

Latchmere Recreation Ground

Playground and Landscape Refurbishment
Consultation Feedback
January 2025



Lead: Enable Parks Development



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Project Overview

£497,163 has been granted by Wandsworth Council to refurbish the playground at Latchmere Recreation Ground and create a new east-west pathway outside the playground. These funds are specifically allocated for play and landscape refurbishment, as part of Wandsworth Council's Year of Play 2025, and have not diverted resources from other social investments.

The playground refurbishment is required as some play items are starting to show signs of wear and tear and may need to be decommissioned in the next few years if we don't act soon. The refurbished playground will have increased capacity, allowing more children to play together at the same time. It will provide inclusive play equipment, allowing for children with disabilities to play alongside their friends and family.

The project will see a completely new playground for children aged 0-12.

The playground boundary will be adjusted to accommodate a new pathway which will run north of the playground. This will improve access for visitors, pedestrians and dogwalkers through the Recreation Ground without having to go through the playground.



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Consultation details:

The first phase of consultation went live, online, on Friday 11th October 2024 and closed on Friday 6th December 2024.

One on-site drop in session was held on:
Saturday 26th October 10am - 2pm (weekend, daytime).

This first round of consultation provides background information to the project including asking what local residents think of the current playground, if and how they use this facility and their suggestions for improvements. We also asked whether respondents agree or disagree with the new pathway proposal and reasoning for their answer.

In total, 58 people responded to the consultation, with 97% of respondents living locally to Latchmere Recreation Ground. The views of local organised groups represented 2% of the overall feedback, specifically the Open Spaces Committee of the Battersea Society.

46 people agreed with the proposed new pathway outside of the playground allowing east-west access through the Recreation Ground. 3 people disagreed with the proposed pathway and 9 people didn't know/had no opinion on the pathway proposal.



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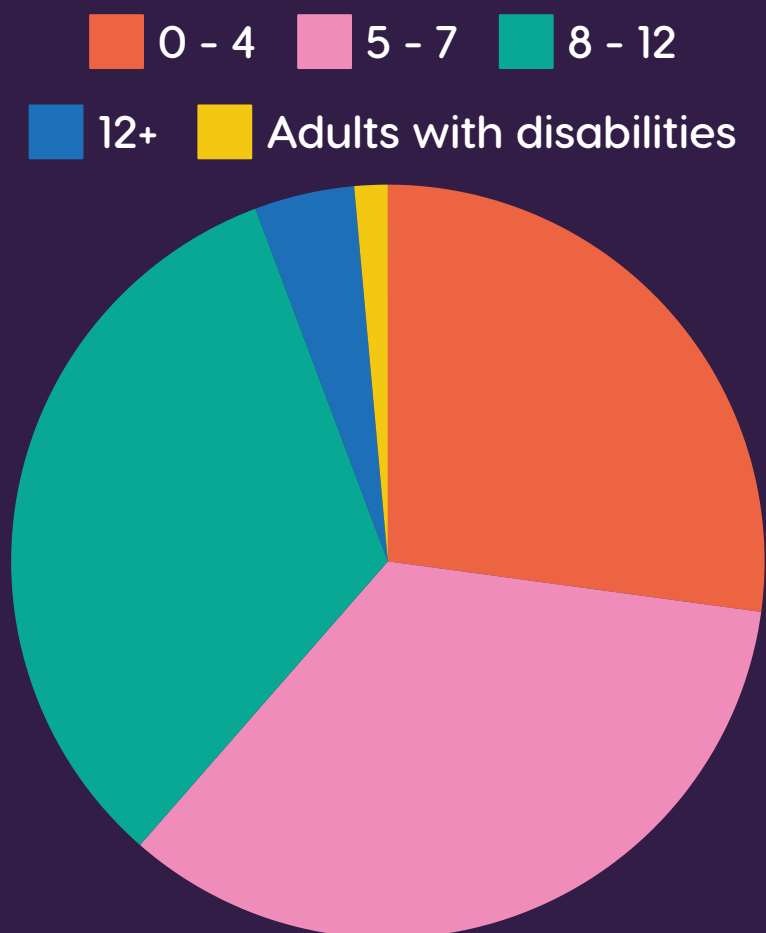
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About the users:

We found that most respondents visit Latchmere Recreation Ground daily, and travel by foot.

65% of respondents visit Latchmere Recreation Ground to go to the play area. The most popular time to visit the playground is weekends. 82% of respondents who visit the playground visit with their children.

The most common ages of children using the playground is 5 - 7 year olds, closely followed by 8 - 12 year olds.



Key findings about play:

You told us that each play behaviour (unoccupied, independent, onlooker, parallel, cooperative) is “very important.”

Play equipment:

- You said that the big climbing frame and big slide are very popular and that climbing is very important.
- You asked if a ground trampoline can be included.
- You asked if a football goal could be included or an open space for ball games where dogs are not allowed.
- You said that swinging is very important and that the swings are popular, especially the swings for infants.
- You asked if balance routes or stepping stones can be included.
- You said that the children enjoyed spinning and to incorporate a spinner.
- You said the treehouse with the green slide attached is important and well-used by younger children.
- You said that imaginative play was important, e.g. play panels and a safe space for role play is needed.
- You asked for more sensory play items.
- You asked for more small scale play items for toddlers, so that teenagers don't use them.
- You asked for line markings and colour on the floor.
- You said it is important to have open space for children to run around.
- You said there wasn't enough equipment in the playground, and often children run out of play items quickly, especially toddlers.
- You asked for covered areas within the play items for shelter and shade.

