

## **Addendum to Committee Report presented at Charity Sub Committee on 21 March 2023**

**Presented by Jo Pearce, Business and Partnerships Manager – Parks and Countryside Service to the Charity Trustee Sub Committee on 5 June 2023**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This briefing focuses on the key discussion points at the meeting on **21 March 2023** which led to a deferral to a future charity committee, these points summarised in section 6.1 of the minutes (which can be found [here](#)) included;

- The designs contained in the proposal and whether these were final.
- The scope of the original consultation and involving the Youth Engagement Team prior to the decision being taken
- How **Sheffield Cycling 4 All (SC4A)** would be impacted by the changes
- Any risks to the funding should the decision be delayed

#### **1.1. Update since 21 March 2023**

Since the meeting on 21 March 2023, Officers have focused on two key areas of activity, this has included:

- working with Sheffield City Councils **Childrens Involvement Team (CIT)** to capture further insight from Children and Young People to understand their views better regarding the proposal
- working with **SC4A** to try and identify solutions which enables their service to continue within the park, whilst also accommodating other users who may be displaced by the proposed occupation of SC4A on the new multi-use-games-area (MUGA)

This briefing provides a summary around these two key activities, with a conclusion at the end.

### **2.0 Engagement and Insight**

#### **2.1 Report from Childrens Involvement Team – Contribution by Max Belwood (CIT)**

##### *2.1.1 Introduction*

The Children's Involvement Team (CIT) was approached by Jo Pearce (Service Manager in Parks and Countryside Service) to conduct a consultation with children and young people around a proposed multi-activity hub in Hillsborough Park in the space that is currently occupied by a large tarmac activity area and four tennis courts.

Max Bellwood (CIT) devised a set of questions which would be asked to both users and non-users of the park to understand their current use of the space in question. All comments and feedback about what they liked or disliked about the space and an idea about what they would like to see in this space in the future are summarised below.

##### *2.1.2 Executive Summary*

- 62% of respondents were aged between 5 and 10 years old, with 35% aged 11 to 15 years old.
- Of the respondents there was a slight majority of males (54%)
- The children and young people who were spoken to overwhelmingly lived in the S6 area of Sheffield, with 85% coming from this postcode.
- 81% of the questionnaires we received were completed in schools, with 19% completed by children and young people on the Hillsborough Park site.

- Of those who told us what frequency they visit Hillsborough Park, 55% visit either weekly or nearly every day.
- Far fewer respondents used the large tarmac sports area, with 28% of respondents saying they use it either weekly or nearly every day.
- Football (28%) is the most popular activity to do on the large tarmac sports area. Biking was also popular with 22% of respondents using the space to ride their bikes
- The most numerous responses to what children and young people like about the large tarmac sports area were; being able to play football, the fact it is big and there is lots of space to play
- When asked what respondents think would improve the large tarmac sports area, the most popular response was installing astro turf for football use
- When the MUGA was in use, we asked what free activities respondents would like to be able to do; football was the most popular answer with 55% saying they'd like to use portable goals on the grass, followed by using the existing playground (48%), socialising or meeting friends in the hub (48%) and attending free activity camps in school holidays (47%)
- Of the range of pay and play activities we asked about, tennis received the most positive approval with 66% of respondents scoring an approval rating of either 5 out of 5 [*really like it*] or 4 out of 5. Mini golf was also popular with 59% answering either 5 or 4 out of 5
- Many of the pay and play activities were more evenly spread across the approval rating of 1 out of 5 [*really do not like it*] up to 5 out of 5. The most unpopular activity was taking part in an exercise class, which scored 42% either 1 or 2 out of 5.
- In terms of amenities which respondents ranked the importance of, 81% felt that free to use public access toilets were very important
- 81% of those who answered would like to have a new multi-activity hub, compared with 7 % who wanted to keep the tarmac sports area and tennis courts as they are. 12% were undecided.

