

Get Active in Small Pitches Playzones Engagement Report

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Summary

During summer 2023 we engaged with over a thousand people to begin to discuss the role of community pitches in helping inactive people to get active, while supporting and improving existing use. We called this 'Get Active engagement in Small Pitches'.

In order to begin to redress inequalities in sport, we set out to target people in groups known to be inactive, including women and girls, people from lower socio-economic groups, people from minority ethnic and cultural communities, and people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. As well as these we worked to build links with existing pitch users and residential communities around target pitches.

The engagement activity was inspired and guided by funding opportunities through the Playzones programme and was kindly funded by the Football Foundation. However, it was carefully focused on local needs and opportunities in order to provide the best solutions for Lambeth and inform a range of projects.

To ensure relevance, we focused into localities, and worked closely with over thirty community partners to deliver focus groups, events, sample sports sessions, and to hold meetings, and discuss solutions. We are immensely grateful for this support in engaging local people. One of the clear conclusions from the activity is that engaging inactive people is most successful when carried out through a trusted local community leader.

This report includes: a summary of how we carried out the engagement, discussions with the different target groups, analysis of potential pitches for improvement and activation, a summary of demonstrable need at each of the six pitches put forward for more feasibility work as Playzones, and last but not most importantly, a page to thank the many many people and groups who helped to deliver this complex project.

As a result of this research, the six pitches we are now putting forwards for feasibility work towards Playzone investment are: Briant Estate, Deronda Estate, Larkhall Park, St Matthews Estate, Loughborough Park, and Vale Street.

The report is a work to summarise over two hundred pages of evidence and survey, including detailed reports around the six pitches put forwards for the first stage of Playzone work. Much of this evidence is separately available if required.

Below are five overarching lessons and common themes across the consultation. There is more detail on the methods and conclusions within the report, itself a summary of the evidence base for all the localised engagement

Activities

Animation of pitches was universally welcomed, with many people at coached events asking for '*more of this*'. A small fee was considered acceptable for good activities.

Healthy activities for children were asked for, with many working people in need of safe affordable childcare. Sports for girls were requested by parents, coaches, and some girls, however many younger girls were concerned not to segregate genders.

Supporting Children's Free Access

There was intense concern that activation and booking systems do not prevent children and young people from everyday casual use. We were repeatedly reminded of the importance of healthy focused activities for boys and young men, particularly those of colour.

At some sites however, the existing use was dominated by older males, and parents were concerned to provide more opportunities for children who feel put off by this.

Design of Playzones must address this by ensuring each pitch is free and open for children's use at after school time, and where possible providing a small separate practice space.

Helping Women become Active

There was warm interest in sports from inactive women, particularly parents, however childcare is a barrier for many, cost even more so. There was more preference for dance-type exercise.

For many inactive women, strong local leadership and a peer group is essential to overcome any anxiety and get them through the door of a pitch. Many will not just turn up on the basis of a poster. Most inactive women don't mind what the activity is and are interested in trying new team sports with an appropriate supportive coach.

Ageing Well and Overcoming Disability

Many older people initially reject the idea of sport, having been active in their youth. They gesture at a leg, or stick, sore hip, foot operation, or back problems and sigh that they used to play basketball, football or run, but cannot anymore. Interestingly, the act of discussing possibilities really helps to focus people on how important it is to be active, and how walking football, chair sports, group exercise, tai chi, and other activities might help them to retain balance, social connections, and mental wellbeing.

Inactive older people need strong local leadership, or a buddy system to get through the door of a pitch.

There is strong potential for more outdoor summertime sports for groups of people with disabilities in a central location. Vale Street is an excellent location to support much needed group exercise for people with learning disabilities, through local groups. An equipment store would help with this.

Sports Preference

Most interest in specific sports facilities came from people who were existing players. Other than being active, the vast majority of these were also in one of our target communities and potentially at risk of inactivity if facilities are not available.

High quality football facilities are requested everywhere.

There is strong support for existing basketball facilities.

Specific requests for places to practice netball came mainly from active women players, this did not dominate in any location but was strongest at Deronda Estate.

There is wide passion for Ecuavoley among the South American community seen at Loughborough Park and Larkhall Park. A booking system at these two parks would help avoid competition for space.

Methodology

This report presents the conclusions following a summer of engagement to explore how inactive people might get active through group activities in small pitches. We called this 'Get Active' engagement.

The engagement activity was inspired and guided by funding opportunities through the Playzones programme and was kindly funded by the Football Foundation. However, it was carefully focused on local needs and opportunities in order to provide the best solutions for Lambeth and inform a range of projects.

To ensure relevance, we worked closely with local partners and are eternally grateful for their support. The main partners are listed where relevant and on the final page of this report.

Local pitches are often known locally in many areas as 'The Cage' or 'the MUGA'.

We set out to ask the questions:

How can we use local ball courts, to help inactive people get active?

How can we demonstrate and refine opportunities through work with target groups:

- Women and Girls (a priority for Lambeth)
- People from lower socio-economic groups
- People from minority ethnic communities
- People with disabilities and long-term health conditions

How can we ensure improvements to programming and infrastructure at local ball courts while including and supporting existing users?

Particularly those in target groups:

- Young men
- People in the categories above
- Children (a priority for Lambeth)



Localised approach

A recognised key issue with Lambeth is lack of open space. Lambeth is in the top 2% of most populated local authority areas in England.

New purpose-built sporting facilities would be of huge benefit; however, we have no vacant land. We worked instead to look at existing community pitches, towards improving these, making them work smarter, and linking these into local community facilities.

We created a longlist of 11 prospect pitches to focus engagement, all with opportunities to develop, both practically, and in community partnerships. The prospect pitches are under a mixture of Lambeth Housing and Lambeth Parks management.

The list, shown below, was intended to give us a starting point, an opportunity to engage potential users in an appropriate environment, and a strong steer towards locations, while allowing room for admission of other projects as engagement dictated.

Where were prospect Playzones?

North to South:

- 1) Briant Estate
- 2) Cotton Gardens
- 3) Larkhall Park
- 4) Loughborough Estate
- 5) Loughborough Park
- 6) St Matthews Estate
- 7) Tulse Hill Estate
- 8) Deronda Estate
- 9) Vale Street
- 10) Holderness Estate
- 11) Streatham Vale.



Community Partnerships

During summer 2023 we contacted local community organisations at each of the pitches and built partnerships with over 30 organisations to deliver meaningful engagement activities around the pitch. Working with these amazing community partners, we:

Attended 8 events, with discussion boards and survey, sports equipment, and coaches

Ran 11 focus groups with taster sessions and discussion, including for children, young people, women and girls, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities.

Attended 10 stakeholder meetings to discuss the project

Interviewed 40 experts on their subject

Provided 11 separate surveys, one for each site, with QR code posters on site, and local social media to help raise awareness.

Surveyed 349 people, with 226 of these face to face on site and door to door.

Facilitated 16 taster sports sessions: In football, basketball, cricket, dancercise, multisport

1090 people were engaged, with 960 of these in person, including 250 children and young people.

