



# Officer Report

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| <b>Application Number:</b> | <b>HGY/2026/0671</b>                                                                       |
| <b>Application Type:</b>   | <b>Full planning permission</b>                                                            |
| <b>Address:</b>            | The Hornsey Club, Tivoli Road, Hornsey,<br>London, N8 8RG                                  |
| <b>Proposal:</b>           | Construction of 4 padel courts with associated<br>lighting, canopies, pavilion and storage |
| <b>Case Officer:</b>       | Adam Silverwood                                                                            |
| <b>Valid Date:</b>         | 20/04/2026                                                                                 |
| <b>Applicant:</b>          | Mr Rupert Taylor                                                                           |
| <b>Agent:</b>              | Mr Patrick Neville                                                                         |

## 1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of four padel courts, together with a canopy and external lighting, on existing hardstanding formerly used as tennis courts. The padel courts are located at the south-eastern corner of Hornsey Cricket Club and are most directly accessed from Tivoli Road. The proposal also includes the construction of a pavilion building to provide equipment storage, reception facilities and ancillary accommodation.

The site is bounded by residential properties to the south and east, with a leisure centre located to the north. The application site adjoins the Crouch End Conservation Area and is designated as Metropolitan Open Land.

## 2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site forms part of Hornsey Cricket Club, which is located off Tivoli Road within Crouch End Playing Fields. The Club comprises a large cricket square and outfield with a small clubhouse and associated ancillary facilities. The application site occupies a former tennis court area located at the entrance to this part of the Playing Fields and is positioned at the south-eastern edge of the wider cricket club site.

The site adjoins Park Road Leisure Centre to the north, which comprises a substantial two-storey leisure complex with an outdoor swimming pool and associated facilities to the rear. The leisure centre is separated from the application site by established evergreen vegetation which provides a significant degree of screening between the two uses. Residential properties are located to the south and east of the site, primarily along Tivoli Road and View Crescent.

The application site forms part of the wider area known as Crouch End Playing Fields, which comprises a range of formal and informal recreational facilities including cricket clubs, tennis clubs, sports pitches, allotments and extensive areas of open space. The Playing Fields provide an important recreational resource within the borough and form part of a wider network of open spaces and green corridors.

In planning terms, the site is designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and adjoins the Crouch End Conservation Area. The site occupies a prominent position close to the Tivoli Road entrance to this part of the Playing Fields, with extensive areas of open recreational land extending to the north and east.

### **3. RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY**

**HGY/2024/2070** – Installation of four de-mountable Instant Padel courts on the site of the existing hardstanding tennis court for a temporary period until 31st October, 2024 - Approved: 15/10/2024

**HGY/2014/0897** - Erection of a three-lane enclosed outdoor cricket net facility on the unused end tennis court. Approved 13/06/2014.

**HGY/2024/3278** - Installation of four Padel courts on existing hardstanding. – Approved with Conditions: 12/06/2025

### **4. CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

The following were consulted regarding the application:

LBH Transport - Raises concerns regarding the site's poor public transport accessibility, the reliance on car travel, and inconsistencies within the submitted Transport Statement. Concerns are also raised regarding the lack of justification for retained car parking, absence of details on electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking, and the need to assess wider parking demand and cumulative transport impacts. Clarification and further assessment are requested, and conditions are recommended relating to cycle parking and construction logistics management.

Sport England – Object objection to the proposal on the basis that it would result in the loss of tennis court provision and has not demonstrated compliance with national and Sport England playing field policy. It advises that the objection could potentially be overcome through amendments to retain or reinstate a tennis court and recommends a number of conditions and design considerations relating to sports provision, accessibility and safety. (Comment: A change of use assessment cannot be applied as both tennis and padel courts are outdoor sports uses).

LBH Active Wellbeing - Concerns about overshadowing of the pool, increased operational costs, impacts on lifeguard visibility and safety, noise from construction and use, reduced sunlight for Lido users, and harm to the Green Belt.

