Hartington Park PlayZone: Engagement Report

September 2025

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1. Background

This report summarises the engagement undertaken in 2025 to inform the design and programming of the Hartington Park Playzone upgrade.

In 2023, prior to funding being awarded to Hartington Park PlayZone, the council held three main strands of engagement as follows:

- An on-line survey
- A number of focus group meetings both directly held to inform the approach to Playzones and drawing on extracts from relevant meetings held to inform Haringey's Parks and Greenspaces Strategy approved by the Council in July 2023.
- Professional meetings including with:
  - The Haringey Playzones Consortium,
  - Haringey Sport and Physical activity providers,
  - Haringey Football Forum,
  - Haringey Safer Parks for Women and Girls Network,
  - Tottenham Hotspur Foundation,
  - Streetgames,
  - Local clubs and NGB's,
  - Disability Action Haringey.

This engagement led to the selection of Hartington Park as a priority site to receive an upgrade to the existing MUGA with a proposal for tarmacadam and facilities for basketball and football, although the court can be booked for any purpose. The engagement also helped to inform the approach towards booking and programming for community use and targeted groups.

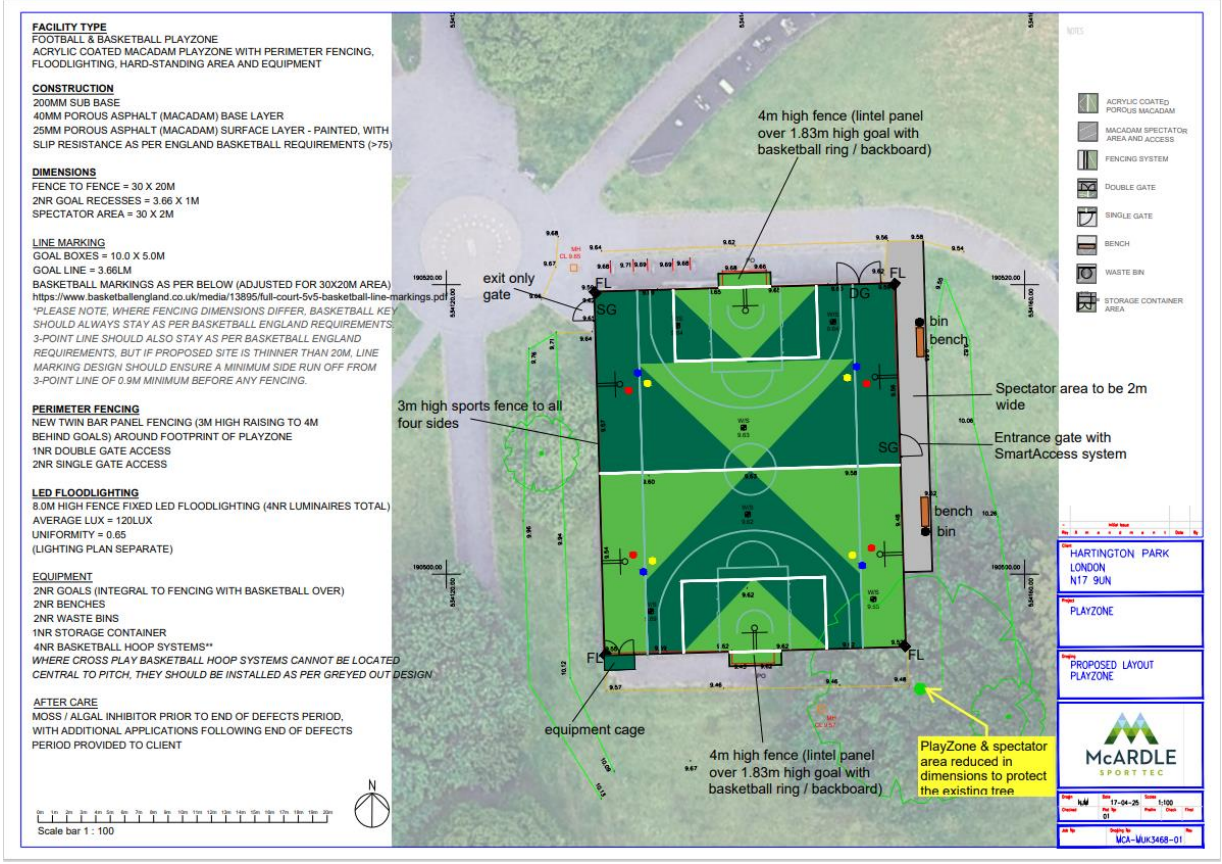
2. Engagement Overview

Following the award of funding for Hartington Park, we have taken the following approach to refine the design and programming of the new PlayZone:

- Posters at every entrance to the park and in the existing MUGA advertising Commonplace and in person engagement sessions. Posters have also been shared with Ward Councillors and the Friends of Hartington Park,
- In person engagement outside the existing MUGA facility:
  - 17/05/2025- 11:00-1:00pm. This was held at the same time as the Friends of Hartington Parks event to 'Paint the Carbuncle' passage,
  - 27/05/2025- 2:30-4:30pm,
- Commonplace:
  - Survey open from 2nd May until 7th July 2025,

- Meeting with Friends of Hartington Park,
- Door knocking/letter drop,
- Engagement with local stakeholders and sports organisations.

Design shared during engagement sessions:



3. Engagement summaries

3a. Door knocking / Letter drop

The Active Wellbeing team door knocked households on Kemble Road, Liston Road, Stirling Road, Siddons Road and Roseberry Avenue. These sites were chosen as neighbours closest to the proposed changes with potential to be most affected by the development.

This was an opportunity to share information about the project, get insight in person and offer a further opportunity for feedback on Commonplace. The vast majority of feedback was positive with several people excited about the development.

3b. Friends of Hartington Park meeting

The Friends helped to provide a picture of the kind of use that occurs in the Hartington Park MUGA, with organised activity like weekend fitness classes, after school use by local school children and more organised basketball activity in the evening. The Friends highlighted key concerns with the proposal as follows:

- The fencing currently surrounding the MUGA is half the size of the proposal, and there is concern the higher fencing will feel exclusionary and block visibility,
- The majority of use is informal, inclusive and spontaneous which the booking system could disrupt and not accommodate for. Free use needs to be protected,
- The need to book is at odds with the area's demographic. There is a particular concern around digital exclusion and being unable to access a facility without internet access or phones/computers,
- Whilst being very positive about encouraging more use by women and girls and disabled people, there is concern that too much emphasis placed on bookable space would be detrimental to young, pre-teen and teenage users and disadvantaged children who *currently* use the MUGA,
- The Friends remain on the fence about the potential benefits of the proposal.

3c. In person engagement

During two sessions, we spoke with 53 individuals outside the existing MUGA.

Observations:

- Hartington MUGA is the most used site across the PlayZone improvement programme,
- People play informally and spontaneously, come and go, play as a bigger group, with parents and small children and individually,
- For the most part younger children play football and teenagers/adults play basketball. The players often divide the space in half to accommodate both sports,
- Players share the space with great success. There are a few complaints about older basketball players being rude and impatient with younger football players,
- People are really passionate about football and basketball,
- Junior school children also ride bikes inside the court, scooter and like to play "stuck in the mud",
- On weekdays, junior school children mostly play football after school until the evening.

Key insights from conversations:

Usage patterns:

- The space is heavily used by children, young people, and adults for football and basketball,
- Weekday after-school hours and weekends are peak times,
- Users include local school children, families, fitness groups, casual players and organised teams.
- On Saturday mornings, fitness classes have been running successfully in the court and users would like this to continue,
- On Sundays, the majority use is adults playing basketball.

Booking system concerns:

- Seen as a barrier to access, especially for children without phones,
- Fear of exclusion and loss of spontaneous play,
- Concerns about conflict and stress for parents,
- Preference for open access, especially during peak community times:
    - “The booking system will immediately lose people”
    - “If you walk up and it’s locked, you walk away”
    - “If you want people to play sport, they need uninhibited access”
    - “If I had to book, I wouldn’t bother”

Some support for booking:

- For safety, organisation, and specific groups (e.g. disabled users),
- If it’s limited to certain times or managed inclusively.

Facility improvements:

- Positive feedback on:
    - Lighting
        - flood lighting will extend play in winter,
    - Benches
        - new benches will allow families and siblings to watch people play,
    - Higher fencing
        - because balls often go out of the court,
    - New flooring
        - the existing loose gravel surface is causing injuries,
        - the existing surface slopes, which isn’t conducive to play,
    - Branding,
    - Bins,

    - Equipment cages,
- Requests for astroturf, dog-free zones, running track.

