



Knutsford Town Council

# ASHWORTH PARK COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A report on the conclusion of the community consultation undertaken in December 2016 on ideas for developing a recreation area on Ashworth Park.



CONSULTATION  
REPORT



LOCAL COUNCIL  
AWARD SCHEME  
QUALITY GOLD

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### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

Knutsford Town Council’s 2020 Vision sets out a commitment to improve recreation facilities across the Town. In 2014 the Town Council agreed a schedule of assets it wished to see transferred from Cheshire East Borough Council to the Town Council, of which land at Ashworth Park (herein referred to as ‘the park’) was on the ‘priority a’ list.

The Town Council had reached the stage where it was agreed that consultation with the community on the project was deemed necessary. The Town Council undertook this community consultation in December 2016 to inform it in developing the business case for the transfer of the park.

This report summarises the consultation data. The purpose of this report is to inform the Asset Transfer Working Group (ATWG) of Knutsford Town Council of the results of the survey.

#### 1.2 Consultation Methodology

The Assets and Operations Committee tasked the ATWG to develop and undertake a community consultation. The ATWG felt that a two-pronged consultation would provide the most useful data and accordingly agreed to consult with both residents and local school children.

The consultation with local school children was undertaken at the two closest state primary schools, Egerton Primary School and Bexton Primary School. The aim of this aspect of the consultation was to get a clear idea of the facilities that local children might like to see in the park.

Cllr Neil Forbes (lead member for the ATWG) and the Town Clerk visited both primary schools and presented at a full-school assembly in early December. Immediately following the assembly Cllr Forbes and the Town Clerk met with the school council to explain in more detail what was required. Children were given three stickers to vote with, placing them on A3 photographs of nine examples of facilities. It was explained that children could place as many stickers on an image as they wished; e.g. if something was their favourite they could place all three stickers on that image.



Stickers given out were colour coded by year group and shaped by gender to allow a detailed understanding of what different age/gender children would like to see.

The consultation with local residents was confined to houses within a 10 minute walking distance<sup>1</sup>. This is in accordance with the Cheshire East Council Open Spaces Review (2012) which sets a requirement for access to a Children’s Play area within a 5-10 minute walking distance.

Surveys were dispatched by 30<sup>th</sup> November, with a deadline for replies of 18<sup>th</sup> December. A copy of the consultation paper is included in Annex A. Residents were asked to choose preferred facilities and provide suggestions, concerns and comments on the ideas for the park. Residents could complete the survey either by paper or via the Town Council website. The survey was highlighted in the Knutsford Guardian on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### 1.3 Consultation Responses

557 consultation papers were sent out. 106 responses to the community consultation were received giving a return rate of 19.03%.

579 children took part in the schools consultation by voting in their classes.

## 2.0 Community Consultation

The survey asked what facilities residents would like to see; giving them the option of choosing up to three options. The most popular facilities were ‘mixed play equipment’ (25.87%), ‘planting schemes’ (19.69%) and ‘picnic tables or benches’ (12.74%). Figure 1 shows the results compared with those from the two schools.

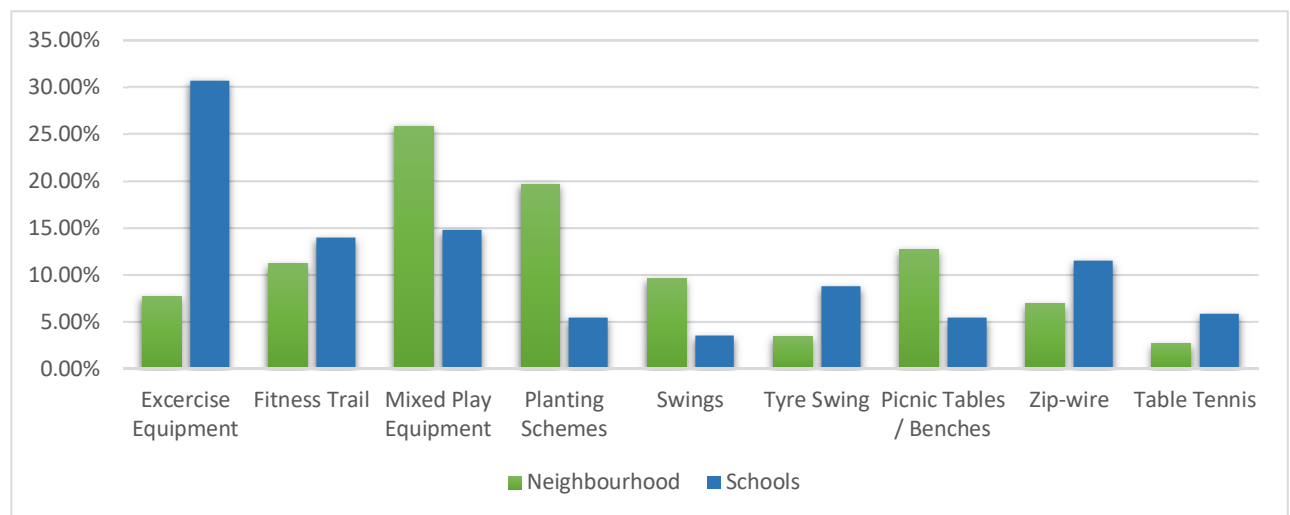


Figure 1: Facilities Preference

Residents were asked for suggestions, concerns and comments on the proposals to improve the area. 17 responses stated the site should be left untouched. 20 responses explicitly gave support or commented that it was a good idea to improve the area.

<sup>1</sup> Approx. 800m in accordance with “Beyond the Six Acre Standard” by Fields in Trust



The top suggestions included litter bins, football facilities, and benches. A number of other suggestions were made, these are detailed in Table 1.

Benches were the top suggestion, specifically seating for those visiting the site. Fencing of the site also featured, either to ensure safety from the railway, fencing the entire site or fencing any new play area. A summary of suggestions is detailed in Table 1.

|                     |   |                                    |   |                 |   |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Benches             | 8 | Fencing (railway, site, play area) | 7 | Litter Bins     | 6 |
| Football Facilities | 3 | Skate Park                         | 2 | Paths           | 3 |
| Promote Wildlife    | 2 | Planting Area                      | 2 | Trees           | 2 |
| Pond                | 2 | Park Feeling                       | 1 | Small MUGA      | 1 |
| Sculpture/Feature   | 1 | Bollards (to prevent vehicles)     | 1 | BBQ Area        | 1 |
| Ensure Safety       | 1 | Limit planting to 20% of site      | 1 | Toilets         | 1 |
| Direction Signage   | 1 | Restrict usage times               | 1 | Retain Woodland | 1 |

Table 1 Suggestions

There were five key concerns about the proposals, namely drainage, anti-social behaviour, parking/traffic, litter and noise. A number of respondents stated that there used to be a pond on the site which was filled in as part of the development of Ashworth Park and which contributes to the water retention at the site. A summary of concerns is detailed in Table 2.

|                               |    |                   |    |                           |    |
|-------------------------------|----|-------------------|----|---------------------------|----|
| Drainage                      | 18 | Traffic / Parking | 12 | Noise                     | 10 |
| Anti-social behaviour         | 9  | Litter            | 9  | Failure to maintain area  | 5  |
| Loss of open space            | 3  | Pylons (safety)   | 2  | Potentially low usage     | 2  |
| Proximity to railway (safety) | 2  | Vandalism         | 2  | Costs                     | 2  |
| Impact on wildlife            | 2  | Dog Fouling       | 1  | Loss of existing planting | 1  |

Table 2 Concerns

There were no substantial other comments which are not contained within suggestions and concerns.

### 3.0 School Consultation

The purpose of the school consultation was to gain a view as to what primary school children would wish to see in any new park. Figure 1 shows that the responses from the two schools were broadly similar with the most popular suggesting being Exercise Equipment which received over 30% of all votes cast by the children. The Fitness Trail, Mixed Play Equipment and a Zip-Line were the next most popular.

The consultation was structured to enable comparisons to be drawn between genders and ages.

The significant results from the gender comparison was that boys prefer table tennis more than girls (10.5% vs 1.75%) and girls preferred swings to boys (4.91% vs 1.95%) although the latter was driven by a greater number of reception girls voting for swings and where their results are excluded there was no significant difference for swings. All other options saw no significant differences between the two genders.

The age group data showed that the Exercise Equipment was favoured by all age groups, generally followed by a Fitness Trail, Mixed Play Equipment and Zip-Wire. This broadly agrees with the overall comparison. Table three contains the rankings by age group for comparison.



| Reception | Year 1   | Year 2   | Year 3   | Year 4   | Year 5   | Year 6   |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Exercise  | Exercise | Exercise | Exercise | Exercise | Exercise | Exercise |
| Fitness   | Mixed    | Mixed    | Fitness  | Zip Wire | Fitness  | Zip Wire |
| Mixed     | Fitness  | Fitness  | Mixed    | Mixed    | Mixed    | Mixed    |
| Tyre      | Zip Wire | Zip Wire | Zip Wire | Benches  | Zip Wire | Tyre     |
| Table T   | Tyre     | Table T  | Table T  | Fitness  | Planting | Fitness  |
| Swings    | Planting | Planting | Tyre     | Tyre     | Tyre     | Table T  |
| Planting  | Benches  | Tyre     | Benches  | Table T  | Benches  | Planting |
| Zip Wire  | Table T  | Benches  | Planting | Swings   | Table T  | Benches  |
| Benches   | Swings   | Swings   | Swings   | Planting | Swings   | Swings   |

