

# Copthall Planning Brief

**Adopted 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016**

## Contents

Contents .....	2
1. Introduction and Background .....	3
2. Objectives of the Planning Brief.....	4
3. The Site .....	6
4. Key Site Constraints and Characteristics.....	8
5. Current uses on the site.....	11
6. Accessibility .....	14
7. Scope of development .....	16
Spatial Strategy.....	18
Spatial Strategy: Southern area.....	19
Spatial Strategy: Central area .....	20
Spatial Strategy: Northern area.....	22
8. Way-finding and Signage .....	23
9. Planning Policy Framework.....	24
10. The London Plan .....	26
11. The Local Plan .....	26
12. Planning Delivery Strategy .....	26
13. Funding and Governance Options .....	28

# Copthall Planning Brief

## 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This Planning Brief has been prepared with the objective of guiding the future of Copthall and provides a framework for future use and development. Copthall has an area of approximately 70 hectares (173 acres) of Green Belt land including grassland, woodland and copse areas. The site has a range of sporting facilities which support a variety of sporting activities including the Copthall leisure centre, the Allianz Park and a number of community sports organisations and seasonally let pitches. Casual, active and passive recreation is a large element of community use. Copthall is also the location for Barnet Council's Green Spaces Operational Base.
- 1.2 Copthall is also an integral part of the green infrastructure network for the Borough and acts as a local park for the communities that surround the site.
- 1.3 Barnet aims to be a national leader in developing attractive suburban parks in partnership with its communities. Such parks will promote health and wellbeing, conserve the natural character of the area and encourage economic growth. An opportunity has now arisen to fulfil these objectives. By working with the local community, stakeholders, tenants and users it will deliver an exemplar facility at Copthall.
- 1.4 The site has many users each having needs and aspirations for the future of the site. This is why this strategically important site requires an integrated plan and operating framework in place to guide future development.
- 1.5 The supporting evidence behind this Copthall Planning Brief is contained in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2016 to 2025 which was adopted by Barnet's Environment Committee in May 2016. To create the strategy all the green spaces in Barnet were surveyed to:
  - Enable the Council to prioritise, plan and commit resources across the Borough
  - Make case to funders to increase resources
  - Make informed decisions for future the management regimes for the service
  - Ensure open space development and improvements are informed by open space needs and requirements
- 1.6 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (July 2014) also provides guidance and direction for the development of the site to meet the existing sporting and future

needs of the Borough, and the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy which will also provide guidance and direction on the existing future needs of playing pitches in the Borough. The Strategy has the objectives of:

- giving an accurate picture of supply and demand of playing pitches
- providing a clear understanding of existing levels of provision, in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility, location and management,
- identifying how these facilities will meet the existing and future needs of the community, and
- provides an evidence base that will allow Barnet to plan, prioritise and schedule future improvement projects.

- 1.7 The existing mix of users on the site includes the regionally important Barnet Swimming Club and the Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers, together with the attraction of the Allianz Park as the home of the European Cup and Premiership winning Saracens Rugby Club, which can be regarded as solid foundations on which to develop a major sporting hub for the Borough.
- 1.8 Close proximity to primary and secondary schools, together with the presence of Middlesex University at Hendon and Barnet and Southgate College at Colindale, create the opportunity for Copthall to play a leading role in the development of sport in education.
- 1.9 The promotion of sport in Barnet with Copthall at the hub of a network of local facilities, alongside the use of the parkland elements for informal fitness and active recreation, ensures the key role of Copthall in contributing towards the achievement of Public Health Objectives and delivery of the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 1.10 The nature of delivery and proposals will depend on the investment decisions of national governing bodies of sport or other funding bodies together with the various parties on or associated with the site.

## 2. Objectives of the Planning Brief

- 2.1 The Copthall site in Mill Hill, offers an opportunity for a high quality green space with an integrated sports and leisure provision. Development here will support the Council's strategic objective of being seen as a national leader in developing attractive suburban parks with its communities that promote health and wellbeing, conserve the natural character of the area, and encourage economic growth alongside the objective of delivering increase participation in sport and improving public health. It will support the continued growth of Saracens Rugby Club together

with investment of local sports clubs through a diversified sports provision. It will leave Barnet with a lasting parks and recreational legacy and first class facilities that complement other facilities within the Borough.

2.2 Copthall is inextricably linked to the future of other Council owned sports facilities that deliver quality services on a sustainable footing. The range of existing/enhanced spaces and facilities integrated with a new leisure centre, new investment in the Allianz Park and a landscaped parkland setting will provide the key hub for sports development within Barnet and the north-west London sub-region. This is the only location in the Borough which has the combination of space and a mix of existing facilities where this can be achieved.

