



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Development Management Service
 Planning and Development Division
 Environment and Regeneration Department
 PO Box 3333
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 LONDON N1 1YA

PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE A		NON-EXEMPT
Date:	18 July 2016	

Application number	P2016/1109/FUL
Application type	Full Planning Application (Council Own)
Ward	Barnsbury
Listed building	Unlisted
Conservation area	Barnsbury
Development Plan Context	Open Space, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
Licensing Implications	None
Site Address	Barnard Park, Copenhagen Street, Islington, London, N1 0NL
Proposal	Refurbishment of east side of Barnard Park involving replacement of existing sports pitch (8,990 square metres) with a new sports pitch (2,763 square metres) that would be repositioned and re-oriented in the centre of the park. The creation of a large 'Village Green' grass area and other works including planting and landscaping, construction of turfed areas and re-design of pathways.

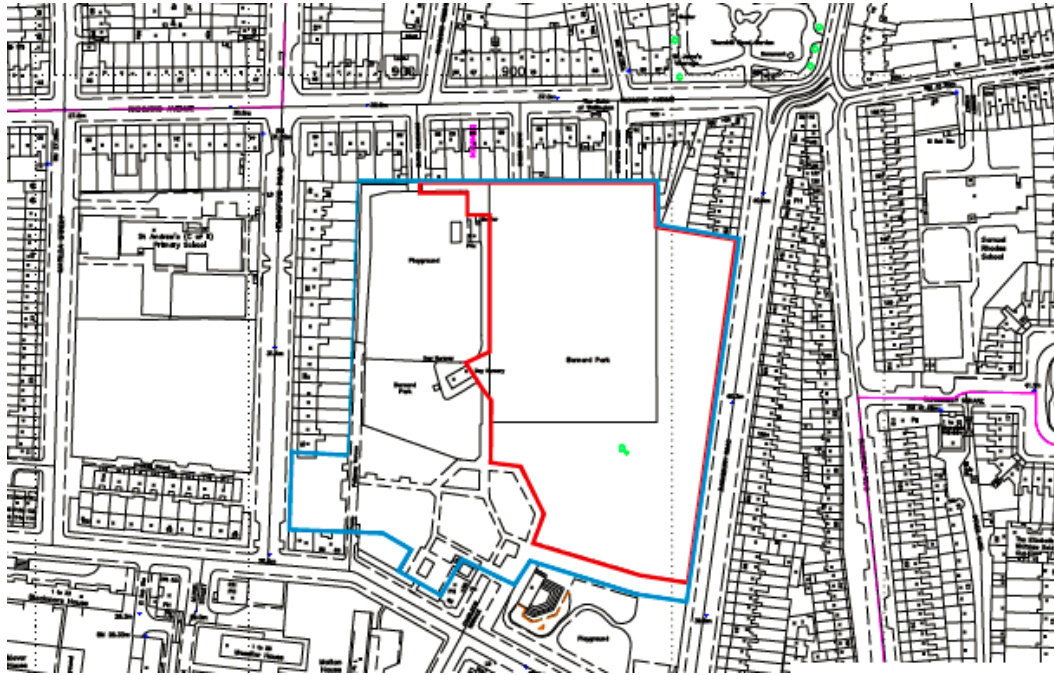
Case Officer	Pedro Rizo
Applicant	London Borough of Islington - Kate Lynch
Agent	None

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to resolve to **GRANT planning permission and referral to Secretary of State:**

1. Subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1;
2. And conditional upon the completion of a Director's Service Legal Agreement securing the heads of terms set out in Appendix 1.

2. Site Plan (Site outlined in BLACK)



3. PHOTOS OF SITE/STREET



Image 1: Aerial photograph showing the existing sports pitch



Image 2: Masterplan of Proposed Development (phase one outlined)



Image 2: View of the park and existing footpaths (access from Barnsbury Road)



Image 4 - View of the east side of the existing sports pitch.

4. SUMMARY:

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the re-development of Barnard Park. The proposed development aims to upgrade the existing park's facilities and include the replacement of the existing sports pitch, the creation of a village green area, the construction of a new path network and landscaping works.
- 4.2 The proposed development would be phased and the application refers to Phase 1, which involves works to the east side of the park, as outlined in Phase 1, where the existing sports pitch is positioned.
- 4.3 Although the improvement works in the masterplan show other forms of development for additional phases, the proposed works are shown within a red line that outlines the east side of the park (as shown in drawing number IA-365-LMP-P01).
- 4.4 As background information, the scheme has been subject to extensive consultation with reference to the proposed preferences for the park. In 2005, the Council interviewed stakeholders and a group was formed to discuss the requirements of the individual stakeholder groups for amenity provision within the park. A formal consultation was carried out by the Council's Greenspace Department between the 14th September 2014 and the 30th November 2014. Following this consultation, the proposed master plan, which will be phased in stages, was produced. The plan involves the re-positioning and reduction of the sports pitch, which is the main point of contention on the application.
- 4.5 The application site is allocated under policy DM6.3 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013) as public open space where development is not normally permitted and the proposed works involve the replacement of the existing sports pitch

with a smaller facility along with other landscaping and creation of a “village green”. It is considered that this loss of sports facility is outweighed by the increased functionality that would result from the creation of a new pitch, path network and large village green area, which would provide space for both formal and informal recreation. Following the consultation that was carried out between the 14th September 2014 and 30th November 2014, it was concluded that there is strong demand for a replacement of the existing provision with an upgraded facility, which would be in keeping with modern requirements of a sports pitch in order to increase the functionality of the sports facility. On balance, the benefits that the proposed works would bring to the park outweigh the harm caused by the reduction of the size of the existing sports pitch facility.

