

Hillsborough Park facility improvement: Local consultation findings & FAQs

December 2023



In spring 2022, Sheffield City Council held an extensive public consultation on plans for Hillsborough Park, collecting 607 responses from residents, who were in favour of a hub by a factor of 4 to 1.

- 81% of respondents had **positive views about the Hillsborough Hub** overall
- 77% said they would **make use of the hub**
- 56% said that the proposal would encourage them to **use the park more**
- 24% of respondents rated the **MUGA as above average**, and 51% have **never used the MUGA**
- 27% of respondents rated the **tennis facilities as above average**, and 57% have **never used the tennis courts**
- 85% of people support a **community café and public toilets** in the park
- 84% support a **resurfaced MUGA** and 82% support **new tennis courts**
- **Dog walking** and **socialising** are currently the main reasons residents visit Hillsborough Park



Quantitative data was accompanied by qualitative opinions on any proposed developments, with the majority seeing a range of beneficial outcomes and a minority stating their concerns.

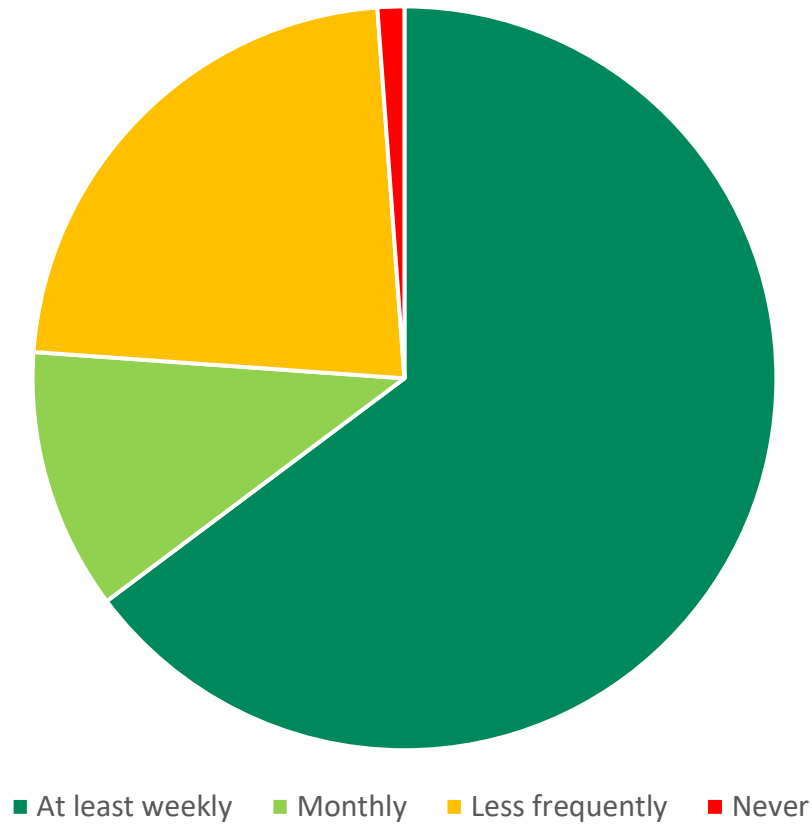
PROJECT BENEFITS

- **Additional facilities:** the additional toilets will support park visitors at the lower end of the park; many respondents also supported the offer of an alternative catering facility to the current Age UK supplier, Depot Bakery
- **Improvements to the park:** many recognised the need for this area of the park to undergo development so welcomed the proposal for the current MUGA to be enhanced
- **Diversity in offer:** many supported the proposal's diverse range of new sporting offer; it was appreciated that the range would cater for different park users and would further encourage physical activity
- **Tennis developments:** a number of those in favour wanted to see the expansion of high-quality tennis provision in the north of Sheffield so welcomed the proposal for new courts and the potential for indoor facilities
- **Tackle safety concerns:** respondents commented on how additional lighting, a staffed facility and enhanced amenities would combat anti-social behaviour and help people feel safer in the park
- **Wider community use:** several respondents supported the opportunity for greater variety of options for hire, community use and access to park space

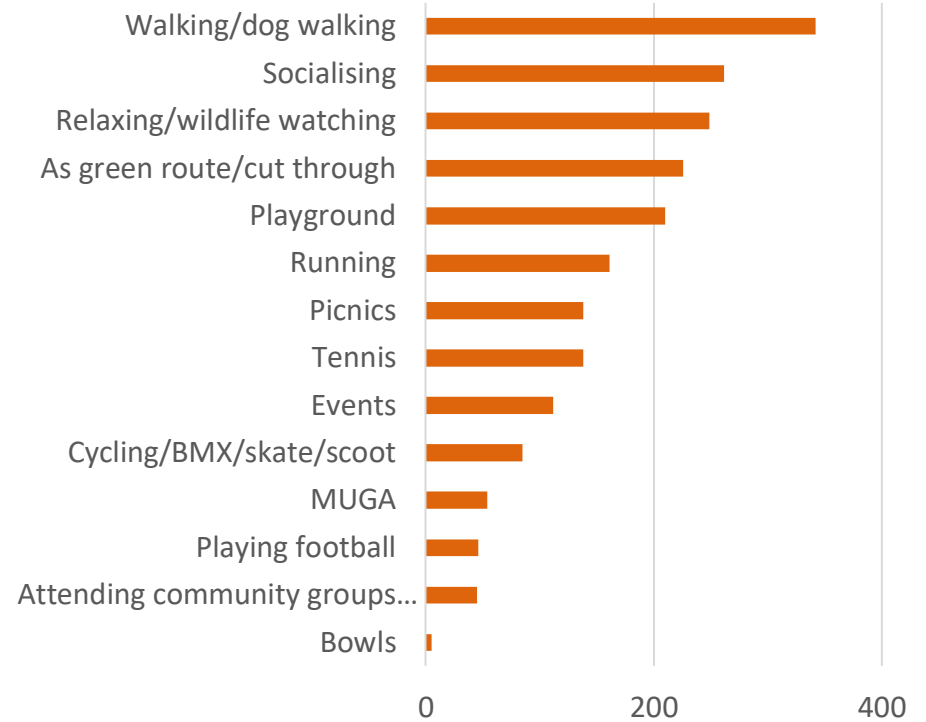
PROJECT RISKS

- **Limiting open, free space in the park:** some were concerned about the proposed reduction in size of the current MUGA that is a free open space
- **Over-development of park space:** an element of the proposal was to see whether people would like additional indoor space that would facilitate year-round use of the facility; some expressed concern that there could be too many buildings in the park
- **Paying for facilities/commercialisation of green space:** especially due to the current cost of living crisis, there was some opposition to new paid-for facilities being installed in the park that would not cater for all; people commented that parks should be free from the pressures of buying products/services, and worried that the hub would change that
- **Content with current facilities:** some respondents were happy with the current facility and commented on its importance; many shared that, while they would support the regeneration of the MUGA, they would like to see it retain its current form as a free-to-play area

