

Application No : 11/02140/OUT

Ward:
Copers Cope

Address : Kent County Cricket Ground Worsley
Bridge Road Beckenham

OS Grid Ref: E: 537216 N: 170872

Applicant : Kent County Cricket Club

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

3 detached buildings for use as indoor cricket training centre/ multi-function sports/ leisure facility, health and fitness centre and conference centre. Spectator stand for 2000-3000 people. Car parking. All weather/ floodlit pitches. 48 detached houses
OUTLINE

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Green Chain
London City Airport Safeguarding
London City Airport Safeguarding Birds
Local Distributor Roads
Metropolitan Open Land

Proposal

Outline planning permission is sought for the development described above. All matters are reserved for subsequent approval and accordingly the layout, appearance and scale of the buildings proposed have yet to be determined, although upper and lower limits of the dimensions of the buildings have been provided. Accesses are indicated to be as described below.

The full details of the proposal are as follows.

Residential element

The proposed residential element of the scheme will comprise 48 detached houses, located against the southern edge of site, adjoining existing residential development on Worsley Bridge Road, Gainsborough Close and Ashfield Close. The dwellings would be a mix of 4 and 5 bedroom units and a maximum of two storeys in height, with some single storey units proposed. A new vehicular access is proposed onto Worsley Bridge Road with a cul-de-sac estate road. It is indicated that the houses would be designed to comply with Lifetime Homes standards. The density of the development would be approx. 23.8 units/ha.

As part of this element, the part of the southern site boundary is proposed to be re-positioned 2m within the site, with this narrow strip of land retained for the benefit of the owners of adjoining properties.

The residential element is submitted to be the 'enabling' development which would part fund the sporting, leisure and conference facilities.

Sports Centre proposal

To the north of the residential part of the site, new all weather pitches are proposed. Beyond this, 3 detached buildings will be sited, which together with a new spectator stand would encircle the main cricket ground. Between these buildings and the Worsley Bridge Road and Copers Cope Road frontages, car parking spaces would be provided (together with an overflow area in reinforced grass).

The buildings would comprise the following:

Building B – Indoor Cricket Academy (2 storey, maximum height 16m, maximum width 45m, maximum depth 52m)

Building C – Health and Fitness Centre (2 storey, maximum height 16m, maximum width 45m, maximum depth 38m)

Building D – Conference Facility (2 storey, maximum height 16m, maximum width 45m, maximum depth 36m)

Building E – Spectator Stand (single storey, open construction, capacity 2000-3000 people)

Remainder of site

The remainder of the site would be retained in its current condition, including the main cricket pitch and existing clubhouse.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, which also contains a Transport Assessment as an appendix, and a Statement of Community of Involvement. The Design and Access Statement sets out the Applicant's case in support of the proposed development, including a case for special circumstances, and the potential benefits to the community and the local economy.

An addendum to the Design and Access Statement was received on 18th October 2011, which includes an Energy Strategy, Flood Risk and Surface Water Assessment, Tree Survey and Arboricultural Report, and further details relating to compliance with Secured by Design, external lighting to the all weather pitch, the quality of the residential development, childrens play space, inclusive design, climate change, biodiversity and urban design. This information was submitted following initial concerns expressed by the GLA, TfL and Sport England.

An updated Transport Assessment and an Outline Green Travel Plan were received on 24th October 2011.

An amended site layout plan was also received on 18th October 2011, which indicates an alteration to the car parking layout, to incorporate an area of reinforced grass surface to accommodate overflow parking in the northern corner of the site.

A Planning Statement and a Financial Viability Assessment (submitted confidentially) were also received on 18th October 2011. The main points of the Planning Statement can be summarised as follows:

Overview:

- At present, KCCC play cricket from three locations, including Beckenham, and notwithstanding the high level of support from the community, the Beckenham ground runs at a loss.
- The current lease has expired and KCCC is 'holding over' – unless additional revenue funding can be secured, then the use of the ground by KCCC will cease along with all other uses of the site.
- In conjunction with the freehold owners of the site, Leander Sports and Leisure Ltd ('Leander'), KCCC has reviewed the scope for development at the Beckenham ground with a view to providing additional capital funding to improve the facilities, which can also provide additional revenue support to the Club.
- This scheme includes a new residential development to provide enabling funding, together with new seating, sports and leisure facilities. On the basis that a viable scheme can be secured, KCCC will enter into a new long lease with Leander, and thus ensure the continued long term presence of KCCC at Beckenham and the social and community benefits it brings.
- The scheme represents the optimum scheme from the Club's point of view, providing a source of revenue in tandem with enhanced sporting facilities.
- No affordable housing is proposed, on the basis that this would require further cross-subsidy, thus increasing the amount of enabling development required.
- The application is accompanied by a financial appraisal, which in conjunction with this statement, seeks to further support the case for very special circumstances to allow inappropriate development on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and to justify the lack of affordable housing.
- In short, the scheme will secure the continued use of the Beckenham ground by KCCC (being only one of three County standard wickets in London) and the provision of a new indoor facility, a new and enhanced all-weather pitch, conference facilities and a health and leisure club.
- The ambition of KCCC and Leander is to secure the long term use and occupation of the ground by KCCC, and the provision of new and enhanced sporting and associated facilities of benefit to the wider community.

KCCC and Beckenham Today:

At present, the Beckenham Ground provides the following:

- KCCC county matches and Beckenham Festival (full details of County matches and attendance provided as appendix to Planning Statement)
- The ground also includes an astro-turf pitch (can accommodate full size football or hockey pitch), and a grass football pitch which are available for hire, with a second gassed area disused and not laid out (details of the bookings of these facilities also provided as appendix to Planning Statement). This use will cease.
- The grass playing areas have principally been booked/used by Balgowan FC, Dulwich Hamlet FC and to a lesser degree Elite FC. The use of the pitches is limited by weather conditions and the degree of intensity of use that the pitches can sustain. The pitches are managed by KCCC and any revenue received goes to support the overall site. It is not considered that the intensity of the use of these elements can be increased.
- The astro-turf pitch represents a more viable option – existing clubs would continue to be accommodated in the new scheme. The current level of use of the astro-turf facility is limited by the quality of the pitch which is in need of replacement. The new facility will attract a higher level of use and act as a revenue source to support KCCC.

KCCC and Leander have been asked to confirm the point regarding the permanent use of the site as stated the letter to residents dated 6th July 2011.

Financial Performance:

- A financial appraisal has been submitted to accompany the application, which assesses the viability of the existing use and as proposed. The appraisal (submitted confidentially) sets out details of revenue received to date and seeks to demonstrate that the continuation of the existing use is not viable.
- At present, the use continues due to the generous support of benefactors and the freehold owners. There is therefore a need to place the continued use of the site on a sound financial footing to ensure the continuation of KCCC at Beckenham and associated uses in the long term.

Planning Policy Review (overview):

- The development plan confirms the same level of protection to MOL as enjoyed by Green Belt. Accordingly, other than essential development associated with continued sporting use of the site, very special circumstances must be demonstrated. Viability can constitute a very special circumstance, while it is noteworthy that the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to the provision of 'appropriate' facilities for outdoor sport as exceptional development, rather than 'essential' facilities as is currently the case in policy terms.
- It is acknowledged that the GLA have expressed the view that the all-weather pitch and seating area could be considered appropriate development if the scale is appropriate for the facilities that take place on the site. The other elements proposed, the conference and banqueting centre, the leisure and health club, indoor cricket centre, associated car

parking and the 'enabling' residential element are considered to constitute 'inappropriate development', which appears to be accepted.

Options for development:

It is clear that continued presence of KCCC at Beckenham cannot be secured without additional funding and revenue. Two options can be identified:

- Cease the use of the Beckenham Ground – the current likely course of action, whereby KCCC would not renew the lease and cease all involvement at Beckenham. County matches would be played at St Lawrence Ground in Canterbury and the Nevill Ground in Tunbridge Wells. All use of the soft playing areas and the astro-turf pitches would cease. The only alternative option is to generate additional funding and revenue support by way of enabling development to support the continued use.
- The KCCC Brief – KCCC wish to continue playing at Beckenham, the brief was therefore to enhance the level of facilities with a view to increasing revenue, enabled by residential development to generate the necessary capital injection. The financial appraisal tests the benefits of the scheme proposed; the addendum Design and Access Statement sets out the evolution of the scheme and how the configuration of development was determined.

The proposed scheme:

Proposed elements of proposal are as follows:

- New Seating to provide 2-3000 seats – the attendance levels appended show that this level of attendance is sustainable
- Gym and Leisure – Leander has identified market demand for a 'high-end' sports and leisure facility, which would operate as a private members' club to provide additional revenue to support the continued use of the site.
- Conference and Banqueting – consultation with Members and the community has identified an aspiration for conferencing facilities, as at present LB Bromley is poorly served by conferencing facilities. The KCCC ground provides a destination in its own right, as well as providing further match day marketing and revenue generating opportunities.
- New All Weather Playing Surface: booking information set out as an appendix shows a consistent high level of usage of the astro-turf pitch. The level of revenue generated by the new facility would increase over and above that secured at present.
- Residential Development – identified as the optimum and most likely means of securing additional capital revenue, with the brief of providing the maximum level of revenue with the minimum amount of built development.
- Affordable Housing – not proposed as this would require further cross subsidy to be generated by the private sale residential development, resulting in more development and built form to enable the development.
- Legal Agreement – proposed that KCCC and Leander enter into a legal agreement to provide for the delivery of the scheme, with a limitation placed upon the delivery of the residential element and the leisure club to ensure

implementation of the all-weather pitch, indoor cricket facility and seating, to include the grant of a new long lease to KCCC. In addition, a financial contribution will be made of an agreed amount to fund the enhancement of existing sports pitches in the area.

- Business Plan – the financial appraisal tested the viability of the existing use and the development as proposed, finding that the existing facilities run at a loss, with no profit for KCCC and Leander receiving only nominal rent (indeed supporting the club). The proposed scheme would generate sufficient capital support to fund the implementation of the scheme and sufficient income to provide a market return over the medium to long term, albeit with losses in the short term. The scheme would be unviable without the leisure club and/or the conference facilities as a consequence of the reduction in revenue, while a reduction in the level of residential development (or reduction in the return arising) would result in a shortfall in capital funding. The resultant loan or mortgage would be required to fund the shortfall would so adversely affect cash flow and returns as to render it unviable.

Summary and Conclusions: The Very Special Circumstances Case

- Despite seeking to maximise revenue lettings from the existing pitches at the ground, the KCCC continues to make an annual loss at Beckenham. The use has continued to date due to the generosity of private benefactors and the freehold owner, Leander. This is not a sustainable solution and the use will cease unless additional revenue support can be generated. The application represents a unique opportunity to secure the long-term presence of KCCC at Beckenham and the continued use of the site for sport.
- The application seeks to achieve this by proposing new Indoor Cricket facilities, enhanced all-weather pitch, conference facility and a leisure club, to provide further revenue support to KCCC and to support the continued use of the ground for sporting purposes. The scheme has been the subject of a full financial appraisal which demonstrates that continuation of the existing use is not sustainable and that, the proposed scheme generates a minimal level of return, commensurate with that which can be expected arising from a sports ground.
- Without the enabling development the use of the site will cease.
- If consented, the scheme will secure the continued use of the Beckenham ground by KCCC, being one of only 3 County standard wickets in London; provision of a new indoor cricket facility; provision of a new and enhanced all-weather pitch and provision of conference facilities and Leisure Health Club.

Location

The application site comprises approx. 6.3ha of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), which fronts Worsley Bridge Road and Copers Cope Road, Beckenham. The site is host to Kent County Cricket Club, which has been established at the ground since 2002. The Club also has grounds at Canterbury (St Lawrence Ground) and Tunbridge Wells (The Nevill Ground).

At present the site is predominantly open in character, with a two storey pavilion building located to the south of the main cricket pitch, which is served by a relatively small car park to the east, accessed from Worsley Bridge Road. To the south is an existing floodlit grass sports pitch, with an all-weather floodlit pitch beyond, and to the west of this is an area indicated as 'unused open land' on the site plan and appears to be slightly overgrown at present, but which appears to have been in use as sports pitches fairly recently.

The immediate surrounding area is mixed in character. Areas to the south, east and north-east are broadly residential in character, excluding the adjacent Worsley Bridge Junior School (designated Urban Open Space) which is located at the junction with Worsley Bridge Road and Brackley Road, while to the west is the adjacent Crystal Palace FC Training Ground (designated MOL), flatted residential accommodation at Gallery House and Pavilion House (and dwellings beyond on the opposite side of Copers Cope Road). To the north-west on the opposite side of Copers Cope Road is the former NatWest sports ground, which is now host to an indoor play centre, a 5-a-side football centre and a gym/leisure centre.

Comments from Local Residents

The owners/occupiers of nearby residential properties were notified of the application by letter, site notices were displayed at various positions around the perimeter of the site and an advert was published in the local press.

A total of 180 responses were received, comprising 122 in support, 55 objections and 3 neither objecting to nor supporting the development.

Comments made in support can be summarised as follows:

- development will encourage KCCC to play additional games at the ground allowing more people to enjoy county cricket in the area
- indoor cricket facility is needed, and would provide coaching facilities for younger players
- development would provide additional employment and benefit local residents
- proposal would provide improved sports facilities in the community
- youth engagement
- new all weather pitch would benefit local hockey clubs
- concern that site will become derelict if application is not successful and KCCC are forced to leave
- proposal would provide much needed family homes in the area.

Objections raised can be summarised as follows:

- proposal would involve development on MOL and no very special circumstances have been demonstrated
- objection in principle to residential development and 'business' uses on MOL
- land should be preserved as open space

- negative impact to Green Chain and Green Chain Walk
- site makes positive contribution to area in current form – proposal would be harmful to visual amenities
- proposal would result in the loss of sports fields (rugby/football pitches), which is contrary to policy which promotes outdoor sport and recreation
- siting of buildings along Worsley Bridge Road frontage would be detrimental to openness of site and amenities of nearby properties, and result in negative visual impact
- increased pollution and harm to the environment
- impact to existing trees on the site
- possibility of flooding in the area
- impact to residential amenities including loss of outlook, loss of view, overlooking, loss of light and noise and disturbance (from both residential and leisure elements of scheme)
- proposed dwellings too close to neighbouring properties
- proposals would result in a loss of value to nearby properties
- various concerns raised relating to increased demand for parking in the area and harm to conditions of road safety as a result of increased traffic (already a problem with nearby Worsley Bridge School)
- proposal would result in an increase in demand for local services, including education and public transport
- demand for leisure facilities insufficient, particularly in view of similar existing facilities in the area
- housing element of scheme is intensive and would result in an overdevelopment
- housing element is not small scale
- objection to absence of affordable housing
- the site is not well used by KCCC and therefore additional facilities are difficult to justify
- no need for permanent spectator stand
- proposal does not secure KCCC's continued future at the site
- previous residential development at the site was supposed to fund the club's long term future at the site
- site is well used by local sporting clubs, including the part of the site marked as 'unused'
- if permission is granted it will be difficult to resist similar proposals elsewhere
- overall footprint of built development on the site (including car parking) is far greater than indicated in the supporting documentation.

Comments were received from the Halcyon Residents Group (representing Gallery House and Pavilion House which are located on Copers Cope Road overlooking the Ground) which can be summarised as follows:

- planning application should be granted as it is an excellent plan and an exciting opportunity to develop a sports facility, and most importantly to keep KCCC at the ground

- the alternative, that Kent and Leander leave the ground, will open up opportunities for the ground to fall into disrepair, inviting unwanted ‘tenants’ which would have a very serious effect on these properties

Comments were received from the Copers Cope Area Residents’ Association, which can be summarised as follows:

- would not object in principle
- special circumstances were previously accepted in relation to the earlier development at the site (clubhouse and apartment blocks) relating to on-going deterioration of site – this must be taken into consideration in this application in this case in light of the possibility of KCCC vacating the site
- should outline permission be granted, would hope that there are safeguards in place to protect the remaining open spaces within the site, which could contribute to a great sporting legacy in the ward
- height, bulk and appearance of buildings must be given close scrutiny at later stage

Comments from Consultees

From the technical Highways perspective, the following concerns are raised:

- single point of access into site for leisure element of scheme is unsatisfactory as it would not be able to accommodate large numbers of vehicles and may be difficult for goods vehicles to use
- insufficient number of parking spaces provided for conference and leisure facilities
- Transport Assessment required
- Travel Plan not sufficient.

Transport for London (TfL) provided initial comments on the application, which raised concerns regarding parking provision, and advised that a revised Transport Assessment would need to be submitted in order to allow the likely impact of the proposal to the strategic transport network to be fully assessed.

Additional information submitted in the form of an updated Transport Assessment and Green Travel Plan seek to address the concerns raised by Highways and TfL. Any further comments in response to this information will be reported at the meeting.

The Environment Agency object to the application on the basis that the FRA submitted does not comply with the requirements of PPS 25 and does not provide a suitable basis for the assessment of flood risks to be made.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) provided a ‘Stage 1’ response, which recommended that the proposal does not comply with the London Plan in that the proposed construction of 48 houses, the indoor cricket training centre/sports hall, health and leisure club and conference facility are inappropriate development for which the applicant must identify ‘very special circumstances’. Those put forward by the applicant are not sufficient to justify the harm to the openness and character

of MOL caused by the inappropriate development, while the proposal would result in the considerable loss of playing fields which is unacceptable. Furthermore, the GLA consider that the design and layout of the scheme is such that the character of the area, which is currently defined by the unobstructed openness of the cricket ground and surrounding playing fields, would be significantly impacted upon. However, the GLA have recommended that the proposal could comply with the London Plan if additional supporting information is provided and the scheme be re-designed to a more compact form to minimise the impact upon the MOL. The applicant has sought to respond to the concerns raised by the GLA and provided a body of further information in support of the application. Any further comments in light of this information will be reported at the meeting.

Sport England submitted an initial holding objection on the grounds of insufficient information, while recognising the importance of KCCC within the local sporting landscape and supporting the plans to increase the sporting offer of the site. Again the applicant has sought to respond to these concerns and provided further information in support of their case, and any further comments will be reported at the meeting.

The Council's Housing division note that the scheme triggers the requirements within policy to provide affordable housing, however no such housing is proposed as part of this scheme, however no justification had been provided. Accordingly a financial viability assessment was sought. At the time of writing a financial viability assessment had been submitted and was in the process of being independently appraised. Any further comments will be reported at the meeting.

With regard to archaeology, English Heritage recommend a standard condition requiring a programme of archaeological work to be submitted/implemented.

The Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor recommended that a 'Secured by Design' condition be imposed on any approval to require certification (rather than seeking to achieve certification).

The Council's in-house drainage advisor requires a standard condition to be imposed requiring details of foul drainage to be provided, and require a petrol interceptor to the outlet of car parking area.

Thames Water advise that the existing water supply infrastructure has insufficient capacity to meet the additional demands for the proposed development, and therefore recommend that a condition be imposed requiring a study to be carried out to determine the magnitude of any new additional capacity required in the system and a suitable connection point, prior to development commencing.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be considered against the following policies:

Unitary Development Plan

BE1 Design of New Development

- H1 Housing Supply
- H2 Affordable Housing
- H7 Housing Density and Design
- T2 Assessment of Transport Effects
- T3 Parking
- T18 Road Safety
- NE7 Development and Trees
- G2 Metropolitan Open Land
- G7 South East London Green Chain
- L1 Outdoor Recreation and Leisure
- L6 Playing Fields
- L9 Indoor Recreation and Leisure

The London Plan

- 3.4 Optimising Housing Potential
- 3.5 Quality and Design of Housing Developments
- 3.8 Housing Choice
- 3.11 Affordable Housing Targets
- 3.12 Negotiating Affordable Housing on Individual Private Residential and Mixed Use Schemes
- 3.13 Affordable Housing Thresholds
- 3.19 Sports Facilities
- 5.3 Sustainable Design and Construction
- 5.7 Renewable Energy
- 5.12 Flood Risk Management
- 5.13 Sustainable Drainage
- 6.9 Cycling
- 6.13 Parking
- 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities
- 7.3 Designing Out Crime
- 7.4 Local Character
- 7.6 Architecture
- 7.17 Metropolitan Open Land

Planning Policy Statements/Guidance Notes

- PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG 2 Green Belts
- PPS 3 Housing
- PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk

PPG 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' advises that careful consideration should be given to any planning applications involving development on playing fields and sets out the requirement (in conjunction with Statutory Instrument 1996 No. 1817) for local planning authorities to consult Sport England about developments that affect land used as playing fields.

Planning History

There is extensive planning history at the site. The following applications are considered to be of relevance to the current proposal:

00/03131/OUT – outline planning permission granted for the demolition of the existing buildings, excluding the façade of the pavilion, and construction of 3 storey development (including façade) comprising 42 flats with car parking spaces, and two storey sports pavilion building with car parking spaces on Worsley Bridge Road frontage. This development was allowed, in part, to enable the site to be brought back into sporting use for Kent County Cricket Club. KCCC's use of the site was safeguarded for a period of 10 years in accordance with the terms of the legal agreement.

Details pursuant to the above permission were approved under ref. 01/02978/DET, and 02/01532/DET.

02/02290/FULL1 – permission granted for formation of earth bund.

03/00719/FULL1 – permission granted for detached single storey building for score board.

07/00779/FULL1 – permission granted for siting of detached scoreboard.

Conclusions

The application site comprises Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) within which there is a presumption in policy terms against inappropriate development, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated which clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness or any other harm.

The existing use of the site is predominantly for outdoor sport and recreation (which is an appropriate use of MOL), operating as a 'satellite' ground for Kent County Cricket Club (KCCC) who play a limited number of county games at the ground each year, as well as providing playing fields and an all-weather pitch which are used by local clubs for football, hockey and cricket, as well as providing significant sporting and community benefits. The applicant submits, however, that the cost of running the ground exceeds any income and consequently that it runs at a loss each year (and has done since 2002), and that these losses can no longer be sustained.

As a consequence of their financial situation, the proposed development has been put forward by KCCC in conjunction with the owners of the ground, in seeking to provide enhanced facilities for county cricket matches in the form of a spectator stand and additional car parking, along with three detached buildings to provide a complementary indoor cricket training centre, together with a health and fitness and centre and conference centre which would provide alternative revenue streams to support the club. In addition, a new all-weather pitch would be provided to replace the existing facility. The proposal would be delivered by way of an 'enabling' development of 48 private houses on part of the site.

Whilst certain elements of the scheme may be considered 'appropriate' development on MOL in the form essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, the remainder would constitute 'inappropriate' development and would require the demonstration of very special circumstances to outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness (or indeed any other harm) in order to be accepted. Specifically, the spectator stand which would appear to be of a scale appropriate for county cricket matches played at the site, and the all-weather pitch which would replace an existing all-weather facility in need of improvement, would appear to be acceptable development within MOL. Conversely, the indoor cricket centre, conference centre, health and leisure centre and housing development would be 'inappropriate' development.

It will therefore be a case of balancing the benefits of KCCC remaining at the ground, against the harm that would arise to the openness and visual amenities of the MOL as a result of the inappropriate development, having regard to the case for very special circumstances (VSC) set out by the applicant (and detailed at the beginning of this report), in considering whether the proposed development can be acceptable. In addition, Members will need to consider the acceptability of the loss of playing fields, and whether the absence of any affordable housing as part of the residential element of the scheme can be accepted in this case.

In short the VSC case centres on the current financial situation at the ground, and submits that in order for KCCC to remain at the ground alternative revenue streams must be secured to support the continued sporting use of the site. The housing development would effectively fund the rest of the scheme, which would result in enhanced facilities for the ground, and a complementary indoor cricket centre, health/leisure centre and conference centre to provide alternative revenue streams and allow KCCC to remain at the site in the medium to long term. It is submitted that the inappropriate development would facilitate the continued use of the remainder of the site for outdoor sport and recreation including cricket, football and hockey, with the alternative being that KCCC would be forced to leave the ground, resulting in all uses of the site ceasing. The applicant has submitted a financial viability assessment in support of the case for very special circumstances, and to seek to demonstrate that the development proposal would involve the minimum amount of 'enabling' development to allow the proposal to go ahead with a reasonable operating profit, which would secure KCCC's future at the ground. The Council has instructed a consultant to independently audit the financial viability assessment, and further comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

While the VSC case and the desire for KCCC to remain at the site is noted, the proposed development would result in the loss of just over half of the open space on the site. The residential development of 48 houses and the three detached buildings along the Worsley Bridge Road frontage (together with the areas retained for landscaping and car parking) would fundamentally alter the open character of the site, affecting views into the site and seriously compromising the openness and visual amenities of the MOL. In this case, the harm to the MOL by reason of inappropriateness is compounded by the amount of development and its siting, scale and form. The residential element of the scheme would comprise a relatively low density development of large detached dwellings, which would not represent the optimum amount of 'enabling' development for this sensitive site in terms of its

built form and the degree of site coverage. The three detached buildings for the indoor cricket centre, health and fitness centre and conference centre would be of significant scale and be highly visible along the Worsley Bridge Road frontage, giving rise to a very apparent loss of openness, compromising views into the site and harming the visual amenities of the MOL. Until the viability of the scheme has been audited it is not possible to draw a firm conclusion on whether the VSC case put forward by the applicant would be sufficient to outweigh the harm to the openness and character of the MOL by reason of inappropriateness and other harm, in this case. A verbal update on this will be provided at the meeting.

In addition to the impact to the openness and visual amenities of the MOL, the development would result in the loss of playing fields, including almost half of the existing cricket field, and the grassed area to the west of the existing all-weather pitch. In policy terms it is possible to consider the re-provision of playing fields elsewhere in order to mitigate any loss, and the applicant has indicated that were planning permission to be granted a financial contribution would be put forward as part of a legal agreement to enhance existing sports pitches in the area. However, details of the size and location of these local pitches have not been provided in order to enable an assessment as to how this might mitigate against the loss proposed in this case. Any further comments in respect of this matter will be reported at the meeting.

With regard to the impact of the proposed development to the amenities of neighbouring residents, it is clear that the proposal would alter views into the site as a result of the amount and scale of development proposed. However, assessing this impact as a residential amenity issue (rather than a public amenity issue such as the openness of MOL), it is not considered that the impact of the proposal to views from neighbouring properties could constitute grounds for the refusal of planning permission. Regarding the residential development, this would be located adjacent to a number of existing residential properties on Worsley Bridge Road, Ashfield Close and Gainsborough Close. Again while there would be likely to be a degree of impact to these properties, the indicative separation between them and the proposed dwellings would appear to be reasonable, while it is highly likely that the proposed dwellings could be designed to ensure that no undue overlooking or loss of privacy would arise.

Regarding affordable housing, the Council's policies require 35% provision on housing sites capable of providing 10 or more dwellings. In this case, no affordable housing is proposed as part of the residential element of the scheme on the basis that this would require further cross subsidy to be generated by the private sale residential development, resulting in more development and built form to enable the remainder of the development. The applicant has submitted a financial viability assessment to seek to justify this which, at the time of writing was being independently assessed, and Members will be updated on the findings of this assessment, together with further comments from the Housing division at the meeting.

Concerning the highways aspect of the development, initial feedback from the Council's Highways division raised concerns regarding the parking provision proposed and the point of access for the sports/leisure element of the scheme. TfL

also raised concerns regarding parking provision. The applicant has subsequently submitted a Transport Assessment, and an Outline Green Travel Plan and further comments will be provided at the meeting.

Finally with regard to the impact of the development on flood risk, the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which has been reviewed by the Environment Agency. However it is advised that the FRA is not sufficient to comply with the requirements of PPS 25, and in the absence of adequate information to enable an assessment of the impact of the development on flood risk the development would be contrary to this policy guidance.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 00/03131, 01/02978, 02/01532, 02/02290, 03/00719, 07/00779 and 11/02140, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: MEMBERS' VIEWS ARE REQUESTED

If Members are minded to grant planning permission, the applicant's supporting statement lists the following matters which would need to be the subject of a legal agreement:

- submission and approval of reserved matters relating to the KCCC uses prior to
- the transfer of the housing land
- construction scheme (including phasing) for KCCC elements of development to be
- submitted prior to the occupation of the first residential dwelling
- indoor cricket facility seating and all weather pitch shall be built before the
- occupation of all dwellings
- lease for KCCC to be for period not less than 20 years, with terms of lease to
- ensure construction of KCCC elements and their operation
- all weather pitches to be made available for hire to the public
- financial contribution to LBB to fund enhancement of sports pitches in the local
- area

It is also suggested that the transfer of the 2m strip of land adjacent to the proposed residential development to adjoining properties be secured by legal agreement.

If Members are minded to refuse permission the following grounds are suggested:

- 1 The proposed indoor cricket centre, health and leisure centre and conference centre, together with the residential development of 48 dwellings would constitute inappropriate development within Metropolitan Open Land by definition, and would seriously harm the openness and visual amenities of this prominent site by reason of the number and size/type of dwellings proposed, the scale and siting of the three detached buildings and the

associated car parking and landscaping areas along the Worsley Bridge Road frontage. No very special circumstances exist to warrant the setting aside of normal policy requirements, and in the absence of which the proposal would be contrary to Policy G2 of the Unitary Development Plan, Policy 7.17 of the London Plan and PPG 2 'Green Belts'.

- 2 The proposed residential development of 48 dwellings does not include affordable housing, and no evidence has been provided to justify the setting aside of normal policy requirements, and in the absence of which the proposal would be contrary to Policies H2 and H3 of the Unitary Development Plan and Policies 3.11 and 3.12 of the London Plan.
- 3 The proposed development would result in the loss of playing fields on the site, and no information has been submitted to demonstrate that this loss can be mitigated by appropriate re-provision elsewhere. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy L6 of the Unitary Development Plan, Policy 3.19 of the London Plan and PPG 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'.
- 4 In the absence of adequate information to enable a suitable assessment of the flood risks associated with the development, the proposed development is contrary to Policy 5.12 of the London Plan and PPS 25 'Development and Flood Risk'.

Application:11/02140/OUT

Address: Kent County Cricket Ground Worsley Bridge Road Beckenham

Proposal: 3 detached buildings for use as indoor cricket training centre/ multi-function sports/ leisure facility, health and fitness centre and conference centre. Spectator stand for 2000-3000 people. Car parking. All weather/ floodlit pitches. 48 detached houses **OUTLINE**

