

7 February 2022

London Borough of Ealing

By email to localplan@ealing.gov.uk

1 Background

Save Ealing Parks is supported by hundreds (in terms of direct contact) and very likely thousands (in terms of broader coverage and agreement with our statements) of Ealing residents.

Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is a type of land designation given to green spaces that gives the same level of protection as the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The MOL site denoted by Ealing Council as MOL20 is formed of Barclays Sports Grounds, St Augustine's School and grounds, Ealing Reservoir, Fox Wood, Hanger Hill Park, and Hanger Hill Wood.

Ealing Council's Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) Review Stage 1 and appendices, Appendix 3-c, published November 2022 (referred to in this document as MOL Review), contains an assessment of MOL20 and proposes to remove the MOL status from MOL20.

Ealing Council's Draft Local Plan furthermore designates Barclays Sports Ground (part of MOL20) as a preferred development site (EA31, EA31a) and proposes to allow residential development on it.

This document is a submission to Ealing Council within the scope of the Ealing Council Local Development Plan consultation.

Based on the evidence set out in this document, we argue that:

- MOL Review contains **factual errors**, multiple instances of **cursorly treatment** of an extremely important subject (shaping Ealing's green spaces in the next 10-15 years), and **abundant internal inconsistencies** that imply irrationality in decision-making; this suggests that MOL Review is **not rational in law**;
- Without invalidating the above point, **MOL20 should be assigned "major importance", "major importance", "major importance", in criteria a, b, c respectively**;
- MOL20 should **keep its MOL status**;
- and in view of this new evidence, the Draft Local Plan should also **remove the proposal for residential development on the EA31 / EA31a** development sites contained within MOL20.

2 Summary

2.1 MOL Review contains factual inaccuracies

We demonstrate in Sections 3, 4 that MOL Review contains factual inaccuracies. For example, in Section 4 we compare MOL Review with Ealing's SINC report 2008. We explain that the SINC report demonstrates that large parts of MOL20 contain ancient woodlands and support exceptional biodiversity. The report also highlights features of historic value. Parts of MOL20 are SINC conservation sites, according to the SINC report 2008.

However, MOL Review says "*The open space itself is not of historic, recreational or biodiversity significance.*"

This directly contradicts the statements from the SINC report. More evidence is found in Section 5. For example, we show that MOL Review incorrectly claims that the (foot)golf centre on MOL20 is only of *local importance*, while (as we demonstrates) it actually has *metropolitan importance*: it hosted the 2021 London Cup, it is the most central footgolf location in London, and some reviews say that it is the best footgolf location in London. **Such examples demonstrate that**

MOL Review is written in a cursory, careless fashion, and that the Council failed to take critical evidence into account. MOL reports are of insufficient quality to be used as evidence.

Without invalidating the above point, Sections 3, 4 also argue, based on the existing evidence, that **MOL20 should be assigned “major importance”, in criterion c and keep its MOL status.**

2.2 MOL Review has internal inconsistencies, and is not rational in law

In Sections 6, 7, 8 we demonstrate internal inconsistencies in MOL Review. We study various features from MOL Review regarding MOL20, and detect multiple cases when similar features (in MOL Review's own words) from other MOL sites were assigned a much higher score in MOL Review.

A prime example is sites with ancient woodland. We demonstrate that MOL20 contains 2 out of 6 ancient woodlands in the borough, and the other 4 MOL sites with ancient woodland were assigned “critical importance” and are proposed to keep MOL status; while MOL20 is assigned “slight/negligible importance”.

There are other examples, notably on the scoring for outdoor, sports and recreational value, which is important for criterion b.

This unfair, inconsistent treatment may be related to the Council's proposal to allow residential development on Barclays Sports Ground, which is owned by an overseas investment company.

Such examples demonstrate that Ealing Council's MOL Review follows a cursory, self-inconsistent logic, and is not rational in law.

Without invalidating the above point, **Sections 6, 7, 8 also argue, based on comparison with sites that have equivalent properties and are ranked much higher in MOL Review, that MOL20 should be assigned “major importance” in criteria a, b, c and keep its MOL status.**

2.3 Site EA31 residential development designation does not comply with NPPF

This is raised in Section 9.

2.4 Uncorroborated statements and inappropriate assessment methodology – giving false justification for Green Belt and MOL de-designations

Section 11 shows that Ealing's MOL assessment methodology is in many ways arbitrary, unjustified and flawed.

Moreover, MOL reports do not follow this methodology (e.g. not reporting percentages of open land form for criterion a, which the methodology stipulates to be an extremely important factor – one that is reiterated across various rankings).

Furthermore, there are issues when the Council uses “criteria definitions” to **axiomatically place its views** which have nothing to do with evidence-based criteria, such as **“enabling development” on MOL, arguably attempting to bypass the need to justify why this is a legitimate decision compliant with NPPF and The London Plan.**

This provides further evidence that **Ealing Council's MOL review is not rational in law.**

2.5 Further contradictions with the Council's pledges and policies

These are raised in Section 12.

2.6 Considering MOL20 as a single MOL object

This important point is highlighted in Section 13.

3 Ealing's MOL20 assessment

3.1 Criteria

The London Plan 2021 Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land stipulates that, to designate land as MOL, boroughs need to establish that the land meets at least one of the following criteria:

- a it contributes to the physical structure of London by being clearly distinguishable from the built up area
- b it includes open air facilities, especially for leisure, recreation, sport, the arts and cultural activities, which serve either the whole or significant parts of London
- c it contains features or landscapes (historic, recreational, biodiversity) of either national or metropolitan value
- d it forms part of a strategic corridor, node or a link in the network of green infrastructure and meets one of the above criteria.

We note that Ealing Council proposed a more detailed assessment methodology based on a “traffic-light system”. It suffers from flaws, unjustified statements and inconsistencies, and moreover the Council does not follow its own methodology: see Section 11 for details.

3.2 Content of Ealing's MOL20 report

MOL Review claims that MOL20 satisfies none of the above criteria. The below content is Ealing Council's MOL Review Entry on MOL20 and is part of the Draft Local Development Plan.

Criterion a. *Slight/negligible importance. This parcel essentially forms a series of adjacent open spaces comprising the former Barclays Sports Grounds, St Augustine's School and grounds, Ealing Reservoir, Fox Wood, Hanger Hill Park, and Hanger Hill Wood. These are separated by Hillcrest Road horizontally and the busy North Circular vertically. There are also several residential properties between the northern and southern parts of the parcel. These factors diminish the parcel's ability to contribute to the physical structure of London.*

Criterion b. *No importance. Whilst elements of the parcel are or have been used for active recreation, the facilities provided meet a local need only.*

Criterion c. *Slight/negligible importance. The open space itself is not of historic, recreational or biodiversity significance. The parcel contains heritage assets such as Greystoke Cottages, the water tower, and St Augustine's Priory but these are of local, rather than national or metropolitan, significance.*

Criterion d. *Slight/negligible importance. The parts of the site are disconnected and the parcel as a whole is isolated from other green open spaces.*

3.3

We believe that MOL Review as far as it concerns MOL20 contains crucial factual inaccuracies as well as inconsistencies in the rating methodology. We assert that MOL20 satisfies criteria a, b, c above.