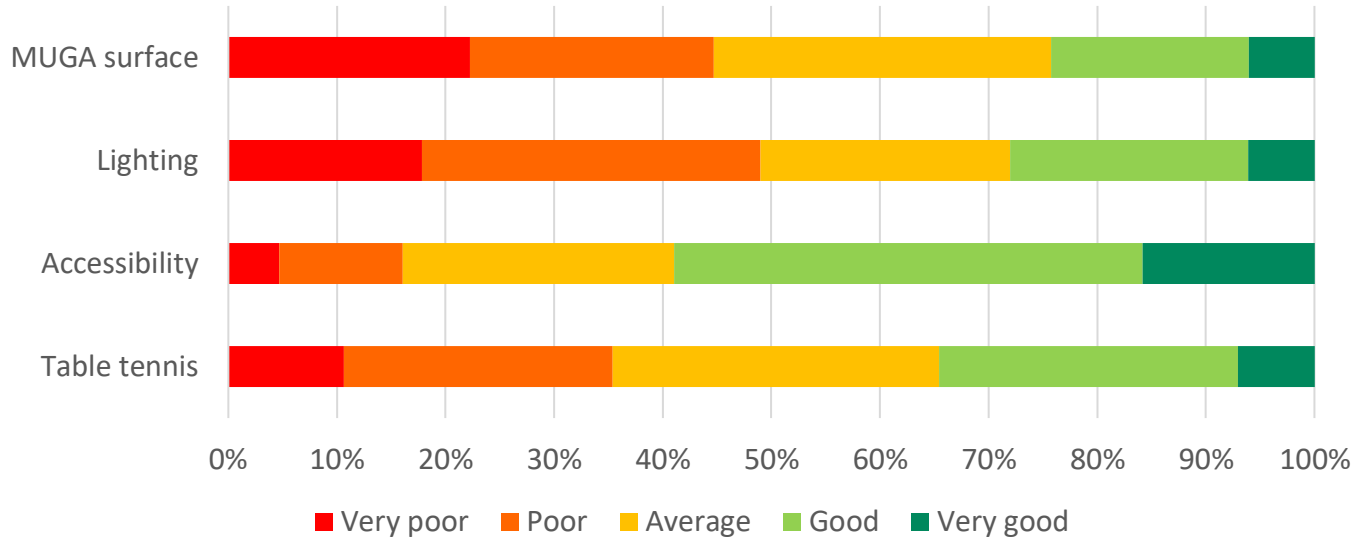
Q2. How often do you visit Hillsborough Park?



Q3. What are your main reasons for visiting the park?



Q4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the MUGA?

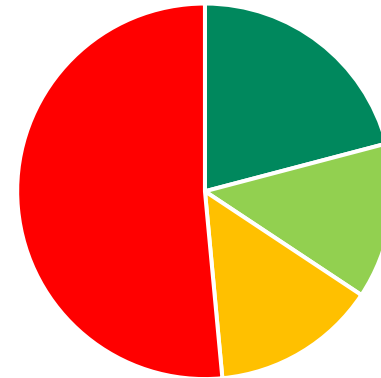


MUGA USAGE

FUNCTION	
Riding/scooting	30%
Football	24%
Basketball	19%
Walking/running	16%

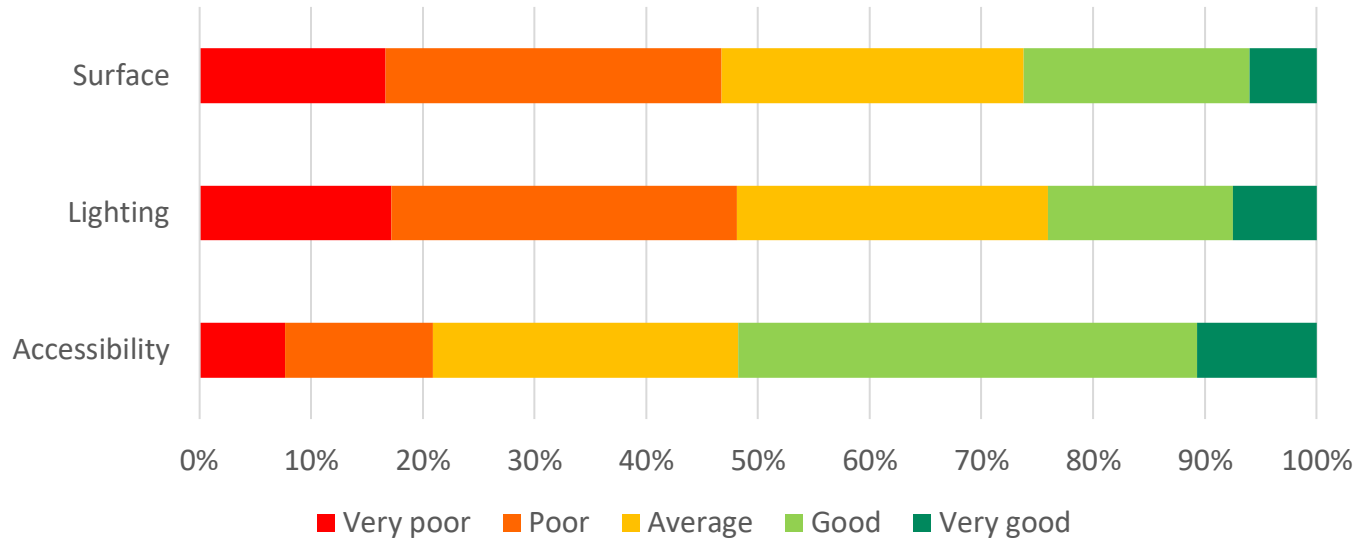
51% of respondents didn't use the MUGA at all

Q5. How often do you use the MUGA area?



