

Proposed development of new football and community facilities at Purley Way Playing Fields and Ashburton Playing Fields, Croydon.

*July 2018*

## **What is the Parklife project?**

Parklife is a five-year commitment to build multi-pitch football 'hubs' across towns and cities in England to create sustainable community football facilities. It aims to raise playing standards and provide more opportunities for everyone to enjoy the game.

## **Who is involved?**

Parklife is a partnership between Croydon Council, Surrey County Football Association, the Football Foundation, Sport England, the Greater London Authority (GLA), and the Palace for Life Foundation.

## **How did Croydon become involved in Parklife?**

In Croydon, our local authority pavilions and football facilities fall below the standards we want, with poor quality changing pavilions and average or poor quality pitches. As a result, football in Croydon has declined over the last ten years, and will continue to do so unless there are changes.

When Sport England and the Football Association invited local authorities to bid for their new Parklife project in 2016, Croydon submitted a successful initial application. Since then we've completed a study which has determined that modern football facilities at both Purley Way Playing Fields and Ashburton Playing Fields are feasible and viable.

If permission is granted, Croydon could potentially secure £5-6 million from the Premier League, Sport England and the Greater London Authority. The rest of the cost would be funded locally. Pending approval, construction will take around a year, starting in summer 2019.

## **What is a hub facility?**

A hub is made up of a combination of at least two floodlit artificial grass pitches, natural grass pitches, modern changing facilities, a café, classroom / community space and car parking. Ideally hub facilities also have health and fitness facilities, such as a gym. In Croydon it's proposed that the Ashburton Playing Fields hub site will have extra health and fitness facilities.

## **Why have Purley Way Playing Fields and Ashburton Playing Fields been chosen?**

Croydon Council and the project partners looked at all potential sites across the borough. These two sites have been chosen based on a number of things, including the nature and size of the land, how it's currently used, location and local transport. We've also looked at the topography, ecology, and geology of the sites.

## **How have you chosen the location for the facilities on these large sites?**

The proposals for both sites are the result of significant work to determine the most viable scheme. We looked at vehicle access and working through technical constraints based on detailed surveys and in consultation with our planning team.

## **How will the hubs make a difference in Croydon?**

We hope that by providing new, affordable facilities we'll encourage more people to take up sport and help tackle obesity in Croydon.

The pavilion building will provide modern, clean changing, showers, and toilets and refreshments facilities. We will also improve access for cyclists and walkers and those who travel by car can park in a dedicated car park, which will include disabled parking bays. Artificial turf shouldn't be damaged by over-play or get waterlogged in winter

## **Who will manage the facilities?**

The facilities would be leased to an independent charity called the London Football Trust, who would manage the facilities through a professional leisure operator.

## **Who are the facilities for?**

FA-affiliated youth football, adult affiliated teams, the Palace for Life Foundation and Crystal Palace FC's community trust, who will deliver sports development and 'sport for social change' activities.

We want to make it easier for more people to play football in Croydon by offering a more varied timetable, including activities older adults, (walking football) and bespoke sessions for disabled people. We also

anticipate schools, voluntary groups, casual users and local coaching companies using the facilities. Women and girls playing football currently accounts for just 3% of football activity across the borough. We want to increase this to at least 25%.

### **How much will it cost to use the facilities?**

The facilities will be affordable for community amateur football clubs. Different types of organisations will receive different rates, with private companies being charged more than affiliated clubs. Each site will have a primary partner club, who will deliver a youth development programme. Up to 40% of the peak time timetable (Mon to Thu 6pm to 9pm) will be reserved for the primary partner's users.

### **Where will the money come from to build these hub sites and how much will they cost?**

If planning permission is obtained for both sites then the council can apply for 60% of the cost to come from the Football Foundation. This is expected to be between £5 and £6 million. The remaining 40% will need to be found through further external fundraising and council funding.

### **How will Parklife benefit local residents?**

Alongside proposed football facilities, residents will benefit from:

- A community café and terrace
- Accessible toilets
- New play spaces for children
- Community space that will be available for hire
- Enhanced cycling facilities
- A management presence on site at all times that the facilities are open
- Dedicated car parking, including accessible car parking, alleviating current parking issues experienced locally

### **How bright can the floodlights be?**

It is proposed that both artificial turf pitches will be floodlit. Floodlights will be consistent with community use pitches, as opposed to a professional facility which requires a higher 'Lux' level. Modern floodlighting is extremely targeted, and the floodlights would sit in enclosures that ensure there is extremely minimal light spill vertically (usually less than 1 lux).

