



Squash court's under threat, have your say.....

Squash courts are vulnerable in any review of facility provision by local government or in the event of any sale of land for development. Many of you will know of courts that have disappeared as the result of development.

Current Government planning policy fails to protect or consider built sports facilities despite their perceived or actual value to the local community. The much debated Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) is under review but will this lead to a new dawn for built facility provision?

England Squash & Racketball are working with The Sport and Recreation Alliance (the umbrella organisation for the governing and representative bodies of sport and recreation in the UK) to challenge the proposed policy.

The Government is undertaking a consultation process for a draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that would replace PPG17 and a number of other related policy statements. Full documents can be viewed at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>

In summary, the Government is pressing ahead with plans to re-prioritise the planning system by encouraging more development at the expense of open space and sport and recreation facilities. The draft Framework will allow facilities to be built on if the 'benefits outweigh the loss'. This position will make open space and facilities vulnerable to 'change of use' applications which could significantly increase the cost of land.

We want to see greater protection for valuable built facilities by ensuring that if a decision is taken to build on a facility a replacement is provided.

What is ESR doing?

ESR is campaigning with the Sport & Recreation Alliance and written directly to the Department for Communities and Local Government to represent our firm views for the protection and provision of squash court facilities.

How can you help?

Raise this issue with your MP by emailing them today via this on line tool. It will only take you a few minutes! <http://sport-recreation.appspot.com/mp/write>

If you have any problems accessing these documents, or if you have any questions, please contact Martin Key (020 7976 3904 or mkey@sportandrecreation.org.uk)

What should you include in the email?

As a guide please see an example of letter below that can be easily adapted:



Dear ,

I am deeply concerned by the lack of protection for sport and recreation facilities in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

At a time when the value of community sports facilities cannot be underestimated this framework fails to protect them suitably or practically.

There should be a requirement to replace 'like for like' built sports facilities that are valued by the community. Also that developers should be obliged to contribute to community sports facilities that provide valuable infrastructure.

I would ask you to support the Sport and Recreation Alliance's proposal that Paragraph 129 of the draft framework be improved by the requirement to provide a suitable replacement in the event that existing facilities are built on.

If you are in agreement I would ask that you write to the Minister for Decentralisation and Planning, Greg Clark MP, to ask how he will ensure sport and recreation facilities are adequately protected.

While I support the need to encourage sustainable development I cannot accept that it must be at the expense of valuable community facilities which enable physical activity and promote community cohesion.

Yours Sincerely

Please note the consultation deadline is the 17th October 2011.

England Squash & Racketball, September 2011