



Planning, Design and Access Statement

Georgians Tennis Club,
Crouch End Playing Fields,
London, N8 8JJ

February 2026

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WEA Planning Ref: 2024_02

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Executive Summary

This table outlines the primary considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal:

Consideration	Key Project Outcomes
Design & Environment	• The canopy design reduces light spill and visible glow compared to existing open courts. • Translucent materials retain 60% light intrusion, minimising artificial energy use during daylight hours. • Open-sided, barrel-vaulted structure preserves visual permeability and the character of the MOL.
Community & Social Value	• A reliable year-round schedule of activities and community programme. • Partnerships established with Mind Haringey, Tottenham Community Sports Centre, and You Vs You. • Engagement with local schools to address the high levels of inactivity among Haringey's under-16 population. • Specific activities planned for older residents and those needing mental health support.
Health & Wellbeing	• Supports the "Active Together" strategy by creating improved, accessible sporting environments. • Directly addresses the 40% drop in participation during winter months by providing weather protection. • Employs a "pay as you play" model, attracting 3,332 individual visitors in its first six months of operation.
Strategic Infrastructure	• Establishes the first covered padel facility within the London Borough of Haringey. • Reduces the need for residents to travel to neighbouring boroughs for covered court access. • Aligns with the LTA Padel Strategy 2024-29 to quadruple national participation.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement has been prepared by WEA Planning on behalf of the Georgians Tennis Club, to support a planning application for the erection of all-weather coverings for three of the four existing padel courts, and formation of two pickleball courts at the Georgians Tennis Club, Crouch End Playing Fields, London N8 8JJ, submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 1.2. This statement sets out the background to the development (including planning history), the design and justification for the proposal and its accordance with the development plan. The statement refers to the development plans which include:
 - The London Plan 2021
 - Haringey Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2013 (with alterations 2017)
 - Haringey Development Management Policies 2017
- 1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning practice guidance to support the NPPF sets out the Government's policies and how they are expected to be applied.

Site Description

- 1.4. The application site is situated within the London Borough of Haringey at the Georgians Tennis Club, Crouch End Playing Fields, London N8 8JJ.
- 1.5. The red line site is c. 0.2ha in extent and is located in Crouch End, North London, within Crouch End Playing Fields Complex. It comprises a tennis club with buildings, 4no. tennis courts, 4no. open padel courts (inclusive of 1no. show court), scattered trees, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, introduced shrub, modified grassland and other developed land. The site is bordered by North Middlesex Cricket Club to the north, Crouch End Cricket Club to the east, Highgate Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club to the south, and woodland to the west. There are blocks of woodland and high-density residential areas in all directions in the wider landscape.

- 1.6. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding) but there is Risk of Surface Water Flooding across the site, from 1 in 1000 years to 1 in 100 years risk.

The proposal

- 1.7. The applicant seeks planning permission from the London Borough of Haringey Council for the adaptation of three padel courts to covered padel courts at the Georgians Tennis Club, Crouch End Playing Fields, London N8 8JJ.

- 1.8. The description of the development is as follows:

Installation of covering for 3no. existing padel courts (proposed) and installation of 2no. pickleball courts (retrospective).

- 1.9. The purpose of the proposed development is to increase the accessibility and usability of the approved padel courts (ref: HGY/2024/1839), through installation of all-weather canopies above three of the four padel courts. Two pickleball courts have also been created on the existing hardstanding and retrospective permission is sought for this. The proposal further contributes to the social value of the club, through greater all-weather provision for the approved padel courts, diversification of the racket sports provided on site, increasing local participation and use of the courts and club facilities.

- 1.10. The main considerations for this proposal are the impacts on the character and appearance of the site and its surrounding area, the compatibility of the proposals with the site's location within Metropolitan Open Land, any impacts in terms of neighbouring amenity, and any impacts relating to ecology.

- 1.11. This development should accord with the NPPF exceptions for inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as this is the same test for MOL. Paragraph 154b of the NPPF (2024) includes:

“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve

the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;”

- 1.12. The proposed development would provide appropriate facilities for land in existing sport and recreation use, and the coverings would preserve the openness of the MOL.
- 1.13. The submission addresses the relevant issues and will demonstrate the development is acceptable and makes a positive contribution to this part of the borough. The proposed development should not be considered inappropriate development within the MOL in accordance with the NPPF (2024) paragraph 154b, but should the decision maker find the proposal to be inappropriate development, then Very Special Circumstances (VSCs) are demonstrated.
- 1.14. The application is supported by the following documents:
 - Plans and elevations – Jeff Kahane Architects – Drawing nos.: 844_EX_100; 844_PL_100; 844_PL_320; 844_PL_321
 - Planning Statement – WEA Planning
 - Visual Impact Appraisal (VIA) – Neaves Urbanism (December 2025)
 - External Lighting Impact Assessment – EPS (February 2026)
 - Bat Roost Potential Tree and Building Survey – Sylvatica Ecology (August 2025)
 - Statement of Community Engagement – Kanda (February 2026)
 - Comparative drawings – Jeff Kahane Architects – Drawing nos.: 844_PL_330; 844_PL_331; 844_PL_332

Relevant Planning History

- 1.15. The property has seen various planning applications in its history which can be found at Appendix A. Further discussion is provided at Chapter 2.
- 1.16. In summary, an inflatable tennis bubble was permitted in 1989 (ref: HGY/1989/1386) and renewed in 1993 (ref: HGY/1993/1177) and 1995 (ref: HGY/1995/0113). An inflatable tennis bubble was subsequently dismissed in 2014 (ref HGY/2013/0039, Appeal ref. No: APP/Y5420/A/13/2198650). The earlier tennis bubbles are both spatially and visually different from the coverings proposed in this application. The existing padel courts were approved in 2024 (ref: HGY/2024/1839).

Similar Planning Applications

- 1.17. There have been no applications for covered padel courts within LBH. Planning applications have come forward in other London and nearby boroughs for covered padel courts within MOL and Green Belt locations. Although these decisions have not considered Haringey's Local Plan policies, they have referenced the NPPF (2024) paragraph 154 and many have referenced London Plan (2021) Policy for MOL. The key point for consideration is all these approvals consider paragraph 154b (or previous iterations) and the key GB tests.
- 1.18. Detailed below are some applications for covered padel courts in MOL or Green Belt designated land, further applications can be found at Appendix B.

Local Authority	Planning Ref.	Key Justification / VSC Argument
LB Enfield	24/02817/FUL	The Committee Report explicitly identified that Very Special Circumstances (VSC) existed to support the canopy construction.
St Albans City & District	5/2024/0942	The Delegated Report concluded that VSC existed and noted that the coverings represented only limited built form.
East Herts DC	3/21/0638/FUL	An Inspector at appeal found that VSC outweighed any harm to the Green Belt.
Brentwood BC	23/01586/FUL	The Delegated Report confirmed that Very Special Circumstances were present to allow the installation of the free-standing cover.
LB Hillingdon	272/APP/2024/2966	The report argued that redeveloping an existing sports site avoided urban sprawl and ensured the visual impact remained in keeping with existing sports

		facilities.	
LB Wandsworth	2019/4940	The Committee Report determined the coverings had no impact on the openness of the MOL and were an appropriate use of the land.	
Hertsmere BC	25/1149/FUL	The Delegated Report found the canopy preserved the openness and was appropriate for the existing sporting use.	
LB Ealing	244249FUL	The Delegated Report confirmed there would be no impact on openness specifically from the court coverings.	

Pre-Application Advice

- 1.19. Pre-application advice was sought from the council in relation to the proposed development (ref: PRE/2025/0035), alongside extensions to the existing clubhouse. The works to the clubhouse have been omitted from the application following the written advice, which raised concerns for openness and the impact to trees.
- 1.20. The council acknowledged that the proposed development would allow for the use of padel courts approved under HGY/2024/1839 to be used during all weather conditions, resulting in an improvement in use of an existing facility. However, officers considered that the proposal will introduce built form and volume into the MOL that will result in an adverse impact on its openness.
- 1.21. LBH believed the development would be inappropriate in accordance with NPPF paragraph 154 and would impact the openness of the MOL, requiring VSCs to be applied.
- 1.22. As such it would need to be demonstrated that benefits of adding such covers to these courts significantly outweigh any harm to MOL openness and function.
- 1.23. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been submitted to demonstrate the effects on the surrounding landscape and visual environment from the proposed coverings.
- 1.24. The VIA includes verified views. This methodology has been agreed with the LPA. The methodology identifies the receptors and assesses the value of the views at these points. The VIA then analyses the susceptibility to change and

sensitivity of the viewpoint to establish the magnitude of change and overall appraisal of visual effects.

1.25. The LPA also recommended the submission of the following documents:

- A completed application form
- Location plan
- Site plan
- Existing plans
- Proposed plans
- Planning Statement – Commenting on specifically:
 - (i) Hours of operation
 - (ii) Commentary on the needs for such structures
 - (iii) Any local community engagement
- Design & Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (can also be incorporated into the D&A)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment & Metric
- Lighting Technical report
- Arboricultural Assessment, Tree Survey and Tree Protection Plan

Chapter 2

Planning Justification

2. Planning Justification

Policy Considerations

- 2.1. The decision to grant planning permission must have regard for the policies and proposals set out in the NPPF and the development plan.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (Draft NPPF, 2025)

- 2.2. The draft NPPF and consultation document were published in December 2025 and have the following points of relevance:

- *“GB5: Beneficial uses of Green Belt Land 1. Green Belt land should provide benefits for communities and nature, which means that the development plan should, at the most appropriate level, set out: a. Proposals for securing improved public access to greenspace within the Green Belt, including for outdoor sport or recreation, allotments and community food production;”*
- *“GB6: Control of development in the Green Belt 1. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7. 2. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposed development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In making this assessment, substantial weight should be given to the harm to the Green Belt which would be caused, including harm to its openness.”*
- *“GB7: Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt 1. The following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or required to demonstrate very special circumstances: f. Certain other forms of development provided the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt purposes. These are: vi. the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments.”*
- *“HC7: Development affecting existing recreation facilities 1. Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and*

recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments, unless: b. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality, in a location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves;”

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

2.3. In so far as the National Planning Policy Framework is concerned, the proposals respond to the following guidelines:

- *“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.” (Para 2)*
- *Local authorities should ensure that developments “are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)” (para 135c)*
- *Local authorities should ensure that development “that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:*
 - a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
 - b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. (Para 139).*
- *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.” (Para 153)*

- “Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies: b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it,” (Para 154) (Own emphasis).

The London Plan 2021

2.4. The proposed development responds to the following relevant policies of the London Plan:

- Policy GG2 Making the best use of land
- Policy GG3 Creating a healthy city
- Policy D4 Delivering good design
- Policy S5 Sports and recreation facilities
- Policy G2 Green Belt states that “*the enhancement of the Green Belt to provide appropriate multi-functional beneficial uses for Londoners should be supported.*”
- Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land
- Policy G4 Open space
- Policy G6 Biodiversity and access to nature

Haringey Local Plan

2.5. Haringey’s local plan contains various policies of relevance to the Proposed Works:

2.6. Haringey Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2013 (with alterations 2017)

- Policy SP11: Design
- Policy SP13: Open Space and Biodiversity
- Policy SP14: Health and Well-being
- Policy SP15: Culture and Leisure
- Policy SP16: Community Facilities

2.7. Haringey Development Management Policies (2017)

- Policy DM1: Delivering High Quality Design
- Policy DM19: Nature Conservation

- Policy DM20: Open Space and Green Grid
- Policy DM23: Environmental Protection

2.7. Draft Haringey Plan (Regulation 18) (2025)

- Policy D3: Inclusive Design
- Policy G2: Green Belt and Metropolitan Open land
- Policy G3: Open Space and Recreation
- Policy S1: Living Well
- Policy S2: Social Infrastructure

Principle of Development

- 2.8. The site has been approved for use as padel courts, the wider site remains in use as tennis courts with a club house and gym building. The proposed coverings are for three of the approved padel courts and would be appropriate to the use of the site as sport and recreation. The NPPF (2024) Paragraph 154 b considers *“appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation”* as long as the facilities preserve the openness and do not conflict with the purposes of the including land.
- 2.9. The proposed development would constitute appropriate development in MOL. The proposed canopy would support the existing sport and recreation land use and has been designed to preserve the openness of the existing site and not conflict with the purposes of Green Belt and MOL.
- 2.10. Should the decision maker find that the development would be inappropriate in the MOL, then there are VSCs to support the application. Additionally, the Draft NPPF (2025) HC7 supports some loss of open space where the access and quality of the sports provision is improved.
- 2.11. The installation of coverings for three padel courts would improve access and increase the number of residents able to visit the Georgians Tennis Club and participate in a new sport. The operation of the courts would be able to extend to cover periods of wet weather and off seasons, enabling higher sports participation in the local area, within the existing hours of operation. The club will

be able to expand community outreach activities as the coverings will enable regular, scheduled sessions in all weather and seasons.

- 2.12. Haringey's Strategic Policies SP14 (Health and Well-being), SP15 (Culture and Leisure), and SP16 (Community Facilities) all support the provision of sporting facilities. Specifically, SP15 states the aim of "*the protection and enhancement of sporting and leisure facilities in areas of deficiency*". The Haringey Open Space and Sports Assessment (Atkins 2004, as updated 2008) demonstrates the demand for indoor sporting facilities and increasing participation rates across the borough. The principle of covered padel courts in this location is therefore in alignment with demand.
- 2.13. Therefore, the proposal would be 'appropriate' development of the MOL site, in accordance with NPPF (2024) Paragraph 154b, and Haringey Local Plan (2017) Policy SP13 and DMP (2017) Policy DM 20.

Assessment of degree of harm to openness

- 2.14. The visual impact of the proposed Fordingbridge covering is significantly less than the previous applications for a tennis bubble (refs: HGY/2013/0039; HGY/1995/0113), benefitting from open sides and translucent materials, the covering will retain a degree of visual permeability.
- 2.15. The polyester-based cloth canopy is 100% waterproof, fire retardant and has high UV resistance. The cloth is translucent, allowing for 60% light intrusion, saving on energy for use of the courts during daylight hours.
- 2.16. The allowed covered padel courts at Batchwood Sports Centre in St Albans City & District Council (St Albans CDC, ref: 5/2024/0942) included Fordingbridge covers. The delegated report (Appendix D) found that the structure to retain some openness, stating that the "*vaulted design with predominantly open sides would represent limited built form which is lightweight in appearance*". The same should be considered of the proposed coverings at this site.
- 2.17. The three courts which will have the new canopy are directly behind the club building, further mitigating the impact on the openness of the site through the proximity to existing buildings. The site has a limited contribution to the openness

of the MOL as the site is surrounded by trees, buildings and a high level of fencing. This opinion was reinforced in the Officer's Report (ref: HGY/2024/1839) which described the site accordingly, "*The character and quality of the land in question is within an area that is already enclosed by fencing, courts, and an existing building.*"

- 2.18. The pre-application advice determined that a Visual Impact Assessment including verified views should form part of the submission to demonstrate the proposed visual impact of the covers on the site and wider appreciation.
- 2.19. The VIA (Neaves Urbanism, 2025) determined that the overall visual impact of the coverings would result in a neutral effect overall. The VIA considered that the site was visually contained by the tree canopy in the summer months and well contained within the winter months also, and that the canopy should not affect existing pockets of openness around the site.
- 2.20. The pickleball courts will have a limited impact on the design and visual appreciation of the site. The two courts are over existing hardstanding and consist only of coloured lines and shapes on the hardstanding with temporary, movable netting to enable play. There is no fixed structure to facilitate the two pickleball courts. The coloured hard standing closely matches the existing situation, resulting in two shades of green and white lines to mark out the court (fig. 1). This should be appropriate for the design of the site and in keeping with the existing character and purpose of the MOL for outdoor sports provision.

Figure 1 – Site photograph



The pickleball courts as existing, consisting of colouring the existing hardstanding
(photo: JEFF KAHANE + ASSOCIATES)

- 2.21. As a whole, the proposed development represents a minimal change in terms of the appearance of the site. The coverings are designed to reduce the visual impact and integrate with the surrounding landscape and the pickleball courts have nominal impact for design. Similarly, Development Management Policy DM1 states that the council will support proposals which make a positive contribution to a place, improving the character and quality of an area. The proposed development is therefore supported by policy in relation to its design and appearance.
- 2.22. With the above in mind, the proposal would result in some very limited harm to the openness of MOL, both visually and spatially. However, these impacts are moderated by the dense surrounding vegetation and the proximity of existing sporting infrastructure. Taking these factors into account and the minimal change in the total cumulative impact on total built form on site, the impact on the openness of MOL is considered to be low-level and in keeping with the existing sporting uses and paraphernalia.

Appropriate Development on Metropolitan Open Land

- 2.23. As the site lies within Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), a key consideration for the application is whether the development would be inappropriate development in the MOL and the effect of the development on the openness of the MOL.
- 2.24. London Plan Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land confirms that MOL is afforded the same status and level of protection as Green Belt. The policy states that MOL should be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy tests that apply to the Green Belt. It also states that boroughs should work with partners to enhance the quality and range of uses of MOL.
- 2.25. The NPPF (2024) classes development on the Green Belt (and therefore also on MOL) as inappropriate, with some exceptions. One such exception is given by Paragraph 154 Part B which states that the following would not be inappropriate: the provision of appropriate facilities, including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. It is clear that the proposed padel court coverings fall within this definition, so the question is therefore whether the development preserves the openness of the MOL or provide circumstances to outweigh the harm to the openness of the MOL.
- 2.26. The Officer's Report for the existing padel courts on site (ref: HGY/2024/1839) defined appropriate development in MOL; "*The word 'appropriate' implies that the use should be suitably linked*". The proposed coverings would be considered appropriate development in accordance with NPPF paragraph 154B.
- 2.27. In relation to the openness of the MOL, the proposals offer some material changes from the current situation. The existing tennis courts and the approved padel courts have fencing around each court. The proposal introduces more height to the site through the introduction of the padel canopies. The coverings are lightweight and translucent, thereby mitigating the impact on the openness of the MOL.

- 2.28. The impact of the coverings on the openness of the MOL have been assessed within the design and appearance section above, with reference to the VIA. It is considered that the proposed covers would have a neutral impact on the MOL. The coverings would be screened from wider views in the summer months by the surrounding tree canopy, with moderate to minor effect in the winter months. The development would be visible from the immediate pitches and paths around the Tennis Club, but would integrate with the existing sport paraphernalia, and would not affect the existing pockets of openness within the wider Crouch End Fields.
- 2.29. Although WEA Planning believe the development is “appropriate” and compatible with open sports use, if the decision maker is minded to consider that the limited visual impact re-defines the proposal as “inappropriate” development, then Very Special Circumstances outweigh any very limited harm arising from the proposal.

Very Special Circumstances

Community Use and Sports Access

- 2.30. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) are promoting the expansion and improvement of Padel across the country. The LTA Padel Strategy 2024-29 supports and outlines a plan to increase participation in Padel across Great Britain. The Strategy outlines the benefits of Padel, including accessibility, particularly for children, women and players with disabilities. The Strategy seeks to increase participation in the sport over the timeframe, from 129,000 to 400,000 annual players, and from 65,000 to 200,000 monthly players.
- 2.31. The LTA and Sport England were supportive of the allowed Padel courts (ref: HGY/2024/1839) and improvement of the sporting facilities on site.
- 2.32. Covering the three padel courts would increase the usability of the existing provision on site, in line with the LTA aims to increase participation in the sport. The uplift in numbers would not lead to an overdevelopment of the site in terms of trip generation but allow for play in periods of bad weather and over winter when the courts are otherwise empty and unusable.
- 2.33. The provision of all-weather and all-season sports provision should be highly favoured by Haringey and would contribute to the goals within the council's health

and wellbeing strategy. The strategy seeks to provide high quality environments, reduce pollution and improve active travel

- 2.34. Providing covered padel facilities within Haringey would meet these aims and reduce trips outside the borough to access covered padel courts.
- 2.35. The existing padel courts have seen an increase in engagement in sports on site since they opened in June 2025. The booking system for padel courts allows sign up without becoming a member of the Tennis Club and operates as a 'pay as you play' system. This removes significant barriers from new participation in racket sports and has seen an increase in new users of the club's facilities.
- 2.36. Haringey's Draft Local Plan (Reg 18) (2025) Policy G2 requires proposals on MOL to be informed by engagement with users and local residents. The applicant, with support from Kanda Consulting, has undertaken a programme of community and stakeholder engagement prior to this submission (Appendix H). This included meetings with local charities, community-led organisations, schools, residents' groups, TRAs, and councillors to provide free access to the padel courts, discuss the proposed canopy design, and share the wider programme of events at the club. With the introduction of covered courts, community groups will benefit from extended access across hours and seasons.
- 2.37. Discussions have also focused on opportunities for extracurricular activities and broader community access, alongside local planning considerations. The applicant remains committed to ongoing consultation with stakeholders throughout the application process, in line with NPPF guidance. Details of meetings and engagement activities are set out in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement.
- 2.38. The club is already in communication with Haringey Council's Active Community Manager to coordinate activities across a range of local organisations, and planning activities for older residents, people who need mental health support, and individuals who are seeking to become more physically active.
- 2.39. The club is also working with Mind Haringey, Tottenham Community Sports Centre and You Vs You to provide padel sessions in the near future.

- 2.40. Haringey's Draft Local Plan (Reg 18) (2025) Policy S2 would require a Community Use Agreement for new social infrastructure. The Applicant is happy to provide such an agreement for the council.
- 2.41. Full details of the community and stakeholder engagement have been prepared by Kanda in the Statement of Community Engagement and submitted in support of this application.

Relevant Decisions in Other MOL/Green Belt Settings

- 2.42. Several recent planning applications for covered padel courts in Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land have been found to be appropriate development in accordance with the NPPF (2024) Paragraph 154b. Covered padel courts were approved at Roehampton Club, SW15 5LR (LB Wandsworth, ref: 2019/4940) the Committee Report (Appendix E) considered that the coverings had no impact on the openness of the MOL and were an appropriate use of the open space land, it was also considered that the proximity of nearby residential buildings and greenery mitigated the impact on openness.
- 2.43. There are several cases where limited harm to openness was identified and VSCs were found to support covered padel courts. The inspector for an appeal (Appendix F) for covered padel courts at Bishops Stortford Lawn Tennis Club, CM23 2TD (Appeal ref: APP/J1915/W/21/3272506) found that the impact from the proposed covering "*would only cause limited harm to the Green Belt*", and found that "*the contribution towards a healthy community should attract very substantial weight, to such an extent that would clearly outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt*" creating the very special circumstances necessary for development in the Green Belt.
- 2.44. The delegated report (Appendix G) for covered padel courts at Brentwood Hard Court Tennis Club, CM13 3FD in Brentwood BC (Brentwood BC, ref: 23/01586/FUL) identified VSCs to overcome any harm to the openness of Green Belt. The report stated:

"The proposed canopy would be the minimum size effective and the minimum size technically suitable, while achieving the significant community and sporting benefits outlined. It is found that although the development would have an impact

on the openness of the green belt and be in conflict with planning policy in this regard, very special circumstances, in the form of the design of the proposal combined with the community and sporting benefits it offers, is sufficient to outweigh this harm and any other harm resulting from the proposal as there are a limited number of all weather outdoor facilities available in and around the Borough.”

- 2.45. The scale of the coverings allowed in Brentwood BC are comparable to this proposal and engaged Paragraph 154b of the NPPF (2024). LB Haringey is also deficient in covered sport provision, particularly padel, and as such significant weight should also be afforded the VSCs in this application. Increasing local participation in sports throughout the year should hold significant weight and this application would create the first covered padel courts in Haringey.
- 2.46. The proposed padel courts do not present any conflict with the purposes of the MOL. Paragraph 8.3.1 of the London Plan makes clear the purpose of the MOL: *“MOL protects and enhances the open environment and improves Londoners’ quality of life by providing localities which offer sporting and leisure use, heritage value, biodiversity, food growing, and health benefits through encouraging walking, running and other physical activity”*. The proposed padel coverings and pickleball courts support the function of the MOL, improve the facilities onsite and diversify the opportunities for sport in this locality.
- 2.47. Haringey’s DMP (2017) Policy DM20 part D supports ancillary uses on MOL which do not detract from the other uses of the land, are of an appropriate scale and do not detract from the open character of the site and surrounding area. Part E emphasises that the council will support improvements to existing outdoor leisure and sports facilities, provided that they are of a high-quality design, do not negatively impact nature and conservation, and do not detract from the overall function and character of the open space.

Holly Park Appeal

- 2.48. The site, previously the Holly Park Tennis Club, has planning history concerning a tennis dome, with a seasonal tennis dome approved on the site in 1989, 1993 and 1995 (refs: HGY/1989/1386, HGY/1993/1177, and HGY/1995/0113), and later dismissed at appeal in 2014 (Appeal ref: APP/Y5420/A/13/2198650,

Appendix H). This planning history formed a part of the discussions within the pre-application meeting and subsequent advice.

2.49. Since the appeal decision in 2014 there have been several revisions to the NPPF and London Plan, and the Haringey Development Management Policies DPD was adopted in 2017.

2.50. The application at Holly Park Tennis Club was for a CovAir style tennis bubble, which is materially, spatially and visually different from the proposed Fordingbridge cover for padel. I would draw your attention to the examples included in our statement, which refers to recent approved proposals within MOL or Green Belt land.

2.51. The table below clarifies the spatial and visual differences between the dismissed tennis bubble scheme and the proposed padel covering.

Feature	Dismissed Tennis Bubble (2014)	Proposed Padel Canopy
Footprint	c. 1,700sqm	c. 700sqm (60% smaller)
Height	High apex design	Barrel arch (9m apex / 6.5m eaves)
Material	Opaque/Solid translucent membrane	High-tenacity 60% translucent cloth
Openness	Fully enclosed structure	Open-sided lightweight structure
Amenity	Background noise and vibration from inflation	Reduces light spill from existing, canopy allows daylight intrusion

2.52. The dismissed tennis bubble was significantly larger than the proposed coverings for 3no. padel courts. Comparative drawings have been provided to demonstrate the difference of scale. The proposed coverings preserve visual openness compared to the tennis bubble and cover a significantly smaller area.

2.53. The site is already significantly built with fences and ancillary buildings for sport and leisure uses, and it is not considered that the covered padel courts would unacceptably impact the openness of the MOL in this circumstance and comparative views have been provided in the VIA (Neaves Urbanism, 2025).

Need for the Development

- 2.54. 'Active Together' A Physical Activity & Sport Strategy for Haringey 2019 – 2023 identified the need to increase activity levels for more local residents and to create and improve accessible and active environments.
- 2.55. Presently Haringey has no covered or indoor padel facilities in the borough. The closest covered padel courts are in the London Borough of Barnet Council, listed below:
- Outdoor covered padel - Chandos LTC, 120 East End Road, London, N2 0RZ - 2.1 miles from the site.
 - Outdoor covered padel - Padel Tree, Finchley, N12 0PD - 2.24 miles from the site.
 - Indoor padel - The Padel Hub, Unit 4, Downland Close, Whetstone, N20 9LB - 3.89 miles from the site.
- 2.56. The 'Active Together' Strategy found that children under 16 were more likely to be inactive than adults in the borough. Accordingly, the proposed community engagement activities with local schools and clubs will bring significant value to this age group. The LTA also states that padel is more accessible for children than tennis and increasing padel participation within the borough would be beneficial for this age group.

Staffing and Employment

- 2.57. The proposed development will have limited impact for the operations of the site and its existing opening hours, resulting in a more efficient use of the site within the existing staffing levels and opening hours.
- 2.58. The current opening hours of the club are 7 days a week 7am – 10pm, the proposed development will not alter the hours of operation.
- 2.59. Padel and pickleball provide a great introduction to racquet sports and should also increase visitor numbers to the existing tennis courts at the club and promote membership. Rackets are available for hire on site and visitors do not need to readily have their own equipment.

- 2.60. The existing open padel courts have resulted in an increase in visitors to the site with 3,332 individual visitors for padel from June to December 2025, which breaks down to 2,589 bookings from July – September and 1,558 bookings from October – December. The number of players over the winter period was 40% lower than the summer months.
- 2.61. The Padel courts can be booked without club membership via an App with one-off payment options for first-time players. The proposed covers and pickleball courts should enable a further increase in membership at the site and welcome a greater number of first-time players to the sports.
- 2.62. The club offers coaching and tournaments on the padel courts, the availability of which would be improved with the all-weather canopy.

Design and Appearance

- 2.63. The proposed development involves three padel courts. There will be no change or alteration to the approved mesh enclosure around the padel courts. The proposed canopy will sit on columns and be positioned over the approved fencing. The canopy will be constructed in high tenacity polyester-based cloth and steel frames. The canopy will have a barrel arch design, reaching to 9m at the apex and 6.5m at the lowest points. The fire retardant and high tenacity Fordingbridge Opal 60 fabric enhances the transparency and openness of the covering, mitigating the impact on the openness of the MOL, increasing the sense of permeability, and preserving views of the surrounding landscape.
- 2.64. The proposed covers would cover a significantly smaller area than the earlier dismissed tennis bubble (ref: HGY/2013/0039) and allowed tennis bubble (refs: HGY/1995/0113).
- 2.65. The area of the three padel courts to be covered is around 700sqm, compared to the refused tennis bubble of around 1700sqm and the allowed tennis bubble (ref: HGY/1995/0113), which would have covered an area of 1828sqm with a height of 8.53m.

Ecological Impacts and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.66. It is not considered that the proposal would introduce any new impacts for onsite ecology and biodiversity.
- 2.67. The canopy should not introduce any new lighting impacts to the existing situation as the lights are designed to limit overspill. The canopy should bring minor improvements compared to the uncovered courts.
- 2.68. The PEA submitted in support of the previous approved application (ref: HGY/2024/1839) explains that the site has high value for nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats, but the gym/club building has low suitability for roosting bats. Wild mammals may also enter the site for commuting or foraging. The PEA confirmed that the site has negligible ecological value for other protected species. The surrounding woodland is classed as a Habitat of Principal Importance (priority habitat) and the scattered trees have moderate ecological value, the modified grassland and introduced shrub have low ecological value and the buildings, developed land, sealed surface and other developed land have negligible ecological value.
- 2.69. A revised Bat Roost Potential Tree and Building Inspection Survey (Sylvatica Ecology) was undertaken to support this application. The initial survey carried out on the 1st July 2024 by Sylvatica Ecology Ltd found one tree on site that exhibited features that bats could have potentially utilised for roosting. Following this, a resurvey was conducted on the 16th August 2025, during the bat activity season to assess for the potential/ actual presence of roosting bats on site and the report confirmed that only this one tree had roosting potential. The lighting assessment (EPS, 2025) confirms that the existing 0-degree flood lighting is sufficient to mitigate any unacceptable impacts for bats. The proposal should be acceptable in this regard.
- 2.70. The lighting assessment (EPS, 2025) also found that the proposed development would bring no change for ecological impacts from the existing lighting onsite and the proposed development should be acceptable in this regard.
- 2.71. Haringey's Development Management Policies DM19 (Nature Conservation) and DM23 (Environmental Protection) recognise the need to protect and enhance

ecological assets and note that mitigation measures to address any harm may be appropriate. Policy DM20 seeks to protect open and green space, and states that the reconfiguration of open space will be supported where it would achieve enhancements to address identified deficiencies in the capacity, quality and accessibility of open space, and it would secure a viable future for the open space.

- 2.72. The pickleball courts are on existing hardstanding and have no implications for ecology or biodiversity from the previously allowed situation.
- 2.73. The development would only impact the existing hardstanding onsite and would be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain as it would not impact over 25sqm of habitat.
- 2.74. Overall, the ecological impacts of the proposed development are minimal, and the development is acceptable in this regard and aligns with the above policies. Given the development will include some additional planting, it can be seen as beneficial in ecology terms, and these additions will also help to soften the site visually.

Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

- 2.75. The site has a Risk of Surface Water Flooding across the site, classified between 1 in 1000 years and 1 in 100 years risk. There is an ordinary watercourse south of the site. The proposed development should have minimal impact on drainage compared to the existing situation.

Impacts on the Amenity and Privacy of Neighbouring Occupants

- 2.76. Local Plan Policy DM1 concerns living conditions including that of occupants of neighbouring dwellings. The potential impact of the proposed development in terms of impacts on neighbours was considered at the design stage.
- 2.77. The covered padel courts will be approx. 145m from the nearest residential dwellings. This distance is considered to be more than sufficient to minimise any neighbouring amenity impacts from the development.