We suggest, based on the evidence below, that an accurate assessment would produce:

Criterion a. Major importance

Criterion b. Major importance

Criterion c. Major importance

Criterion d. [Not reviewed, no comment]

Based on this ranking, MOL20 should retain MOL status.

4 Evidence from Ealing's SINC report 2008: history, biodiversity

4.1 Current MOL20 report

MOL Review evaluates MOL20 against criterion c as follows:

The open space itself is not of historic, recreational or biodiversity significance. The parcel contains heritage assets such as Greystoke Cottages, the water tower, and St Augustine's Priory but these are of local, rather than national or metropolitan, significance.

We believe that this assessment is **grossly inaccurate**. First, **MOL20 contains ancient woodland** (Hanger Hill Wood, Fox Wood, Hanger Hill Park), and carries a **historic** and a **great biodiversity significance**. **This is evidenced by multiple expert sources**. For example, *Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Ealing Prepared jointly by the GLA and Ealing Council Council update (October 2008)* says the following about Hanger Hill Wood, Fox Wood, Hanger Hill Park.

4.2 SINC Report 2008 on Fox Wood / Hanger Hill Park

From *Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Ealing Prepared jointly by the GLA and Ealing Council Council update (October 2008)*, entry on **Fox Wood and Hanger Hill Park**:

Site of Borough Grade I Importance for Nature Conservation Site Reference: EaBI15

Site Name: Fox Wood and Hanger Hill Park

Summary: A fine ancient wood on a slope with additional wildlife habitats in the adjacent Hanger Hill Park

Habitat(s): **Ancient woodland**, secondary woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland, acid grassland, amenity grassland, hedge, scattered trees, ruderal, bare ground, running water

Site Description: The main wildlife interest of this site is in Fox Wood itself. This is a mixed woodland partly on a slope with a good variety of structure and species composition. **Wood anemone** (*Anemone nemorosa*) has been recorded here and other **woodland herbs such as wood avens** (*Geum urbanum*), **garlic mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*) and **lesser celandine** (*Ranunculus ficaria*) are frequent. Two small meadows occur north of the playing fields between the two arms of the woodland. Several colourful herbs have been planted here and the meadows are cut annually for hay, to **retain their value for wildlife**. Hanger Hill Park ... best features here are the ancient hedge along the west and the **mature oaks** in the middle which may have been part of an **historic hedge line**.

4.3 SINC Report 2008 on Hanger Hill Wood

From *Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Ealing Prepared jointly by the GLA and Ealing Council Council update (October 2008)*, entry on **Hanger Hill Wood**

Site of Borough Grade I Importance for Nature Conservation Site Reference: EaBI16

Site Name: Hanger Hill Wood

Summary: **Ancient woodland** with a good **variety of trees and shrubs**

Habitat(s): **Ancient woodland**, secondary woodland, scrub.

Map evidence suggests that there has been woodland here since at least the 14th century, although the site was much modified in the 18th century with several exotic species planted. The woodland has a wide variety of trees and shrubs with a well developed shrub layer, making it **suitable nesting habitat for several species of woodland birds**. A plant of butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) near the north end is thought to have been planted here. The ground flora is mainly dominated by cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), with some wood avens (*Geum urbanum*) adding some colour. Many of the mature sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees have died or are dying due to sooty bark disease. **This enhances the value of the site for many types of wildlife** (especially certain birds, invertebrates and fungi) which depend on decaying timber. Four blocks of sycamore and English elm (*Ulmus procera*) woodland south of the main wood have been added to the 2004 (UDP) site

SINC reports are considered to be “gold standard” in terms of such references. We believe that the above document, unquestionably prepared by experts, demonstrates the **abundant existence of ancient woodland on MOL20** (which itself should be considered to have **historic** and **biodiversity** value), and further demonstrates **historic** and extremely high **biodiversity** value beyond ancient woodlands.

4.4 Historical map evidence



This part of a 17th century map shows Hanger Hill Wood, demonstrating the ancient woodland status and the historical value of the site; both warrant “major importance” in criterion c.

4.5 Other ancient woodland in Ealing

We point out that MOL20 contains 2 out of 6 ancient woodlands in Ealing (see more below). All other MOLs containing ancient woodland score as “major / critical importance” in criterion c, therefore MOL20 should score as “**major importance**”, too. Moreover, we believe the amount of biodiversity demonstrated by the above evidence is truly outstanding, and also warrants a “**major importance**” assessment in **criteria c**.

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4.6 Notice on SINC classification

In private communications, Ealing Council seems to opine that if a site is designated as of “borough importance” in a SINC report, this would somehow mean that the site is not of “metropolitan value” and therefore does not deserve MOL status. **This is an abstract linguistic exercise** and not grounded in any facts of policies; it should not be taken into account. The London Plan does not draw any line of correspondence between SINC levels of designation and MOL status. London Boroughs have much more MOL than they have Metropolitan-level SINC sites. Each of Ealing, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham boroughs has only one Metropolitan-level SINC site. **The “borough” level of a SINC site cannot be used to justify MOL de-designation.**

4.7 Summary

Based on the SINC report, MOL20 should be recognised as being of “**major importance**” in **criteria c**, and retain its MOL status. Moreover, the examples in this section demonstrate that **Ealing Council's MOL report contains factual errors and irrationality in decision making; the decision to de-designate MOL20 is not rational in law.**

5 Other expert evidence on criteria A, B and C

5.1 Evidence from London Garden Trust and Hanger Hill (Haymills) Conservation Area Character Appraisal

We supplement the evidence above with the entry from London Garden Trust, **prepared with extensive references to expert literature**, <https://londongardentrust.org/conservation/inventory/site-record/?ID=EAL021>

Hanger Hill Park came into being as a result of negotiations between Ealing Borough Council and the owner of the land here ... One of the highest points in Ealing, the **park has dramatic views** and includes a fragment of **oak woodland** to the west. A pitch and putt course was set up on lower land to the north. To the west of the park across Fox Lane is now a Nature Reserve, a remnant of **ancient woodland...**

Hanger Hill House, a late C18th house built for the Wood family, who owned large tracts of land in Ealing, was on the east of Hanger Lane; it was let to Sir Edward Montague Nelson from 1874-1901 and the grounds were then a golf course from 1901-1930, after which the site was sold and developed as Haymills Estate from 1933. Woodland opposite Hillcrest Road's junction with Hanger Lane may be a vestige of its grounds...
Sources consulted:

Meg Game, John Archer, Mathew Frith, 'Nature Conservation in Ealing', Ecology Handbook 16 (London Ecology Unit), 1991; Middlesex County Times 25/11/1905, 4/1/1908; Richard Essen, 'Ealing, Hanwell and Greenford', Sutton, 1997; Peter Hounsell 'The Ealing Book' (Historical Publications, 2005)

The second paragraph in the quotation above demonstrates **historic** value, and the first paragraph demonstrates **biodiversity** value as well as a **feature of metropolitan value** (“dramatic view” over London), which warrants “**major importance**” in **criteria c**.

