

Draft Copthall Planning Brief

DRAFT

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Draft Copthall Planning Brief

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1** This Draft Planning Brief has been prepared with the objective of guiding the future of the Copthall site and provides a framework for the future development of the park and the recreational facilities within the site. The site has an area of approximately 70 hectares (173 acres) of Green Belt land including grassland, woodland and copse areas. The site supports an array of sporting facilities and activities including the Copthall leisure centre, the Allianz Stadium, home to Saracens RFC and Shaftesbury Harriers Barnet athletics club and a number of other sports tenants and seasonally let pitches. Casual active and passive recreation is a large element of community use. The site also includes a Council's Green Spaces Operational Base which services the site and surrounding spaces.
- 1.2** The site is also an integral part of the green infrastructure network for the Borough and acts as a local park for the communities surround the site.
- 1.3** Barnet has determined that it will be 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. An opportunity has arisen to fulfil these objectives and by working with Copthall's local community, stakeholders, tenants and users it will deliver an exemplar facility.
- 1.4** The site has many users each having competing demands and 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 these future developments.
- 1.5** The supporting evidence behind this draft Copthall Planning Brief is contained in the emerging Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for the Borough which has looked at all the borough's green spaces 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 is informed by open space needs and requirements, and
- 1.6** The emerging Sport and Physical Activity Strategy also provides guidance and direction for the development of the site to meet the existing sporting and future needs of the Borough, and
- 1.7** 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
- provide an evidence base that will allow Barnet to plan, prioritise and schedule future improvement projects.

1.8 The value of the site as part of the green infrastructure of the Borough will need to be recognised as well as the contribution its green capital plays in enhancing the quality of life for the local community. The size of the site and its strategic location places it as a District Park in the hierarchy of parks in London.

1.9 The existing mix of uses on the site and the attraction of the Allianz Stadium can be regarded as solid foundations on which to develop a major sporting hub for the Borough. Close proximity to primary and secondary schools, together with the presence of Middlesex University and New Barnet and Southgate College at Hendon and Colindale respectively, highlight the possibility of Copthall playing a highly significant role in the development of sport in education. Furthermore, the promotion of sport with Copthall at the hub of a network of local facilities, and the use of the parkland elements for informal fitness, ensure that Copthall will contribute towards the Public Health Objectives of the Sports and Physical Activity project.

1.10 The delivery of the proposals will depend on the investment decisions of the various parties on or associated with the site.

2. Objectives of the Draft Planning Brief

2.1 The Copthall site in Mill Hill, London Borough of Barnet, 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 the Saracens Rugby Union Club together with investment of local sports clubs through a diversified sports provision. It will leave the Borough 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 Stadium and a landscaped parkland setting will provide the key hub for sports development within the Borough and the north-west London sub-region. This is the

