

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	261097
Site Address:	Reading Cricket & Hockey Club, Sonning Lane, Sonning, Reading, RG4 6ST
Expiry Date:	7 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	27 May 2026
Proposal: Full Application for the proposed part change of use of the pavilion (including existing ancillary caretaker accommodation) to provide a gym, physiotherapy clinic, changes to fenestration and the conversion of the detached outbuilding to an ancillary 2- no. bedroom flat with a single storey extension.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Tree Preservation Order – TPO – 0002 – 1951

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB02 – Development adjoining the Green Belt TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB08 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
191555	Application to vary condition 19 of planning consent 19715 dated (10/08/1984) for the proposed new sports ground including pavilion, storage, residential accommodation, cricket fields, hockey pitches, tennis courts and car parking. Condition 19 refers to floodlight operating times.	Approve 19 August 2019
081337	Proposed construction of two hockey pitches and associated earthworks, floodlighting and fencing.	Approve 16 April 2009
042466	Proposed erection of a porch for the groundman's flat.	Approve 25 January 2005
020892	Proposed warm up area and two floodlights (Amendment to consent F/1999/0179).	Approve 10 May 2002
011309	Proposed two storey side extension to pavilion.	Approve 28 Nov 2001
990142	Proposed extensions to pavilions and new surface on car park and warmup area plus new flood light.	Approve 01 February 2001
44896	Hiring of pavilion for training and commercial purposes in addition to leisure use	Refuse 23 October 1995
T/APP/H0330/A /89/121486/P5	Floodlighting to all weather hockey pitch and car park.	Appeal Allowed 2 November 1989
24031	Equipment store	17 July 1985
23049	Erection of a 2-storey building with basement for use as a sports pavilion including 2-bedroom caretakers flat on the ground floor (revision of scheme approved under ref 19715).	**Approve 6 March 1985
19715	Sports ground and pavilion.	*Approve 10 August 1984

***Condition 8 ref 19715**

"The occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted shall be limited to persons solely or mainly employed in connection with the use, management and maintenance of

Reading Cricket and Hockey Club Sports Ground, the subject of the application, and the dependents of such persons residing with them.

Reason: The site is within an area where building development is severely restricted, and the development is justified only to meet a specific need."

****Condition 1 ref 23049**

"Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to affect or vary the conditions imposed on consent no. 19715 dated 10/08/84 which conditions continue in full force and effect save insofar as they are expressly affected or varied by this permission.

Reason: The conditions of that consent are still applicable."

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection
WBC Drainage – No objection
WBC Highways - Requested further information
WBC Growth & Delivery (Planning Policy) – No comments received
WBC Landscape and Trees - No objection
WBC Ecology - No comments received

External

Office for Nuclear Regulation – Responded "No comment"
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council

1. The introduction of Class E uses (gym and physiotherapy facilities), the replacement of the groundsman's flat, and the wider implications of future development at the site. The Parish Council considers that insufficient information has been provided regarding the need, viability and sustainability of the proposed commercial uses and raises concerns that increased weekday activity could result in additional traffic, parking demand and environmental impacts.
Officer comment: *The application must be determined on the development presently proposed. References to potential future works do not form part of this application and cannot be assumed to occur. Traffic and parking are discussed in the main body of the report.*
2. Existing traffic and parking pressures on Sonning Lane arising from nearby schools and sports facilities and considers that the likely volume, frequency and timing of vehicle movements associated with the proposed uses have not been fully assessed. Concerns are also raised regarding the potential cumulative impact of future development, including references to padel courts, although it is acknowledged these do not form part of the

	current application. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> The application must be determined on the development presently proposed. References to padel courts or other potential future works do not form part of this application and cannot be assumed to occur. Any future development requiring planning permission would be assessed on its own merits, including its cumulative effects with committed development. Traffic and parking are discussed in the main body of the report.</i> 3. In relation to the proposed residential accommodation, the Parish Council requests that any permission be subject to conditions restricting occupation to employees of the club. The Parish Council also notes concerns regarding the level of pre-application community engagement and suggests that greater consultation with residents would have been beneficial. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> Pre-application engagement by the applicant is not a prerequisite to the grant of planning permission. The Council has undertaken the statutory publicity required for the application, and the representations received have been considered. If the application is approved it will be subject to a condition limiting occupancy of the residential accommodation to persons employed in connection with the use, management and maintenance of Reading Cricket and Hockey Club Sports Ground, and the dependents of such persons residing with them.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	The Sonning & Sonning Eye Society is concerned that the grey gravelled area shown on the topographic plan extends to the boundary via a narrow strip, which could indicate a second access onto Sonning Lane. This would create a potentially unsafe access with limited visibility and should not be permitted. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> The submitted plans do not propose a second vehicular access onto Sonning Lane. The narrow-gravelled area is internal to the site, and no permission is granted for an additional access.</i> 3 neighbour concerns related to: 1. Lack of public consultation and insufficient information about the club's wider long-term aspirations, including references to a 20-year masterplan and potential future development such as padel courts, additional commercial uses and

	residential accommodation. Objectors consider that the proposal cannot be fully assessed in isolation without understanding the cumulative implications of future phases and have requested greater transparency, and extended consultation and engagement with local residents and stakeholders. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>Pre-application engagement by the applicant is not a prerequisite to the grant of planning permission. The Council has undertaken the statutory publicity required for the application, and the representations received have been considered.</i> 2. The impact on the local highway network. Sonning Lane already experiences significant congestion and road safety issues associated with The Blue Coat School, existing sports clubs and commuter traffic. It is argued that the proposed gym and physiotherapy facilities could attract additional visitors beyond club members, leading to increased traffic generation, parking pressure and cumulative impacts when considered alongside other existing and proposed developments in the area. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>Traffic and parking are discussed in the main body of the report.</i> 3. It is suggested that the proposal could facilitate future expansion of commercial and residential uses, resulting in additional traffic, noise, lighting and environmental disturbance, which may adversely affect the character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring residents. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>The application must be determined on the development presently proposed. References to padel courts or other potential future works do not form part of this application and cannot be assumed to occur. Any future development requiring planning permission would be assessed on its own merits, including its cumulative effects with committed development.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description: Reading Cricket & Hockey Club occupies a large triangular site of over 20 acres, bounded by Sonning Lane to the west, the A4 to the south-east and Berkshire County Sports Club to the north. The site has its own access with a right-turn lane, a car park providing over 130 spaces. The main artificial hockey pitch is located close to the car park. The cricket squares are located on the large, grassed areas to the east of the pavilion. The pavilion measures approximately 1,300m² and includes a flat formerly occupied by the groundsman and subsequently by the

steward and their family. The flat is currently used to accommodate players who combine playing with coaching and security. The groundsman's hut is used to store equipment but is of insufficient size for larger equipment. The pavilion lounge bar, meeting rooms and hall are also available for hire to the public for hospitality events.

Proposal: To reorganise and consolidate the club's facilities. The part change of use of the clubhouse and existing ancillary residential accommodation to provide a gym and physiotherapy clinic and the conversion of the detached outbuilding to provide a replacement two-bedroom flat.

Pavillion

1. Conversion of men's changing rooms and shower block on the ground floor to a physiotherapists practice with 6 no. treatment rooms, a designated reception area and a gym/staff room. The Physiotherapy Practice would utilise approximately 132m² of existing floor space (measuring approximately 16m in length and 11.5m in width). There would be a separate entrance door and a window on the front elevation.
2. Conversion of the ground floor flat into 2 changing rooms. The combined space will measure approximately 6m in length and 12.5m in depth and each changing room will have a WC and showers. There would be direct access via an existing porch and entrance door on the south facing side elevation.
3. Conversion of the first-floor bar area to gym utilising approximately 122m² of existing floor space (measuring approximately 16m in length and 8m in width).
4. Internal alterations to the ladies' toilets to provide separate blocks and new external access.
5. Fenestration changes to the clubhouse.

Detached Outbuilding

The existing detached building, measuring approximately 10m by 6m and 5.3m in height to the roof ridge, would be adapted to provide a single-storey detached staff flat. The proposed alterations include the addition of a rear porch measuring approximately 1.2m in depth, 6.3m in length, 2m to the eaves and 3m in height. There would be 2 no. windows on the northwest elevation and 2 no. windows on the southwest elevation. It would have 2no bedrooms, a bathroom and an open plan kitchen/living room. Each bedroom would be approximately 9.7m².

Supporting Information

The applicant advises that the gym and physiotherapy facilities would be operated by independent businesses based at the club. Club members would receive discounted access, although both facilities would also be available to the public. The applicant states that the club's membership of over 600 members would not be sufficient to sustain the proposed uses and that additional customers would be attracted from the wider Sonning and Woodley area.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of

sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The application has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026, which is a material consideration of critical importance.

The refusal of application 44896 is noted. However, limited information is available regarding the precise nature of that proposal, and the application was determined over 30 years ago under a materially different policy context. The current application relates to the reuse of existing floorspace within an established sports complex and is assessed against the adopted development plan and current national policy framework.

POLICY CONTEXT

NPPF Policy S5 (Principle of development outside settlements) states that:

1. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:
 - a. Development for: agriculture, horticulture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; allotments; cemeteries and burial grounds; mineral extraction and processing; engineering operations and infrastructure (including for transport, energy, water and telecommunications); roadside facilities in accordance with policy TR5; national defence and security; or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;
 - b. Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;
 - c. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces;
 - d. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential);
 - e. Limited infilling within groups of houses;
 - f. An exception site as provided for in policy HO10, or development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;
 - g. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need for gypsy, traveller or travelling show people accommodation, provided it meets the criteria in policy HO12;
 - h. Residential and mixed-use development which would:
 - i. Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);
 - ii. Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;
 - iii. Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; and
 - iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location.

- i. The development of land allocated for that purpose in the development plan (where this lies outside settlements); and
- j. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test), and where the development would:
 - i. . Be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated considering the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or
 - ii. Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.

NPPF Policy E4 Rural business development: The policy states that sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Policy CP11

The site is in designated countryside and Policy CP11 applies. It states that to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted unless it falls within certain exceptions:

1. It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
2. It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
3. It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
4. In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
5. In the case of replacement dwellings, the proposal must: i) Bring about environmental improvements; or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building.
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

The site lies within the countryside where Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy seeks to restrict development unless it falls within one of the identified exceptions. The proposal comprises three distinct elements:

- The provision of a commercial gym within part of the existing pavilion.
- The provision of a commercial physiotherapy clinic within part of the existing pavilion.
- The conversion and extension of an existing detached outbuilding to provide replacement staff accommodation associated with Reading Cricket & Hockey

Club.

Each element is considered separately below.

A. Gym

The proposed gym would occupy approximately 122m² of existing first-floor floorspace within the pavilion. The applicant has confirmed that the facility would be operated by an independent business and would be available to members of the public. Whilst club members would receive discounted access, the submitted information states that the membership of the club alone would not be sufficient to support the operation and that users would be drawn from the wider catchment area. The proposal therefore cannot reasonably be regarded as a facility serving only the private needs of club members. Rather, it represents a commercial leisure use operating from within the existing sports complex. Notwithstanding this, the gym would:

- Utilise existing floorspace within the pavilion;
- Require no extension to the building;
- Remain physically integrated within the established sports complex;
- Provide fitness facilities closely related to sporting activities taking place on the site; and
- Contribute to the long-term viability and diversification of an established recreational facility.

The gym would not result in expansion of development beyond the existing built form or developed footprint of the site. Whilst the proposed gym would operate as an independent commercial business, it would provide fitness facilities directly related to sport and recreation and would be located within an established sports complex rather than as a standalone commercial facility. It is therefore considered to contribute to recreation and the continued viability of an existing recreational use in accordance with criterion 1 of Policy CP11.

B. Physiotherapy Clinic

The proposal includes conversion of approximately 132m² of ground-floor accommodation to provide six treatment rooms, associated reception facilities and ancillary accommodation for a physiotherapy business. The applicant has confirmed that the facility would be operated independently and be available to members of the public. The physiotherapy clinic therefore represents a commercial health service rather than a facility solely ancillary to the sports club. However, the clinic would:

- Occupy existing accommodation within the pavilion;
- Be physically integrated within the established sports club complex;
- Provide services directly related to sport, fitness, injury treatment and rehabilitation;

- Support the sporting activities undertaken at the site; and
- Make beneficial use of existing accommodation without further encroachment into the countryside.

The use would remain co-located with an established recreational destination and would not create a detached commercial centre unrelated to the sporting use of the site. The physiotherapy clinic would provide treatment and rehabilitation services associated with sporting and physical activity and would operate from within an established sports complex. It is therefore considered to contribute to and support the recreational use of the site for the purposes of criterion 1 of Policy CP11.

C. Replacement Residential Accommodation

Existing Position

Planning permission 19715 approved a sports ground and pavilion including residential accommodation subject to Condition 8, which restricts occupation to persons solely or mainly employed in connection with the use, management and maintenance of Reading Cricket & Hockey Club Sports Ground and their dependants. The subsequent permission under application 23049 expressly retained the conditions attached to permission 19715. Accordingly, the existing residential accommodation benefits from an occupancy restriction and does not constitute an unrestricted dwelling in the countryside.