- 2.78. The proposed development offers little new scope for neighbouring amenity impacts from the existing situation. Rather, the coverings should limit any acoustic or light impacts.
- 2.79. The approved 0-degree floodlighting was considered sufficient to protect neighbouring amenity. The proposed development would include the existing flood lights within the coverings. The revised Lighting Assessment (EPS, 2026) found that, in regards to any impacts for neighbouring amenity, there were no new impacts from the allowed situation (ref: HGY/2024/1839). The Assessment also considered that *“The canopy structure further contributes to containing light within the court area, reducing the potential for light spill or visible glow beyond the site boundary.”*
- 2.80. The development would not result in any harmful overshadowing, over-dominance, loss of outlook or loss of privacy for any neighbouring properties and would have no impact on the amenity of the adjacent properties.
- 2.81. Noise impacts had also been assessed under the previous application (ref: HGY/2024/1839). The conclusion of the noise assessment is that the predicted noise levels from the use of all the 4 proposed padel courts simultaneously are considerably less than the Sport England default threshold of 50 dB $L_{Aeq,1h}$ at all properties, and they do not result in an increase in the existing ambient noise conditions. It is considered that the incorporation of a covering over three of the padel courts will result in a decrease in noise impacts across the site.
- 2.82. The development would therefore accord with Policy DM1 of the DMP (2017) and should be acceptable in relation to amenity impacts.

Access Arrangements and Impact on Transport

- 2.83. The site benefits from vehicular and pedestrian access from Shepherds Lane. There is also pedestrian access via the footpaths which run from Queen’s Wood and the Crouch End Open Space. There are no changes to access arrangements to/from the site proposed as part of the works and there are consequently no impacts in this regard.
- 2.84. Providing dry and reliable surfaces to play on should improve the accessibility of the courts for users with different access and mobility needs, increasing

accessibility and participation to the existing padel courts. The enhancement of the existing sporting facilities should accord with London Plan (2021) Policy G2.

Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.85. The proposed development seeks to promote active participation and social infrastructure in the borough. The London Plan (2021) Policy GG1 Part C states that development should *“provide access to good quality community spaces, services, amenities and infrastructure that accommodate, encourage and strengthen communities, increasing active participation and social integration, and addressing social isolation”*.
- 2.86. Local authorities must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Local authorities should advance equality of opportunity, and encourage participation in public life and activities, with regard to the relevant protected characteristics in the Act.
- 2.87. Through engagement with local community groups and timetabled sessions, which the proposed coverings will facilitate, both the club and padel will be more accessible for residents with relevant protected characteristics.
- 2.88. The proposed development should increase the participation of local residents, the development should not create negative impacts for people within any of the protected characteristics as defined within the Act.

Planning Balance

- 2.89. The application would be appropriate development within the MOL, in accordance with the NPPF (2024) Paragraph 154b for appropriate development in the Green Belt. The coverings would be ancillary to the existing sports and leisure use with no unacceptable impact on the openness of the site.
- 2.90. If the decision maker believes there to be an impact for the openness and the use would be inappropriate, then there are significant VSCs for the scheme and the application should be approved accordingly, and in line with the decisions taken for Green Belt and MOL sites elsewhere and application of openness and VSCs test.

- 2.91. The balance of the benefits for the scheme and design to mitigate impacts for visual openness should be sufficient to allow the proposed development.
- 2.92. It is considered that, on appreciation of the above, the development would have acceptable impacts for principle of use, MOL and openness, access, ecology, amenity and design.
- 2.93. The proposed development at Georgians Tennis Club has been rigorously assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the London Plan (2021), and the Haringey Local Plan (2017). The "Planning Balance" demonstrates why permission should be granted, either as "appropriate" development or through the demonstration of Very Special Circumstances (VSCs).

Chapter 3

Conclusion

3. Planning Balance and Conclusion

3.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of all-weather covers over three padel courts and the formation of two pickleball courts at the Georgians Tennis Club, Crouch End Playing Fields, London N8 8JJ.

3.2. In conclusion:

- The submission for pre-application advice included plans to extend the clubhouse building. This no longer forms part of the proposed development.
- The submitted VIA supports our position that the covers would not detract from the function and character of the open space and should be appropriate development in line with NPPF (2024) paragraph 154b. The covers read as lightweight and visually permeable and bring little new built form from the existing buildings and fencing treatment.
- Substantial weight should be given to the benefit of VSCs and the lack of covered padel facilities in the borough. The proposed development would create much needed covered sports facilities in the area, of which there is significant local demand.
- It is clear that the proposed development is acceptable in relation to its impact on the MOL. It is not inappropriate development, it does not unacceptably harm the openness of the site, and accords with the intended functions of the MOL.
- There would be no harm to the amenity or privacy of the neighbouring properties.
- Any impacts on ecology would be minor, and mitigation measures could be implemented if required.

3.3. The development proposal is therefore compliant with the NPPF, the London Plan 2021 and development plan policies contained within the Haringey Local Plan (Strategic Policies and Development Management Policies). Planning permission should therefore be granted, and we ask that the council approve this application. We look forward to receiving your decision. Should you have any queries in respect of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us.