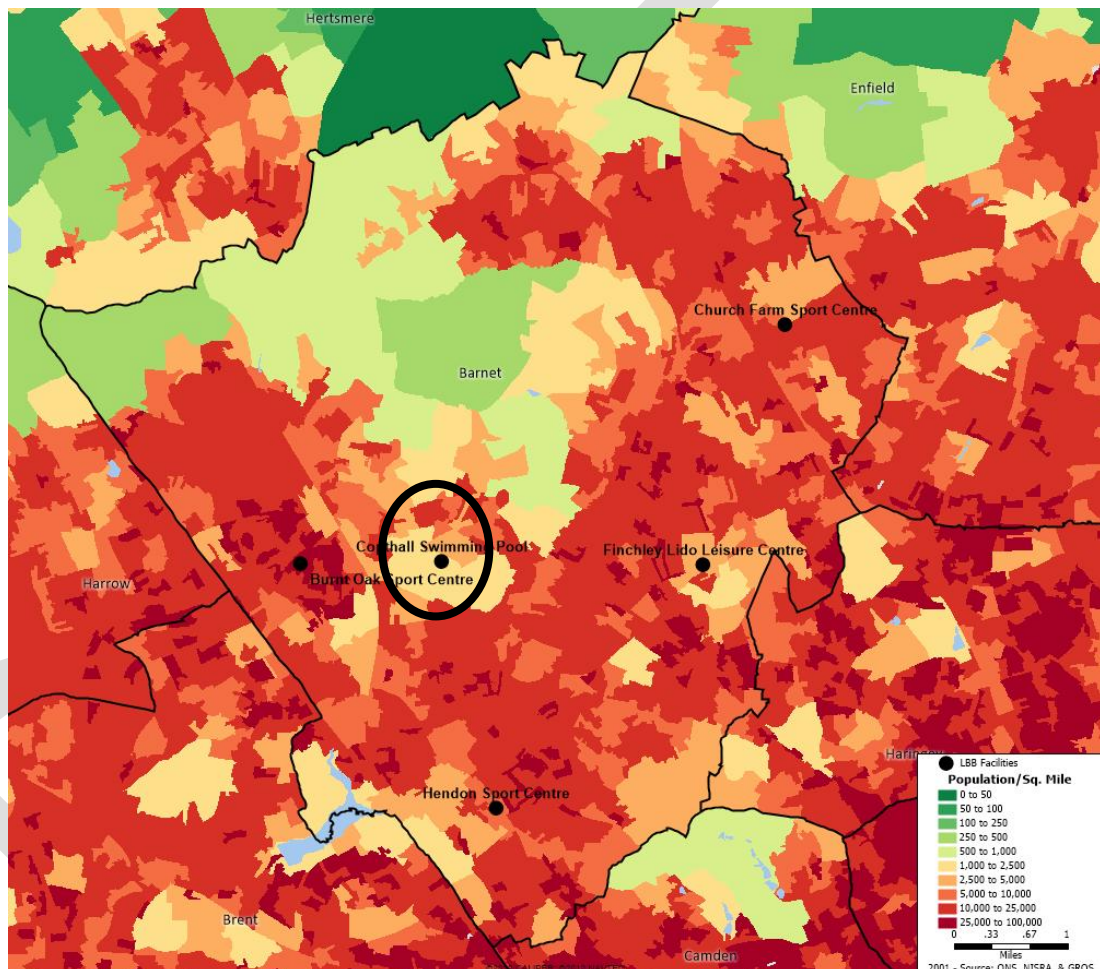
only location in the Borough which has the combination of space and a mix of existing facilities where this can be achieved.

2.3 These key objectives for Copthall were approved by the Council in February 2015:

- The creation of an exciting place for sport and recreation;
- 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 Stadium and a new pavilion with satellite facilities which meet the future needs of sports clubs;
- To support sports development across the borough by acting as a hub for other facilities, and links to local and sub-regional sports clubs;
- To harness the prestige and potential of Saracens and the Allianz Stadium as a centre of excellence for rugby in London;
- To support the growing links with education at all levels;
- To create a first class visitor experience that is safe, enjoyable and memorable;
- To create a coherent, well branded and managed whole understanding and delivering the needs of a range of operators and activities;
- A design that caters for the need and reflect the corporate objective for sport and the public health outcomes;
- 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;
- Create a park where users can co-exist and operate without detriment to each other 24/7; and
- A park that links as part of a green network with its surrounding areas, in particular Hendon and Middlesex University 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..

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 split the various areas, a legacy from an earlier agricultural use, which contributes towards the overall feel and attractiveness of the site.



Map One: Location of Copthall (PTAL Map)

- 3.2** The 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 Hendon town centre 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 Road, which is predominantly residential.

- 3.4** Also lying on the western boundary are developments at the former hospital and the Hasmonean High School (for Girls). Both are accessed from Page Road 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 with Edgware. The disused line is a public rights of way and an attractive tree lined walk.



Map Two: Planning Brief Area

- 3.6** The Copthall site forms part of the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan area for Mill Hill which is expected to cover Mill Hill ward and the NW7 parts of Hale ward.

4. Key Site Constraints and Characteristics

4.1.1 Listed Building

There are no listed buildings within the site, but, The Lodge is a Grade 2 Listed building located to the north west of the site. The Planning Brief will need to consider the setting of this building. See Map Three below.



