



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



Green Space Management Strategy Review



Citizens' Panel Focus Group

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OPINION RESEARCH SERVICES

NHDC

- Planning on **important issues**
- Genuinely **engaging** with public
- Seeking views to **inform development** of NHDC's Green Space Management Strategy

ORS

- **Independent** organisation → two-way **messenger**
- **Explain the issues** in lay terms
- **Record and Report** your views fully - confidential
- **NHDC** gets independent report

YOU

- Be **open minded and fair**
- Ask **questions**
- Be **challenging**
- Give **real opinions** – no right/wrong answers or 'stupid' questions
- Can disagree but **respect diversity**
- **Take part**

Alarms – none planned
Mobiles off or on silent please



Informal – refreshments,
toilets, questions, comments



Audible and visible?



Forms



Recruitment ok?

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE...



**INITIAL
QUESTIONS**

INITIAL QUESTIONS: CURRENT USE



Do you use green space currently (inc. equipped play areas, football pitches & pavilions)?



Which ones? How often?



What do you think of them?



What do you think is most important in terms of green space/infrastructure (i.e. grass/trees, play equipment etc.)?

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE...



**BACKGROUND
INFORMATION**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Project Board est. (Jan 2016) to look at future of green space across District

Current investment of £390k p.a. not enough to improve/refurbish/renovate green space...

...including infrastructure like equipped play areas, football pavilions, skate parks etc.

If current investment level continues...

Gradual decline in entire green space infrastructure

Most well used + valued areas (e.g. Howard Park Play Area) first to 'wear out' and need decommissioning

Less used areas (e.g. small housing estate play area) survive → need expenditure for ongoing maintenance

STRATEGIC APPROACH REQUIRED TO...



Ensure future, more limited, resources directed to areas that *maximise community benefit...*

...e.g. refurbishing large play areas that serve entire neighbourhoods

Reduce expenditure on infrastructure with low community benefit but high costs...

...e.g. ageing football changing rooms and small play areas only serving part of neighbourhood

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE...



**REDUCE INFRASTRUCTURE
BUT RETAIN GREEN SPACE
IN URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE...



Proposed → phased
approach to infrastructure
reductions...

...sites in poorest condition
first to be converted back
to green space

...disposal of green space
sites = last resort

How do you feel about NHDC's strategic approach (i.e. maximising community benefit)?



Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to return infrastructure in poor condition to green space?



EQUIPPED PLAY AREAS

Current Situation...

Number of equipped play areas	Average Life (i.e. need to be refurbished after...)	Annual capital investment needed to maintain <u>all</u> play areas	Current annual capital investment	Annual revenue needed to maintain 47 play areas
47	15 years	£222,500	£85,200	£104,000

CURRENT PLAY AREAS



Project Board → in dense urban areas, play areas may be only local green space...

...removal of poorly used play equipment & return to green space benefits whole community

Average cost of converting play area back to green space = £10k per site

FUTURE OPTIONS



1+2

- Option 1 → maintain 47 play areas
- Option 2 → maintain 33 play areas + remove equipment from 14
- Both = increased annual capital spend

3

- Maintain 14 large play areas (full investment) + 19 medium size play areas (limited investment)
- Remove equipment from 14 play areas
- Maintains annual capital spend + makes revenue savings

4

- Retain 14 large play areas
- Remove equipment from 33 play areas
- Reduced annual capital spend



**PREFERRED
OPTION**

PREFERRED OPTION



Maintains 14 large play areas (full investment)

Retains 19 medium sized play areas (limited investment)

Remove equipment from 14 play areas – return to green space

Benefits?

Maintains annual capital spend + makes revenue savings

33 equipped play areas should still meet community needs

Opportunities for children's formal play + informal play at open green space

More green space for use by the whole community

QUESTIONS



What are your views on the Council's general approach to equipped play areas?



What are your views on the Council's options?



Benefits/drawbacks?



Preferences?



Viable alternatives e.g. transfer to community groups to manage?

PLAY AREAS - WHICH COULD RETURN TO GREEN SPACE?



What do you think?

PLAY AREAS - WHICH COULD BE RETAINED?



What do you think?

FOOTBALL PITCHES

CURRENT FOOTBALL PITCHES



Football played on grass pitches in decline

Increased use of artificial turf pitches/indoor sport centres → some Councils removed football pitches

NHDC has 24 football pitches → use varies between sites (from zero usage to well used)

Minimal potential savings from removing pitches as income from pitch bookings may offset savings

Monitor usage levels...

**...if supply exceeds
demand reduce number
of pitches accordingly**

**No cost for removal of
football pitches**

QUESTIONS



Do you agree/disagree with the Council's proposed approach to football pitches?

Benefits?

Drawbacks?

Viable alternatives e.g. transfer to community groups to manage?



FOOTBALL PAVILIONS

CURRENT FOOTBALL PAVILIONS



NHDC has 7 football pavilions

Normally used by small % of community for few hours a week in football season

Ongoing revenue cost and some need significant capital investment if to be retained

4/7 pavilions assessed as beyond economic repair

NHDC → removal + landscaping back to green space = enhance appearance of whole site

CURRENT FOOTBALL PAVILIONS



OPTIONS....



**If NHDC
can
acquire
funding...**

- **Retain Pavilion at Grange + new build at Walsworth**
- **Remove remaining 6 pavilions***
- **2 hubs for football (each pavilion would serve 4+ football pitches)**

**Without
funding?**

- **Remove 4 pavilions***
- **Retain 3 pavilions in Letchworth and Hitchin (Grange, Ransoms, Swinburn)**

*** Average cost of removing pavilion = £30K**

QUESTIONS



What are your views on the Council's approach to football pavilions?

Benefits/drawbacks?

Preferences?

Viable alternatives e.g. transfer to community groups to manage?

PAVILIONS TO BE RETURNED TO GREEN SPACE?



**What do
you think?**



PAVILIONS TO STAY?



What do you think?



FINAL THOUGHTS?

**Thank you for your
time and have a safe
journey home**