Crouch End Open Space - Objects to the proposal on the grounds of harm to Metropolitan Open Land, insufficient Very Special Circumstances, impacts on neighbouring amenity (including the Lido and nearby residents), potential noise, flood risk and procedural concerns. The objector also considers that further technical information is required before the application can be determined. The full objection is available to view online.

LBH Noise Nuisance and Licensing Enforcement Team – In summary noise assessment may not accurately reflect the likely noise impacts of the padel courts because it was undertaken in December 2025, when court usage may have been lower than at other times of the year. They suggest that a further assessment should be carried out during a period of higher usage to provide a more representative understanding of the potential noise impacts before a recommendation is made.

## **5. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

The application has been publicised by way of letters sent to neighbouring properties.

### Objections – 210

The objections consider that the development would:

- Be detrimental to neighbouring amenity as a noise nuisance
- Increase the hours of noise nuisance due to the canopy
- Would overshadow the Lido reducing its viability through lack of heat on the water surface
- Would be detrimental to the openness of the area
- Would place an unacceptable demand on local parking
- Would be detrimental to local wildlife
- Would be higher than the tree line
- Should have restricted hours
- Would undermine the use of the Lido and therefore have negative health benefits
- Does not have accurate plans
- Noise impact assessment does not model the enclosed structure
- Length of hours would be detrimental to amenity
- Would be a warehouse-like structure
- Located too close to residences
- No assessment of flood risk
- No assessment of light spillage
- Be an over intensification of the site
- Would result in anti-social behaviour

### Support – 39

Those comments in support of the development consider that the development would:

- Be good for the community
- Provide improved playing conditions

- Provide physical and mental health benefits
- Support the cricket club and green space
- Provide greater participation in sport
- Would not be detrimental with regard to noise and parking
- Bring an underused site into better use
- Provide a space for a growing sport
- Allow for year-round use
- Support local economic activity

Representations: 1

This representation considers that the development should:

- be constructed in a sympathetic and considerate manner, not impact upon existing facilities.
- It should also be reduced in height so as to not impact the Lido.

## **6. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of Development
2. Design and Impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Area;
3. Very Special Circumstances
4. Impact on Neighbourhood Amenity
5. Highways and Transport
6. Other.

### **Principle of Development**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Policy GB7 (Development Not Inappropriate in the Green Belt) states that certain forms of development are not inappropriate within the Green Belt, provided that the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised and there is no significant conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Paragraph GB7(f)(iv) specifically includes the provision of appropriate facilities, including buildings, in connection with outdoor sport and outdoor recreation. The policy therefore recognises that buildings associated with outdoor sport may be acceptable in principle, but only where their scale, form and siting are such that their impact on openness is minimised. As Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is afforded the same level of protection as Green Belt, these principles are directly relevant to the assessment of the current proposal.

NPPF Policy H4 (Proposals for New and Improved Community Service Infrastructure and Development Providing Public Health Benefits) requires substantial weight to be given to proposals that provide new or improved public service infrastructure or community facilities and which make a demonstrable contribution towards promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction

Policy G3 of the London Plan (2021) likewise recognises the importance of MOL and highlights its role in supporting sport and leisure activities, enhancing the open environment and improving quality of life through opportunities for physical activity.

Emerging London Plan Policy PV6 (Metropolitan Open Land) states that MOL is land that is open in character and should remain permanently open and distinct in character and function from the wider built-up area. It should be protected from inappropriate development unless Very Special Circumstances exist. Substantial weight should be given to any harm to the function of the MOL, including harm to its openness.

Appropriate development within MOL includes the replacement, extension or alteration of a building used in connection with an appropriate use, provided that it would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It also includes the provision of new facilities connected with an appropriate use that enhance the functionality of the MOL, including facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, provided that they preserve the openness of the MOL and do not result in a reduction in public access.

The policy framework therefore establishes a strong presumption against development that introduces built form, enclosure or visual intrusion within Metropolitan Open Land.

Local planning authorities are required to assess proposals within MOL against this combined national and strategic policy framework. Where development is considered inappropriate, applicants must demonstrate Very Special Circumstances capable of clearly outweighing the harm to openness and any other identified harm. In line with national policy and established case law, factors such as operational convenience, user comfort or general sporting benefits do not normally amount to Very Special Circumstances unless exceptional and compelling circumstances exist.