- 4.6 Given that the proposed sports pitch would have a greater separation from neighbouring properties and the imposition of conditions restricting hours of operation for the sports pitch, the proposed replacement sports pitch would have no significant detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 4.7 The application is brought to Committee because of the number of objections received and the application has been submitted by the Council. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

5. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 5.1 Barnard Park is designated as public open space and located on the southern fringe of Islington. The park is the largest open space in the southern side of Islington and has an area of approximately 4 hectares. The main park is bordered by Copenhagen Street, Barnsbury Road, Richmond Avenue and Hemingford Road, with an annex park which is separated from the main park by Hemingford Road. The annex and western side of the park are not part of the application.
- 5.2 The main entrance to the park is via Copenhagen Street along Charlotte Terrace, which is a small cul de sac used for occasional parking and maintenance of vehicles. However, the park contains secondary entrances at Barnsbury Road, Hemingford Road and Boxworth Grove. The park abuts the rear gardens of terraces along Hemingford Road and residential properties at Richmond Avenue.
- 5.3 There park contains three buildings on its western side, which are known as the Park Keeper’s Building, the One O’Clock Club Building and the Adventure Playground Building. In addition, the park contains various facilities, consisting of the main sports pitch, paths, fencing and playing area.
- 5.4 The park’s history dates back to the 1960’s and 1970’s and was originally formed by a large amount of land that suffered from damage in the war. The park was therefore created as a response to the need for outdoor recreational and green space in the south side of Islington.
- 5.5 The park is located within the Barnsbury Conservation Area and the site is designated as Open Public Space and as a Site of Importance of Nature Conservation (SINC).

6. PROPOSAL (IN DETAIL):

- 6.1 Full planning permission is sought for a phased development to the park. The proposed development would be positioned on the western side of the park, as outlined in red on the proposed masterplan. This planning application deals with Phase 1 of the proposed masterplan.

Sports pitch:

- 6.2 The application seeks to replace the existing sports pitch (8,990 square metres) with a new sports pitch (2,763 square metres) and a village green area (2,986 square metres). The sports pitch would be re-positioned in the centre of the park in order to provide a greater separation from adjacent neighbouring residential properties along Barnsbury Road. The proposed sports pitch would measure 65 metres x 42 metres and would have a modern artificial 3G surface that would be 210mm in depth. The proposed sports pitch would have new retaining walls and fencing that would measure 4.5 metres in height. The development also proposes flood lighting for the new 3G sports pitch.

New path networks:

- 6.3 The proposed development includes the construction of a new path network in order to enhance connectivity across the park. The design includes the construction of a large circular footpath that would surround the village green, which would be used as an informal exercise track. The existing entrance from Barnsbury Road would be connected to the new network and the existing slope entrance at Boxworth Grove (north entrance) would be regraded from a 1:11 to a 1:17 slope. These works would involve substantial tree works, surface treatments and lighting design.

6.4 'Village Green' Grass Area:

The circular 'Village Green' area would be positioned on the northern side of the proposed sports pitch and would constitute a new park hub space with gym equipment, picnic tables and table tennis tables that would provide informal sports activities.

7. RELEVANT HISTORY:

Planning Applications:

- 7.1 **860200** – (Barnard Park Play Building). The addition of a second storey to provide additional recreation space with ancillary office and store. Approved on the 30/05/1986.
- 7.2 **881112** – (Barnard Park Extension). Installation of railings on Matilda Street and Hemingford Road frontages and at the rear of 84 – 110 Copenhagen Street. Approved on the 22/03/1989.
- 7.3 **880784** - (Barnard Park). Enclosure of existing covered seating to provide staff room and toilets. Approved on the 12/09/1988.

Enforcement:

- 7.4 None.

Pre-Application Advice:

- 7.5 **Q2015/4613/MIN:** Pre-application advice was sought for a phased re-development of Barnard Park. The scheme involved the two following phases:

Phase 1:

Re-location of the existing full size sport pitch and re-designing the layout and path circulation within the park. These works included tree works, surface treatment and lighting design.

Phase 2:

Re-designing the main entrance to the park (via Charlotte Terrace) and erecting a new park building facility with toilets.

8. CONSULTATION

Public Consultation:

8.1 Letters were sent to 482 occupants of adjoining and nearby properties at Everilda Street, Islington Place, Leirum Street, Copenhagen Street, Charlotte Terrace, Barnsbury Road, Cloudesley Road, Richmond Avenue and Hemingford Road. On the 21st April 2016 a site notice was placed outside the main entrance via Charlotte Terrace and the application was advertised in the Islington Gazette on the 14th April 2016. In addition, five additional site notices were displayed on the 10th May 2016 on five entrances to the park, as requested by residents. Although the public consultation expired on the 12th May 2016, it is the Council's practice to continue to consider representations made up until the date of a decision.

8.2 At the time of writing this report, 14 letters of objection and 70 letters of support had been received from the public with regard to the application. In addition, 2 additional letters, which provided comments and did not raise an objection against the application, were received. A total of 86 letters of representation were therefore received and the issues raised can be summarised as follows (with the paragraph that provides responses to each issue indicated within brackets):

8.3 Objections:

- The reduction of the size of the sports pitch would have a detrimental impact on Barnard Park (paragraphs 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4 and 12.5).
- The existing sports pitch should be upgraded and not built over (paragraph 12.5)
- The proposed open grass area would be underused and would not be suitable for sports (paragraphs 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4).
- The proposed development would change the nature and character of the park (paragraphs 14.2, 14.3 and 14.4).

8.4 Support:

- The proposed design provides a feature for everybody in the community. It addresses the needs of young, old, families and disabled residents.
- The proposed facilities would be family friendly.
- The proposed features would enhance the appearance of the park.
- The proposed hub would provide informal sports facilities, which are required within the park.
- The proposed high quality playing area would result in more sporting usage.
- The proposed external path would benefit people of all ages.
- A reduced sports pitch would be an improvement as it would provide more flat grass, enhancing the visual appearance of the park and it would have more intensive use than the existing sports pitch.

8.5 Other Comments:

- Dog only playground would be welcomed (paragraph 19.2).

- Cycle paths should be reviewed by reason of safety to pedestrians (paragraph 19.1).
- Wild life proof containers should be provided (paragraph 19.1).
- Opening hours should be restricted (paragraph 15.3).
- Lightning columns should be reviewed (paragraph 15.3).

