

## Appendix 23

Our Ref: 220020/CM/4

Murad Qureshi AM  
Chair of the Health and Environment Committee  
London Assembly  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London  
SE1 2AA



18 December 2012

Dear Mr Qureshi

Thank you for your letter of 23 November about playing fields in London.

I understand the Committee's desire to ensure that there is adequate provision of playing fields in London. The Government and Sport England share this desire, and are committed to ensuring that playing fields are protected throughout England. I am sorry to read, however, that you do not feel that Sport England's role in protecting playing fields is sufficient.

I am aware that the Chief Executive of Sport England, Jennie Price, wrote to you on 4 December to reiterate her confidence that their statutory responsibility robustly protects playing fields from development, and recent statistical evidence supports this view. On 27 November Sport England released figures showing that in England 1373 out of 1460, and in London 161 out of 185, concluded planning applications affecting playing fields in 2010/11 resulted in improved or safeguarded sports provision. Sport England is also directly investing in the protection and improvement of playing fields via the Protecting Playing Fields fund.

With regard to the possible re-configuration of Sport England and UK Sport, this is still in discussion but I am clear that the protection of playing fields falls very much within Sport England's remit, and I am pleased to hear that they have offered to meet with the Committee in the New Year to discuss how you could work together. I hope that these discussions will be positive.

Thank you, once again, for writing to me, with all my very best wishes.

RT HON HUGH ROBERTSON MP  
Minister for Sport and Tourism