Children's needs:

- Children value:
    - Freedom to play without booking,
    - Safe surfaces,
    - Respectful sharing of space,
    - Opportunities to meet and play with others,
    - Younger players would like coaching as part of an activation programming.
- Concerns about:
    - Older kids dominating space,
    - Basketball players bossing others,
    - Lack of supervision or structure,
    - Younger children who use the space everyday don't have phones/internet access and feel they need a team to be able to book which doesn't suit people playing alone.

Community sentiment:

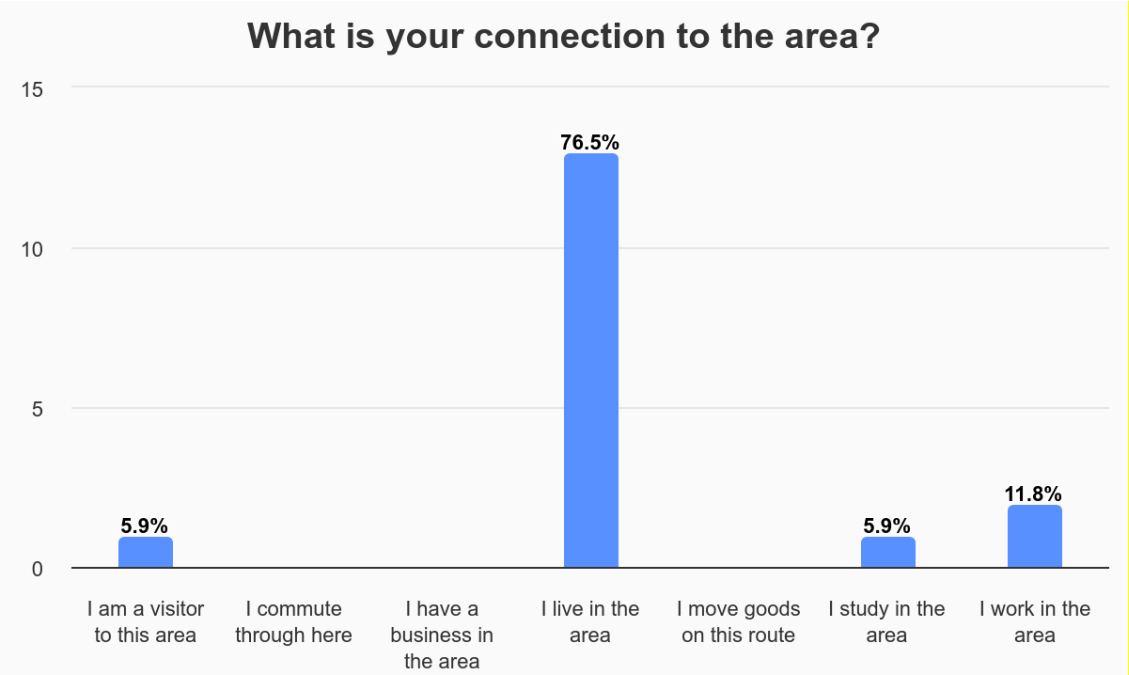
- Strong sense of local ownership and pride in the space,
- Fear that changes will disenfranchise existing users,
- Recognition of the park as a lifeline, especially for those living in flats,
- Mixed views on how to balance structure vs. spontaneity,
- Maintenance will be an important issue to preserve the improvements.

Wider park comments:

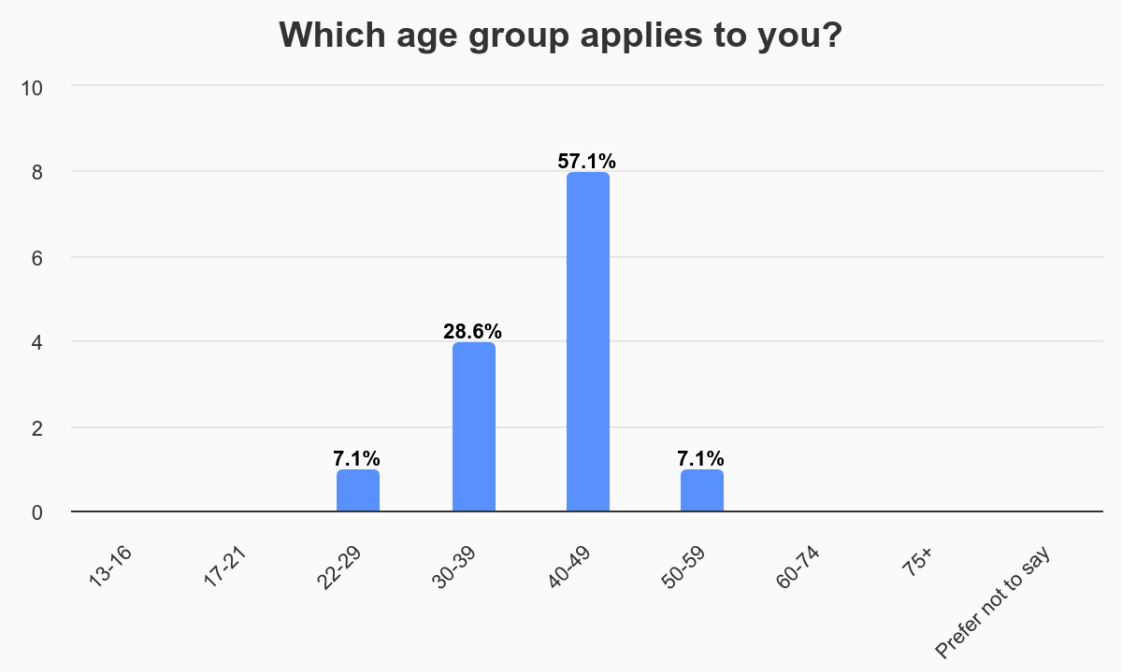
- Players feel there needs to be some maintenance:
    - "The tree is my OG, but need branches cut back from coming inside",
    - Broken pathway lighting is an issue,
- People love the park, feel it's social and that it is continually improving:
    - "The new pathway is a lifeline",
    - "The change over the last 4 years is really positive, largely thanks to The Friends".

3d. Commonplace survey online

22 responses to our online survey, with the majority of respondents living in the area (76%) and in the age range 30-49 (83%).

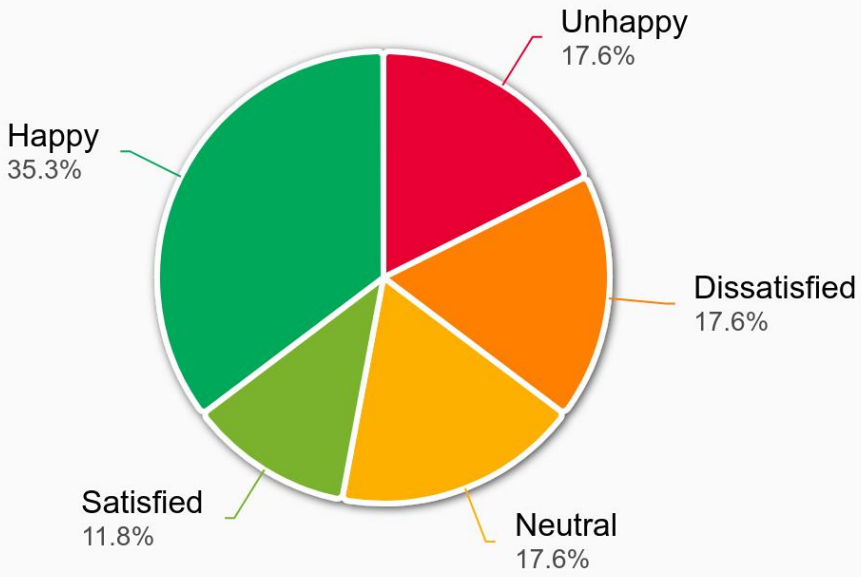


All numbers and percentages are calculated on the total number of answers to the question.



