

# CONSORT PARK

## INITIAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SUMMARY



## Introduction

Consort Park is a small (280m<sup>2</sup>) local park in a quiet residential area adjacent to Dr Harold Moody Park in Peckham, Southwark, SE15. The park has a few pieces of play and outdoor exercise equipment, as well as a multi-coloured play surface, all of which are in poor condition. There are a few benches and picnic tables and the footpaths are in bad condition. Large grassy mounds reduce visibility across the park and create hidden areas at the back of the park; this area also can feel dark due to the thick tree canopy.

### Visitor Observation Survey

Visitor observation surveys were carried out in Consort Park between August and October 2019, during seven one-hour sessions between 8am and 6pm on weekdays and two one-hour sessions in the morning and afternoon over two weekends.

A total of 110 individual visitors were recorded in the park; an average of 12 visitors per hour, which is low compared to other parks.

The busiest times were:

- Tuesday 10-11am (23 visitors)
- Thursday 8-9am (19)
- Thursday 1-2pm (19)

This is unusual, as normally the busiest times are after school weekdays, and at weekends. Between 5 and 6pm on a



The Masterplan design will seek to:

- Create a more welcoming, attractive park
- Increase visibility to reduce opportunities for anti-social activity
- Ensure footpaths and surfaces are of high quality

The initial consultation took place online between 17 January to 17 February 2020.

A number of surveys have already taken place at Consort Park such as visitor observation, ecology, bat and tree surveys, with 38 trees counted in the park. The recommendations from these surveys will feed into the Masterplan.

There is currently no funding to carry out the improvements, but creating a Masterplan will be used to seek funding for the future works.

Wednesday two separate groups of local people brought in their own picnic tables and camping chairs into the park.

Half of visitors were estimated to be 30-59 years old (50%), nearly two thirds of visitors were visiting the park alone (62%). 16% of visitors had a dog, which is comparatively higher than other parks.

Most visitors were walking (70%), using the park as a convenient short cut or pleasant alternative route to the road, and they were not stopping to enjoy the park.

Improvements are likely to encourage more people to visit, and spend some time in the park, which has benefits to both mental and physical health.



- Increase biodiversity and wildlife in the park
- Increase local community engagement and involvement in the park
- Improve green links, which are connections between green spaces that benefit people and wildlife

In total 62 responses were received. The summary of the results can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

## Consultation Analysis

### 1. Consultees were asked how often they visit Consort Park?

2 to 6 times a week	14	22.5%
Daily	13	21%
Weekly	9	15%
Monthly	9	15%
Less than monthly	9	15%
Never	4	6.5%
Fortnightly	3	5%

Almost a quarter of consultees stated they visited Consort Park 2 to 6 times a week (22.5%), followed by daily (21%). The number of consultees visiting weekly,

monthly and less than monthly was evenly split (15%). A small number of consultees stated they never (6.5%) visit the park or visit it fortnightly (5%).

### 2. Consultees were asked what they like about Consort Park that encourages them to visit/use the park?

Nature	39	62.5%
Play	22	35%
Places to rest	22	35%
Peace and quiet	20	32%
Dog walking	13	21%
Safe space	11	17.5%
Attractive layout	5	8%
Other -	17	27%
Wildness	3	5%
Place for bikes	3	5%

No answer	3	5%
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Over half of consultees liked the nature in Consort Park (62.5%), which was almost twice as popular than the next most chosen answer. About a third like play, places to rest and peace and quiet. Only a small number of consultees felt it was

a safe place (17.5%) or found the existing layout attractive (8%). There were a range of other comments, with keeping the park wild, and a place for children to ride their bikes being the mentioned the most.

### 3. Consultees were asked if the park feels safe?

Yes	31	51%
No	30	49%

The results were evenly split of consultees with slightly more stating that the park does feel safe (51%), however half of

consultees stated they don't find the park feels safe (49%), which is a considerably high proportion.

### 4. Consultees were asked what should the priorities be to improve Consort Park?

More wildlife friendly	46	73.5%
Improve safety	40	64%
Improve play equipment	34	55.5%
Increase benches or picnic tables	28	45%
Other -	19	30.5%
Lighting	5	8%
Rear area of park too dark	3	5%

For almost three quarters of consultees, the priority is for Consort Park to be more wildlife friendly (73.5%), this was the highest percentage for any of the survey questions. This was followed by safety improvement (64%). Over half wanted

better play equipment (55.5%) and nearly half wanted increased benches/picnic tables (45%). There was a range of other comments (30.5%) with the suggestion for more lighting (8%) being mentioned most often.

5. Consultees were asked if they had any other comments.

The table below shows the common themes in the comments received.

