

PART 5: Development Presentations

Item 5.1

1. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

SITE A

Ref: 17/04913/PRE
Location: Purley Way Playing Field, Purley Way, CR0 4RQ.
Ward: Waddon
Description: Pre-application for creation of two full size artificial football pitches with associated fencing and floodlights. Erection of single storey building containing changing facilities, club room, cafe and plant. Creation of 35 space car park, access road, shared cycle/pedestrian path, refuse store, cycle parking, outdoor gym, playground, running trail, with associated hard and soft landscaping.

SITE B

Ref: 18/01808/PRE
Location: Ashburton Playing Fields, Coleridge Road, CR0 7BQ.
Ward: Shirley North
Description: Pre-application for creation of two full size artificial football pitches, with associated fencing and floodlights. Erection of single storey building with indoor gym, changing facilities, club room, cafe and associated plant. Creation of 35 car parking spaces, access road and shared path, refuse store, cycle parking, outdoor gym, playground, with associated hard and soft landscaping.

Applicant: Xander Beck, Regeneration Manager, Croydon Council.
Case Officer: Barry Valentine

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 Due to the similarities of the above schemes and issues surrounding them, this report covers both developments. The structure of the report is as follows:

- a. Executive summary of key issues
- b. Background
- c. Material considerations
- d. Summary of comments made at Place Review Panel
- e. Preliminary conclusions
- f. Specific feedback requests

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Both of the proposed developments are located on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), which is given the same policy protection as Metropolitan Green Belt. There are elements of the scheme that are considered by officers to constitute inappropriate development as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018). In addition both proposals would lead to the loss of

playing field area and open land. The applicant will need to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist to outweigh this harm. Officers are of the view that there are positive elements of the schemes that could potentially form part of very special circumstance case.

- 3.2 The initial scheme designs are positive. Officers are particularly welcoming of how both schemes are developing a sense of place and complete offering, which is considered absolutely necessary if developing on MOL is to be justified. The design detail and use of materials is both contextual and high quality. Nevertheless there will be some elements of the scheme that by virtue of their nature (such as 4.5m high fences and floodlights) are less desirable, although it is acknowledged that the applicant is working through landscaping to reduce their impact.
- 3.3 Both developments through intensification of the use have the potential to have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties' living conditions through noise disturbance and light pollution. However, the impact in officers' view can be mitigated through appropriate design, installation of mitigation measures and through controls imposed by condition.
- 3.4 The level of parking provision for both sites is based on travel plan targets, rather than modelled demand when the development is open. Whilst more robust justification on this is required, including impact on parking stress, this does seem potentially an appropriate response given the sensitivity of both sites. The new pedestrian and cycle links are actively welcomed and form an extremely positive part of the schemes offering.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Development proposed on both sites are part of a nationwide programme of investment known as 'Parklife', which is funded by The Football Association (FA), Premier League and Sport England. In addition, in London the program is also being further supported through investment by the Mayor. In turn these funding partners would team up with Local Authorities, and other stakeholders such GLA, Palace for Life Foundation (Official charity of Crystal Palace Football Club) and Surrey County Football Association to help deliver these projects.
- 4.2 The Parklife Programme seeks to improve the provision of grassroots football in England, by creating a network of football hubs to support the delivery of FA and County FA youth development and coach education programmes, and to improve the quality of grassroots provision for clubs and teams. The key objectives is to reduce football's reliance on local authority subsidies, build significantly more artificial grass pitches and to ensure that the development is sustainable. The hope is to improve sporting participation, which in turn would improve the health and social wellbeing of the population.
- 4.3 Croydon has a lower number of residents participating in sport and physical activity than the London average. Only 34.7% of the adult population (14 years +) in London Borough of Croydon, as surveyed in 2015/2016, participate in sport at least once a week, which is significantly lower than the London average of 38.2% and the nationwide average of 37%. There is a clear need to increase sporting participation, within a challenging environment of declining Local Authority resourcing. This proposal as such represents a potential opportunity to

secure funding into the borough's underutilised sporting infrastructure to the benefit of local residents.

- 4.4 It is understood that as a requirement of Parklife programme two football hub facilities are required to come forward in each borough in order for the funding to be agreed and the developments to go ahead.

Site A - Purley Way Playing Field

- 4.5 Purley Way Playing Fields is a 43.81 hectares area of open land bounded by Purley Way (A23) to the west, Waddon Way to the north, and Pampisford Road to the east. Purley Way Playing Fields is the largest expanse of sport pitches in Croydon.



Image 1 – View of Purley Way Playing Fields

- 4.6 The proposed development would be located at northern end of Purley Way Playing Fields, directly to the east of Croydon Colonnades leisure and retail park, accessed from Waddon Way. The part of Purley Way Playing Fields that the development would be located on currently consists of football pitches, an existing sports pavilion that is accessed from Croydon Colonnades, a child's play area that faces onto Waddon Way, a half pipe, playground and several trees.



Image 2 – Birds Eye View of Purley Way Playing Fields

- 4.7 The site is designated as MOL, is located within a Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area and forms part of Croydon Panorama (see image 3 below), which is a locally designated public viewpoint of Croydon Town Centre.

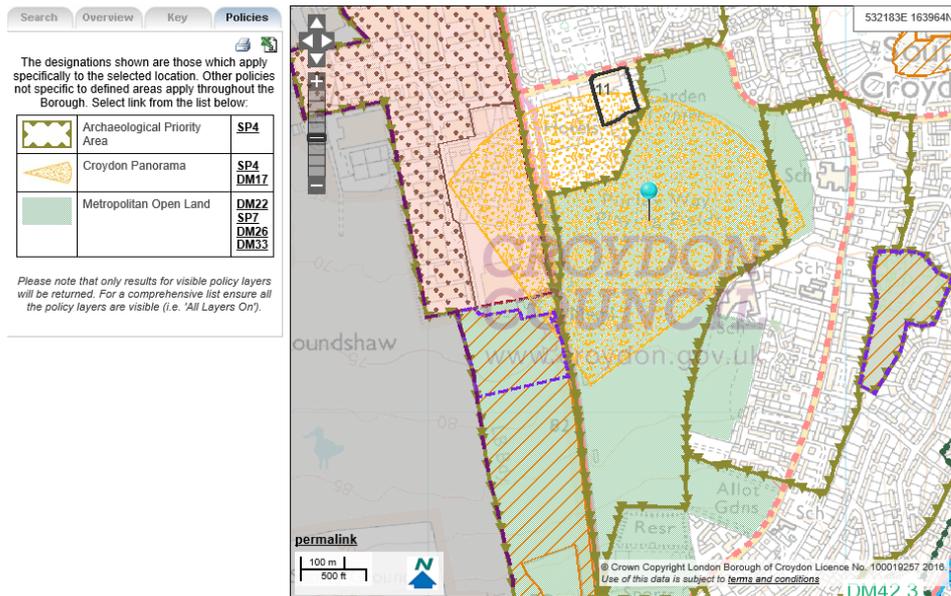


Image 3 – Extract from Policy Map

- 4.8 The Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of the site varies between 1a and 1b (very poor) and is located within Flood Risk Zone 1. Parts of Purley Way Playing Fields are modelled as being at risk from surface water flooding, although the parts of the site that the development is proposed to be located on are modelled as being at very low risk (less than 1 in 1000 years).

Site B - Ashburton Playing Fields

- 4.9 Ashburton Playing Fields is a 20 hectare area of open land, which runs from Bywood Avenue in the north, Chaucer Green to the west, and Woodville Avenue to the south. There are a number of residential properties whose rear gardens back onto the site.



Image 4 – Birds Eye View of Ashburton Playing Fields

4.10 The proposed development would be located in the south eastern corner of the Ashburton Playing Fields. The relevant parts of the site contains football pitches, trees, a pavilion and a footpath that links Woodville Avenue to Long Lane/ Ashburton Park. The development would be accessed from Woodville Avenue.