From a planning perspective, the use of this site for padel does not constitute a material change of use and does not, in itself, require planning permission. Padel is a bat-and-ball sport played on a court similar to tennis, albeit on a smaller scale and with associated enclosure structures. As outlined below, the impact of the proposed development on the openness of the MOL is a key material planning consideration.

The previously approved development aligned with this exception, as it provided appropriate facilities connected to the use of the land for outdoor sport and recreation whilst remaining open-air in nature.

Under application HGY/2024/3278, the Local Planning Authority concluded that the installation of open-air padel courts and associated court enclosures preserved the openness of the Metropolitan Open Land and would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the adjoining area. The principle of padel at this location has therefore already been established and is not disputed by the current application. The present proposal differs materially from the approved scheme through the introduction of a substantial 9-metre-high canopy structure, external lighting and a pavilion building, all of which require separate

assessment in terms of their impact on openness, visual appearance and the wider character of the site.

The proposed development differs from the previously approved scheme in two significant respects. Firstly, a 9-metre-high domed canopy would be constructed over the four padel courts and, secondly, a single-storey pavilion building would be constructed to the front of the site. The proposal would result in a substantial area of the court facility being covered, introducing additional built form, height and visual enclosure. Whilst it is acknowledged that the canopy would remain open-sided and would differ from a fully enclosed building, it would nevertheless represent a significant departure from the open-air character of the previously approved development.

Whether the proposed canopy and pavilion preserve the openness and character of the MOL is considered in detail within the following section of this report. That assessment considers the scale, siting, form and visual prominence of the proposed structures, together with their effect on the openness and wider character of this part of Crouch End Playing Fields. The extent of any resulting harm must then be weighed against the sporting, community and health benefits advanced by the applicant, and the issue of whether the proposal is supported by the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify development within Metropolitan Open Land is considered in the subsequent section of this report.

### **Design, visual impact and effect on Metropolitan Open Land**

London Plan (2021) policies emphasise the importance of high-quality design and seek to optimise site capacity through a design-led approach. Policy D3 'Delivering Good Design' states that development proposals should enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and form, with due regard to street hierarchy, building types, built form and proportions.

Local Plan Policy SP11 (2017) and Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) Policy DM1 seek to secure the highest standard of design that respects local context and character and contributes to the creation and enhancement of Haringey's sense of place and identity. DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' requires development proposals to have regard to a range of criteria, including building height, form, scale and massing, prevailing character, urban grain, sense of enclosure, building lines, the rhythm of plots and building widths, active frontages and the use of distinctive local architectural styles, detailing and materials.

The site adjoins the Crouch End Conservation Area and occupies a prominent position at the termination of Tivoli Road. In determining application HGY/2024/3278, the Local Planning Authority concluded that the approved open-air padel courts would not materially affect the setting of the Conservation Area due to their relatively low-profile form and siting within the existing court area. Whilst the proposed canopy would be more visible at the end of Tivoli Road than the previously approved courts, officers do not consider that it would result in material harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area itself. Rather, the

principal concern relates to the effect of the structure on views from Tivoli Road into the adjoining MOL and wider Crouch End Playing Fields.

In the specific context of MOL, the NPPF and London Plan Policy G3 require that development maintains openness and minimises visual intrusion and, whilst facilities associated with outdoor sport may be acceptable in principle, their impact on openness must be minimised. The assessment is therefore not limited to architectural quality alone, but must also consider the extent to which the proposed structures introduce built form, enclosure and visual prominence within an area whose defining characteristic is openness.

The proposed canopy would cover four padel courts and extend to approximately 9 metres in height. By reason of its scale, footprint and elevated roof form, the structure would be highly visible within this part of Crouch End Playing Fields and would form a prominent feature at an important entrance point into the wider MOL. The submitted visualisations demonstrate that the canopy would be readily perceptible from Tivoli Road and from within the surrounding open space, where it would interrupt views across the Playing Fields and introduce a substantial element of enclosure within an area that currently retains an open character.