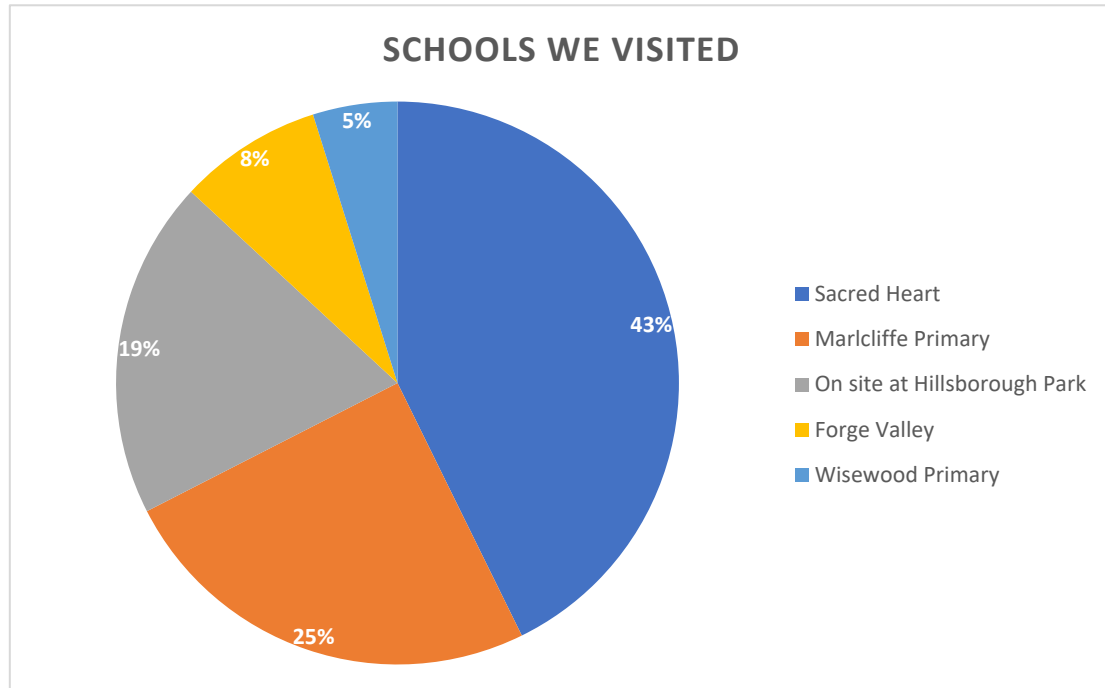
### 2.1.3 Methodology

- CIT devised a set of questions which we felt would allow respondents to comment flexibly on both the current layout of the park and also informed to make comments and suggestions about a potential new development.
- CIT were provided with details of the current layout and also details on the proposed plans which we developed into a set of questions aimed at users and non-users of the park.
- We felt that it would be essential to speak to children and young people both on site, i.e. in Hillsborough Park, and also within schools where we felt a high proportion of the cohort would be either users already, or have local knowledge of the park in order to provide us with data about why they were not currently accessing the provision.
- The table in **Fig.1** below shows which schools we visited, the full data spreadsheet can be found in **Appendix A**
- Two on site sessions with children and young people were carried out during the Easter holidays on 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Officers from Parks and Countryside set up a gazebo on the existing tarmac sports area with visuals of the proposal and the sessions were facilitated by adults who verbally asked the questions and wrote down the respondents' answers.
- For the school-based phase of the consultation, where we felt it was practical for respondents to complete it themselves, we designed a child-appropriate and accessible questionnaire with pictures to illustrate and explain each question. These documents can be found in **Appendix B**. Sessions were delivered in three primary schools and one secondary school on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023. An officer from the

Parks and Countryside service explained and introduced the consultation and was present during these sessions to field any queries the children had relating to the questions.

- Although we designed both user and non-user versions of the questionnaires so everyone had chance to input their ideas, all of the children we spoke to in each of the four schools had visited the park and classed themselves as a user.

