

Development Control (FAO Stuart Adams)
Merton Council
Civic Centre
Morden SM4 5DX



29 September 2021

Dear Mr Adams,

**21/P2900 The AELTC Wimbledon Park Project
Wimbledon Park Golf Club Home Park Road Wimbledon Park SW19 7HR**

Having considered the above planning application, Merton Friends of the Earth believes that, if approved, it would cause enormous harm to the local environment, biodiversity, air quality and natural heritage. In our view the application is incompatible with local and national policies relating to the protection of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), Heritage Assets and Conservation Areas. For these reasons we call for the application to be rejected.

We have listed some of our objections below:

- 1) The proposed development is on MOL, in a registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest (Grade II*), which is also a site of Importance for Nature Conservation and a defined Green Corridor. To turn this land into a construction site and subsequently a venue for a Show Court (30 metres in height and with a capacity to accommodate 8,000 spectators), along with 38 additional tennis courts and ancillary facilities, will result in concreting over a large area of much-needed green space.
- 2) The proposed construction, which also includes a massive expansion in car parking space, will reduce public access to parkland, even though many of these facilities will be used by AELTC for a relatively short period each year.
- 3) The felling of hundreds of mature trees will represent a serious loss of biodiversity and wildlife and will also cause a deterioration in air quality. Furthermore, it will undermine Merton Council's goal of increasing tree coverage in the borough by 10% by 2050. Merton Friends of the Earth is committed to working with the Council to achieve this objective, and is actively engaged in tree planting projects in the borough. However, any saplings planted to replace those mature trees felled under AELTC's proposal will not have the same capacity to remove carbon dioxide and pollutants out of the air for at least 30 years.
- 4) The proposed project, if allowed to go ahead, will produce years of disruption and noise pollution during the construction phase. Once completed, it will result in increased traffic congestion and air pollution in an area that already suffers from high levels of disruption during the Wimbledon championship fortnight.
- 5) If the AELTC development were to proceed, in contravention of existing national and local policies intended to protect MOL and other highly valued parkland, then no green space of special

conservation or heritage status would be safe from large-scale construction projects. It would, therefore, set a dangerous precedent.

6) A significant increase to the championship's size will result in a similarly significant increase in its carbon footprint, including the flights and other journeys needed for spectators to visit. Given we are in a climate emergency and the Council has committed to achieving net zero in Merton by 2050, the goal should be to reduce overall emissions, not increase them.

For these reasons, we reiterate our opposition to AELTC's Wimbledon Park Project.

Regards,

Laura Carter and Gabriel Partos
Coordinators, Merton Friends of the Earth