We used wipe-clean purpose designed boards to inspire debate and record discussions on three themes: preferred sports, groups and level to play at, and improvements to the pitch.

At the same time, market researchers took the formal survey to everyone at each event.



Local Groups, Events and Data

The engagement project would have been impossible without the support of many local groups. Below are listed the key groups and individuals by locality, and the actions we took together.

Place	Groups	Actions
1. Briant Estate	<i>Briant Estate TRA, Resident Engagement Officer Cherlyn,</i>	<i>Community sports event</i>
3. Larkhall Park	<i>Friends of Larkhall Park, East African Muslim Association, Eritrean Muslim Community Association, Lambeth Early Years Partnership.</i>	<i>Stall and survey at community Event, Survey in the park on 3 occasions., Interviews.</i>
3. Loughborough Road	<i>Disability Advice Service LETMO</i>	<i>Dasl Lambeth Focus Group.</i>
4. Loughborough Park	<i>Dwaynamics group, Equavolley Friends of Loughborough Park</i>	<i>Women's meeting, stall and activities at open day, Interviews</i>
7. St Matthew's Estate	<i>SMETRA Steering group, St Matthews Project, UK Latin,</i>	<i>Steering Group, Interviews, Playscheme Focus group</i>
6. Tulse Hill Estate	<i>St Matthews Project, Miss Hazel, 's group of elders, Tulse hill TRA, Wellbeing Bus, Tree Shepherd, REO Rory,</i>	<i>Stall at Open Day, Group discussion with elders', women, children's discussions at playscheme. Interviews TRA meeting.</i>
8. Deronda Estate,	<i>Lavendar Hope, CIC Asylum Seekers' Group</i>	<i>Residents' meeting, Stall and sample sports at Community event, Sports workshops with asylum seekers and after school.</i>
9. Vale Street	<i>Community Shop, Rathbone Society, Emmanuel Church Youth Club, Black Thrive, ward councillors.</i>	<i>Stall and survey at Community Shop BBQ, Sports, survey and stall after school for residents, Stall and discussion in Youth Club, focus group for adults with learning disabilities,</i>
10. Holderness Estate	<i>Sloth CIC.</i>	<i>Door to door survey Interview.</i>
11. Streatham Vale Park Pitches	<i>Streatham Youth and Community Trust</i>	<i>Young people's survey and focus groups (SYCT delivered direct).</i>
General and Consortium	<i>LEAP, Age Friendly Lambeth, Basketball England, Dr Elizabeth, Lambeth Public Health, Fulham FC, SMP, Black Prince Trust, Resident Engagement, Child Friendly Lambeth,</i>	<i>Stall at Age Friendly Lambeth event Interviews.</i>

Thanks also to Basketball England, ACE Cricket, Fulham FC, St Matthews Project, who delivered the sports workshops and helped with organisation.

The next page displays numbers engaged across activities and location.

Locality	Local Co-ordinators	Interviews	Meetings	Events Adults	Events Child	Child Focus Groups	Adult Focus Groups	Face to Face Survey	Online Survey	Total
1. Briant Estate	3			30	30			3	6	72
2. Cotton Gardens									9	9
3. Larkhall Park	6	9	8	20	5			25	43	116
3. Loughborough Est	2							8	5	15
4. Loughborough Park	6	4	4	40	15		20	27	7	123
7. St Matthew's Estate	5	2				12		13	6	38
6. Tulse Hill Estate	3	2	20	15	5	20	9	16	3	93
8. Deronda Estate,	2		6	40	15	5	15	14	13	110
9. Vale Street	8	4		75	60	29	11	46	41	274
10. Holderness Estate	2	1						19	3	25
11. Streatham Vale	1					60		60	3	124
General and Consortium	4	19	37	40						100
TOTAL	42	41	75	260	130	126	63	223	139	1099



Engagement in process at, from top left; Loughborough Park, Vale Street, Tulse Hill Estate, and the Community Shop.

Observations across demographic groups

Practice and taster sessions for pitch sports present a unique opportunity to bring groups together, create a high level of success and reward, and encourage fitness. We witnessed time and again the powerful moment for someone who has not held a basketball (or not held one for a long time), who then pitches their first hoop, the joy that surges results in arms in the air, a shout of success, a happy dance, or a victory dash.

This small success contributes to release of dopamine – the success hormone. For beginners and inactive people, it is important to continue to encourage these successes to provide internal reward to participants.

However, engaging inactive people into this in the first place does require leadership and sensitive coaching, to focus on reward, and away from any sense of punishment or reprimand for those who are not doing so well.

Women and girls

A strong trend shown among women is business. This is even more so when the woman is a mother whose time may be taken with her children. This is compounded for parents on a low income, and particularly if the woman is a single parent.

The women we spoke to and received information from are concerned for their own fitness, however many find it hard to invest time or money which is prioritised for their children and family. Women are very interested in low-cost activities that will include childcare and allow them to socialise with other mothers. There is a need for well facilitated parent and child sports and fitness, aimed at those with young children.

'It's all so expensive, and you always put your children and their activities first, so there is nothing left for you.'

There is a need for women-only activities. Women also seem to step back when they perceive they might be taking a place away from a child.

The majority of women and girls we spoke to are interested in fitness classes, Zumba, dancercise. Many women are also provisionally interested in sampling pitch sports if these are with a peer group on the same level. In this instance they might be interested in tasters of a variety of pitch sports – they tended to tick all the boxes for different sports.



Many women show tentative interest, but not confidence. This includes those who used to be active. These women are easily put off if not supported by friends and community – and easily encouraged if they are.

Within the surveys, a scattering of women asked for facilities to practise netball. This was across most of the locations and did not dominate anywhere. Some of the women we spoke to smiled fondly to remember their background in netball or basketball many years before.

There's nowhere to practice shooting for netball - only basketball which is always dominated by men and very intimidating

We have seen how women, and many inactive people benefit from strong peer-based leadership to get them through the door of a pitch and into exercise. This is a recurring theme in our consultation and in the sports sessions, we were involved in running and witnessing. This was particularly evident where we worked with the community of women and girls of colour at Dwaynatics, witnessing the importance of Pastor Lorraine's leadership to bring women onto the pitch, and the power of sport to bring them together as a community and move all participants onto a mutual high.

Parent and toddlers

Georgia-May Campbell from Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) kindly discussed their experience, where relevant to Playzones.

Parents regularly tell LEAP they would like to get proper exercise and that while very busy, they are becoming unfit since having a baby. Parents recognise that gyms with a creche are incredibly expensive.

LEAP has been leading parent and child exercise of the kind requested through the Get Active consultation. Their core area is Brixton, Stockwell and Loughborough Junction.

Within this area LEAP has been running

- Zumba with babies, either held on the floor or in a sling.
- Baby yoga
- Black mum's Pilates – aerobic Pilates
- Breast feeding walking groups

There may be an opportunity for Playzones in future to provide more parent and baby activities. Noting however that most outdoor pitches are an austere environment with little shade, and no rain shelter. It seems that the most effective way to provide these classes would be to host them in a nearby community centre and hold them on the pitch when weather is temperate, and people are keen to be outdoors.

