

Suffolk Road Recreation Ground Consultation

Summary of Results

1. Background

Working with the Friends of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground, The Parks and Open Spaces Team carried out a consultation to garner public opinion on improving Suffolk Road Recreation Ground. The Council's proposal was to re-design the open space so that it included a new play area, a dog free area and that further improvements were carried out, such as new tree and shrub planting and sowing of a wildflower meadow. Considerations were also made to install a new entrance into Walnut Tree Close in the future.

The consultation ran from Wednesday 20th September to Tuesday 10th October 2017.

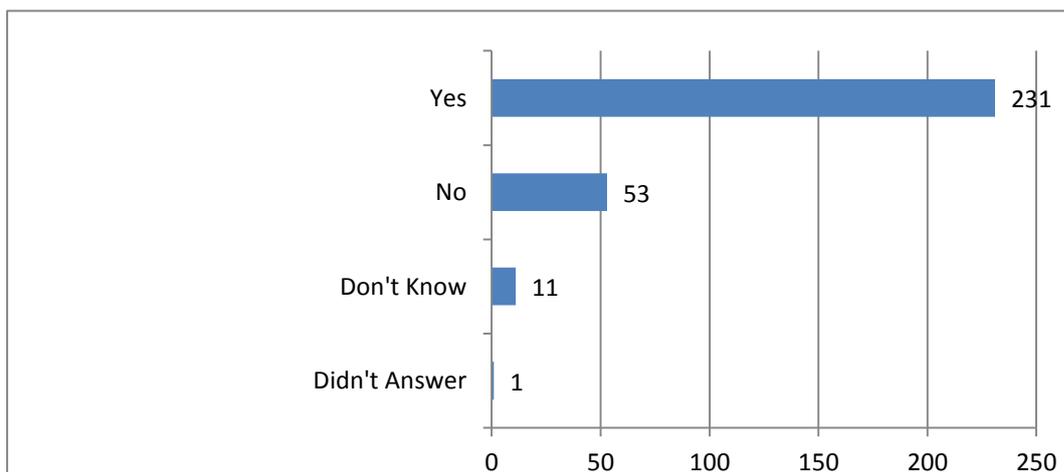
2. Summary of Results

In total, this consultation received 296 responses. There were 295 responses submitted online and one paper copy submission. The Parks and Open Spaces Team received one phone call and one email regarding this consultation.

Please note that percentages in this report may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

2.1. Overall, do you support the proposed changes to Suffolk Road Recreation Ground?

There was strong support demonstrated for the proposal with 231 (78%) respondents stating that they favour the proposed changes. 53 (18%) respondents stated they do not support the proposals, while 11 (4%) respondents indicated that they were not sure whether they agreed with the proposals or not. One respondent did not answer the question. The full results are displayed in the graph below:



2.2. Comments supporting the proposal

General comments that were supporting of this proposal were around the need for the open space to be transformed into a space that benefited the whole community. The majority of respondents welcomed the changes and disclosed that they believed a play area was desperately needed in this part of Barnes, especially equipment that would cater for older children.

Seventeen residents requested that the play area is made larger than the proposed designs suggest; and that in its existing state, Suffolk Road Rec is underused at present. Three respondents stressed the importance of a disabled swing being included in the design as the closest suitable play area was at Palewell Common, East Sheen.

There were also requests that the dog free area should be larger than proposed and that additional seating and picnic tables should be installed, along with more bins and a space for children “to play imaginatively without the fear of dogs running off the lead”. One resident proposed the inclusion of a wooden kiosk that could be tendered out to local businesses and another proposed bike racks by the entrance to the play area. Finally, two respondents were pleased about a wildflower meadow being sown; however, they were concerned about how the meadow would be maintained as it could be susceptible to damage from dogs and children playing games.

As a result of this feedback, the Council will analyse and discuss these comments with the Friends of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground. Following this, the Council will design a project specification bearing in mind these comments and invite interested suppliers to tender.

