

JR/P6792
08 January 2018

Ms Tara Butler
Future Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Dear Tara

**Merton Local Plan 2020 Consultation
Representations made on behalf of the All England Lawn Tennis Club**

We write on behalf of the All England Lawn Tennis Club (the AELTC) to make representations to the London Borough of Merton's 'Local Plan 2020' consultation January 2018.

The AELTC welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with LB Merton to formulate a new Local Plan for the Borough. In particular, the AELTC is keen to promote a positive planning policy framework which recognises the importance of The Championships as the premier tennis tournament in the world and on grass – and supports the continued improvement of the AELTC's facilities within Merton.

With this in mind, we provide a summary of the current status of the AELTC's principal land-holdings (the AELTC Church Road and the All England Club Community Sports Ground, Raynes Park) and include a short position statement setting out our recommendations for the direction of future planning policy.

For the sake of completeness, we have completed 'Call for Sites' pro-forma for the AELTC's land-holdings on-line and included the relevant site plans. Nevertheless, our principal comments on the current consultation are set out below:

The AELTC and The Championships - Church Road, Wimbledon

Wimbledon is the oldest tennis tournament in the world and is widely regarded as the finest stage in world tennis. The Championships have been held at the Church Road site since 1922 and have been a key factor in placing Wimbledon on the global map. In particular:

- The global TV audience for The Championship event is estimated to be 1.2 billion people;
- The Championships are watched in 200 broadcast territories around the world;
- Up to 10,000 staff are employed during The Championship period itself;
- 300 local school children are world-renowned Ball Boy and Ball Girls at The Championships each year;

Merton Local Plan 2020
Jan 2018

- Around 500,000 people visit Wimbledon during The Championships fortnight;
- Another 100,000 tourists visit the areas throughout the year coming to see the multi-award winning Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum.

In order to maintain Wimbledon's leadership position, the AELTC has committed to a long-term development programme to improve its facilities throughout the Borough. Standing still is not an option. In 2011 The Club commissioned Grimshaw to develop a Master Plan to guide the further long term development of The Club and its facilities. The Wimbledon Master Plan was developed during 2012-2013 with the aim of ensuring Wimbledon remains the finest stage in world tennis.

The first phase of The Master Plan has been the remodelling and construction of a retractable roof at No. 1 Court to enable uninterrupted play irrespective of weather, thereby guaranteeing tennis for around 27,000 spectators on the two main show courts – No. 1 Court and Centre Court. Planning permission was granted in June 2015 (ref: 14/P3481) and construction is expected to be completed before The Championships 2019.

The second phase will involve the replacement of the existing covered courts on Somerset Road with a new world class indoor courts facility, a basement car park and 6 new external clay courts. The new facility will play a key role in the future operation of The Championships, as well as providing new Club facilities for Members. The project has received a resolution to grant planning permission (ref: 16/P4651) and work is expected to start during 2018.

The above development projects are only the first step in the implementation of the Wimbledon Master Plan, which will continue to see the upgrade and improvement of facilities at the site over the next 10 to 15yrs (and beyond).

The All England Club Community Sports Ground - Grand Drive, Raynes Park

In early 2015 the AELTC established the All England Club Community Sports Ground on their existing sports site at 216 Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Key to this was the provision of additional tennis facilities including six synthetic surface tennis courts (three of which are covered by an air dome) as well as changing and WC facilities (Planning Permission ref: 14/P3466 - January 2015).

The sports ground has been operating successfully since the summer of 2016 and the facilities have provided a home for the All England Club's Community Tennis Programme and the Wimbledon Junior Tennis Initiative (WJTI). The Community Sports Ground also provides a training base for the Wimbledon Ballboys and Ballgirls, who are drawn from many local schools.

Given the success of the new facilities, the AELTC is intending to expand and enhance the services they can offer on the site, a move which would benefit both The Championships and the local community. Specifically, this would involve the provision of additional world class grass courts (and ancillary facilities) as well as covered hard surface courts, which would be used for practice by professional players in the run up to and during The Championships, as a venue for amateur tennis competitions and for use by the local community.

The AELTC intends to submit a planning application for the expansion of the tennis facilities at the sports ground during the early part of 2018.

Merton Local Plan 2020
Jan 2018

Future Planning Policy – recommended approach

In light of the importance of The Championships and AELTC's continuing development aspirations (outlined above), we would ask that LB Merton take the following recommendations into account during the formulation of future planning policy:

1. That future planning policy explicitly supports The Championships as the premier tennis tournament in the world and on grass – recognising and supporting the continued improvement and upgrade of the AELTC's facilities;
2. Recognition be given within planning policy to the positive economic impact of The Championships, which directly contributes nearly £149M to the London economy on an annual basis (and around £53M directly to Merton and Wandsworth). *Figures from Sheffield Hallam University's Report "The Economic Impact of the Championships (Wimbledon) – Oct 2016;*
3. The AELTC's Church Road estate (including Somerset Road) be designated within future planning policy as a "world class sporting venue of national and international significance", where the continued improvement of The Club and facilities will be supported;
4. The Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), Green Corridor and Open Space designations, currently covering the AELTC's (Church Road) estate be deleted/reconsidered. These designations are inconsistent with the current use and nature of the site (i.e. a world class sporting venue incorporating extensive tennis and spectator facilities);
5. The AELTC Community Sports Ground (Raynes Park) be identified (within planning policy) as part of the AELTC estate within the Borough, which supports the operation of The Championships and provides community tennis and sports facilities;
6. It is recommended that the existing Open Space designation for the AELTC Community Sports Ground (Raynes Park) also be reconsidered in-light of the above. Furthermore the drainage/flood data currently illustrated on the adopted Proposals Map is now out-of-date and inconsistent with up-to-date information for the site.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Future Merton team to review the matters raised above and collectively work towards the formulation of a positive planning policy framework, which recognises the role of The Championships and supports the continued enhancement/improvement of the AELTC's facilities within the Borough.

We trust that the above provides a useful outline of the AELTC's position. Nevertheless, please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any points raised in greater detail.

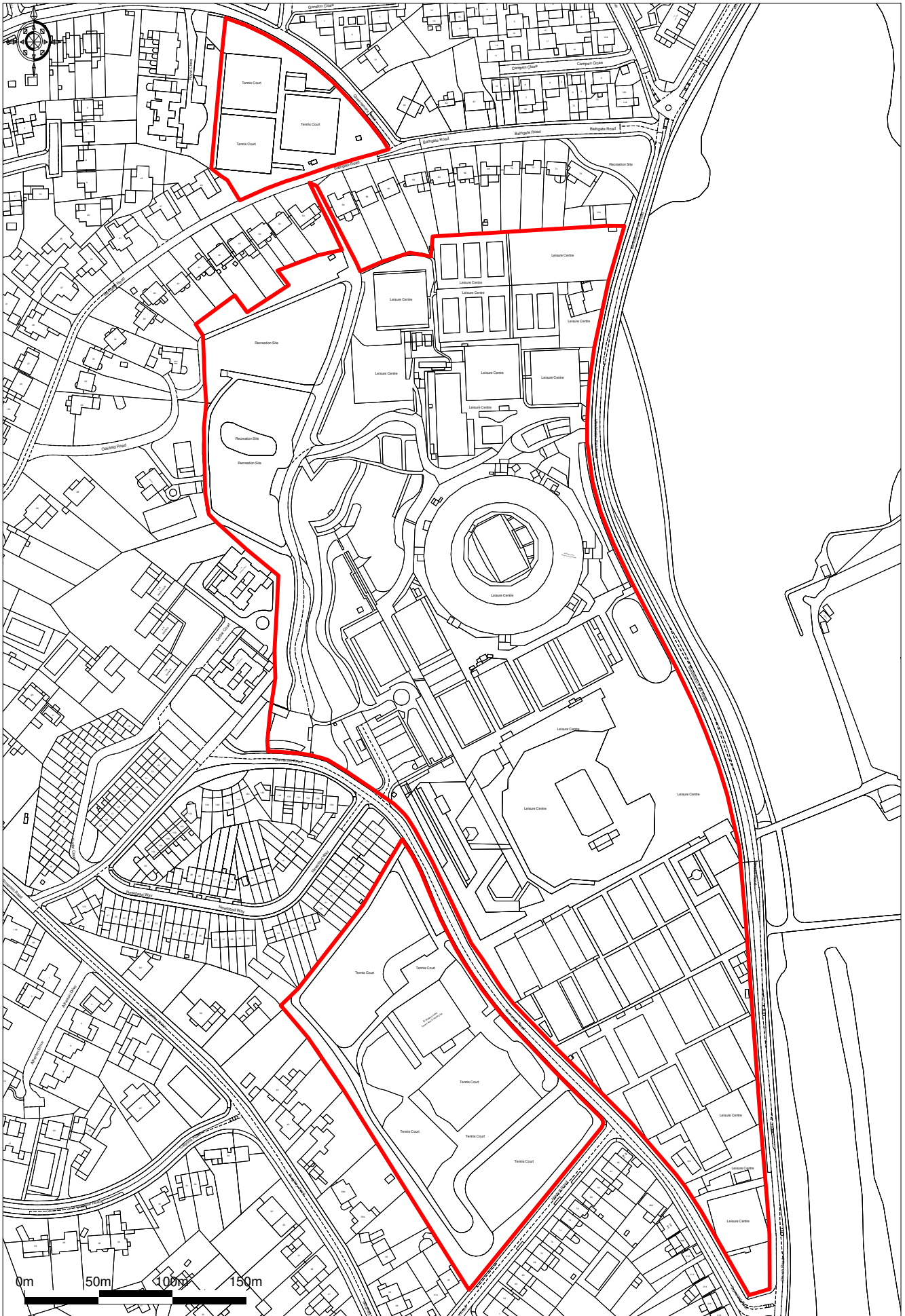
Yours sincerely

Jon Roshier

For and on behalf of
Rolfe Judd Planning Limited

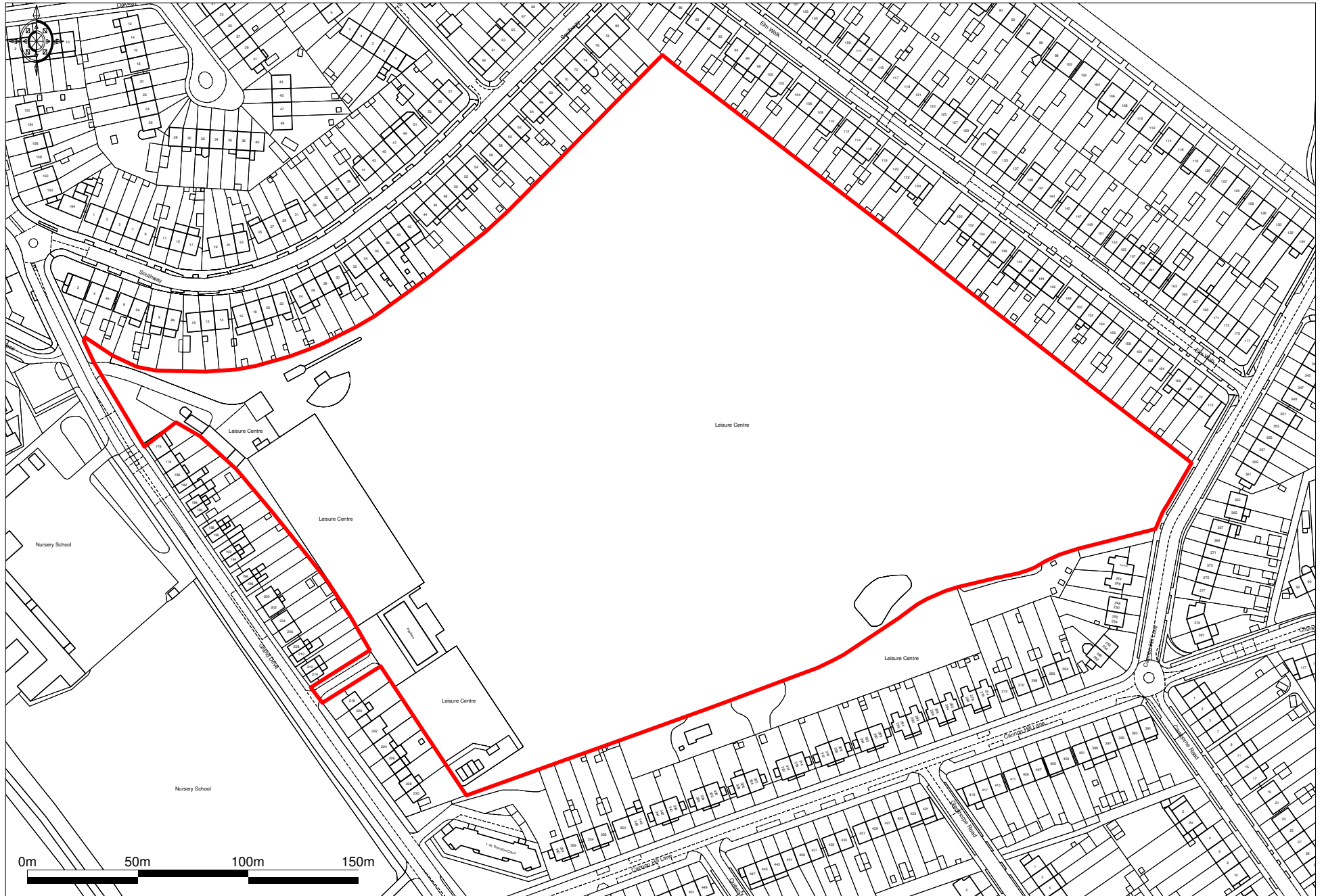
Cc Justin Smith - AELTC

AE LTC - Church Road, Wimbledon



© UKMap Copyright The GeoInformation Group 2018
Licence No. LANDMLON100003121118. Plotted Scale - 1:3479

AELTC Community Sports Ground, Raynes Park



© UKMap Copyright The GeoInformation Group 2018 Licence No. LANDMLON100003121118. Plotted Scale - 1:2317