'it's a bit hit and miss on an outdoor pitch, as parents won't be keen to have their babies out in weather that is too hot or too cold.'

We discussed floor surfacing for babies, and noted that for current classes, Georgia tends to put lots of yoga mats out to cover floors that may be dirty anyway. So hard floor surface is not necessarily an issue.

However, any kind of 3G rubber crumb would be very inappropriate for babies.

LEAP is a ten-year project funded by a National Lottery Fund grant, unfortunately all LEAP services will finish when this grant runs out at the end of next year. This may mean that there are likely to be no services of this nature for parents of young children, and that these parents will be at high risk of inactivity.

Older people

Inactive older people were usually initially tentative about joining an exercise group, citing their various health issues and that they are not as fit as they once were.

Older men are often visibly aware that they used to play football or basketball, or run, but believe they can do so no longer due to health problems, and focus on this first, needing some discussion to consider alternatives. However, with discussion, many realise that there are potential opportunities to return to the camaraderie of team sports through walking sports, chair exercise, or other coached interventions, and seem refreshed by the conversation.

We have provisionally located community leaders who have offered to help motivate older men and women in their community to join in walking football or other walking sports. This local leadership is key to help locate and motivate older people to join in, even where a coach is provided for individual guidance.

Lambeth's population of 55–64-year-olds is growing, having increased to around 50,000 people, at the 2021 census. This is a key group to maintain activity and one that is easily set back by illness, and ageing joints and muscles. We also have small increases in over 65s with around 20,000 people of this age.

GP Referrals: Dr Liz Williams from Clapham Park Group was asked to comment on the need for activities for doctors to refer general patients to. She talked about the need for support to help people to get active, and the way this can help combat various health problems.

Yes, absolutely we need it. We desperately need starter stuff at a lower level – tiny groups, with a buddy. Someone to actually pick you up from your door and take you there. Someone to guide you and go with you. The exercise is only as good as the quality of the companion.

The thing is that keeping active is the most important thing. And people who need to change are least likely to do it. People who smoke or who have another problem, just doing a little bit more exercise gets you empowered, gets your endorphins moving, gives you success, and then it's easier to deal with other changes in life.'

People with disabilities:

We worked with Disability Advice Service Lambeth (DASL) to organise a focus group for people with disabilities and their carers to try pitch sports, and to discuss the potential of these to help build activity levels among this demographic. Husnara Zaman of DASL managed the development, liaising with Loughborough Estate RMO to book and set up a community space, and managing bookings for participants.

Existing activity levels in the group varied: One of the parent carers present, used the gym, while another found it too expensive. One considered himself limited by a visual impairment, so exercised through walking only. One walks, and often takes on long walks up to 3 hours. One does weightlifting. Several of the men talked about how they used to be more active 'I used to have a kickabout with my friend's sometimes'. All would like more fitness activity and recognised it as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Activities: All participants said they enjoyed the range of activities. There was discussion over how enjoyable it is to be outdoors, when the weather is good.

- *'My legs definitely feel it, feels good.'*
- *'I had a great time; how different it is to be outdoors.'*

- *'It was good to be outside, a mood lifter, good to participate.'*
- *'It can be distracting when you're inside, the colours and smell, words, can be overwhelming.'*
- *'I prefer similar activities indoors and outdoors; in case it rains. I wouldn't be able to enjoy it outdoors in the rain. You can do winter indoors, and summer outdoors.'*
- *'The wind was fine, I like it, it makes you feel cool and calm.'*

Several participants had played team sports before and recognised the value of this. They suggested it would be good to have a workshop with more people towards playing team sports:

'If they can invite more people and have friendly competition it would be interesting.'

Location: The Loughborough Estate pitch location was convenient for the DASL offices, and for other groups located in the same premises. It was also very central for Lambeth-wide sports events. However, it is not prominent and the Loughborough Centre itself was hard to find for those not familiar with the area.

'We need locations throughout the borough for easy access, for people not to have to travel the length of the borough for a 2-hour session.'

We also discussed how desirable it would be to have transport or a buddy system.

'I've had a motivation drop with Parkinson's it would be good to have someone knock on the door and get me to come.'

Thanks to Husnara Zaman from dasl and Debbie from disability sports.



People with learning disabilities

Working with Rathbone Society we ran a discussion and sports session for people with learning disabilities.

Seven people joined the workshop while three chose to sit to the side on chairs we carried across, demonstrating the need for seating in situ for most groups with physical vulnerabilities.

There was quite a variety in fitness and strength, so we started with throwing and bouncing the basketball and getting to know each other. It was clear that one or two people were quite fit and enjoyed throwing the ball hard, others had vulnerabilities, so we were careful to arrange the circle to avoid any over enthusiastic throws at the wrong people.

The group moved on to shooting hoops and bouncing to shoot. Some of the individuals were exultant when they achieved their first hoop, cheering and running with excitement. Other people did not get this far but got better with instruction from Yvonne.

Group leader Yvonne was fired up by the potential of the space and made many suggestions of how they could use the pitch. *'We could do cricket, basketball, and other sports. If we had a store on site, we could get tricycles, or even roller skates, with the right protection.'*

Some individuals discussed how they liked to keep themselves fit, and enjoyed these kinds of sports, but were limited in opportunities to carry this out.

Both Andrew and Yvonne talked about the importance of exercise for this demographic:

'Adults with learning disabilities are a known group in need of more exercise and disadvantaged in sport on a national basis.' Andrew Preston

'The residential centre had a basketball hoop for a while and that was really good. While they can't use it, we encourage them to do board games like Monopoly, just to get them to get up and go from one place for another and to give them an interest.' Yvonne Hall.

This workshop helped demonstrate the potential of pitches to provide activities for adults with learning disabilities during the daytime when not in demand from children. The two key improvements needed are seating and equipment storage.



Comments from cultural group representatives

Eritrean Muslim Community Association (Norden Jahar): would like more football facilities in order to run children's groups at different ages, men's groups, and older men's groups, not being keen to play on the hard surface court. However, the girl's groups do sometimes use the hard surface court for basketball. Focus: Larkhall Park.

East African Muslim Association (Hussein Hussein): would like more football facilities to run home games, not keen to play football on the hard surfaced basketball court. Focus: Larkhall Park

UK Latin Ltd (Andreas and Wendy Innocente) Comments made on the need for football and sports, and the power of these, to help keep young people away from crime and to bring them out from the insulation of computer games. Focus: St Matthews Estate

Black Thrive, (Sadiki Harris): Spoke on the need for good equipment at a local level. *'In Clapham Common you have a superior example of basketball equipment made available to the public. However, there is a reluctance for some young people to move around the borough for enjoyment purposes. If you live in North Lambeth it's not likely you'd travel to South Lambeth to enjoy the basketball court. So, the idea with Kennington was to bring some of that superior basketball equipment to a space closer to the north.*

Ultimately, we believe in exercise and healthy living to help improve wellbeing. So, it makes sense to have good equipment in as many places as possible to help encourage that.'