2.3 These key objectives for Copthall were approved by the Council in February 2015 as part of the Sports and Physical Activity Review<sup>1</sup>. The relevant objectives for this planning brief are identified as follows :

- To create a hub for a range of sports that will sit within a parkland setting and attract the widest range of users that encourages sport take up, exercise and improves health within the Borough;
- A core of sports and leisure facilities based on a new leisure centre, the Allianz Park and a new pavilion with satellite facilities which meet the future needs of sports clubs;
- To provide a range of parkland facilities that will attract the widest range of visitors;
- To respect the Green Belt location offering environmental and social enhancements that supports the case for development. In this regard the development must have a minimal impact on and enhance the landscape;
- To create an accessible location for all visitors with vastly improved pedestrian and cycling movements within the site;
- To create a park as an integral element of a network of green spaces connecting Copthall with its surrounding areas, in particular Sunny Hill Park, Hendon and the Middlesex University campus to the south, Mill Hill Park and Arrandene Open Space to the north, Burnt Oak and Mill Hill East via the disused railway line to the west and east respectively.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Outline Business Case for the Sport and Physical Activity Review set out the full list of key objectives, see appendix 1 section 5

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s21209/Appendix%201%20Outline%20Business%20Case.pdf>

### 3. The Site

- 3.1 The Copthall site is located centrally within the London Borough of Barnet in the Mill Hill Ward. The site has an area of approximately 70 hectares (173 acres). The site slopes slightly to the south east and has generally even topography. A number of hedgerows form boundaries across the site, a legacy from an earlier agricultural use, which contributes towards both amenity and biodiversity value.
- 3.2 The Copthall site is bounded to the south by the A1 Great North Way, and beyond that by residential properties and Sunny Hill Park, which is connected to Copthall by an underpass under the A1. Sunny Hill Park provides pedestrian access to Brent Street and Hendon town centres and the main Middlesex University Campus.
- 3.3 To the east lies Hendon Golf Club, which is a privately run 18-hole golf course. To the south east boundary are the Archfields Allotments. The northern boundary of the site is defined by Pursley Way with the Dollis Junior and infant School to the north east. Beyond Pursley Way are residential areas and Mill Hill School. The western boundary is formed by Page Street, which is predominantly residential.
- 3.4 Also lying on the western boundary are developments at the former hospital and the Hasmonian High School (for Girls). Both are accessed from Page Street and lie outside the Copthall site boundary.
- 3.5 Crossing east to west through the site is a disused railway, which once linked the underground at Mill Hill East with Edgware. Tracks were removed in 1964 and the disused line is now a public right of way and an attractive tree lined walk known as the Copthall Railway Walk



- 3.6 The Cophall site forms part of the Mill Hill Neighbourhood Development Plan area which covers all of Mill Hill ward and the NW7 parts of Hale ward. The Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum are currently producing the Neighbourhood Plan which will upon adoption form part of Barnet’s Development Plan.

## 4. Key Site Constraints and Characteristics

### 4.1.1 Listed Building

There are no listed buildings within the site, but Chase Lodge is a Grade 2 Listed building located to the north west of the site. The setting of this building may need to be considered by adjacent development proposals.



### 4.1.2 Conservation Areas

There are no conservation areas within or adjoining the site.

### 4.1.3 Tree Preservation Orders

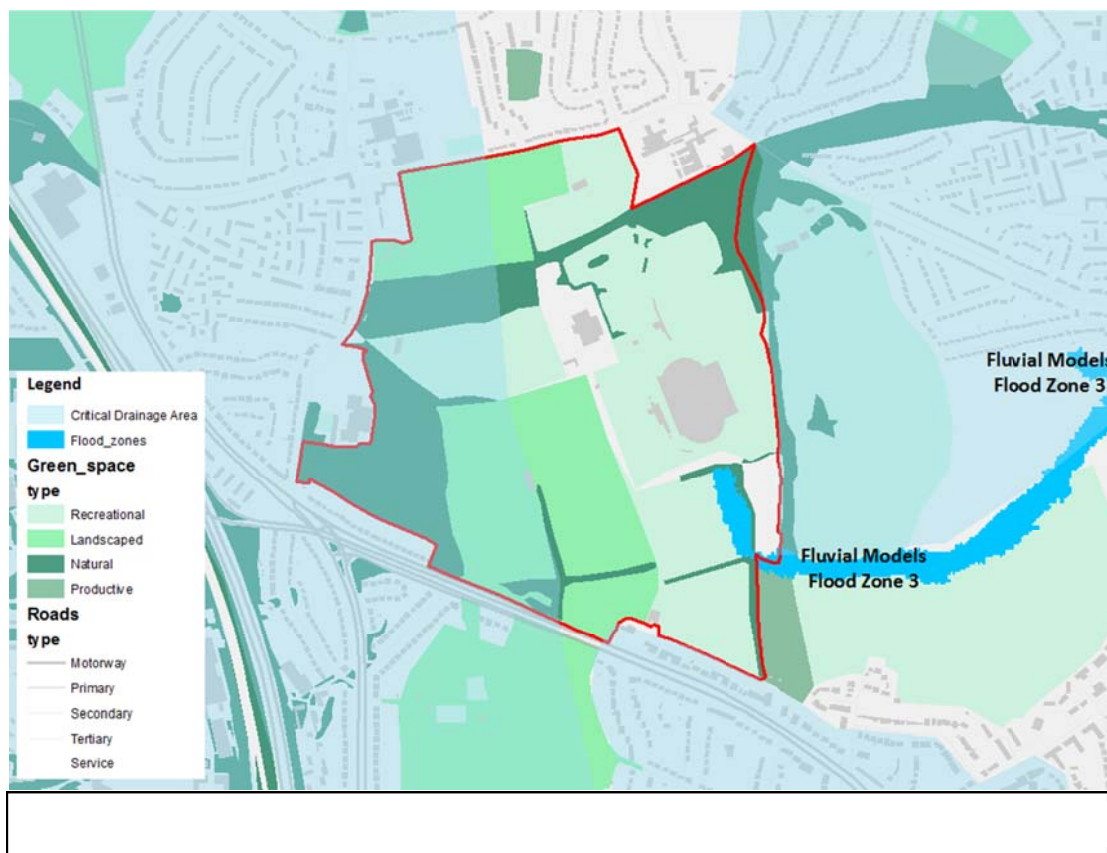
There is a group (woodland) TPO on land occupied by the Metro Golf Centre. These will form part of the parkland setting for the leisure facilities. See Map Three below.