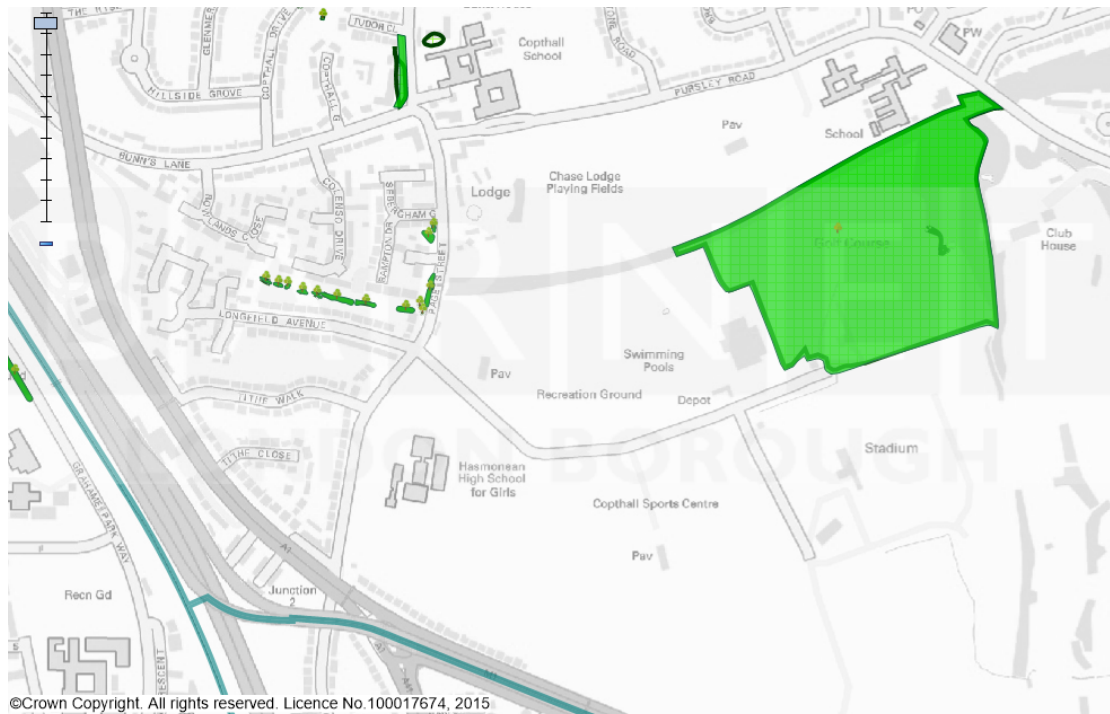
Map Three: Location of The Lodge Listed Building

4.1.2 Conservation Areas

There are no conservation areas within or adjoining the site.

4.1.3 Tree Preservation Orders

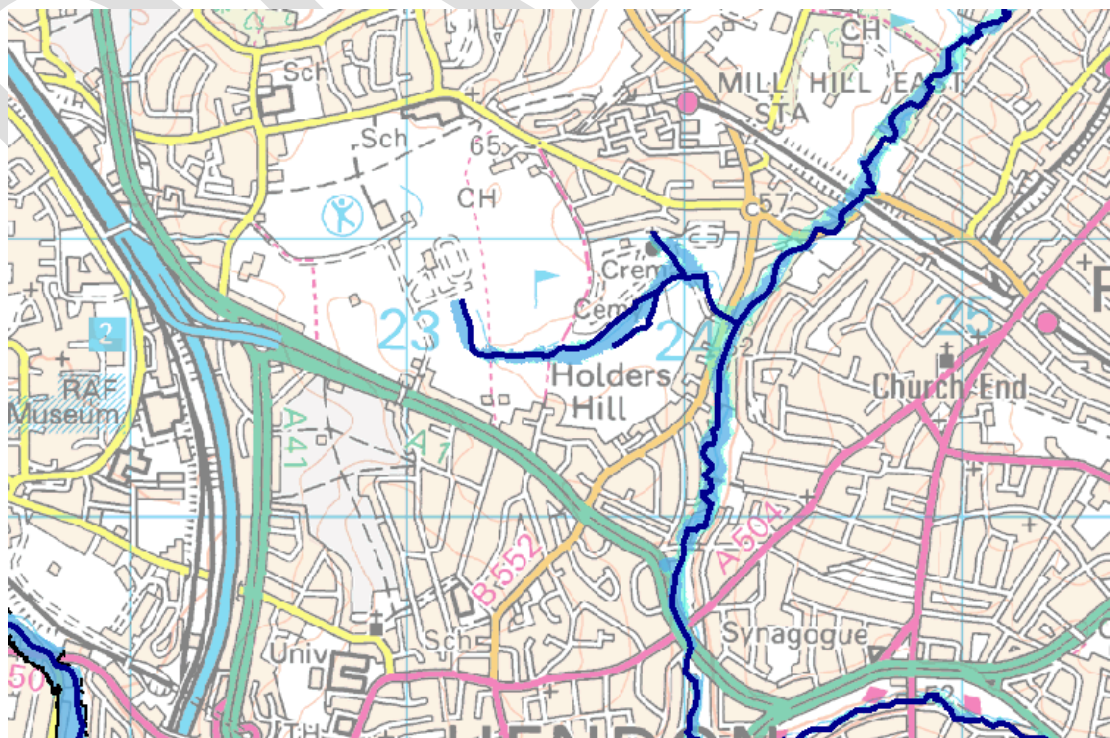
There is a group (woodland) TPO on land occupied by the Metro Golf Centre. These will form part of the parkland setting for the leisure facilities. See Map Four below.