Proposed Development

The proposal would convert the existing residential accommodation within the pavilion into replacement changing rooms and instead provide a two-bedroom flat within the detached outbuilding. The proposal would therefore relocate the existing tied accommodation rather than introduce a net additional dwelling. The replacement accommodation would continue to serve the operational requirements of the club and is intended to accommodate persons involved in the management, maintenance, coaching, security or operation of the sports ground.

Assessment

The proposal would:

- Replace existing residential accommodation already established on the site;
- Maintain accommodation associated with the operation of the club;
- Avoid the creation of an additional dwelling;
- Utilise an existing building of permanent and substantial construction; and

not materially expand built development within the countryside.

In the absence of an occupancy restriction the proposal could result in the creation of

an unrestricted dwelling in the countryside, contrary to the planning basis on which residential accommodation was originally justified. The residential element is appropriately assessed as replacement ancillary staff accommodation rather than a new unrestricted dwelling. Subject to the imposition of an occupancy condition mirroring Condition 8 of planning permission 19715, the proposal is acceptable in principle.

Conclusion Principle of Development: The proposal comprises three separate but complementary elements: a commercial gym, a commercial physiotherapy clinic and replacement ancillary staff accommodation. Whilst the gym and physiotherapy clinic can operate independently and attracting members of the public, they remain closely related to the sporting and recreational activities occurring on the site. Both uses would be accommodated within the existing pavilion and would support the diversification and long-term sustainability of an established sports facility. The residential component would not create a new unrestricted dwelling but would replace existing staff accommodation that has historically been subject to an occupancy restriction.

It is acknowledged that the gym and physiotherapy clinic are commercial uses which would attract members of the public to a countryside location and therefore attract limited conflict with the restrictive objectives of Policy CP11. However, significant weight is afforded to the fact that both uses are accommodated wholly within an established sports complex, utilise existing floorspace, support recreational activities occurring on the site and do not result in material encroachment into the countryside. On balance, that limited policy tension is outweighed by those factors.

Overall, the proposal would make beneficial use of existing buildings, support an established recreational facility and would not result in excessive encroachment into the countryside. The development is therefore considered to comply with the key aims of Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy and Policies S5 and E4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Condition: Residential Occupation

The residential accommodation hereby permitted shall be occupied only by a person solely or mainly employed in connection with the use, management and maintenance of Reading Cricket and Hockey Club Sports Ground and the dependants of such a person residing with them.

Reason: *To prevent the creation of an unrestricted dwelling in the countryside where residential development would otherwise be contrary to Policy CP11 and to reflect the planning basis on which residential accommodation was originally justified.*

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character

to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The Club House is located approximately 95m from Sonning Lane and 140m from Bath Road to the south. The single-storey detached outbuilding is set back approximately 80m from Sonning Lane and 140m from Bath Road. Furthermore, the boundary treatment comprises tall vegetation, hedges and trees. The proposed alterations would be largely screened from public viewpoints by existing distance, buildings, vegetation and boundary planting. Furthermore, the works would relate to existing buildings with an established leisure use and would not materially alter the spatial extent or visual prominence of development within the countryside. Accordingly, the proposal would not result in the loss of an open space, sport or recreational facility and would remain consistent with the objectives of Policy TB08.

The lawful use of the pavilion is associated with the established Reading Cricket and Hockey Club. The proposal would introduce commercial gym, and physiotherapy uses within defined parts of the building. The gym would be available to the public and the physiotherapy practice would accommodate external staff and clients; the proposal therefore represents a material change in the nature and pattern of activity rather than merely an internal rearrangement of the club facilities.

However, the uses would occupy existing floorspace within an established sports complex and have a functional relationship with sport, fitness and rehabilitation. Subject to controls over the extent of the approved uses, hours of operation and external activity, they would not alter the predominant recreational character of the site or establish a general commercial centre unrelated to the club.

Condition: Gymnasium and Physiotherapy Facility Use

The gymnasium and physiotherapy facilities hereby approved shall only operate from the areas shown on the approved plans and shall not be used for any other purpose within Class E of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order (as amended) without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: *To ensure the development remains compatible with the recreational function of the site and to safeguard the character of the countryside location.*

The conversion would result in the loss of part of the pavilion's changing, bar and meeting accommodation. The proposal retains the primary sporting function of the pavilion and replaces the existing changing facilities within the building. No evidence has been submitted demonstrating that the proposed reconfiguration would prejudice the continued operation of the cricket and hockey club. The proposal would therefore not result in the unacceptable loss or impairment of the established sports facility. Whilst part of the pavilion would be repurposed, replacement changing facilities are provided and the evidence before the Council does not indicate that the proposal would prejudice the continued use of the site as a cricket and hockey club.

NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a

detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces, occupiers and their quality of life.

The clubhouse and detached outbuilding are located approximately 100m east of the nearest residential properties at Lime Tree House and Suites 1 and 2, The Pavilion, Holme Park Farm. These properties are further separated from the application site by significant areas of intervening land, together with established vegetation and trees along Sonning Lane. South Meadow Cottage is located approximately 300m to the north of the site.

Given the substantial separation distances between the proposed development and neighbouring residential properties, together with the existing vegetation and tree screening, the proposal would not result in material overlooking, loss of privacy or an undue sense of enclosure to neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, considering there would be a negligible increase in built form, limited to the addition of a single-storey porch to the outbuilding, the proposal would not appear visually overbearing or result in a loss of light to neighbouring properties.

The gym and physiotherapy use would introduce additional weekday comings and goings and activity beyond the existing pattern of club use. Nevertheless, the activities would take place principally within the pavilion, approximately 100m from the nearest identified residential properties, with intervening land and vegetation. Environmental Health raises no objection, and no external plant, extraction equipment or other material source of noise, odour or emissions is proposed. Subject to conditions controlling operating hours and requiring separate approval for external plant, amplified sound and external lighting, the proposed use is not considered likely to result in unacceptable noise or disturbance. Having regard to the scale of the proposed facility, Environmental Health's comments and the substantial separation distances to neighbouring dwellings, the proposed gym and physiotherapy use is considered acceptable in principle.

Operating Hours

Parish Council and neighbouring residents have raised concerns that the proposed use could result in additional traffic movements, parking demand, noise, lighting and general disturbance, particularly during the early morning period. These concerns are material considerations and attract some weight. The proposed gym and physiotherapy facilities would, however, operate from within the existing pavilion building, approximately 100m from the nearest residential properties, with intervening land and vegetation. Environmental Health has raised no objection to the proposed use, and no external plant, extraction equipment or other significant source of noise is proposed. Furthermore, the use would benefit from substantial on-site parking and would remain ancillary to the wider sports club. Accordingly, it is considered reasonable to control the operational hours through condition and require the facility to operate in accordance with the submitted Gymnasium and Physiotherapy Operational Plan.

Condition: Gymnasium and Physiotherapy Facilities

The gymnasium and physiotherapy facilities hereby permitted shall be operated at all times in accordance with the Gymnasium and Physiotherapy Operational Plan dated September 2026 as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The measures and procedures contained within the approved Operational Plan shall be fully implemented prior to the first use of the gymnasium and physiotherapy facilities and shall thereafter be retained and complied with for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the use operates in an appropriate manner and to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy as it would not result in material overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overbearing impacts or other harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The applicant has provided additional highways information at the request of the Highways Officer.

Sustainability: The proposed dwelling is a relocation within the existing site. As such, Highways have no objection to the sustainability of this proposal.

Access: There is an existing access into the site from Sonning Lane, and it is proposed to utilise this to serve the development. Given that the proposed application would result in an intensification in the use of this access, the Officer requested that drawings demonstrating a 2.4m x 43m visibility splay be provided in accordance with the Manual for Streets standard for a 30mph speed limit.

Officer comment: The Highways Officer subsequently reviewed the Visibility Splays Plan submitted by the applicant and requested the following Condition be added to the Decision Notice:

Condition: Visibility Splays

Prior to the occupation of the development the proposed vehicular access shall have been formed and provided with visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m. The land within the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height and maintained clear of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Parking: Sonning Lane is subject to double yellow line restrictions and will not accommodate overspill parking. The Officer commented that the Planning Statement states there are over 130 spaces and 20 acres of land to be available for overspill parking. This Planning Statement also included some baseline weekend parking occupancy levels. However, the Site Plan indicates 100 car parking spaces in the main car park. The Highways Officer requested that the applicant provide further details of the current parking layout, including the capacity and location of the overflow. This should demonstrate at minimum the 160 spaces recorded on the Sunday at 0900, plus the additional 20 spaces estimated by the applicant as required

by the proposals.

The Highways also requested that the applicant adopts a 'first principles' approach to ascertain the level of trip generation and subsequent parking demand from the physiotherapy and gym uses. If this indicates demand that exceeds the 20 spaces estimated, then capacity to accommodate the increased demand shall be demonstrated.

