

# Ealing and Hounslow Councils Gunnersbury Park Sports Facility Development Project Community Sports Development programme

## Project overview

Gunnersbury Park is located in the Brentford ward of the London Borough of Hounslow and is situated on the border with the London Borough of Ealing. The two boroughs have been the joint owners of the park since an agreement on the joint stewardship of the Gunnersbury estate was established in 1927.

Having secured over £20 million of funding to improve the heritage aspects of the park, the two boroughs are now building on this success and working together on Phase 3 of the Gunnersbury Master Plan which is to develop and deliver the sports phase of the project which will transform a virtually derelict outdoor sports facility used by a handful of people last season into a year round seven day a week daytime and evening indoor and outdoor sports facility offering a five court sports hall, three cricket pitches an assortment of adult and junior football pitches, two floodlit full size Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) and eight floodlit tennis courts. Planned opening will be autumn 2017.

In line with the identified strategic facility need of both Ealing and Hounslow the plan is to reinstate, upgrade and provide new facilities, as follows:

- New sports centre including 8 changing rooms, toilets, café, sports offices and classrooms
- 5 court sports hall
- 8 full size grass football pitches
- 3 adult grass cricket pitches each with a non-turf strip
- 2 full size floodlit 3G AGP
- 6 - 8 outdoor floodlit macadam tennis courts

These new facilities will then be used by various organisations to deliver a wide range of sport and physical activity programmes benefiting local people of all ages and abilities and providing new opportunities in a variety of sports and recreational activities.



## The need for the project

Ealing and Hounslow Councils have identified the redevelopment of the outdoor sports facilities at Gunnersbury Park, as well as the development of new indoor facilities at the site, as being of key importance in addressing both existing latent demand and potential future demand for access to sports participation opportunities in the area.

As Gunnersbury Park serves both Ealing and Hounslow residents it is important to consider the needs of residents in both boroughs. Ealing's Sports Facility Strategy 2012 – 2021 adopted in 2013 and endorsed by Sport England shows that Ealing has an identified need for more sports hall space particularly in the South East of the borough, equating to a need of 34 more courts by 2021; more floodlit AGPs, unmet demand is equivalent to 4 pitches and supply is well below the FA guideline of 1: 25,000 people; and more cricket and football pitches with the required quality of ancillary facilities which meet league requirements.

Hounslow's draft Built Sports Facility audit shows that there is currently unmet sports hall demand equivalent to around 11 courts; unmet demand for AGP's is currently equivalent to 2 pitches; like Ealing, Hounslow is also in need of quality grass winter and summer playing pitches with ancillary facilities that meet NGB standards.

Gunnersbury Park is one of the biggest open outdoor sports facilities in West London with approximately 80,000 people living within a 1 mile catchment area. This, combined with good public transport links and close proximity to major roads, makes the park an ideal location for a major community sports facility.

The pictures below show the current state of the condemned sports facilities which have now been taken out of use, which means the sports pitches can no longer be used for league matches.





The proposed project will provide new indoor and outdoor sports facilities for local people to enjoy.



Results from the 2011 census show that there were 338,449 residents of Ealing across 124,082 households. Hounslow is slightly smaller in population size with 253,957 residents across 94,902 households. As Gunnersbury Park serves both Ealing and Hounslow residents, the demographic breakdown of each borough needs to be considered as the two boroughs do have similarities but also have major differences as well.

Both Ealing and Hounslow perform worse than the national average for indicators such as childhood obesity (Year 6) and the proportion of children living in poverty. Hounslow performs worse on health indicators for children than for adults when compared with the national average. Ensuring that any enhanced sports facilities at Gunnersbury Park can be used by and meet the needs of school groups and youth groups will mean that the new proposed facilities at Gunnersbury Park can help to target this health issue. Ealing shows higher than average rates of early death from heart disease and stroke.

The proposed development at Gunnersbury Park may also be able to help address this by increasing the opportunities for inactive adults and older people in particular to be active within a community setting and realise the associated health benefits of a healthy active lifestyle.

Since 2001 Hounslow's population has grown by 19.6% and Ealing's population has grown by 12%. London's population grew by 14.4% and national population growth was 8.1% during the same period. The high rate of population growth in Hounslow and maintained growth in Ealing has placed particular pressure on existing facilities for sport, active recreation and physical activity. The new facilities at Gunnersbury Park will provide much needed capacity particularly for sports halls and artificial grass pitches (AGPs) the latter used primarily by children new to the sport of football; the surface allows youngsters to learn the skills of the game more easily than on grass.



Four outdoor sports NGB's (Cricket, Football, Rugby and Tennis) and local sports clubs have already expressed an interest in using the site to accommodate the growing numbers of people wanting to participate in sport. To date, twelve indoor minority sport NGB's such as handball, volleyball and judo are also interested in using the much needed new sports hall. Local club Old Actonians adjacent to the park and the only remaining regular user has over 700 members and its current facilities cannot meet any additional demand which has already been identified in the area.