Map Four: Tree Preservation Orders

4.1.4 Flooding

Land either side of Dollis Brook south of the Allianz Stadium is within Flood Zone 3 (See Map 3 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.



Map Five: extent of Flood Zone

4.1.5 Nature Conservation

Parts of the site and adjacent land are identified as either sites of Importance for nature conservation or sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation. These will enhance the parkland element and the overall attractiveness of Cophall as a visitor's destination.

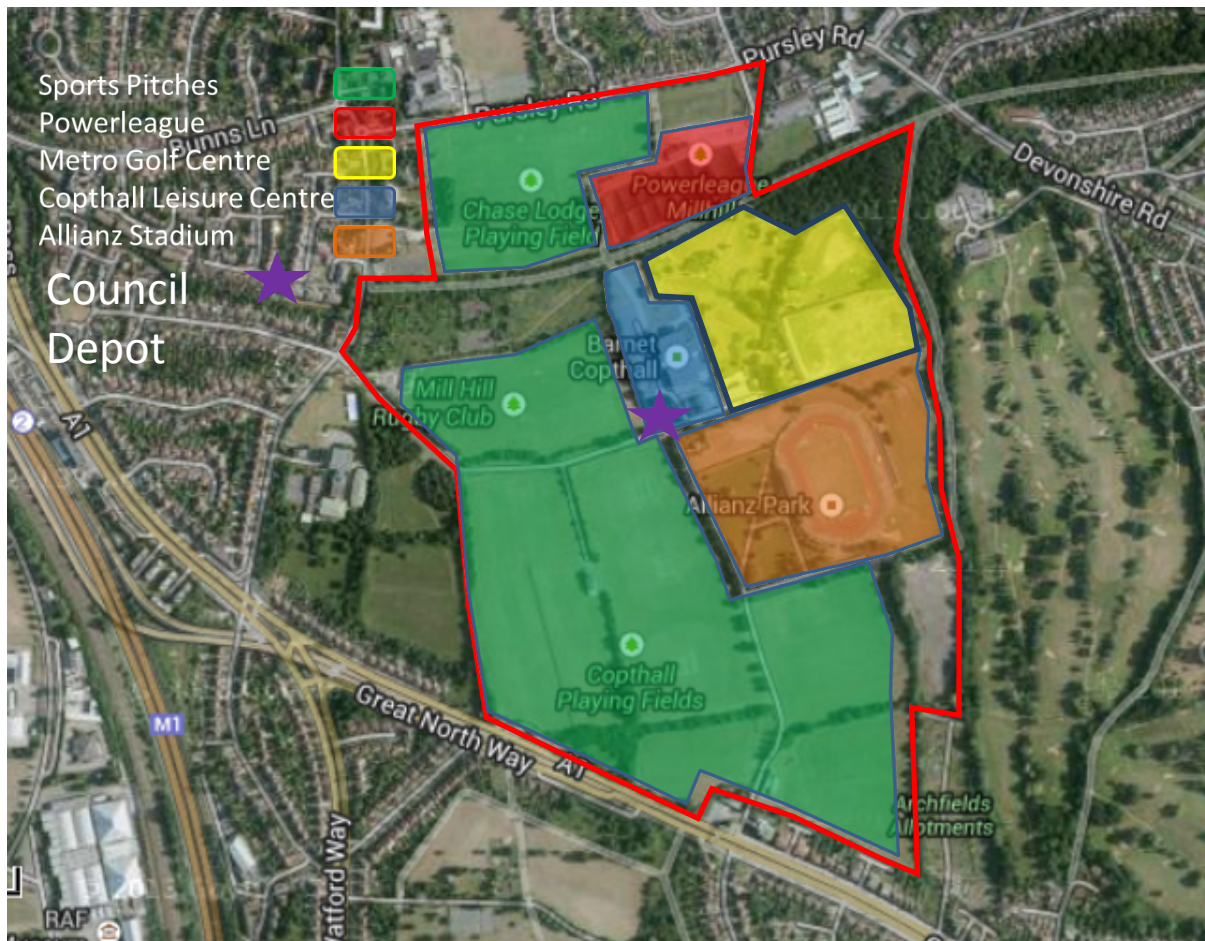
5. Current uses on the site

5.1.1 The site is presently used for sports, recreation and open spaces purposes. Broadly the main uses on the site are (see Map Six overleaf):

Site	Main uses	Comments
Cophall Leisure Centre	Swimming, including diving Gym Café Car Parking	The current centre requires replacement as part of the SPA study. Its location is poor in relation to the remainder of the sports facilities. No sports hall.
Allianz Stadium	10,000 seat (maximum) sports stadium Rugby Union (Saracens) Athletics 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 under stand of the east stand is used for events and training. Under stand of the new stand to be used as Saracens training academy and training/education.
Metro Golf Centre	Golf driving range Par 3 nine-hole golf course Novelty golf Shop and café/restaurant Offices in converted house Car parking	Although not incongruous the current buildings are not modern.
Powerleague Soccer	12 football pitches – 2 large Function room/bar	Situated north of the leisure the Powerleague is divorced from the main

Site	Main uses	Comments
	Car parking	area of Copthall
Chase Lodge	Full size and junior football pitches Changing facilities Car parking	Separated from main sports areas
Mill Hill Rugby Club	Club house, with function facilities 3 full size rugby pitches	Poor quality buildings leave a negative first impression of Copthall. Should be replaced.
Hendon Rugby Club	Club House with facilities 2 full size pitches	Poor quality clubhouse on exit from the site. Should be replaced.
Copthall Playing Pitches	4 Football 3 Rugby 3 cricket Changing room facility	The large two storey changing room facility is extremely prominent and of very poor quality. Should be replaced.
Council parks operational base		Located to front of the 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, Copthall Lodge, located between the Allianz Stadium and the Copthall Leisure Centre.



Map Six: Existing Uses

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 Copthall 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 Road. Coach access and parking is provided at the current Leisure Centre and Allianz Stadium.
- 6.3** The site (taken as the Leisure Centre) does not have a PTAL 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 Copthall 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 can also be obtained 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 Copthall investment package.

7. Scope of development

7.1 Given the Green Belt location of Copthall, comprehensive redevelopment is not appropriate. Therefore, the range of facilities proposed is designed to enhance existing facilities, replace existing facilities and support the sports and open spaces provision within the site. As a consequence the level of new development is very limited with the most significant changes being a replacement west stand at the Allianz Stadium and a replacement for the Copthall Leisure Centre.

Use	Proposed uses	Key issues
Copthall Leisure	25 m 8 lane pool 25 m 6 lane pool Training pool Up to 115 station Gym Café Car Parking Changing rooms Public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New centre to replace existing on new location – most likely to the west of the existing. • Planning risk is reduced if the footprint and massing of the new centre do not disproportionately exceed that of the existing centre. • May result in the loss of one pitch, which can be replaced to the north or the provision of an all-weather pitch. • New centre should be designed so that it can expand as resources and planning policy allows.
Allianz Stadium	Replacement West Stand to match east stand and facilities underneath, plus outdoor training facility New stand similar height of east stand. Improved car parking. Retention of athletics and home to Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement west stand with integrated under stand facilities reduces overall footprint. • The removal of the existing two floodlights. • Improve overall appearance of the stadium creating a positive impression of the Copthall area. • Car parking surface requires improvement with increased landscaping. • Opportunity to improve the environs surrounding the stadium. • Continued use of the stadium for athletics and better integration of track and field activities.

Use	Proposed uses	Key issues
Golf – Metro Golf Centre	No changes proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration needs to be given to the long term investment required and improvements to the car park.
Powerleague	No changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved links with the remainder of Copthall.
Camden Community Football and Sports Association	Improved integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved car park provision required in landscaped setting. Improved integration with remainder of Copthall
Mill Hill Rugby Club	Retain option with replacement clubhouse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of at least one pitch for the replacement Copthall Leisure Centre. A replacement clubhouse and an improved car parking environment with have a significantly positive impact on the entrance to Copthall.
Hendon Rugby Club	Retain option with replacement clubhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option to replace clubhouse should be explored to improved quality and facilities.
Copthall Playing Pitches	Replacement for the existing changing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to the integration of the changing facilities in the new Copthall Leisure Centre. The existing poor quality pavilion building should be replaced with a structure which enhances the green belt location, blends into the landscape, and contains accessible public toilets. Design should take account of need to act as a pavilion for three cricket pitches and facilities for other sports. A wider range of sports on pitches and use for outdoor exercises.
Council Parks Operational Base	To be re-provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The operational base for the Council's Green Spaces department is an essential part of the network of bases that serve the Borough's parks. It is proposed to retain a base at Copthall and enhance its operational capabilities to best serve the site and the Borough's needs. The base will need to be relocated to make way for the new leisure centre, and to avoid traffic

Use	Proposed uses	Key issues
		<p>conflict it is proposed to relocate it to a site close to the junction of Champions Way and Page Road in a landscaped setting and in a manner which minimises the openness of the Green Belt and its impact on residential amenity.</p>
Open Space and Amenity Land	<p>Creation of parkland. Options include:</p> <p>Children's play area / adventure park Fitness Trail/outdoor gym BMX/Skateboard Park Water park MUGA and all weather pitches (close to the new leisure centre) Aerial course Parkour Outdoor games Provision of public toilets either in the new sports pavilion or a separate unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North of the proposed site for the leisure centre West of the Copthall playing pitches The impact of these facilities on the green belt is a consideration, but by setting in a parkland and focussing on community development, they provide special circumstances. Improving the links with Sun Hill Park are required to link with a wider green network. Improved accessibility into and through the public park areas New toilet facilities
Closed circuit Road Cycling track (option being considered)	New facility that is being explored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated track over 1km in length, 6 m width roadway surface with run off areas Provides safe training and race facilities for Road Cycling Could serve North London Would also support triathlon and road based sports

8. Spatial Strategy

8.1 The spatial strategy for Copthall will be based on the overall three key Nodes for improvement and development:

- Park and Recreation Spaces
- Allianz Park and associated development
- The Copthall Leisure Centre Cluster – including the new operations facility, outdoor leisure facilities and the Metro Golf complex



8.2 Park and Recreation Spaces

The park and recreation spaces provide the physical space in which all other activities take place as well as functioning as a social and environmental asset in its own right. A good quality park and green spaces will not only form the backdrop to all the other built facilities on the site but will provide a place where local communities and visitors can come and enjoy all the benefits that a park can provide.

8.3 The first priority will be to develop a whole site Landscape Design and Management Plan encompassing;

- The retention of the preserved area of trees and woodlands
- The improvements to parkland and wildlife spaces across the site, including the areas alongside pitches
- Improvements in the general landscape layout, including access, circulation, car parking, sound buffering and green transportation links
- The enhancement of the ecological value and increase biodiversity on the site
- The creation of wildflower meadowlands
- The provision for play spaces and creative arts places. Play areas should relate to the new leisure centre, have an activity focus and be available to all age groups (NEAP).

8.4 A set of Park Design Principles are presented on Map Eight below. This layout will provide the basis of the Landscape Design and Management Plan in to which other proposals will need to blend.

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Improve circulation routes for walking/running/cycling
- Improve visual permeability across the site
- Improve entrances
- Provide central amenity offer inc.
 - Play
 - Water
 - Cafe/kiosk
 - Picnicking
- Play trail
- Sound barrier
- Running & cycle routes
- Outdoor gym
- BMX/All terrain circuit

- Site Boundary
- Main vehicular route
- Primary walking/cycling route
- - - Indicative secondary walking/cycling route
- ⊙ Enhanced entrance
- Improved visual permeability
- /// Acoustic barrier

Map Eight: Landscape design principles



- 8.5** The area in the south west corner of the site currently provides informal open space and it should retain that function to provide a parkland setting for the sports facilities. It would also provide space for visitors not using the sports facilities or those seeking outdoor fitness activities, such as a trim track or outdoor gym. Consideration will also be given to informal sports such as parkour, BMX, skateboarding. A children's play area could be provided together with a small park pavilion which could house a refreshment stall and toilet/baby changing facilities.
- 8.6** A perfect exemplar of a high functioning park which can support venues for sporting excellence is the Queen Elizabeth Park in which the 2012 Olympic site was situated. The needs of the park and the demands of users, visitors, local communities and sport bodies are carefully balanced with an outcome that is second to none.
- 8.7 The Allianz Node**
The Allianz node is centred on the existing stadium which is home to the Saracens Rugby Club and the Shaftsbury Barnet Athletics Club. It is envisaged that rugby and athletics use will remain with the continued benefit of the shared facilities. The stadium will continue to act as a community facility ensuring that the community do not feel excluded, and the integration of the stadium with the wider Copthall parkland will remain.
- 8.8** The East Stand is a multi-purpose facility incorporating Saracens shop and offices, conferencing and banqueting facilities and training facilities, including an indoor 100 m running track. The stand consists of permanent seating and temporary seating to the front which sits over the athletics track. This seating is removed on non-match days to allow full use of the athletics track.
- 8.9** Existing West Stand was constructed 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 Copthall and the only features visible from surrounding areas.
- 8.10** At either end of the stadium are two temporary stands, dismantled out of season to allow for the full use of the athletics track.
- 8.11** This brief allows for the replacement of the West Stand with a new facility. That new facility should, like the East Stand, make the best use of the undercroft space, including use for education purposes and additional indoor training.
- 8.12** A external training pitches will also be supported close to the stadium.
- 8.13** 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. Any proposal

to increase the outdoor facilities footprint will limit the opportunity for built facilities in this node.

- 8.14** The Stadium has a current seating capacity of 10,000 and any replacement stands should not exceed that overall capacity.
- 8.15** Any new or replacement stands should be of a sufficient height to incorporate integrated floodlighting to obviate the need for separate stand-alone floodlight towers and facilitate the removal of the existing towers.
- 8.16** Greater use of the undercroft area in all stands will remove the need for separate buildings on the site, or additional floorspace in the replacement leisure centre.
- 8.17** Any new stand constructed will be expected to meet Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology, BREEAM, Very Good towards Excellent standard.
- 8.18** Saracens are one of the top rugby clubs in Europe and recent success has brought the Allianz Stadium, Copthall and Barnet to the national and European media attention. Even so, the stadium is an important facility for the local community and should be managed with an 'open house' policy that allows other sports club use and activities for schools. This will foster closer relationship between Saracens and the local community and encourages sport activity with the benefit of achieving the Council's health targets.
- 8.19** The Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers Athletics Club has been based at Copthall when the stadium opened in 1964. The addition of the all-weather track in 1976 and a new clubhouse in 1983, strengthened the clubs ambitions and they are one of the largest and successful clubs within the UK. The club winning the Premiership of the British Athletics League for the first time in 2012, a feat they repeated the following year.
- 8.20** As the rugby playing surface is an all-weather and synthetic it is not suitable for athletics field events. Therefore, a dedicated field event area is located to the rear of the East Stand which includes its own small seating area.
- 8.21** Any proposal for the replacement West Stand shall not affect the athletics use of the site, although like the East Stand, the use of temporary seating over part of the track which will be dismantled when not in use will be permitted.
- 8.22** Car parking for the stadium should be improved with a more sustainable surfacing and improved landscaping to minimise the visual and environmental impact. The area to the north of the stadium could also be improved.
- 8.23 The Leisure Centre Node**

The Council proposes to replace the existing 40 year old Copthall Leisure Centre with a new modern facility that will be more efficient to run and improve the overall experience for users.

8.24 The centre hosts the Barnet Copthall Swimming Club, which is one of the most successful in the UK. In order to ensure that the new pools can be used for competition purposes it should be built to regional short course standards in accordance with Sport England and Amateur Swimming Association guidelines.

8.25 The proposed facilities for the new centre are not yet finalised but could include:

- 25m, 8 lane pool
- 25m, 6 lane pool
- Learner pool with moveable floor
- 110-115 station gym
- 2 dance studios
- Spinning studio
- Café.

8.26 In order to ensure that there is no break in the use of the sports facilities, it is proposed that the new Centre is located to the immediate south west of the existing centre.

8.27 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 Draft Playing Pitch Strategy and built facilities elsewhere on the site.

8.28 The new facility should have a massing which is not disproportionate to the existing centre and its replacement should be an opportunity to create a facility which is more in keeping with the parkland and Green Belt setting.

9. Other sports facilities

9.1 Elsewhere within the Park and Recreational spaces other smaller nodes will exist around the new Mill Hill Rugby Club clubhouse, which could be redeveloped to provide a new Parks Resource Centre incorporating the park operations function and facilities for the community and the Mill Hill Rugby Club adjoining. Similarly new clubhouse facilities will be encouraged for Hendon Rugby Club. In all instances the new facilities must not be disproportionately larger than the existing facilities.

9.2 New outdoor sports facilities should be sought for the land between the existing pathway along the old railway line and the Mill Hill rugby club site either complementary to the youth activities or alternative sports use. The type and number of playing surfaces will be determined by a needs assessment emanating from the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy. Such provision should retain the footpath along the old railway. Any new facilities will need to respect the landscaping in that area.