Table 3 School Year Rankings

| School Ranking | Neighbours Ranking |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Exercise       | Mixed              |
| Mixed          | Planting           |
| Fitness        | Benches            |
| Zip-wire       | Fitness            |
| Tyre Swing     | Swings             |
| Table Tennis   | Exercise           |
| Benches        | Zip-wire           |
| Planting       | Tyre Swing         |
| Swings         | Table Tennis       |

Table 4 Group Rankings

## 4.0 Conclusions

There was overall support from the community consultation for the proposals to develop a recreation area at the park. This is demonstrated by several clear expressions of support and a minority of objections. However, a number of concerns were raised which require investigation, most notably drainage. Concerns over traffic and parking issues, noise and anti-social behaviour should be investigated, perhaps by consulting with residents living near the play area at Southfields and the Police.

The greatest support across the two groups was for a mixed play area; this was in the top three for both the School and Neighbour consultations. The fitness trail was the next most popular item in common with both groups.

## 5.0 Recommendations

The consultation has demonstrated support from the community for creating the park and the Council has already established need. It is therefore recommended that the project progresses.

The drainage of the site needs and initial investigation and advice from a land drainage expert as to the suitability of the site and options for drainage.

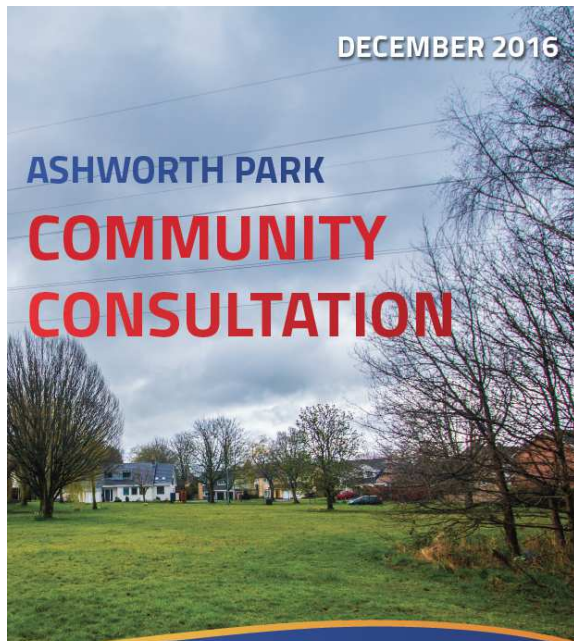
Investigations as to mitigation/prevention for the key concerns raised by residents should be made; namely the impact on traffic, parking, noise and anti-social behaviour.




# Annex 1: Consultation Paper


**DECEMBER 2016**

**ASHWORTH PARK  
COMMUNITY  
CONSULTATION**



**Knutsford Town Council**  
looking to the past, *the present* and *the future*  
[www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)


 01565 653 929  
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Knutsford Town Council has identified the opportunity to enhance an area of land on Ashworth Park, which could also help meet the shortfall in children's recreation space in Knutsford. The Town Council is considering taking on this land through an asset transfer from Cheshire East Council to undertake a range of improvements and we are seeking your views on what happens.



We are consulting households within a ten-minute walk (approx. 900m) of this area to ask your views on what improvements could be undertaken on this area, including to address the shortage in children's play space. We are also visiting Bexton and Egerton Primary Schools to understand the views of children.



The purpose of this consultation is to help inform the Town Council of what enhancements at this site would be appreciated. Your feedback will help shape our plans.



The funds to purchase equipment to improve the site would be sought through grant funding, with the day-to-day maintenance at the site then the responsibility of the Town Council.

Please return this survey by Friday 18th December.

*The 2012 Cheshire East Council Open Spaces Assessment identified a shortage of children's play space in Knutsford, particularly in the south-west of the town.*

All information provided through this survey will be treated in strict accordance with the Town Council's Data Protection Policy.

Your name

Your postcode  House number

There is a range of different equipment/facilities we could consider for this area. Naturally we cannot have everything.

Please tick your **three** top preferences.



Zip-wire



Table Tennis



Fitness Trail



Tyre Swing



Swings



Picnic Tables/Benches



Mixed Play Equipment



Planting Schemes



Exercise Equipment

Do you have any other suggestions for facilities on this area?

Do you have any concerns about enhancing facilities here?

Any other comments...

**Please return to:**  
**Knutsford Town Council, Council**  
**Offices, Toft Road, Knutsford, WA16 6TA**  
 or complete online at  
[www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk/ashworthpark](http://www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk/ashworthpark)