**Fig.1**



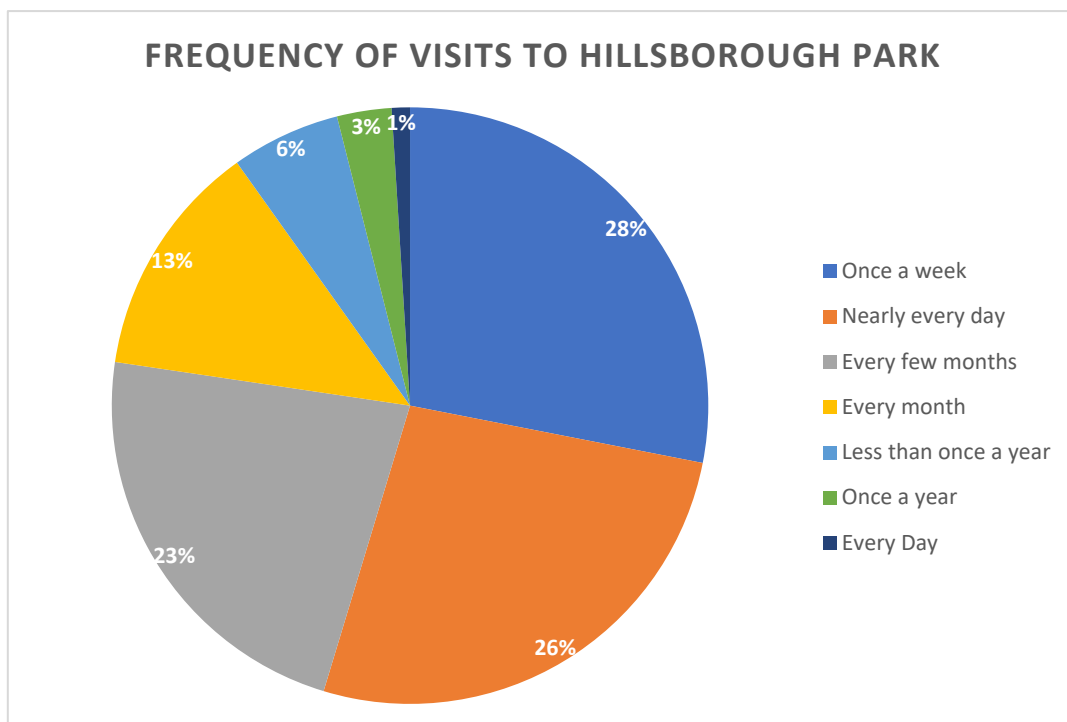
#### *2.1.4 Conclusions from the Childrens Involvement Team*

It is clear from our viewpoint that children and young people who completed our questionnaires overwhelmingly prefer the multi-activity hub option, as opposed to the park staying as it is. We do feel that it is hard to fully explain the reality of scaling down the size of the tarmac sports area to children, so although they undoubtedly want the benefits of more activities and more of a 'hub' space to meet friends, the plans we presented them with are only 2D and quite small, so the reality of losing some space for football and bikes etc may not have been fully grasped. However, judging by the comments relating to improvements in the park and the range of new activities and amenities a multi-activity hub would bring, we feel this would be in the interests of the children and young people who use this popular park.

#### *2.1.5 Reflections on the Children and Young People consultation from Parks and Countryside staff*

We were pleased to hear from all pupils from the local primary and secondary schools that they were regular visitors to Hillsborough Park, the Park is clearly an important destination for children and young people within this area, **Fig.2** below shows this. All the children and young people we spoke to had visited the park at least once, and for many different reasons, this meant the conversations we had were relevant and helpful.

**Fig.2**



Working with the CIT we tried to devise a questionnaire that was as impartial, transparent and helpful as possible, whilst also not being misleading or overpromising potential changes which wouldn't be possible. With advice from the CIT we took the survey into schools, with a member of staff present to talk through the survey and explain things clearer, rather than sending something into schools cold, which would have been harder to complete. See **Appendix C** for pictures of some of the engagement sessions in action.

In addition to the feedback found in the full data set from the surveys and CIT's summary of the findings, Forge Valley Secondary Schools' Council shared with us some recent consultation they had carried out with 591 pupils within the school, the slides related to Hillsborough park can be found in **Appendix D**. Things that came out as important to young people were football pitches, astro turf and improvements to the playground amongst other things. From the School Council perspective, the majority of the group didn't use the tarmac area as said there weren't activities for them to do there.

The consultation has affirmed recent research around the Make Space for Girls campaign, specifically around 'Deconstructing the default male landscape' and talks about 'if there's just one space or pitch, chances are that the boys will take it over. Dividing it up gives everyone a chance to play...'. 'creating openness and visibility in parks, clear escape routes and better lighting made women feel safer, along with a visible presence of park staff.' Although women and girls are one of a number of key target audiences the activity hub would aim to reach, designing a space which appeals to multiple audiences is a priority for this project and the conversations we've had with children and young people have emphasized this even more.

With regards the Friends of Hillsborough Park, the group have kept us up to date with regards their position, which has not changed. The group do not support the change that this proposal would bring about. We have kept them updated with the engagement work we have carried out and shared with them copies of the surveys used.

## 2.2 MUGA Observation Data carried out by Parks and Countryside staff

In addition to the survey carried out with children and young people, we also carried out some observations of MUGA usage with our staff on site. We did this throughout the period

between 30 March 2023 and 3 May 2023. This covered both term time and a holiday period, which has been highlighted as a potential pinch point from a user capacity perspective.