5.2 Evidence from Hanger Hill Conservation Area Appraisal

We point out the following from Hanger Hill (Haymills) Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Ealing Borough Council 2007:

Remains of Romano-British burials have been found at Hanger Hill. It is not known whether Ealing had Anglo-Saxon settlement but the name of Ealing denotes the Gillinga's or Gilla's People of c 700. The name Hanger Hill is derived from a “hangra” or wooded slope where it is known that a wood existed in 1359.

This warrants “major importance” in criterion c.

5.3 Metropolitan importance of the footgolf club

London Footgolf centre, which lies within MOL20, is a sports venue of metropolitan importance.

5.3.1

From London FootGolf Centre website:

We are the most central place to play footgolf in London. Located within Hanger Hill Park in Ealing, the London Footgolf Centre is set in beautiful surroundings on the original pitch and putt course, which has been operational since 1906

...in the **2021 London Cup competition held at the London Footgolf Centre** and Tudor Park Footgolf....

This demonstrates that this venue **has undisputable metropolitan value and must be ranked as “major importance” in criterion b.** MOL Review assessment that the footgolf centre is only of local importance **is grossly inaccurate.**

5.3.2

This is further proved by Google Reviews. London Footgolf centre has an average rating of 4.9 out of 5, and there are many reviews by companies of 4-5 people that had an “amazing day out”. One of the reviews, for example, says:

Best footgolf centre in London. Great location and great service

This further justifies **“major importance” in criterion b.**

5.3.3

We object to the following remarks in MOL Review that allegedly may diminish the value of MOL20. We explain why these remarks are unsubstantial:

These are separated by Hillcrest Road horizontally and the busy North Circular vertically.

North Circular road runs between the two ancient woodlands within MOL20 which provide a **green corridor** as well contribute to the **distinctive physical structure of London.** If anything, this is an enhancing feature. On the other hand, Hillcrest Road is quiet and easily crossed, and does not create any connectivity problems.

There are also several residential properties between the northern and southern parts of the parcel.

These properties are tiny in relation to the site, are located on the sides of MOL20 (e.g. on a side adjacent to North Circular Road). Due to their size and position they have negligible impact on the qualities of the site.

5.4 Summary

The London Garden Trust report demonstrates that MOL20 deserves **“major importance” in criterion a,** since it has a **feature of metropolitan value** (“dramatic views” over London). Both reports demonstrate **historic** and **biodiversity** value that warrant **“major importance” in criterion c.** The evidence on London Footgolf Centre demands for “major importance” in **criterion c.**

Moreover, the examples in this section demonstrate that Ealing Council’s MOL report contains **factual errors and irrationality in decision making; the decision to de-designate MOL20 is not rational in law.**

Factual errors in MOL Review include:

- Failure to acknowledge biodiversity on MOL20
- Failure to acknowledge historic value of MOL20
- Failure to acknowledge metropolitan recreational value of MOL20 (Ealing Council says that the (foot)golf centre has “only local importance” which is proved above to be incorrect).

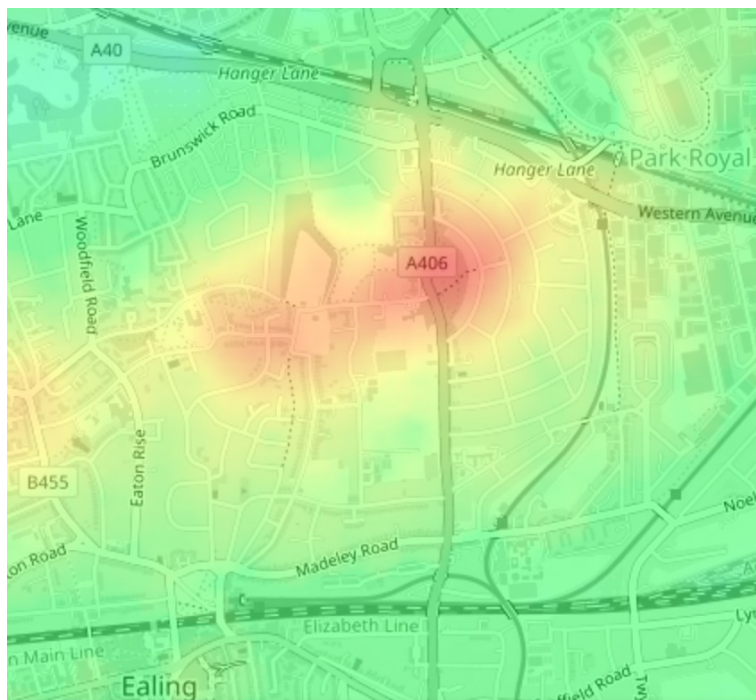
6 Criterion A: comparison with other MOL sites

6.1 Comparison with MOL15

MOL Review assigns the highest score of “**critical importance**” in **criterion a** to MOL15 and one of the most important points is “*thanks to its height at 85m above sea level (the highest point in the borough). Its size and elevation make the site clearly distinguishable from the built-up area.*”

Hanger Hill (part of **MOL20**) is, as cited above, “*one of the highest points in Ealing, the park has dramatic views and includes a fragment of oak woodland to the west.*”

Since MOL15 is assigned “**critical importance**” in **criterion a**, we stipulate by analogy that **MOL20** should be assigned “**critical importance**” in **criterion a**.



The elevation colour map shows that Hanger Hill is prominent in the surrounding area.

6.2 Comparison with MOL09

Review assigns “moderate importance” to MOL16 in criterion a. One of the arguments is that “*The number of mature trees dispersed across both sites is also significant in enhancing the overall openness as these often screen neighbouring buildings and in doing so create the impression of much larger parcels of open space.*” If a “number of mature trees” is

significant, then **two ancient woodlands must be decisively more significant**. Based on this, we believe that **MOL20** should be assigned **at least “major importance” in criterion a**.

MOL Review assigns “major importance” in criterion a to MOL09 on the grounds that “*The land forms a substantial gap in urban form with the majority of its boundaries being clearly defined by various types of fencing, dependent on the different parts of the site.*” The same characteristics apply to **MOL20**, and are magnified by the fact that the urban gap created by **MOL20** via Barclays Sports Ground and Hanger Wood provides **significant separation** from the busy and polluting North Circular Road A406. Based on this, we believe that MOL20 should be assigned **at least “major importance” in criterion a**.

6.3 Comparison with MOL12

MOL Review mentions in several **criterion a** assessments that an important contributing factor is the fact that a green space delineates several areas of the borough. For example, **MOL Review** says on MOL12 that the site “*historically had the role of delineating Ealing and Hanwell from Southall, Greenford, and Perivale.*” This is a vital component of MOL12's “major importance” score. Analogously, **MOL20 via Barclays Sports Ground has the role of delineating Ealing from Acton**. Based on this, we believe that **MOL20** should be assigned at least **“major importance” in criterion a**, as well.

6.4 Comparison with MOL17

MOL Review assigns MOL17 a “moderate importance” score in criterion a **solely on the fact** that “*MOL17 is clearly distinguishable from the built-up area in central Ealing and provides a break in the built form.*” It is clear that **MOL20** is also a clearly distinguishable area and provides a break in the built form. However, **MOL20** has **many other exceptional features, such as the view, elevation, variety of nature** and biodiversity (see above) which make it **even more distinguishable** from the built-up area. Based on this, we believe that **MOL20** should be assigned **“major importance” in criterion a**.

6.5 Summary

Based on the above four pieces of comparison-led evidence, we argue that **MOL20** should have **“major importance” in criterion a**. Moreover, the examples in this section demonstrate that Ealing Council's MOL report contains **irrationality in decision making; the decision to de-designate MOL20 is not rational in law**.

7 Criterion B: comparison with other MOL sites

7.1 Comparison with MOL09

MOL Review on MOL09 says that “*The Warren Farm Sports Ground is Ealing's largest outdoor sports ground and therefore has particular importance. However, the facilities have been out of use for more than 10 years. The council has the long-term ambition for Warren Farm to provide new outdoor sports facilities while preserving its wild character and enabling people to enjoy nature.*” Based on this, MOL Review gives a “moderate importance” rating to MOL09. We do not see evidence that Council's future *plans* on a site should affect the MOL review which is *evidence-based* and therefore should be based on *facts*, not plans. Hence, the “moderate importance” of MOL09 is established by the *objectively existing potential* of MOL09 to *provide* new outdoor sports facilities.

Barclays Sports Ground, which is part of **MOL20**, has very similar features. It is one of the largest sports grounds in the borough, and has also been disused for more than 10 years. It does have **tremendous potential to provide new outdoor sports facilities**. This would be enough to argue in favour of at least a “moderate importance” rating for MOL20. However,

MOL20 also has **an active (foot)golf club and an active football club**, therefore should score higher than MOL09. Therefore, we suggest that **MOL20** should be given a “**major importance**” rating.

7.2 Comparison with MOL10

MOL Review on MOL10 says “*The land accommodates a number of open-air leisure activities including: golf club, mini-zoo and café, and recreation grounds. Both the golf club and mini-zoo attract people from beyond the local area*”, and assigns “**major importance**”. **MOL20** has an active **footgolf club** and an active **football club**, which we believe is comparable to MOL10 and warrants “**major importance**” for **MOL20**.

7.3 Summary

Based on the above two pieces of comparison-led evidence, we argue that **MOL20** should have “**major importance**” in **criteria b**. Moreover, the examples in this section demonstrate that Ealing Council’s MOL report contains **irrationality in decision making; the decision to de-designate MOL20 is not rational in law**.

8 Criterion C: comparison with other MOL sites

8.1 On the basis of ancient woodlands

Ealing Borough contains 6 sites with confirmed ancient woodland according to the *Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Ealing Prepared jointly by the GLA and Ealing Council Council update (October 2008)*:

- Perivale Wood
- Horsenden Hill
- Tentelow Lane Wood
- Long Wood
- Fox Wood
- Hanger Hill Wood

Below, we present a table showing how these sites are proposed to be designated by MOL Review.

Name	MOL Number	Criterion C Score in MOL Review
Perivale Wood	MOL15	Major importance
Long Wood	MOL8	Major importance
Tentelow Lane Wood	MOL8	Major importance
Horsenden Hill	MOL15	Major Importance
Fox Wood	MOL20	Slight/negligible importance
Hanger Hill Wood	MOL20	Slight/negligible importance

The treatment of MOL20 stands out as exceptionally unfair and inaccurate in this comparison. Despite MOL20 containing 2 of the 6 Ealing's ancient woodlands, it scores "slight/negligible importance" in criterion c, while the other

ancient woodland sites score "major importance". We believe that **MOL20** should be given at least a "**major importance**" score based on this comparison.

8.2 On the basis of SINC sites

Both Fox Wood and Hanger Hill Wood in MOL20 are Borough Grade I SINC sites (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation). MOL Review says on MOL09 that "*Warren Farm is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). It also has Local Nature Reserve statutory designation. The land to the north and along river Brent is also a SINC (Brent River Park: Hanwell Flight 1) and an Archaeological Interest Area (Tentelow Lane/Canal/Boston Road).*" This is **sufficient** for MOL Review to justify that MOL09 has "major importance" in criterion c. Based on this, we find that **MOL20** should also score at least "**major importance**" in criterion c.

The same goes for MOL12. Review says that "*A significant part of the site is designated as a SINC of borough importance Grade I. The site contains a number of important heritage assets including the Church of St Mary the Virgin and Brentham Club.*" Here, SINC is a **sufficient** argument for "major importance". However, MOL20 contains ancient woodland and has much higher biodiversity value than MOL12: therefore, MOL20 should be ranked of "**major importance**".

8.3 No other ancient woodland sites are being de-designated

MOL8 and MOL15 have been ranked as having "major importance" and are keeping MOL status. We argue on this basis that MOL20 should keep MOL status too.

8.4 No other criterion C "major importance" sites are being de-designated

We have provided abundant evidence that MOL20 should be assigned "major importance" in criterion c. Therefore, **MOL20** would share the highest ranking among the following other MOL sites: MOL8, MOL9, MOL12, MOL16, MOL17. None of these sites are proposed to be stripped of MOL status in MOL Review. Therefore, **MOL20 should retain its MOL status.**

8.5 Summary

Based on criterion c comparisons, **MOL20** should be assigned "major importance" in criterion c and retain MOL status. Moreover, the examples in this section demonstrate that Ealing Council's MOL Review contains **irrationality in decision making; the decision to de-designate MOL20 is not rational in law.**

9 Proposal for residential development sites EA31 and EA31a does not comply with NPPF

Ealing Council proposes residential development on sites EA31 / EA31a which are contained within MOL20. Even more so, EA31a is a "preferred development" site. We believe that this proposed development goes against the NPPF policies.

It should be remembered that Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is given the same protection as Green Belt land, so when NPPF makes a statement on Green Belt land, it applies to MOL too.

NPPF article 140 says that Green Belt (and MOL) *boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.* The Draft Local Plan contains no justification of exceptional circumstances.

NPPF article 141 says that should be able to *demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This includes establishing that its strategy:*

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- “makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land” - we have no evidence in the current Draft Plan of how this has been assessed;
- “has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground” – the current Draft Local Plan does not contain evidence that this has been done.

NPPF article 142 says that *plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport*. The Draft Local Plan does not include evidence of such first consideration. For example, has the Council explored all avenues of potential residential development on brownfield sites or disused buildings such as disused warehouses? The current Draft Local Plan does not show such evidence.

NPPF article 142 says that MOL changes should come with *compensatory improvements*, and we do not see any in the Draft Local Plan.

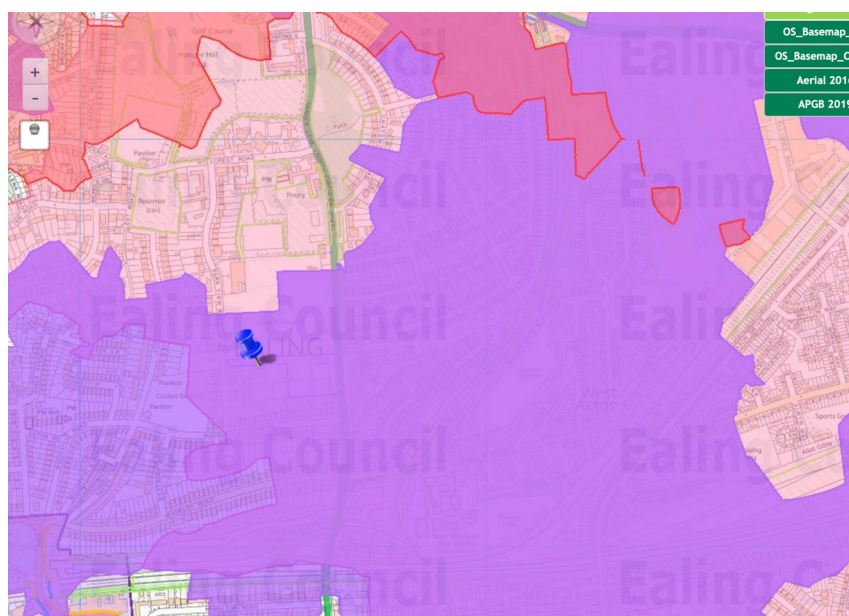
Conclusion: **residential development on site EA31/EA31a does not comply with NPPF, and should be removed from Local Plan.**

10 MOL20 lies in an area of park deficiency

The Draft Local Plan sometimes draws an argument (which is largely unjustified) that the borough has a “large amount” of GB and MOL land, and that therefore MOL could be treated less exceptionally than required by the London Plan and NPPF. This is a dubious argument, with which we do not agree.

However, even assuming this argument has merit, MOL is distributed very unevenly across Ealing. The majority of MOL and Green Belt land lies in the west. The area around MOL20 (Central Ealing and West Acton) is a highly urban zone with deficient green space. This elevates the value of MOL20, and calls for giving utmost value to this MOL.

Indeed, the map below shows that the area around MOL20 suffers from district and local park deficiency, including the large West Acton Area.



The pink colour on the map around MOL20 shows areas of district and local park deficiency.

The lax approach to MOL status which was created with a view on much greener west Ealing spaces does not apply to MOL20.

11 Uncorroborated statements and inappropriate assessment methodology – giving false justification for Green Belt and MOL de-designations

MOL Review, which sets the basis for MOL de-designations on sites including MOL20, is in many ways flawed:

Ignoring NPPF policy. Paragraph 2.4.9 states the review “has sought not to be constrained by the limitations of current policy”: it is ignoring NPPF and London Plan policy. Para 2.4.11 states the review seeks to identify land for development (albeit as a secondary objective) and is not an exercise in establishing whether GB and MOL meet their purposes.

MOL Review Para 2.5.10 implies that there is only one option for land which does not “draw visitors from several boroughs” – indicating “it maybe more appropriate to assign it other designations” – but there is a clear option (not analysed in the report) to ensure the space is managed in such a way that it does draw visitors. This is not an appropriate justification for “correcting” the designation.

MOL Review 3.5: there is much in here which is extremely worrying.

11.1 Issues with MOL Criteria, 3.5 Table 2

Under MOL Criteria 3.5 Table 2 (A), the criteria seem to give most weight to the fraction of open land form. For “crucial importance” the criterion states that “the land is predominantly open with less than 10% built form.” For “major/moderate importance”, this criterion is repeated with 20% and 30% respectively. **These numbers seem to be drawn out of thin air with no justification provided. Furthermore, site-specific assessment reports do not follow this guideline and do not report these percentages. That is, the MOL reports do not follow the methodology MOL review itself sets out.**

It must be noted that we asked the Council if they possess fuller MOL reports which might contain extra information, for example, the measurements of such percentages for the MOL sites. The Council responded that they do not have any fuller versions of the reports.

11.1.1

Under MOL Review Criteria 3.5 Table 2 (B), it is stated that a piece of land is “Not important / does not contribute” if “the site is vacant and accommodates no such activities and is of limited priority for investment”. But this would mean that a site which has been deliberately bought by a developer and neglected with a view to applying for planning permission at a later date (but which could and ought to be offering important recreational facilities and/or e.g. habitat) would be regarded as having no purpose. This is not an unrealistic concern – for instance, CPRE London has identified large numbers of protected MOL and GB sites which are being land banked in this way for their “hope” value. This cannot be used as a reason to remove their designation as this would clearly provide a strong incentive for this to be replicated, undermining both Green Belt and MOL designation London-wide. **This is a particularly relevant concern as far as Barclays Sports Ground is concerned, because it is owned by a private investor.**

11.1.2

Also under (B), it is not explained what “local importance” means: does this mean ward-wide or borough-wide? Without an explanation, “borough-wide” seems to be a more natural interpretation. **This leaves a big uncovered gap between “moderate importance” (defined as “local importance”) and “major importance”, defined as “serving a significant part of London.”** What about, for example, a football club that is used by residents of nearby boroughs – that is, that clearly has more than local importance – but to which a description “serving a significant part of London” may or may not be applicable, depending on the interpretation of the definition? **This is a particularly relevant concern as far as MOL20 is concerned, because it has active football club. (Note: it was demonstrated above the footgolf club on MOL20 has metropolitan importance).**

11.1.3

Under (B), “*Enabling development of an acceptable scale could be accommodated without significantly undermining this function(s).*” - this sentence should be dropped. This sentence is found in the “defining characteristics” field, and the

sentence is not a defining characteristic of a site. Rather, the sentence indicates Ealing Council's view on what should or should not be appropriate use of MOL. **Such views cannot be simply placed into the "defining characteristics" field.** They need to be placed elsewhere, and furthermore the Council must justify this phrase and why it is compliant with NPPF and The London Plan. By placing this sentence into the "defining characteristic" field, **the Council attempts to axiomatise "enabling development" on MOL without properly arguing why this is a legitimate decision compliant with NPPF and The London Plan. This is particularly evident in the example of EA31 site: based on this objection we argue that residential development on EA31 should not be allowed.**

11.1.4

Under (C) it is not justified why certain designations (such as SAC, SMI) lead to certain rankings. This correspondence seems to be random, drawn out of thin air.

11.1.5

Under (C): the criteria must separately consider biodiversity aspects.

11.1.6

Under (C) land would be regarded as "not important / does not contribute" if it contains none of the stated features or landscapes despite it being perfectly possible to create recreational and biodiversity features and landscapes (and despite there being an urgent need to do so in many instances). **This is again a particularly relevant concern as far as Barclays Sports Ground is concerned, because it is currently disused.**

11.2 Summary

MOL methodology is in many ways arbitrary, unjustified and flawed. Moreover, MOL reports do not follow this methodology (e.g. not reporting percentages of open land form for criterion a, which the methodology stipulates to be an extremely important factor – one that is reiterated across various rankings). **This leads to the conclusion that MOL Review and MOL reports are not rational in law.**

12 Further objections

12.1 The following statement is made in the Draft Local Plan – Statement on the Development of Tall Buildings

we must also be realistic in recognising that tall buildings have been an integral part of the overall development story in London, particularly over the last few decades, and will continue to be so. Moreover, with our green belt, metropolitan open land (MOL) and parks afforded the greatest policy protection against development, land is a finite resource in the capital, and it is therefore prudent to consider all forms of development on brownfield land to optimise its use.

This pledge to protect MOL and develop brownfield sites **contradicts the proposal to develop EA31 and de-designate MOL20.**

12.2

Ealing Council makes much-needed environmental and ecological pledges in its Biodiversity Action Plan 2022. MOL20 is an extremely important location for the execution of these pledges, and its de-designation will be a step back, not forward, in implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan. Ealing Council has not explored any of the following objectives from the Biodiversity Action Plan in regard to MOL20:

***"Identify opportunities to enhance and create more spaces for nature and implement them, directly or through engagement with other council services, developers, landowners/ managers, community groups and residents"* – Barclays Sports Ground and other parts of MOL20 are a great opportunity for this.**

“To conserve and enhance habitats that create better, and more interconnected places for wildlife across Ealing” – the de-designation of MOL20 goes against this policy.

13 Considering MOL20 as a single MOL object

Ealing Council's **MOL Review** makes it clear that MOL20 is considered in its entirety as a single MOL object. MOL Review's assessment of MOL20 does not consider various geographical parts of MOL20 case-by-case, but treats MOL20 indivisibly. We support this approach and agree that MOL20 should be considered as a single indivisible unit for the purposes of MOL designation. This report is based on this assumption.

However, Ealing Council's MOL report says the following:

The subdivision of parcels will need to be noted on the map, and each subdivided parcel will require separate assessment. Where a parcel is subdivided a letter prefix should be added. For example, parcel 7 might be split into 7a, 7b and 7c, and so on. Any open space contiguous with the site which is not presently designated but warrants potential inclusion should also be noted and reviewed.

It is evident that MOL20 is not subdivided using letter prefixes, and there is no note of potential amendments.

On the basis of the above, we strongly object if Ealing Council should subsequently suggest amending its proposal regarding MOL20, other than acknowledging that MOL20 should retain MOL status in its entirety. In particular, we strongly object should Ealing Council subsequently suggest dividing MOL20 or adjusting MOL boundaries within MOL20 in any other way than as proposed in MOL Review. This is because any such proposal has not been part of the current consultation; because there is evidence that MOL20 is a single MOL object; because MOL20 is designated as a single site by the MOL Review; and because alterations of MOL boundaries require exceptional circumstances.

7 February 2022

London Borough of Ealing

By email to localplan@ealing.gov.uk

**Objections to enabling residential development on site EA31 / EA31a, Barclays Sports Ground:
Local Plan Chapter 4 Town Plans and Development Sites**

1. Site EA31 Former Barclays Sports Ground

'Development site' EAL31 comprises the land that is the former Barclays Sports Ground, which has been protected for many years from inappropriate development via its designation as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), (which is similar to Green Belt). The London Borough of Ealing (LBE) is proposing through the Local Development Plan (LDP) to de-designate site EA31, remove the MOL status and change its permitted use from exclusively sports and leisure to a "Leisure-led scheme with enabling residential use facilitating access to sports and play pitches".

We strongly object to the removal of MOL status from the site: these objections are formulated in a separate document on MOL. **We strongly object to allowing residential development on EA31: this document explains our objections.**

This vague definition of the intended use for the site is open to interpretation and is designed to remove planning controls and change the current permitted use for sports and leisure, to include an unspecified amount of residential development. It is important to note that there is no stated intention to replace the MOL designation with any other designation that would provide the site with protection from any other type of future development.

Furthermore, it is not correct to assume that residential development is the only way of "facilitating access" to sports facilities. Look at the example of the sports hub in Gunnersbury Park. This was built without the need to construct residential buildings.

2. Background

Aerial photographs show that the site has been used exclusively for sports since before 1928. For many years it was owned by Barclays Bank PLC, for use by their employees, as well as wider community use by local schools, netball teams, football teams, and QPR football team training. The grounds were sold in 2000 following a bidding process which saw interest from Chelsea Football Club, Middlesex Rugby Club, as well as a number of other sporting organisations. Unfortunately, the site was sold to an anonymous private individual who has done little with the site.



3. Objections based on Metropolitan Open Land Status

3.1 Shortly before its sale, the land was designated as Metropolitan Open Land, with a view to protecting the land against future inappropriate development and change of use. The whole site is designated as Open Land and a greenfield site. It has no designated brownfield land. NPPF guidelines require priority to be given to brownfield sites before developing on MOL. - we have not seen evidence of this. In fact, we see evidence of the contrary. For example, Ealing's MOL review para 1.1.4 says that 'such sites [MOL/Green Belt] are often seen to be less challenging to develop when compared with the current supply of brownfield sites.' - if 'often seen' means in particular 'seen by Ealing Council', this is an indication that the Council **refuses to explore all the potential of brownfield sites simply because it is 'more challenging', which goes against NPPF guidelines.**

3.2 In 2010, Ealing undertook a Borough-wide review of Green Belt/MOL as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. This document assessed the appropriateness of Barclays Sports Ground's MOL designation and concluded that there was no requirement for removal. **Why has this changed?**

3.3 In 2016, following the relaxation of some planning rules, LBE used a loophole in planning law to argue that there were exceptional circumstances which required them to de-designate a small parcel of the land in the Southern corner of the site to build what is now the site of Ada Lovelace school (The school currently has no access to the site's wider playing fields). LBE stated at the time that they had no intention of aiding development on the rest of the site.

3.4 We laid out our objections to the MOL de-designation in a separate document and trust that these objections will be taken into account. **Development on EA31 goes against the MOL status of the site:**

3.4a According to the London Plan, exceptional circumstances must be demonstrated for enabling residential development on MOL sites, and **no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated.**

3.4b Residential development on EA31 **will contribute heavily to urban sprawl.** NPPF says that Green Belt designation serves to protect land from urban sprawl, and the London Plan says that MOL enjoys the same protection as the Green Belt.

4. Objections based on Local Development Plan Chapter 4 - Development sites

The LDP seeks to remove MOL status from EA31 and change its use from sports and leisure to a “leisure-led scheme with enabling residential use”. This change contradicts the following points in the LDP:

4.2.13 - identifies that deficiencies exist in Ealing, in access to Green Space. Allowing residential development on the site will not enable this, but instead, **restrict access and not achieve the aims of the plan (LDP).**

4.2.14 - Highlights poor air quality, particularly **around Hanger Lane.** Residential development on the site will only add to this through increased traffic and further congestion of the already congested roads.

Policy E1 - Ealing Spacial Strategy calls for “increased urban greening around the North Circular Road”. Site EA31 runs parallel to the North Circular Road and provides a vital Green corridor, along with the green land on the opposite side of the North Circular Road. **Enabling residential development on the site contradicts this policy.**

4.2.25 - Call for Urban Greening to improve air quality. **Enabling residential development on the site contradicts this aim and policy,** as it will reduce the amount of open green space in the borough and potentially destroy a number of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

4.2.28 - Details how working patterns have shifted in Ealing to more local working and home working, and therefore more green space is required. Enabling residential development will reduce the amount of green space available within Ealing and therefore not complement the requirements of the identified new working patterns.

4.2.37 - Highlights the benefits of outdoor activity. **Enabling residential use on the site will restrict the amount of space that is available for sports and recreational use on the site.**

5. Objections based on incorrect rankings in the Site selection report

This section points out inaccuracies and factual errors contained in the Site selection report on site EA31a, Barclays Sports Ground (Appendix E Site Selection Report Part 2 of 4). This report consists of a traffic light ranking of the site across a number of criteria.

5.1 Health and safety. Draft ranking: green, proposed correction: red.



Figure: current traffic on Park View Road near Ada Lovelace School is already chaotic and poses a health and safety risk for the schoolchildren. All mitigatory measures (improved lights, signage prohibiting U-turns, road bumps) have already been implemented. Any further traffic increase on this road is unsustainable and will multiply the health and safety risks for the school.

5.1a The site is adjacent to Ada Lovelace School and very close to St Augustines Priory school. Residential development will cause severe safety issues for the schools. Traffic is already a serious health & safety concern for Ada Lovelace School. **Traffic on Park View Road (along Barclays Sports Ground) becomes extremely dense and dangerous during school drop off / on times. It already exceeds the capacity of the road.** The school was forced to take extra measures to mitigate this risk even at the current traffic levels: increased lighting, ban on U-turns, etc. **All sources of mitigatory measures have already been used to mitigate the current situation and there is no more room for mitigating additional increases in traffic. Any further traffic increase will pose an unsustainably severe health and safety risk.**

5.1b It should be noted that when Ealing Council was proposed the construction of Ada Lovelace school, residents pointed out that the traffic on Park View Road would become chaotic. **The Council dismissed those concerns, citing using unrealistic traffic modelling.** This shows that the Ealing Council's ability to correctly estimate traffic changes that arise from new development is compromised: **Ealing Council tends to underestimate the severity of these problems.**

5.2 Vehicular access. Draft ranking: green, proposed correction: red.

The plan says that '*Depending on the proposed layout it may be appropriate to create additional access from Park View Road to the west.*' As explained above, this is not possible, as additional traffic on Park View Road will greatly exceed the capacity of the road. It creates a health and safety risk for the school that cannot be mitigated. Additionally, it would severely decrease the quality of life of Park View Road residents. Likewise, access from North Circular Road is also unsustainable because this part of North Circular Road already has very dense traffic. (See section on Infrastructure Topic Paper.)

5.3 Distance to nearest infant/primary school. Draft ranking: green, proposed correction: red.

5.3a The nearest primary schools (Montpelier and West Acton Primary) are oversubscribed and the site does not fall into their catchment areas. The criterion's proposed 'green' distance of 1000m is unrealistic in this case: catchment area considerations should be given priority. There is generally a severe lack of primary schools in the area.

5.3b Ealing Council's *'Infrastructure Topic Paper'* acknowledges, in the Primary Schools section, that *'Pockets of sustained high demand remain, particularly in central, south and east Ealing where schools are near or at capacity'*. This concerns the schools around EA31.

5.4 In view of the above ranking corrections, residential development on EA31/EA31a should not be allowed.

6. Objections based on Infrastructure Topic Paper

6.1 Infrastructure Topic Paper - Transport – road network says that *'Five roads (highlighted yellow in figure 2) in Ealing have greater than 1.5 minutes' delay per kilometre driven (the highest indicator for congestion): [...] • A406 - along the whole length of the road through the Borough'*. A406 (North Circular) runs along the eastern side of EA31. Residential development will: 6.1a Deteriorate this congestion, 6.1b Deteriorate air quality and the nearby ecological landscape.

6.2 Infrastructure Topic Paper says the following:

What are potential solutions? • Explore opportunities to enhance GB / MOL land to increase its accessibility and functional role. Priorities for investment (also see Nature objectives as part of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021)): • Metropolitan, District, or Local Parks located in areas of deficiency - typically face greater demand, or are important due to lower levels of open space in the vicinity. • Pledges for 10 new parks have been made, through the creation of new sites as well as redesignation of existing spaces. • Investment in green spaces in areas of low public open space provision or areas with low average quality levels of open space, as well as green spaces that are currently of lower quality

6.3 In reference to the above paragraph, development on EA31 goes against:

6.3a enhancing GB / MOL land, 6.3b enhancing open space in areas of deficit, 6.3c investment in green space

7. Objections based on lack of convincing housing demand data

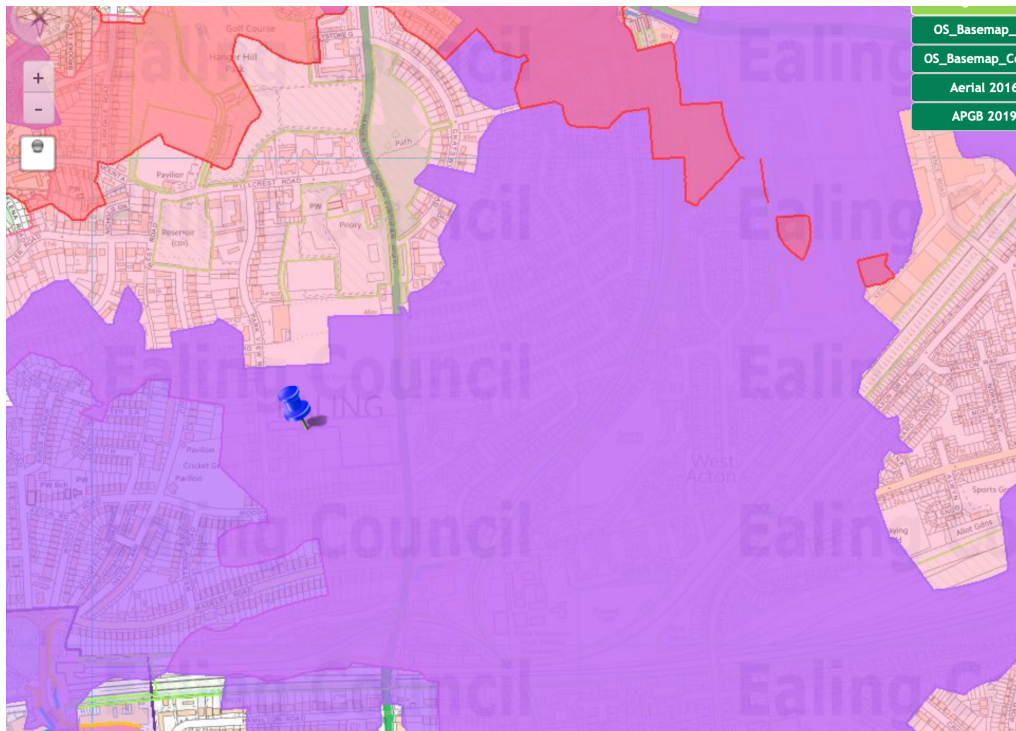
Ealing Council **has not properly studied housing supply to justify the development of the greenfield site EA31**. We fully support another group's statement on this issue (see Appendix A).

We also fully support CPRE's report **challenging the assumption that the housing demand in Ealing outstrips supply**: CPRE provides evidence of the contrary.

In the situation where Ealing Council has not presented reliable housing data, and the existing data, at the least, does not conclusively demonstrate that housing demand far outstrips supply, **residential development on the greenfield MOL site EA31/EA31 is absolutely unjustified**.

8. Objections based on park deficiency

The picture below shows that the area around Barclays Sports Ground is an **area of local and district park deficiency, as well as a vast area in West Acton** across the A406 from the site.



Keeping Barclays Sports Ground a green space in its entirety is the only chance to improve the park deficiency picture in this vast area. Enabling residential development on site EA31a will permanently lose this opportunity.

9. The proposal for residential development sites EA31 and EA31a does not comply with NPPF

Ealing Council proposes residential development on sites EA31 / EA31a which are contained within MOL20. Even more so, EA31a is a “preferred development” site. We believe that this proposed development goes against the NPPF policies.

It should be reminded that Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is given the same protection as Green Belt land, so when NPPF makes a statement on Green Belt land, it applies to MOL, too.

NPPF article 140 says that Green Belt (and MOL) *boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified*. Draft Local Plan contains no justification of exceptional circumstances.

NPPF article 141 says that the Council should be able to *demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This includes:*

- make as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land – we have not seen evidence in the current Draft Plan of how this has been assessed
- has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified needs for development, as demonstrated through the

Objections to enabling residential development on site EA31 / EA31a Save Ealing Parks Group

statement of common ground – the current Draft Local Plan does not contain evidence that this has been done.

NPPF article 142 says that *plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport*. The Draft Local Plan does not include evidence of such first consideration. For example, has the Council explored all avenues of potential residential development on brown field sites or disused builds such as disused warehouses? The current Draft Local Plan does not show such evidence.

NPPF article 142 says that MOL changes should come with *compensatory improvements*, and we do not see any in the Draft Local Plan.

Residential development on site EA31/EA31a does not comply with NPPF.

10. Further objections

Draft Local Plan - MOL Criteria 3.5 Table 2 (B) contains: “*Enabling development of an acceptable scale could be accommodated without significantly undermining this function(s)*.” This sentence is found in the “*defining characteristics*” field for MOL sites, and the sentence is **not** a *defining characteristic* of a site. Rather, the sentence indicates Ealing Council’s (unjustified) *view on what should or should not be appropriate use of MOL*. Such general discussions are not the mandate of Ealing Council. **Such views cannot be simply placed into the “defining characteristics” field**. Instead, the Council must justify this claim and why it is compliant with NPPF and The London Plan. By placing this sentence into the “defining characteristic” field, the Council **attempts to axiomatise “enabling development” on MOL circumventing the need to explain why this is a legitimate decision compliant with NPPF and The London Plan (while, in reality, it is not)**. We assume that this attempt to axiomatise development on MOL sites is tailored to sites such as EA31. We strongly object to it because it does not comply with NPPF and the London Plan, which allows development on MOL only in “exceptional circumstances” which were not demonstrated.

11. Conclusion

EA31 is one of the few remaining areas in North Ealing that have been protected for use for sports and recreation. Seeking to change the use of the land from sports and recreation to mixed leisure and residential, removes the protections that the site has always held and contradicts many of the policies in Chapter 4 of the LDP. “With enabling residential use” is too broad a definition and does not attempt to accurately define how the land will ultimately be used once the LDP has stripped it of its long-standing protections. Further detail, with subsequent new consultation with the residents, is required before Ealing’s residents can be expected to accept the inclusion of EA31/EA31 as a development site within the plan.

Appendix A

We fully support the concern regarding the lack of housing supply figures prepared by another group of residents:

Para 065 of the Guidance states that one of the items of information that local authorities can consider in their review is:

the success of policies against indicators in the Development Plan as set out in their Authority Monitoring Report

Para 073 of the Guidance states that:

Local planning authorities must publish information at least annually that shows progress with local plan preparation... This information should be made available publicly.

- o Prior to October 2021, the most recent AMR on the Council's website had been published in 2015 and related to 2013/14.
- o The Council published an interim AMR in October 2021 covering in a single report the years 2014/15 to 2018/19.
- o This interim AMR was only published following repeated attempts by residents (32 that I am aware of since September 2016) to get the Council to fulfil their statutory duty, and a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) as a last resort. The LGO ruled in our favour on 15 September 2021.
- o While the interim report was published as required by the LGO, it did not contain crucial housing data, namely LBE's housing trajectory since 2013/14 nor a five-year housing land supply figure.
- o The LGO also required the Council to produce a final AMR to cover 2019/20 including the missing housing data within three months of their decision notice, i.e. by 15 December 2022. This has not been done despite more resident requests since the LGO ruling.
- o Ealing Council blames this failure on problems with migrating pipeline data into the GLA's Planning London Datahub, which replaced the GLA's London Development Database in 2020. Worse still, it is now using this excuse to apply the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development (see Friary Park planning application ref 221747HYBRID (Appendix 2 of the officer's report) due to be decided at Planning Committee on 19 October).

We dispute the Council's account of the reasons for the lack of a 5-year housing land supply figure.

- o The figures provided to the GLA's Planning London Datahub originate from Ealing Council. If the Council has been aware of this data migration problem since 2020, why has it not taken steps to analyse its own data in the meantime as most other local authorities across the country have to do?
- o Indeed, why is it that by July 2021 (it may well be more now), 15 London boroughs, including the largest (Barnet) have been able to produce AMRs including 5-year housing land supply for 2019/20 when Ealing hasn't?
- o When we enquired directly with the GLA on 28 September, we received by return an email from Peter Kemp, the Head of Change and Delivery, Planning saying that: 'You will be pleased to hear that the Datahub is now fully operational for Ealing, and as such any data that you are now looking for is now accessible, plus significant amounts more.'

Why is it that the Council, knowing the significance of the 5-year housing land supply, has not used the almost three weeks since the GLA's confirmation to calculate that as a matter of urgency?

It seems to us that the Council's withholding of a 5-year housing land supply figure betrays its own desire to collude with the developer in tipping the balance in favour of the development.