

PLANNING REF : 242598
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Notley
: Croft Road Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire
: RG7 1DR
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Adam Lowe
DATE SUBMITTED : 15/11/2024

COMMENTS:

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed redevelopment plans for Millworth Lane, particularly due to the significant impact they will have on the local sports teams that depend on its pitches.

***Loss of Essential Football Facilities**

The proposed modifications threaten to remove or reduce the existing football pitches, which are central to our community's sports landscape. Shinfield Rangers teams, along with other local teams, depend on these facilities for regular training and matches. Losing or downsizing these pitches would directly harm opportunities for young players, who rely on this space for both athletic development and personal growth. The local demand for football facilities is high, and the current setup barely meets it; reducing the capacity would only exacerbate this issue, potentially displacing teams and forcing some to disband altogether.

***Inadequate Replacement Facilities for Football**

The plans include new sports pitches and fitness areas, yet there is no clear assurance that these would fully accommodate the needs of football. Football clubs, particularly those focusing on youth development, need sufficient, regulation-sized pitches, training areas, and supportive infrastructure. Without these, it would be impossible to meet the current or future demands of teams like Shinfield Rangers, who play a critical role in promoting girls' participation in sports. A clear commitment to retaining and enhancing football-specific facilities should be integral to any redevelopment. Overdevelopment and Misalignment with Community Needs

The proposal seems overly ambitious, with features like an events mound, climbing wall, and a running track elements that do not address local needs. There appears to have been minimal consultation with community sports groups, resulting in a plan that does not prioritize existing usage patterns. Instead, the council should consider how to sustainably house multiple football pitches in this area, which would address a longstanding need and benefit local clubs, schools, and residents.

***Parking and Accessibility Concerns**

The proposal also lacks an adequate parking solution, which has long been a concern at Millworth Lane. Expanding parking and ensuring safe, accessible entry for players, parents, and spectators is critical, especially for a facility that serves a large number of youth participants. A thoughtful redesign of the parking and access areas would make a positive, long-term difference, enhancing the site's usability for all.

Environmental and Community Impact

The removal of existing infrastructure could disrupt the site's natural features, potentially impacting drainage, wildlife, and biodiversity. The council must prioritize environmental assessments and preservation efforts to protect the local ecosystem, which adds

value to the space and supports local well-being.

***Lack of Consultation with Key Stakeholders**

It is concerning that there has been insufficient consultation with the local community, especially clubs like Shinfield Rangers, which rely on these facilities. For any redevelopment plan to succeed, it must reflect the needs of those who use these spaces regularly, particularly for organized sports. Shinfield's community values these pitches as a place of unity, exercise, and youth development, and the council's plans should reflect this.

In conclusion, while the redevelopment of Millworth Lane could offer certain benefits, the current proposal risks disrupting the essential sports facilities that serve Shinfield's community especially the

Shinfield Rangers girls' team, from which my daughter has gained so much. I strongly urge the council to reconsider, prioritize the needs of the existing sports groups who rely on these facilities, and work collaboratively with them to ensure the project truly supports the community's needs.

Adam