2.3. Comments against the proposal

General comments against the proposals were that the current use of the open space was suitable and that no changes were required. 26 respondents indicated that the site is the only space in the borough where dogs can run around safely and securely in a closed site.

A number of residents voiced concerns about the possible increase in noise and disturbance from having a play area and seating so close to adjacent properties. Residents of Lowther Road were concerned that seating along the boundary fence could make their properties less secure and their privacy violated. This was also echoed by respondents from Conniston Close (an elderly community), Walnut Tree Close and the Barnes Baptist Church, with respondents concerned that the community garden at the church and residents back gardens will have to manage an increase of noise from users of the Recreation Ground.

There were also concerns that the new play area would encourage anti-social behaviour after dark – specifically from young people. It was also suggested that increased visitors would be a burden on what is already an area that faces problems with car parking and traffic.

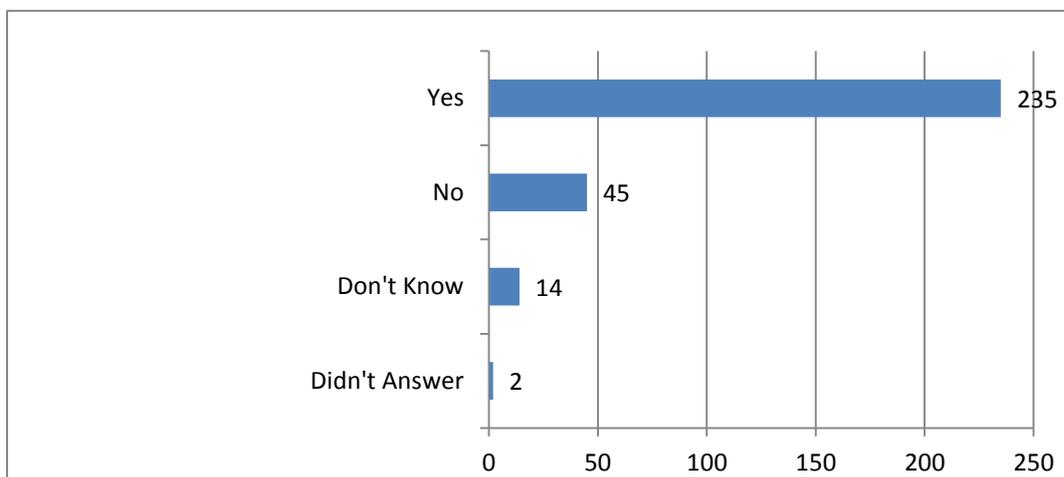
Three respondents voiced concerns about ongoing maintenance costs of the play area and whether this had been included or not, and five respondents suggested that the available funds should be used to improve Castelnau Recreation Ground instead or even local schools.

Two respondents were concerned that by planting shrubs and trees, the security of the site would be compromised as sight lines would be disrupted. This could make the introduction of a play area less safe. A local cricket club were also concerned that the proposals would affect their junior cricket programme.

As a result of this feedback, the Council is going to analyse and discuss these concerns with the Friends of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground and consider them against the proposals.

2.4 Do you support the proposed inclusion of a play area within Suffolk Road Recreation Ground?

Of the 295 respondents who took part in the consultation, 235 (79%) stated that they would support the installation of a play area in Suffolk Road Recreation Ground. 45 respondents (15%) indicated that they do not support the inclusion of a play area, whereas 14 respondents (5%) did not know and 2 participants (1%) did not answer the question.

