

# Heath Farm Sports Facilities

## Summary of Proposal Preview Event

We are pleased to provide a brief summary report to all residents of Kings Hill Parish following the preview event which was held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Kevin Murray and Jas Atwal of Kevin Murray Associates (KMA) facilitated special preview sessions, commissioned by Liberty Property Trust UK Ltd (the developer) and Kent County Council (the County), a joint venture partnership, promoting the development of Kings Hill.

The sessions were attended by over 140 residents. A full copy of the Summary Feedback Report is available at [www.kings-hill.com/amenities/country-park](http://www.kings-hill.com/amenities/country-park) or by contacting our office on 01732 870375.

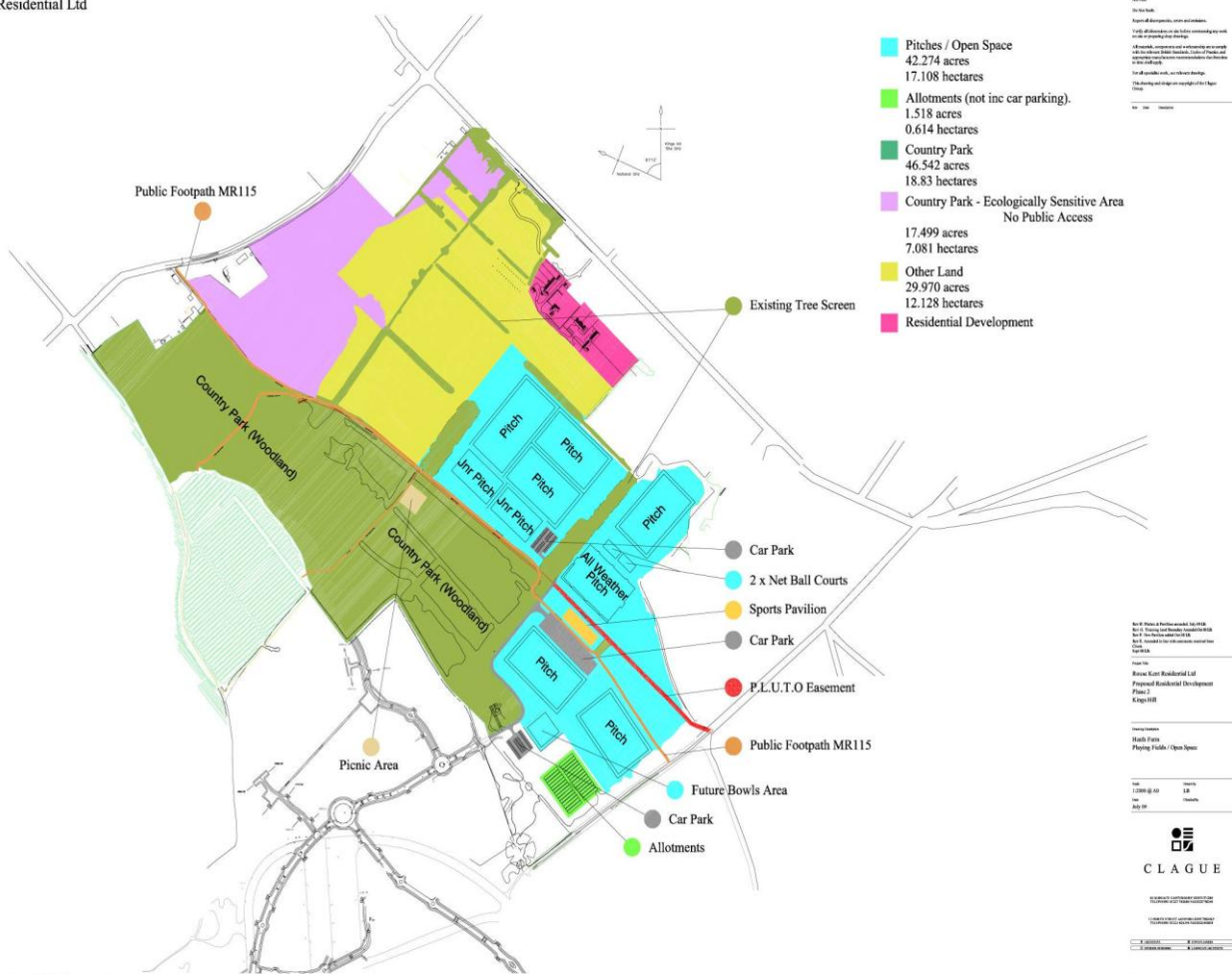
### Aims of the session

The objective of the session was to help local residents explore, understand and respond to the proposals for the sports and leisure facilities on Heath Farm. The plan below shows the overall development proposals for Heath Farm which include Playing Pitches, a Country Park, Picnic Area and Allotments.

Heath Farm is located at the end of Beacon Avenue, which is accessed via Discovery Drive, past The Discovery School and right at the roundabout. The entrance to Heath Farm can be viewed from the end of the road.

### Overall masterplan of Heath Farm

Rouse Kent Residential Ltd



## Setting the context

**Andrew Blevins**, Managing Director of Liberty Property Trust UK Ltd, explained the background to the proposals, including the requirement for playing facilities as part of a Section 106 legal agreement and the establishment of the principle through historic permissions. He explained the updates to the proposals (also exhibited around the room) and the intended role of Charlton Athletic Community Trust as operators of the facilities. He also reinforced the priority of providing for Kings Hill Football Club and local young people.

**Matt Parish & Jason Morgan** of the Charlton Athletic Community Trust explained their established relationships in the area, and their role in the operation the facility, including the different uses (both football and others) and how they operate with different youth and special needs groups. Matt drew examples from other programmes they operate – and also explained that this would not be a facility for Charlton Athletic FC – which is a separate entity from the Community Trust.

## Headline Issues

There was generally much support for the amended proposals and the suggested activities. However, much of the discussion at the sessions focused on the concerns of the residents. The following are the headline issues:

- Traffic volume and generation
- Access to the facilities
- Parking
- Speed of drivers
- Safety and security
- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise
- The range of activities proposed
- The level of use of pitches
- The pavilion and its associated uses
- Maintenance and management of the facilities

## Summary feedback

Following the presentations, Kevin invited questions and comments from attendees. The following is a summary of the key issues raised during both sessions.

### Issue 1 Traffic, Volume, Access, Movement, Parking

A number of issues were raised around traffic generation, movement, access and parking as a result of the proposed addition of two further pitches. Suggested figures for traffic generation/volume were deemed unrealistic, at only 15 vehicles per game. Confirmation of any traffic assessments carried out was sought by the community.

There was general concern about the amount of additional traffic generated and the impact that this would have on the residential areas both during the day and at night, particularly in relation to parking. Street parking was already perceived to be a problem for many, due to a lack of adequate parking provision around the development, Reference was made, in the display material, about ease of access for coaches, however, it was noted that there was no intention or anticipated need for coaches to enter the development as the nature of uses and users would not warrant the need for such vehicles. The local authority planning department requirements are for roads to be designed to a specific width to ensure carrying capacity and (parking) for coaches.

For many attendees, traffic accessibility was a key issue. If this could be resolved early on there would be much more support for the proposals. It was hoped that the link road (Kings Hill Avenue) would be operational by the time any development/use of the facilities became available.

The question was asked about access to the pitches from the Maidstone end (Wateringbury Road) but it was noted that this was prohibited.

The final issue relating to traffic was that of the speed of drivers. There was a fear that the sports facilities would attract young people who were more likely to drive at higher speeds.

## **Issue 2 Safety, Security and Anti-Social Behaviour**

There was a lot of concern about the safety and security of local residents with the introduction of the new facilities, particularly with relation to the activities to be carried out by CACT. However, residents were assured that the programmes run by CACT are strictly managed by highly trained 'coaches' and that under no circumstances would young people be in a situation where they were not being managed or monitored by the coaches. The groups are transported to and from the facilities together. CACT also employ 24 hour security for their facilities.

It was feared that noise levels would increase as a result of the activities relating to the football but also linked to anti-social behaviour due to the bar that is proposed in the pavilion, i.e. people leaving the bar late at night.

## **Issue 3 Range, provision and use of facilities**

The perceived bias towards football caused some dismay. There was a call for a broader and more diverse range of uses within the overall Heath Farm development. Suggestions included allotments, bowling club, tennis, swimming, riding stables. The current intention is that there will be facilities for rugby, hockey, netball and dance classes. CACT were keen to emphasise that the facilities would be made available to local teams and further meetings would be held once the scope of the facilities provided was established.

