

PLANNING REF : 242598
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 57 Westall Street
: Shinfield, Berkshire
: RG2 9RJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Andy Howard
DATE SUBMITTED : 14/11/2024

COMMENTS:

Whilst I welcome any proposal that purports to have intentions to improve sports, leisure and recreational facilities, my observations to this application are that it does not appear to have developed as the result of proper consultation with the community and with key parties, particularly Shinfield Rangers FC.

I note that many of the comments and objections to the plan relate to removal of the football pitches at Millworth Lane without any reassurance that provision will be made elsewhere. The significant reference to the impact on local football demonstrates the unavoidable fact that it is the single largest participation team sport nationally and globally by a huge distance. It is in a time of real growth, particularly regarding girls and women's football and it appears there has been no proper consideration of this.

We moved to Shinfield just over 4 years ago and Shinfield Rangers quickly became a significant part of our daughter's life as she started playing grassroots football. But what was also apparent was the central role that the club plays in the local community. The support of the club over the last 3 years has enabled our daughter to play representative football for the district schools and to be selected for Reading FC emerging talent centre. Two other girls from her age group have also developed via the club onto the same pathways demonstrating the rich pool of talent that the club nurtures and supports.

The pitches at Millworth Lane are excellent quality and more importantly are a hub of community activity at weekends. Removing them without a plan for alternatives is a huge oversight. Whilst I welcome the intention to upgrade the facilities I question how much benefit the following will have in that location and what value they will provide

A 5 a side pitch versus two proper pitches

2 x netball / basketball courts. Is there a clear demand for that ?

Do we need additional tennis courts given that it is quite rare to see all 4 of the existing courts being used at the same time ?

I do recognise that padel is a growth sport with increasing demand and see the benefit it could provide.

I agree with other comments that the proposed running track does not appear fit for purpose in this proposal although the concept of a well lit area for exercise that promotes safety should be welcomed.

Is there demand for a climbing wall of this nature and the pump track in this location ?

I accept that football is not everything and that many people don't follow or support the sport but it is the most popular and importantly provides an excellent opportunity for people of all ages to participate in team sport and develop both sporting and social skills.

I would urge that the proposals are revisited to ensure that they properly meet the needs of the local community. In my view at the

very least, the 9 a side pitch area within the running track should be developed as a full time pitch to enable the continuation of junior football to be played at Millworth Lane due to the lack of suitable alternative quality pitches and in support of the football club's presence at this location to be maintained.