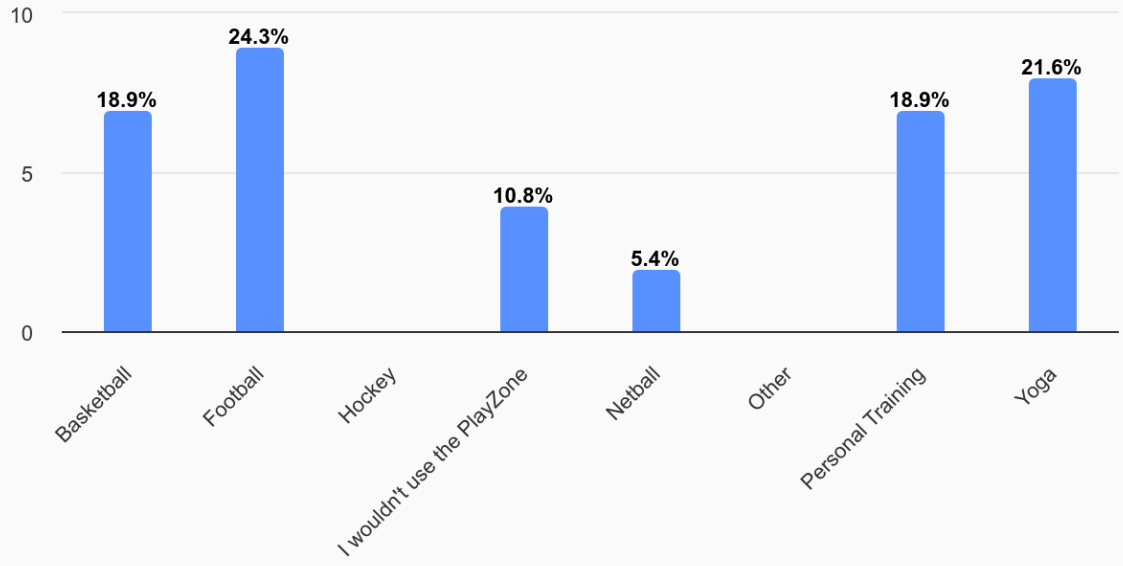
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How do you feel about the proposed facilities?

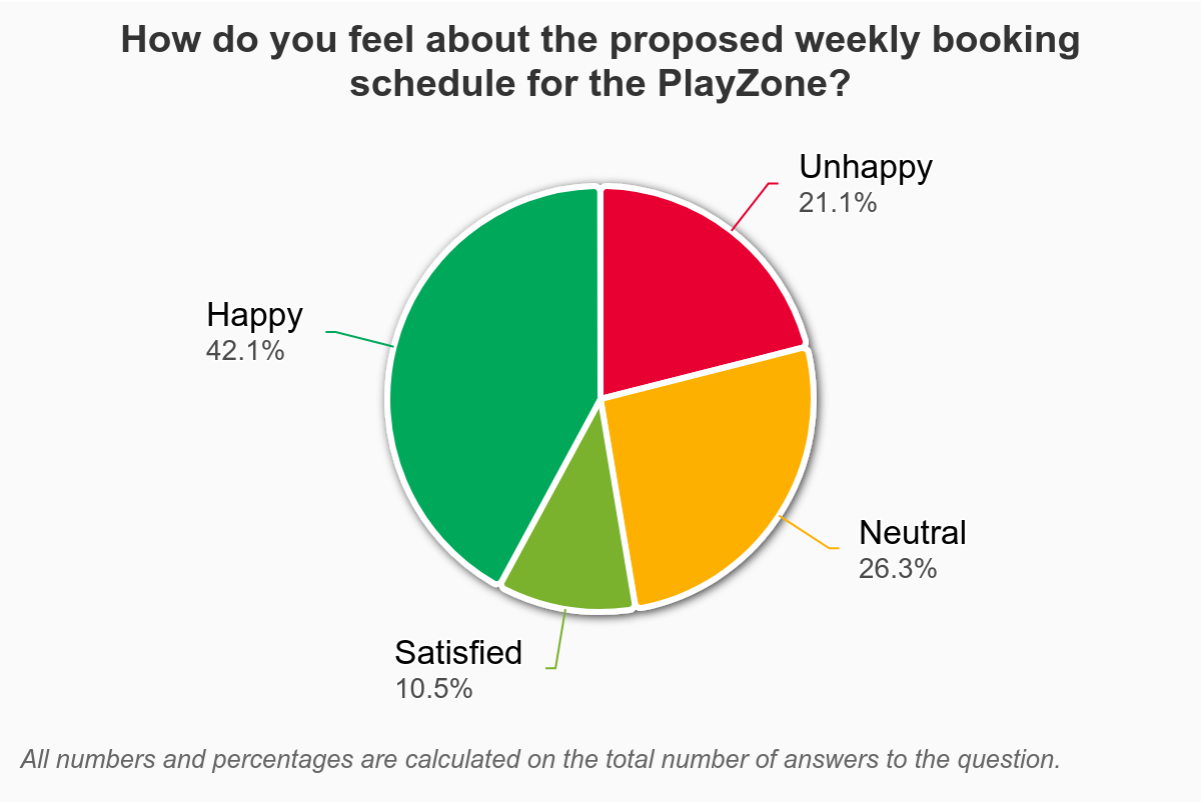


All numbers and percentages are calculated on the total number of answers to the question.

