

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250276
Site Address:	Wargrave Pavilion, Wargrave Parish Council Office, Recreation Road, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8BG
Expiry Date:	11 April 2025
Site Visit Date:	17 February 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed provision of one uncovered pop-up padel court.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside
Green Belt
Public Open Space

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping TB01 – Development within the Green Belt
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Wargrave Parish Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date	Relevant Conditions
20105	Erection of 4 columns, each 12m high with floodlights, for 2 tennis courts.	Approve 23 rd September 1983	Condition 2: Floodlights shall be designed and shielded so as not to shine on adjacent land to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority.

31414	Erection of 4 floodlights.	Approve 15 th September 1988	Condition 2 (as above). Condition 3: The floodlights hereby approved shall not be used after 10 p.m. on any day and shall be controlled accordingly by installation of a master time switch to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority.
001918	Two acrylic courts.	Approve July 2001	Condition 7: Floodlights shall be constructed in accordance with details submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 26/09/2000 as indicated on data sheet 11.
030554	Extension and resurfacing of two existing tennis courts and repositioning of two floodlights	Approve 22 nd August 2003	Condition 2: The perimeter fencing hereby permitted shall be to a maximum height of 2.75m and shall match the existing perimeter fencing. Condition 3: The floodlights that are existing on site shall be relocated and reused as shown on the drawings hereby approved unless any variation is agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing.
090489	Club room.	Approve November 2009	

160457	Practice wall between Courts 6 and 8.	Approve 2016	May	
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No response received
WBC Highways – No Objection
WBC Green Infrastructure – No objection
WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods) – No objection

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection raised.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One comment in support of the proposal: The Padel Court will introduce a leisure facility resulting social and health benefits for those who play. Whilst the court structure may be visible from some parts of the Recreation Ground it will be viewed as part of an established leisure facility that is already in place.

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Woodclyffe Recreation Ground, East View Road, in Wargrave is located within the borough's Green Belt and Countryside. Wargrave Tennis Club is sited in the southwest corner of the Recreation Ground and adjacent to the Pavilion. It has no. 8 hard surface tennis courts, floodlighting and a club house. To the south, the tennis courts are screened by trees, and to the west they overlook allotments. There are no residential dwellings within the immediate vicinity. The Padel Court would be sited on Court no. 8 that is enclosed by chain link fencing approximately 2.8m in height and floodlight columns approximately 10m in height. There is a single lime tree protected by TPO-1709-2020 close to tennis court no. 8 in the southwest corner of the recreation ground.

Proposal: A single pop-up padel court on one of the existing eight tennis courts at Wargrave Tennis Club. The proposal is for a temporary structure that could potentially be removed without causing damage to the existing tennis court. The Padel Court would have no. 4 floodlight columns 6m in height and be enclosed by glass walls 4m in height. The surface would be blue artificial turf and net posts.

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 Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. 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 proposed Padel Tennis Court would be smaller than the existing tennis court and be set within the existing footprint. The clear glass enclosure would be partially visible, approximately 1.5m above the existing chain link fence, but would be clear glass and not overly prominent. The floodlights would be lower than the existing floodlights, and the existing lights would be switched off when the Padel Court is in use. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy that requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, and be of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character.

Location within the Green Belt

The NPPF (Paras. 142 and 143) states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The NPPF (Para. 154) also states that Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it meets certain exception. Relevant to this application is exception b) which refers to *“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, **for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it**”*.

Policy CP12 states that within the borough's Green Belt, any proposal that harms the open character of the area or entails inappropriate development will not be acceptable.

MDD Local Plan policy TB01 refers to the NPPF and reiterates the requirements to ensure that development maintain the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposal for a Padel Court would comply with Para 154 of the NPPF because it would relate to the existing use of the land for tennis and outdoor sport. Therefore, it complies with the NPPF in the sense that it is not inappropriate development and broadly complies with CP12 and TB01 in that there would be minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt given it would be set within an existing tennis facility.

Location within Countryside

The site is in Countryside where Core Strategy Policy CP11 applies and states that proposals outside of development limits will only be permitted that do not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Furthermore, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where it contributes to and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside.

The proposal complies with CP11 because it does not lead to expansion or encroachment of existing buildings and would not harm the character of the area. In addition, it is contained within an existing tennis court and given the nature of the proposed leisure use, it would contribute to enjoyment of the countryside.

Overall, the proposal complies with CPI, CP11 and CP12 of the Core Strategy.

Character of the Area:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

Neighbouring Amenity:

There are no residential properties in the immediate vicinity and there are no concerns about overlooking, loss of light or overbearing.

The proposed padel court would have its own external illumination which would in addition to the existing illumination for the main court. No response has been received from the Council's Environmental Health Officer on this application but it is considered the illumination proposed would not have any significant impact on neighbouring amenity given the establish use of similar external lighting in the vicinity and considering the nearest residential receptors are a significant distance away from the application site.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Highway Officer comments: No objection raised. The proposed padel court is located on an existing tennis court and as such there will be no increase in capacity or parking demand. The court would continue to be used by up to 4 people and the existing parking arrangements are therefore considered acceptable.

Landscape and Trees: TPO-1709-2020 Single lime is located adjacent to the southwest boundary of Court no. 8. However, the Padel Court would be sited towards the northern end of tennis court no. 8, with a 2m gap between the fence and the start of the Padel Court. Moreover, the temporary structure will not require the digging of foundations. Therefore, the construction of the proposal would not damage the TPO tree roots.

Ecology: Court no. 8 is not within a bat protection zone. Therefore, the proposal would not cause harm to roosting bats.

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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. 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:	19 March 2025
Earliest date for decision:	7 March 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	24/03/25