

Lighting Statement: Priory Park Tennis Courts

Introduction

The Priory Park Tennis Courts upgrade project is being delivered by Haringey Council to increase public tennis playing provision. The overall aim of the project is to increase the opportunity for local people to participate in tennis and thereby contribute to improvements in activity levels and the health and wellbeing of residents.

This Lighting Statement supports the application from Haringey Council for the transformation of an area that is currently in poor condition. The project will deliver revamped courts (x2) as well as installing 2x new mini courts to improve access to tennis for all the community and in particular children and young people.

The lights will transform the playing experience for local people; allowing them to access the courts in the evenings during the winter period. For children accessing the very popular tennis coaching sessions at the park, in the early evening, this is particularly beneficial to ensure continuity of the learning experience. In the later part of the evening adults will be able to access the courts for coaching and to play tennis casually.

Trees and Ecology:

The lighting design is sensitive to the ecology and bio-diversity of the site as well as mitigating successfully any potential impacts on nearby residents.

- An Ecological Survey has been carried out that demonstrates low impact on local wildlife.
- The Council's Tree Section has been engaged to check all the plans including the ducting. There are no adverse impacts on nearby trees. Some hedge and shrub clearance is required as well as removal of self-seeded trees that have impacted on the perimeter of the court and is authorised by the Tree Section.

The Site: Priory Park

Dating from 1891 Priory Park is a 6.5-hectare public park in Hornsey, in the London Borough of Haringey. It is located between Priory Road and Middle Lane, approximately 0.5 km north of Crouch End Broadway. The park is protected as a Fields in Trust Queen Elizabeth II Field. It has won multiple Green Flag Awards since 2003 and has an active Friends group.

Priory Park is one of the most popular and frequently visited parks in Haringey. It has large open grassy spaces, an ornamental garden, tennis courts, philosophers' garden, paddling pool, café, playground, and large asphalt area for ball games and junior cycling.

The Tennis Courts in Priory Park

The very popular Priory Park Tennis courts are located on two sides of the Priory Road entrance to the park. Currently there are 2 recently refurbished courts and 2 mini courts (completed in 2015) on one side of the entrance and the proposal is that the 3 run down, undersized courts on the opposite side are refurbished to replicate the newer courts. Thus, the project will entail reducing 3 courts to 2 full sized courts and as well 2 mini courts will be installed in the remaining space. The addition of floodlighting to the 2 main courts will complete the project.

Engagement

An engagement exercise regarding the tennis court upgrades and lighting took place on the 'Commonplace Website' from 16th January 2023 to 10th March 2023, this was in addition to Information Sessions at the park and meetings with Stakeholders. The Engagement Exercise was widely publicised with park stakeholders and users including sending emails to all the tennis court bookers.

Of the 330 responses, 250 responses said they were positive towards the lighting, 20 were not in favour and the rest were neutral. Examples of comments from those positive towards the lights e.g.

'Fantastic to have code and floodlights'

'This is a very encouraging development and I welcome it. Thank you for making these improvements which I see as an improvement to the quality of life for tennis players in the area.'

'Strongly support the improvements'

The negative responses were for a variety of reasons e.g.

'Tennis is a fairly elite activity, requiring over 100 m2 per user. If we are spending this kind of money, then a user value for money exercise comparing tennis with other potential football, skatepark should be undertaken'.

'Existing arrangements for tennis are fine. We do not need floodlights at night, it would disturb birds and wildlife and upset the ecological balance.'

And a couple of others, while overall positive, commented on other items they disagreed with regarding the refurbishment e.g.

'I believe the locking system will deter people from using the courts. I like the spontaneity of being able to use them whenever I feel like it. To encourage people to exercise more we must make it easy, not put barriers in the way. I also don't have an issue with the courts being used for other purposes (eg for other ball games or by dog walkers) when they are free. It makes sense to make maximum use out of public space'

Hours of Opening

The park is accessible at all times as it is not locked at night. Effectively this means the park is primarily utilised from dawn to dusk.

The proposed hours of operation for the lights are:

Monday to Sunday: dusk to 9pm

These operating hours for the lights will ensure that the tennis coaching programmes can continue during the winter months (approximately 16 hours per week) and that a minimum of 35 hours of additional court time is made available for casual pay and play. Shutting the lights down at 9pm will minimise any impacts on local residents while going some way to satisfying the strong local demand for tennis.

ANDREA KEEBLE – HARINGEY COUNCIL

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