Officer comment: Having reviewed the additional information, the Highways Officer concluded that adequate parking capacity could be provided to accommodate the development and raised no objection on parking grounds. The following Condition is requested to be added to the Decision Notice:

Condition CF4 - Parking (as approved)

No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Cycle storage: Cycle storage is to be provided in line with WBCs Parking Standards. The applicant has not provided any information regarding existing cycle parking at the site for visitors to use and whether there would be an increase in provision as a result of the proposals. It would be welcomed if the location of cycle storage could be identified on a plan. Secure and covered cycle storage has been indicated for the proposed flat.

Officer comment: The Highways Officer subsequently reviewed the parking layout plan that demonstrated the location of cycle storage. The applicant also confirmed that Sheffield Stands would be installed.

Refuse collection

WBC waste services will need to be consulted and advise on the acceptability of the refuse collection arrangements. It is anticipated that the pavilion building will continue to be serviced in the same manner that it currently is. A dedicated bin store has been shown for the proposed flat with kerbside collection possible using the site's internal access road.

Construction Method Statement

The applicant shall provide a Construction Method Statement. Highways would seek to secure this by condition.

Officer comment: The applicant has submitted a Construction Method Statement and the Highways Officer has requested the following Condition be added to the Decision Notice:

Condition: Construction Method Statement

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Conclusion: Following receipt of the additional parking and visibility information, the Highways Officer raises no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. Whilst concerns regarding traffic generation have been raised by local residents and the

Parish Council, the Local Highway Authority has reviewed the submitted trip generation and parking information and raises no objection subject to conditions. Those concerns therefore attract limited weight. It is therefore concluded that adequate visibility, parking and cycle parking provision can be achieved and the proposal complies with Policy CC07.

Flooding and Drainage: The Drainage Officer raises no objection to the proposal. The existing buildings are within flood zone 1 and would have no objection to their change of use as represented by proposed ground floor plan drawing 1.40 E dated 20/05/2026 and proposed groundwater store proposed flat drawing 1.60 A dated 20/05/2026.

Landscape and Trees: The Tree Officer raises no objection to the proposal. And there would be no detrimental impact on the group of protected trees (Ref: TPO-0002-1951) located along the western boundary of the Site.

Environmental Health: The Environmental Health Officer raises no objection and has commented: *"The proposed uses are largely internal in nature and are located within an established sports and recreational site, which already accommodates periods of comparatively high activity associated with its existing use. The submitted information indicates that the additional activity generated by the gym and physiotherapy uses would be modest in scale relative to the existing use of the site and would not materially alter the overall character of activity at the premises. No plant, extraction systems or other sources of noise, odour or emissions have been identified which would give rise to Environmental Health concerns. The development does not give rise to issues relating to contaminated land, air quality, or drainage"*.

Ecology: The application site is within an area identified as a suitable habitat for bat roosting. Having regard to the nature and limited scope of the works, no evidence has been provided indicating the likely presence of protected species within the parts of the buildings affected by the proposal. On that basis, a Preliminary Bat Survey is not considered necessary.

Internal Space Standards: BDG standard R17 recommends a minimum gross internal area of 61m² for a two-bedroom flat. The proposed staff flat would provide approximately 61m², which falls within the recommended standard.

Conclusion and Planning Balance: The proposal introduces commercial gym and physiotherapy uses within a countryside location, which is a matter weighing against the development. However, significant weight is given to the fact that both uses would be accommodated within existing buildings, support an established recreational facility, remain physically integrated with the sports complex and would not result in material expansion of development into the countryside. Subject to defined operating controls, they would not materially alter the countryside character of the site or cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity. The submitted information also demonstrates sufficient parking capacity in principle. Given that the proposal would remain functionally associated with the established sports and recreational use of the site and would not result in excessive encroachment into the countryside, or material expansion of the developed area, the proposal complies with Policy CP11.

The limited harm arising from the introduction of commercial activity within a countryside location is afforded moderate weight. The benefits associated with supporting the ongoing viability and diversification of an established sports facility, together with the reuse of existing buildings and absence of material environmental harm, are afforded greater weight. The balance therefore falls in favour of the proposal.

The proposed flat falls within the identified internal-space standard. The residential element of the proposal would not create a net additional dwelling in countryside. The recommendation to approve is contingent upon the attachment of conditions to the Decision Notice that relate to occupancy restriction and operational controls identified above, which are necessary to ensure the development remains compatible with the recreational function of the site and countryside location.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	11 September 2026
Earliest date for decision:	25 June 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
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Date:	11/09/26
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