Internal Consultees:

- 8.6 **Conservation & Design Officer:** No objections.
- 8.7 **Acoustic Officer:** No objections subject to conditions restricting operating hours of new sports pitch, submission of details of rebound fencing on the sports pitch and submission of a report detailing the lighting scheme and predicted light levels.
- 8.8 **Policy Officer:** No objections. The key issue is the reduction in the size of the sports pitch, given that policies seek to maintain quantity of provision. The justification is important in order to determine if on balance, the proposal is acceptable. The following information should be reviewed:
- Can the existing 11-a-side pitch be refurbished to increase its use?
 - How sports and recreation provision will be affected within the site and local area?
 - How the local population is provided for in terms of pitch provision. Have there been/will there be any other improvements to the provision of sports pitches in the wider area?
 - How will increase/improvements to open space cater for sport and recreation? Can this be quantified? How would the proposed new village green accommodate opportunities for sport to help mitigate the reduction in pitch size?
 - How the new proposal compares to what is there currently and in what ways it might help to enhance use, access and/or capacity?

Further information was submitted by Greenspace to address these points and to justify the reduction of the size of the sports pitch. It is now considered that the concerns of the Policy Officer have been addressed by the additional information that has been submitted, which is included in section 12 of this report.

- 8.9 **Tree Officer:** No objections subject to condition requiring submission of an arboricultural method statement.
- 8.10 **Crime Prevention Officer:** No objections. The overall design and layout appears to be good from a crime prevention perspective. However, it is recommended that the planting is maintained at scrubs and foliage to a height of 1.5 metres and the tree canopies to be above 2 metres to allow significant sight lines across the development.

External Consultees:

- 8.11 **Sport England:** Objects to the proposal, by reason of the proposed reduction of the existing sports pitch, which provides an important sports facility to the Borough. There is clear evidence available that there is existing demand for extra full-sized floodlit AGP provision in Islington. The proposal does not meet the exceptions set out in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

Barnard Park has a full sized, fenced, redgra pitch with floodlights. Whilst the pitch is in poor condition and the floodlights no longer work, it continues to be informally used by the local community for sport, which in itself is evidence of demand.

One small-sided for 7-a-side, offers little capacity for a range of sporting activities to be delivered. Providing a full size floodlit artificial pitch within the park would enable a broad range of partners to provide sporting opportunities for a wide section of the community. This would have various social, health and sporting benefits for residents.

The London Borough of Islington currently has 4 full size artificial grass pitches across three sites. The average number of a full sized floodlit football AGPs in a London borough is five and so Islington is below this. There is a shortage of circa 3.8 full sized floodlit football AGPs in the Borough and there is significant unmet demand for floodlit artificial grass pitches in Islington and surrounding boroughs.

The benefits of reinvestment in a full size floodlit artificial grass pitch would include youth engagement programs, local health provision, school's football, training and employment and community and club football.

Reducing the facility in size will result in a loss of an area that has the potential to provide increased opportunities for sport in the local area. Should the local planning authority be minded to grant planning permission for the proposal, the application should be referred to the Secretary of State, via the National Planning Casework Unit.

- 8.12 **Environment Agency:** No comments received at time of writing this report.
- 8.13 **Metropolitan Public Gardens Association:** The overall design and layout would be acceptable under a crime prevention perspective. However, it is advised that foliage is kept to a maximum height of 1.5 metres and the tree canopies to be above 2.0 metres in order to allow sightlines across the development.
- 8.14 **Friends of Barnard Park:** Support the application. The phase one scheme addresses the need of a wide variety of user groups, including children, families, team sport players, runners, dog walkers and the elderly. The proposed pitch would provide a better quality of use for sports players. The new village green would create an informal sport and play area for children and family and the seating area would be an important central hub in the park.

9. RELEVANT POLICIES

Details of all relevant policies and guidance notes are attached in Appendix 2. This report considers the proposal against the following development plan documents:

National Guidance

- 9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) seek to secure positive growth in a way that effectively balances economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF and PPG are material considerations and have been taken into account as part of the assessment of these proposals. Development Plan.
- 9.2 The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2015 (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011), Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, The Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013. The policies of the Development Plan that are considered relevant to this application are listed at Appendix 2 to this report.

Designations

- 9.3 The site has the following designations under the London Plan 2015, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013 and Site Allocations 2013.
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation SINC
 - Major Cycle Route
 - Local Cycle Route
 - Local View from Archway Road
 - Local View from Archway Bridge

10. ASSESSMENT:

- 10.1 The main issues arising from the proposal relate to:
- Land Use
 - Sports Facilities
 - Open Space
 - Biodiversity, Landscaping and Trees
 - Design and Visual Impact
 - Amenity
 - Highways
 - Transport
 - Inclusive Design and Accessibility

11. LAND USE:

- 11.1 The application site, Barnard Park, is allocated as Open Space under Policy DM6.3 of the Islington's adopted Development Management Policies (2013), which states that development is not permitted on any public open space. Barnard Park consists of approximately 4 hectares of total open space and the Phase 1 re-development under this application has a total area of approximately 2 hectares. This space includes the existing sports pitch, which has 8,990 square metres. The site is designated site as importance nature conservation area (SINC).
- 11.2 The proposed development would involve works on public open space therefore the weighting of the potential benefits in promoting the use of the open space should be reviewed. The proposal involves replacing the existing sports pitch with a smaller facility, which would comprise a 36% reduction in overall sports pitch provision in the park. However, the improvement to the existing path network and the creation of a village

green area (2,986 square metres) along with the provision of an improved, albeit smaller pitch, should be considered against the reduction of the size of the existing sports pitch. On balance, it is considered that the provision of a new village green area and associated facilities along with the provision of a new sports pitch with floodlights will enhance the park and the functionality of the public open space. As such, it is considered that the exceptional circumstances of this case would justify the reduction of the existing sports pitch facility, which is in poor condition.

- 11.3 The proposed new circular village green grass area, which would provide space for informal sport and general recreational activities, would constitute a new hub space and become the central focus of the park. This village green area would have new picnic tables and table tennis tables that would provide informal sports activities within the park and would be used by different groups within the community.
- 11.4 The existing green space within the park contains 8,280 square metres in area, which would be increased by 1,645 square metres. The proposed plan aims to enhance the existing path network within the park by increasing the surfaced footpaths by 840 square metres and connect existing entrances to the new network. For example, the entrance from Barnsbury Road would be connected to the new internal network and would allow a direct access to the main amenities of the park. Additionally, the existing entrance from Boxworth Grove would be regraded from a 1:11 existing slope to a 1:17 slope.
- 11.5 Given the provision of additional open space, increase of planting area/tree cover and recreational facilities with an enhanced connectivity, the proposed development would not conflict with policy DM6.3 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013), which requires any form of development to open spaces to provide benefits that outweigh the principle that development is not permitted on any public open space.

