

## Appendix A

### Public Petitions and Questions –Charity Trustees Sub- Committee– 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**N.B** - Please note that a period of up to 30 minutes shall be allocated at meetings of Policy Committees and other appropriate bodies for members of the public to present ordinary petitions or to ask questions of Members and officers present.

#### **Petitions** Received from Members of the Public - 1

	<b>Petitions</b>	Response:
1.	<p>Andy Chaplin – Friends of Hillsborough Park</p> <p>Hillsborough Park's MUGA (multi-use games areas) is a large area of flat ground adjacent to the four tennis courts, near the car park, the new skate park and Penistone Road.</p> <p>Currently, it is a free-of-charge, easily-accessible, popular and well-used area of our local park, enjoyed by many members of our community, as well as various local charitable groups, such as Cycling 4 All.</p> <p>As part of a proposed Activity Hub development in Hillsborough Park, Sheffield City Council intend to significantly alter the existing MUGA, reducing its size significantly, enclosing it with fencing and making parts of the new area chargeable.</p> <p>The Friends of Hillsborough Park understand that the plan is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move three tennis courts onto the current MUGA</li> <li>Build padel tennis courts</li> <li>Build a new café and welfare building</li> <li>Create a much smaller and fully-enclosed MUGA on the site of the tennis courts.</li> </ul> <p>The objective of the Activity Hub is to create enough income from pay-to-use activities at Hillsborough to maintain all of the park tennis sites across the city.</p> <p>This development of a public green space will drastically reduce the free-to-use area and we believe it will disadvantage those people who currently use the MUGA.</p>	<p>Thank you to the Friends of Hillsborough Park for bringing the petition and additional comments to the Charity trustee sub committee on 5 June 2023. We're aware that a number of questions have been asked previously, therefore have tried to focus the responses below on any key changes that have not yet been responded to. Previous responses can be re-sent if helpful.</p> <p>Petition &amp; Community Consultation</p> <p>The Parks and Countryside (P&amp;C) service acknowledge the significance of the number of respondents to the petition 'not to reduce the current size of the Hillsborough Park MUGA'. It's important that this feedback is considered alongside the other insight that has been gathered throughout this process.</p> <p>The P&amp;C Service has undertaken a number of consultations related to the Activity Hub in the last couple of years, which provide clear support for the Activity Hub in Hillsborough Park. Information about these consultations have been provided previously and in more detail within the addendum for the charity trustee sub committee on 5 June. As highlighted within the committee, of the children and young people we spoke to in the most recent consultation, 81% stated that they would like to have a new multi-activity hub, compared with 7% who wanted to keep the tarmac sports area and tennis courts as they are.</p>

The new, enclosed MUGA will be much smaller and less easy to enter (or leave!).

We believe that moving the tennis courts is designed to facilitate easier access for Tramlines equipment and set up.

We believe it is a poor use of council funds.

We believe that this is commercialisation of a public park, with little regard for those people in Hillsborough community who currently use the MUGA for free. With the current cost-of-living crisis, families and communities struggling with high energy bills and high demand for food banks we believe that these plans will leave our community worse off.

For the benefit of Hillsborough's communities as well as visitors from across the city, P&C are very much wanting to see the implementation of the Activity Hub proposal to secure a similar scale of investment in the sport and recreational facilities of the Park as has been seen in the heritage buildings of the Coach House and Potting Sheds.

Within the introduction to the petition, there is reference to the 'popular and well used' area of the park. The recent consultation highlighted that the majority of children and young people didn't visit the park for this facility but for the pump track, playground and other amenities. Of those we spoke to, the large concrete space was seen as an area for those who wanted to play football or basketball predominantly.

There is reference to the consultation being mis-leading. The P&C service worked closely with the Children and Youth Involvement Team who are an independent service within the Council, who supported the consultation design. Visuals and clear language were used to explain the potential impact in as neutral a way as possible.

With regards reference to another café in the park. The consultation has shown that there is significant support for further catering facilities (with a different offer and price point) and a toilet at this part of the park.

#### MUGA size reduction

P&C acknowledge that the area of continuous open flat tarmac will be reduced in the proposed activity hub, however want to make it clear that the actual amount of free to use flat tarmac area will be only slightly less than it is currently. The key difference is that the proposal would deliver three separate free-to-use but connected spaces that provide distinct areas with specific activity 'themes', including:

- MUGA – with a focus on ballcourt games and play
- Enlarged learn to ride area – with a focus on bikes, scooters and skate boarding.

- Inner activity space – with a focus on informal fitness including organised sessions, and for games such as table tennis.

P&C have highlighted throughout this process, the importance of how spaces are designed to enable different types of users to feel confident to be active, including women and girls. Another aspect of having separate spaces for different types of activities is to reduce potential user conflict and safety issues. For example, having ball sports and bikes operating in the same space does present health and safety related concerns.