Key users of the site will be University of West London students and staff, local sports clubs, schools, Middlesex Cricket, Brentford FC Community Sports Trust (BFCCST) and the general public. The University currently has no sports facilities available to students living in the Ealing and Hounslow area; this new facility will mean a hugely significant rise in activity levels amongst this group of people who traditionally have relatively low levels of sports participation.

## Community involvement and consultation

Two sport specific public consultation events have taken place to date, in addition to these events public consultation has also been carried out as part of the wider Master Plan for the redevelopment and refurbishment of the heritage aspects of the park.

There has been significant public interest in the sports facility development plans as well as the activity programmes to be delivered in the new facilities. People have been genuinely interested in the plans for both the indoor and outdoor facilities. Those living in close proximity to the park have also voiced concerns about the possible impact of light spillage caused by floodlighting of outdoor pitches and additional traffic generation and the increase in park usage. To keep people informed and to respond to these types of queries from local residents there is an extensive frequently asked question document available on the Gunnersbury Park website at <http://www.visitgunnersbury.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FAQ-Gunnersbury-Sport-Consultation-July2015.pdf>

During the feasibility stage of the project, Ealing and Hounslow Councils engaged Continuum Sport and Leisure to develop a Needs Assessment and Business Planning report for the proposed sports facility development in Gunnersbury Park. The views of various stakeholders fed into the planning, design and operational plans for the site in order to make the facility both viable and sustainable for the foreseeable future.

Sport England has confirmed the strategic need for the project by supporting Ealing and Hounslow's Strategic Facilities Fund application which is due for decision later this year. The Football Association and Football Foundation are both hugely supportive of the project and have been involved in the development of the facility design and have clearly stated the project as a priority for funding.

Ealing specifically is one of the LTA's focus boroughs for tennis development, as Gunnersbury Park serves a large proportion of Acton and the south of the borough, the LTA is prioritising investment in improving facilities at the park to increase participation in park tennis. The England and Wales Cricket Board as well as Middlesex Cricket are also key project partners, both have identified the proposed new facilities at Gunnersbury Park as of strategic importance as there is a need for additional cricket pitches in the area to serve clubs in Ealing and Hounslow and the wider west London catchment area.

Brentford Football in the Community was established in 1987 as part of a joint initiative between Brentford Football Club and Ealing and Hounslow Councils. In 2005 the scheme became Brentford FC Community Sports Trust (BFCCST) and remains linked to Ealing and Hounslow Councils. This is a unique arrangement which has evolved over time and as a result of this three way partnership, BFCCST will be a key deliverer of a wide range of activities on the site aimed at getting more people of all ages and abilities active or more active .

Featherstone and Willow Tree Schools Sports Partnerships based in Ealing and Sports Impact School Sports Partnership based in Hounslow will directly and indirectly through local primary schools be daytime users of the site. The new facilities will offer the opportunity for local primary and high schools to use good quality facilities for participation events as well as inter school matches and larger central venue competitions.

As part of the ongoing consultation plan, the Hounslow Planning Team have been consulted on the current plans for both the indoor and outdoor sports facilities and has provided pre planning advice for the project which states that the proposals would be acceptable in principle. Any application should provide details proving the need for all of the facilities and their benefits - particularly in relation to their contribution to the protection and enhancement of the site.



## Impact – outcomes and visits

The current base level of activity is zero. The decline is attributed to the condition of the sports facilities and lack of changing facilities on site. Currently there is no formal use of any sports pitches onsite and no indoor facilities exist. All usage of the new indoor and outdoor sports facilities will be additional; the table below illustrates the projected usage over the first five years of operation.

Facility type	No.	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Sports Hall	1	22750	25025	27300	29575	31850
3G AGP - floodlit	2	42000	46200	50400	54600	58800
Grass Football Pitches	8	6240	6864	7488	8112	8736
Cricket Pitches	3	2200	2420	2640	2860	3080
Tennis Courts - floodlit	6	9828	11466	13104	14742	16380
Classrooms	2	1800	1980	2160	2340	2520
Other (Distance markers, outdoor gym)	NA	10500	11550	12600	13650	14700
<b>TOTAL VISTS</b>		<b>95318</b>	<b>105505</b>	<b>115692</b>	<b>125879</b>	<b>136066</b>

The sports development programmes across all the sports available will be delivered by partners with a proven track record such as Brentford FC Community Sports Trust and will focus on getting people of all ages more active and playing sport for fun and enjoyment. The new indoor facilities will also provide a base for health related fitness programmes which will focus on getting inactive people active, making use of both the formal and informal sports facilities in the park.

People of all ages and abilities will be able to make good use of free to use distance marker routes, outdoor gyms and multi-use games facilities as well as the more formal sports facilities such as the sports hall, studio, artificial grass pitches and grass cricket, football and rugby pitches. The tennis courts will provide those more interested in individual sports with the opportunity to play year round.

The investment into these new sports facilities will ensure generations of local people have affordable, good quality indoor and outdoor sports facilities to use for many years to come.

A full size version of the diagram below which shows the different types of activity and the target groups to be engaged can be found on the next page.



Proposed activities and programming focussed on raising participation across a wide range of target groups especially those with low levels of participation.

