

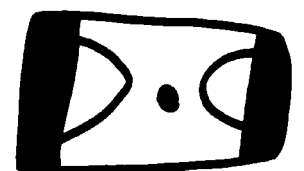
Revitalise Peckham Rye



Proposals for Improvements to Peckham Rye Park and Common

Interim Report on Stakeholder Engagement

May 2014



Executive Summary

The Building Exploratory has been engaging local stakeholders on behalf of Southwark Council with outline proposals for Peckham Rye Park and Common since January 2014.

This interim report documents the findings from our engagement to date, and lays out some recommendations for moving forward to be discussed with the client team.

The Building Exploratory would like to thank all stakeholders and members of the Peckham Rye Park and Common community for their input thus far.

Headline findings

We consulted a wide range of park users and stakeholders and found the following headline responses:

- Peckham Rye Park is generally loved by all, well-maintained, valued for its variety of spaces
- Positive reaction to the relocation and upgrade of changing room facilities
- Friends of adventure playground in opposition to the introduction of the play room to their area
- The rebuilding of the children's playroom is welcome
- The current play area is inadequate and new play equipment is needed
- A number of people came forward with helpful suggestions for improving the park experience

Recommendations & Suggestions

We have put forward a number of recommendations and suggestions, listed here and at the end of the report. We look forward to discussing these with the client team.

- **Rationale** - The council needs to clearly explain the rationale as to why positioning of new facilities has been proposed in the way that it has
- **Loss of green space** - Is there a calculation as to loss of green space and how much is being provided elsewhere? Can this be shared?
- **Online presence** - Could we share the plans online with people? They are keen to hear more. Perhaps the Council website could have a page dedicated to the consultation.
- **Meeting key stakeholders** - A meeting with key stakeholders to dispel myths and bond a little more with those feeling threatened by change could be a good move
- **Using feedback** - Demonstrate how the consultation is feeding into the design.
- **POW hut status** - Communicate that POW hut is to be demolished

Next steps

The Building Exploratory will agree a set of actions with the client group in order to communicate design changes and new proposals following this initial consultation.

1. Consultation to Date

The Building Exploratory has been engaging local stakeholders on behalf of Southwark Council with outline proposals for Peckham Rye Park and Common since January 2014. A series of one to one conversations, public meetings and animated events have taken place with groups and individuals using the children's playroom, adventure playground, football pitches and children's play spaces. This document outlines the activity to date and provides a summary of the responses to the proposals and the issues that have been raised by those we have spoken with (as well as the general park users).

Consultation Focus:

The engagement programme is seeking to understand how key facilities in the Park and Common are currently used and to document responses to the Council's proposals to relocate and reorganise them. In particular we have been asking about the proposed:

- relocation and rebuilding of the children's playroom
- relocation of the football changing rooms and Caribb headquarters
- relocation of the children's fixed play area





The Adventure Playground is very popular: many respondents hoped it could be open for longer in general

Consultation Activity to date:

These issues were discussed with local people during a series of meetings and events as follows:

- 20 one to one meetings with key internal and external stakeholders
- Six sessions with groups at the children's playroom
- Seven public events: 4 at the adventure playground and 3 in the Park

This activity has resulted in:

- 65 questionnaires completed by adults at the children's playroom
- 83 questionnaires completed by adults using the adventure playground
- 46 questionnaires completed by general adult park users
- 140 children have completed nature tiles with the project artist
- We have spoken to more than 320 adults and 200 children

2. Key Issues Identified

The following main responses to the proposals have been noted:

- People like the variety of Peckham Rye; enjoying its wilder parts as well as its more formal areas
- The children's playroom is a well used and treasured facility and there is widespread support for the proposed relocation
- The adventure playground is an important and treasured resource for local families. There is a notable opposition amongst the staff and friends to any change at all and to the proposed relocation of the children's playroom to the adjacent site.
- Users of the football pitches are very positive about the relocation of the changing rooms.
- There is an urgent need for a bigger and better play area in the park

Some overall suggestions and requests were made about the implementation of the proposals:

- Better toilets were requested by all the groups we consulted
- Connections between the adventure playground and the café area could be reinforced with a formal path. There were many requests for a water feature and re-visiting the 'hidden' stream
- Many expressed a desire for sustainable, interesting methods of play (nature based, natural play, tying in with Forest School)
- Strong sense that phasing the building/works processes is important so as not to interrupt activity and keep facilities open throughout
- Desire for more activities for young people and cultural, events and to draw people into the park
- A number of good precedents were introduced e.g. Brockwell Park, Ruskin Park, Burgess Park and so on (a list of these can be found in the appendix).

