

**Planning Statement
Shinfield Recreation Ground
New Ball Court**



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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for a new ballcourt at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground, Linden Road, Reading, RG2 7EH.

This Planning Statement assesses the proposals against policies adopted in the Development Plan and other material considerations and should be read in conjunction with the other supporting planning documents.

2. The site and current playground

Shinfield Road Recreation Ground is a 11.4 hectare park entirely surrounded by houses in Linden Road in south Reading.

There is a small playground in poor condition on the site that services the needs of local residents. The nearest alternative facilities are a large, well-equipped playground at John Rabsons Recreation Ground (1.5 km away by road), a smaller playground and ballcourt at Hexham Road (2km away), and teenage facilities at Longbarn Lane Recreation Ground (1.8km away). There are pay-to-use football courts at South Reading Leisure Centre, now managed by Greenwich Leisure.

2. Proposals

The proposed scheme is for the installation of a new ball court at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground. This is to replace the current small grass football pitch with a hardstanding court which will allow the facility to be accessed and used all year. This is an area with a high incidence of antisocial behaviour, in part prompted by insufficient facilities for youths within the immediate locality.

The installation of a new ballcourt at Shinfield Road Recreation Ground will provide much-needed physical recreational activity for older children in an area of deprivation.

The ballcourt will be a tarmac multi-use games area (MUGA) with metal ends which have both basketball and football goals at each end and 1 metre high side railings. The surface will be marked out for both sports.

To make the ballcourt accessible, there will be a new 1.2 metre wide tarmac path connecting the existing park path to the new ball court.

Plans of the proposed location and a photograph of the proposed facility are appended.

4. Planning history and pre-application advice

None found for Shinfield Recreation Ground.

Community engagement

The proposed application is due to demand from local residents through Ward Councillors. Residents will be encouraged to comment about the new ball court as part of the planning application. Planning notices will be displayed at the Recreation Ground and on the Council website to encourage local resident's comments.

5. Planning policy context

Introduction

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Reading Borough Council's Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and has 'Development Plan' status.

The National Planning Policy Framework is also a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In making decisions on planning applications: *"Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."*

6. Proposal Assessment

As mentioned previously the application concerns the master landscape plan for the playing fields and this is considered against the following:

- Open Space impact
- Transport
- Ecology
- Trees
- Flood risk
- Archaeology

Open Space Impact

In the context of open space, the NPPF and Local Plan place a high emphasis on access to high quality open spaces, sport and recreation which can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. These proposals contribute to meeting these aims.

The new ballcourt is an outdoor activity, enhancing use of the open space for the local community.

Transport Statement

The proposal to replace the informal grass football pitch with a hardstanding ball court within the park will have no material impact on the transports needs for the site. There is no predicted increase on existing users of the playground.

Ecology and Trees

The proposals are considered in the context of the planning policies

- EN12 Biodiversity and the Green network
- EN14 Trees, hedges and woodlands

An arboricultural impact statement was carried out in October 2021. No trees or hedgerow are being removed as part of the proposed work. The proposal allows for the planting of ten new native trees, to ensure that there is a biodiversity net gain from the development.

Flood Risk

The proposal is considered in the context to planning policy EN18: Flooding and sustainable drainage systems. The site is located in a Flood Zone 1 area, is at a low risk of fluvial flooding with a similarly low risk of surface water or groundwater flooding. The proposed scheme does not propose a flood risk.

Archaeology

The proposal applies to a site within a large housing development, and is not an Area of Archaeological Potential as defined on the Sites and Detailed Policies Document Proposals Map (October 2012)

7. Conclusion

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application made by Reading Borough Council for the installation of a new ballcourt in an open space designated for the provision of recreational facilities for the benefit of local people within a neighbourhood of social and economic deprivation.

The proposals set out a scheme that meets these requirements and provides an opportunity for enhanced recreational facilities without any adverse impacts in planning terms.

The NPPF and Local Plan place a high emphasis on access to high quality open spaces, sport and recreation which can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. These proposals contribute to meeting these aims.

Appendices

Example of proposed Design

ARENA - ATLANTA (AR-05) - (SA-AT)



