

PLANNING REF : 261097
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Council Office
: Pearson Road, Sonning, Reading
: RG4 6UL
SUBMITTED BY : Sonning Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/06/2026

COMMENTS:

Sonning Parish Council have carefully considered this application and have the following comments.

Discussion held at Sonning Parish Council (SPC) Planning meeting 16th June 2026 where we were joined by representatives from Sonning Lane and Sonning Meadows Preservation Group. After careful consideration of the comments made at the meeting and received directly from parishioners we would make the following comments in relation to the plans as submitted to date.
Overview:

The part change in use of this cricket and hockey pavilion to provide a gym and physiotherapy practice, as class E business use within the premises has raised significant level of concern amongst parishioners. Principally this is with regards to; the impact of both volume and frequency of additional vehicles to and from the Reading Cricket and Hockey Club (RCHC) and the adequate provision of parking on site; the potential additional provision of Class E business facilities within the village with limited data provision on need, viability and sustainability; mention of other facilities e.g. padel courts [which are not part of the current application] and further impact of traffic and noise; and the replacement of groundsman flat within the pavilion, with a new flat in separated outbuilding conversion.

It was suggested that it would be much clearer if the 2 aspects part change of use and conversion of outbuilding to flat were under separate applications to aid full consultation and clarity on any permission.

SPC do not support approval of the current plans.

Impact on environment, traffic flow and parking requirements Reading Blue Coat School (RBCS), Reading Rugby Club (RRFC), Berkshire County Sports (BCS) and RCHC are all within a short distance, along or just off, of Sonning Lane. Considerable efforts by interested parties have been ongoing for suitable parking provision and timing of access arrangements to help manage traffic volume and flow, particularly at peak times. Any additional traffic volume and parking space requirements for facilities and services within the parish need careful evaluation so as not to negatively impact residents and road users in the locality.

Very limited information contained in the planning statement on parking and traffic indicates '....30 to 35 additional people using the site when operating capacity.' This presumably is at any one time but does not give any indication as to the numbers expected during the course of a normal working day, nor are the users' hours of operation known (these are noted to be relevant in the application form but stated as unknown).

The traffic counting figures quoted indicate vehicle numbers over the 130 spaces (on hardstanding). As these figures relate to wintertime the use of the field for car parking via the gravel

causeway indicated on the topographical plan would not be accessible. Cars parking on the pavements just outside RCHC and down Sonning Lane have been observed in the past, at peak periods.

Viability, sustainability and impact of change to class E business use

One portion of this application seeks approval for part change in use of the pavilion for new commercial, business and service provision in the form of a gym and physiotherapy practice. The granting of class E business use for these purposes has been noted as a concern. If approved, it will result in commercial facility provision throughout the week, on this recreational site, which has to date almost exclusively been utilised at weekends and some evenings. As noted in the planning statement the intention is that this will significantly increase the weekday and potentially weekend use, of the facilities at RCHC. SPC empathise with the need to make changes to ensure that RCHC can continue to provide recreational/sporting facilities. The Parish Council would however highlight that there is a lack of detailed information regarding the number of users for viability and sustainability of these new facilities, to ensure their success.

The Council would seek to ask that further viability and sustainability information be obtained to better and more accurately assess the numbers and peak times of users, the vast majority of which will attend in their own vehicle and hence the impact in terms of traffic and parking provision, and effect on the environment including air quality (from increased slow moving vehicles).

Additional observations relating to use of site

There is mention of padel courts on the key for the ground workers store plan and elevations as existing (RCHC 0.60 A) and drawings as proposed for new staff flat (RCHC 1.60 A). This has raised significant concerns amongst parishioners, for similar reasons as above, plus additional noise concerns from such courts, however we've noted not part of this current planning application, so not commented further here.

Conversion of outbuilding to flat

The other portion of this planning application relates to the replacement of a currently integrated groundsman's flat within the pavilion with conversion of a separated outbuilding (groundsman store). The Council have noted that the application form itself (date received 6/5/26) does not make mention of this. Alignment of the application form with the information provided in the documentation listing and summary description we leave to be dealt with by the applicant and WBC. SPC would be very keen to ensure that conditions of approval for this separate residential accommodation should be tied to RCHC employment. Enforcement of such conditions should be made so that it is only utilised by those employed to provide sporting/coaching/security services on the behalf of RCHC as this is the outline need stated in the planning statement. No subletting or use by anyone outside of those appropriate employees, whilst exercising their duties, should be allowed.

Parishioners also noted a lack of community consultation in advance

of the planning application being submitted. [SPC are happy to assist, as appropriate, in facilitating such discussion. SPC are keen to support ongoing provision of recreational/sporting facilities and in seeking solutions to allay and/or mitigate residents' concerns with developments in the parish.

Lesley Bates (Clerk)

25/06/26