Key findings about play continued:

We asked how important it was for your children to be able to do the following:

- Balance - "very important"
- Bounce - "very important"
- Climb - "very important"
- Slide - "very important"
- Spin/rotate - "quite important"
- Swing/sway - "very important"
- Imaginative play - "very important"
- Sensory play - "very important"
- Play using surface markings - "quite important"
- Play panels - "neither important or unimportant"
- Creative play - "very important"
- Sit and socialise - "very important"

The most popular choice of play material chosen was "Conventional wooden."



Accessible features:

- You asked for benches with backrests and shaded seating areas.
- You asked to ensure there is space for wheelchairs, buggies and prams and that the gates be wide enough and much easier to use to accommodate these users.
- You asked for bins to be put in the playground.

Pathway proposal

79% of respondents agreed with the pathway proposal.



The common reasons for respondents agreeing with the pathway proposal were:

- to avoid dogs entering the playground to get across the Recreation Ground;
- provides a safer and more accessible route through the Recreation Ground;
- provides a faster route to Latchmere Leisure Centre; and
- those that don't want to go into the playground and/or don't want to be around children can easily get through the Recreation Ground.

The common reason for opposition was convenience:

The pavement along Burns Road, outside the Recreation Ground, does provide access to the Recreation Ground without requiring entry through the playground. However, current behaviour shows that many still walk through it. To address this, the pathway offers a practical and attractive alternative, as well as a safe play area for children by reducing foot traffic through the playground while optimising the use of its space. Though some may continue using the playground as a shortcut, we hope the pathway's placement will guide foot traffic effectively over time. Additionally, playground equipment will be spaced to avoid creating a direct route through the playground.

Safety and security:

Dog behaviour: The most common concern raised was the worry about dogs in and around the playground. You are concerned that the low fence and gappy planting on the west side of the playground allows dogs to jump into the space. We will explore what we can do to improve this boundary - this may include increased planting and / or alterations to the fence itself. We will also improve the signage to remind dog owners that dogs are not permitted within the playground and we will work with Parks Police to engage with and educate dog owners. By providing a new pathway that links both halves of the space there will be no need to go through the playground, to get to the other side of the Recreation Ground.

Anti-social behaviour: We understand that the playground may be used by older teenagers during the evening, particularly in the summer months. While the play equipment will remain designed for younger children, we will consider strategies to minimise this, such as improved signage, engagement with young people, items for teenagers elsewhere and policing anti-social behaviour. If we receive reports of anti-social behaviour, we will work with parks police to mitigate this, as well as engaging with the young people to find out what they need.

Cycling: In keeping with the rest of the Recreation Ground, the pathway will be a cycle-free pathway.

Lighting: We will not be installing additional lighting as part of this project. The existing street lighting from Burns Road and Reform Street will provide sufficient "borrowed" lighting for the new pathway, ensuring safety and visibility.



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Concerns raised:

Value for money: People raised concerns that the proposed improvements at Latchmere Recreation Ground are costly. We are committed to delivering this project in a cost-effective way but we also want to ensure that we use items of good quality to ensure they have a long life. The playground upgrade will enhance the safety, accessibility and play value for children, as well as allow more people to use the playground at the same time, ensuring the longevity of this facility.

Heritage: We will investigate a separate heritage project to cover the restoration of the railings, gates and interpretation for The Brown Dog Statue. We understand the importance of preserving and sharing the heritage of Latchmere Recreation Ground. We will explore opportunities to secure funding for heritage interpretation to highlight the Recreation Ground's history and significance. We will keep you updated on our progress with this via on-site signage and social media as the project develops.

Leaf litter: The pathway will be maintained by the contractors, as part of their regular upkeep of the Recreation Ground, ensuring it remains safe and accessible throughout the year. All pathways will be maintained as part of the Recreation Ground.

Gym equipment: We are aware that some residents are unsure about using the outdoor gym equipment. To address this, we will liaise with colleagues to consider putting on guided sessions with trained instructors who can demonstrate how to use the equipment safely and effectively. This will help encourage more people to make the most of the facilities. We will keep you updated on with this via on-site signage and social media.



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Construction

You asked if **the footprint of the playground will be extended:**

We know that the green areas within Latchmere Recreation Ground are extremely popular, especially during the summer months. The playground will not be extending into the green areas. The footprint of the playground will be adjusted to accommodate the new pathway.

You told us you were worried about **the length of the time the playground will be closed:**

For safety reasons we can't keep the playground open during the build phase. We anticipate the build will take 8-12 weeks, and it will take place outside of summer and school holidays. We will put up clear signage directing you to the next nearest available play areas.

You asked if **more gates** are going to be added to the playground:

We will review the need for additional access points to ensure the playground remains accessible and safe for all users. In line with the relevant British Standards, any gates to the playground will be "self closers" that open inwards to the playground.

You asked **when the refurbishment will be delivered:**

The aim is to complete this project by summer 2026.



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Next steps:

We will design a detailed project specification based on this consultation feedback.



Wandsworth Council Design Services will produce 3 designs that incorporate what you have asked for and best fit the project specification, with slight variations on playground equipment and look.



We will present these 3 design options for you to choose from in the second round of consultation.



The most popular design will be then be delivered, with the aim to complete the project by summer 2026.

The timetable for delivery will be finalised once determined, and on-site signage will inform you when the playground will need to close for refurbishment.