1. Stakeholder Responses

One to One Meetings

Prior to the events programme, a series of one to one meetings with key internal and external stakeholders helped to shape the wider public consultation. These included internal stakeholders and the wider client group: children's services, parks department, Ivydale Children's Centre, staff at the playroom, adventure playground and volunteer football club representatives. We also spoke to the Friends of Peckham Rye Park and the chair of the Peckham Society, both of whom were largely in favour of the proposals.

Liz Bough (Chair) and Pru Bland representing the Friends group thought the proposed changes were positive and long overdue commenting that they thought it made sense to bring the children's playroom and adventure playground together and for the changing rooms to move next to the football pitches. They also expressed concern that the adventure playground was underused due to its limited opening hours.

The main area of concern expressed was about the close proximity of the playground to the café, which they felt would make the café very noisy and would deter people without children. They added that they would like to see natural play items, rather than brightly coloured off the shelf climbing frames and suggested some kind of structure for parents to shelter. They argued for a fence around the children's play area – to keep dogs out and children away from bikes.



Play equipment outside the former One O'Clock Club, currently known as Peckham Playroom

They also voiced concern about the car park – regarding it as unsightly and in the wrong location. We attended the Friends of Peckham Rye Park AGM (20 members were present) in April at which the wider group raised the need to communicate the news that the prisoner of war hut was to be demolished. They reported that a lot of people assume that the building is listed.

Peter Frost, chair of the Peckham Society, while regretful of the loss of the prisoner of war hut, said that he understood why this was necessary. He reminded us of the need to build in opportunities for the public to access the heritage of the park and common such as the history of the hut and was happy with how this particular case had been handled by Southwark Council with the interpretation board. He liked the idea that the Peck stream might be cleaned up, he thought it was some of the cleanest water in the park.



Interpretation board telling the story of the Prisoner of War Huts, Peckham Rye Park

(i). The Children’s Playroom

At the children’s playroom we spoke to users about why they use the facility and what they like about it before asking them for their views on the proposed relocation.

We also sought to inform the brief for the new building, asking them about their priorities for the new facility.

The playroom is currently managed by Ivydale School as part of the Ivydale Children’s Centre offer by manager Miles Smith.

It provides three open access sessions for the under fives and their carers and hosts a wide range of other groups for target families and a session for childminders. We participated in four stay and play sessions and attended childminders’ and also attended the Muslim women’s sessions.

In total, we had conversations with 98 adult users of the playroom, of whom sixty-five completed questionnaires. There were few negative responses to the proposed relocation. Most liked the idea and the opportunity it presented to observe older children in the adventure playground.

We asked respondents about their journey to the playroom and discovered that the overwhelming majority (68%) walk to the facility with their children. Though 16 people (25%) stated that they drove, seven of these came to the Muslim Women’s Group and lived further afield in Lewisham, Kennington and Westminster.

How do you travel to the children’s playroom?	
Walk	68%
Drive	16%
Bus	6%

(ii). Stay and Play (Monday PM, Tuesday AM & PM, Thursday PM)

Stay and play sessions are held three times a week and last two and a half hours, attracting families largely from the immediate area. All stay and play sessions are drop in, those in the mornings and towards the beginning of the week are most popular with parents and carers. Sessions provide an opportunity for children and parents to use the play room building and resources, take part in messy play, art activities and use the home corner and baby play areas. They can also use the outside space, which has some fixed play equipment and large wheeled toys such as bikes and the extremely popular cars.

We asked attendees at these sessions how often they visited the playroom, establishing that 88% visit at least once or twice a week, the remainder visiting two to three times a week.

Why families come and what they like

The children's playroom is a highly regarded facility providing a unique opportunity for diverse local families to share play experiences with their children and to socialise with each other. It was widely agreed by users that there is nothing else like it in the area and that ideally there would be more open access sessions:

"It's amazing and well thought out ... every week there are creative activities. Southwark is to be commended for providing it. Seven stars out of five."

