

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261405
Site Address:	Spencers Wood Pavilion, Clares Green Road, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1DY
Expiry Date:	11 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	10/02/2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed installation of a ground-based construction to form a youth shelter to provide a safe, designated space for young people to meet and socialise (retrospective).	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand 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 CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking TB08 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC2 – Community infrastructure HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List
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PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
15319	Demolition of existing pavilion and erection of new hall for community facilities (outline).	Approved, 26/06/1981
22865	Extension to pavilion to provide improved toilet kitchen and changing facilities.	Approved, 11/02/1985
200992	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey building for community use including provision of a pre-school, ancillary office and community rooms, plus associated landscaping works, following demolition of the existing pavilion.	Approved 13/07/2020
221601	Full application for the proposed provision of Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and erection of 3m high fencing. Removal of basketball court and relocation of exercise equipment to former basketball court location	Approved, 27/07/2022
260102	Pre-application advice for the proposed erection of a small, standalone shelter intended to provide a safe and designated space for young people	Replied, 25/02/2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Environmental Health – No comments received. WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections. WBC Ecology – No comments received. WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods) – No comments received. WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received. WBC Green Infrastructure – No objections.
External
None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	Shinfield Parish Council – No objections.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	<u>2 Bernard Cottages – RG7 1ED</u> No dimensions provided to assess the shelter's size or impact. Shelter colour and appearance are not

	specified. <i><u>Officer Comment:</u> Scaled elevational drawings and floor plans have been submitted with this application (dwg 7033:26:1).</i> • Suggests rotating the shelter to improve visibility over the skate park and MUGA. • Recommends metal mesh rather than Perspex/polycarbonate due to vandalism concerns. • States no pre-application consultation leaflet was received. <i><u>Officer Comment:</u> Pre-application community consultation, while encouraged is not a mandatory statutory requirement.</i> • Raises concerns over existing anti-social behaviour and requests CCTV coverage, monitoring and planning conditions. • Later representation alleges the shelter had already been substantially constructed before the application was determined. <u>Glendene – RG7 1AE</u> • No consultation leaflet was received despite claims of community consultation. <i><u>Officer Comment:</u> Pre-application community consultation, while encouraged is not a mandatory statutory requirement.</i> • Existing anti-social behaviour, vandalism and noise at the recreation ground would be worsened by the shelter. • Questions whether there is sufficient evidence of need and whether alternative locations were considered. • Requests greater consideration of neighbouring amenity, community safety and police involvement. • Supplementary comments acknowledge the Parish Council's response but maintain objections, noting: ○ the shelter location changed after consultation; ○ neighbouring residents were not re-consulted; ○ the Youth Club already operates successfully elsewhere;
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	○ anti-social behaviour issues remain; ○ Thames Valley Police were not formally consulted. <u>Merton – RG7 1AE</u> • Existing issues with youths causing noise and disturbance at the recreation ground. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> The Council's records confirm that a consultation letter was sent to this property on 17/06/2026.</i> • The shelter would provide an unsupervised gathering place likely to increase anti-social behaviour. • No consultation information was received. • Concerns that the proposal would increase noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties. <u>Trevalfry – RG7 1AE</u> • States no consultation leaflet was received. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> The Council's records confirm that a consultation letter was sent to this property on 17/06/2026.</i> • Refers to previous similar proposals that were abandoned following local objections. • Considers the shelter would worsen existing anti-social behaviour and vandalism problems at the recreation ground.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

The application site is a large public recreation ground comprising a grassed field. It includes The Spencers Wood Pavilion, which accommodates Chapel Lane Pre-School, the Shinfield Voluntary Car Service, and the Pavilion Youth Club. The site also features a recently approved multi-use games area, along with a skate park and outdoor gym.

To the north of the recreation ground is a car park, with multiple footpaths across the ground. There are community allotments to the south and residential dwellings to the west, east and north of the site.