12. **SPORTS FACILITIES:**

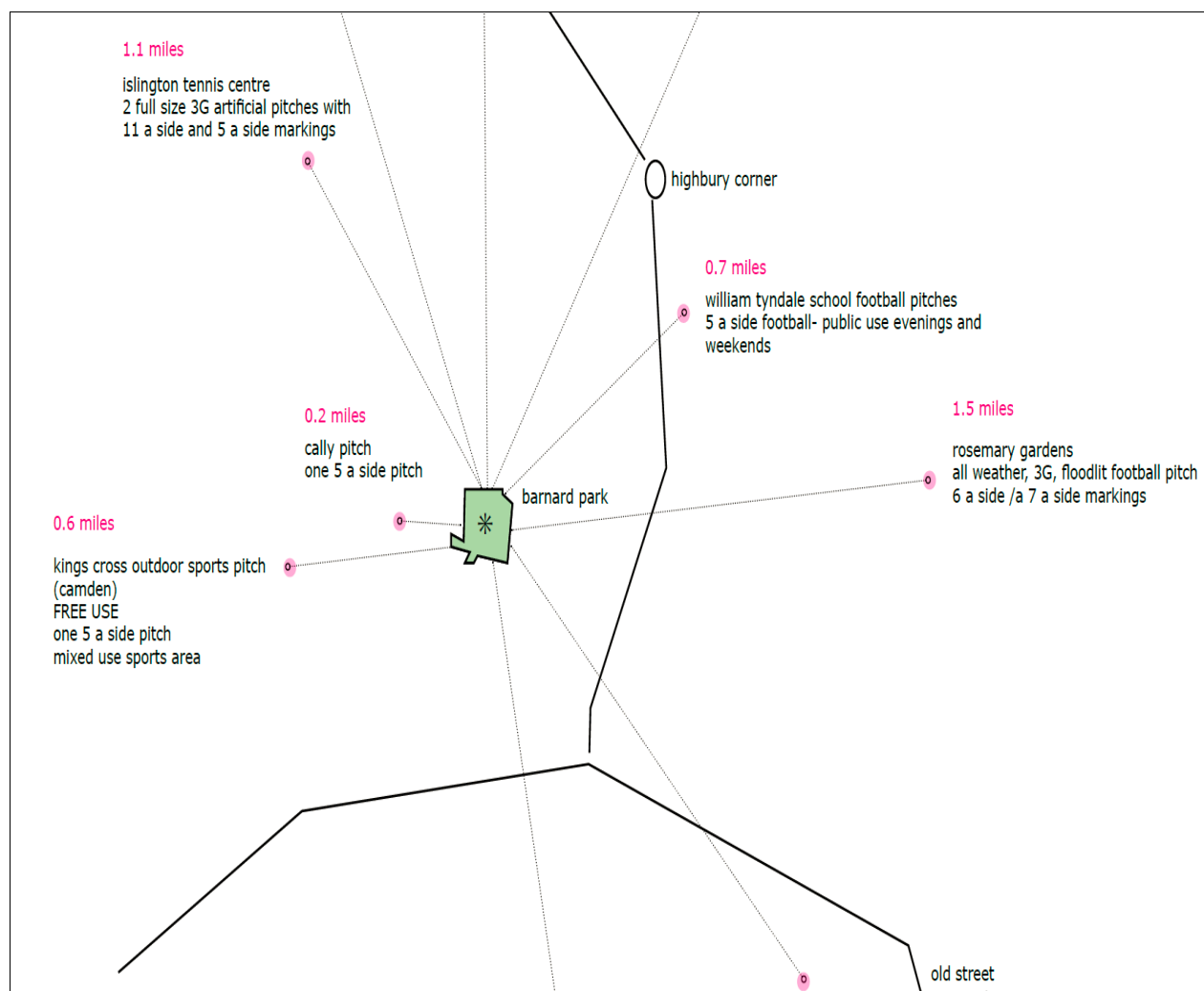
- 12.1 The proposed development involves the reduction in the area of the existing sports pitch, by removing the existing sports pitch facility(8,990.00 square metres) and replacing this facility with a new sports pitch (2,763.00 square metres). The proposed development involves a 36% reduction in overall sports provision in the park. The new sports pitch would be re-located to the central area of the park and would abut the south side of the proposed village green grass area. The proposed sports pitch would be controlled and managed by the London Borough of Islington.
- 12.2 The proposed sports pitch would have eight floodlights that would measure 15 metres in height. A condition has been recommended in order to assess further details of the proposed lighting scheme and predicted light levels on neighbouring properties.
- 12.3 The proposed 3G sports pitch would comprise a 210 mm in depth rubber infilled carpet that would sit over a compacted stone base. The sports pitch would be enclosed with a 4.5 metres in height black plastic coated wire fence. A condition has been recommended in order to assess details of the proposed fencing, in order to ensure that noise from footballs hitting the fencing is mitigated by appropriate rubber fixings to reduce resonance.
- 12.4 Core Strategy Policy CS17 safeguards existing formal sport and recreation facilities and seeks to improve their quality, accessibility and capacity. In addition, London Plan Policy 3.19 resists the net loss of sports and recreation facilities. Policy DM6.4 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013) provides further detail for proposals that involve the loss of existing sport/recreation and advises that the loss of play spaces would be resisted unless a replacement play space of equivalent size and functionality is

provided to meet the needs of the local population. Policy DM6.4 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013) mentions that the loss of play spaces would be resisted unless *"a replacement play space of equivalent size and functionality is provided to meet the needs of the local population. Where this is not possible development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where there are over-riding planning merits to the proposal and the capacity of other local play spaces shall be increased"*.