- Joan

When asked to explain why they visited the playroom, the key responses, not in order of priority, were:

- It's local to where we live and the setting is lovely
- The staff are inviting and friendly and know us and the children
- The mix of activities inside the play area is widely appreciated
- The outdoor play area is important as are the large outside toys
- The social support and interaction, for parents and children
- The freedom for children to play as they wish
- Option for free flow inside/outside is good and important

Additional reasons stated for attendance included:

- Proximity to the café
- Free of charge and drop in
- For the messy play
- It is enclosed and safe
- It has a good mix of toys



The current Peckham Playroom building

Priorities for the new building

There was widespread agreement about the range of improvements that needed to be made in the new building. In its current form, the indoor space gets very crowded and the outside space has poor drainage and gets very muddy when it rains. The following thoughts about the new building were communicated to us:

Indoor Space:

- A bigger building to address the over crowding
- Toilets need to be improved and changing area provided
- More and better storage is needed
- Bigger windows more natural light
- Better storage arrangements
- Better heating, kitchen, toilets and baby changing
- Buggy store
- Breast feeding area
- Sandpit
- A sensory space

Access and security:

- Access to the building and visibility throughout could be improved
- The new building should be an interesting design - not just a shed
- Better relationship between the inside and outside spaces

Outdoor Space:

- As much outdoor space as possible
- A better surface in the playground
- A covered outdoor space
- More outdoor benches for carers
- Better outdoor structures/equipment



Swing outside of gated Peckham Playroom play area: the ground is quite waterlogged here

(iii) Child minders' Group Wednesday Mornings

The majority of this group come every Wednesday morning. A number work together, for example a mother and daughter and a married couple that run their own child minding businesses from home.

Child minders also come for the social opportunities both for the children and for themselves. They enjoy having contact with other child minders and technical support and advice on child minding issues from Lindsay Barrett the professional who runs the group.

They come because they enjoy the variety of activities: crafts, logic, wet and dry facilities and culturally themed activities, which they have throughout the year.

The sessions are affordable @ £1 per child minder per session which provides fruit for the children. (See comments from Lindsay Barrett, Child minder coordinator)

This group have a high level of understanding about children's developmental, social and educational needs. On the whole their observations and feedback are similar to those raised above with an emphasis on:

- Improving entrance arrangements
- Providing a better buggy shed
- Improving the surface of the play area
- A bigger building to address overcrowding
- Defined spaces for toddlers and babies

(iv) Muslim Women's Group Thursday Mornings

The Muslim Women's Group is a parent led group that meets every Thursday with children ranging in age from a few months to 12 years old.

In the main they use the playroom because it is local and has a contained outdoor space, most of the families do not have gardens. As with the other groups, most of the women come for support and to socialise with "women and children who share the same values".

The majority of their children are home educated and this is an important opportunity for parents to share ideas and support their learning and for the children to learn with each other.

On the day we attended the parents had organised for the local fire brigade to visit the children with one of their engines and talk to them about fire prevention.



People enjoy the variety that Peckham Rye Park has to offer - the lake was mentioned as a favourite for some

The group was particularly supportive of the proposed relocation of the playroom next to the adventure playground, due to the age range of the children attending.

They had few particular requirements or interests rather their needs seemed to be largely similar to other families using the space.

There was slightly more interest from the group in the security of the building with a suggestion that the fence could be higher and gates that are clearly visible from the building, but these were not unique to the Muslim Women's Thursday group.

2. The Adventure Playground

Consultation based at the Adventure Playground

The adventure playground was used as a base on five separate occasions during the initial consultation phase. Sessions were well advertised in advance and open to everyone to come and speak to us about the Revitalise Peckham Rye proposals. Each session attracted a slightly different audience and provided an array of interesting responses. In total we spoke to more than 130 adults and received 80 completed questionnaires. We found that those involved in the friends of the adventure playground group were largely against the proposal to locate the children's playgroup next to the adventure playground, however a wider majority of users either thought it was a positive move to collocate the facilities though careful consideration of the distinct role of each would be required by the designers.

The majority of those who participated in the consultation lived locally and come to the playground regularly, more than once a week in good weather and during school holidays. There were many positive comments about the role of the adventure playground as a safe environment for children within the park and about the commitment of the staff, particularly the lead play worker.

The adventure playground is currently open for children aged five to eighteen during term time on Tuesdays to Fridays after school from 3.30pm to 6.30pm and on Saturdays from 10 to 4pm. During holidays it is open during week days from 11am to 5pm, but closed on Saturdays. On Sundays there is a two-hour session for children with special needs.



Fun Day at the Adventure Playground, Friday April 11th 2014

Consultation: February and March 2014

At the pilot session during February half term we took large scale plans showing the proposed areas for change in the park, heritage resources, and an artist to work with the children. A range of families were present and shared their views about the park which were largely spread across the scale from those who were against any type of change to those that were positive.