Whilst the proposed pavilion building would contribute additional built form, the canopy would represent the dominant element of the development and would be substantially more prominent within the wider landscape. Taken together, the proposed structures would result in harm to the openness of the MOL both spatially and visually and would fail to minimise their impact on openness in accordance with the requirements of national and strategic planning policy.

The extent to which this identified harm is outweighed by the sporting, community and health benefits advanced by the applicant, and whether those benefits amount to the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify the development within MOL, is considered in the following section of this report.

Whilst the site adjoins the Crouch End Conservation Area, Officers do not consider that the proposal would result in material harm to its character, appearance or significance. The proposed canopy would be located outside the Conservation Area and, whilst visible from certain locations, would be experienced primarily in the context of the adjoining sporting and recreational uses that characterise this edge of the Playing Fields. The principal concern arising from the proposal is therefore not its effect on the Conservation Area itself, but rather the prominence of the canopy in views from the end of Tivoli Road and its impact upon the openness and visual character of the adjoining MOL and wider Crouch End Playing Fields.

## **Very Special Circumstances**

### Applicant's Case for Very Special Circumstances

The applicant has submitted a supporting statement setting out the Very Special Circumstances advanced in support of the proposed canopy and pavilion. In summary, it is argued that the proposed structures would be located within an established sporting facility

on an area of existing hardstanding, would benefit from a degree of screening from surrounding residential roads and would represent development associated with an established outdoor sporting use.

The submitted information further states that the proposal would support the long-term operation and financial sustainability of the wider sports club, facilitate the delivery of youth coaching programmes and increase opportunities for participation in sport. It is also argued that the proposal would generate wider community and public health benefits by promoting physical activity and supporting social interaction, whilst enabling these benefits to be maintained on a more reliable year-round basis through the provision of all-weather facilities.

The applicant therefore considers that the sporting, community and health benefits arising from the proposal are of sufficient weight to amount to the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify the development within MOL.

#### Weight to be given to the claimed benefits

In this case it is important to distinguish between the principle of padel as a recreational use and the acceptability of the proposed canopy structures. The Local Planning Authority has already accepted the principle of padel at this site through the grant of planning permission under application HGY/2024/3278 for the installation of four padel courts. Consequently, there is no dispute that padel is a legitimate and increasingly popular outdoor sport capable of broadening sporting opportunities and increasing participation.

The Council also accepts that covered courts may facilitate greater year-round use, increase participation during periods of inclement weather and support additional community access opportunities. However, the principal issue raised by the current application is not the acceptability of padel itself, but whether the erection of substantial canopy structures within MOL constitutes appropriate development and, if not, whether the benefits identified are sufficient to amount to Very Special Circumstances capable of clearly outweighing the identified harm.

Whilst the applicant highlights the growing popularity of padel and the benefits that covered courts may provide, no permanent padel facility is currently operating from this site. The proposed canopy would therefore not safeguard an established use that has been demonstrated to be at risk, but would instead facilitate the introduction of a covered form of development from the outset. Whilst officers acknowledge that the canopy would improve the usability of the courts during periods of adverse weather and may encourage increased year-round participation, the evidence submitted does not demonstrate that such a structure is necessary to secure the delivery of padel at this location. These benefits attract weight in favour of the proposal, however they are not considered, in themselves, to amount to the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify harm to the openness of the MOL.

#### Appeal Decisions

In considering whether the benefits advanced by the applicant amount to Very Special Circumstances, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to relevant appeal decisions concerning covered sporting facilities within areas of protected Metropolitan Open Land (MOL).

In particular, the Local Planning Authority notes the 2014 appeal decision (Ref: APP/Y5420/A/13/2198650) relating to the erection of an inflatable translucent polythene dome over three tennis courts at Holly Park Tennis Club. Whilst acknowledging that the proposal differed in its design, appearance and scale from the current scheme, the Inspector concluded that the development would result in harm to the openness and character of the MOL. In reaching that conclusion, the Inspector accepted that the proposal would provide benefits through increased opportunities for sport and recreation, including more reliable year-round use of the courts, but ultimately found that those benefits were insufficient to outweigh the identified harm.