#### 4.1.4 Flooding

Land either side of Dollis Brook south of the Allianz park is within Flood Zone 3 (See Map Four below). A flood risk assessment will be required to consider flooding within the site and the impact of additional run off on Dollis Brook. Any requirements to manage surface water run off will form part of the overall landscaping for the site. The western part of the site is identified as a Critical Drainage Area in the Surface Water Management Plan, and also the land adjacent to the eastern boundary – see Map 5 below.



#### 4.1.5 Nature Conservation

The Cophall Railway Walk and Cophall Old Common covers an area of 11 hectares and is designated as a Grade 2 Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation. The Railway Walk and Cophall Old Common are a mixture of grassland and woodland with access by a public bridleway. Cophall South Fields within the south west of the site covers an area of 6 hectares and is designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation. The three fields and hedgerows provide a pocket of countryside locally and are managed to encourage wild flowers. These areas of nature conservation importance will enhance the parkland element and the overall attractiveness of Cophall as a visitor destination.

## 5. Current uses on the site

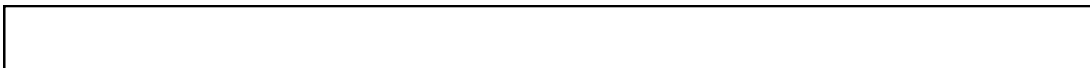
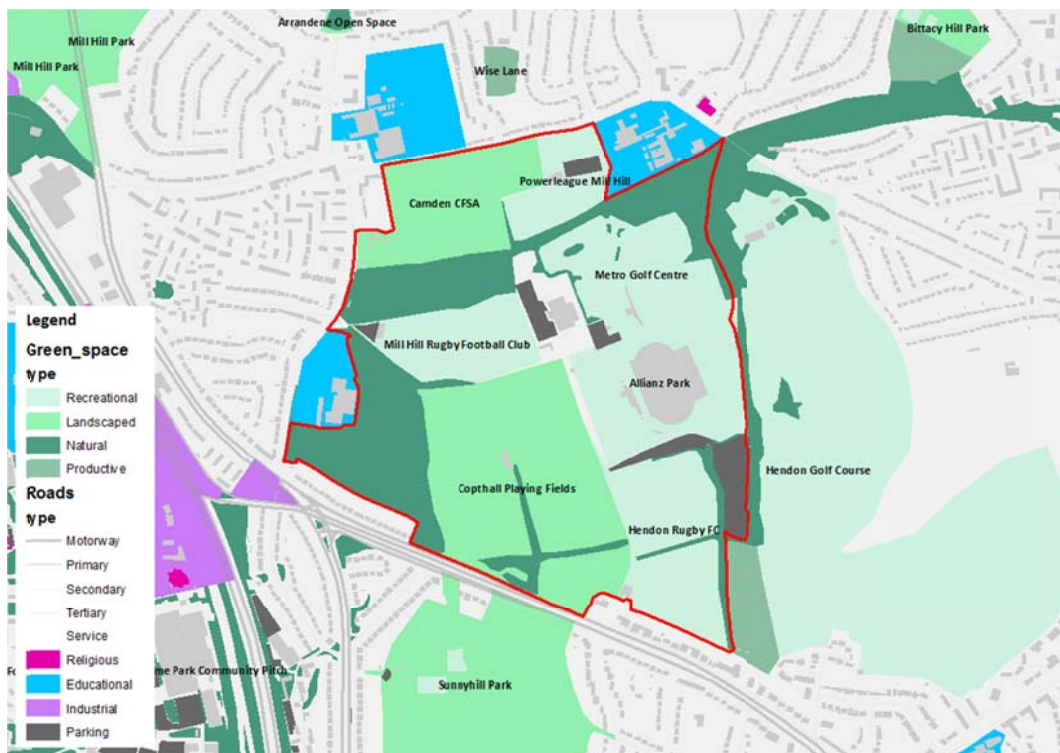
5.1.1 The site is presently used for sports, recreation and amenity. Table 1 broadly sets out the main uses on the Cophall Estate (see also Map Five ):

Site	Main uses	Considerations for investment
<b>Cophall Leisure Centre</b>	Swimming, including diving Gym Café Car Parking	The current centre requires replacement as identified within the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.  Its relationship to other sports facilities on the site could be improved. It currently has no sports hall.
<b>Allianz Park</b>	10,000 seat (maximum) sports stadium Rugby Union (Saracens) Athletics (Barnet & District Athletics Club) Education Conference and meeting space Car Parking	Saracens are developing proposals for a new west stand. The athletic facilities are split between the track and field facilities to the rear of the east stand. The internal areas of the east stand are used for events and training. The internal areas of the new stand may be used as Saracens training academy alongside other sports training / education uses.
<b>Metro Golf Centre</b>	45 bay golf driving range Par 3 nine-hole golf course nine-hole novelty golf course Shop and café/restaurant	Buildings and facilities have been subject to recent refurbishment and investment. There maybe further investment potential going forward.