A month later, as we prepared for sessions on the 28th and 29th March, we were warned by play staff that the friends group were very unhappy with the proposals to move the children's play room to the site adjacent to the adventure playground and to expect protest and antagonism at the events. We also learned that one of the friends had started a petition against the proposal for which he was seeking signatures.

On the Friday we found around 20 children aged eight to thirteen using the playground. There were very few parents present at this session, in total three parents who were extremely antagonistic to the plans dominated.

The following day was the warmest of the year to that date and the playground was packed. We observed children in the ball area for most of the day, children and families all over the play equipment and in the bushy area at the eastern end of the playground. A few families used the grassy area for short periods of time. This was an intense day dominated by the antagonism of the friends group though a wider range of opinions and support for the proposals were recorded. At the remaining sessions on the 5th and 11th of April 2014 we recorded a more balanced range of opinions on these occasions and people engaged with the wider changes being proposed to the play areas and football changing rooms.

Fear of loss of space among some groups

There is a reasonably widespread fear amongst some parents of losing space in the adventure playground, specifically the grassy picnic area, ball area and the garden. The following statements are representative of the opposition to the proposals coming from the Friends of the Adventure Playground group some of which are shared by the wider user group.

"I don't want any change at all – it works fine and we like it as it is."

"We don't want to lose the picnic area, ball games area or the garden."

"There's not enough space as it is – especially on a hot summers day"

"Changes to the caged surfaced play area not tenable, kids use it all the time to play football."

"An inappropriate mixing of ages is proposed, teenagers and under fives don't mix."

"Consider older kids, we need places for teenagers – there are too few."

"There'll be a lot more parking – needed if the children's room is next door, it will cause congestion on Holmestall Road."

"The current location of the children's room is more convenient for the people that use it."



Adventure Playground Fun Day, April 11th 2014

Adventure play popular, opening hours could be consistent, new ideas offered

Those who were open to some change at the adventure playground emphasized how popular it is and that the opening hours need to be more consistent and expanded. Many people liked the proposal to locate the children's room next to the adventure play, some emphasized the need to keep access to each facility separate. Some considered that the proposal might provide an opportunity to make improvements to the playground. Ideas for improvements included:

"I like the thought of these facilities being located next to each other as I have children of different ages."

"Please could we modernise the playground?"

"Provide more play equipment for younger children"

"We could do with a café at this end of the park"

"I love the idea of a tree house in the adventure playground"

"More fruit trees please and a bigger garden"

"It would be great to see the play structures updated"

"More table tennis tables"

Children's Viewpoint

A number of older children, aged 11 to 13 years, visit the adventure playground alone after school while their parents are still at work, but on the weekends we were present there were children from a few weeks of age to 13 years present.

We asked the children, the median age of those who spoke to us was eight years, about their favourite things and they agreed unanimously that huge rope swings and the areas behind the bushes at the back of the playground were their top places.

Children of the Friends of the Adventure Playground group told us that they did not want any changes, but did not give us reasons for this. The majority engaged with the artist and made their plaster tiles, but not with the idea of change at the playground.

Small Acres School

Small Acres School is a registered free school renting the adventure playground and building three days a week during school hours. They clearly have a sense of ownership of the place and would like to increase their use of it to five days a week. While not as antagonistic as the Friends of the Adventure Playground to the proposal to locate the children's playroom next door, they were reluctant to see shared access.

They use the space the same time as the playroom and largely have primary aged children - about 10 of them at present, one of whom has been referred by Southwark Council.

Analysis of Responses

In response to the antagonism of the friends group, we looked again at the completed forms and analysed the responses of adults who completed forms to the proposals. In doing so we found that:

- **17** were outright **opposed** to the proposals at the Adventure Playground
- **27** said they **supported** change, but that it needed to be qualified to ensure maintenance of service
- **34** were **positive or unconcerned** about the proposed changes, but most of them had specific changes they would like to see happen.

Of the 17 opposed to any change at the Adventure Playground, the majority suggested changes to other locations.

Our observations on the use of the space and reluctance to change indicate that it is already being used by children with a very wide age range. The majority of children using the space at weekends are 11 or under. There is a smattering of older children. The rationale behind some of the objections was unclear and could be addressed by the design (e.g. access, separation, ages not mixing). Those against any change seemed very committed to their positions and were not open to engaging with the potential of collocation of the two facilities or comforted by that fact that they would largely be open at different times.

3. Play Area

Consultation on the proposed play area

On Saturdays 5th and 19th April 2014 we spent time outside the current play space opposite the football pitches and by the small play space and children's room adjacent to the café in order to gather views about the proposed relocation of the play space and about what local people thought these spaces should provide. There was unanimous agreement that there was a great need for a bigger and better play area at Peckham Rye Common.