South American Ecuavoley community (Wilson and Lila, Cristian) Ecuavoley is the national sport of Ecuador, largely, but not exclusively, played by older men who come together for long matches playing teams of three. Participants are from a range of Latin American backgrounds, many are working in London away from their families, and join in these matches in order to engage with their community. Food and drink is usually cooked and provided separately.

The coach provides and sets up the nets and publicises the event via WhatsApp. In winter, the group meets in Brixton Recreation Centre instead. There is a burgeoning demand for Ecuavoley with many informally organised groups. Lambeth and Southwark hold the largest density of Latin Americans in the UK. Focus: Larkhall Park and Loughborough Park.

Ecuavoley is shown in play at Loughbrough Park below.



Barriers to Activity

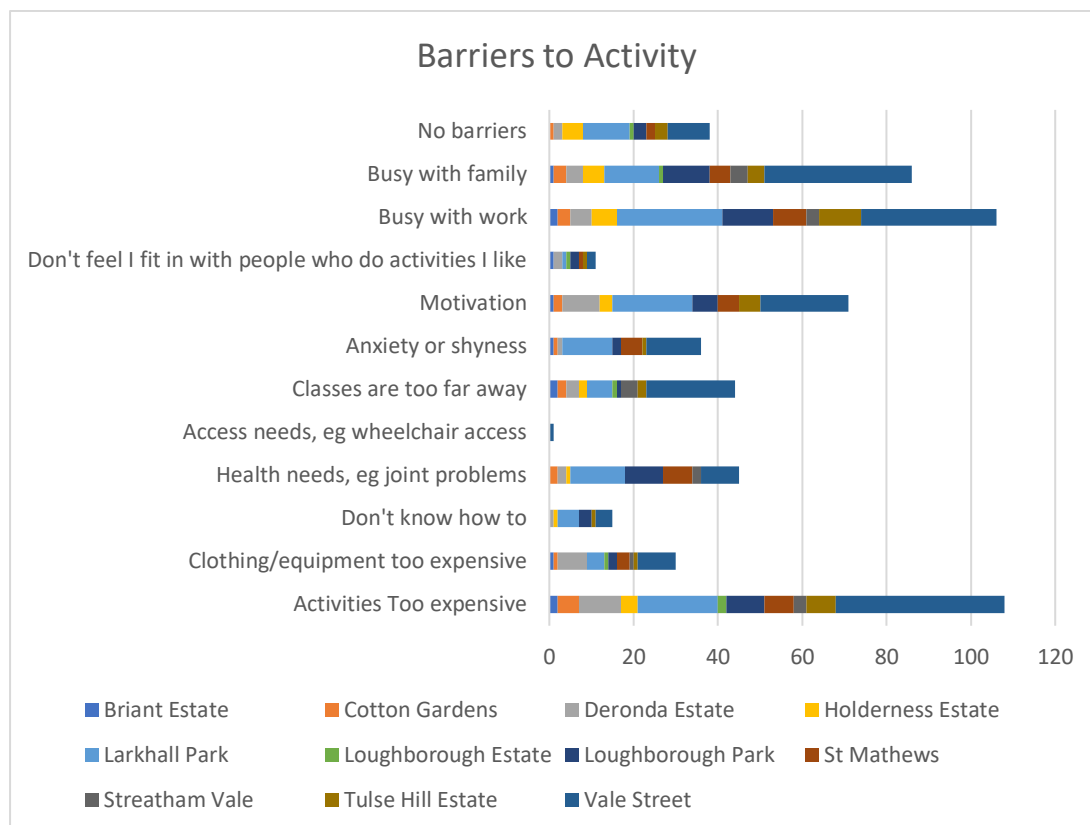
We set out to discuss barriers to activity in person and through the survey, talking to people who are inactive for different reasons. Many of these barriers are discussed in the section above around specific groups.

Below is presented correlated results from our survey of 362 people. Around two thirds of this survey was carried out in person to ensure a wide demographic, for many people this was one of the hardest questions.

Only 8.9% of people who filled in the survey had no barriers to activity.

As can be seen, the top limitations for people who helped with the survey are:

- Busy with work (25%)
- Activities are too expensive (24%)
- Busy with family (20%)
- Motivation (15%)
- Health needs (11%)
- Classes too far away (9.67%)



Evaluating the Pitches as Playzones

Place	Potential for Activation with inactive groups	Need for improvement	Playzone Strategy
Briant Estate	<i>Briant Estate TRA, Women, children</i>	<i>Refurbishment Football and Basketball</i>	<i>Phase One Submission Spring 2024</i>
Deronda Estate	<i>Lavender Hope, Groups inc Asylum Seekers</i>	<i>Options appraisal, Refurbishment Football and Netball</i>	<i>Phase One Submission Spring 2024</i>
Holderness Estate	<i>Possibility of walking football</i>	<i>Very little need</i>	
Larkhall Park	<i>Older people's activities, Ecuvoley, women's activities.</i>	<i>Refurbishment. Basketball and Ecuvoley</i>	<i>Phase One Submission Spring 2024</i>
Loughborough Park	<i>Womens groups, Ecuvoley, children's groups</i>	<i>Pressing need for refurbishment, realignment of fences, signage, second gate. Football, Basketball, Ecuvoley fittings</i>	<i>Phase One Submission Spring 2024</i>
Loughborough Road	<i>Good location for dasl and Brixton based groups, however, needs more input from RMO</i>	<i>Improvement needed. Housing and RMO could work together on this. Needs partnership work.</i>	
St Matthew's Estate	<i>Playschemes, walking sports, women's groups, children's coached sessions</i>	<i>Enlargement and complete rebuild for basketball with football.</i>	<i>Phase One Submission Spring 2024</i>
Tulse Hill Estate	<i>Women's exercise, Tai Chi, Older people's coached sessions, playschemes</i>	<i>Pitch is in very good condition (3G), and well maintained. Room to improve exterior.</i>	
Streatham Vale	<i>High demand for more children's activities and space to play football and other team sports locally.</i>	<i>SYCT and Lambeth Parks and Sports are working together to find a suitable location.</i>	
Vale Street	<i>Adults with learning disabilities. Older people. Facilitated young people's sessions. Girl's sessions. Coach training.</i>	<i>Pressing need for complete rebuild. Opportunity to extend and need for additional space for informal seating, overflow and toddler play, and equipment storage for visiting groups. Basketball and Football</i>	<i>Phase One Submission Spring 2024</i>

There is also a need for a centrally located pitch, such as Kennington, to provide for wider specialist audiences from outside local areas.

The Pitches:

Following the summer of engagement, we have highlighted six pitches to move forwards to the feasibility stage as potential Playzones, shown on the previous page. These six fitted the full brief including community support, clear need for activation, and an opportunity to make a significant improvement to the pitch.