<b>Site</b>	<b>Main uses</b>	<b>Considerations for investment</b>
	Offices in converted house Car parking	
<b>Powerleague Soccer</b>	12 football pitches – 2 large Function room/bar Car parking	Situated to the north of the leisure centre there is a separation between the Powerleague and other areas of the Copthall Estate
<b>Chase Lodge</b>	Full size and junior football pitches Changing facilities Car parking	Separated from main sports areas
<b>Mill Hill Rugby Club</b>	Club house, with function facilities 3 full size rugby pitches	Buildings would benefit from investment in order to create a more positive first impression of Copthall. Should be replaced or renovated. Gaelic Athletics Association use the pitches
<b>Hendon Rugby Club</b>	Club House with facilities 2 full size pitches	Buildings would benefit from investment in order to create a more positive impression of Copthall. Should be replaced or renovated.
<b>Copthall Playing Pitches</b>	15 Football 4 Rugby 3 cricket Changing room facility	The large two storey changing room facility is extremely prominent and in need of investment. Should be replaced or renovated.
<b>Council parks operational</b>	Green space depot used	Located to front of the

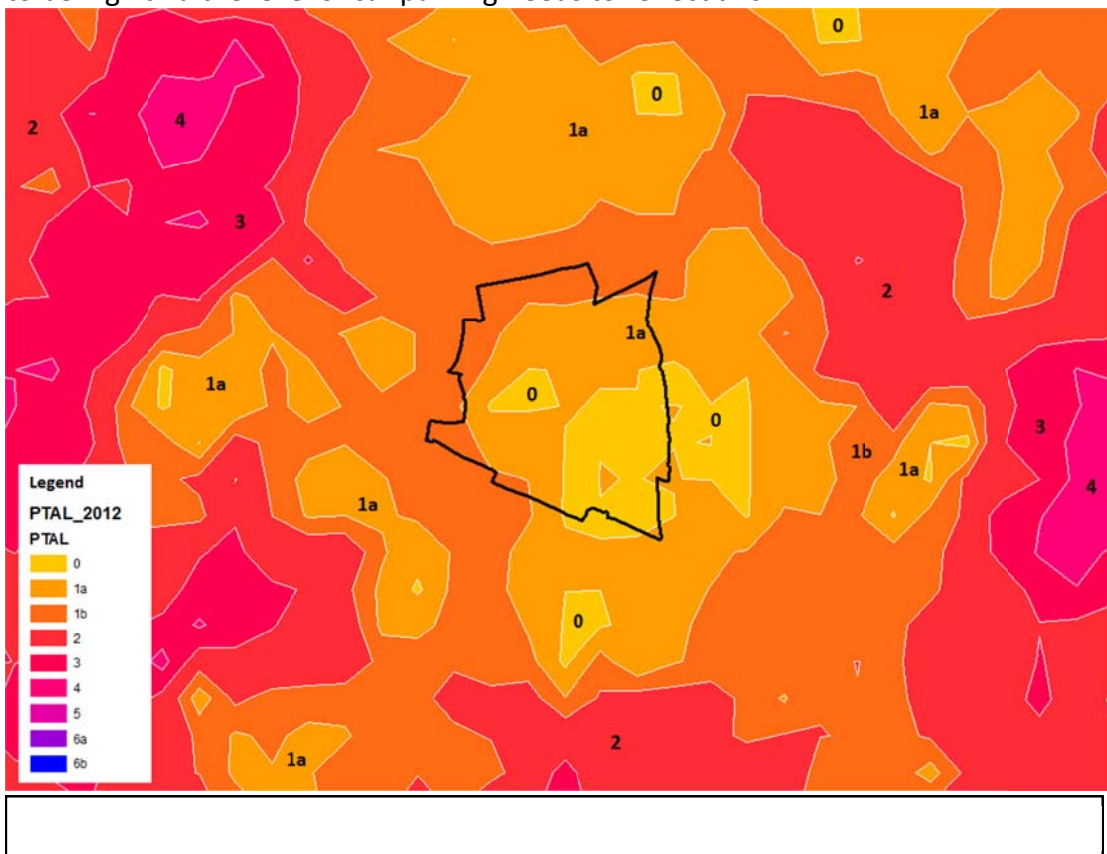
Site	Main uses	Considerations for investment
base	to support the management and maintenance of Cophall and other green spaces in the area	Leisure Centre. Needs to be relocated.
Open space and amenity land	10.6 hectares	Lacks facilities – toilets, children’s play area, teen activities etc. Should be better integrated into the overall concept.

There is one residential property within the site, Cophall Lodge, located between the Allianz Park and the Cophall Leisure Centre.



## 6. Accessibility

- 6.1 The site is located centrally within the Borough, approximately 1.5 km from Mill Hill East Underground station and the same distance from Mill Hill Broadway Station served by Thameslink. Hendon station is approximately 2.5 km to the south.
- 6.2 The 221 bus service serves the site with stops along Pursley Road. The Service connects Cophall with Edgware, Mill Hill Broadway (including the station), Mill Hill East station, North Finchley, Friern Barnet and beyond to Wood Green and Turnpike Lane. There are no bus services along Page Street. Coach access and parking is provided at the current Leisure Centre and Allianz Park.
- 6.3 The site (taken as the Leisure Centre) does not have a PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Level) rating. However, Pursley Road has a rating of 1b. This reflects the relative isolation of the site from railway stations. Therefore, improving connectivity between the site and stations, whether by foot, cycling and bus services needs to be explored with the relevant bodies and providers. It also means that car usage is likely to be high and the level of car parking needs to reflect this.