The appeal decision also recognised the wider character of Crouch End Playing Fields as an area of MOL comprising a range of sporting and recreational uses set within an open landscape. The Inspector attached considerable importance to maintaining the openness and visual character of the MOL, notwithstanding the sporting benefits associated with the proposed enclosure.

Officers also note a more recent appeal decision relating to padel court canopies at the Powerleague site, Bobby Moore Way, Muswell Hill. Whilst each proposal must be assessed on its own merits, the Inspector similarly concluded that, although padel constituted an appropriate sporting use, the associated canopy structures failed to preserve the openness of the MOL and that the benefits advanced were insufficient to amount to Very Special Circumstances.

Taken together, these decisions demonstrate that support for the underlying sporting use does not automatically justify substantial covering structures within MOL. They also reinforce the importance of distinguishing between the acceptability of outdoor sport in principle and the separate question of whether associated buildings or canopy structures give rise to harm to the openness and character of the MOL that is capable of being clearly outweighed by Very Special Circumstances.

### Pavilion Building

In addition to the canopy, a single-storey pavilion building is proposed to the front of the site. The building would provide ancillary facilities associated with the operation of the padel courts, including equipment storage, reception, office and toilet facilities.

The Local Planning Authority accepts that a modest pavilion building may be appropriate in connection with an outdoor sporting use, provided that it remains genuinely ancillary and subordinate to that use. In this instance, the proposed pavilion would serve a clear functional relationship with the padel courts and would provide facilities commonly associated with the operation and management of a sporting facility.

Whilst the pavilion would introduce additional built form within the MOL, it would be limited in scale, single-storey in form and located on an existing area of hardstanding. As such, any resulting harm to openness is considered relatively modest and materially less significant than that arising from the proposed canopy structure. The pavilion is therefore afforded limited weight in the overall assessment of harm arising from the development.

### Cumulative Impact

The Local Planning Authority has also considered the proposal in the context of the wider MOL rather than solely as an individual development associated with Hornsey Cricket Club. Crouch End Playing Fields comprises a large and interconnected area of open recreational land containing a variety of sporting facilities, clubs and areas of informal open space. The contribution made by the site to the wider openness and character of the MOL is therefore an important consideration in the assessment of the proposal.

Whilst the benefits identified by the applicant are acknowledged, including increased sporting participation, improved resilience to adverse weather conditions and enhanced opportunities for year-round use, similar benefits could potentially be advanced in support of proposals for covered sporting facilities elsewhere within Crouch End Playing Fields. In this regard, the Local Planning Authority considers it necessary to assess not only the impact of the current proposal in isolation, but also the implications of introducing similar structures across the wider MOL over time.

If comparable canopy structures were introduced at multiple sporting facilities within the Playing Fields, the cumulative effect would be likely to result in a gradual increase in built form, enclosure and visual intrusion within an area whose defining characteristic is openness. Whilst any individual proposal might be limited to a particular site or club, the aggregated effect of a number of similar developments has the potential to materially alter the character and appearance of the wider MOL and diminish the sense of openness that currently exists across the Playing Fields.

The Local Planning Authority therefore considers that the benefits associated with the current proposal should be afforded weight within the planning balance, but that such benefits are not unique to this particular site and must be considered in the broader context of safeguarding the openness, character and function of Crouch End Playing Fields as a whole. The potential cumulative effect of similar forms of development across the wider MOL is consequently a material consideration in the assessment of the weight to be attributed to the Very Special Circumstances advanced in support of the proposal.

### **Planning Balance and Conclusion**

As set out above, the Local Planning Authority acknowledges that the proposal would provide some sporting, community and health benefits through increased opportunities for year-round participation in padel and improved resilience to periods of adverse weather. These benefits attract weight in favour of the proposal.