The summary of activities and rationale behind each of the six is below. There is a fuller report available for each one including the detailed evidence base behind the commentary below.

Briant Estate Pitch

Briant Estate pitch is a large tarmac pitch laid out for basketball and football in a Lambeth Council estate between North Lambeth and Vauxhall. The pitch is 30 metre X 14 metre and has a low wall for perch seating around the edge. Briant Estate is a red brick estate of 134 flats.

The pitch is enclosed in the estate and is considered a safe place for older children to play without direct supervision from adults. However, it is on the edge of the estate with easy separate access from the street, it is also one of the few pitches in the locality that is open and free to play. We were told that as a result it is often used by older young people from the surrounding area to the exclusion of children from the Estate.

During summer 2023 we engaged with around 70 people to assess improvements needed to the pitch. The vast majority of these were engaged in person during a family event, with coaches, food and music.

Everyone was very much in favour of improvements to the pitch, lighting, and control over access. However, there was very little specifics, just general enthusiasm for the sample pictures shown.

People were enthusiastic about activation classes, including children's football, children's netball, and women's fitness classes. We also discussed supported classes for people with health conditions including diabetes and having fold down spectator seating.

Indices of Deprivation 2019 for the immediate area show it is in the top 30% for child poverty and top 40% for poverty among older people, however, this covers a wider area than just the estate.



Deronda Estate Pitch



Deronda Estate pitch is a tarmac multi-use games area, in a Council housing estate in Tulse hill. It is set slightly away from the buildings, although overlooked by one low rise block across Abbess Close. The pitch is slightly sunken due to the layout.

Residents of Deronda Estate are passionate about the need to improve the pitch, and the importance of this resource to their community.

During the summer 2023 we worked with local Community Centre Lavender Hope and sought feedback from residents and local people about the pitch and its activation, **we were very grateful to receive opinions and ideas from 111 people**. We ran: a residents' meeting, a basketball workshop for asylum seekers, taster sports sessions in basketball, football, and cricket, discussions with children who use the pitch, and a survey delivered door to door and online.

The run-down concrete MUGA on the estate is **well used by local boys, particularly after school and in the holidays**. The young users we met were entirely young men of colour, from a variety of backgrounds. When not playing on the pitch, they tend to stay indoors and play computer games. These young men have given us a list of **pressing problems and improvements** required for simple functionality.

Many of the young men are footballers and they would like to see 3G installed so they can play football more safely.

The small Estate is **on the edge of an area of deprivation and high need**. The Estate has 172 properties, in low rise flats and small houses. It is close to Tulse Hill train station. The Estate does not have a functioning tenants association, or social media, and residents noted a **need for a better communication mechanism** to ensure opportunities are shared.

The pitch is adjacent to the Lavender Hope Community Centre, run by a small community interest company lead by Lyndsey. **Continued participation of the Centre** in future programming around inactivity would be vital for the success of this.

We have interest from the user groups at Lavender Hope here for more sporting activity and have demonstrated the effectiveness of this through **participation at the asylum seekers group here**. Many of the asylum seekers are currently unable to participate in 'their' sport, and are losing out on the mental and physical health benefits.

There is opportunity to provide a small activation programme for local residents and groups on the pitch outside, **in partnership with Lavender Hope**. We have trialled sports here with some success with the asylum seekers group, and with local young people. The individuals who attended would normally spend their time in their hotel room in Streatham. **Several of these asylum seekers would very much like to return to 'their' sports**, including netball, football, cricket, notwithstanding their other pressing concerns such as funding a lawyer or signing up for medical support.



While some local residents were initially keen to keep the pitch for the estate, the overall impression is that they would be prepared to work with Lavender Hope to host activities, if these demonstrably contributed back to running the pitch or other residents' benefits. Any **additional activities hosted here must be outside of the core times for children** to use it. Moreover, residents continued to be very suspicious of a booking system on the basis that this was not necessary and would make it hard for their young people.

We have interest in some **women's fitness and women and baby exercise from the surveys**, and the women asylum seekers.

Jermaine, a young man who is resident on the estate carries out informal coaching and is **keen to develop this coaching programme for young people**. Jermaine and his friend feel that coaching opportunities should start with local people, so there may be opportunities to offer a training programme for coaches. There is also possibilities to link up with Fulham FC who provide coaching in Elm Green School nearby.

Boys and young men who already use the pitch welcomed the different coaches brought in for the event, and **were happy to try basketball, cricket and football**. They all expressed a strong preference for football.

The inhabitants of Deronda Estate are **likely to be in the highest 10%** in the country for income deprivation affecting children, however, this is not immediately verifiable, due to the way the ONS boundaries bisect the estate and include wealthier areas. The two adjacent secondary schools have 48% and 52% of pupils eligible for free school meals. Observations and feedback suggest a highly mixed community with many speakers of other languages, and different cultures present as well as looked after children.



We are very grateful to Lyndsey, Jade, and all at Lavender Hope and the residents of Deronda Estate for their help in this engagement.

During the consultation this list of improvements were highlighted:

- The priority sport is football
- Second priority is either basketball or netball
- Floodlights
- Seating nearby
- The metal supports for the existing fence need either replacing or covering to avoid scratching at players legs and giving a rebound on the ball.
- There is possibly an opportunity to rework the layout and make the play area slightly larger
- Resurfacing
- Drainage
- Replace gate, and install second gate
- Strong resistance to booking system
- Maintain disability inclusion
- Potentially an extra hoop outside the community centre



Larkhall Park Pitch

The Larkhall Partnership Board, Friends of Larkhall Park and other partners worked with us to explore pitch opportunities around the park. The park has a basketball/MUGA at (3) below, which is open access and the focus of discussions. Next to it is a 5 a side 3G football which is used by booked groups and closed on a combination lock.



Larkhall Park is heavily used by many of our target communities, and already hosts some sports for key groups. This is a densely packed area, with a high need for sports and fitness.

During the engagement period we talked to and collected information from 116 people. We couldn't have done this without support from the Friends of Larkhall Park and the

Partnership Board, and we are very grateful for this, particularly from Nickie, Gareth and Ben as well as Alex the Park Development Officer. With their help, we were able to: attend the Partnership Board, and a Steering Group Meeting, provide engagement during the Larkhall Park Sports Day Event, and run a series of face-to-face survey interviews in the park, targeting a cross section of park users. We also interviewed key local organisations including Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP), Eritrean Muslim Community Association (EMCA), East African Association/Streatham Football Club, and received timely feedback from the Ecuadorian community.

There is a **great demand for football**, and this leads the results at 38%, with men and women both asking for football activities. 33% asked for basketball, and 26% for netball.

However, the leaders who are interested in providing football for groups are not keen on the hard-surfaced basketball court for this.