- 12.5 In light of the policy guidance, which in principle resists the reduction of formal sports facilities, the application provides justification to address the concerns over the reduction of the sports pitch. This justification has been reviewed by the Council's Public Realm Officer, who has provided the following comments in order to address the considerations that were outlined by the Council's Policy Officers and the points of objection raised by Sport England:
- 12.6 The existing 11 a side pitch is in poor condition and would require a total refurbishment and re-build to reinstate the pitch as a working facility. An extensive consultation was conducted with local residents and park users including the assessment of several design options, combined with advice from landscape architects. The Greenspace Service is of the view that the retention of the full sized pitch would be a detriment to the success of the overall park and not constitute an improvement to the Greenspace as a whole.
- 12.7 The main concerns expressed in the public consultation and ongoing discussions with stakeholders is the dominance of the 11 a side pitch within the park, as this:
- Reduces the available space for other park uses, such as informal recreation and events.
 - Creates a barrier across the park, forcing users to walk the 'long way round' to get from one side of the park to the other.
 - Noise caused to local residents, caused by the proximity to the northern boundary.
 - Light pollution to local residents, caused by the proximity to the northern boundary.
 - The reduction of sightlines across the park, making it feel smaller and reducing the perception of safety.
 - The existing hard surface Redgra pitch and surrounding fencing, do not present a welcoming feel to the park, but present an obstructed view that cuts across the middle of the park.
- 12.8 A large majority of those who participated in the consultation did not want the 11 a side pitch to remain and were happy to see a reduced size pitch re-located within the park.
- 12.9 Currently, there is no substantial contiguous area of amenity grass for informal amenity, events and sports use. Many responses to the consultation highlighted the lack of a flat, expansive area of amenity grass that fulfills this role. The proposed design gives a stronger, more legible design for the park, which will provide a wider range of informal use and therefore a wider range of park users in the future.
- 12.10 For the above reasons, the Council believes that the proposed design achieves a balanced design providing high quality sports provision as well as space for a range of park activities and users.

Sports and recreation provision

- 12.11 Currently there is little open and sunny area which park users can access, given the size of Barnard Park in the context of the generally small sizes of green space in Islington. There is some informal recreation that occurs in the 11 a-side pitch (other than ball games or organized sport) but this is very low given the footprint and dominance of the facility.
- 12.12 The proposed scheme provides a significant increase in available amenity space for recreation such as walking, picnics, sunbathing, socialising and informal ball sports and activities.
- 12.13 The 11 a side pitch is a large space that can be used for some events. Whilst it is larger than the proposed village green, the increased size comes at the expense of the wider park as the fences prevent easy access around the site.
- 12.14 The Council is confident that all events currently held on the 11 a side pitch could in future be accommodated in the Village Green. This will be a grassed area, which is easily accessible from across the park and will be able to hold different sized events and still leave space for general park use.
- 12.15 Currently the 11 a side pitch is used for jogging and informal training. Because of its size, users tend to stay within the fenced area as there is not easy running access to other areas in the park.
- 12.16 The proposed scheme incorporates measured tracks around the perimeter of the park, allowing joggers to gauge and plan their runs. Gym equipment has also been provided in key locations to provide additional fitness facilities, such as table tennis.
- 12.17 The current provision is for 11 a-side matches on an old Redgra pitch with degraded surface. This is used by several local clubs and organisations, both for football and other organised training, as well as on an informal basis for ball games.
- 12.18 The proposed scheme allows for a high quality 3G surface, with one 7 a-side pitch that can also accommodate two 5 a-side pitches. This would have a varied management plan to allow public and private access at different times (i.e. formal and informal).
- 12.19 Islington has the second lowest amount of open space of any London borough, with only 201 hectares of open space. Because of the lack of available green space, Islington's parks and open spaces have many competing pressures on green space.
- 12.20 There are several locations within walking distance of Barnard Park for organized football. There are two 11 a-side pitches within a one mile from Barnard Park located at the Market Road Pitches, near to the Islington Tennis Centre, off Caledonian Road. Walking further north at Whittington Park there is also one 11 a-side football pitch. The majority of the pitches available for public use are run by the Council's leisure team and can be booked via the GLL website.
- 12.21 Other than proposals at Barnard Park, there is no proposed improvement to sport pitches planned for the wider area in the immediate future. However, the past two years have seen significant investment in Market Road Pitches and the Sobell Centre pitches (two 5 –a side pitches) which have been upgraded and refurbished.
- 12.22 The following map shows the location of football pitches relative to Barnard Park:



12.23 However, for reference, the size of the proposed village green is 2,986 square metres and the new sports pitch will be 2,763 square metres. Both spaces will support sports activities. Additionally, the village green will provide a more flexible open space to encourage other types of sport (cricket, rounders etc) alongside the football provision.

12.24 It is considered that the proposed scheme provides a diverse and multi functioning park than is currently allowed, whilst still providing a high quality sport provision that can be used by all groups, ages and backgrounds. The existing 11 a-side pitch sport facility is replaced with a 7 a-side sport facility. It is considered that on balance, the proposed scheme would enhance the use and sports capacity of the park when considering the benefits that the proposed design allows for, such as improvements to access, quality of surfacing, legibility of the space, modern floodlighting, perceived safety, a more welcome environment, a high quality formal sport provision, good levels of informal sport provision, more diverse planting, a more flexible and accessible events space and more socially welcome and accessible park.

13. **OPEN SPACE:**

13.1 The proposed open space involves the creation of a village green area that would accommodate opportunities for sports, which should mitigate the impact that would result from reducing the sports pitch. The village green would contain a circular footpath route, which would be an informal exercise track and new table tennis tables.

