

## **Finsbury Park 5-a-side Football Centre Consultation Results**

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>Increasing participation by adults in sport and physical activity is a priority for Haringey. In 2006, the participation, as measured through the national Active People, showed that 22.9% of adults were meeting the recommended levels of 3 x 30 minutes participation and a target of increasing this by 1% was set.</p> <p>In gauging how this increase could be achieved, football was identified as a priority sport for development as analysis of the people living in Haringey indicated very high levels of latent demand for football.</p> <p>In 2009, the Council was approached by a commercial five a side football operator who was interested in developing a centre in Finsbury Park.</p> <p>The area of the Park identified by the operator for the possible location of this facility was the existing tarmac area.</p> <p>This area is currently used on a casual basis for a range of sports including basketball, football, netball and volley ball. It is also used by a disability cycle club, Pedal Power and as a base for film location units and storage for events.</p> <p>The area is not in good condition and funding is not available, either from the Council or through external sources to improve it.</p> <p>In order to test the acceptability of the proposal, the Council has undertaken a consultation exercise to obtain people's views.</p>
<b>Who was consulted</b>	Local Haringey Residents, Park Users, Organised Sport Clubs/Groups, Young People, Friends of Finsbury Park, Members, Council Departments, Local Businesses, Neighbouring Boroughs (Hackney & Islington), Stakeholders.
<b>Methodology</b>	Online survey, postal survey, interviews, Open Day, online forums, newspapers, internet, websites, emails, letters posted to 9100 local residents

<p><b>Summary of responses</b></p>	<p>The following amalgamates responses of residents who replied either by returning the completed paper survey or via the online questionnaire.</p> <p>A total of 260 responses were received to the survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 77 responded via the paper version</li> <li>• 183 responded using the online questionnaire</li> </ul> <p>Comments were also received by letter, email, and the talking wall and cab cam at the consultation open day which can be viewed in the appendices.</p>
<p><b>Summary of findings</b></p>	<p><b>The consultation asked respondents who did not support the proposal for their reasons. The major reasons cited were:</b></p> <p>1) <b>Concerns about privatisation/restricted use/charging for use</b>  55 comments were received expressing these types of concern (some respondents made a number of comments).</p> <p>These concerns might be summarised as follows:</p> <p>The area is currently freely available to all users at all park opening times. Should the Football Centre go ahead, the area would no longer be free to access at all times. Instead, at certain times, potential users would have to pay a hire fee to the operator. For some respondents, using this area of the park for this purpose e.g. where access is controlled by a private company is unacceptable. For others, the issue of having to pay for what is currently a freely available facility is unacceptable.</p> <p>2) <b>Concerns about preserving the character of the Park</b>  10 comments were received expressing this concern. These respondents were expressing the view that a new facility would negatively impact on the recreational value of the Park by increasing usage, increasing the amount of buildings/losing green space, creating additional noise and disrupting wildlife.</p> <p>The view expressed was that enough major activity such as events and funfairs were happening already.</p> <p>3) <b>Concerns about increased traffic generation and parking</b>  The consultation asked for respondent's views on</p>

	<p>including 83 dedicated parking spaces for the proposed development. 27 comments were received objecting to this, some respondents were wholly against the idea of increasing provision for car parking and felt it was inappropriate in a park.</p> <p>Others were concerned about the impact on the Park and Park users from additional traffic being generated. Concerns were specifically expressed about the potential impact on parking in the surrounding area and generally on how additional traffic might impact on what can already be an area of high traffic volumes.</p> <p>4) <b>Increased provision for football</b>  10 comments were received expressing concerns about the new activity (football) being proposed.  Some respondents were of the view that the Park was already well used for football and did not require an additional, dedicated space. Others felt that this was providing for a minority (male) users to the exclusion of everyone else, others felt it was unnecessary as provision for football is already available locally.</p> <p>5) <b>Concerns that the Centre would displace other activities</b>  34 comments were received expressing the concern that an area that is currently used for a number of activities would, in future, only be available for football.</p> <p>6) <b>Concerns arising from the indicative plans</b>  26 additional comments were received expressing concerns about the indicative plans.  Comments made here, over and above those already made. Previously included concerns about the proximity to the playground, objections to having a licensed bar and objections to any more buildings within the park.</p> <p><b>Respondents where asked would they use the facility?</b></p> <p>70 of the 260 respondents to this question indicated that they were in favour of the proposal and that they would use the facility. 147 said they would not use the facility and 9 indicated that it would depend upon exactly what was provided 34 either didn't know or gave no reply.</p> <p>The major reasons given for not using the facility were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't play football/5 a side football (35 respondents)</li> <li>• Concerns about cost/charging (9 respondents)</li> <li>• Concerns about losing a space that is currently free to use (13 respondents)</li> </ul>
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- No interest in football (9 respondents)
- Against privatisation (4 respondents)
- Want the area to remain as a shared space (8 respondents)
- Want the space to remain as it is (9 respondents)

**Respondents were further asked did they currently use the tarmac area and if so for what activity?**

117 respondents indicated that they did currently use the area.

136 indicated that they didn't.

Of those that did use the area, the following activities were mentioned: basketball, cycling, fitness training, socialising, running, as a viewing point, for sports team training when the grass is waterlogged, football, sprint training, roller blading, as a young child's play area, volleyball, model car racing, filming, yoga, circuit training, kite flying, skateboarding, tennis.

**Respondents were also asked what improvements they would like to see in the park?**

The top three mentioned were:

- An increase in free sports programmes (137 respondents)
- Lighting along paths to and from exits (130 respondents)
- Refurbishment of the Finsbury Park track and gym (115)

**Respondents were then asked did they think the proposed site was appropriate and accessible for a 5 a side football centre?**

99 respondents answered yes to this question

136 respondents answered no

26 responded that they didn't know.

Of those who responded no, the reasons given were:

- The area is already well used/concern for existing users
- Against privatisation/having to pay for an area that is currently free
- Concern about loss of open space.
- Concerns about traffic movements/car parking/traffic congestion
- Concerns about specific details of the proposed plans
- Did not feel that there was sufficient evidence that the facility was needed.

<b>Council's response</b>	<p>The Council is of the view that there was merit in considering and testing out this proposal.</p> <p>Currently budgets, both capital and revenue, are under severe pressure and this is likely to worsen. This development, as well as providing a facility that would be very well used, would also provide capital funding for investment in other local provision and an annual revenue income stream.</p> <p>A further potential benefit would be the creation of a number of new jobs. However it is clear from the consultation that the proposal has raised significant levels of concern and objection and the Council has taken the view that it will not be pursued further at this juncture.</p>
<b>What happens next</b>	The Council now intends to examine the wider issue of non public sector investment in sports and recreation provision as a potential response to current and future projected reductions in the overall level of funding available to the public sector.
<b>For further information, please contact:</b>	Erica Owusu-Boateng at <a href="mailto:erica.owusu-boateng@haringey.gov.uk">erica.owusu-boateng@haringey.gov.uk</a>
<b>Dates of consultation:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> May – 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2010