Football is currently heavily focused around the overbooked five a side 3g pitch. Requests have been made from the area's **Muslim leaders for space for children's league level games and for additional groups for older men.**

There is great demand for football in Larkhall Park and very little space in the neighbourhood. There is some **pressure for creation of a formal 11 a side grass pitch** on the central grass area, with floodlights, for league level games. This need is clearly something which requires feasibility investigation, and wider consultation before any plan is put forwards. This is not part of this consultation which focuses on the MUGA.

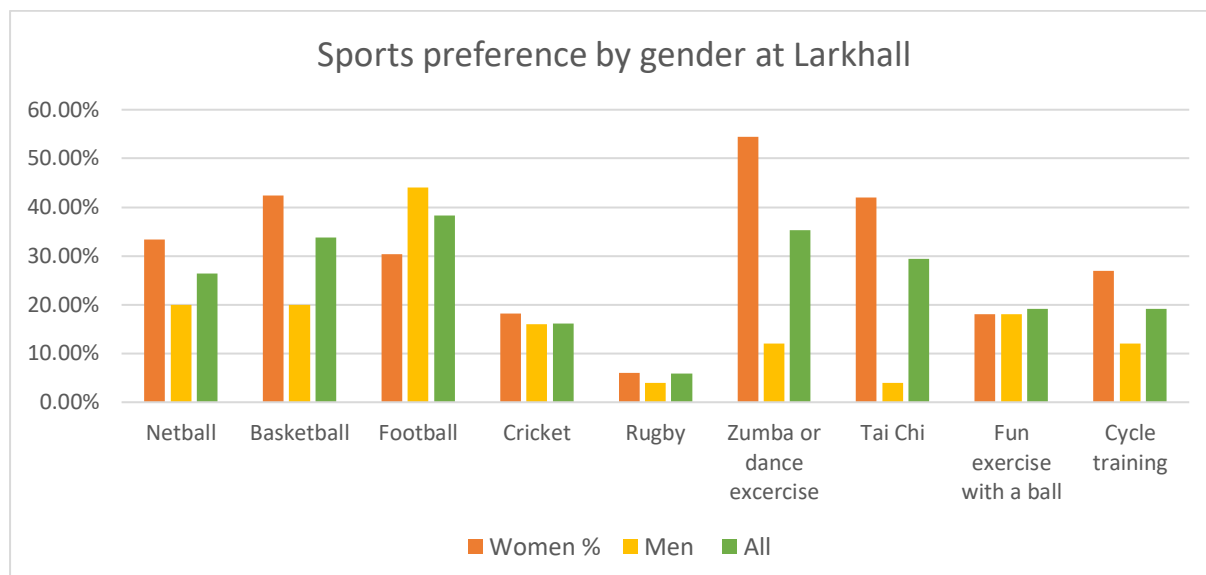
The MUGA is currently used for basketball practice, and Ecuavolley matches as well as informally organised coached aerobics.

Immediate neighbours are concerned about late night usage and would like the pitch closed at night.

There was wide interest in **an activation programme in the pitch**, or across the park, and some of this already takes place.

There is some interest in walking football and exercise for older people, and those recovering from disabilities.

There was a lot **of interest in organised activities specifically for women**, with 46.7% of participants requesting this. In terms of activity: 54% of women requested Zumba or dancercise, **42% of women respondents asked for basketball, 32% for netball, and 30% for football**. The graph below shows the preference by gender for each activity.



Larkhall has potential to **enter the MUGA into the Playzones programme**, possibly adding the 3G football pitch to the same booking system and act as an exemplar to the other projects.

The current court area including 3 metre run off is sized 34 metres X 16 metres, giving an opportunity to split into **two smaller areas** each with their own gate.

The **full list of improvements** to discuss includes:

- Improved surfaces
- Higher fences
- Floodlights
- Basketball layout
- Additional netball hoops for practice.
- Consideration needs to be given to space for Ecuvooley,
- Booking system with the pitch closed after 9pm
- Narrow, or fold-down seating,
- Welcome sign and information

There was much interest in football primarily applied to the larger grass area. In discussion, those who are interested in providing football seek high quality and are not keen on the hard-surfaced MUGA for this.

Loughborough Park Pitch



Loughborough Park Pitch is a hard court laid out for basketball and football, in Loughborough Park, near to the Moorlands Estate in Brixton. The pitch shown above, is adjacent to the Dwaynastics building which provides community services such as food, toddlers groups, and other gatherings to the local community.

We were extremely grateful to those who spent time in helping with our consultation, particularly **Pastor Lorraine and Zaynah from Dwaynastics, Jon from the Friends of Loughborough Park**, and **Wilson and Lilia from the south American group Ecuavoley** who play Ecuadorian volleyball here regularly.

With the help of these partners, we **received consultation information on the pitch and activities here from 123 people**, the vast majority in person. We held two open consultations in the park, supported a Dwaynastics women's focus group in basketball, and held a detailed interview with the Ecuavoley leaders.

At Loughborough Park more than anywhere we demonstrated the **importance of active leadership** to get new audiences active within the pitch. Thanks to the leadership of Pastor Lorraine, we ran a taster **women's group in basketball**. The women and girls were keen to join in, and to generously share the pleasure, while bonding with the other women of all ages present. Many of them had previously played basketball in their youth. However, it was Lorraine's encouragement, supported by two or three of the others, that helped everyone to step forwards as a group, and encouraged those hanging back to come and join in too.

'It was beautiful that we as women and girls from the black community used the pitch and had fun doing sport. This had not happened before. As a Leader, I saw so much need for our females and an eagerness to blossom, be listened to, and to be utilised. I would love to keep the sport side of things going.' Pastor Lorraine Jones

We were grateful for interviews with Wilson and Liliias and others **in the Ecuavoley group**. This group of up to 40 South American people meets here at Loughborough Park. Wilson's team erect their own nets and sends notification of dates on their WhatsApp group, to play their national sport. Most of the players are men aged 40-60, many are in the UK to work, alone, and this gives them an important social opportunity to come together. Occasionally women play too. There is a small group of women and children who support the group with food, this could be the basis of a women's fitness session, however it would probably need recruitment from outside the immediate south American community to build the success of this as there are only a small number of women interested.

We held consultations with local people face to face in the park during the Dwaynatics Open Day, and independently.

Children sometimes feel intimidated to access the pitch when large numbers of adults are using it.

34 people filled in our survey showing strong support among stakeholders for floodlights, a booking system to manage access and ensure priorities, and activities for children.

At the next stage, we hope to bring **stakeholders together** into a meeting to agree proposals

The pitch at Loughborough Park is very run down and has been earmarked for improvements for some time. These are priority improvements noted through the process:

- Floodlights
- New fencing: the existing is patched up and holey creating a run-down impression of the pitch. It is tall enough at the back to protect residents' gardens.
- Booking system with keypad entry
- Seating: currently seats face away from the pitch, perhaps a picnic table on the grass area. There is a low wall below the fences, which is currently outside the court. New fencing could bring this wall inside enabling use as informal spectator seating.
- Improved floor surfacing and gate at access to pitch – to include people with disabilities
- Reconfigured Park entrance so that pitch may be approached independently after closing hours.
- Resurfacing and marking
- Some different opinions about whether to turn the large space into two courts – marked for football and basketball, with Ecuavoley. OR to maintain one large space and add a strip at the front for practice and children's use when the main court is in play. There was also interest in netball posts.
- Possibly some space could be gained by moving the hoops closer to fences
- Football nets
- Table tennis outside
- More welcoming, brighter attractive colours
- Integrate Ecuavoley into the design to allow for safe erection of nets
- Wider gate, second gate
- Welcome sign

Some comments were made about desire for drinking water and toilets, when not in the Dwaynatics building.

