

County Durham Plan

Statement of Common Ground between Durham County Council and Sport England

October 2019

Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared jointly between Durham County Council (DCC) and Sport England (SE).

The Statement sets out the confirmed points of agreement between DCC and SE with regard to the County Durham Plan (CDP) and the sites identified for development.

Background

DCC have been working alongside SE, the Football Foundation (FF) and the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) to update the current Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for County Durham. When finalised, the PPS will provide a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitch provision and accompanying ancillary facilities (up to 2035, in line with the CDP).

The Strategy is being developed to provide:

- A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches.
- A number of aims to help deliver the recommendations and actions.
- A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock.
- A series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- A prioritised area-by-area Action Plan to address key issues on a site-by-site basis.

SE Representations to Pre-Submission Draft CDP

In January 2019, the Council published the Pre-Submission draft of the CDP for statutory consultation under regulation 19 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

In response to this statutory consultation, SE submitted a formal response to the draft plan on 08 March 2019. A copy of this response can be found at Appendix 1.

The response detailed that SE objected to the plan and associated allocations which result, either in whole or part in the loss of playing field, or have the potential to prejudice the use of playing field.

In order to address these concerns, the Council have been working together with SE and have subsequently agreed to several proposed modifications to the CDP to satisfy the concerns raised.

Subject to these changes, SE accept that their objections to the Plan would be met.

Agreed Matters

Policy 3 - Aykley Heads

Aykley Heads is allocated as a high-quality employment allocation within the CDP. Historically the site contained the sports facilities for the Durham Constabulary. The site formerly hosted a range of

sporting facilities including football pitches, cricket pitch, tennis courts, bowling greens, leisure centre with swimming pool. The site had a total playing field area of 10.25 Ha. Planning applications to:

- develop a new Police HQ (Ref: CMA/4/73); and,
- redevelop the existing HQ site for housing (Ref: CMA/4/71)

were approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in June 2012. The new HQ is built and operational and the former site is under construction for housing. A S106 payment of £150,000 was secured from the Police towards replacement playing field. Once the PPS and Action Plan for the Durham City area is complete the monies can be invested in accordance with its recommendations.

At present approximately 7.35Ha of playing field remain in-situ.

In calculating the supply and demand for pitches in Durham City, the facilities formerly provided at Aykley Heads are not included in the current supply within the PPS. Should the findings of the PPS and Action Plans for Durham City not indicate a surplus of playing pitch provision, replacement playing field provision would need to be made.

The former bowling greens, tennis courts and all-weather pitch at Aykley Heads (amounting to 1.84Ha of playing field) have been unused for a number of years. An additional requirement is proposed to be added to Policy 3 with a new criterion added requiring the development to provide a financial contribution to facilitate playing field re-provision in the catchment area. The proposed main modification is as follows:

“The development of Aykley Head will require a financial contribution to facilitate playing field re-provision in the catchment area”.

Policy 5: Durham City’s Sustainable Urban Extensions and H5: Sniperley Park, Durham City

Sniperley Park is identified as a sustainable urban extension with a yield of 1,700 units. The southern part of the allocation currently contains playing fields with an area of 6.8Ha, and development is earmarked for this land. The pitches have no changing facilities associated with them. Like for like or improved alternative playing field provision will be developed as part of the Sniperley Park development. Land is identified within the Sniperley Park for a new primary which is where these replacement playing fields will be re-located to. Additional text is proposed to Policy 5 as a modification confirming that in accordance with SE’s playing field policy exception E4 the playing field will be re-provided within the Sniperley Park development. The proposed main modification to Policy 5 criterion b is as follows:

“A new primary school and associated playing pitches will be provided of a scale which will meet the expected requirement for school places generated by the new housing development. The primary school should be readily accessible to public transport, walking and cycling route. and incorporate mini soccer pitches. The primary school will contain associated playing fields which will replace those lost at the southern end of the site and will be of an equivalent or better quality; equivalent quantity and available for use by both the school and by community teams via a community use agreement.”

A main modification is also proposed to Policy 5 supporting text 4.105

"The southern part of the Sniperley allocation currently contains playing fields with 5 pitches marked. The pitches have no changing facilities associated with them. Like for like or improved alternative playing field provision will be required as part of the Sniperley Park development. The need for a new primary school has been identified for the site which will also provide these replacement playing fields. The Durham City Playing Pitch Action Plan (PPAP) indicates that there is an adequate supply of senior football pitches in the Durham City area even after considering the loss of pitches at Sniperley Park. There is however a requirement to provide additional mini soccer pitches to meet latent demand from teams based within the area should their existing central league venues in Sunderland cease, or change to home and away format. Whilst the PPAP recommends mitigating latent demand by the conversion of surplus senior pitches on specified sites, on a 1:4 ratio, it will be necessary to incorporate some additional mini pitches at the new primary school/s which can ~~can~~ will be used both by the school and by community teams via a formal community use agreement. The precise layout and configuration of pitches to be laid out within the school playing fields will be determined by the Playing Pitch Strategy and associated action plans".

Sport England's objection would be resolved by this modification.

Policy 4 - Housing Allocations

H1 - Gilesgate School

This site is now the subject of a formal planning application by Chapter Homes (DM/19/02546/FPA) for 60 dwellings. The grass playing field area which belonged to the school has been taken on by the neighbouring Primary School and does not form part of the allocation. Historically the school also included floodlit tennis courts and a floodlit artificial grass pitch which because of their location were also considered to be part of the playing field. These facilities do form part of the housing allocation boundary. A modification is proposed to the policy which requires a financial contribution from the development of the site for the improvement of provision within the catchment area. The proposed main modification is for a new bullet point to be added to Policy 4, H1 as follows:

"The development of Gilesgate School will require a financial contribution to facilitate playing field re-provision within the catchment area".

Sport England's objection would be resolved by this modification.

H11 - Former Roseberry School

A current requirement of Policy 4 is that the development of the site will maintain an access to the adjacent playing pitches which are protected. **Objection resolved.**

H16 - Blackfyne School

This policy requires replacement sports changing room and a financial contribution towards the improvement of the existing playing fields immediately to the west of the site. Replacement changing has now been provided by Consett cricket club. DCC provided £80,000 of improvements to their changing rooms in return for community use to accommodate other activities on site including football. Drainage works have been carried out to allow poor pitches to west of site to be re-introduced. **Objection resolved.**

H24 - Tudhoe Grange Lower School

A current requirement of Policy 4 is to retain a suitable maintenance access to the adjoining playing pitch directly to the north east of the site which is to be retained for usage by King Street Primary School and falls outside of the housing allocation boundary.

The housing allocation covers the remainder of the former school's playing field – an area of 2.6Ha.

It is agreed that development of that part of the site can only take place subject to an up-to-date PPS identifying there being a surplus of playing pitches in the catchment in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E1, or where the playing field can be re-provided in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E4. Additional text is proposed to Policy 4 as a modification confirming this which if accepted, would resolve Sport England's objection. The proposed main modification is for a new bullet point to be added to Policy 4, H24 as follows:

"The part of Tudhoe Grange Lower School which includes a former school playing field can only be developed subject to an up-to-date PPS identifying there being a surplus of playing pitches in the catchment in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E1, or where the pitch can be re-provided in a suitable location in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E4".

H25 - Tudhoe Grange Upper School

A current requirement of Policy 4 is to retain the vehicular and pedestrian access to the adjoining playing pitches. Within the confines of the housing allocation boundary there is an area of former playing fields amounting to 1.2Ha which contained an adult pitch.

It is agreed that development of that part of the site can only take place subject to an up-to-date PPS identifying there being a surplus of playing pitches in the catchment in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E1, or where the playing field can be re-provided in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E4. Additional text is proposed to Policy 4 as a modification confirming this which would satisfactorily resolve the objection. The proposed main modification is for a new bullet point to be added to Policy 4, H25 as follows:

"The part of Tudhoe Grange Upper School which includes a former school playing field can only be developed subject to an up-to-date PPS identifying there being a surplus of playing pitches in the catchment in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E1, or where the pitch can be re-provided in a suitable location in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E4".

H32 - Woodham College

The land earmarked as a housing allocation does not include any of the playing fields or pitches currently associated with Woodham College. The allocation covers annex land formerly associated with the Avenue Comprehensive School which closed in 1992.

Confirmation that the current playing fields and pitches associated with Woodham School do not form part of the allocation enables SE to remove their objection.

H43 - Wolsingham Leazes Lane

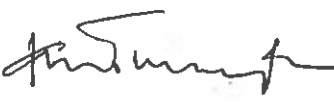
The allocation site boundary excludes the playing fields located immediately to the south and east of the site. An access road will be shared between the housing site and the leisure centre, however, those pitches will be unaffected.


Included within the extent of the housing allocation boundary is 2Ha of playing field which contained a grass playing pitch, tennis courts and an artificial grass pitch.

It is agreed that development of that part of the site can only take place subject to an up-to-date PPS identifying there being a surplus of playing pitches in the catchment in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E1, or where the playing field can be re-provided in a suitable location in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E4. Additional text is proposed to Policy 4 as a modification confirming this which would satisfactorily resolve the objection. The proposed main modification is for a new bullet point to be added to Policy 4, H43 as follows:

"The part of Wolsingham Leazes Lane which includes a former school playing field can only be developed subject to an up-to-date PPS identifying there being a surplus of playing pitches in the catchment in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E1, or where the pitch can be re-provided in a suitable location in accordance with SE's playing field policy exception E4".

Statement of Common Ground

Signed on behalf of Durham County Council		
Name and position	Signature	Date
Ian Thompson Position: Director of Regeneration and Local Services		3/10/19.

Signed on behalf of Sport England		
Name and position	Signature	Date
David McGuire Position: Planning Manager		3 rd October 2019