

30th July 2025

Sent by email

Dear Delyth Jewell MS,

I am writing on behalf of cricket clubs across Wales, who are increasingly concerned about the risks posed by cricket balls leaving grounds, particularly as new housing developments continue to emerge near longstanding sports facilities.

Cricket is more than just a sport, Criced, is a 'Sport For All', and a cherished part of Welsh communities. It develops teamwork, resilience, respect, and community pride. As the national governing body, Cricket Wales is committed to safeguarding this heritage, 'Protecting What's Precious', while ensuring cricket's growth and accessibility for future generations. However, planning decisions are threatening the viability and safety of our grounds due to a lack of clear guidance and accountability in the planning process.

One of the most pressing issues is the increasing frequency of developments being approved adjacent to cricket grounds without proper consideration of the potential for ball strike. These developments often encroach on formerly protective green buffers, introducing real safety concerns for new residents and placing significant financial burdens on community clubs who are forced to install protective netting or fencing costs that typically range between £80,000 and £100,000 per ground.

At present, Sport Wales is not routinely consulted during the planning stages of such developments. This stands in stark contrast to planning practices in England, where Sport England works in partnership with national governing bodies to assess potential risks and recommend mitigation measures prior to construction. Wales currently lacks a comparable system of early-stage engagement and accountability.

Cricket Wales urges the Welsh Government and the Senedd to introduce clear planning policy requiring:

- Review of the existing agent of change principle in the planning policy;
- Formal consultation with Sport Wales or relevant governing bodies where developments are proposed near sports facilities;
- Developers to assess and fund any necessary safety mitigation, such as fencing or ball-stop netting, at the planning stage where a risk of ball strike is identified;
- Local councils and developers to recognise and act on their shared duty of care to both new residents and existing community facilities.

Such a policy would preserve the functionality and appeal of cherished green spaces like cricket grounds. A clear policy would support community sport, specifically cricket, in not carrying the financial burden. Far from being an obstacle to development, well-maintained and accessible sports grounds are a genuine asset to new communities, contributing to their health, identity, and overall well-being.

This proposal aligns directly with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, in particular the goal of creating a Wales of cohesive communities, places that are safe, attractive, and connected. We have discussed this matter with the Future Generations Commissioner, who understands that statutory bodies have a shared responsibility to uphold this principle in decision-making.

We believe the time is right for the Welsh Government to introduce a planning policy that recognises the dual needs of community sport and responsible development. Clear, proactive guidance would support developers, protect green spaces, and ensure that community clubs are not left to carry the burden of safety costs alone.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage with Members of the Senedd further on this matter and to support the development of planning policy that reflects the value of sport, safety, and cohesive communities in a modern, inclusive Wales.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



Barry Cawte
Cricket Wales CEO
On behalf of Cricket Clubs in Wales.