Thoughts on the current gated play area

The current gated play area was described by some as inadequate, those using it would like to see more swings for small children as there is often a queue for them.

The majority of people liked the proposal for a new larger play area on the site of the current playroom and football changing rooms and were positive about the idea of a play space next to the café. Some however argued that current location suited them better and worried that a play area near to the café would result in children asking for treats, others argued for two play spaces, one in each location.



The current gated play area

Many people expressed disappointment with the natural play area next to the playroom completed recently and pleaded that lessons would be learnt from its failures. The water feature was specifically criticised. There were a great many ideas about what a new play area might include:

“It’s important to provide a range of equipment for different ages.”

“Sensory play and natural play including sound and sand”

“Traditional equipment such as swings and slide and climbing”

“Accessibility - provide equipment that disabled children can use”

“Water features that work”

“A paddling pool”

“Astroturf football pitch”

“A lot more swings”

“Good toilets close by”

Adults requested better access to the stream by the adventure playground and resources that they could use for fitness activities such as:

- Tennis courts
- Access to the games area outside of adventure playground opening



The stream was identified as an opportunity: could it be developed into more of a feature in its own right?

4. Football Changing Rooms

Positive response to proposals to relocate changing rooms

The proposed relocation of the football changing rooms adjacent to the pitches has been very positively received:

- Footballers and coaches are all very keen to have changing facilities next to the pitches
- The current lack of toilets near the pitches is a huge problem
- Caribb and United All Stars FCs are both positive about the proposal
- The least disruption possible to the running of activities appreciated
- The size of changing rooms is dictated by the Football Association

We met with key stakeholders Carlton Scafe (Southwark Caribb) and Joe Dobson (Peckham All Stars) over the course of the consultation period, to establish their needs and responses to the proposals.

Southwark Caribb and Peckham All Stars (approx 120 members in total) are set to merge at the end of this season and to be renamed Southwark All Stars. Carlton Scafe will step down as manager and take a place on the management board of the new club.



Current facilities: Southwark Caribb

Southwark Caribb currently have a small shipping container on the site next to the adventure playground building which acts as a club headquarters housing an office, small kitchen, office storage and computer equipment. A temporary marquee acts as a changing room for the children attending training sessions on a Saturday morning and matches on Sundays. The latter is inadequate. Occasionally the club will book the changing rooms by the café, particularly if there are matches on the pitches close by.

Carlton Scafe was supportive of proposals put forward at the two meetings, as long as the club has the resources it has at present. With regard to moving up to the car park temporarily, Carlton was also supportive of this: he did request a letter of comfort with regard to management and use of the facility following completion of the capital project.

Pitch usage

Pitch	Age	Duration of match (plus 15 minutes half time)	No. of players per team	No. of subs per team	Total no. of players per team
Senior	17+	90 mins	11 v 11	5	16
PJ1 Junior	13/14	75 mins	11 v 11	5	16
	15/16	90 mins	11 v 11	5	16
9 v 9	U11/12	75 mins	9 v 9	5	14
PS1	9/10	60 mins	7 v 7	5	12
PS2	9/10	60 mins	7 v 7	5	12
PS3	7/8?	60 mins	7 v 7	5	12

Facilities are currently stretched and there is a likelihood that this situation will worsen once the two teams merge. In the meeting, Joe Dobson expressed embarrassment regarding the condition of the current facilities for team visits.

Recommendations

At this stage, we would recommend the following:

- **Rationale** - The council needs to clearly explain the rationale as to why this positioning of new facilities has been proposed
- **Loss of green space** - Is there a calculation as to loss of green space and how much is being provided elsewhere? Can this be shared?
- **Online presence** - Could we share the plans online with people? They are keen to hear more. Perhaps the Council website could have a page dedicated to the consultation.
- **Meeting key stakeholders** - A meeting with key stakeholders to dispel myths and bond a little more with those feeling threatened by change could be a good move
- **Using feedback** - Demonstrate how the consultation is feeding into the design.
- **POW hut status** - Communicate that POW hut is to be demolished

Appendices to be included in final report

1. List of one to one meetings held
2. List of targeted and public events organized with attendance figures
3. Resources used during consultation sessions
4. Breakdown of questionnaires
5. Children's Drawings
6. Artist's activities and outcomes
7. List of examples of good play areas and play rooms
8. Event publicity (how & where advertised)
9. Playroom session notes
10. Feedback form database
11. Emails & contacts count