- 6.4 The principal access to the site is from Page Street via a T-junction. The quality of this entrance to Cophall should be improved and an evaluation of traffic flows and junction redesign as well as better signage.
- 6.5 The Chase Lodge Playing Fields have a separate access off Page Street, whilst the Powerleague is accessed from Pursley Road.
- 6.6 There is a secondary left hand in and out access from the A1. However, there is no slip road (in or out), and the footbridge restricts scope to create on.
- 6.7 Pedestrian access is via the footbridge over the A1 to Sun Hill Park to the south and a footpath from Pursley Road, which provides access for those travelling by bus.
- 6.8 Within the site, Champions Way serves the existing facilities. Whilst adequate for the volumes of traffic, way-finding is limited and improvements should be incorporated into the Cophall investment package.
- 6.9 Improved cycle parking should be provided as part of new development.
- 6.10 It is recommended that a feasibility study is undertaken to consider options for improving public transport access, and delivering new walking and cycling routes and improved connections. This study could then sit alongside this Planning Brief providing clarification around the appropriate ways for addressing accessibility concerns through the investments being delivered across the site over time.

## 7. Scope of development

7.1 A range of facilities are proposed including enhancing existing facilities, replacing existing facilities and supporting the sports and open spaces provision within the site. The level of new development is limited with the most significant changes being a replacement west stand at the Allianz Park and a replacement Cophthall Leisure Centre.

Use	Proposed uses	Key considerations
<b>Cophthall Leisure Centre</b>	25 m 8 lane pool 25 m 6 lane pool Training pool Potential for diving facilities Sports hall Up to 115 station Gym Café Car Parking Changing rooms Public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring continuing provision of a leisure centre for users during re-provision</li> <li>Scale of the centre should not disproportionately exceed the existing centre</li> <li>Any changes to / loss of sports pitches will need to ensure that existing needs are met elsewhere</li> <li>new centre should be designed so that it can expand as resources and planning policy allows, in particular to enable the introduction of a suitably sized sports hall if required.</li> </ul>
<b>Allianz Park</b>	Replacement West Stand to match east stand and facilities underneath  New stand similar height of east stand.  Retention of athletics and home to Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement west stand should minimise its overall footprint</li> <li>Space below any new stand should provide further economic or community benefit or associated uses</li> <li>Reduce the visual impact of floodlighting</li> <li>Maintain the open nature of the stadium</li> <li>Improve car parking arrangements including surfaces, and maximising shared use by all users.</li> <li>Maximising the opportunity for improved and more flexible use of land surrounding the stadium (e.g. event day parking areas doubling up as informal recreation or sporting uses).</li> <li>Maintaining continued use of the stadium for athletics and better integration of track and field facilities and activities.</li> </ul>



Use	Proposed uses	Key considerations
<b>Golf – Metro Golf Centre</b>	No changes proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent investment has delivered a range of refurbished and new facilities including facilities for children and families, new technologies for golf leisure/training and associated on site retail.</li> </ul>
<b>Powerleague</b>	No changes proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving links with other parts of Copthall.</li> </ul>
<b>Camden Community Football and Sports Association</b>	Full size all weather pitch with flood lighting and stand (circa 100 seats) and associated parking and changing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>car parking provision and impact on green belt</li> <li>Potential flood lighting impact on biodiversity</li> <li>Stand impact on green belt openness</li> <li>Demonstrating need for the facility</li> <li>Nature of ‘community use’ offer/access</li> </ul>
<b>Mill Hill Rugby Club</b>	No changes proposed, option for replacement or renovated clubhouse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential loss of pitch associated with replacement Copthall Leisure Centre.</li> <li>Current clubhouse and car parking environment could be improved to improve the first impressions of Copthall.</li> </ul>
<b>Hendon Rugby Club</b>	No changes proposed, option for replacement or renovated clubhouse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current clubhouse and car parking environment could be improved</li> </ul>
<b>Copthall Playing Pitches</b>	Option for replacement or renovated pavilion in a new location. Various improvements to pitches/fields for existing users and for outdoor exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing poor quality pavilion building detracts from and fails to respond to its visibly prominent position in this green belt location</li> <li>Any design should maintain and enhance current use as a pavilion for existing sporting users and provide opportunities for other sports.</li> <li>Support a wider range of sports on the existing pitches as well as facilitate wider use for outdoor exercises / active recreation.</li> </ul>