At least weekly Monthly
Less frequently Never

Q8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the tennis courts?

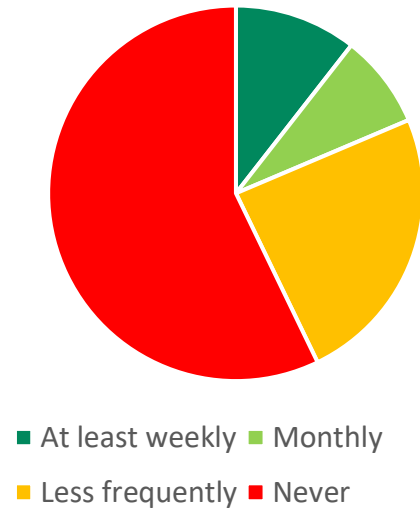


TENNIS USAGE

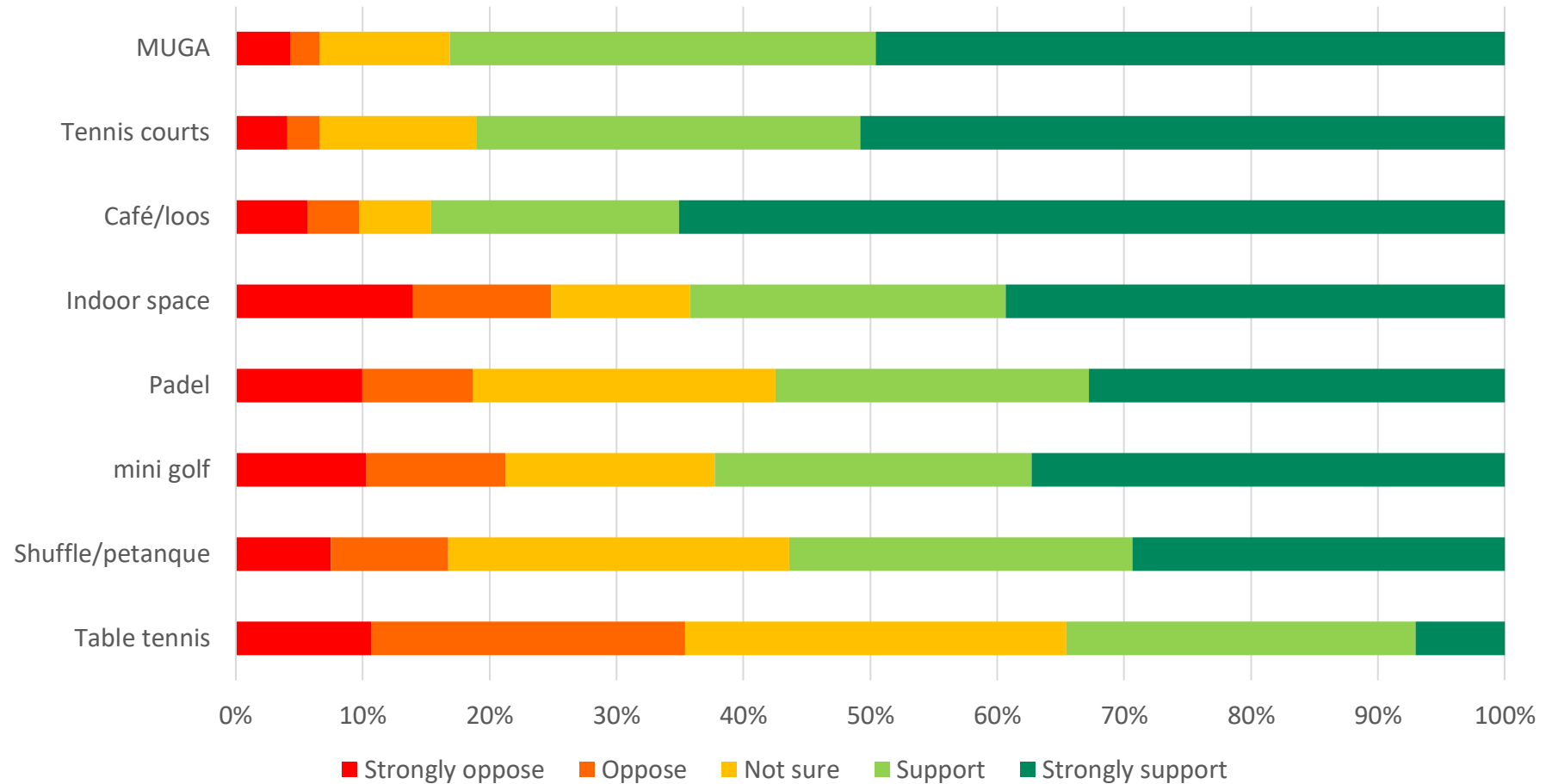
FUNCTION	
Court bookings	85%
Coaching	11%
Social Tennis	4%