St Matthew's Estate Pitch

St Matthews Estate pitch is our smallest pitch, laid out for basketball and football however it is only really large enough for three a side football. It lies alongside the public lands of Rush Common making it very accessible to the public.

St Matthews Estate Tenants Association (SMETRA) works hard to support initiatives for residents on and around the estate, in the Community Hall, and on adjoining Rush Common. We worked with SMETRA to set up a Steering Group for the project including local residents: Jean (Chair), Maureen, Sybil (Treasurer), Anton, and Lee Dema of SMP. The group was enthusiastic about the project and keen to engage more inactive people from the target groups. They were concerned about the proposed booking system and how this might limit usage in this well used pitch. It was in discussion with this group that we identified the unused pavement space around the pitch, which could be used for enlargement.



SMETRA works with the St Matthews Project (SMP) runs holiday activities for children at the St Matthews Hall, and a regular older people's exercise group in the Hall. We were grateful for an interview with Lee Dema from SMP, who described his work locally. Lee does not currently provide football on the St Matthews Estate pitch because it is only big enough for three a side. SMP would like more girls' leagues in the area, having only one at Roupell Park, which is highly successful, and provides a model for what is possible in other locations. There is rich potential for local young men trained as coaches through SMP to run more activities on the Estate.

SMETRA works with UK Latin Ltd, to provide a playscheme for children on and around the Estate. We ran a focus group with the children attending to explore ideas around the pitch. Children were interested in more sports, and particularly fun general ball activities and games like Hot potato, as well as football, and basketball. We interviewed Wendy and Andreas from UK Latin Ltd, who talked about their work using sports to engage children and young people.



SMETRA also works with Anton of Justcoolradio who is a SMP trained coach. Anton is developing his own company around coaching young people on the estate. *I coach young people on the pitch on the weekdays with football and media school via eyes of many cic and justcoolradio*



The pitch is very small, but surrounded by pavement which observations show is not used. There is a huge opportunity to make the pitch bigger using this pavement. This would amount to an additional 30 feet of length – as shown in yellow.

The pitch is very well used by young men, largely playing basketball.

There was much discussion throughout the consultation of the importance of sport to help boys and young men channel their energies and stay active. Future development of this pitch as a Playzone would need to ensure capacity to continue to engage these casual users.

'Most of them like to spend time doing video games when we are not there, and doing other things they shouldn't, if you know what I mean.' Wendy UK Latin Ltd.

Our consultation identified interest from those who don't currently use the pitch but live nearby, in a wide range of coached activities, with women participants most interested in netball, and men in football.



Close to central Brixton, St Mathews Estate is a Lambeth Estate of 368 properties, largely in flats, with a few small houses. There is a selection of housing association properties, and Manor Court sheltered housing in the same triangle, sharing the playgrounds and sports pitches, making around 500 properties in total. While well connected, the triangle of the Estate is in a Lower Super Output Area that is among the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, with particularly poor scores for poverty among older people, and crime.

Pitch improvements proposed

- Make the pitch bigger onto existing pavement – gain of 30 feet.
- Move the cycle parking elsewhere to fit this in
- Turn the pitch to fit two in – or possibly a pitch and a slender shooting hoops/goals area
- Much resistance to a booking system, this might work if two pitches were provided so as not to take away spontaneous use.
- Overhead nets to contain the ball.
- Floodlights are already present, might need to be moved if pitch is expanded.
- Layout is likely to be basketball and football, however, we may need some netball provision locally too.

Vale Street Pitch

Vale Street Pitch is a too small, run-down hard surfaced pitch on the borders of West Norwood and Gypsy Hill.

There is no park in the area, so this **pitch is intensively used by children, and young people** from the local community, many of whom are passionate about this space.

There is a **strong local drive for change** and need for improvements.

Through the engagement process we were very grateful for the **support of local champions**, and to people of many backgrounds and ages who made input into our consultation. People were kind, understanding, willing to go the extra mile to bring in their contacts and very very keen to get the pitch made better. We formed a Steering Group of key partners to guide this process and will plan a public meeting at the feasibility stage.

During the engagement stage **we spoke to 233 people and** received an additional 41 surveys online making 274 engagement records altogether. Engagement methods included face to face surveys and discussion boards at two events, sample coached activities organised by Basketball England with the ACE programme and focus groups with adults with learning disabilities and young people. This is the largest coverage for any of our prospect pitches and the coverage is testament to all the help from local people and group leaders, for which we are immensely grateful.

The pitch is very close to the Vincennes Estate and the local community includes around 600 council properties, all the houses are small, with small gardens, some divided into maisonettes. The area has intense pockets of deprivation, particularly affecting children and older people. There is high need for **open space for play and sports**.



The pitch is strongly supported by local community organisations, particularly the Community Shop, Emmanuel Church and Youth Club, and Rathbone Society, giving a range of excellent opportunities to work with people in the target inactive groups through an activation programme.

The Community Shop provides an affordable shop, café and community services to people on a low income, including many single parents, speakers of other languages, and people with disabilities. The Shop would like to host **sports activities for people on low incomes during its opening hours**, and users are keen to participate, particularly in parents' activities with childcare provided, affordable children's holiday activities that function as

childcare, and walking football or other sessions for people with mobility issues. The pitch would benefit from a door directly into the Shop.

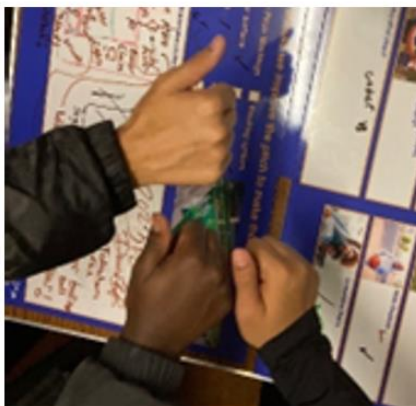
The Community Shop has also offered to function as service facilities during its opening hours – providing **drinking water and toilets on request** and welcoming the interface this provides with the local community. The Shop closes at 4.30pm.

Emmanuel Church supports a weekly youth club which is well known as a meeting place for young people, particularly those that live in flats. The youth club helps provide an interface with young people locally and would be interested in **hosting more structured sports activities**, with additional **provision for girls**. The Church would also provide a **walking football session**, making good use of its excellent connections to older people locally.