There were questions about the level of use of the facilities, including times of use during the day and evening how many and where they would come from. It was stated that Kings Hill Football Club have priority over bookings for pitches before other local teams. CACT would use the pitches during Monday-Friday, which complements the requirements for use by local teams.

Whilst the detail of hiring fees and rates were still to be determined it was suggested that they would be in line with Local Authority rates. CACT could also assist smaller clubs to secure appropriate funding to allow them to use the facilities.



## **Issue 4 The Pavilion**

The use and need for the Pavilion was raised by several people. It was explained that the pavilion was necessary to provide the requisite changing facilities and also classrooms for the educational programmes run by CACT. As many of the facilities will be used by young children the bar area would provide a warm, dry, comfortable shelter for parents and families who accompany their children. It also provides a valuable revenue stream that ensures facilities can be maintained to a high standard.

The anxiety for some was that the Pavilion would be regularly hired out for private functions – weddings, parties, causing disruption to local residents. However, this has not been confirmed and the perception is that if it is hired out, the floor plan for the area that could be used for private functions is relatively small, implying that it would not be attractive or suitable for large parties or events.

## **Issue 5 Commercial viability, management and maintenance**

Attendees sought clarification of whose responsibility the management and maintenance of the pitches and related facilities was and whether this would in some way impact on residents' Estate Management fees. It was confirmed that the operational costs for the Sports facility would be paid for by CACT and that there would not be a subsidy from Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company.

CACT's commitment to Heath Farm was questioned but it was noted that they are in the process of finalising the details of the contract but the Heads of Terms have been agreed. The contract will be for a 25 year partnership.

### Next steps

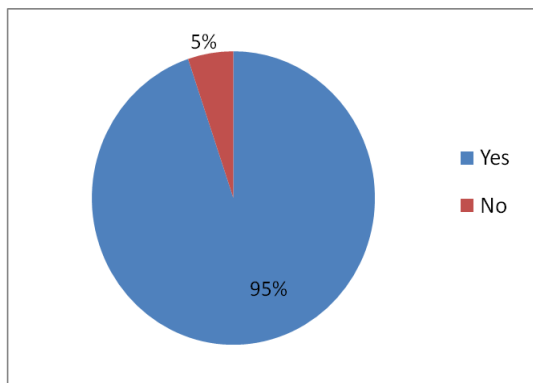
The amendment to the planning application will be submitted by the end of the year, following which the Council will undertake statutory consultation to which residents will have the opportunity to respond



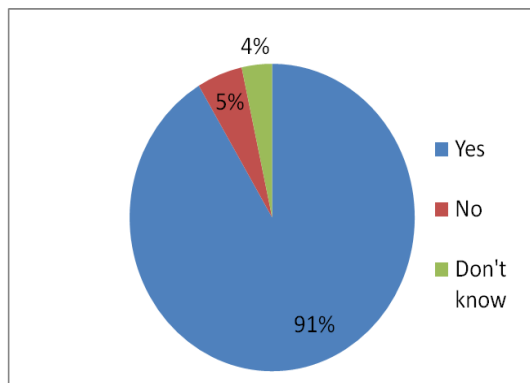
### Summary feedback from questionnaires

From the completed questionnaires, the following information was obtained.

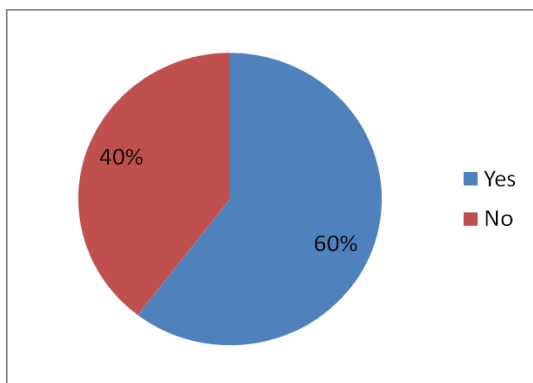
**Question 1 – did you gain relevant up to date information about the Playing Field proposals?**



**Question 2 – Was the session conducted in an open, fair manner?**



**Question 3 – Are there aspects of the proposals you like or particularly support?**



**Question 4 – Area there any particular concerns you have about the proposals?**