57% of respondents didn't use the tennis courts at all

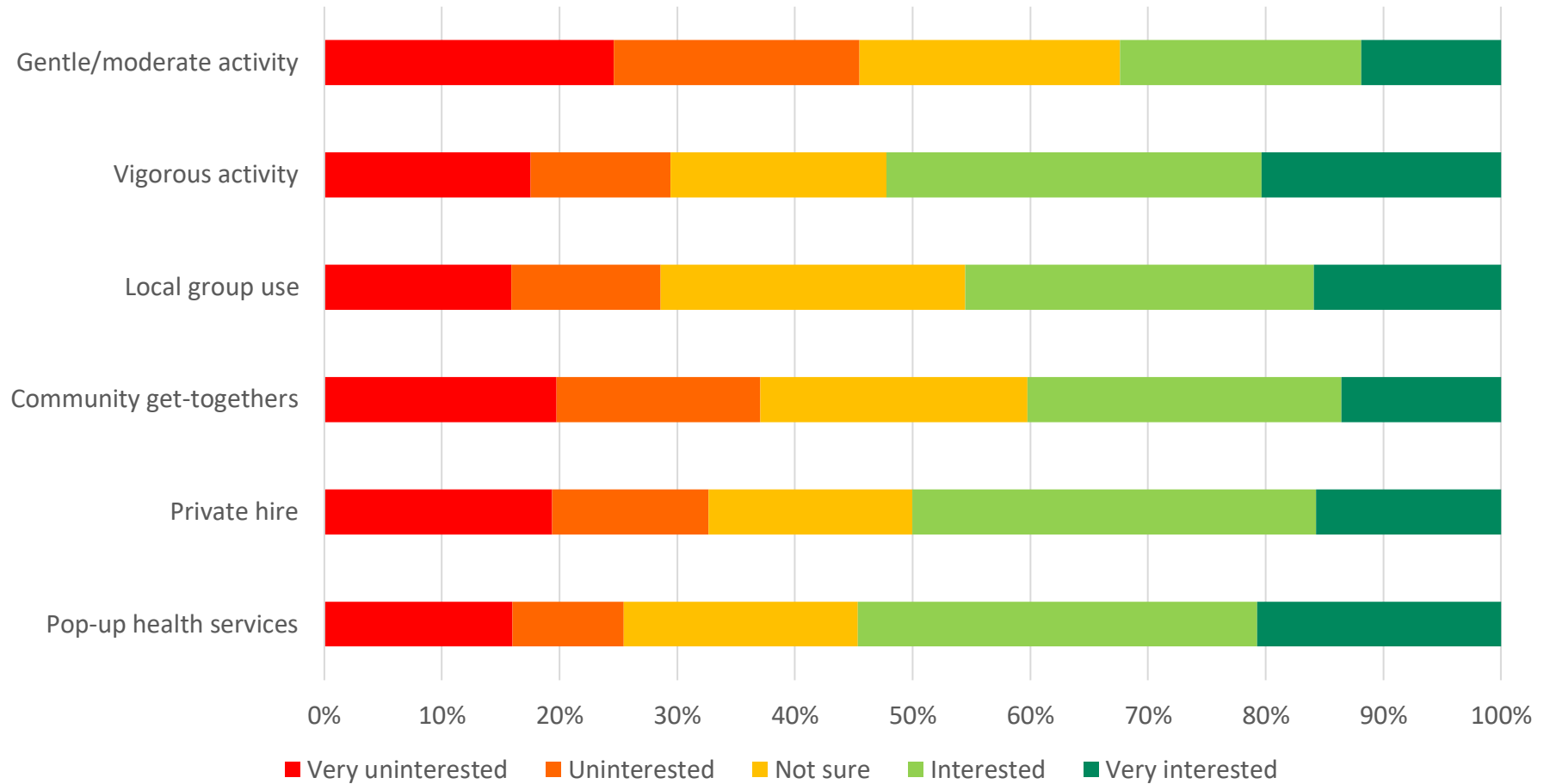
Q9. How often do you book to use the tennis courts?



Q11. We are exploring the option of renovating the tennis courts and MUGA into a multi-activity hub. What do you think of these proposed new facilities?

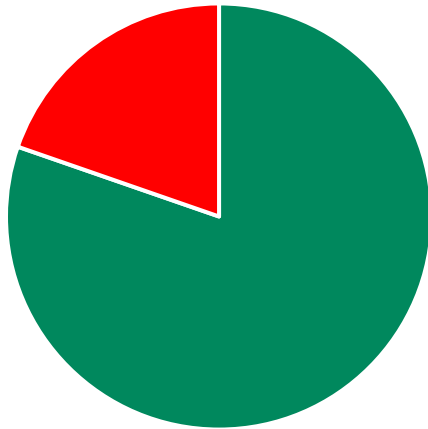


Q13. If you are supportive of an indoor activity space, how interested would you be in using an indoor space for the following activities?



Overall opinions of the hub concept and likelihood to spend time there scored very highly, with over half of people saying it would make them visit the park more often.

Q15. Do you support the Hillsborough Hub?*

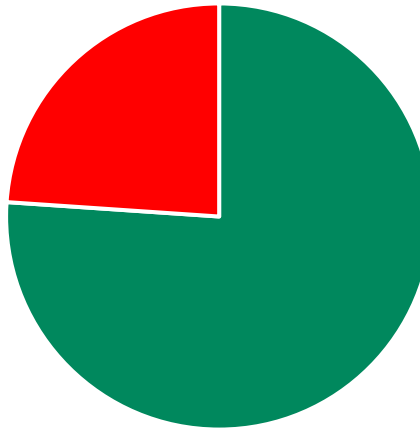


■ Yes ■ No

81%

yes

Q16. Would you use the Hillsborough Hub?*

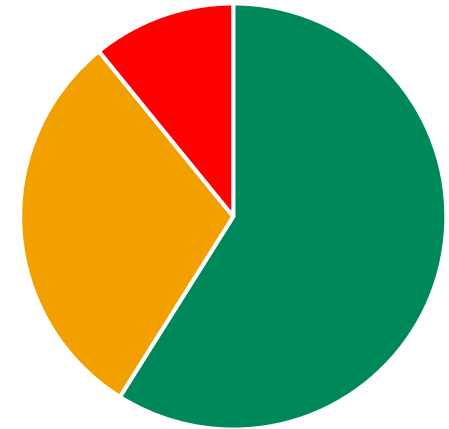


■ Yes ■ No

77%

yes

Q17. Would you visit Hillsborough Park...?



■ More ■ Same ■ Less

56%

more

As a team, we visited 4 schools and conducted over a dozen park-based MUGA surveys to engage c200 young people during May and June 2023, with overwhelmingly positive support for the hub.



Date	Day of the week	Time	Activity
30.03.2023	Thursday	5.00pm	4 boys ages 10-15 playing football
31.03.2023	Friday	4.00pm	10+ mixed ages playing football and basketball
03.04.2023	Monday (school hol)	1.00pm	Empty
06.04.2023	Thursday (school hol)	8.00am	2 males age 40+ roller blading
11.04.2023	Tuesday (school hol)	Not recorded	Busy 30+ people mixed games
13.04.2023	Thursday (school hol)	3.00pm	2 families playing football
14.04.2023	Friday (school hol)	Not recorded	3 girls age 7-12 b'ball, 2 boys age 14 football
18.04.2023	Tuesday	4.00pm	5 boys age 11+ football, 2 families playing
24.04.2023	Monday	7.00pm	3 families children age 2-10, mixed games
26.04.2023	Wednesday	5.00pm	Empty
03.05.2023	Wednesday	8.30am	Family/toddler (bike), a few girls/boys age 13+
11.05.2023	Thursday	Not recorded	6 boys age 8-15 football, 2 girls age 7-11 games
16.05.2023	Tuesday	8:15am, 4pm	7 adult male skateboarding, 10+ mixed ages

Respondent data:

- 5-10 years = 62%
- 11-15 years = 35%
- Male = 54%
- Female = 45%
- 85% from S6 postcode

Schools visited:

- Forge Valley
- Marcliffe Primary
- Sacred Heart Primary
- Wisewood Primary

55%

visit the park weekly



1 How many times do you go to Hillsborough Park?

Every Day Nearly every day

Once a week Every month

Every few months Once a year Less than once a year

2 How many times do you use the tarmac sports area?

Every Day Nearly every day Once a week

Every month Every few months

Once a year Less than once a year

3 What do you use the large tarmac sports area for at the moment?

Football Biking Cricket

Basketball Scooting Seeing friends

Something else? Tell us...

