



Statement of Common Ground between  
Cannock Chase District Council and Sport  
England

Cannock Chase Local Plan (2018-2040)

September 2024

## Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC) and Sport England (SE), hereafter referred to as “the parties” to inform the submission of the Cannock Chase Local Plan (2018-2040).
2. This SoCG has been prepared in accordance with national guidance and is intended to cover matters of strategic importance relevant to the parties. It documents those matters agreed by the parties with regard to the Cannock Chase Local Plan and any areas which remain subject to further discussion. This Statement of Common Ground covers the following matters:
  - Evidence on loss of sports pitches in relation to specific proposed allocations in the Local Plan;
3. Cannock Chase District Council published consultation material and invited comments relating to its Local Plan process at the following stages:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Issues and Scope	2 <sup>nd</sup> July - 28 <sup>th</sup> August 2018
Issues and Options	13 <sup>th</sup> May - 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Preferred Options (Regulation 18)	19 <sup>th</sup> March -30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
Pre-Submission (Regulation 19)	5 <sup>th</sup> February - 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024

4. Sport England were consulted at each stage and responded as they considered appropriate.

## Geography covered by Statement of Common Ground

5. This SoCG covers the Local Authority area of Cannock Chase District Council.

## Key Strategic Matters

6. The following issues outlined below are considered to be the key strategic matters with regards to on-going plan making. Both parties are committed to further dialogue moving forward, not just limited to the periods of plan preparation.

## Scope of this SoCG

This Statement focuses on the issues and objections made by Sport England with regard to the assessment of some of the proposed allocations and whether sufficient information has been provided to assess the impact of these allocations on the sports pitches available within the District, alongside the concerns raised on the use of the Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy and/or the Playing Pitch Strategy New Development Calculator. Sport England also raised some minor issues with regards to some of the text within the Local Plan, these are however, not subject to consideration within this SoCG.

## Engagement

7. Sport England provided detailed comments in response to the Issues and Options consultation and Preferred Options consultation. Following on from comments in response to the Regulation 19 consultation, the Council and Sport England undertook a meeting to discuss the issues raised and this has informed the proposed resolutions within this SoCG.

### **Preferred Options Site Allocations - Issues raised**

8. During the Preferred Options consultation, Sport England submitted a representation which noted that a number of proposed allocations were on *either active or lapsed sports and recreations sites, and that the loss of provision should be replaced where appropriate in line with the requirements of the NPPF paragraph 97 or in the case of lapsed sites contributions towards enhancements to existing sports sites could be sought to address shortfalls identified within the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy.*
9. The representation identified the following sites:
  - Land at Newlands Lane (SH1)
  - Heath Hayes Football Club (SH1)
  - Land at Girton Road/Spring Street, Cannock (H35)
  - Nursery Fields (H50)
10. Regrettably, the points of difference were not fully resolved prior to the publication of the Reg 19 consultation. This resulted in Sport England raising issues of soundness regarding some of the proposed allocations in the Local Plan.

### **Regulation 19 Site Allocations - Issues Raised**

11. During the Regulation 19 consultation, Sport England submitted several representations which noted that a number of proposed allocations were sited on playing field land and raised that a criteria should be added to the applicable site specific policies to state that *the land shall not be developed upon unless it has been demonstrated that the playing field land is surplus to requirements or replacement field land is secured and delivered in line with proposed local plan policy SO2.3 and NPPF Paragraph 103.*
12. The representations submitted by Sport England covered the following sites:
  - Former Hart School, Burnthill Road (SH6)
  - Land at Girton Road/Spring Street, Cannock (H35)
  - Cannock Chase High School, Lower Site Campus, Hednesford Road (H61)
  - Nursery Fields, St Michaels Road, Brereton (H50)
  - Former Rugeley Power Station, Rugeley (SM1)

13. More detailed issues were raised in relation to two of the sites: the former Hart School and the former Rugeley Power Station site. Sport England raised a specific objection to Policy SH6: Former Hart School - *with it resulting in the loss of playing field land. No details have been submitted demonstrating that the playing field land is surplus to requirement in line with proposed policy SO2.3 and NPPF Paragraph 103. The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) notes the closure of the Hart School (Lower Campus) would result in a shortfall of one match equivalent sessions in the North East Analysis Area; increasing overall shortfall of three match equivalent sessions on youth 11v11 pitches throughout Cannock Chase District.*
14. Further to this, Sport England submitted a representation with regards to the Former Rugeley Power Station site and noted *that the policy lists the proposed sports provision at the site. However, the provision is not aligned to that proposed to be delivered at the site through planning permission 10/00753/OUTMEI which seeks to deliver two artificial pitches, football pitches, rugby pitch and MUGA.*
15. Sport England also submitted a representation concerning paragraphs 6.59 and 6.67 of the supporting text for Policy SO2.3 in relation to playing field demand and how the policy proposes a standard approach which Sport England do not support, whilst the policy also advocates the use of the Planning Pitch Strategy New Development Calculator.