However, for the reasons explained in the preceding section of this report, the proposed canopy would introduce a prominent and substantial structure within the MOL, resulting in harm to its openness and visual character. The Local Planning Authority has also had regard to the relevant appeal decisions discussed above, together with the potential cumulative implications of similar forms of development within the wider Crouch End Playing Fields.

Whilst the proposed pavilion building would result in only limited harm by reason of its modest scale and ancillary function, the proposal must be assessed as a whole. Having regard to the nature and extent of the harm identified to the openness and character of the MOL, the Local Planning Authority does not consider that the sporting, community and health benefits advanced by the applicant, either individually or collectively, clearly outweigh that harm.

Accordingly, and taking account of the considerations set out above, the Local Planning Authority concludes that the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify the development have not been demonstrated. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies GB7 and H4 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy G3 of the London Plan and Emerging London Plan Policy PV6.

### **Impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers**

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, whilst promoting health and well-being and maintaining a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High-Quality Design' requires development proposals to provide a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbouring occupiers, whilst Policy DM14 requires development proposals to reduce, manage and mitigate noise impacts.

Objections have been received raising concerns that the proposed padel courts would generate unacceptable levels of noise for nearby residents, increase traffic movements associated with the use and result in overshadowing of the adjacent Lido, thereby reducing the amount of sunlight reaching the pool.

The proposed padel courts would be located approximately 30 metres from the nearest residential property on Tivoli Road, with the flank elevation of that property facing towards the courts. The courts would also be situated approximately 25 metres from the flank elevations of properties on View Crescent and approximately 55 metres from the rear elevations of properties on Glasslyn Road. It is further noted that the nearest residential gardens would be located approximately 23 metres from the proposed courts, resulting in a relatively close relationship between the development and neighbouring outdoor amenity space.

The proposed canopy is not considered likely to result in harmful overshadowing of the adjacent Lido. The structure would be located behind substantial boundary vegetation and, by virtue of its curved roof form, would arch away from the outdoor pool area. Taking account of the siting, orientation and scale of the canopy, officers do not consider that the development would result in a material loss of sunlight to the Lido sufficient to justify refusal of the application.

In respect of noise, officers have considered the application alongside the submitted Noise Impact Assessment. It is acknowledged that padel can generate distinctive noise associated with player activity, ball impacts and contact with the court enclosure. However, the principle of padel has already been accepted at this site through the grant of planning permission for open-air courts, with the activity occupying the footprint of former tennis courts which historically generated noise and activity associated with outdoor sport.

Whilst the principle of padel has therefore been accepted, the current proposal differs from the approved development through the introduction of a canopy, floodlighting and extended operating hours until 22:00. Collectively, these elements have the potential to increase both the intensity and duration of activity at the site, particularly when having regard to the proximity of neighbouring residential gardens. Although the submitted Noise Impact Assessment concludes that noise impacts would remain within acceptable levels, it is noted that the proposal does not include additional mitigation measures, such as acoustic screening, and seeks operating hours extending beyond those previously approved.

Officers are also mindful that background noise levels generally reduce during the later evening period, with noise arising from recreational activity consequently becoming more noticeable and capable of having a greater effect on residential amenity. In this regard, continued use of the courts until 22:00, particularly when combined with floodlighting and the increased prominence of the covered facility, has the potential to increase disturbance to neighbouring occupiers when compared with the extant permission, which restricts use to between 08:00 and 20:00.

Had the proposal been considered acceptable in all other respects, officers would have sought to restrict the hours of operation through planning condition and secure appropriate mitigation measures in order to safeguard residential amenity.

The proposed lighting would comprise directional LED fittings mounted beneath the canopy structure. The applicant advises that the canopy would assist in limiting light spill beyond the courts and officers accept that the proposed arrangement has the potential to reduce wider light dispersion. Whilst lighting did not form part of the extant consent, officers consider that this element of the proposal could potentially be made acceptable through the imposition of planning conditions controlling hours of operation, lighting specification and light spill.

Taking all matters into account, officers do not consider that the proposal would result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers sufficient to warrant refusal in its own right. The recommendation to refuse the application instead relates to the impact

of the development on the openness and character of the MOL, as set out elsewhere within this report.