4 What do you like about the large tarmac sports area at Hillsborough Park?

Leave it blank if there's nothing you like!

28%

play football



it's got lots of space

it's free

28%

use the MUGA weekly



it's not used much

*it has basketball hoops
and football goals*

safer surface

*modern
hoops/goals*

5 What would you like to see changed about the large tarmac sports area?

Leave it blank if there's nothing you want to change

We want to ask you about a...

Multi-Activity Hub



We would like to change how things are set out at Hillsborough Park.

This is what it looks like at the moment ?



At the moment there are:
4 tennis courts
1 large tarmac sports area

We are thinking of making the large tarmac area a bit smaller; it will look like this ▼



lines we can see

better lighting

We want to fit in some new things for people to do. There will be:

- An area for table tennis, basketball shots and playing
- Tennis courts
- Padel tennis courts
- Mini golf

People will have to pay money to do these 3 things

We also want there to be:

- Toilets
- Cafe with food and drink
- Indoor activity space

You will still be able to use the MUGA (multi use games area) to play football and basketball. There will be some new lights so you can play when it's dark.

At the moment other groups, like the Sheffield Cycling For All club, use the big tarmac area to ride bikes on. They will keep using the MUGA in the day time.

This would be the new MUGA

5 When the MUGA is being used, are there other free activities you would want to do in the park and in the multi-activity hub?

Tick a number between 1 and 5 for your answer: 1 = Definitely not 5 = Yes I want to

A The pump track or learn to ride area

B Portable goals to be used for football on grass areas

C Informal basketball around the hub area

55%

want to play football on a proper grass pitch



1 = Definitely not 5 = Yes I want to

D Table tennis on new tables in the hub

E Garden games in the hub (e.g. Bowls, Quorits, Giant Connect 4)

F Free activity camps in the school holidays

G Walking, jogging or cycling around the park

H Socialising/meeting friends in the hub

I The existing playground

J Something else? Tell us...

K I would not want to do any of these things!

47% want free activity camps

48% will socialise with friends

48% will use playground



59%
like mini golf

66%
like tennis

95%
value cheap food/drink

80%
value good court lighting

6 What do you think of the following pay and play activities?
These activities cost money to do them, but they help us raise money to look after the park.
1 = Really do not like it 5 = I really like it

A  Mini golf £4 each for 9 holes	1 2 3 4 5	B  Padel tennis £4 each for 1 hour	1 2 3 4 5	C  Shuffleboard £2.50 each for a 1 hour game with 4 people	1 2 3 4 5
D  Tennis £1.50 each for a 1 hour game with 4 people	1 2 3 4 5	E  Netball £1.50 each for a session with 10 people	1 2 3 4 5	F  Exercise class £7 each for an hour class	1 2 3 4 5

7 We think that our ideas for a multi-activity hub would make the park even better. How important are these things to you?

 Free-to-use public access toilets	1	2	3	4	5
 Good value food and drink	1	2	3	4	5
 Free onsite wifi	1	2	3	4	5
 Covered cycle/scooter rack/storage	1	2	3	4	5
 Floodlights for gear-round activity in the evenings	1	2	3	4	5
 Staff in the park - gear-round and evenings	1	2	3	4	5

Something else that would make the park better? Tell us..

90%
value new toilets

82%
value free wifi in the park

7%



don't want any change

12%



are undecided

8 Decision time, what do you is best for Hillsborough Park?

Option A

- Keep the park as it is.
- This means you keep the large tarmac sports area, next to the tennis court area

Yes - option A



Option B

- Build a new multi-activity hub with a high quality MUGA.
- The big tarmac area will be smaller.
- There will be new things to do in the park.

Yes - option B



Option C **I'm not sure**

Have you got anything else you want to say? Tell us...

Thank you for your help!