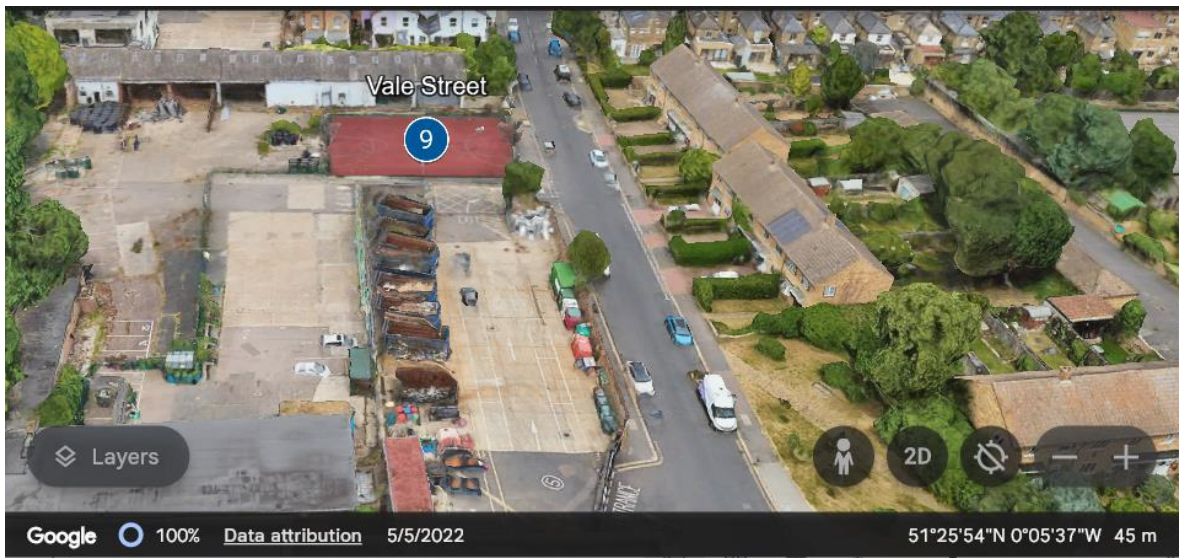
Lambeth Elfrida Rathbone Society (Rathbone) is an important pillar of the local voluntary sector, based around West Norwood. They have offered an interface with other groups and potentially further use by their young people's group. Rathbone provide outreach support to 80 adults with learning disabilities. Based on our partnership focus group, Rathbone would like to build a programme of **sports visits for adults with learning disabilities** to the pitch, utilising links with the Community Shop for meals and hospitality. This would be a stronger proposition if an **equipment store** is provided locally. This group is shown to have high levels of inactivity and barriers to participation.

The Steering Group also includes local residents; ward Councillor Judith Cavanagh, Bianca from Triton Community Garden and Sadiki Harris from Black Thrive, as well as Helen and Ruth from Lambeth Council. All of whom were immensely helpful. Lee Dunford provided additional help with surveys.

The pitch is **heavily used after school by local children, young people, and families**, with many multi-age informal sports sessions, as well as bike training, roller skates and hanging out with friends. There is desperate need **to make the pitch larger**, and to **provide floodlights** for continued after school use to alleviate pressure on families in small accommodation.



Vale Street Pitch is **adjacent to a recycling centre, and surrounded by waste storage** areas, which are currently underused and unattractive. These create issues when balls are lost, look unsightly, particularly when litter is trapped and potentially are dangerous if children



break in to retrieve lost balls. For this reason, **new stronger fences and tension netting is imperative.**

The pitch would also benefit from **back boards** or wall to obscure the unsightly areas and trapped litter.

The pitch is currently just under regulation size for basketball, we are in discussion with waste colleagues to gain an additional 10 metres of space, **allowing creation of a regulation basketball size pitch**, and an **additional 5 m strip for casual use**, spectators, equipment boxes etc. **A slightly separate pitch would make multiple users more effective.**

We are in discussion with Lambeth colleagues over whether this extension is best achieved to the north or west. A northern extension would involve relocating the pitch slightly.

However, during the engagement process, many respondents were keen that more of the existing waste space were added, seeing this as unused, redundant and a blight on the area.

There is **concern about the proposal for a booking system**, understandable when the pitch has such a thriving existing use and is a known meeting place for local people. Such a system would hence have much more likelihood of success if it was focused on the hours outside the young people's main use (3.30pm-6.30pm and school holidays) and if the pitch were reformatted to include at least an additional space at the front.

In terms of sports for the pitch layout, the strongest preference was for basketball, followed by football, then netball. In addition, many women and some men expressed interest in keep fit or dance-based exercises for themselves, as well as chairfit exercise for older people.

Engagement results suggest there is **very strong interest in coached sessions**, particularly:

- Zumba or dancercise for parents, with childcare provided and/or babies included
- Basketball for all ages.

Notes from the other pitches

The six pitches above going forwards for Playzones feasibility work will help inform future programmes at other pitches. With many stages yet towards a funding package, we cannot develop all pitches at the same time. These are outline conclusions regarding the others:

Cotton Gardens

The pitch would benefit from some refurbishment, however more work is needed to assess activation opportunities. It is hoped that nearby Briant Estate pitch will help to demonstrate possibilities for Cotton Gardens.

Holderness Estate

Holderness Estate Pitch is in good condition and little need was demonstrated for improvements by residents. We understand any development or extension is also constrained by services. Some possible interest in walking football here.

Loughborough Estate:

The pitch is a superb size, and in a good central Brixton location. There are separate areas for football and basketball and a lot of potential to develop this into a bookable facility with improved surfaces, seating, and better access. We would need a bit more partnership work with the RMO to take this project forwards and develop an activation programme here.

Tulse Hill Estate

We were very grateful to community partners on the Estate for helping us to engage a range of users. There is definitely potential here for an activity programme involving activities for mothers, older people, local makers, and the playscheme group. The existing pitch is in very good condition and topped up regularly with rubber crumb by Lambeth Housing. There is potential to add further elements around the pitch and this would be appreciated by Playscheme leaders, eg more gym equipment, hopscotch type markings, balance beams.

Streatham Vale Streatham Youth and Community Trust did an amazing job of completing sample sports activities and 60 surveys with young people from a wide range of backgrounds, including the local traveller's community. These showed overwhelmingly a need for more sports facilities.

On the basis of this Streatham Vale is a strong candidate for a Playzone, however more work needs to be done to nominate a suitable piece of land with good street access. There is no power on site.

Acknowledgements

With huge thanks to:

Darnelle and Melita from Basketball England
Esther, Perry, Tenitia and all at the Community Shop
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Nicki, Gareth, Ben and all at Friends of Larkhall Park
Jon from Friends of Loughborough Park
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Thanks also to Lambeth Playzones Consortium, which includes: Fulham FC, Afewee, Big Kid, England Netball, Football Beyond Borders, Lambeth Tigers, London FA, London Sport, Palace for Life, Street Games, Surrey Cricket Club as well as dasl, SMP, and Basketball England named above.

We are very grateful to all the above and to the many adults and children who helped with their insight and knowledge.