

Moormead Recreation Ground

Proposed Outdoor Gym Consultation

Summary of Results

1. Background

As part of the Council’s continued commitment to improve our parks and open spaces, the Council and Friends of Moormead Recreation Ground are proposing to install a new outdoor gym that would be suitable for both those with mobility issues and able-bodied users. The gym will be situated next to the playground, towards the border with the River Crane.

The new equipment would include a mixture of static and moving items. Respondents were encouraged to provide suggestions of equipment that they would like to see installed in the gym. A suitable safety surface material, depending on the final pieces of equipment that are chosen, will be installed on site. We have a variety of surfacing in other outdoor gyms, grass matting, wet pour and tarmac.

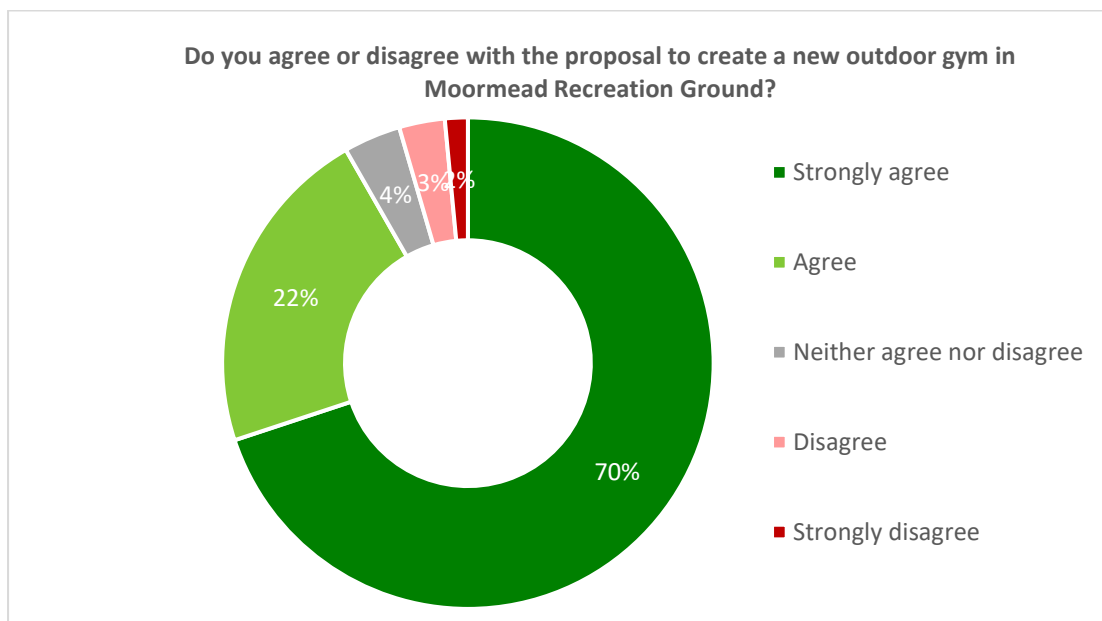
The consultation took place between the 7th of May and the 4th of June.

2. Summary of Results

133 people responded to this consultation with the majority completing an online form, but four respondents contacting the Council via email.

93 people (70%) strongly agreed with the proposal of installing a new outdoor gym, with 29 people (22%) agreeing. In contrast only 4 respondents (3%) disagreed and 2 people (2%) strongly disagreed. 5 people (4%) declared that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.

With 92% of respondents in support of the new gym, this is a very strong indication that the new facility would be welcomed and supported by users of the Recreation Ground.



2.1 Comments not in support of the proposal.

Of the 6 people who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, all 6 left comments or reasons why. The focus of these comments were around outdoor gyms being perceived as an eyesore in what is a beautiful natural space and it is inappropriate to place it next to the playground.

Other concerns were that the park is already overrun with fitness providers who use existing trees for their equipment and they would monopolise the new gym area. Others were concerned about the loss of grass for plastic equipment which is not in keeping with the Council's climate change action plan and the project should be carbon neutral or to used wooden items. Lastly, there were concerns about the costs of the project and how well it would be used, or where information on the costs could be found.

In response to the above comments, the introduction of a gym would be a benefit as fitness providers are not permitted to tie instruments to trees for their exercise classes. By providing a facility users can exercise on suitable equipment. The Council would also request that our enforcement contractor carries out regular monitoring of the site to ensure that any fitness providers with more than 5 attendees are licenced through the Council's Park Events team. Fines will be issued where breaches occur.

