

PLAY AND URBAN GAMES FACILITIES – GLEBE PARK

RESIDENTS UPDATE

Introduction

We are writing to update you on the proposed development of Play and Urban Games facilities within Glebe Park.

Current proposals include the development of a small wheeled sports park (designs are attached) followed by an equipped play area for children, later in 2009 - the designs to be decided by young people and residents in coming months.

This will mean that the current games area, combined with the proposed wheeled sports park and an equipped provision will provide for all ages and abilities within Glebe Park. It is likely that the whole provision will be ready and available to residents within the next 12 months, providing an estimated 1400 children and young people with new access to high quality play provision.

This newsletter is to ensure that residents of all ages, near to the proposed development have full details of the project and can provide ideas or raise questions if they wish.

Where is the investment from?

Sunderland City Council successfully applied to the Department for Children, Schools and Families for Play Pathfinder Status and we are one of only 20 councils in the country to secure the £2.1 million Government grant.

Play Pathfinder is a special award to authorities who have excelled in improving play, and challenges us to strive further. The funding will go towards 28 new or updated play areas across Sunderland. Such investment into play is unprecedented in the City. Research for our Play Strategy identified the need for an area wheeled sports park for Washington and a new equipped play provision for Glebe.

Developer contributions from nearby housing developments and City Council funds have been added to the Pathfinder funds to provide a total budget for a wheeled sports park and equipped play area provision in excess of £200k, which will be spent in two phases.

What are the timescales for delivery?

The 28 new or updated sites will be delivered over an 18 month period. 12 Projects must be delivered by 31st March 2009 and the remaining 16 projects and an Adventure Centre by March 2010. There are strict rules on expenditure, so funds must be spent within the timescales. The Wheeled Sports Park is one of the first 12 projects, whilst the equipped provision for Glebe is scheduled for the second year of development.

Which other sites were considered?

In deciding the location of the Washington wheeled sport provision, children and young people from across Washington have been involved in identifying options.

Several sites were considered by officers, stakeholders and young people themselves.

These were Albany Park, Holley Park, Princess Anne Park and Glebe Park. Consideration was also given to other identified areas of land in Lambton and Rickleton. A range of factors were considered including access by public transport, land ownership, land topography and sub-structure, visibility and informal oversight.

Taking on board all of the issues the preferred site was Glebe Park.

The preferred location within Glebe Park was agreed to be the area of land adjacent to the current Dual Use Games facility for football and basketball. This area is opposite Wessington Primary school at the junction of Parkway and Abbey Road. It is next to the car-park area and sheltered by a natural boundary of trees, whilst still offering clear visibility and informal oversight to promote safety of users.

Planning and Conservation issues

Whilst a new framework is being developed to help retain the historical features of the Old Washington Village, this proposed development is not within the Washington Village conservation area.

In addition, the proposed Wheeled Sports Park development has a cubic capacity below 200 cubic metres and none of the structures are higher than 4m. On this basis, it benefits from Local Authorities permitted development rights at Class A of Part 12 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

The development is simply extending the play facilities already present and is considered to enhance the provisions offered in an area already designated as recreational and park space for all the community to use.

Who has been Consulted?

Since September 2008, Sunderland City Council in conjunction with Oxclose and District Young People's Project began initial consultation with young people in Washington to develop ideas for an area wheeled sports provision.

Representatives from Sunderland City Council, Oxclose and District Young People's Project and Oxclose Community School took a group of young people to various skateparks across Sunderland and South Shields in order to experience different design styles and construction materials.

Young People's workshops were held in September 2008, followed by further workshops at Pitstop in October 08 half term and the Millennium Centre in late November 2008.

Council staff were invited to make presentations at community meetings such as Washington Pride and to Washington's Area Committee. A range of informal meetings

have also taken place with local police and ward councillors to discuss location and community safety issues.

Feedback

Whilst the development is a permitted development under planning regulations, recent feedback from residents has suggested our consultation regarding the preferred option should be extended and we recognise that it is important that residents have the opportunity to make suggestions or raise concerns.

You can contact us :

- By telephone: 0191 5614590 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday
- By e-mail ros.edwards@sunderland.gov.uk
- By post returning the attached response form in the freepost envelope provided
- In person at a "drop in" event at the Wessington Primary School Children's Centre on 19th and 20th January between 4.30pm and 8.00pm

We would be grateful to receive your feedback by 20 January.

A second newsletter detailing the outcome of the consultation will be sent to all respondents.

In order to track the volume and location of responses you will appreciate we will require full details of names and addresses (and for young people under 16 years their age). This information will only be used to identify the spread of respondents and proximity to the development.