Which sport or activity would you like to use the PlayZone for?



All numbers and percentages are calculated on the total number of answers to the question.



Key insights:

There is concern over replacing the existing MUGA, which is currently:

- Free, accessible, and informally used by local children and young people,
- A space for spontaneous play and community interaction.

Entry and exit gates:

- Suggestions include relocating the entrance to the northwest corner of the pitch for better access and to prevent wear on grassy areas,
- Preference for entrances to align with existing pathways and footfall patterns.

Booking system concerns:

- Fear it will exclude current users, especially children and young people,
- Lead to commercialisation and domination by for-profit teams,
- Reduce unstructured play opportunities and negatively impact health and wellbeing,
- Concerns about social exclusion and potential for anti-social behaviour if access is restricted.

Free community use:

- Strong preference for:
    - Weekdays after school,
    - Weekend mornings and afternoons,
    - Friday free use,
- General opposition to ringfenced or paid time slots, especially during peak community use hours.

Additional feedback:

- Requests for:
    - More picnic tables and seating in grassy areas,
    - More dog waste bins to improve cleanliness and safety,
- Comments on:
    - Existing use of Down Lane Park for organised sports,
    - Concerns about cost of the project (e.g., £250k perceived as excessive),
    - Desire for transparency and learning from other PlayZone implementations.

3e. Meetings with local stakeholders

- Disability Action Haringey state that a booking system is essential to meeting their users' needs.

- Local basketball coach:
    - Need to cater for things other than football,
    - Broaden sporting options with markings for different sports,
    - Seating important for spectators,
    - Promotion is key for people to get involved. Need large signage in notice boards, libraries, sports centres and leafletting,
    - Free activities are essential especially during summer,
    - Need more facilities for all ages including outdoor gyms and sport that caters to older ages.

- Tottenham Hotspurs Foundation (THF)
    - Target groups similar between PlayZone programme/THF,
    - THF have specialist officers in accessible sport, health and youth and community,
    - Outdoor access can be a barrier for Women and Girls groups so sessions are often run indoors but would like to work together on

Women and Girls engagement. School age girls want to use space during non-term time,
    - THF run programme for people to get into coaching,
    - Can incorporate employment coaching within wider programme,
    - Currently delivering at New River, Somerford Grove and Tottenham Community Sports Centre but would like to utilise outdoor spaces more, particularly in Summer,
    - Design of PlayZone meeting expectations for sports facility. Fencing essential, lighting matching people's needs, locked space important for outdoor sessions,
    - Coaching and facilitation in kind for facility use. Coaching could include:
        - Premier League Kicks programme – ask parents to sign up before, with space for drops in,
        - Shape Up – Women's and men's only programmes,
        - THF huddle which is similar to touch rugby.
    - Flexibility is useful for community when booking.

3f. Youth Advisory Board

- Currently use MUGA's for basketball, football and hanging out,
- Proper markings are important, so games aren't interrupted,
- Used facilities in the past, but some have fallen into disrepair,
- Would use PlayZone for netball, girls' football, badminton, rugby, roller skating,
- Need signage to let people know what they can use space for,
- Would like mixed and women's only sport,
- Would like equipment cage to have compartments for different user groups,
- Questions over how to book, concerns over management/people hogging space,
- Give schools code for open access slots.

4. Conclusions

Overall sentiment towards improvement:

- People are pleased about the investment to upgrade the facility. In particular:
    - the flooring because loose gravel is currently causing injuries and slopes aren't conducive to play,
    - higher fences because balls often go out of the court,
    - new benches as this will allow families and siblings to watch people play,

    - flood lighting to extend play in winter.
- Some football players would like astroturf as playing surface but agree that the space should be shared and for dual use basketball-football, tarmacadam is the preferred surface,

Booking System:

- Some people think the booking system is good to ensure access to those with disabilities or players who want to book a game, but the *vast majority* of respondents have concerns about the booking system because the current spontaneous and shared play works well most of the time,
- Players would like free access after school from 3:00-6:00pm, Fridays all day and at weekends from the late morning until early afternoon.