Use	Proposed uses	Key considerations
<b>Council Parks Operational Base</b>	To be re-provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining an operational base for the Council's Green Spaces team which meets the boroughs current and future needs</li> <li>• Avoids traffic conflict</li> <li>• Minimises its impact on the openness of the Green Belt</li> </ul>
<b>Open Space and Amenity Land</b>	Creation of recreational spaces including:  Children's natural play area / adventure playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two locations:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ North of the proposed site for the leisure centre</li> <li>○ On land of existing leisure centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The impact of these facilities on the green belt maybe a consideration</li> <li>• Improving pedestrian and cycling accessibility into the Cophall Estate especially to the south</li> <li>• Introduction of appropriate features for informal recreation and sports where blended into the natural environment (e.g. climbing, fitness trails)</li> </ul>
<b>Cophall Playing Pitches</b>	New facility that is being explored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dedicated track over 1km in length, 6 m width roadway surface with run off areas</li> <li>• To provide safe training and race facilities for Road Cycling</li> <li>• Could serve North London</li> <li>• Would also support triathlon and road based sports training and events.</li> </ul>

## Spatial Strategy

7.2 The spatial strategy for Cophall is characterised by the following three areas :

- A northern area with private access outdoor sporting space
- A core area with public/private access and a focus on built sporting facilities
- A southern area of public access outdoor sporting and recreational space



### Spatial Strategy: Southern area

- 7.3 The expanse of playing fields and natural greenspace to the south provides a substantial physical space for informal recreational activities to take place. Primarily comprised of fields with pitches and an area of natural greenspace it provides a significant social and environmental asset in its own right with permanent public access. The space forms the backdrop to the central area.
- 7.4 The area of grassland in the south west corner of the site provides access to natural greenspace and it should retain that function with no development. Improved pedestrian access should be created at the southwest corner of the site – giving access to the pedestrian subway.
- 7.5 The field used by Hendon Rugby FC will remain as it is currently used. Options to improve access from the south-east corner of the site should be considered to enable a link north to Allianz Park. Connections to Sunny Hill Park to the South and the relationship between the open spaces should be improved.

- 7.6 The fields with the central two storey pavilion and other fields to the south and east known as Copthall Playing Fields could provide various opportunities. For existing users the Copthall playing fields need improvements; cricket pitches are rated poor, football pitches - standard and rugby pitches – very poor in the draft Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment. The fields should be improved to maintain their existing sporting provision for cricket, rugby and football.
- 7.7 Going forward Copthall Playing Fields may provide opportunities for an enhanced fitness trail/measured walking route. It has been suggested the fields could also incorporate a 1km length tarmac track for cycle training (road and triathlon) however this would require work on feasibility and deliverability with Sport England and British Cycling and its impact on existing sporting users, as well as impact on green belt objectives.
- 7.8 A longer term aim should be to replace the existing two storey pavilion with a modern building, potentially closer to the Allianz Park and core area where there is already a built environment focus, ensuring sporting users' needs are maintained. This could reduce the impact on the openness of green belt of the existing structure. Any replacement pavilion would need to be multi-use changing room and storage facility of a more sympathetic design. The Copthall Playing Fields also provide the opportunity for events space such as drive in cinema, food markets, circus and fairs.

### Spatial Strategy: Central area

- 7.9 The Central area is focused on Allianz Park and Copthall Leisure Centre. Whilst the Allianz Park is the principle focus for this area the land released by the leisure centre has potential to create a more public focus for the site as a whole. The possibility to provide formal recreational use is available such as a playground or picnic area, there is also potential to develop a more intensive alternative sporting use such as a skate/BMX park or rock park in this location. The relationship with the leisure centre car park and transition to Allianz Park Stadium would be important to create an attractive space.
- 7.10 The Allianz Park is the principle focus for this area, and rugby and athletics use will continue to share facilities and the stadium will continue to act as a community facility. The development of the west stand may present an opportunity for Middlesex University to expand their facilities onto the site.
- 7.11 The East Stand is a multi-purpose facility incorporating Saracens shop and offices, conferencing and banqueting facilities and training facilities, including an indoor 100m running track. The stand consists of permanent seating and temporary seating

- to the front which sits over the athletics track. This seating is removed seasonally to allow full use of the athletics track.
- 7.12 The existing West Stand was built in the 1970's and is showing its age. It has a limited capacity and does not comply with the highest standards of stadium design. Due to the limited height the stand is flanked by two floodlight towers, which are the most prominent features of Cophthall and the only features visible from surrounding areas.
- 7.13 At either end of the stadium are two temporary stands, dismantled out of season to allow for the full use of the athletics track.
- 7.14 Any proposed development should be designed to ensure that there is no disproportionate increase in the floorspace over and above the existing structures, and that they sit as far a reasonably possible on the existing footprint. Disproportionate increase will be judged on its own merits. The openness of Green Belt can potentially be maintained if built facilities are concentrated in this central area. Use of the undercroft space for economic growth, continuing community use of the stadium, reducing further car park hard standing and not affecting the athletics use of the stadium are all important considerations.
- 7.15 Depending on the scale or amendments to, the permission for the temporary seating over part of the athletics track which is dismantled when not in use may continue.
- 7.16 Any new stand constructed will be expected to meet Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology, BREEAM, Very Good.
- 7.17 The Council proposes to replace the existing 40 year old Cophthall Leisure Centre with a new modern facility that will be more efficient to run and improve the overall experience for users.
- 7.18 In order to ensure that there is no break in the use of the sports facilities, the replacement Leisure Centre will be located to the west of the existing centre.
- 7.19 Any loss of site facilities or playing space as a result of the rebuilt leisure centre must be re-provided. In the case of sports pitches on the vacated area and/or other space within the site with new state of the art pitches in accordance with the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy and built facilities elsewhere on the site.
- 7.20 The new facility should have a massing which is not disproportionate to the existing centre and its replacement should be an opportunity to design a facility which is more in keeping with the parkland and Green Belt setting.

