

Wokingham Borough Council

FAO: B Hindle Esq.

By email

5th September 2025

**Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England)
Order 2015**

Application Reference: 242598

Site: Recreation Ground Millworth Lane Shinfield Wokingham RG2 9EN

Proposal: Full application for proposed works to modify the existing recreational facilities including provision of additional car parking and new sports pitches, plus modification of existing pitches and installation of an events mounds, equipment storage and climbing wall, fitness zone, open space, exercise track, pump track and associated landscaping, following removal of the existing concrete bases, cricket square and practice nets.

Sport England Reference: PA/24/SE/WON/69073

Dear Benjamin,

Thank you for re-consulting Sport England on the above application.

Since our we lodged our statutory objection on the 15th November 2024 we have had an email change and meeting with the applicants, which has resulted in the current revised plans.

Key to the application was the retention on site of Shinfield Rangers FC until their new site at High Copse, which was confirmed in emails dated 15th of August 2025 from the applicants:

What we have said previously remains. I.e. Any removal of football pitches only happens when suitable alternative provision has been made. That includes the 3G which has to have support from Football Foundation and University of Reading and we have made very good progress with the latter about where such a pitch might go at High Copse.

We've satisfied ourselves that both existing pitches at Millworth can be retained with regards to our planned positioning of the Fitness Centre as is indicated on the attached. This includes exceeding the required run off space for safety.

As we mentioned before the scheme with all the additional sports is has significant merit and will attract a lot of different participants and allow different sections of the community experience new and different sports.

It would allow formal and informal activity to take place which is promoted in our own strategy *Uniting the Movement*.

The additional information and clarification, we are of the opinion that the proposal meets our E5 planning policy exception and having compliance with paragraph 103 bullet point c).

Sport England's Revised Position

Given the above, Sport England withdraws its statutory objection to the application because it is now considered to accord exception 5 to our Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s).

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact the undersigned

Yours sincerely,

Bob

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Annex

The Five Exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy

Exception 1

A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

Exception 2

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

Exception 3

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

Exception 4

The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

Exception 5

The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

The full 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document' is available to view at:
www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy