

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 12 JANUARY 2022**

**Ward:** Church

**App No:** 211827/REG3

**Address:** Shinfield Road Recreation Ground, Linden Road, Reading

**Proposal:** To install a small tarmac ball games court with a combined metal basketball / football goals at each end and perimeter of 1 metre high metal railing fence

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council

**Date validated:** 07/12/2021

**Target Date:** 01/02/2022

### RECOMMENDATION

**Subject to no substantive objections to public consultation being received by 30 December 2021.**

**GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives**

Conditions to include

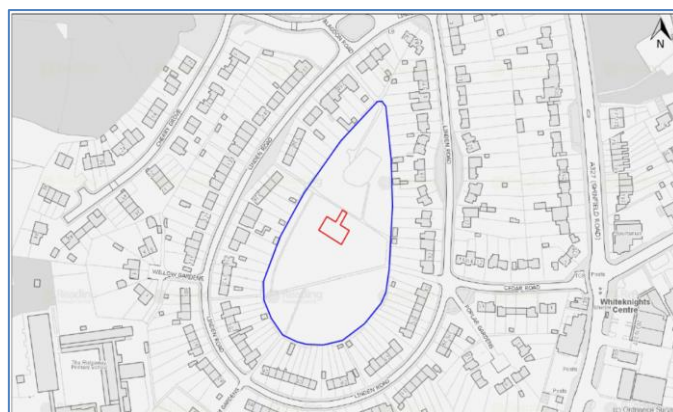
1. Time Limit (Standard)
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as on approved drawings
4. Standard construction times
5. No external lighting
6. Reinstatement of any grass areas that are negatively impacted by the works to its previous condition before first use of development.

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Positive and Proactive
3. Encroachment

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Shinfield Road Recreation Ground is a 1.15 hectare tear drop shaped park located in Church Ward. The recreation ground is surrounded by houses along Linden Road in South Reading, with several pedestrian access points from Linden Road. The Ridgeway Primary School is located 100m south west of the proposal site. The proposal site is also located within 200m of the Shinfield Road District Centre.
- 1.2 The recreation ground is lined with mature deciduous trees around the perimeter. The existing facilities include a children's playground to the north, and a smaller playground to the south. The centre of the park consists of a grass football pitch. Shinfield Road Recreation Ground has been identified as a local green space and public open space under Policy EN7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (code EN7Sg).



**Location Plan**



**Proposed Visuals**

## 2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The proposed scheme is for the installation of a new ball court at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground. This is to replace the existing small grass football pitch. A new 1.2 metre wide tarmac path connecting the existing park path to the new ball court is also proposed.
- 2.2 The applicant, the Council's Parks Team, advises that this is an area with a high incidence of antisocial behaviour, in part prompted by insufficient facilities for youths within the immediate locality.
- 2.3 The ball court will be a tarmac multi-use games area (MUGA) with metal ends which have both basketball hoops and football goals at each end and 1 metre high side railings. The surface will be marked out for both sports.

## 3. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED:

The following plans and documents were submitted on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021:

- Planning Statement - Shinfield Recreation Ground - New Ball Court
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment: New Multi Ballcourt at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground - October 2021

The following documents were submitted on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021:

- Reading Borough Council | Shinfield Road Recreation Ground MUGA
- 24.5m x 12m Area with Footpath - Drawing Q-38925-C Revision 2

The following document was submitted on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021:

- Planning Statement Addendum

The following documents were submitted on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021:

- Planning Statement in response to Environmental Protection Team and Natural Environment comments

The following documents were submitted on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021:

- Amended Location Plan
- Access route and contractors compound for ball court plan
- Proposed Block Plan - Q-38925-C Revision 2

#### 4. PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application.

#### 5. CONSULTATIONS

##### Statutory Consultations

- 5.1 *Sport England*  
No objection.

##### Internal Consultations

- 5.2 *Environmental Protection*  
Concerns have been raised by the Environmental Protection Team with regards to noise arising from the development. Specifically, sound generated from use of the hard surface court such as ball impact and shouting. Clarification was also requested as to whether or not the proposed multi-use games area would be lit, and the implications that this would have on the hours of use of the games area.

- 5.3 *Natural Environment*  
The information submitted for this application suitably demonstrates that existing trees at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground will not be harmed. The plan demonstrating construction access routes and materials storage is acceptable. The proposed planting of ten trees to Shinfield Road Recreation Ground is positive. Condition recommended for the reinstatement of any grass areas that are negatively impacted by the works.

- 5.4 *Transport*  
There is no predicted increase on existing users of the playground. Therefore, there are no transport objections to this application.

- 5.5 *Leisure Services*  
No objection.

##### Public consultation

- 5.1 Five site notices were displayed around the site. No representations have been received at the time of writing. The formal public consultation period ends on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and any responses received will be reported to your meeting.

## **6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 6.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2021)**

Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

### **Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)**

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

EN7 Local Green Space and Public Open Space

EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities

### **Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (Adopted March 2021)**

## **7. APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 The main issues are considered to be:
- i) Principle of development
  - ii) Design
  - iii) Safeguarding Amenity
  - iv) Impact on trees and construction access
- i) **Principle of development**
- 7.2 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2021) states that; *“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: (...) c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”*
- 7.3 Paragraph 98 of the NPPF (2021) states that; *“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”*
- 7.4 Paragraph 99 of the NPPF (2021) states that; *“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: (...) c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational*

*provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”*

- 7.5 Policy OU1 of the Local Plan states that; *“Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site”*. Policy CC7 states development will be assessed to ensure they *“Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily”*.
- 7.6 Policy EN7 of the Local Plan states that; *“Proposals that would result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted”*.
- 7.7 The area of the recreation ground selected for the development is an existing grass football pitch. The development will provide in its place a multi-use games area appropriate for the Shinfield Road Recreation Ground. Therefore, the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable.

**ii) Design**

- 7.8 Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -*
- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
  - Landscape;*
  - Density and mix;*
  - Scale: height and massing; and*
  - Architectural detail and materials*
- Under Policy CC7, development should contribute positively to urban design objectives relating to character and a sense of place. Developments should also be of high quality, promote community cohesion, and be safe and accessible to all.
- 7.9 The proposed hard court will cover an area of 24.38m x 12.3m (300m<sup>2</sup>) and is located close to the central path that runs through the recreation ground from west to east. The hard surface court would be accessible from the existing path via a new pathway, with a chicane entrance to the court. The proposed hard surface court area is surrounded by a fence which is 1m high along the length of the court, with 3m high fencing at either end of the court. The 3m high fencing at either end of the court is designed to maximise ball retention. Incorporated in the design are basketball hoops and football goals.
- 7.10 The design of the hard court is intended to provide an accessible community facility, that promotes physical exercise. The location of the proposed development is considered appropriate being within an existing recreation ground and will improve the vitality of the recreation ground through providing a multi-use facility for children living close by to use.

- 7.11 The design of the multi-use games area is considered appropriate to the character of the surrounding area, with it being sited to the centre of the recreation ground. The proposed facility is accessible from the existing pathway. It is acknowledged that a grass area within the recreation ground will be lost as a result of the development, however, the recreational benefits of the proposed development are considered to outweigh this loss.
- 7.12 As the proposal is set within the grounds of an existing park, the type of the facility proposed is unlikely to be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

**iii) Impact on neighbouring properties**

- 7.13 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:*
- *Privacy and overlooking;*
  - *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
  - *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
  - *Harm to outlook;*
  - *Noise and disturbance;*
  - *Artificial lighting;*
  - *Vibration;*
  - *Dust and fumes;*
  - *Smell;*
  - *Crime and safety; or*
  - *Wind*
- 7.14 Concerns have been raised by the Environmental Protection Team for noise caused by participants shouting and the sound of ball strikes on the hard surface. Clarification was also requested regarding whether the proposed area would be lit. These concerns arise given that numerous properties along Linden Road back on to Shinfield Road Recreation Ground.
- 7.15 It was clarified by the applicant that the proposed ball court will not be flood lit, as is demonstrated on the plans and within the Planning Statement, but this can also be a condition of any approval. As a result, it is unlikely that the proposed ball court will be used during hours of darkness. It is anticipated that most noise arising from users of the development will likely be during daytime hours. Any increase in noise experienced by neighbours needs to be considered in the context that the application site is already designed for recreational use and a playing field and therefore noise associated with outdoor activities is to be expected. Any shouting arising from use of the ball court is considered to be suitably attributed to the overall use of the space at Shinfield Recreation Ground as a playing field.
- 7.16 The proposed development is unlikely to give rise to harmful levels of noise and disturbance nor harm the outlook from the properties around the site. Overall, the proposed development is not considered to be harmful to the living conditions to neighbouring residents with regards to the other criteria listed under Policy CC8.

**iv) Impact on trees and construction access**

- 7.17 A proposed block plan has been submitted to support this application, which demonstrates the development is sited more than 15m away from the nearest tree. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment provided supports the application and suitably confirms that nearby trees will not be harmed by the development. The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable as it would not harm the nearby trees that line the perimeter of Shinfield Road Recreation Ground.
- 7.18 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment proposes the planting of ten trees within Shinfield Road Recreation Ground to aid in delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy. While the additional planting at Shinfield Recreation Ground is welcome, the acceptability of the proposed ball court in planning terms is not considered dependent upon the delivery of the proposed tree planting, as the application also demonstrates that trees will not be harmed as a result of the proposed development.
- 7.19 The applicant has stated that tree planting and reinstatement of the ground will be conducted by the Council Parks Team following completion of the development. It is considered reasonable to secure the reinstatement of any damaged land during construction of the ball court prior to its first use.
- 7.20 Details have also been provided by the applicant regarding construction methods, this includes details of construction vehicles entering the site, duration of implementation, and the storage of materials on site. These details have been approved by Natural Environment, and Transport Development Control.
- 7.21 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

**8. Equality**

- 8.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development. The proposal is specifically to address the needs of a disabled person.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 Overall, the proposed development is considered to contribute positively to existing facilities at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground and has the potential to revitalise a valuable open space for the local community.
- 9.2 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above.

Case Officer: David Brett



**Site Photos taken by Case Officer on 09/12/2021.**



**Proposal Site (looking west) -  
*Proposed ball court to be located  
between the two football goals.***



**Proposal Site (looking west) -  
*Proposed ball court to be located  
between the two football goals.***



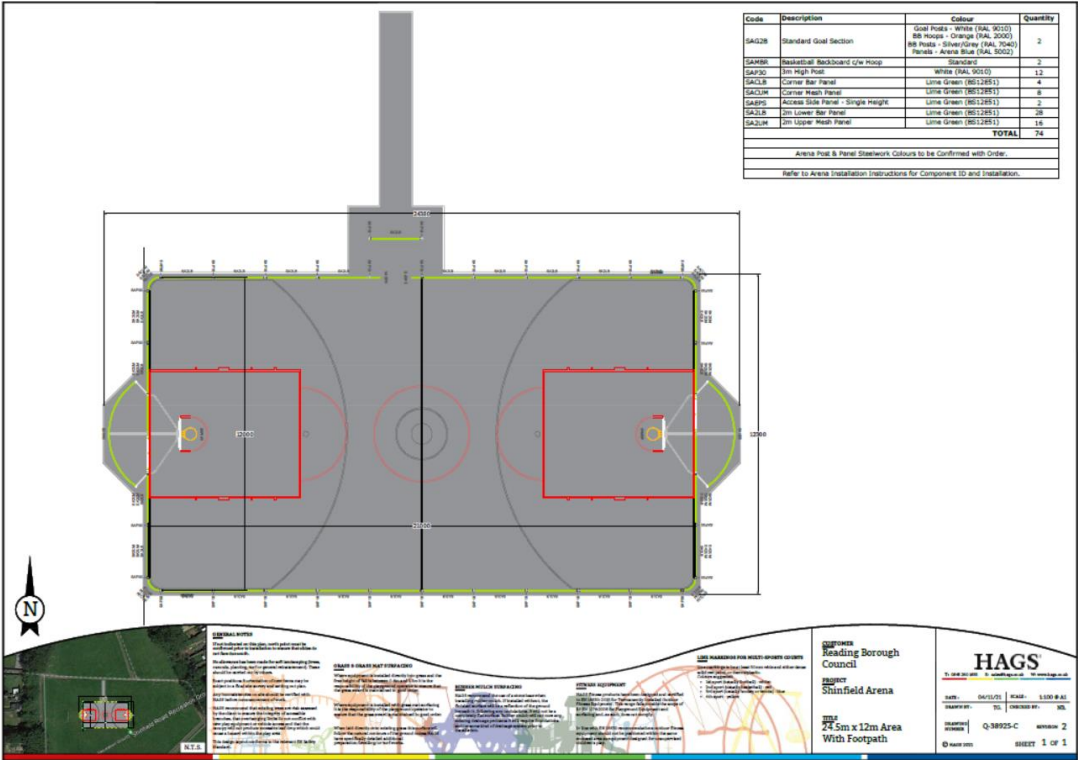
**Proposal Site (looking southwest) -  
*Proposed ball court to be located  
between the two football goals.***



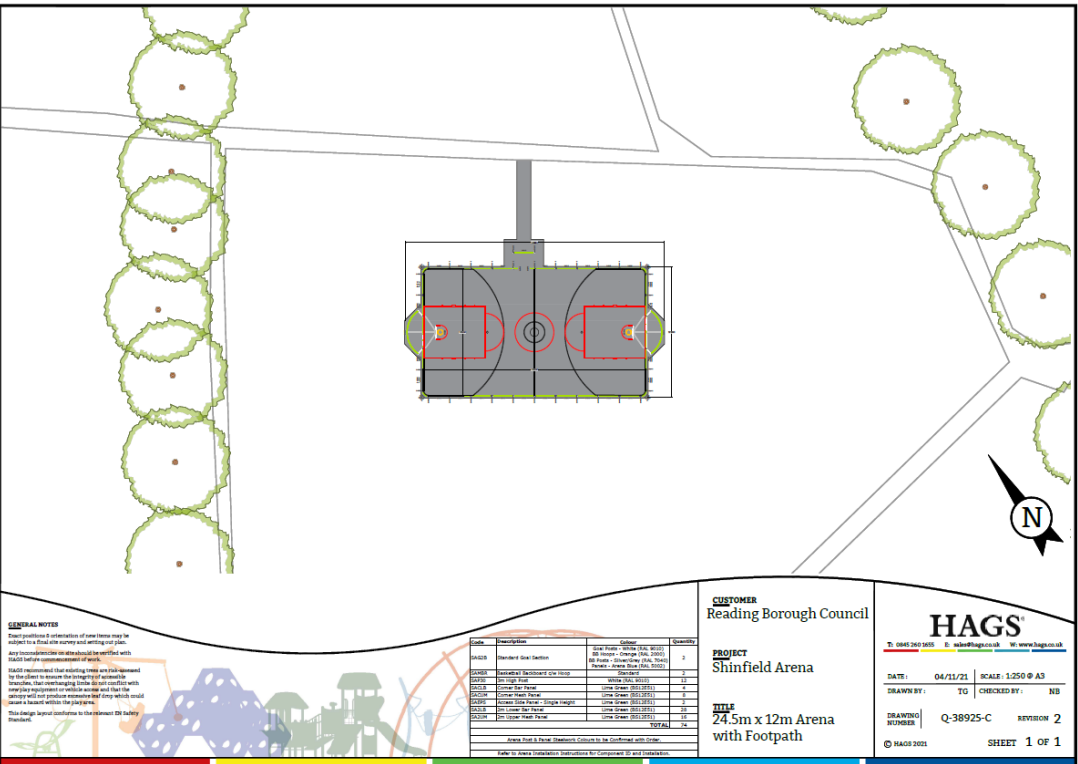
**Proposal Site (looking south) from  
construction access entrance.**



Appendix 1: Plans



Proposed Layout



Proposed Block Plan