

Gunnersbury Park Leisure Facility Public Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions document

Introduction

This document has been developed to address the frequently asked questions and key topic areas that have been raised during the project to date. It is intended to be used as an information tool and will be updated throughout the course of the project as part of the on-going communication with stakeholders.

The invitation sent to over 500 people (to all who registered to receive information about Gunnersbury Park).

31st March 2015

Number of attendees: 21

1. Tennis Courts – why are there plans to relocate these instead of repairing them?

- a. The Gunnersbury 2026 Master Plan, adopted by both councils has always sort to relocate the tennis courts to ensure that the historic views and setting of the Heritage Core of the park, in reinstated to its former glory. In addition to enhance the usage and opportunities for participation for residents, this type of facility in a park requires floodlights, which again would not be appropriate within this part of the park.

2. Leisure Facility Costs – what is the difference between proposed Option 1 and Option 2?

- a. The main difference between the two options is the inclusion of the sports Hall and the additional changing and ancillary facilities required to support the sports hall, such as toilets. Both boroughs have a deficit of Sports Hall provision and the Community Development Programme opportunities of having a sports hall will bring significant benefits to borough residents across, formal sport, leisure participation and public health programmes

3. Total cost of each options: Option 1 and Option 2 – what elements does this cover?

- a. Slide 12 of the presentation included the following table and proposed facility mix, as per both boroughs approved cabinet reports

Option 1 – minus sports Hall and Studio Total Cost £5,004,772	Option 2 – Including Sports Hall and Studio Total Cost £8,689,180
New build changing block including changing accommodation,	New build sports centre including changing accommodation,
toilets, café social area and office	toilets, café social area, office, 2 classrooms
8 full size grass football pitches	5 court sports hall
3 adult cricket pitches	8 full size grass football pitches
2 full size 3G AGP	3 adult cricket pitches
8 outdoor floodlit macadam tennis courts	2 full size 3G AGP
	8 outdoor floodlit macadam tennis courts

4. Bowling club - should there be any concerns with proposed location of the bowling club?

- a. The location of the bowls club and its green is seen as a positive to the scheme in terms of development of the club, membership and participation. For example use of the sports hall for indoor short matt bowls and general increase in footfall to the site. The councils have met with the bowls club committee and will continue to work together in developing these proposals. With regards to sunlight and shading, the council have completed shading modelling, which shows no impact during the bowls season, with shadowing occurring during December and January. The design will also take into account the need for wind and other factors, such as the reduction of the leylandii behind the bowls club, so that the green is not affected.

5. Hard courts – what age ranges are catered for and what encouragement will be there for sports for older people?

- a. The project team have consulted with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) on the facility mix, as both the National Governing Body (NGB) and potential grant funders. To date and they have recommended Tarmac Macadam (Hard Courts) as being the most suitable. Following the consultation and raising of this question, we again raised the question, and were informed

‘Given the likely volume of usage and nature of play, alongside cost implications and maintenance scheduling, a porous tar macadam (hard court) surface would be advisable. Construction and maintenance wise, it is the most cost efficient, whilst it provides good playing characteristics, drainage and longevity’.

6. Can anything be done regarding location of football pitches as some residents are unhappy about the current proposed location?

- a. Yes, The council will be meeting with the NGB's for the sports requiring use of the natural turf pitches and discussing the location of the pitches. The site is a large site and accommodation of the mini soccer pitches should be possible in an alternative location

7. Why is the proposed location of football pitches in the area that is on a slope?

- a. The project team have carried out a full topographical survey of the site, to ensure that the location of the pitches, and the fall on the pitches, is in accordance with the NGB technical guidance documents. Whilst the site have a fall of circa 16m across its entirety. It is in effect two plateaus, which the pitches have been designed around. However, with the answer to question two, the site is large and variations can be looked at during the detailed technical design stages

8. Why can't football pitches stay in lower area?

- a. Please refer to answer 6 & 7 in relation to the ability to spread out the pitches. The recent feedback on the most suitable activity to go in that location was for the golf, which it was felt was potentially less of an impact to the ecologically sensitive area of the Potomac. However, recently commissioned surveys to look at the ecology and Bats, for example, should provide a further steer.

9. What are the proposals for floodlighting on the site and which facilities will be floodlit?

- a. The proposals are the AstroTurf Grass Pitches (AGP's) will be floodlit, along with the tennis courts on the site. Floodlighting is required to allow for the Community Development plans to be delivered, with our partners such as Brentford Football in the Community and the NGB's, given that for large parts of the year, without floodlights these facilities could not be used.

10. Light pollution – has this been considered with floodlight pitches?

- a. Light pollution has been considered with regards to the location and any light spillage which may affect residents. This has resulted in the current locations being selected, as well as the least impact to the wider site and ecology. The technology has improved significantly in recent years, with regards to floodlights and there are many recent examples of floodlights being approved in more densely populated areas, such as Spikes Bridge Park, Lord Halsbury Playing Fields, Pitshanger Park Tennis courts, to name a few. Of course the floodlighting will be subject to planning and a full light impact assessment will be required as part of the planning application.

11. Will there be fences around artificial surfaces and tennis courts?

- a. Yes there will be fencing around the AGP's and the Tennis Courts

12. What security will be in the park, will there be any CCTV?

- a. The facility will have a full CCTV system as part of its design, which will also allow for external Areas.

13. On a previous plan the public right of way was different, why has this changed?

- a. The plans are not proposing to change any rights of way that may or may not exist on the site. Local knowledge and the pedestrian movement surveys have been very helpful in showing desire lines within the park, and these will be taken into account with regards to the natural grass pitches. It is important to note that none of the grass pitches will be fenced and the sports pitch area, which has had up to 30 football pitches on it, will continue to be used as it has over the years.

14. Public path – how will people get round in the park?

- a. As per above the pedestrian movement surveys have been very helpful and the landscape architect, responsible for the Heritage Project, is the principle landscape architect for this element, to ensure consistency

15. Car park – will the car park stay free of charge?

- a. The site, for all phases of the master plan, does require improvements to car parking provision and additional spaces to be made available. The councils are considering using part of the walled Garden, occupied by Greenscene, however this is currently outside of the funding of both the Heritage and Sports Phases. This location does currently have an income value of circa £35k, which is built into the revised business model for the whole estate. This revised model, is to ensure the site is fully funded and able to be maintained to a high standard following the significant investment. Therefore, options will need to be considered to mitigate any lose of income, should the car park expansion proceed. This may include a charging policy, but this could be linked to the events pricing, i.e. incorporated into the wedding hire fee, a Gunnersbury Park Membership, similar to the National Trust, where by members park for free or peak time charging etc. therefore Officers will be exploring a range of options

16. Entrance to the park - what will be done about safety - as the existing location of entrance is narrow and dangerous?

- a. A transport assessment has been commissioned and will advise on options for pedestrian and vehicle movement within the existing entrance. Given the restrictions on width, residential and listed boundaries, a solution will be required within the existing boundary of the entrance.

17. Will there be cycling routes in the park?

- a. There are plans to investigate cycle paths in the park, as part Hounslow's cycling strategy and connectivity of new and existing cycle routes around the site. These do not form part of the sports project

18. Will the drainage outside bowling green be improved?

- a. Improved landscaping and works to the hard landscaped areas, such as car parks and footpaths, will be included as part of the project, so yes there will be improvements across the site.

19. Will there be provision for cycle parking in new facilities?

- a. Yes there will be provision for cycle parking in accordance with Hounslow's Planning Policy

20. In the 1st lottery scheme there was no car park and aim was for people to come to see the park. In this 2nd scheme there is a high level of concentration of facilities with encouragement to include car park. Why are these two schemes so different?

- a. Works and provision for additional car parking fell outside of the Heritage phase of the project, due to the funding opportunities. It was noted during the development of the Heritage Project that parking improvements were needed at the site, given the predicted increase in visitors from circa 600K to 1 million. Car parking has always been planned to be improved as part of the full 2026 Master plan; the development of the sports phase of the project, has presented the opportunity to look at the usage of the walled garden area.

21. What is planned for evening use of the park?

- a. Subject to planning, the proposed hours of usage for the sports facilities will be up to 10 p.m. This is within the hours the site may be used for example, weddings within the Museum and other principle areas.

22. Pedestrian movement and potential damage – what will be done about potentially large numbers of football fans as for example for Brentford football fans the park is the preferred route to walk to Acton Town tube station?

- a. This does sit outside of the scope of the Sports Project at Gunnersbury Park, therefore Officers will need to discuss this, the considerations and any proposals that have been considered as part of the Stadiums planning approval.

23. Changing facilities – can you explain practicality of proposed lockers and changing rooms?

- a. Most new built facilities for outdoor sports area, have bag stores for team events. This allows for a staggered start time of matches, so that the changing rooms can be vacated allowing another team to use them whilst the other game its proceeding. This avoids the need for large changing room spaces, which are limited in use to weekends and match days, which cost both capital and revenue funding. By simple operational arrangements these funds can be better invested. We are proposing some lockers as well, outside of the changing rooms, as operator feedback is this is the best location, given they are visible and lockers in changing rooms can sometimes be targeted more. However, we will review the options and look to incorporate some lockable areas in the changing room provision.

24. Will the Café be fully licenced café?

- a. There is the requirement for a licensed bar, under some of the Sport League rules and regulations, principally for cricket. Therefore this does need to be explored, to see if the level of cricket at the site will progress to these higher leagues. This is a topic that we do require feedback on, as some resident have indicated that the ability to have a drink at the site on a summers day would be nice. Further consultation will certainly take place on this, but at present we are not proposing bar facilities.

25. What is the proposed height of the 5 courts sports hall?

- a. The current designs are being finalised, but to meet with Sport England Technical guidance, the building will be around 9m in height

26. Sports hall – how far does shadow cast from the building?

- a. Some modelling has been completed on this and will be required as part of the planning application. We will provide details of the initial assessment. It is important to note that the building is staggered and is not that high across the full facility.

27. Sports hall - are there any proposals to use solar panels?

- a. Yes the site will look to benefit for sustainable energy provision as much as possible.

28. What is the distance between side wall of the sports hall and bowling green?

- a. Current layouts are being finalised, but the distance would be within 10m

29. What are the plans for future of the Potomac Lake?

- a. This location forms a significant part of the Heritage Project and also the wider educational programme opportunities at the site. With particular reference to sporting and recreational activities, the councils have been discussing with Get Hooked on Fishing and other parties with regards to that type of activity. An intensive use however, would not be suitable and the site is principally a very rich and diverse site for ecology and this must be maintained as its principle use and importance to the site.