

Planning Statement

Proposed Development : The Conversion of Three Floodlit Netball Courts to form Four Floodlit Padel Courts at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the conversion of three outdoor floodlit netball courts to four outdoor padel tennis courts together with associated low-level LED floodlighting and ancillary works.

The proposal represents an investment in high-quality sports infrastructure that will increase opportunities for physical activity, improve community health and wellbeing, and provide modern recreational facilities within Wokingham Borough.

2. Site Context

The application site forms part of an existing sports facility at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre and is well located to serve local residents by sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport. The proposal has been designed to integrate with the surrounding landscape while minimising impacts upon neighbouring properties.

The proposal makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and transport connections and promotes sustainable leisure development.

3. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which promotes healthy, inclusive and safe communities through the provision of accessible sports and recreation facilities.

In particular, the development:

- promotes social interaction and healthy lifestyles through increased sporting opportunities;
- enhances community infrastructure by providing modern recreational facilities;



- makes effective use of an existing redundant sporting and recreational site ;
- supports sustainable development through investment in community infrastructure.

The NPPF places significant weight on protecting and enhancing sports facilities and recognises that planning decisions should facilitate opportunities for sport, recreation and active lifestyle.

Wokingham Borough Development Plan

The proposal is consistent with the strategic objectives of Wokingham Borough Council's adopted planning framework and emerging Local Plan policies relating to:

- protection and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities;
- delivery of healthy communities;
- provision of community infrastructure;
- sustainable patterns of development;
- high-quality design;
- biodiversity enhancement and landscape protection where appropriate.

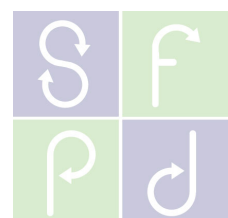
The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy identifies the importance of providing sufficient sports facilities to meet the needs of a growing population and supports investment in modern sporting infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan specifically identifies new padel courts as part of planned sports infrastructure investment, demonstrating that padel facilities are recognised as an appropriate form of sporting provision within the Borough.

Community Facilities and Recreation

The emerging Local Plan Update supports new sport and recreation facilities and seeks to protect and enhance recreational infrastructure. Policy HC4 (Open Space, Sports, Recreation and Play Facilities) states that development proposals for new open space, sport and recreation facilities will be encouraged and supported where they are well related to the communities they serve and consistent with Sport England guidance.

The proposal directly delivers new recreational facilities without resulting in the loss of existing sporting provision.



4. Principle of Development

The principle of providing additional sports facilities is strongly supported by national and local planning policy.

Padel is one of the fastest-growing participation sports in the UK and demand for accessible courts continues to exceed supply. The development will increase opportunities for participation by people of all ages and abilities, encouraging physical activity and improving community wellbeing.

The proposal represents appropriate investment in recreational infrastructure and contributes positively to the Borough's sporting provision.

5. Design and Appearance

The proposed courts have been designed to minimise visual impact while maintaining high-quality sporting standards.

Existing high column and high output metal halide fittings will be taken down and removed from site. New low level floodlighting is proposed which will comprise modern directional LED luminaires designed to minimise light spill beyond the site boundaries. The padel court surrounding glass walls and weld mesh panels will be of a contemporary transparent design, reducing visual mass and allowing views through the development.

The existing landscaping to the outside of the existing netball courts will soften the appearance of the development and integrate it into the surrounding environment.

6. Residential Amenity

The proposal has been carefully designed to protect neighbouring residential amenity through:

- appropriate separation distances;
- controlled operating hours;
- directional lighting designed to minimise glare;



Any potential impacts from player activity are expected to be limited and capable of being appropriately managed through planning conditions where required.

7. Highways and Accessibility

The development will utilise existing access arrangements and existing adjacent parking provision.

The site is accessible by walking and cycling and contributes towards reducing barriers to participation in sport for local residents.

Traffic generation is expected to be modest and spread throughout the day, with no material impact on the surrounding highway network and no more than the use of the three existing netball courts

8. Ecology and Sustainability

The proposal seeks to retain existing vegetation to outer perimeter of the court block area without disturbance.

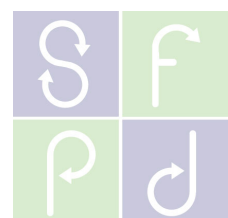
The development represents sustainable investment in long-term community infrastructure and supports public health objectives through encouraging active lifestyles.

9. Planning Balance

The proposal delivers significant public benefits by:

- increasing provision of sports facilities;
- promoting health and wellbeing;
- encouraging participation in physical activity;
- supporting community cohesion;
- investing in local recreational infrastructure;
- contributing to the Borough's sporting offer.

These benefits substantially outweigh any limited localised impacts, which can be effectively mitigated through design and appropriate planning conditions.



10. Conclusion

The proposed padel courts represent sustainable development that is fully consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning strategy of Wokingham Borough Council.

The proposal enhances the Borough's sporting infrastructure, supports healthier lifestyles, improves community recreational opportunities and contributes positively towards meeting current and future demand for sports facilities.

For these reasons, it is respectfully concluded that planning permission should be granted.

DATE 31.07.2026

