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From:
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Subject: [EXTERNAL]:20260715 Sport England consultation Response Ashfield District Council Main Modification Consultation
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Dear Playing Policy Team,

Please see below Sport England's comments in response to the Main Modification consultation.

Main Modifications MM28–MM31: Policy EV5 – Green Space and Recreational Facilities

Sport England considers that Main Modifications MM28–MM31 make Policy EV5 more effective, positively prepared and consistent with national policy. The amendments provide a clearer and more robust framework for the protection of sports facilities, recreational facilities and playing fields, ensuring that decisions relating to the loss of such assets are based on established policy tests and supported by appropriate evidence.

The revised policy now reflects national planning policy requirements for the protection of existing open space, sports and recreational land, and buildings. In particular, it establishes clear circumstances in which the loss of sports facilities or playing fields may be considered acceptable, including where facilities are demonstrated to be surplus to requirements, where development is ancillary to the sporting use, where equivalent or better replacement provision is secured, or where alternative provision delivers benefits that clearly outweigh the loss. As a result, the policy provides a sound and effective basis for decision-making and helps ensure opportunities for sport and physical activity are protected across the district.

The supporting text further strengthens the policy by recognising the importance of sports and recreational facilities alongside green spaces and by confirming that proposals involving the loss of sports or recreation land and buildings will be assessed against Policy EV5. Reference to the Council's Public Open Space Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy will help ensure future planning decisions are informed by an up-to-date and relevant evidence base relating to need, demand and future provision. This strengthens both the effectiveness and justification of the policy. The modifications also improve the policy by ensuring that flood alleviation schemes affecting sports facilities and playing fields are subject to the same assessment criteria as other forms of development, thereby safeguarding the long-term value, function and accessibility of these facilities.

Kind Regards

Rajvir Bahey
Planning Manager



'Sport England was recognised for its work in leading the sport sector to promote environmental sustainability and net zero, through both its Every Move strategy and innovative campaigns and advocacy.'



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