## **Impact on the Highways Network**

Policy T4 of the London Plan emphasises that development proposals should align with existing and planned transport infrastructure, ensuring that access, capacity and connectivity are effectively integrated. Policy T6 states that car parking provision should correspond to levels of public transport accessibility, with developments designed to provide only the necessary level of parking. Additionally, Policy DM31 of the Haringey Development Management DPD requires developments to promote sustainable modes of travel and seek to minimise reliance on the private car.

The site is accessed via Tivoli Road and is adjacent to an existing parking area that has historically served both the former tennis courts and the wider cricket club. The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement detailing the anticipated trip generation associated with the proposed development.

The Council's Transport Team has raised concerns regarding the submitted Transport Statement, including the justification for retained parking provision, the assessment of parking demand, electric vehicle charging provision, cycle parking details and wider cumulative transport impacts. However, officers note that these concerns principally relate to the level of supporting information submitted and the need for further assessment and clarification, rather than demonstrating that the proposal would result in severe impacts on the highway network.

The principle of padel at this location has already been established through the grant of planning permissions under applications HGY/2024/2070 and HGY/2024/3278, where the associated highways and parking impacts were considered. The site has historically operated as tennis courts and would continue to function as a sporting facility. Whilst the site has a relatively low PTAL rating, it remains located within an established urban area that is accessible by a range of transport modes.

The current proposal does not seek to increase the number of courts already approved or fundamentally alter the nature of the sporting use, with the principal changes relating to the introduction of a canopy, pavilion building, associated lighting and extended operating hours. Whilst covered courts may facilitate greater year-round use of the facility and potentially increase utilisation when compared with the extant permission, officers do not consider that the proposal would substantially increase the overall capacity of the site.

Officers acknowledge that the introduction of a canopy, floodlighting and extended hours may increase the attractiveness of the facility and facilitate a greater intensity of use. However, there is insufficient evidence before the Local Planning Authority to conclude that any associated increase in trips would give rise to severe residual cumulative impacts on the local highway network sufficient to justify refusal.

The proposal retains 40 parking spaces and continues the formalisation of parking arrangements previously approved under application HGY/2024/3278. Whilst Transport Officers have requested further justification in respect of parking demand and management arrangements, officers note there is no evidence before the Council demonstrating significant parking stress arising from the existing approved use of the site.

Two EV charging points and 16 cycle parking spaces are also proposed. Whilst further details may be required regarding their specification and layout, officers consider that the proposed provision has the potential to accord with the aims and objectives of Policies DM31 and DM32 of the Haringey Development Management DPD (2017), Policy SP7 of the Haringey Local Plan, the London Plan and the NPPF.

Whilst officers do not consider that the development would result in severe impacts on the local highway network or parking conditions sufficient to justify refusal, additional information regarding parking demand, parking management arrangements, cycle parking provision and electric vehicle charging infrastructure would likely be required in the event that planning permission were granted. Had the application been considered acceptable in all other respects, such matters could have been addressed through planning conditions, including a Car Parking Management Plan and details of secure cycle parking and EV charging provision, to ensure appropriate management of the facility and minimise impacts on surrounding roads and neighbouring uses.

### **Other matters**

Objections have raised concerns regarding surface water drainage and flooding. The proposal would not introduce any additional impermeable surfaces and any rainwater collected by the proposed canopy would be directed into the existing site drainage system. As such, officers do not consider that the development would materially increase flood risk within the site or elsewhere.

Objections have also raised concerns regarding the potential impact of the development on wildlife, particularly arising from increased lighting and activity associated with the use of the courts. Officers consider that any impacts arising from noise are likely to be limited, having regard to the site's location within an established and active sports club where sporting and recreational activities already take place.