- 13.2 The proposal includes the provision of two outdoor table tennis tables within the circular village green area. The tables would be installed over a reinforced grass surface to reduce surface wear. The plans include additional running routes through the park and the proposed play areas aim to create additional facilities for informal sports.
- 13.3 Although the provision of additional recreation areas (consisting of two outdoor table tennis tables and an outdoor gym equipment area) within the circular village hub constitutes permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A (Development by Local Planning Authorities) of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, these works are not considered in isolation from the proposed scheme and form part of a holistic approach for assessing the application, particularly as the scheme involves the reduction of the existing sports pitch, which requires robust justification.
- 13.4 It is considered that on balance, the proposed scheme would enhance the use and sports capacity of the park and that there are sufficient considerations that mitigate the reduction of the size of the sports pitch. The proposed development would enable members of the community to use the park, as the proposed village green area and its facilities would be family friendly. In the absence of existing informal sports facilities and appropriate connectivity within the park, the proposed development would be seen as an improvement to the park and would provide significant public benefits that would enhance the overall functionality of Barnard Park.
- 13.5 Due to these considerations, the proposal would provide sufficient justification that outweigh the reduction of the sports pitch facility and would meet the requirements of policies DM6.3 and DM6.4 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013) and Core Strategy Policy CS17. On balance, the scheme provides over-riding merits that would address the needs raised during the consultation process for the development.

14. **BIODIVERSITY, LANDSCAPING AND TREES:**

- 14.1 Barnard Park is within a Site of Importance of Nature Conservation (SINC) and the site falls within an area that has been identified as being deficient in access to nature. Core Strategy Policy CS15 (2011) highlights that access to nature will be increased by improving the biodiversity value of parks and gardens. In addition, policy DM6.2 of the Islington's DMP (2013) states that SINC's will be strongly protected and those public open spaces shall incorporate areas of biodiversity habitat that complement surrounding habitats.
- 14.2 The application includes a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for the park (dated December 2015), which advises that the majority of the vegetation within the park consists of uniform amenity grass, with parcels of formal planting and vegetation. There are also a number of mature trees across the site, which provide value for nesting. The proposed plans propose an increase in the number of trees in the park, in order to increase the wildlife value for birds. Furthermore, the proposal includes the provision of a native hedgerow planting area (wildlife area) that includes a wildlife pond on the north side, which would provide further cover and nesting opportunities for birds and food growing space.
- 14.3 The Arboricultural Report (dated 14th March 2016) has been reviewed by the Council's Tree Officer, which raised no arboricultural objections against the proposal, subject to a condition requiring a scheme for protecting retained trees. The tree survey indicates that there are 200 trees and 2 tree groups within the entire park and that these are one of the main assets of the site. The works involve the removal of six trees and the planting of thirty five trees. Furthermore, new footpaths would have surface falls to areas of landscaping and the scheme would provide adequate permeable surfaces. Due to the

above, the proposed development is considered consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS15 (2011) and policy DM6.2 of the Islington's DMP (2013).

14.4 In terms of landscaping, policy DM6.5 of the Islington's DMP (2013) mentions how development must protect, contribute to and enhance the landscape, biodiversity value and growing conditions of the site. The proposed development aims to maximise the provision of soft landscaping, which results from the repositioning and construction of the sports pitch and it is therefore in accordance to policy DM6.5 of the Islington's DMP (2013).

15. **DESIGN AND VISUAL IMPACT:**

15.1 Islington's Planning Policies and Guidance encourage high quality design which complements the character of an area. Given that the park is situated within the Barnsbury Conservation Area, any visual impact should be carefully considered, in order to ensure that the development is acceptable under visual terms and provides a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the conservation area.

15.2 The proposed development is also assessed against the Islington's Urban Design Guide, which mentions how any re-development should recognise the recreational, amenity and ecological value of the open space and identify how the works can be best fit within the wider area. The Urban Design Guide adds how *"Open spaces should normally be coherently designed and well overlooked by surrounding development that fronts on to them and defines their edge. The shape and form of the open space should be positively determined and should influence the layout of the surrounding development as much as the development shapes of the space"*. Furthermore, the guide mentions how *"public space should be designed with a purpose in mind. Space left over after development, without a function, is a wasted resource and will detract from a place's sense of identity"*.

15.3 The proposed works seek to enhance and maximise the potential for the park, by the provision of the village green area and enhanced connectivity, with new footpaths and improved facilities that would result in new attractions for the park.

15.4 In terms of particular design guidelines, the Barnsbury Conservation Area Design Guidelines mention how *"the existing character and appearance of the area is created by the survival of 18th and 19th century buildings and that it is important that new buildings blend in with and reinforce this character. The guide mentions how modern materials (glass, steel and concrete) may be acceptable as long as the design of the new building acknowledges the scale and character of the area"*.

15.5 The application involves development for phase 1 of the masterplan and therefore no buildings that would affect the character and appearance of the park and the Barnsbury Conservation Area are being proposed. The Design and Conservation Officer therefore raised no objections against the visual impact that would result from the replacement of the existing sports pitch with a smaller facility and the creation of a village green grass area.

16. **AMENITY:**

16.1 The proposed works raise no concerns with reference to impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties. The position of the proposed sport pitch would have a distance of approximately 45 metres from the closest residential properties at Barnsbury Road and the letters of objection do not raise concerns over impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of daylight/sunlight, privacy, safety, noise and general disturbance.

- 16.2 The development has been reviewed by the Council's Public Protection Officer, who advised that the proposed pitch is arranged at a 45 degree angle away from residential properties at Barnsbury Road, which are the nearest receptors. The proposed arrangement is considered more appropriate to the existing arrangement, by reason of the greater separation from the residential properties at Barnsbury Road, which should reduce levels of noise and disturbance.
- 16.3 As advised by the Public Protection Officer, the proposed development would be acceptable, subject to conditions restricting the operating hours.
- 16.4 Bearing in mind the open nature of the proposed fencing and its overall height of 4.50 metres, it is not considered that the development would give rise to any material adverse impacts on adjoining resident's amenity levels in terms of loss of daylight/sunlight, increased enclosure or privacy.
- 16.5 In addition, a condition has been recommended in order to control the noise that can be generated from footballs hitting the fencing, by ensuring that the proposed fencing provides adequate vibration and resonance levels.
- 16.6 The proposed lighting scheme involves the installation of eight columns that would measure 15 metres in height. A condition has been recommended requiring a full report detailing the lighting scheme and predicted light levels at neighbouring properties in order to ensure that the residential amenities of neighbouring residents is protected.
- 16.7 In light of the above and the a recommended condition restricting operating hours of the sports pitch (09:00 – 21:00 weekdays and 09:00 – 20:00 weekends) the proposed development would not conflict with policy DM2.1 of the Islington's DMP (2013).