Anti-social behaviour issues	17	27%
Issues with irresponsible dog owners	16	25.5%
Play equipment is worn	11	17.5%
Lighting is needed	11	17.5%
Wildlife is a priority	11	17.5%
Love the park	9	14.5%
Benches/tables are needed	8	13%
Outdoor gym is needed	8	13%
Community gardening suggested	6	9.5%
Peace and quiet/less formal than Dr. Harold Moody	5	8%
Place for bike riding suggested	5	8%
Link Consort Park to Dr. Harold Moody Park	4	6.5%
Rear area of park is too dark	3	5%
Dog walking is a priority	3	5%

Anti-social behaviour (27%) and issues with irresponsible dog owners (25.5%) were most often mentioned, by over a quarter of consultees. Making the park more wildlife friendly, installing lighting and the worn play equipment were mentioned by a sixth of consultees (17.5% each), followed by consultees stating how much they love the park, (14.5%). Some mentioned the need for more benches/tables (13%) and an outdoor gym (13%) and providing opportunities for community gardening was suggested (9.5%).

How quiet and peaceful the space is (8%) and how this contrasts with the more formal Dr. Harold Moody Park (8%) was commented on. Some find it a great space for children to ride bikes, particularly on the mounds (8% each). A few consultees also mentioned the possibility of linking both parks together by closing a small section of Sturdy Road to traffic and turning it into part of the park (6.5%).

## Conclusions

### Visitors

Almost half of consultees visit Consort Park at least two times per week, improvements are likely to make people want to visit more often.

Parks are normally busiest on weekdays after school and at weekends, however Consort Park was busiest early on weekdays.

The park is popular with dog walkers, and most visitors use the park as a pleasant alternative to the road, or short cut on a journey, without stopping to enjoy the park.

### Nature

Enhancing the park for wildlife was the most popular suggestion by consultees and will be considered. Tree and bulb planting could take place with community involvement, as there was interest in community gardening. The Council would be in support of residents setting up a 'Friends of Parks' group, which would need to be properly constituted.

### Play

Many consultees mentioned the worn play equipment at Consort Park. A few consultees noted that Dr. Harold Moody Park is a more formal space that has an enclosed, designated play area.

The old play equipment in Consort Park should be removed due to its poor condition and the updated design will include improving the existing play area at Dr. Harold Moody Park. Consort Park should have a different recreational focus.

### Cycling

The park is used by children on bikes, with some local children learning to ride here, and using the mounds. Consideration should be given to providing suitable areas for children to cycle.

The existing bike racks don't appear to be used, and should be moved or replaced to a more convenient location within the park.

### Outdoor gym

There were a few comments about people using the exercise equipment, although this wasn't observed during

the people survey. New outdoor gym equipment was requested, and could be included in the design.

### Places to rest

Almost half of respondents requested more benches and/or picnic tables and during the people survey local residents were witnessed bringing in their own garden furniture. The updated design will include more seating and refurbishing or replacing the picnic tables.

### Peace and quiet

The peace and quiet of Consort Park was appreciated compared to Dr. Harold Moody Park, which was mentioned to be busier. The updated design will include improving the play facilities at Dr. Harold Moody Park and enhancing the nature in Consort Park.

### Safe space

Half of consultees stated that they found the space safe, which is low compared to other parks, a significant number of consultees (17 people) highlighted concerns about anti-social behaviour, so seeking to improve this is a priority. Experience has shown it is possible to reduce anti-social behaviour through design; for example by increasing visibility. This could be achieved by reducing the size of the mounds, which are currently very steep and tall.

17 respondents had concerns about irresponsible dog owners and dogs that seem aggressive. Although most owners are responsible, unfortunately a few who are not can spoil some people's enjoyment of the park. The parks operations and safer neighbourhood team have been notified about the concerns raised. Dr Harold Moody Park has a dog-free play area for families. Signs are on display, with information about the Public Space Protection Order rules about dogs.

There were a number of comments about lighting and how dark the back of the park is. The parks operations team will review whether vegetation needs thinning out, which could also help increase visibility. New lighting should not be installed as it would disturb wildlife and can encourage people to use the park at night, which may lead to a false sense of security and disturbance to local residents.

### **Attractive design**

Only a few consultees found the existing space attractive; the Masterplan will ensure a high quality, attractive design.

### **Linking Consort Park to Dr Harold Moody Park**

Some consultees suggested linking Consort Park to Dr. Harold Moody Park. Based on this suggestion, closing the

end of Sturdy Road to vehicles and joining both parks together should be explored. If this is not possible, other types of link could be considered, such as reducing the number of parking spaces and the installation of a pedestrian crossing between both parks. Dropped-kerbs would make both parks more accessible for people in wheelchairs, mobility scooters and with buggies.

## Next steps

A design will be created by experienced Landscape Architects taking into account the consultation and survey results. The public will have the opportunity to comment during a second consultation planned for early 2021, where the design will be available to download and a survey will be online. A virtual event will also take place which will be

an opportunity for the public to discuss the plans with the architects, council staff and their own neighbours. Anyone who joined the mailing list will be notified by email when the new consultation begins.

Once the plan is ready, it will be used to help seek funding for the improvements.

**For more information about the project visit [www.southwark.gov.uk/consortmasterplan](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/consortmasterplan) or to join the mailing list for future updates please contact [parks@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:parks@southwark.gov.uk)**