- 7.21 Exhibition space for the arts should be considered at either newly built facilities or possibly use of outdoor amenity space.

### Spatial Strategy: Northern area

- 7.22 This area does not have public access. Metro Golf, the Camden Community Football and Sports Association playing fields are all private sporting facilities which make an important contribution to the range of sporting facilities on site. There are public rights of way through this northern area which should be maintained and enhanced where appropriate; opportunities for improved accessibility would be beneficial.
- 7.23 New outdoor sports facilities are proposed for the land between the existing pathway along the old railway line and the Mill Hill rugby club. The CCFSA propose a full size all weather pitch with flood lighting and stand (circa 100 seats) and associated parking and changing facilities on the site of the former Cophthall Girls School - a derelict and private piece of land this proposal would bring this back into use. Access and parking should aim to minimise the amount of hardstanding, investigating shared parking facilities with the Cophthall Leisure Centre or Mill Hill Rugby Club should be considered.
- 7.24 Mill Hill Rugby Club clubhouse, which could be renovated or redeveloped to provide an improved first impression of Cophthall.
- 7.25 The intended new parks operations centre is to be located adjacent to the Mill Hill rugby club. It may share access with the proposal from Camden Community Football and Sports Association subject to highways assessment.
- 7.26 The Powerleague Soccer centre off Pursley Road is well established and self-contained. Possibly could benefit from improved links to the footpath on its west boundary, and through to the leisure centre and the wider Cophthall area.
- 7.27 The Metro Golf Centre is a popular facility in this northern area that provides a two tiered golf driving range and a 9-hole par 3 golf course in well landscaped setting. The centre is a feeder and training facility for golf courses throughout north and west London. It adjoins the Hendon Golf Club. The centre also includes a Golf Shop and restaurant. It has its own car parking, which together with the approaches should be enhanced.

## 8. Way-finding and Signage

- 8.1 Vehicular access to Copthall is presently provided from Page Street with Champions Way acting as the principal service road for all of the facilities. The junctions and road is adequate for existing usage and likely to remain so after the implementation of the proposals in this Planning Brief.



- 8.2 Each on site user currently has their own specific car park. Increasing individual tenants car parking space in the longer term could be an inefficient use of land. Formalising arrangements for sharing car parking should be sought to ensure that the minimum land is developed for this purpose. Site wide management of this parking should also be considered for the benefit of site tenants.
- 8.3 Improving north/south access for cyclists is important. The route to the Hendon University Campus is approximately a 1.5km walk – a more attractive cycle. Helping to encourage cycling will support the link with the University. Providing cycle parking centrally as part of both Copthall Leisure Centre and Allianz park West Stand will be

essential. Providing signage and route improvements for cyclists and pedestrians would help encourage use of this north/south route.

- 8.4 The old railway is a major asset and could be enhanced to create a more direct and safe pedestrian/cycling route to Mill Hill station. If the route is to be reused for other forms of transport then the pathway will need to be re-provided as part of those proposals. The impact of introducing lighting on biodiversity would need to be considered.
- 8.5 It is essential that accessibility for pedestrians/cyclists within the site is also improved and maintained. The southern area contains large expanses of open space, with little signage making clear the leisure facilities and key pedestrian access routes.
- 8.6 A common criticism at major event locations is the lack of information for users on where facilities are located and on what is on offer. The signage on Page Street is poor, and likewise there is poor signage within the site with which to clearly identify the routes to the various facilities or even what the facilities are across the site. Developing a way finding strategy for the site is a priority.

## 9. Planning Policy Framework

- 9.1 The development plan for Barnet is the London Plan and the Barnet Local Plan. The latter consists of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policy Development Plan Documents, both adopted in 2013. The key policy consideration for Cophall is the Green Belt. The site is within the Mill Hill Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum is in the early stages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The emerging Mill Hill Neighbourhood Plan will subject to adoption eventually form part of Barnet's development plan.
- 9.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies. In it the Government state that the fundamental aims of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open with the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and permanence.
- 9.3 The Green Belt is one of the most significant and enduring national planning policies, and the Government, Greater London Authority and London Borough of Barnet attach great importance to it and regard any new development within the Green Belt against the policies set out in paragraphs 79 to 92 of the NPPF. It is not the purpose of the Brief to repeat verbatim those policies, but to highlight the **issues that they raise with regard to the re-use and redevelopment of this site. In paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:**



- *‘To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.’*

9.4 Most development is inappropriate in the Green Belt. Such development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The harm of new development on the Green Belt is a key test. However, Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that *‘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.’*

9.5 Inappropriate development is defined, in paragraph 89 of the NPPF, to include all development except, *inter alia*, for:

- *‘The provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it*
- *An extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original*
- *The replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces*
- *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brown field land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the purposes of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.’*

9.6 The development proposed in this planning brief, are related to sport and recreation; propose extending or replacement of existing facilities with new ones and the redevelopment of previously developed sites.

9.7 The spatial strategy in this Brief is designed to maintain openness of the Green Belt and minimise any harm. New facilities are either in the existing site or as close as possible, with the existing facilities returned to open uses. The spatial strategy is focusing built development in the core area at Allianz Park and Cophthall Leisure Centre. Best use is to be made of land already developed. Modern standards mean that new buildings may be of a different massing and scale to existing, these will be judged on their own merits. The openness of Green Belt can potentially be

maintained and enhanced if built facilities are concentrated in this central area and attention is given to their cohesiveness together with surrounding landscaping.