17. **HIGHWAYS**

- 17.1 The park would continue to be serviced from the same access points on Charlotte Terrace. Whilst the scheme involves upgrading the existing north entrance at Boxworth Grove by regrading the existing 1:11 slope with a new 1:17 slope , there would be no impact on the access for vehicles at entrance points. In the absence of any impact, there are no concerns under a highway point of view.

18. **TRANSPORT**

- 18.1 No objections have been received in relation to level of parking required and no on-site parking for visitors or staff is proposed. Given the close proximity of the park to the Angel Tube Station and numerous bus stops, the site is considered to be well located to access by sustainable means.
- 18.2 Although the Design and Access Statement mentions that five cycle hoops would be installed within the park, no details for the provision of cycle parking are shown in the drawings. Policy DM8.4 of the Islington's DMP (2013) mentions how "*it must be demonstrated that there are no road safety conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles entering, parking and servicing a development. Cyclist entrances must be safe and convenient and separate cycle lanes should be demarcated*".
- 18.3 In light of the above requirements, it is recommended to attach a condition, requiring details of cycle parking and routes within the park that takes into consideration connectivity, public routes and a proposed cycle network within the park.

19. **INCLUSIVE DESIGN AND ACCESSIBILITY:**

19.1 Although the proposed scheme would provide new routes to enhance the connectivity within the park, the pedestrian and step free entrances would be retained. The existing entrance from Boxworth Grove would be regraded in order to reduce the slope. The development would therefore not conflict with policy DM2.1 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013) and the Council's Access Officer has raised no objections against the proposal with regards to access. The park would continue to provide ease of use and deliver spaces that are convenient and enjoyable to everyone.

20. **OTHER MATTERS:**

20.1 Letters of representation have advised that cycle paths should be reviewed for the safety of pedestrians and opening hours should be controlled, in order to safeguard amenity. These points of concern are addressed and conditions restricting hours of operation of the proposed sports pitch and details of lighting are recommended. In addition, details of proposed cycle facilities are also requested by a separate condition.

20.2 Although a letter of representation advised that a 'dog only' playground and the installation of wild life proof containers would be welcomed, these are not facilities being proposed under Phase 1 for the re-development of the park. However, the proposed scheme provides a wildlife pond on the north side, which would provide further cover and nesting opportunities for birds and food growing space. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for the park (dated December 2015) is considered complete and provides an increase in wildlife value within the park.

21. **Directors' Level Service Agreement:**

21.1 The proposed development would be subject to a Community Use and Management Agreement to ensure that the space is suitably managed and public access is guaranteed. This safeguard would also secure the appropriate management and long term use and intensity of use of the sports space. It is considered that this agreement to provide these details coupled with controls on light levels and hours of operation would ensure that the amenity of neighbouring residential properties is safeguarded. This is secured through a Directors' Level Service Agreement which operates in a similar manner to a S106 Agreement.

22. **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Summary

22.1 Full planning permission is sought for the re-development of the east side of Barnard Park (phase 1 of the proposed masterplan). The proposed works seek to upgrade the existing facilities of the park and include the replacement of the existing sports pitch with a smaller sports pitch, which would result in a 36% reduction in overall sports provision in the park in terms of the physical area for sports.

22.2 The application follows extensive consultation exercises by the Council, which conclude that a reduced sports pitch would be acceptable if this new facility would provide a higher quality surface that could be used for both public and private hire. Given that the scheme provides new facilities, which include new pathways, additional open/recreational spaces and a new park hub that would enable other informal sports and activities within the park, it is considered that the scheme provides a robust justification for replacing the existing sports pitch facility, in accordance to the requirements of policies DM6.3 and DM6.4 of the Islington's Development Management Policies (2013).

- 22.3 It is considered that the redevelopment of the park would not raise concerns over design and impact on the character and appearance of the Barnsbury Conservation Area. In addition, the impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring properties has been carefully considered. It is recommended that a condition is imposed restricting the times of operation of the new sports pitch facility. As such, the proposal would not have a significant detriment impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 22.4 The proposed development includes the provision of further planting and landscaping on the south side of the park. A condition is recommended, which requires the submission of an arboricultural method statement, in order to ensure that biodiversity, sustainability and visual amenity is enhanced as part of the scheme.
- 22.5 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable and to be broadly in accordance with the Development Plan Policies.

Conclusion

- 23 It is recommended that planning permission be granted (and referral to Secretary of State) subject to conditions as set out in APPENDIX 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS.

APPENDIX 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATION A:

That planning permission be granted and referral to Secretary of State subject to the prior completion of a Directors' Service Agreement to the satisfaction of the Head of Law and Public Services and the Service Director, Planning and Development/Head of Service – Development Management or in their absence the Deputy Head of Service:

1. A Community Use and Management Agreement to ensure suitable management and community use.

RECOMMENDATION B:

That the grant of planning permission be subject to conditions to secure the following:

Grant of planning permission subject to **conditions** to secure the following:

List of Conditions:

1	Commencement (Compliance) 3 YEAR CONSENT PERIOD: The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91(1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Chapter 5).
2	Approved Plans List: (Compliance) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Arboricultural Report dated 14/03/2016, Primary Ecological Appraisal dated December 2015, Tree Constraints Report, Design and Access Statement, Site Plan, Drawings titled "Arboricultural Impact Assessment" and "Tree Constraints Plan" and Drawing Numbers IA-365-LS-P-02 (Rev. B), IA-365-LS-P-03 (Rev. B), IA-365-LS-P-04 (Rev. B), IA-365-LGA-P-01 (Rev. B), IA-365-LS-P-02 (Rev. A), IA-365-LS-P-03 (rev. A), IA-365-LS-P-04 (Rev. A), IA-365-LS-P-01 (Rev. A), IA-365-SP-P01 (Rev. A), IA-365-LMP-P01 (Rev. B) and IA-365-LMP-P02 (Rev. B). REASON: To comply with Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Act 1990 as amended and the Reason for Grant and also for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.
3	Hours of Operation (Sports Pitch and Lighting) (Compliance) CONDITION: The proposed all weather football pitch shall operate only between the hours of: 09:00 and 21:00 Monday - Friday and 09:00 and 20:00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The football pitch flood lighting shall operate during the hours of: 09:00 and 21:00 Monday - Friday and 09.00 20:00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays Usage of the football pitch flood lighting within these hours shall be controlled by a photocell detector and timer switch.

	REASON: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring residents.
4	Fencing (Details)
	<p>CONDITION: Details of the football pitch rebound fencing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to development works commencing on site. The fencing shall be installed strictly in accordance with the details so approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter and no change therefrom shall take place without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Reason: In order to protect the residential amenities of neighbouring residents.</p>
5	Method Statement (Details)
	<p>No site clearance, preparatory work or development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of the retained trees (the tree protection plan, TPP) and the appropriate working methods: the arboricultural method statement, AMS in accordance with British Standard BS 5837 2012 -Trees in Relation to Demolition, Design and Construction and construction method statement have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.</p> <p>Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>REASON: In the interest of biodiversity, sustainability, and to ensure that a satisfactory standard of visual amenity is provided and maintained in accordance with policies: 5.10, 7.19 and 7.21 of the London Plan 2011, policies: CS7, CS15A, B and F of the Islington Core Strategy 2011 and 6.5 of the DM policy 2013</p>
6	Lighting (Details)
	<p>CONDITION: No development shall take place until a report detailing the lighting scheme and predicted light levels at neighbouring residential properties has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Artificial lighting to the development must conform to requirements to meet the Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations for Environmental Zone - E3 contained within Table 1 of the Institute of Light Engineers Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting, GN01, dated 2005.</p> <p>Reason: In order to protect the residential amenities of neighbouring residents.</p>
7	Drainage Strategy (Details)
	<p>Details of drainage strategy for a sustainable urban drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works. The drainage strategy shall include the following details:</p> <p>A drainage plan detailing the proposed method for disposing of surface water by means of appropriate sustainable drainage systems. The submitted details shall include the scheme's peak runoff rate and storage volume and demonstrate how the scheme will achieve no net increase in surface water runoff from the site post-development.</p> <p>The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of sustainability.</p>

8	Landscaping (Details)
	<p>A landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works commencing on site. The landscaping scheme shall include the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an updated Access Statement detailing routes through the landscape and the facilities it provides; b) a biodiversity statement detailing how the landscaping scheme maximises biodiversity; c) existing and proposed underground services and their relationship to both hard and soft landscaping; d) proposed trees: their location, species and size; e) soft plantings: including grass and turf areas, shrub and herbaceous areas; f) topographical survey: including earthworks, ground finishes, top soiling with both conserved and imported topsoil(s), levels, drainage and fall in drain types; g) enclosures: including types, dimensions and treatments of walls, fences, screen walls, barriers, rails, retaining walls and hedges; h) hard landscaping: including ground surfaces, kerbs, edges, ridge and flexible pavings, unit paving, furniture, steps and if applicable synthetic surfaces; and i) any other landscaping feature(s) forming part of the scheme. <p>All landscaping in accordance with the approved scheme shall be completed / planted during the first planting season following practical completion of the development hereby approved. The landscaping and tree planting shall have a two year maintenance / watering provision following planting and any existing tree shown to be retained or trees or shrubs to be planted as part of the approved landscaping scheme which are removed, die, become severely damaged or diseased within five years of completion of the development shall be replaced with the same species or an approved alternative to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority within the next planting season.</p> <p>The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved and shall be maintained as such.</p> <p>REASON: In the interest of securing a sustainable development.</p>

Informatives:

1	Positive statement
	<p>To assist applicants in a positive manner, the Local Planning Authority has produced policies and written guidance, all of which is available on the Council's website.</p> <p>A pre-application advice service is also offered and encouraged. Whilst this wasn't taken up by the applicant, and although the scheme did not comply with guidance on receipt, the LPA acted in a proactive manner offering suggested improvements to the scheme (during application processing) to secure compliance with policies and written guidance. These were incorporated into the scheme by the applicant.</p> <p>This resulted in a scheme that accords with policy and guidance as a result of positive, proactive and collaborative working between the applicant, and the LPA during the application stages, with the decision issued in a timely manner in accordance with the NPPF.</p>

2	Surface Water Drainage
	<p>It is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water course or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separated and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0800 009 3921.</p>
3	Service Level Agreement
	<p>Your attention is drawn to the fact that this grant of permission is subject to a Service Level Agreement.</p>

APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT POLICIES

This appendix lists all relevant development plan policies and guidance notes pertinent to the determination of this planning application.

1 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 seeks to secure positive growth in a way that effectively balances economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF is a material consideration and has been taken into account as part of the assessment of these proposals.

2. Development Plan

The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2015, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013. The following policies of the Development Plan are considered relevant to this application:

A) The London Plan 2015 - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London

- Policy 3.16 Protection and Enhancement of Social Infrastructure
- Policy 3.19 Sports Facilities
- Policy 7.4 Local Character

B) Islington Core Strategy 2011

- Policy CS8 (Enhancing Islington's Character)
- Policy CS9 (Protecting and Enhancing Islington's Built and Historic Environment)
- Policy CS15 (Open Space and Green Infrastructure)
- Policy CS16 (Play Space)
- Policy CS17 (Sports and Recreation Facilities)

C) Development Management Policies June 2013

- Policy DM2.1 – Design
- Policy DM2.7 – Telecommunications and Utilities
- Policy DM6.2 -- New and Improved Public Open Spaces
- Policy DM6.3 – Protecting Open Space
- Policy DM6.4 – Sports and Recreation
- Policy DM6.5 – Landscaping, Trees and Biodiversity
- Policy DM3.4 - Housing standards
- Policy DM6.5 – Landscaping, Trees and Biodiversity
- Policy DM8.4 – Walking and Cycling
- Policy DM9.1 – Infrastructure

3. Designations

The site has the following designations under the London Plan 2015, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013:

- Public Open Space
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) – Local Importance

- Barnsbury Conservation Area

6. **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) / Document (SPD)**

The following SPGs and/or SPDs are relevant:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Islington Local Development Plan: | London Plan: |
| - Conservation Area Design Guidelines | - Sustainable Design & Construction |
| - Urban Design Guide | |