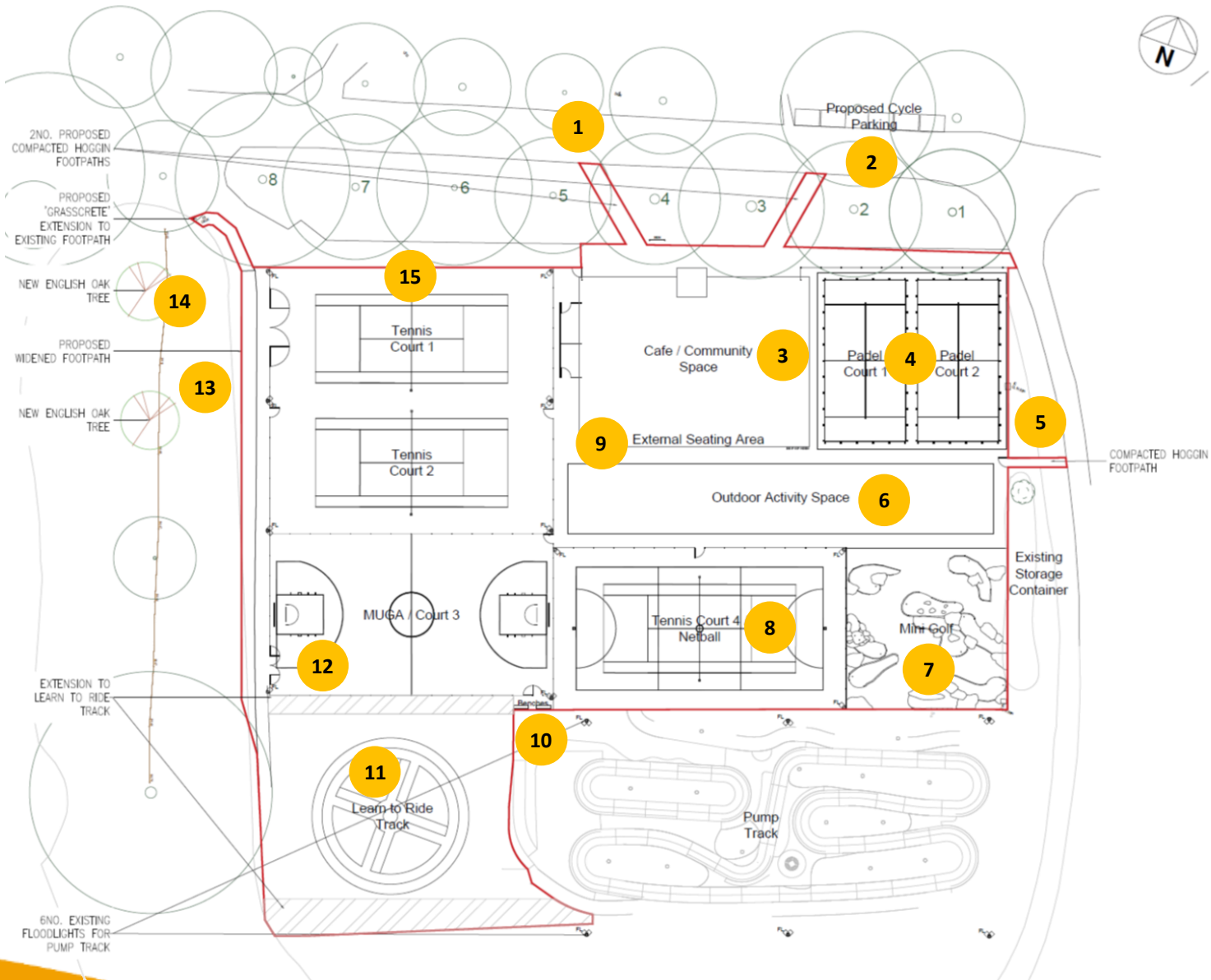


81%

want new hub facilities

We have followed a set of guiding principles in order to deliver a multi-activity hub that fits within the park, has inter-generational appeal and stands the test of time.

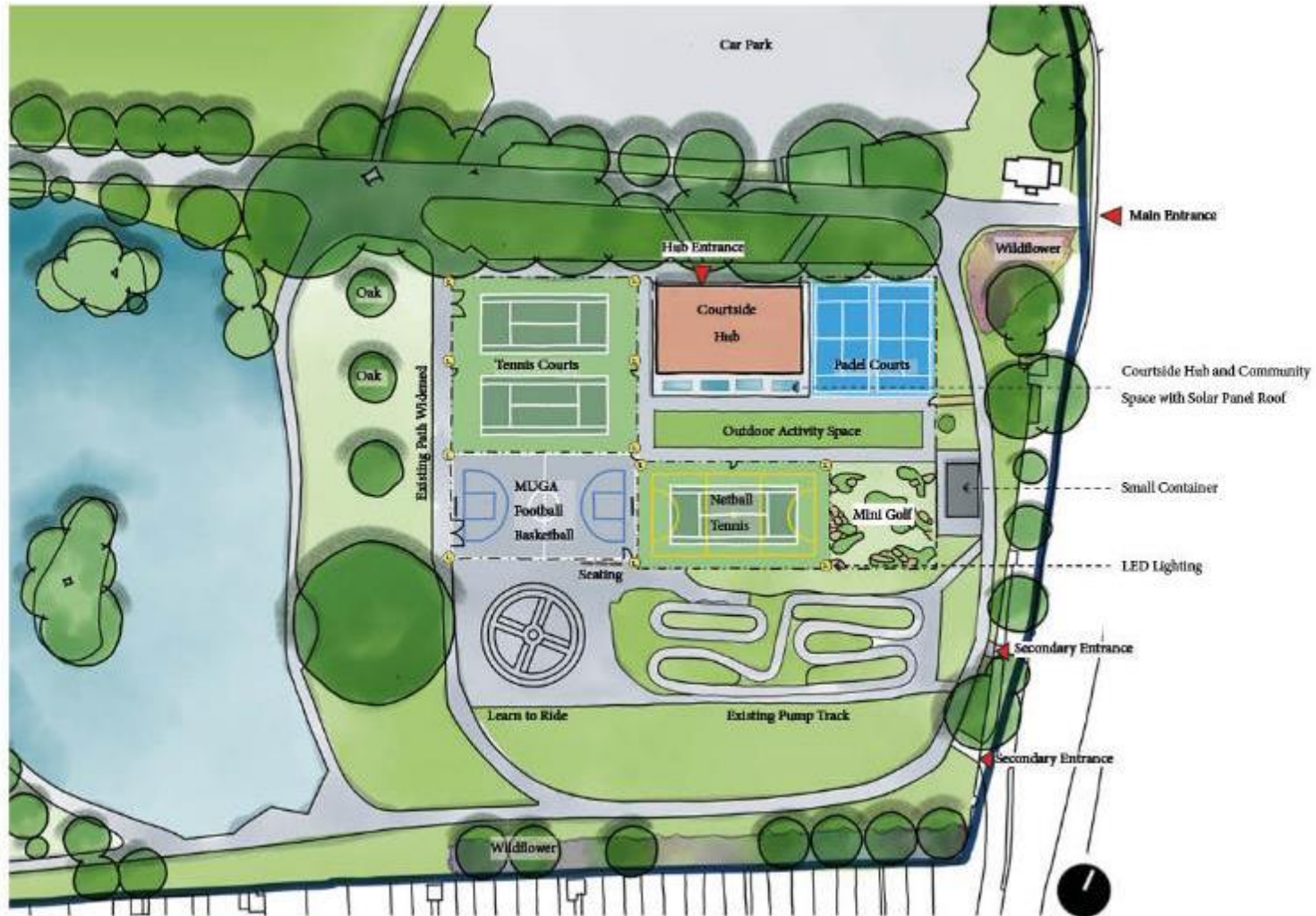
Principles...	...in practice
Inclusivity	Improvement of facilities means there is something for all generations and abilities to enjoy; continuation of free MUGA with new 3x3 basketball courts and new football line markings; low-cost activities and holiday camps; additional cycle racks to promote active travel; partnerships with local stakeholders, charities and delivery partners; welcoming environment for public, staff and volunteers.
Accessibility	Easy access into hub and sports facilities; automatic entry door; wheelchair friendly design; DDA compliant toilets; access to MUGA, tennis courts and new activity area will be graded so any non-ambulant user can safely navigate and enjoy the facilities; all gates between facilities will be wide enough for chair users.
Sustainability	Reduce, reuse, recycle where possible; no use of gas to remove reliance on fossil fuels; efficient induction, well insulated and environmentally performant building with 100% renewable energy; potential for solar PV array and air source heat pump; significant biodiversity net gain through new trees and wildflower planting.
Heritage	Situated in a conservation area, Hillsborough Park benefited from the 19 th century Sheffield Corporation legacy of providing recreational facilities across the city, subsequently expanded from the 1930s; the hub seeks to protect this heritage by enhancing the recreational facilities for future generations in keeping with the park's character.
Security	Onsite staff presence morning to evening, new LED court lights (until curfew) and ambient pathway lighting will improve perceptions of safety; steel shutters to protect windows and doors; fire-proof bin store for recycling and waste; CCTV throughout site and fire/intruder alarm installed.
Efficiency	Design includes low maintenance facilities, efficient kitchen equipment, fixed outdoor seating and connectivity with the rest of the park; pre-planning advice, site surveys and positive public consultation all support an efficient and inclusive layout, which will be fed by existing power supply and benefit from new ACO drainage.



