

**Hammonds Pond Play Area Refurbishment**  
**Summary of Consultation Responses – January 2021**

**Engagement**

The City Council carried out a paper based and online community consultation process between Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September and Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to determine residents' preferences for the types of new equipment they'd like to see in the play area.

Details of the consultation were shared with three local primary schools and posters advertising the details of the online questionnaire and availability of paper copies in the park Café were displayed on site. The Council's Communications Team worked to publicise the consultation using a news page on the Council web site, a press release issued to local media and daily posts on the authority's social media pages. The Friends of Hammonds Pond and Hammonds Pond café also frequently promoted the consultation on their own social media pages.

525 surveys were completed, of which 456 were online – this is the largest response received to any play area consultation in recent years! The results from these, together with other comments left by members of public, have been used to form the following proposals to progress the project.

**Feedback**

The survey was formatted into several individual questions to allow respondents to provide feedback relating to the equipment options available. Responses are summarised below.

*Do you support the replacement of play equipment at Hammonds Pond play area?*

98% of those who engaged in the survey were in favour of the proposals, community support for the project is therefore extremely strong and we are working to progress this development.

*How often do you use Hammonds Pond play area?*

69% of respondents told us they use the play area often or very frequently, confirming its importance to residents.

*Three questions were asked for respondents' preferences as to the types of infants (0 – 6 years) play equipment they would prefer to see on site.*

Responses received were strongly biased towards a mixture of swing types (traditional cradle seats plus basket seats), with 80% of completed surveys preferring this option. Meanwhile, 53% of respondents indicated a preference for two or more small/medium sized play units offering a range of activities as opposed to one large unit. The most popular choices of additional equipment were a trampoline, wheelchair accessible items and a balance trail.

*Three questions were asked for respondents' preferences as to the types of junior (6+ years) play equipment they would prefer to see on site.*

Residents were again in favour of a mixture of swing types (traditional flat seats plus basket seats), with 80% choosing this option. 53% of respondents voted in favour of retaining and refurbishing the existing 'Birds Nest' climber within the play area rather than replacing it. The most popular choices for additional equipment were more climbing items, a rope-end swing and a tyre swing.

*Please provide any further comments*

Approximately 150 further comments were received, the majority of these focussed on a few specific themes, responses to which are provided below:

- Concerns regarding vandalism and requests for CCTV.  
A new CCTV system was installed on the site whilst the consultation was ongoing and this covers the play area, signage is now in place informing park users of this. All new play equipment purchased by the authority is specifically chosen to be robust and as vandal resistant as possible without compromising play value to users.
- Requests for rubber surfacing as opposed to the bark currently used.  
We intend to replace as much of the existing bark surfacing as possible with accessible, all weather, rubber surfacing, particularly in the infants' section.
- Requests for wheelchair accessible equipment.  
We intend to install several fully wheelchair accessible items as part of the scheme, comprising a multi-play unit, in-ground trampoline and roundabout. We will also ensure a high level of inclusivity within all other play items, whilst not necessarily allowing wheelchair access this will improve the play offer for youngsters with other physical disabilities, learning difficulties or sensory disabilities. All items will be chosen and located in order to allow children of all abilities to play and socialise together.
- Requests for a water park, bike track and outdoor exercise equipment.  
Unfortunately, a water park is significantly beyond the budget of this project and cannot be considered. We will, however, be working to upgrade the existing BMX track on the site in the near future and plan to hold a further consultation

on the possibility of installing outdoor exercise equipment on the Blackwell Road side of the park.

## **Summary**

Feedback received from the consultation process has been very positive, residents are pleased and excited to see investment in their local play area. The Council will work to address specific concerns and requests as part of the ongoing procurement process.

The Council has received initial design submissions from eight play equipment providers in the past week and these are currently being reviewed. Following the identification of the three most suitable schemes we will undertake a further targeted consultation exercise regarding the design of wheelchair accessible and inclusive items with local parties (for example Carlisle Mencap and Jigsaw Children's Hospice). It is our intention to revise the schemes as required and seek to order new equipment within the next four weeks.

We hope to carry out works to the infants play area in spring and follow on with the junior area in late spring/early summer.

We will continue to update all parties of our progression through the procurement and construction process as we move towards the delivery of this exciting and well-received project. Other improvements to footpaths, land drainage, bridges and additional CCTV provision also continue to advance, we will regularly update all stakeholders as key stages in each project are reached.