- 9.3** The Copthall Playing Field south of Champions Way is currently served by a large pavilion centrally located between the cricket squares and football pitches. This is a prominent and unattractive structure that should be replaced with a fit for purpose multi-sport pavilion, changing room and storage facilities.
- 9.4** The Powerleague Soccer centre off Pursley Road is well established and self-contained. It would benefit from improved links to the footpath on its west boundary, and through to the leisure centre and the wider Copthall area.
- 9.5** The Metro Golf Centre is a popular facility 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 Mill Hill 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.
- 9.6** The recent success of the British Road Cycling team and British riders, and high profile events such as the Tour de France start in Yorkshire, has increased demand for formal road cycling facilities. Opportunities need to be identified to link the various facilities within Copthall with a circular network of foot and cycle paths internal and external to the site.
- 9.7** Consideration could be given to a closed circuit Road Cycling raceway similar in scale to facilities at Redbridge and Hillingdon. An investigation with Sport England and British Cycling looking at the feasibility of such a circuit at Copthall, its impact on the site, as well as delivery would need to be undertaken.

10. Accessibility and Circulation

- 10.1** Vehicular access to Copthall is presently provided from Page Road 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. However, whilst retaining Champions Way as it presently is an option is being examined on the re-routing of the road further north (which dash line on Map Nine below) is a more suitable alternative position.



Map Nine: Access Options – alternative realignment of Champions Way

10.2 This alternative route will:

- Re-use the existing junction onto Page Road;
- Result in the closure of Champions Way to the point where it turns south. The closed road could become part of the foot and cycle network;
- Improve the connectivity between the new leisure centre and the sports pitches to the south;
- Remove traffic from the most heavily pedestrianized areas, particularly heavier vehicles including those from the parks depot.

10.3 The old railway has the potential to become a major asset. It could be enhanced to create a more direct and safe pedestrian/equestrian/cycling route to Mill Hill station. In turn this could reduce the need for car journeys overall and the consequential car parking. 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.

10.4 Other pedestrian/cycling routes should be enhancement including the access to Sun Hill Park and the footpath from Pursley Road.

10.5 It is essential that accessibility within the site for non-motorised vehicles is also improved. The area of open space, leisure facilities and key pedestrian access routes into the site from all directions, should be linked making the best use of the informal route network created alongside sports pitches, the open areas, woodlands and facilities. This can also encourage sports such as orienteering and trim tracks.

11. Information and Signage

- 11.1** A common criticism at major event locations is the lack of information for users on where things are located and on what is on offer. The signage on Page Road is poor, and likewise there is poor signage within the site which clearly identifies routes to the various facilities or even what the facilities are. A way finding strategy to the site and within the site will form part of the Planning Brief. This will also consider branding.

12. Planning Policy Framework

- 12.1** 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 Copthall 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 be subject to adoption eventually form part of Barnet's development plan.

- 12.2** 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.

- 12.3** **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.'*

- 12.4** 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.'*

- 12.5** 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.'*

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

12.7 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. Best use is to be made of land already developed and whilst modern standards mean that new buildings may be of a different massing and scale to existing, these should be kept to a minimum.

12.8 The Copthall site is an enclave of Green Belt and this Planning Brief will ensure that any proposals are designed not to undermine any of the five purposes of the Green Belt in this location, maintains openness of the Green Belt and, therefore, does not cause harm to the Green Belt..

13. The London Plan

13.1 Adopted in 2011, the London Plan was revised and updated in March 2015. 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.'*

13.2 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.

14. The Local Plan

14.1 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.

14.2 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.

- 14.3** 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.'*

15. Planning Delivery Strategy

- 15.1** The developments outlined in this Draft Planning Brief will require planning permission. As the applications relate to different uses and facilities to be provided by different users over varying time periods, it is considered that a single comprehensive application will not be feasible. Such applications would have time limits for implementation that may not be met, and may not provide the flexibility required as the needs of users change. Furthermore, given the sensitivities of a green belt location, and the importance that design will have on the area, detailed plans for each facility will not be available to submit as one comprehensive application.
- 15.2** Therefore each planning application must show how each development fulfils the objectives of this Draft Planning Brief and the 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.
- 15.3** All planning applications must conform to the Validation Requirements set out by the Council to be found at www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications. Pre-application discussions should take place with the Council.

There are currently no phasing plans in this Draft Planning Brief. During the consultation period, the Council will 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 community groups and schools such as the Hasmonean to understand the programme, manage the impacts and discuss any variations. This Draft Planning Brief recognizes 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.

- 15.4** Development options for the sites must have regard to the following matters:

- Site topography and existing trees
- Neighbouring users amenity
- Access, highway and parking implications
- Character and form of surrounding area
- User and service requirements
- Consultation responses
- Mitigation measures

15.5 Proposals should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets.

16. Funding and Governance Options

16.1 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 Draft Planning Brief and its subsequent governance and management.