We have spent significant time iterating designs for a multi-activity hub that is ‘pretty and practical’, marrying the natural beauty and heritage of Hillsborough Park with a wide range of new facilities.

- 1. New pathways connecting main park thoroughfare to activity hub entrance
- 2. Additional cycle racks for active travel, incl. trailers and cargo bikes
- 3. Community café, public access toilets and multi-purpose indoor activity space
- 4. Padel courts under barrel vault canopy for year-round play, incl. social seating alongside
- 5. Side entrance for easy access, linked to perimeter path around park
- 6. Flexible outdoor activity space for group exercise, spectating and socialising
- 7. Landscaped 9-hole mini golf course with interconnecting paths
- 8. Resurfaced, enclosed tennis court with netball line markings and LED lighting
- 9. Covered external seating area looking out to open space and sports facilities
- 10. Bench seating for pump track with entrance onto MUGA
- 11. Extended learn-to-ride area for young children and disabled users
- 12. Resurfaced, free-to-use MUGA with side entrance, 3x3 basketball, football line markings and LED lighting
- 13. Widened pathway for improved access to MUGA and learn-to-ride area
- 14. Two new oak trees to improve landscaping and add shade
- 15. Resurfaced tennis courts with LED lighting and fencing

In addition to significant investment in community facilities, our proposals include a biodiversity net gain of over 540%, well in excess of recommended thresholds.



We have put together a list of questions below that have appeared regularly within our consultation and survey feedback and we would like to share our responses with you. If you have any other questions or queries, please drop us an email at hello@courtside.uk.

Who are Courtside?

Courtside is a community interest company dedicated to increasing physical activity and promoting community through the transformation of local parks. Courtside currently partner with Sheffield City Council and have operated Parks Tennis across the city since 2017. During this time there has been considerable improvements to the quality of tennis court provision across the city, as well as a significant increase in the numbers of people accessing tennis in the city. The Hillsborough hub would employ 10-12 people in catering and community activation; the onsite team would deliver activity elsewhere in Sheffield's parks tennis sites.

How and when will this project happen?

- Winter 2023/24: Planning Application Process
- Spring/Summer 2024: Proposed Construction Works
- Summer/Autumn 2024: Activity Hub Opens

Why does the park need this development?

Hillsborough Park is much loved and much used, but the facilities have not kept up with demand and require renovation; both the tennis courts (used annually by c1000 people, 75% of whom play nowhere else) and the MUGA (over-sized but under-used) are nearing end of life in terms of offering a safe playing surface.

SCC has a strategic remit to get people to move more, and parks are a great way into informal, recreational exercise in early life or sustaining good health in later life; almost half of adults in the ward are inactive vs one third nationally. The proposed developments will create jobs/apprenticeships, develop skills and provide volunteering opportunities to bring local people together.

Won't the hub compete with other local providers?

The hub is not a leisure centre, nor a specialist sports club/facility. The hub will be a source of information (via display materials and staff presence) for activities taking place within the park and beyond.

What are the expected outcomes?

As well as the main aim to create a hub which will reduce health inequalities, supporting the health and well-being of key target audiences within Hillsborough and the surrounding area, this project aims to improve facilities, employ people and offer a year-round programme of activity.

Key highlights include:

- Free access, connecting well with the existing All Wheels Park
- A local team that looks out for the physical, mental and social well-being of local people
- A staff presence morning to evening to improve perceptions of community safety
- A culture of developing staff, embracing volunteers and working with partners
- A range of informal or structured activity options for all ages, abilities and backgrounds
- A focus on children, older people, women and girls, and those facing disadvantage
- Scope for GP referrals/social prescribing

Isn't this a case of 'privatising the park'?

No, the hub will be open and free to access for all, with everyone able to roam, spectate, use the toilets or rest. The hub will offer activities that are free or affordably priced, with no membership charges. The MUGA will remain permanently free: a brand new surface, new line markings, range of uses and new LED lights will ensure safe purposeful use and increase utilisation. As they are today, the tennis courts (and other sports facilities) will be available to book for modest fees in order to raise income to cover running costs.

Does the development need planning permission?

Yes. This development will need to obtain full planning permission.

Will the hub require Council subsidy year after year?

No, the opposite: the mix of facilities will enable income to be generated for SCC which can be reinvested into the facilities for on-going community use.

Will there be any indoor activity space?

Yes, the proposed designs include a multi-purpose indoor space. This is needed to help people to continue to be active and use the facilities during the winter months. There will be an offer of weekly physical and social activities and available meeting space.

How does the hub respect the principle of public access green space?