5. Design and Programming Amendments

- The entry gate will be moved to where the existing entrance is located for continuity of use,

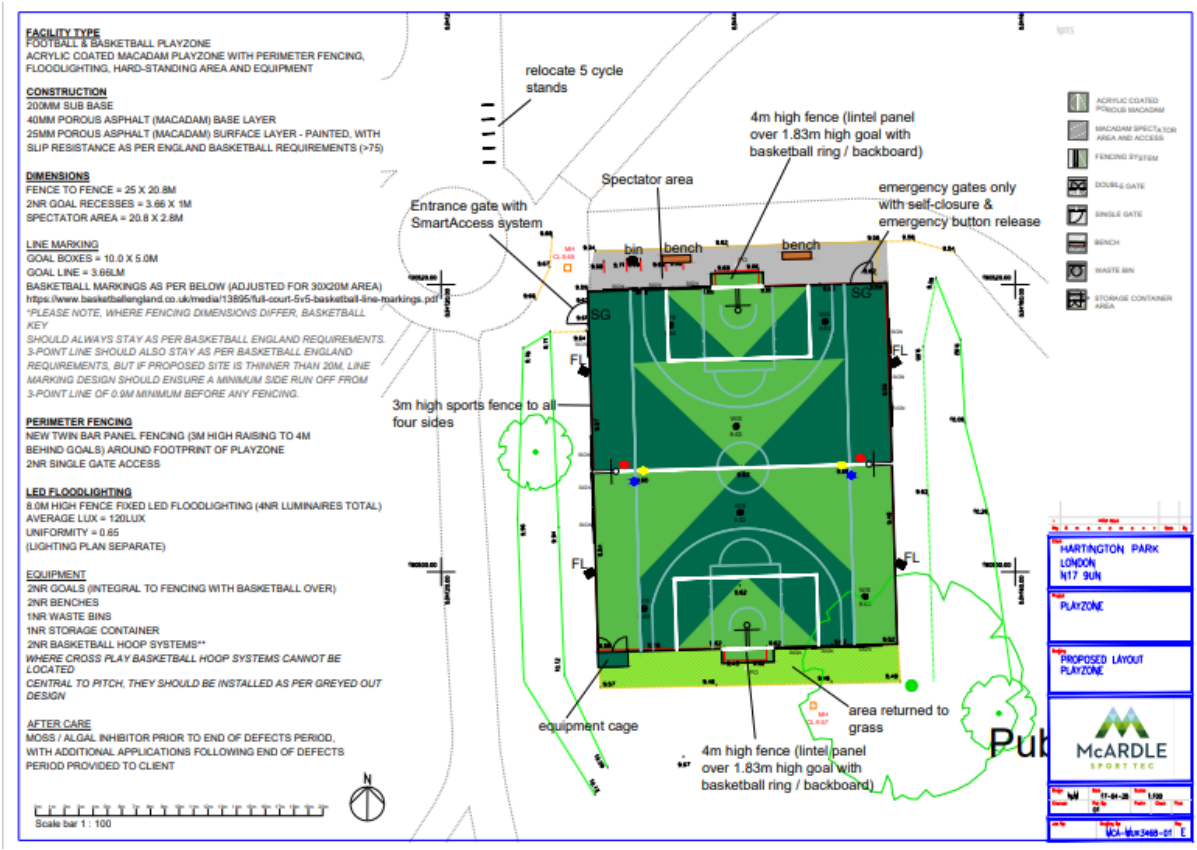
- The location of benches/bin has been placed to the north edge. This is because spectators often use this area to watch over games, and to keep the existing grassed area. The cycle parking will be relocated to the north,

- The booking system and programme will respond to community desire for mixed open access and booked sessions. The recommendation for open access is as follows, and will include :
    - Weekdays: 3-6pm
    - Fridays: 10am-8pm
    - Winter weekends: 9am-5pm
    - Summer weekends: 9am-8pm
    - School holidays: 10am-8pm

  This system will be managed by Haringey Council and can be further refined based on testing and feedback. Signage and clear instructions on how to book will be provided on-site and online,

- Flood lighting will only be activated during booked sessions, and floodlighting will not extend beyond 9pm. This would be the same operational times as we have in other parks.

The developed PlayZone design below highlights the amended design.



We would like to acknowledge the importance of everyone that has contributed their thoughts and concerns in order to help refine the design and programme of the new PlayZone. This has been hugely valuable to make meaningful amendments based on community need, aspiration and concern.