The table below provides a summary of the observations at varying times and days of the week. The data is limited to the days that staff were on site, however it does demonstrate the range of uses. Of the times observed the current large tarmac space/MUGA was being used predominantly for football and basketball and by more males than females. As expected, during the peak times of school holidays and after school, there was greater footfall and mixed usage, at other times, during the days in term time, this attendance dropped off significantly and was used by younger children and families.

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+ people 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	VERY 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 with parents – basketball and scoots 2 boys age 14 play football
18.04.2023	Tuesday	4.00pm	5 boys age 11+ play football 2 families with young children just 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 with toddler (bike) Group girls and boys age 13+ mixed games
11.05.2023	Thursday	Not recorded	6 boys age 8-15 play football 2 girls age 7-11 with parents mixed games
16.05.2023	Tuesday	8:15am 4pm	7 adult male skateboarding 10+people mixed ages

### 3.0 Sheffield's Cycling for All (SC4A)

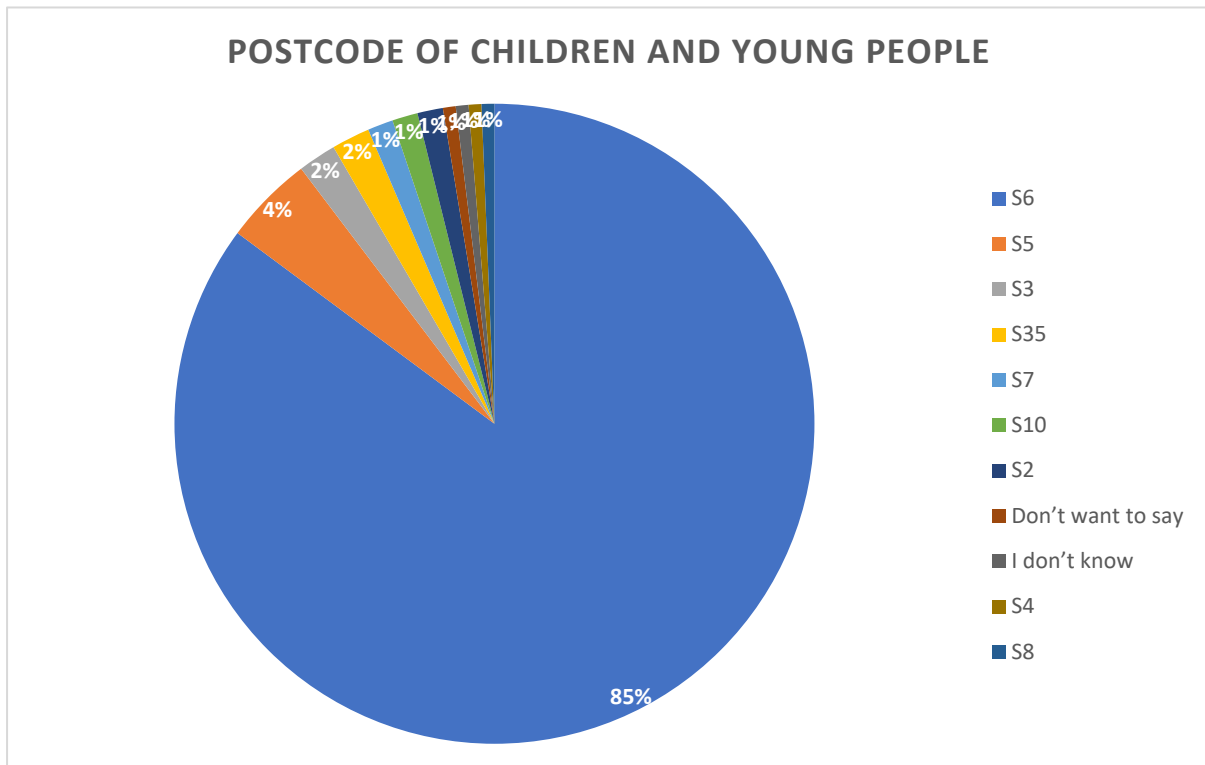
As highlighted within the **Introduction 1.1** it was agreed within the Committee meeting on 21 March, that Parks and Countryside officers, together with Courtside CIC would continue to work with SC4A to try and identify solutions which would enable their service to continue within the park, whilst also accommodating other users who may be displaced by the proposed occupation of SC4A on the new multi-use-games-area (MUGA).