In respect of lighting, it is noted that floodlighting associated with sporting facilities has previously been approved elsewhere within Crouch End Playing Fields and there is no evidence before the Local Planning Authority to suggest that lighting of the nature proposed would result in significant ecological harm. The application site is separated from the adjoining Park Road Leisure Centre by a substantial Leylandii hedge, which primarily serves a screening function and is considered to provide more limited ecological value than mature native tree planting. Furthermore, the proposed lighting would comprise directional LED fittings mounted beneath the canopy structure, thereby assisting in limiting wider light spill beyond the courts.

Whilst officers do not consider that the proposal would be likely to result in significant harm to wildlife, had the application been considered acceptable in all other respects, conditions controlling the specification, operation and direction of the lighting would have been imposed to minimise any potential impacts on ecology and neighbouring amenity.

## **Conclusion**

This application follows on from application HGY/2024/3278, which established the principle of the use of the site for padel courts. The current proposal, however, differs materially from the approved scheme through the introduction of a substantial 9-metre-high canopy, external lighting and a pavilion building and, in doing so, would introduce a significant degree of built form, enclosure and visual prominence within a sensitive area of MOL, resulting in harm to its openness and character.

The proposal would provide sporting, community and health benefits through increased opportunities for year-round participation in padel, improved resilience to periods of adverse weather and enhanced use of the facility. Whilst these benefits are acknowledged and attract weight in favour of the proposal, the Local Planning Authority does not consider that they are of sufficient magnitude to clearly outweigh the harm identified to the openness and character of the MOL or amount to the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify the development.

In reaching this conclusion, officers have also had regard to the relationship of the development with neighbouring residential properties. Whilst the impacts on residential amenity are not considered sufficient, in themselves, to warrant refusal, the introduction of a covered and illuminated sporting facility operating until 22:00 would have the potential to increase the duration and perception of activity at the site, particularly having regard to the proximity of neighbouring residential gardens, the absence of specific mitigation measures such as acoustic screening and the reduction in background noise levels typically experienced during the later evening period. Had the proposal been considered acceptable in all other respects, officers would have sought restrictions on hours of operation together with additional mitigation through planning conditions in order to safeguard residential amenity.

Taking all matters into account, including the importance of safeguarding the openness, character and recreational function of this strategically important area of MOL, the Local Planning Authority concludes that the proposal conflicts with Policies GB7 and H4 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy G3 of the London Plan and Emerging London Plan Policy PV6 and that the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify the development have not been demonstrated.

In reaching this recommendation, the Council has had full regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is satisfied that the decision to refuse planning permission would not result in any disproportionate impact upon persons with protected characteristics. The Council has also taken into account the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and considers that the decision represents a proportionate response

in pursuit of the legitimate planning objective of protecting the openness and character of the MOL.

Having regard to the considerations set out above, this application is recommended for refusal for the reason detailed below.

## **7. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

The application is not considered to be LIABLE FOR CIL.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse Permission

1. The proposed introduction of a 9-metre-high canopy over the padel courts, by reason of its scale, prominence and siting within a prominent and open corner of the wider Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), would fail to minimise its impact on openness and would harm the character and openness of this part of Crouch End Playing Fields, in specific forming a prominent feature at the Tivoli Road entrance to the Playing Fields and interrupting views into the wider MOL. While the proposal would provide sporting, community and health benefits, these are not considered sufficient to clearly outweigh the identified harm and furthermore, the proposal would increase the likelihood of similar structures being sought elsewhere within Crouch End Playing Fields, resulting in cumulative harm to the openness and character of the wider MOL. Accordingly, the proposal constitutes inappropriate development within MOL for which the Very Special Circumstances necessary to justify approval have not been demonstrated and is therefore contrary to Policies GB7 and H4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026), Policy G3 of the London Plan (2021), Policies SP11 and SP13 of the Haringey Local Plan (2017), Policies DM1 and DM20 of the Haringey Development Management DPD (2017) and Emerging London Plan Policy PV6.
2. The proposed development, by reason of the introduction of a covered and illuminated sporting facility operating until 22:00, the proximity of the courts to neighbouring residential properties and gardens, and the absence of adequate mitigation measures to control noise and disturbance, would result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026), Policy D14 of the London Plan (2021) and Policies DM1 and DM14 of the Haringey Development Management DPD (2017).