## 10. The London Plan

- 10.1 Adopted in 2011, the London Plan was revised and updated in March 2016. Through it the Mayor reaffirms the NPPF stating in Policy 7.16 that *'the strongest protection should be given to London's Green Belt, in accordance with national guidance. Inappropriate development should be refused, except in very special circumstances. Development will be supported if it is appropriate and helps secure the objectives of improving the Green Belt as set out in national guidance.'*
- 10.2 The Mayor does support the positive use of Green Belt particularly where it improves health and quality of life and the Green Belt is positively managed.

## 11. The Local Plan

- 11.1 The Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2012. It complies with the NPPF and sets out planning policy and a spatial strategy for the Borough.
- 11.2 Whilst the Barnet Core Strategy creates a framework for significant growth, it also seeks to protect the Green Belt alongside built and green heritage and character areas. Protection of the Green Belt is part of one of the Three Strands Approach the Council has towards planning, development and regeneration. Therefore the Local Plan and Development Management DPD (Policy DM15) reaffirm the NPPF policies in respect of Green Belt.
- 11.3 Policy DM15 in particular sets out both the Council's general approach to development in the Green Belt and specific requirements in respect of particular types of development. It reinforces the NPPF and in particular states that *'The replacement or re-use of buildings will not be permitted where they would have an adverse impact on the openness of the area or the purposes of including land in Green Belt.'*

## 12. Planning Delivery Strategy

- 12.1 The developments outlined in this Planning Brief will require separate planning permission. The sensitivities of a green belt location, and the importance that design will require detailed plans for each facility.

- 12.2 Each planning application should show how it fulfils the objectives of this Draft Planning Brief and the planning objectives for Copthall. This will ensure that the overall vision is observed and discordant development is not allowed. Any development over and above that highlighted in this plan will need to show how it still meets the objectives of the plan and the Green Belt.
- 12.3 All planning applications must conform to the Validation Requirements set out by the Council to be found at [www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications). Pre-application discussions should take place with the Council.
- 12.4 There are no phasing plans in the Planning Brief. The Council will continue to work with the various parties to establish likely timeframes for investment and establish a programme that enables the on-site stakeholders and off-site stakeholders such as the Neighbourhood Forum and Copthall Community Sports Group and schools such as the Hasmorean to understand the programme, manage the impacts and discuss any variations. This Planning Brief recognises it is important that the school can thrive and grow in line with the Council's requirement for increased secondary school places to meet the needs of Barnet's diverse population.
- 12.5 Development options for the sites within Copthall estate must have particular regard to the following matters (although not exclusive):
- Site topography and existing trees, *where there are existing trees, hedges, topsoil, log piles or other valuable habitat features which can be included within the final development design, these should be properly preserved where practical during the construction phase. Topography and dips or undulations in the landscape should be used where possible to reduce the impact of any built development on the openness of green belt*
  - Biodiversity, *ecological assessments /statements should set out further detail on how biodiversity and habitat quality will be protected including protected species. Reports produced for different sites across Copthall should be shared to build up a common resource of biodiversity across the site. The Green Infrastructure SPD will also set out further detail on how biodiversity and habitat quality will be protected in due course with a draft expected to be published autumn 2016*
  - Construction management and neighbouring users amenity, *should be considered by preparing and implementing a Construction Management Plan for developments. Such plans should as a minimum address the following issues: water, waste, noise and vibration, dust, emissions and odours, ground contamination, wildlife and features and archaeology.*

- Access, highway and parking implications, *in planning new development, its full impact on the whole transport system will need to be considered and where necessary, mitigation measures required in order to ensure that the additional travel generated by a proposed development can be accommodated*
- Accessibility, *new development to consider quality mark ‘inclusive fitness initiative’*
- Flood Risk, *A flood risk assessment will be required to consider flooding within the site and the impact of additional run off on Dollis Brook. This would need to be provided in line with EA standing advice. Any works within 8 metres of the Hendon Cemetery Drain ‘main river’ would need Environment Agency consent.*
- Character and form of surrounding area, *proposals should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets*
- User and service requirements, *where existing users remain and there is continued demand their needs should continue to be met either on or off-site*
- Consultation responses, *these will be published as part of the committee reporting process and should be considered where relevant to a development proposal*
- Landscape management, *landscaping should aim to choose plants which are beneficial to wildlife using indigenous plants wherever possible, which require low levels of water and are low maintenance. In addition the southern area should be a priority to develop a Landscape Management Plan encompassing;*
  - *The retention and improvement of the areas of trees and hedgerows*
  - *The retention and improvement of the grassland fields*
- Archaeology, *developers should assess whether the site is likely to contain archaeological remains given the proximity of the two Areas of Special Archaeological Significance to the west at Chase Lodge and to the east at Holders Hill and the significant amount of undeveloped land.*

## 13. Funding and Governance Options

- 13.1 To enable Copthall to realise its full potential as an exemplar of good planning, design and management it is proposed that a Copthall Consortium, be made up of site users and stakeholder, be formed to explore the options for future delivery of the aspirational developments outlined within this Planning Brief and its subsequent governance and management.