### **Proposed resolutions**

16. The following resolutions cover the issues identified by Sport England in their representation in relation to all sites, and the concerns raised with regards to paragraphs 6.59 and 6.67 of the supporting text for Policy SO2.3.

### **Policy SO2.3: Provision of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields**

17. The Council agree with Sport England that it is important that any loss of playing pitches is considered in line with the requirements of the NPPF. It was considered that Policy SO2.3 would apply when assessing planning applications for relevant site allocations and therefore the Council had not sought to identify this as a specific requirement within the 'Key Development Considerations' of the relevant site allocation. The Council suggest that a minor modification to Policy SO2.3 could help clarify that the conditions in the policy also applies to allocated sites.
18. With regards to all sites and the potential for loss of existing playing fields a modification is proposed to Policy SO2.3 to ensure that the change in demand and/or supply of playing pitches within the District is considered throughout the Plan Period and is applicable to all site allocations. The following modification to the wording is proposed:

(proposed modification to first paragraph of policy, underlined text is new additional wording)

**Policy SO2.3: Provision of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields**

**Existing Provision**

*The local planning authority will require development to maintain and support the improvement to the level of provision of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and resist development which restricts physical access to them. Any development proposals, including on sites allocated within the Local Plan, that would result in a reduction in the provision will only be supported where: [...]*

19. The Council acknowledge Sport England’s concerns with regards to the reference to both the Playing Pitch Strategy and the New Development Calculator. It was envisaged by the Council that the New Development Calculator would be used to determine financial contributions but it is acknowledged it is an accurate tool to determine outdoor sports provision as it converts the demand into match equivalent sessions and the number of pitches required. The Council acknowledge Sport England’s comments that there may be certain circumstances there might not be the need for additional playing field land to meet the demand generating from a development, with off-site contributions to enhancements to existing sites being the relevant approach based on an up to date Playing Pitch Strategy.
20. As such, the Council proposes the following modification to the table in the supporting text for Policy SO2.3 following paragraph 6.59 to clarify that the NDC calculator rather than a standard will be used in the calculation for playing pitches:

<p><b>Outdoor Sports Provision</b></p> <p>Formal outdoor sports pitches for rugby, football, hockey or cricket for hire with associated facilities and infrastructure including car parks and changing rooms. Including public land, private clubs or institutional land.</p>	<p><b>1,60</b></p> <p><b><u>New Development Calculator</u></b></p>	<p><b>1,200</b></p> <p><b><u>N/A</u></b></p>
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**Policy SM1: Former Rugeley Power Station, Rugeley**

21. The comments raised by Sport England with regards to the wording within Policy SM1 not aligning to the provision proposed to be delivered at the site through the planning permission have been considered by the Council. The wording in Policy SM1 intended to capture all of the relevant sports and recreational facilities for the site. However, it is agreed that the use of more

specific wording which aligns with the conditions of the planning application will ensure their delivery. The following modification to the wording in line with the Department for Education Conditions letter setting out their interpretation of Condition 20: Sports Provision is proposed:

*The development will provide facilities for sport and recreation including a Multi-Use Games Area for the secondary school including netball, basketball or tennis courts; a smaller Multi-Use Games area to serve the primary school including netball/basketball court; a four court sports hall with associated changing facilities; a an U15/16 sized 3G all-weather football sports pitch including areas for storage of goals; a 2G all-weather hockey pitch; a senior football grass pitch; a rugby league grass pitch that could accommodate javelin throw and a 100m sprint straight; an U9/10 mini soccer grass pitch; and an U7/8 mini soccer grass pitch. ~~Two senior football pitches, a cricket oval (for curricular use). Three mini football pitches and six hard courts that could accommodate tennis, netball and basketball amongst others.~~*

## Summary

22. Cannock Chase District has undertaken all available actions in partnership with Sport England, to ascertain the impact of development proposed in the Local Plan on Playing Pitch/Sports Facilities and are committed to ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to any required mitigation measures to enable development.
23. The Council has sought to take a pragmatic approach to ensure that the Plan could be progressed, and to acknowledge and where able address the issues identified within Sport England's Regulation 19 consultation, and as identified above a small number of proposed amendments to text in the Local Plan have been prepared to resolve these issues and should be considered through the examination as potential modifications to the plan. Both parties are in agreement regarding the wording of the proposed modifications.

## Signatures

We confirm that the information in this Statement of Common Ground reflects the joint working to address identified strategic matters that has been undertaken between Cannock Chase District Council and Sport England. The parties will continue to work together to address cross-boundary and strategic issues.

### **Cannock Chase District Council**

**Name: Dean Piper**

**Position: Head of Economic Development & Planning**

**Signature:**



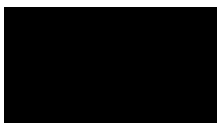
**Date: 01/10/2024**

### **Sport England**

**Name: Rajvir Bahey**

**Position: Planning Manager**

**Signature:**



**Date: 10/09/2024**