Image 5 – Birds Eye View of Relevant Part of Ashburton Playing Fields

4.11 The site is designated as MOL.

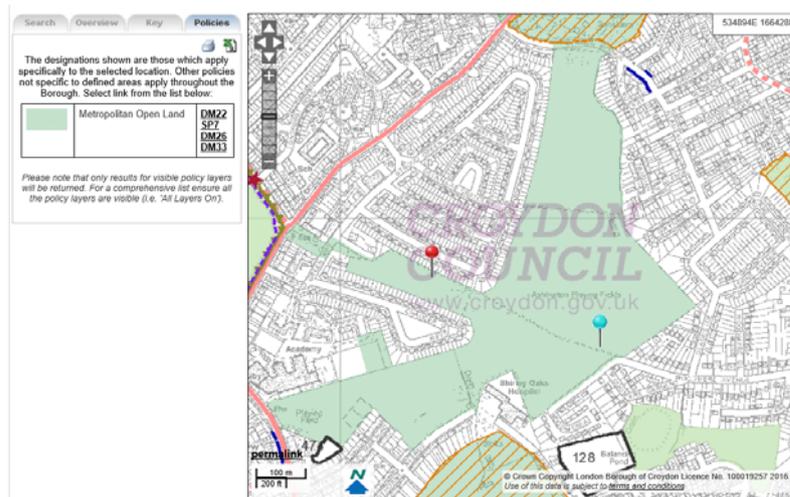


Image 6 – Extract from Policy Map

4.12 The Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of the site varies between 0 (worse) and 1b (very poor), and the site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1. Ashburton Playing Fields are prone to surface water flooding, with the risk varying between high (greater than 1 in 30 years) and very low (less in 1000 years). The part of the site the proposed development is located on is generally less prone to surface water flooding than other parts of the site.

5. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The main matters for consideration in both future submissions are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Bulk, Mass and Design
- Impact of Residential Amenity
- Highway and Parking Impacts
- Trees
- Sustainability and Environment

Principle of Development (both sites)

Development on MOL

5.2 Both sites are designated as MOL. London Plan (2016) policy 7.17 states that 'The strongest protection should be given to London's Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), and inappropriate development refused, excepted in very special circumstances, giving the same level protection as in the Green Belt. Essential ancillary facilities for appropriate uses will only be acceptable where they maintain the openness of MOL'.

5.3 As MOL is afforded the same protection as the Green Belt, paragraphs 133 to 147 of the NPPF 2018 apply. Paragraph 145 states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt unless certain exceptions apply. One of these exceptions is 'provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation... as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.'

5.4 Paragraph 143 of the NPPF 2018 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 states that "when considering a planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

5.5 In officer's view there are certain elements of both proposals that could potentially be considered appropriate development. These include the car park area (if number of car parking spaces is justified), pedestrian and cycle paths, well designed cycle shelter, outdoor gym equipment and the child's play area.

- 5.6 There are other elements that are for outdoor sports, but are considered by officers to cause some harm to openness, and therefore as per NPPF 2018 definition inappropriate. These include refuse store, sports pavilion, and artificial pitches and associated structures such as floodlights/fences.
- 5.7 It should be noted that Ashburton Scheme proposal (Site B), also includes an indoor gym. By virtue of this not being for outdoor sport, it would constitute inappropriate development as per the NPPF 2018 definition.

Development on Playing Fields

- 5.8 Both sites are located on playing fields. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF 2018 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land including playing fields, should not be built on unless the open space, buildings or land are surplus to requirements or, the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location, or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- 5.9 Both developments result in the loss of playing field area, reduce opportunities for informal play and sport, and result in the loss of public open space.

Very Special Circumstances

- 5.10 The applicant has stated the following as justification for building on MOL and playing fields:

“The Purley Way and Ashburton Playing Fields hub sites will be major contributors to community development in Croydon. The schemes are expected to see around 300,000 visits per year in combination, providing the borough with a high-class park-based community Football offer, sitting alongside our indoor leisure offer. The key focus will be on an improved offer for young people, particularly young girls, and addressing physical inactivity. We know female affiliated team Football is 3% of the market and we intend to achieve 25% female participation through these sites within 5 years. In addition, we want participation by disabled people to be at 10% over the same time period, and are aiming for a diversity of usage that doesn't currently exist at Croydon facilities.

Wider benefits for the scheme will include a Btec education programme for young people, school holiday scheme and programmes for the local community, sessions tackling anti-social behaviour and gangs, all delivered by the Palace for Life Foundation in partnership with Surrey County Football Association.

More broadly there will be volunteer training particularly for coaches and officials, a locally driven café offer and free accessible toilet facilities, new and enhanced children's play areas, new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle paths and facilities to improve accessibility, accessible parking, community rooms hireable for functions and children's parties, biodiversity and landscape improvements, and at Ashburton Playing Fields a low cost community fitness gym offer. Our aim is to make these facilities a go-to destination for the local community, creating a hub that goes beyond just Football.”

- 5.11 Officer's support the intentions of the Parklife Programme, but will need to balance this with protecting the openness of the MOL and playing fields.

Engagement with the GLA and Sport England is recognised as being vital, and the applicant is understood to be in discussions with both.