#### Engagement with MUGA stakeholders

Some objections relating to the Activity Hub proposal relate to the impact on current users, such as Sheffield Cycling 4 All. To understand the needs of existing users the P&C service continues to have discussions with key partners and have consequently explored design modifications to the proposal to better accommodate their needs. These design changes were presented at the most recent Charities Sub Committee meeting and include a slightly enlarged learn to ride area, an accessible connection between the learn to ride area, the proposed MUGA and the inner activity space (which would also connect through to the refreshments outlet and toilets).

Conversations with users groups and key stakeholders are on-going and will continue through to detailed design stage to ensure their needs and requirements are fully considered.

#### Business model for the Activity Hub

One objective of the Activity Hub which has been highlighted previously, is to create a staffed presence in Hillsborough Park to provide activation and engagement and other services to support and facilitate a wider range of users to 'move more' in the activity hub and across the park.

The staff base will also provide an operational base for the Community Interest Company's staff to deliver activation services at other parks tennis courts across Sheffield.

#### Relocation of the tennis courts

The proposal to locate the tennis courts on the current MUGA area is to facilitate access to the park for events such as Tramlines. As we have indicated, we have been engaging with key user groups to ensure their requirements are considered as part of any changes to the MUGA and Tennis courts area of the park.

#### 25 year lease arrangements for parks tennis sites

Although we believed that all friends groups had been consulted about the 25 year lease proposal as part of the new contract arrangements at the time of the last Charities Sub Committee meeting, this was inaccurate. However, since then we have made every effort to contact and inform groups about these proposed changes. The P&C Service staff team are extremely stretched due to resource constraints, and consequently this can impact on our capacity to ensure our commitments are fully delivered. We have learnt from this situation and have improved our communications procedures to ensure this doesn't happen in future.

#### Young People's Support

It is clear from the engagement work with the Children and Youth Involvement Team that a significant number of local young people would like to see the Activity Hub facility in Hillsborough Park.

One of the challenges of this project is that the Friends of Hillsborough Park have taken a position in opposition to its development and consequently have sought support for this point of view. The P&C Service and others have undertaken consultation to understand if there is support and interest in the Activity Hub and have found this support.

		<p>The P&amp;C service recognise this as a kind of polarisation of opinion relating to the proposal, which is far from ideal. We can work with user groups to find solutions to ensure they are supported and benefit from the proposed investment however we have not found a way forward to find common ground with the Friends Group on this, which is really upsetting for everyone involved.</p>
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**Questions Received from Members of the Public x 1**

1.	Question from <b>Leah Byatt</b>	Response:
	<p>1. Considering a decision on the proposals for the Hillsborough Park multi-use-games-area was deferred at the last meeting with recommendations for wider consultations to be carried out across the community, why have local community groups for adults with disabilities, who use the MUGA for cycling and other sports activities, still not been included in any consultation? Disabled users of the MUGA should be entitled to have their own say directly on the proposals as they will be the ones most affected by the decision made by the council.</p> <p>2. The 'wider consultation' carried out by the council since a decision was deferred at the previous meeting has included council representatives asking young children playing on the MUGA questions such as "would you like to have more games available to you in the park?" and "do you think £4.00 is a reasonable amount to charge for a game of paddle tennis?" - would these questions not be deemed as misleading to children who are at present too young to have a fully-rounded understanding of the financial challenges currently being faced in society under the cost of living crisis and the implications of commercialising a public space.</p>	<p>At the March meeting, the focus of the discussion around engagement was around youth and children engagement which Officers have worked closely with the Childrens Involvement Team to do. With regard Cycling for All, Officers have worked closely with the organisation leads, to discuss the needs of their users from an operational perspective, to find design solutions which would accommodate disabled users of the MUGA</p> <p>Officers sought advice from SCC's Childrens Involvement Team to ensure the survey was balanced and helpful, enabling children and young people to give an informed view. Within the March meeting there had been feedback that the previous consultation was mis-leading and didn't provide enough information around the reduction in size of the MUGA and also that there would be charged use of some activities. To make this as clear as possible we included images of the design as well as likely prices for certain activities. All surveys were completed with an adult present who was able to explain and clarify any questions children and young people had.</p> <p>The QR code survey was not something that SCC led on, we believe this may be the survey that the Friends of Hillsborough</p>

<p>3. Many Hillsborough residents feel they still have not been fully consulted on the proposals for the MUGA. Beyond council representatives visiting MUGA users in school holidays and the application of a QR code at the MUGA that is inaccessible for users who face barriers with regards to advanced technological developments, exactly what further consultation has been carried out to fully allow the community who will be most impacted by the decision made by the council their say on the proposals?</p>	<p>Park carried out. Officers carried out sessions at the MUGA and visited schools in the local area to capture further views. 190 children and young people completed the survey, all of whom were users of Hillsborough Park. From the previous consultation carried out over 650 respondents completed the online survey, with the majority coming from the local area.</p>
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