The current facilities in this part of the park are for sport and recreation, they are being upgraded and improved to ensure safety, longevity and diversity, catering to a wider range of users. Given the conservation area, careful consideration has been given to the design, aesthetics and materials (planning permission will insist on this), with the project delivering a biodiversity net gain. The anticipated end result will be far more attractive than the current tennis courts/MUGA and will help SCC's quest for Green Flag status. The scheme is being developed with no loss of green space. New facilities would reside on the same footprint as the current tarmacked area that includes the MUGA, tennis courts and table tennis courts. A small area of grass will be used to extend the learn to ride area and widen pathways for full accessibility.

The following interventions have been proposed which deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of 540% whilst also improving the visual amenity of the park.:

- 2 new English Oak Trees
- A new 'super pollinator' wildflower meadow
- A new 'woodland fringe' wildflower meadow

What is Biodiversity Net Gain?

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It is making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development.

Will the Activity Hub be environmentally friendly?

Courtside are exploring sustainable methods of construction and are committed to reducing waste and creating an energy efficient building, for example with solar panels and renewable heating sources.

What will be the hub's opening hours?

This is to be confirmed and subject to planning permission. SCC would like the hub to open morning to evening to maximise use of the space and provide a manned presence at times when the park is quieter or when perceptions of safety are lower. Lighting within the hub would turn off no later than 10:00 PM, subject to planning permission.

Will the hub be accessible/wheelchair friendly?

Yes, one of the specific benefits of the site is its open, flat design; all facilities will be as accessible as possible to those with disabilities, seen or unseen. It is a goal that the hub becomes known as a welcoming place with welcoming people.

Why have you picked the proposed activities/amenities at the hub?

The open, flat, flexible design allows for 20+ activities (most facilities can be multi-purpose). This is a tennis-led development supported by the LTA, including a much more accessible version, padel tennis (smaller court, no serve, bats instead of rackets). We are deliberately avoiding facilities offered by others locally (e.g. gym, 3G football, indoor tennis). We are adding popular recreational activities to offer more than just ‘traditional sport’, and allow for groups to get together in a safe and welcoming environment. A balance needs to be struck to offer free and paid-for activities to pay back investment and provide fees to SCC.

Why wait all these years for café/toilets, then two come along in quick succession?

For a long time, Hillsborough Park has needed “a brew, a loo and something to do”; it is a positive to have interest and funding from able partners to help realise the park’s potential. The coach house and activity hub cafés are different sites that will cater to different users at different price points; both are served by their own busy roads; there is more scope for collaboration to provide services for different people than there is competition to serve them.

How will current MUGA users be accommodated?

Sheffield Cycling 4 All (SC4A) participants will be able to use the upgraded MUGA, car park, learn to ride track and widened park pathways as they deem appropriate for their respective groups. Other users – mostly male teens currently – will benefit from a new approved all-weather and floodlit MUGA with a right-sized football pitch, full size and 3x3 basketball hoops. Netball lines will be added to one tennis court and a large activity area will offer many different activity options (e.g. table tennis, badminton, garden games and more) when SC4A is onsite.

How would existing park partners, operators, and users be accommodated?

We are aware that this is a significant change for the park, and we are working with stakeholders to ensure the new facility and layout allows them to continue and enhance their services which has included widening of paths and extension of the learn to ride area, as shown in the layout plan.

Which paths are being widened and why?

The path to the west of the tennis courts (nearest the pond) is being widened to 3 metres, currently this is 1.5 metres. This will enable users (both on wheels and on foot) to have more space for passing each other which is especially important for park users utilising the space on adapted cycles.

How will you control any anti-social behaviour?

Courtside will have an onsite presence from morning to evening which we believe will help build relationships and reinforce respect for the park and facilities. CCTV will be installed as part of the development and the hub staff will act as additional 'eyes and ears'. From research and past developments we know that having an onsite presence and schedule of activity increases interaction and discourages anti-social behaviour.

What will happen when Tramlines takes place?

Courtside and the Council have been working closely with the organisers of Tramlines to ensure that construction of the hub and its future operation do not impact Tramlines as well as making sure disruption and any closure of the hub is kept to a minimum. The Wheels Park and hub have both been designed to accommodate Tramlines and allow for event entry/egress of festival attendees (across the new tennis courts, which will be closed for the duration of the event).

What is Padel Tennis?

Padel is a fun 'bat and ball' variation of tennis played in a smaller, enclosed court in a social doubles format (4 players). It is one of the fastest growing sports in the world.

What can you offer teenagers, girls and the older generations, age groups that are often overlooked?

We want to bring people together and deliver and maintain a mix of amenities for all ages. The new facilities can be 'flexed' to accommodate a wide range of activities for young and old, and everyone in between. The hub will promote social inclusion, physical health and mental well-being, by offering a calendar of community-led activities.

The existing facilities at Hillsborough Park are very limited and lack facilities that are welcoming for female users. The hub will help close this gap, by responding to recent research (January 2023) conducted by Make Space For Girls, which outlined the importance of social spaces and toilet facilities within parks.

More locally, 78% of girls surveyed in Yorkshire said that a lack of toilet and changing facilities was a barrier to them exercising in the park and 67% said that a lack of toilets was a barrier to them using the park altogether [102]. Elsewhere, researchers found that a park was fourteen times more likely to be highly used by teenagers if there were public access toilets, and their provision was directly associated with increased activity levels [103].

102 Yorkshire Sport, 2022. 103 Wards, 2015

Will the 'All Wheels' Park still be able to be used whilst construction takes place?

We know how important a resource this is for adults, teenagers and children, the 'All Wheels' Park will remain open for use whilst construction takes place.

Will Parkrun be affected during construction and once it's open?

No, during construction the Parkrun route should not be impacted. Courtside and the Council will be working closely with Parkrun to minimise any disruption. Once built the cafe will provide further facilities for Parkrun users to use.

What if this development does not go ahead, what would be the next steps?

If this development does not go ahead, we will need to pursue alternative means of improving the tennis and multi-use games area facilities. Due to the financial constraints that the Council are facing, alternatives to the partnership approach will provide a much less sustainable future for the delivery of quality recreational facilities in this area of the park – and will not provide scope for a site presence with coaching and engagement by professionals to support positive use of the space nor welfare or catering facilities.

Parking - How will you manage the increased footfall?

All forms of active travel will be promoted (walk, cycle, scoot, etc) and new bike racks will help facilitate the safe storage of cycles. We are also looking at options to incorporate a buggy park. Hillsborough Park has good tram and bus links as well as ample car parking.

Thank you for your support.

December, 2023