Bulk, Mass and Design

Site A – Purley Way Playing Fields

- 5.12 The location at the northern end of the site in officer's view seems to be the most appropriate location on Purley Way Playing Fields for such a development. It allows the development to be clustered next to the existing built form of Croydon Colonnades, which helps limit its impact on openness, as well as ensuring it is within reasonable walking distance of bus services.
- 5.13 Officers are encouraged by the attempt to create a sense of place and local destination point, rather than simply being just a football offer. This more complete offer that includes connecting pedestrian/cycle paths, play space, running trail and thought through landscaping, is considered complimentary to the existing function of the MOL. It is likely to encourage more active participation, ensuring that a broader cross section of the local population enjoy, benefit and use this important space. Creating a sense of place is essential if the development on MOL is to be justified.
- 5.14 In general, the positioning of the buildings both relative to the open space and to each other is appropriate. The car park is tucked away and has a direct relationship to both the existing pavilion and the new building, which helps tie the two elements of the scheme together. The impact of the pitches extending into the site on views from the south and from the Croydon Panorama would in part be mitigated by the change in land levels and proposed excavation (although it should be noted that officers do have some concerns over the financial feasibility of such excavation). The pitches are also set away from Waddon Way, which is likely to reduce both their visual and neighbouring amenity impact. The applicant will need to demonstrate the acceptability on views through appropriate 3D modelling.



5.15 The bespoke contemporary design of the building is high quality. The angulation of canopy gives a real focal interest and legibility, highlighting the entrance and café areas. Glazing in this section of the building will allow views in, creating activity, but also offers views out for customers of the MOL, play area and landscaped setting. The southern end of the building which needs to be more private due to the nature of the use (changing rooms etc) features brick, which would be broken up with high level continuous glazing that extends from the main canopy area. The extensive area of brick has both a security and maintenance benefit, and helps reduce the need for unsympathetic security measures such as security shutters.



Image 8 – Artist sketch for Purley Way Playing Fields

5.16 The material concept outlined by the applicant is supported by officers. White almost chalky brick references Croydon Airport and the chalk downlands of South England. Timber is an appropriate material choice for MOL. The material will also need to be easy to maintain if damage was to unfortunately occur.



Image 9 – Detailed Elevation Drawings and Material Precedents

5.17 The existing playspace on Purley Way Playing Fields, whilst occupying a large area, is not of particular high quality. Its re-provision within an improved offer is supported. In addition, the applicant will need to justify the loss of the existing half pipe.

Site B – Ashburton Playing Fields

5.18 The applicant initially proposed to locate the development at the northern end of Ashburton Playing Fields. Whilst this had the benefit of being closer to the main road, officers raised serious concern due to the impact on attractive views from Bywood Avenue (see photo image 10 below). The site is also narrower in this

location, which means that the development would dominate this part of the site more and leads to the creation of some challenging pinch points. Officers are satisfied that the current location in the eastern corner of the site is the most appropriate. The characteristics of its chosen location limits its visual impact as it is tucked into corner and the existing tree line provides some visual relief from views from the north. The development is also located in an area of the site less prone to surface water flooding and benefits from reasonable access to Woodville Avenue, as well as to the shared pedestrian/cycle path that links Ashburton Park to Woodville Avenue.



Image 10 – View of Ashburton Playing Fields from the North

5.19 In general, the positioning of the building and other structures both relative to the open space and to each other is appropriate. The main parking area is located adjacent to the road, which limits its impact on the green open space. Mounding would be used adjacent to the car park area to limit the impact on views experienced from the MOL. Disabled parking spaces would be located closer to the building for ease of access. The proposed location of the building has a welcomed direct mutually beneficial relationship with the shared cycle/pedestrian path. The play area is located in front of the café, creating a complementary synergy between these two uses. The play area is also close to the line of the trees, which acts as a source of inspiration to its design and encourages enjoyment of this open space.



Image 11 - Proposed Plan for Ashburton Playing Fields

5.20 The comments made on the sense of place and contemporary bespoke design of the building for Purley Way Playing Fields are equally applicable to this development on Ashburton Playing Fields.



Image 12 - Artist sketch for Ashburton Playing Fields

5.21 Differing from the Purley Way scheme the applicant is exploring the use of terracotta hanging tiles, which is an interesting material that is commonly found in the local area. The commonality of the building form and design with that of the Purley Way scheme, but with a different material choice, is supported. It helps create a connection between the two projects, but at the same time ensures they are contextually sensitive. Officers do have some concerns about the robustness of the suggested material, which needs to be explored further by the applicant.



