

PARLIAMENT HILL OUTDOOR GYM PROPOSAL

Background

The London Borough of Camden has invited the City of London to register an expression of interest in having an Outdoor Gym at Parliament Hill. This is subject to Camden undertaking an assessment of need, with the ultimate aim of targeting their investment to have the greatest impact on physical inactivity within the Borough

The Outdoor Gym programme aims to provide people with a way to enhance their fitness and health in an outdoor environment. It can be seen as enabling people to get fit who would not normally attend a conventional gym or sports centre. Camden installed 9 Outdoor Gyms 6 years ago, funded by Public Health Research. This programme suggests there are genuine benefits to many user groups which include:

- Overcoming barriers to exercise, such as cost and accessibility
- They are often installed next to children's playgrounds, thus encouraging parents to use the fitness equipment while their children play.
- Aimed at all fitness levels
- Low-impact and intuitive to use - instructions are also included, which often use interactive signage
- Traditional keep-fit apparatus, such as pull-up bars and hurdles, tends to be used by the already athletic
- Health benefits are associated with increased physical activity
- Many variations of equipment can be tailored to the site
- Perfect for small spaces

If a location at Parliament Hill is selected, it is anticipated that Camden would fully fund the installation and the first five years of maintenance, however Camden have indicated that if the City of London was able to make capital contribution this would strengthen the case.

If Parliament Hill was successful, a conditional requirement would require a structured programme of instruction to maximise use of the Outdoor Gym, especially for priority groups such as young, older and disabled users and women. These are groups that may have limited experience of physical activity, or those who need reassurance that they are in a safe setting. The bid will include resources to support and develop capacity for this via a volunteer development programme, which the City of London, as the host site, would manage once established.

The Project Plan for this is still to be finalised but Camden are working towards the following milestones:-

- Procurement and site selection February – April 2015.
- Site selection and consultation phase during summer April – July 2015.
- Initial works to begin in early autumn 2015.
- Volunteer development and capacity building following site completion March 2016.



Possible Locations

To comply with the Hampstead Heath Management Plan any proposed locations would need to fall within the designated Parliament Hill sports area (referred to as 'Sports area A' in the Management Plan). This could include:-

1. Trim trail (next to Parliament Hill traditional Playground).
2. Dukes Field (adjacent to Tennis courts 8, 9 & 10). This is used informally but not sure whether it fits sports area A.
3. Lido triangle (located between the Lido and Railway embankment).
4. Petanque rink (triangle behind Tennis courts 1, 2 & 3).

Consultations

The Sports Advisory Forum are supportive of the proposal. The Superintendent is seeking the views and comments of the Consultative Committee, and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. The Superintendent will also approach the London Borough of Barnet to establish whether similar funding is available, which may be applicable to Golders Hill Park.

Next Steps

Subject to selection by Camden, and Committee approval to explore the opportunity, the Superintendent will prepare a Business Case to evaluate the proposal and develop a strategy for managing the facility in the long term, including the identification of the costs involved.