The proposal seeks the erection of free-standing shelter with seating intended to provide a safe and designated space for young people. The Case Officer has been notified that the shelter was completed in July. Accordingly, the description of development has been updated to reflect the completed works, and the application will be assessed on this basis.

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.

Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy states new development should contribute to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of (b) Children, young people and families including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs.

The proposal seeks the installation of a ground-based youth shelter to provide a designated space for young people. Although the supporting information does not explicitly confirm whether the shelter is intended solely for users of the Pavilion or for wider public use, the structure would be publicly accessible and capable of serving both groups. In planning terms, the shelter would support the existing recreational and community function of Spencers Wood Pavilion and the wider recreation ground, which provide facilities for local sport, leisure and community activities. The proposal would therefore contribute to the provision of community infrastructure for children and young people and is considered to accord with Policy CP2(b) of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

The proposed shelter would be modest in scale and open in appearance. It would be viewed within the context of the existing public recreation ground, which already

contains a range of recreational and community facilities, including a skate park, multi-use games area and outdoor exercise equipment. As such, the shelter would not appear out of character within its setting and would be compatible with the established recreational use of the site. The proposal would therefore not adversely impact the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The proposed shelter would be suitably located and of modest proportions not to pose any unreasonable concerns of loss of light, overbearing or overlooking impacts.

Noise impacts:

Several letters of concern and objection have been received from nearby residents regarding the potential for increased noise and antisocial behaviour. The proposed shelter would be sited within the existing recreation ground, where outdoor leisure and community activities already take place. It would also be located approximately 55 metres from the rear elevations of the nearest residential properties to the west on Basingstoke Road. Given its modest scale and intended use as a seated shelter for up to 12 people, it is not considered likely to generate noise materially above that already associated with the existing recreational use of the site. Any incidents of excessive noise or antisocial behaviour would be more appropriately addressed through separate environmental health or antisocial behaviour legislation. On this basis, the proposal is not considered to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

Green infrastructure:

The Council's Green Infrastructure Officer has reviewed this application raises no objection to the proposed youth shelter and welcomes the provision of facilities for this underrepresented age group. However, it is recommended that the shelter is installed on a hard surface to ensure accessibility, rather than directly on grass. The Officer also advises that the layout should accord with inclusive mobility guidance, with the shelter set back from the main pedestrian route and sufficient surfaced space provided adjacent to the seating to accommodate wheelchair and mobility device users without obstructing pedestrian and cycle movements.

In considering these comments, the Case Officer notes that the proposed siting has been carefully selected to integrate with the existing cluster of recreational facilities within the park, creating a focal point for informal youth activity whilst avoiding unnecessary visual intrusion elsewhere within the open space. Relocating the shelter towards the northern part of the site, closer to Clare's Green Road, would reduce its relationship with the existing recreational facilities and diminish its suitability for its intended users. Furthermore, the presence of the established boundary hedgerow, mature trees and the adjacent parking area would significantly constrain any alternative siting closer to the main pedestrian route. Whilst the shelter would not achieve the recommended separation distance from the principal route, it is nevertheless considered to occupy an appropriate and accessible location within the recreation ground, and on balance the proposed siting is considered acceptable

The supporting description within the application form also confirms that the structure

will be securely fixed to a suitable base, such as a concrete pad.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal relates to a modestly sized shelter providing seating, which would not affect the existing access arrangements to the site or generate any significant additional vehicle movements. Accordingly, no highways objections are raised.

Landscape and Trees:

The proposal would be sited well clear of any vegetation, including the root zones of trees along the site boundaries. As such, it is considered that the development would not give rise to any adverse impacts on trees or the wider landscape.

Ecology:

Portions of the application site, specifically around the Pavilion, are located within habitat known to support bat roosts elsewhere in the borough. However, the scheme does not involve the demolition or alteration of any roofs where bats are likely to roost. Therefore, the Councils Ecology Officer considers that the proposals are would not have any adverse impact on roosting bats or other protected species.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	13 July 2026
Earliest date for	8 July 2026

decision:	
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	01.09.2026