

## **Submission on Copthall Sports Hub & Mill Hill Open Spaces Master Plan Consultation – Mary O’Connor**

Where will the money come from to implement this? Hopefully not possible and will be retained as natural area.

When the “Copthall Planning Brief” was adopted I queried why there was no ecological assessment when Copthall is in the Green Belt and was assured that it would be included in the Master Plan. But it is not! This is Green Belt with protected species in it, areas for nature conservation as well as Green Belt designation and it is all ignored. If you do not do an ecological survey how do you know what the impact will be on the proposed urbanisation of Copthall and nearby park sites? There is no consideration of the need for dark corridors, with extra lightning being proposed. Why did the Green Belt designation and its value to the natural environment and the planned London Natural Park City not form the base on which to add proposals? And where are measures to retain areas for slow worms, bats and other protected species? Additionally, if it is a Copthall Sports Hub & Mill Hill Open Spaces Master Plan Consultation, why is all the land belonging to Barnet Council not included, regardless if it is on a peppercorn long lease or not?

**Paths:** This is Green Belt which does not require tarmac or clearmac paths for cyclists. The Old Railway Line should remain a wildlife corridor and for pedestrians on the natural surface it now has. This could be promoted to pedestrians more as with the trees and the previous railway surface it is sheltered from the cold winds in winter and the hot sun in summer. Retain the stepped entrances at the ends to discourage through cycling and also install “no cycling” signs. It’s “Mill Hill Old Railway Walk” – keep it for pedestrians and wildlife only. Instead of “shared paths” create a pedestrian-only nature circuit from Mill Hill East tube station along “Mill Hill Old Railway Walk”, then through the old Copthall School site, the Copthall South Fields and up the path around the back of the stadium to meet “Mill Hill old Railway Walk” again and back to Mill Hill East station. “Mill Hill Old Railway Walk” has a base formed years ago when it supported a railway line and since then foliage from trees has built up a wonderful natural surface. It does not need, “Improve surfacing/drainage to prevent water logging” which will instead destroy an ideal pedestrian path. It is worth noting that not permitting cycling in a path does not prevent a cyclist from walking along the path. Not permitting cycling does not exclude anyone.

The internal roads in Copthall have little traffic so are suitable cycling. The aim needs to be to retain the area as natural as possible. Champions Way is an access to the south and any cycle route to this needs to skirt Sunny Hill Park rather than go through it as it is much safer to travel along residential streets than through a park in the dark. Sunny Hill Park needs to retain its dark space for wildlife – there is a suitable alternative. There is no need to create a transport corridor through it – it should retain its tranquillity to be enjoyed. Similarly Arrandene needs to retain its rural character by not having a wide path through it. On page 41, the yellow “proposed new connections” are not needed as there are alternative on-road options. This map does not have the “Mill Hill Old Railway Walk” as a cycleway – keep it for wildlife and pedestrians only – do not destroy it for them!

The path through the old Copthall School site has “Install informal breedon gravel track” but why? The present path is grassed. If it gets worn, why can't it be retained as a natural path if this is a natural area. And please keep it natural – why put buildings in there? A pity the Grounds Maintenance Depot is being built at the main entrance instead of a public space building. Would have been much safer and accessible to have had the Leisure Centre here if any building was to go on this site.

There is a need to retain much of Copthall as Open Space for informal recreation and wildlife – no “Masterplan Precedents”, Play Tower, woodland play trail or BMX trail. These are out of keeping with the Green Belt. Children like to explore the natural environment and can go to playgrounds elsewhere. The opportunity to walk along the Old Railway line or explore the hedgerows and meadows or regenerating woodland will be as appealing as some manmade structure. Children need to have imagination and to explore. Copthall natural areas permit this. Please retain its rural character. BMX is in conflict with the natural environment. They would not confine themselves to the space set aside for them and would soon disturb other areas. They do not belong at Copthall where the natural areas are no abundant.

A new bridge over the A1 Great North Way. Who will pay? The best place will be at the end of Sunny Gardens across from Champions Way where cyclists can use existing roads.

**Car Parking** Why are the Allianz car parks marked as private parking? These are to be available to the public except for the 15 game days per year. And why

have ticketed parking for the new Leisure centre when it has been positioned so that in hours of darkness it can only be safely reached by private vehicle? It is disturbing that it was placed in an area of PTAL = 0 so only those who have private vehicles will be able to attend it regularly. Sadly it will not replace as much pool space as the present centre which already is “uncomfortably busy” at times.

**Wetland** While this is a positive addition it would appear that it would be a necessary requirement as a “primary drainage treatment system” for 3G pitches.

On the subject of pitches, it is disturbing that S106 agreements with Saracens were removed in their latest planning permission. Shows how they are not really interested in supporting the community if it gets in the way!

Figures in this consultation vary from what they noted in their planning application!

They stylised diagrams in this master plan made it very difficult to read.

No to the “Masterplan Activity Hub” and all that goes with it. The Green Belt must not be turned into an amusement park. There are too many protected species and most likely some red listed ones if someone would do a ecological survey.

Why is there nothing in Appendix A: Environmental Feasibility Study?

# Protect the Green Belt!