movements in and out of a site.

Ample parking is often very important in encouraging users to a facility but be aware that providing for more sustainable modes of transport will often be seen as essential by a LPA, and is encouraged by Sport England as it helps people become more active through walking and cycling.

TIPS:

- Undertake early conversations with the LPA and Highways Authority, as these will help you understand any potential traffic impacts which may have been unforeseen or identify areas within the locality which might have particular traffic issues which your proposal may affect.
- Look at appropriate guidance to help understand the transport impacts of your proposed development, and how these impacts may be remedied. Depending on the result of the early conversations suggested above consider taking professional advice.
- Consider producing a 'travel plan' to demonstrate how your development will encourage more sustainable and active modes of transport.
- Consider parking provision for both regular use of the site and any occasional events/ activities which may create a greater need (e.g. formal provision and any informal/ occasional arrangements on-site or with neighbouring and nearby uses);
- Incorporate any appropriate measures early in the design stage of any proposal.
- Be aware that traffic impacts may fluctuate depending on operational times or events undertaken at a facility – a LPA will likely expect a development to be able to accommodate a 'worst case' scenario.
- Be aware of and demonstrate how your proposal helps to meet any policies on transport and access in the LPA's Local Plan (and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework).

Useful Resources

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (see paragraphs 102 - 111)

APPENDIX B

FURTHER INFORMATION, GLOSSARY & CONTACTS

Sport England Guidance

Planning for Sport Guidance

Guidance on how the planning system can help to provide opportunities for all to take part in sport and be physically active.

The guidance and supporting guidance and tools will be of assistance to all involved in or looking to engage with the planning system.

www.sportengland.org/planningforsport

Facility Design and Cost Guidance

Sport England seeks to provide best practice design advice and requirements for a range of building types and sporting activities covering a range of aspects along with associated costs.

This guidance, developed with a range of partners including national sports governing bodies, contains information which will be of interest to those dealing with proposals for new development along with inquiries into facility-related issues.

www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance

National Planning Policy Guidance

To support the implementation of its National Planning Policy Framework, the Government publishes online guidance for planning matters.

This includes guidance on when planning permission is required, making a planning application, planning conditions, enforcement and other matters included in this document.

www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application

www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required

www.gov.uk/guidance/use-of-planning-conditions

NGB Facility & Planning Guidance

British Gymnastics (BG)

BG provide advice, guidance and a range of case studies to help clubs develop new and improved facilities. This includes guidance on changing the use of existing buildings (e.g. industrial or commercial premises) to a gymnastics facility.

www.british-gymnastics.org/clubs/club-support/facilities

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)

The ECB publishes guidance on projects and a range of technical specification documents covering indoor and outdoor cricket facilities and pitches (natural and artificial) at all standards of play.

www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/club-support/club-facility-management/project-development-guidance

England Hockey (EH)

EH provides guidance on the dimensions, specifications, surfaces and lighting of pitches along with their maintenance.

www.englandhockey.co.uk/facilities

England Netball

Netball facility design guidance can be downloaded from England Netball's website. For further information and enquiries, email facility.development@englandnetball.co.uk

www.englandnetball.co.uk/facilities

Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)

The LTA publishes a range of technical guidance notes relating to court surfaces, floodlighting and indoor projects. Supplier listings and step-by-step guides to improving club facilities are also available.

www.lta.org.uk/workforce-venues/tennis-venue-support/tennis-and-padel-facility-funding-and-advice/

Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

The RYA provides resources and practical advice for clubs and boaters on a range of topics including caring for the environment and planning and licensing law.

www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/planning-environment/Pages/hub.aspx

Rugby Football League (RFL)

The RFL publishes a range of documents covering subjects such as pitches and their maintenance, lighting, artificial pitch specifications, pitch dimensions, and changing room specifications.

https://www.rugby-league.com/the_rfl/great_places_to_play

Rugby Football Union (RFU)

The RFU publishes a range of documents covering subjects such as pitches and their maintenance, lighting, artificial pitch specifications, pitch dimensions, and changing room specifications.

www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/facilities

The Football Association (FA)

The FA publishes a range of documents on facility development and covering subjects such as goal & pitch sizes, designs and specifications (natural and artificial pitches), goalpost safety, and small sided football (including Futsal).

www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/facilities

The Football Foundation act as a point of contact for planning related enquiries for football on behalf of The FA. The Foundation can be contacted by email at:

planning@footballfoundation.org.uk

Further information

Active Partnerships

There are 43 Active Partnerships across England who work collaboratively with local partners to create the conditions for an active nation using the power of sport and physical activity to transform lives.

www.activepartnerships.org/active-partnerships

Planning Portal

The Planning Portal is the Government's online planning and building regulations resource for England and Wales.

www.planningportal.co.uk/

Land Access & Recreation Association

The Motoring Organisations' Land Access & Recreation Association provide information on a range of topics including the 14/28-day rule for temporary use of land for motor sports events – see their 2019 'Motor Sports Events in the Countryside' guidance.

laragb.org/lara-papers/

Planning Aid

Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees.

www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/

Royal Town Planning Institute

The professional body providing advice and guidance on the planning system.

www.rtpi.org.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects

The professional body providing advice and guidance on architecture.

www.architecture.com

The RIBA plan of work

If a development requires the input of an architect, there are stages to the work which they will adhere to. These are grouped into five categories:

- preparation
- design
- pre-construction
- construction
- use

www.ribaplanofwork.com/

The Planning Inspectorate

Responsible for the determination of planning appeals and the examination of development plans.

www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk

Sport England contacts

For enquiries regarding a planning application, planning consultation, development, site or facility you can contact the relevant national governing bodies of sport and Sport England. For Sport England please contact the relevant geographical email:

North East, North West, Yorkshire

planning.north@sportengland.org

West Midlands, East Midlands, East

planning.central@sportengland.org

South West, South East, London

planning.south@sportengland.org

If you have any general planning enquiries for which you'd like to contact Sport England or the enquiry relates to our planning policy, guidance and tools please email:

planningforsport@sportengland.org

Sport England's planning team can also be contacted by phone on 020 7273 1777 or by post at either its London or Loughborough offices:

- **London**:
  21 Bloomsbury Street,
  London,
  WC1B 3HF,
- **Loughborough**:
  Sport Park,
  3 Oakwood Drive,
  Loughborough,
  LE11 3QF

Contacts - Funding

For any Sport England funding related enquiry please visit www.sportengland.org/funding or call the funding helpline on **0345 8508508**.

Alternative Languages and formats:

This document can be provided in alternative languages, or alternative formats such as large print, braille, tape and on disk upon request. Call Sport England on **08458 508 508** for more details.

Disclaimer:

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