The comments on using only wooden items would be considered by the Friend of Moorhead Rec and if supported could form part of the project specification. The funding for the gym is through the Council's capital fund for park improvements.

2.2 Comments in support of the proposal.

Of the 122 respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal 81 left additional comments where there were several recurring themes. Concerns were raised by a couple of respondents on the location, suggesting that it should be moved away from the playground or some sort of screening should be installed as it is inappropriate. Richmond Council has multiple other outdoor gyms located near to playgrounds and would not look to install screening or fencing. Examples can be found at Heathfield Recreation Ground, Old Deer Park, Hatherop Park and Palewell Common.

Several of respondents mentioned that by providing the new equipment, this will bring benefits to the mental well being of users and visitors of the recreation ground. The gym will also provide a facility to those who are unable to afford gyms or fitness classes.

2.3 Type of equipment

The Council provided examples of types of equipment that the Parks Team were proposing to install. The items included: a balance board, crossrider combo, hip twister, air walker, chest press/lat pull combo, hip swing and a step and calf unit.

21 of the 81 people who commented mentioned the types of equipment that they would like to see in the park with a majority requesting the installation of high bars, pull up bars or parallel bars in order to build strength and exercise various parts of the body. This will be considered by the Council and Friends Group when devising the project specification. High bars do require more robust type of safety surface so this would need to be considered as this can be more expensive.

Other respondents suggested that static items are more popular than complicated machinery but the Council would look to install a mixture of both to ensure that the gym is accessible to users with mobility issues and able bodied users.

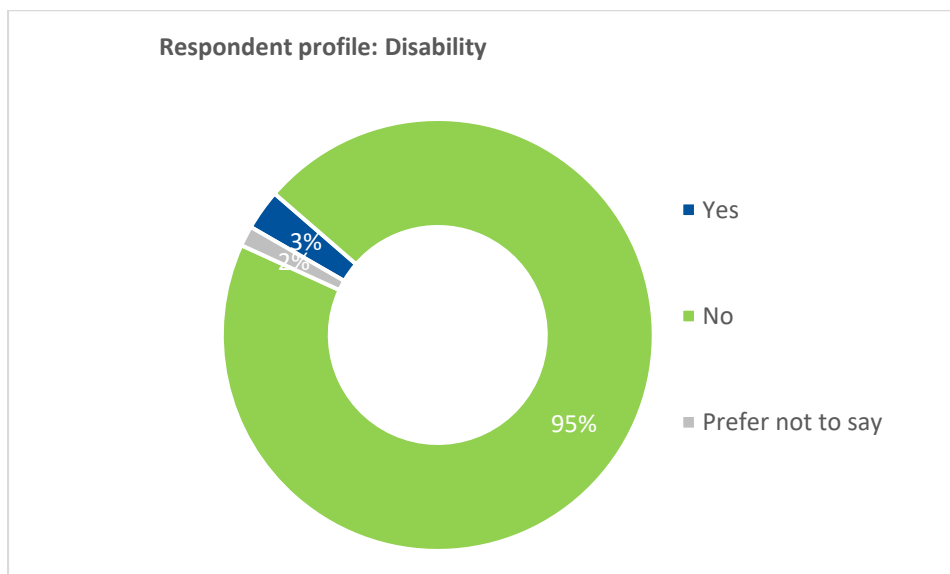
The Council would now discuss options with the Friends of Moormead Recreation Ground to finalise the equipment list.

User information

When asked about in what capacity are respondents responding to the consultation. The majority of respondents were from the local area and regular users of the Recreation Ground. Please note that respondents were able to choose more than one answer so the total percentages exceed 100.



132 of the 133 respondents answered the question on whether they consider themselves to have a disability with 4 people (3%) declaring that they did, 126 people saying they did not (95%) and 2 people preferring not to say (2%). Being able to provide a new facility that benefits those who have a disability is one aim of the new gym.



3. Next steps

The Parks and Open Spaces Team plan to:

- Share the report with the Friends of Moormead Recreation Ground, ward Councillor's and the Chair of the Environment, Sustainability, Culture, and Sports Services Committee. The Chair will make the final decision on whether to proceed with the project.
- Work with the Friends group to develop a project specification for supply and install the new gym equipment, taking into consideration the suggestions made by the public in this report.
- Invite suppliers to quote for the new gym, based on the project specification. The window to quote would last for 3 to 4 weeks. Should a contract be awarded the Council would work with the chosen supplier to install the new gym within the next 3 months – subject to approval by Cllrs as mentioned above.