Horizontal light spill can also be minimised through the floodlight configuration and angling. Supplementary information will be submitted as part of the planning application on light spill at the two sites, but evidence from comparative facilities shows that light spill from floodlighting of this nature can be reduced to around 1 lux by 20 metres away, which is consistent with the level of lighting you would expect on a minor suburban road.

Other external lighting can be appropriately chosen to meet minimum requirements while ensuring that no additional light spill occurs.

### **How much car parking is proposed and what will be the impact?**

The exact scale of the car parking requirements will be established by an independent assessment which takes into account likely peak time use, local public transport, and how people travel to existing local facilities. Croydon is committed to reducing travel by car, and measures will be put in place to encourage users to access these facilities by public transport, walking or cycling. However, there will be a need to provide appropriate car parking, provide appropriate access for disabled people, and ensure that we address as much as possible the current parking issues at both sites (with users often parking inappropriately in surrounding residential streets).

### **Will the proposed facilities contribute to flooding?**

No. All facilities will be designed with the input of specialist engineers, who will ensure that the new drainage systems built as part of the new hub facilities are fit for purpose.

The artificial grass pitches will be synthetic but porous, and sit on a bed of gravel, allowing water to filter through at an appropriate rate for the site.

## **What is proposed for the grass pitches on the site, and across the borough?**

Croydon's strategy is to reduce the overall number of grass pitches in the borough to a level that matches demand. We currently mark out around 50 pitches and it is anticipated that with the development of two hub facilities, Croydon will only require 12 grass pitches

We're proposing that the number of grass pitches across the borough will reduce by 30-35. No grass pitch sites are earmarked for residential or commercial development.

At least 4 of the 12 grass pitches required will be at Ashburton and Purley Way Playing Fields. The Parklife model is predicated on any site also having two grass pitches that will be upgraded in time, to also increase the quality of natural grass pitches in the borough. As the facilities start to make money, initial profits will be invested into the two most appropriate grass pitches.

## **What are the proposals for existing pavilions on the sites?**

If the Parklife scheme goes ahead, the existing pavilions on these sites would no longer be needed for football. It is proposed that the existing pavilion facility at Ashburton Playing Fields would be demolished as part of these proposals. The nature of the pavilion buildings, their location and state of repair mean that it's not viable for them to be used for anything else.

At Purley Way Playing Fields, pavilion 4 (at the North end of the site against the Colonnades) is proposed to be demolished. The other three pavilions (those lining Purley Way), as well as other pavilions across the borough, are being assessed as part of a pavilions review that will look at potential licence or lease arrangements to other organisations, such as community groups.

## **What engagement has taken place, and is planned?**

Community engagement started by discussions with, and a survey of Croydon Football clubs and leagues, in summer 2017. This helped us to develop a business case and feasibility work on the two sites between December 2017 and June 2018.

Through July and August 2018 we will be speaking to residents and community representatives surrounding the two playing fields sites, as well as speaking to young people in the community about ideas to improve play facilities. The purpose of community engagement is to raise awareness of the proposals and get feedback on them, particularly the new local facilities proposed as part of the development.

Residents can give their views by completing an [online feedback form](#) up until the planning submission in September 2018.

Once a planning submission is lodged and validated then members of the public are able to review the proposals and can comment formally via the council's statutory consultation process, with feedback collated and considered by Planning Committee (usually 13 weeks after submission of the proposals).

## **When is it proposed that facilities are built and open?**

If planning permission is granted and funding secured, we would work towards the facilities being built in time in 2020.

## **How long will construction take and what will be involved?**

Should planning permission be granted, we will aim to start in summer 2019. An initial construction plan will be developed as part of the planning submission. A detailed programme including specific timeframes for elements of the build, hours of work, noise and dust controls, traffic and access plans, will be agreed and made available publicly before construction starts on site. Because of the nature of the proposed facilities, a lot of the construction of the building can take place off site, which should help to reduce the impact on local residents. All build contractors are required to be a members of the Considerate Constructor Scheme.