Image 13 – Detailed Elevation Drawings and Material Precedents

5.22 The provision of new playspace on Ashburton Playing Fields is actively welcomed.

Secure by Design

5.23 It will be important that both schemes are designed so as not to cause or contribute to anti-social behaviour. The applications have been referred to the Metropolitan Police’s Design Out Crime Officer whom we understand is in discussion with the applicant.

Impact on Residential Amenity (both sites)

5.24 Through intensification of the use of the site there is the potential to have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties’ living conditions through noise disturbance. The applicant recognises this and has deliberately left space/buffer between the development and neighbouring properties. In addition, it is foreseen that conditions in regards to hours of operation, plant noise, limits on late night events, restrictions on amplified sound and music will be necessary to mitigate the impact.

5.25 The buffer between neighbouring properties and the development would also help naturally limit the impact of light pollution. A full light report will need to be submitted to demonstrate that the proposed flood lights and any other lighting have been designed not to have adverse impact on surrounding uses including residential properties and light sensitive businesses such as adjacent hotel on the Purley Way Playing Fields site.

Highways and Parking Impacts (both sites)

5.26 The applicant has submitted a Transport technical note that considers the impact of trip generation on peak rush hours. At peak time between 5pm and 6pm on a weekday, the Purley Way Playing Fields is expected to generate between 18 and 28 two way vehicle trips, and Ashburton Playing Field would generate between 24 and 36 two way trips. This level of trip generation is unlikely to result in a material impact on local highway network.

5.27 On the Purley Way Playing Fields approximately 30 general car parking and 5 disabled parking spaces are proposed. The applicant is also looking into whether Waddon Community Centre car park can be used as an overflow car park. On the Ashburton Playing Fields 30 echelon car parking spaces which would run parallel with the road. The echelon parking spaces are proposed to limit the impact of the development on the playing fields themselves.

- 5.28 To discourage excessive parking provision and to promote sustainable travel, the level of parking provision is understood to be based on travel modal targets of the travel plan. Whilst more robust justification on this is required, this does seem potentially an appropriate response given the sensitivity of the site. This may however lead to additional parking stress on surrounding roads.
- 5.29 On both sites, the applicant is proposing a new shared path for cyclist and pedestrians. On Ashburton Playing Fields the applicant is exploring with Sustrans whether the development could link into/extend the Waterlink Way. The Waterlink Way is a Sustrain cycle/pedestrian path that currently links South Norwood Country Park to Cutty Sark, Greenwich, through a continuous series of open spaces such as Ladywell Fields. The Waterlink Way then connects into route 21 of the National Cycle Network that finishes at Pevensey via Eastbourne.
- 5.30 The new pedestrian and cycle links are actively welcomed and form an extremely positive part of the potential schemes offering. New cycle parking facilities are proposed to actively encourage sustainable modes of transport.

Trees (both sites)

- 5.31 Due to the evolving nature of both schemes, the applicant has yet to confirm what the impact on trees will be. On the Purley Way (Site A), it does not appear that there would be any loss of trees, although officers have raised initial concerns about potential provision of disabled car parking spaces close to a coppice of trees and the impact this may have on root systems of those trees.
- 5.32 On the Ashburton (Site B), it is noted that a path is proposed through a relatively young coppice of trees. Further details on the impact on trees within this coppice is required. The applicant is showing extensive replanting of trees on both sites on submitted plans.
- 5.33 Officers have advised the applicant that a full application must include a tree survey, constraints plan and a tree protection plan. A landscape scheme and planting schedule will also be required.

Sustainability and Environment (both sites)

- 5.34 Policy requires that new build non-residential development of 500 sq.m and above achieve BREAAAM Excellent standard. The applicant has indicated that the development will achieve this.
- 5.35 A flood risk assessment will be required to be submitted with the application including a detailed Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme. SuDs will need to be integrated into the design, particularly on Ashburton Playing Fields. It will be expected that the development achieves better than greenfield run-off rates. Submitted drawings show the use of Swales.
- 5.36 Given both sites location within MOL and areas of open land, an Ecology assessment will need to be carried out. Any required surveys that arise out of this assessment such as Nesting or Bat Survey will need to be carried out upfront with the application, so that appropriate mitigation measures can be incorporated

into the design. The applicant will need to ensure that opportunities be taken, where possible, to enhance biodiversity including through the use of green roofs.

- 5.37 The entire borough is located within an Air Quality Management Area. The development both during construction and once complete could have an adverse impact on air quality if not sufficiently managed. A detailed Air Quality Management Assessment will be required to be submitted upon application.