Since the meeting, officers met with SC4A together with Courtside CIC. The focus of the conversation was around, not on the occupation of C4A on the MUGA area, as SC4A had said that they could be accommodated within the proposed footprint, but around the displacement of other users being properly addressed should the proposal go ahead.

SC4A also highlighted that they wanted to hear reassurance that the consultation has been carried out in a way that proactively engaged local people whilst proportionately engaging all social groups, and that the consultation was not just purely a yes/no question but gave people an opportunity to indicate a preference for alternatives.

Through the additional children and young people consultation we have carried out since the March committee, we hope that SC4A as well as others, are satisfied that we have proactively sought out the key target audiences of children and young people from the local area. We had 190 surveys completed by children and young people and this work is ongoing with further sessions planned for the Spring half term holidays. As highlighted previously, we deliberately carried out face to face sessions on site and in school, rather than through an online survey so we could reach children and young people better. **Fig.3** below shows where the children and young people lived who completed the surveys.

**Fig.3**



The previous survey carried out, was online and predominantly reached a family/parent audience with the biggest response rate of 32% coming from people aged between 35-44, however it did reach a local audience, with 68% having been completed by local residents.

With regards the potential displacement of children and young people from the MUGA if this was occupied by SC4A, on the whole the insight gathered showed that children and young people were not too worried about this, due to the range of other activities being available to them within the activity hub and the wider park. As the CIT team highlighted, this is potentially hard to get across with a hypothetical scenario, although visuals were provided and staff were open and clear in the narrative around this.

Through the conversations, it was suggested, alongside football being available in other parts of the park (as well as on any MUGA/tarmac space), that SC4A could potentially be based on the Learn to Ride area beside the pump track. This had been considered previously but ruled out due to size constraints. We have had initial conversations with SC4A and local Councillors, and feel it is possible that this change to the hub design could be a workable compromise solution which would:

- (a) give SC4A a designed base exceeding (by over 40%) their minimum space requirements
- (b) avoid displacement of children/young people by freeing up the MUGA for other users when SC4A run their sessions

- (c) create new connectivity between the pump track, Learn to Ride area and the new MUGA

SC4A are speaking with group members and users and we will have an update on this in time for the Charity Committee Meeting on 5 June.

#### **4.0 Risks to funding from External Bodies**

The delays to this project, after Co-Op Exec Approval in April 2022 and then the deferred decision pre-election period in March 2023, have already meant that £25k is no longer available from the Investing for Growth fund.

£300k of other funding made up of £150k from Sport England and £150k from The Key Fund is also at risk if the project is further delayed and the money is not spent by 31 March 2024.

In addition to the specific and tangible risk of funds, there is further reputational risk for the Council if the project is not delivered in a timely manner. Sport England had offered a solicited Community Asset Fund bid towards this project in 2022 as they felt it contributed to wider outcomes as part of their covid recovery works and active environment strands of their Towards an Active Nation Strategy. We are beyond the initially agreed project timeline and as Sheffield has a good track record of delivery with Sport England and the LTA, the goodwill is still there however it is fading quickly.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

Although any local decision about whether to approve development and accept investment in a conservation area on land with charitable status is bound to elicit differences of opinion, we believe wholeheartedly that supporting the proposed multi-activity hub in Hillsborough will bring benefits to the ward, surrounding area and the city overall. The previous Charity Trustee Sub Committee meeting in March 2023 reflected those arguments for and against, and the subsequent pause due to the pre-election period has allowed for further consultation as requested by the Sub Committee.

Council officers and partners have had the opportunity to reflect and focus on the feedback received. The key points around children/young people engagement, as well as further dialogue with SC4A, have allowed for a possible change to the hub design to emerge as a compromise that could be a workable solution for a wide range of user groups. We will have a further update on this on 5 June 2023, after further conversations have taken place.

The proposed investment in place is complemented by a no less important investment in people, with the potential for 10-15 jobs being created for local residents (including apprenticeships) and skills being developed (including volunteering opportunities). We believe this combination will drive improved social and financial outcomes, as well as delivering facilities now for the people of Hillsborough and for future generations of Sheffielders to enjoy.

In closing, it is worth saying that we have been inspired by the children and young people we've spoken to and feel even more so than before, that this proposal would benefit a far wider audience than the current space provides. We have developed ideas with local Councillors and SC4A which would continue to support them to provide an important service for disabled people across the city. We feel the multi-activity hub will make this recreational part of Hillsborough Park a home from home for locals as well as a destination day-out for others, bringing people together and helping them to be active.

