

Committee Update - HW/FUL/19/00426 - New Frontiers Leisure Club, Paringdon Road

Additional representation received - Applicant

As with many other organisations in our sector, we have been very badly hit by the pandemic. As our site is closed we cannot charge people membership fees and obviously we have no events, sports or other activities active at present.

The only income we have is a small reduced amount from the car dealer, and some container rent from a couple of the units. They can obviously access the site with their own gate keys without needing to enter the building.

However, we are still having to pay our rent (our landlords have given us longer to pay, but will not reduce the amount). We also have an electric bill coming in, insurance to pay and we are having to maintain a level of security, albeit very reduced.

All of this adds up to any reserves we had before the pandemic are being eaten into and our plans for summer restoration work on our pitches will now not happen. It is this type work that would normally be financed by the income from the containers and the tennis courts.

Officer response

It is acknowledged that development helps to support the financial viability of the leisure centre and this has been taken into account in the committee report. However, such (supporting) development would be required to be ancillary to or support and/or enhance the existing facility in order to accord with Policy L3 of the Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan. The change of use of tennis courts to car storage space and the location of the number of containers on site do not accord with this criteria. Additionally they adversely affect the role of the Green Wedge and the visual amenity of the occupiers of nearby dwellings and the users of the facility.

Recommendation

The recommendation remains as set out in the published agenda papers.