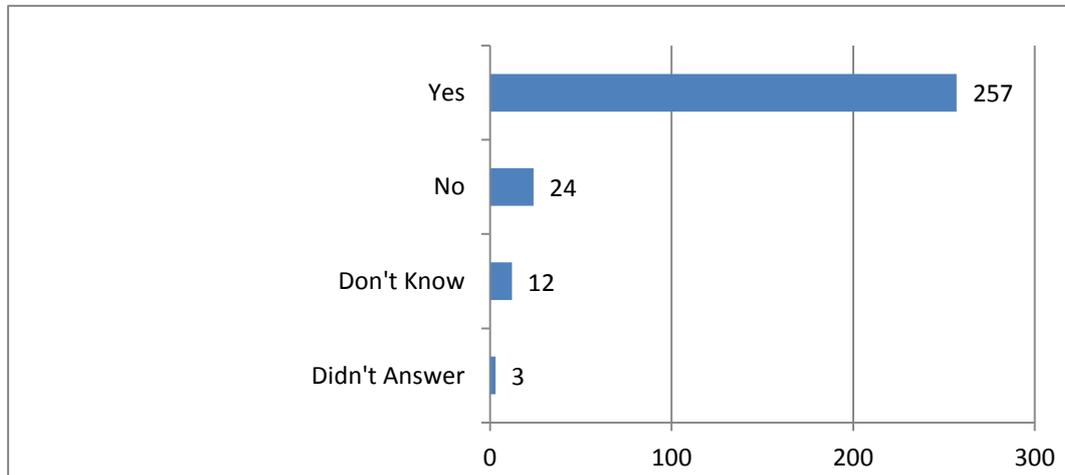


When looking at the types of potential play equipment that may be installed in the new play area (subject to the outcomes of the consultation), the Council and the Friends of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground agreed that the consultation would inform the selection of five main pieces of equipment. Respondents were able to select the types of equipment they would like to see on the site as well as make any further suggestions.

The five suggested items were; Swings (210 respondents selected this), Climbing Frame (221 respondents selected this), Slide (206 respondents selected this), Sand pit (132 respondents selected this) and Ground Trampoline (155 respondents selected this). Other popular suggestions included a Trim Trail (24 mentions), Paddling Pool / Water Play (13 mentions), Zip Wire (10 mentions), Seesaw, MUGA and accessible play items e.g. roundabouts (5 mentions). Other mentions included Gym equipment, Basket Swing, Skate Park, Ping Pong and play for younger children.

2.5 Do you support the proposal to plant new shrubs, trees and a wildflower meadow in Suffolk Road Recreation Ground?

Respondents were also asked whether they supported proposals to introduce new planting such as shrubs, trees and a wildflower meadow to Suffolk Road Recreation Ground. Out of the 295 respondents 257 (87%) were in favour of the proposals, while 24 (8%) were against and 12 (4%) were undecided. Three respondents (1%) did not answer the question.



3. Demographics

Demographic	Sample base (Unweighted)	Proportion (Unweighted %)
Gender		
Male	82	28%
Female	200	68%
Prefer not to say	10	3%
<i>Base: 292 respondents</i>		
Age		
Under 18	1	0%
18 – 24	3	1%
25 – 34	12	4%
35 – 44	101	35%
45 – 54	68	23%
55 – 64	46	16%
65 – 74	35	12%
75 or over	9	3%
Prefer not to say	16	5%
<i>Base: 291 respondents</i>		

Disability		
Yes	16	5%
No	269	92%
Prefer not to say	7	2%
<i>Base: 292 respondents</i>		
Ethnicity		
White	236	82%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	13	5%
Asian or Asian British	6	2%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	0	0%
Prefer not to say	26	9%
Other Ethnic Group	7	2%
<i>Base: 288 respondents</i>		

4. Next steps

The Parks and Open Spaces Team plan to:

- Share this report with ward Councillor's and the Joint Deputy Leader who is the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Business and Community and consult on next steps.
- Publish this report on the Council's consultation finder website.
- Inform the Friends Group members and decide whether further consultation with adjacent property owners is required.
- Develop a project specification for the proposals that have been outlined above and invite suppliers to tender for this contract within a three-week period.
- Assess all tender submissions and award the contract in order to begin delivering the project.