Mitigation (both sites)

- 5.38 At this stage it is envisaged that planning obligations will be required to mitigate the impacts, with the following Heads of Terms:

- Employment and training
- Air quality
- Travel Plan
- Transport for London contributions (if required)
- Highway works (if required)
- Public realm works (if required)
- Community Use Plan

6. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM PLACE REVIEW PANEL

- 6.1 The schemes were presented to Place Review Panel on the 20th September 2018. Earlier versions of the scheme had previously been reviewed by the panel on the 15th May and 27th July 2018. It is important to note that the applicant has fully embraced the PRP process and has significantly improved the scheme as a result. The applicant team should be commended for this.

- 6.2 The following is an officer summary of what was said on 20th September 2018 (PRP are in the process of providing their formal comments):

Site A - Purley Way Playing Fields

- 6.3 The panel were supportive of the scheme including the reduction and consolidation of the parking to one area and the quality of the play provision. They supported the retention and refurbishment of the existing changing rooms. In addition, the landscape design was praised for its ambition, however further refinement to landforms were recommended. The panel asked the applicant to look into whether the location and orientation of the main pavilion building could be improved. They suggested exploring rotating the building and reorganising the layout to allow the café to receive more southerly sun. They also recommended further exploration of the long views towards the site in order to ensure the building and wider landscape setting are harmonious. Additionally the panel had concerns regarding the approach to graffiti control and queried whether the pale brick could be detailed in a manner that created an uneven surface, which would act as a deterrent. The panel also advised branding graphics and signage should be modest in size and kept to a minimum in order to not overwhelm the architecture.

Site B - Ashburton Playing Fields

- 6.4 Overall the location, layout and design of the scheme has greatly improved from the previous reviews and the panel were generally very supportive of the

direction that the design was progressing in. In particular, the panel commented that the canopy gave welcomed prominence to the entrance, the landscape design was sensitive to the location and neatly integrates into its setting, and the play area design was evolving in the right direction and was appropriately located. The reduction and relocation of the parking was also welcomed as well as the reduction in height of the building. The aspect that required most development from the panel's perspective was the northern elevation facing the pitches. It was felt that this needed more design work to strengthen the relationship between the spectators and users of the building, and the activities happening on the pitches. In addition the glazing within the brick walls, particularly around the gym, was felt to be of the wrong visual language. Punched openings were advised rather than slots. The panel also advised branding graphics and signage should be modest in size and kept to a minimum in order to not overwhelm the architecture.

7. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The development poses a challenge in that it improves borough's sporting provision, which has potential significant social benefits, but would involve building on protected MOL and playing fields. At this stage, the applicant has supplied insufficient information on whether the benefits of the scheme would outweigh the harm caused to the MOL, and from the loss of playing field area. However, officers are of the view based on discussion and progress made so far that the applicant may be able to demonstrate this, and as such, in principle the development should not be dismissed. Further engagement will need to take place during the pre-application process with both the GLA and Sport England.
- 7.2 The proposed development is sufficiently located away from neighbouring properties that any impacts on neighbouring properties' light, outlook, and privacy would be negligible. Impact on neighbouring properties' living conditions through intensification of use and light pollution can be managed through good design, mitigation measures (landscaping) and conditions (hours of use).
- 7.3 Officers consider the level of parking provision likely to be appropriate given the sensitivity of the site.
- 7.4 Pre-application engagement has (to date) been extremely positive and if the pre-application process continues to progress in this manner and the planning application is supported by high quality reports and plans, officers are reasonably confident that a high quality, well thought out sustainable development should prevail.

8. SPECIFIC FEEDBACK REQUESTED

- 8.1 In view of the above, it is suggested that members focus on the following issues:

Across both schemes

- Whether the principle of the development is acceptable having regard to the potential benefits of the scheme balanced against the impact on MOL, open space and playing fields.
- Is there anything members would like to see to improve the offer in order to make the development acceptable?

- Are members comfortable with the approach taken in regards to parking, i.e. basing it on targets rather than expected parking demand so as to promote sustainable travel and limit the impact on playing fields by reducing the size of the car park

Site A - Purley Way Playing Fields

- The location of the proposal within the site.
- Scheme design and how it contributes to a sense of place.
- Potential impact on the residential amenities of neighbours and how the scheme might be further developed to minimise any effects.

Site B - Ashburton Playing Fields

- The location of the proposal within the site
- Scheme design and how it contributes to a sense of place.
- Potential impact on the residential amenities of neighbours and how the scheme might be further developed to minimise any effects.