

Wokingham Borough Council

FAO:

By email

3rd July 2025

**Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England)
Order 2015**

Application Reference: 242598

Site: Recreation Ground Millworth Lane Shinfield Wokingham RG2 9EN

Proposal: Full application for proposed works to modify the existing recreational facilities including provision of additional car parking and new sports pitches, plus modification of existing pitches and installation of an events mounds, equipment storage and climbing wall, fitness zone, open space, exercise track, pump track and associated landscaping, following removal of the existing concrete bases, cricket square and practice nets.

Sport England Reference: PA/24/SE/WON/69073

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for re-consulting Sport England on the above application with additional information following our statutory objection which we submitted on the 16th of November 2024.

We note that the proposal has been paired down to a new fitness zone. Unfortunately, the fitness zone clearly impacts on the cricket and could impact on the 11 aside football pitch. (The cricket out field needs to be shown and run-off area, along with the run-off areas for the football pitches.) Also, there is no indication where the bio-diversity net gain is to be located, this does need to be addressed, whether it is on site or off-site.

We strongly suggest that the surveyors who have produced the drawings, set the pitches out properly on the existing layout with correct dimensions, then work in the proposals which their clients' desire. Therefore, it may be appropriate to withdraw the current planning application until this work has been completed.

Once completed Sport England would be happy to discuss the new proposals with the applicants and their surveyors.

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises a statutory objection to the application because it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to our Playing Fields Policy or paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

Should the local planning authority be minded to approve this application contrary to Sport England's statutory objection, then the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 requires the application to be referred to the Secretary of State, via the National Planning Casework Unit.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s).

If you would like any further information or advice, please contact the undersigned

Yours sincerely,

Bob

Bob Sharples RIBA ARB MRTPI

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cc N Higginson-Dark Esq. ECB
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G Goudie Esq. WBC

Annex

The Five Exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy

Exception 1

A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

Exception 2

The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

Exception 3

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

Exception 4

The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:

- of equivalent or better quality, and
- of equivalent or greater quantity, and
- in a suitable location, and
- subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

Exception 5

The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

The full 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document' is available to view at:
www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy