



Shepherd's Hill Bike Trail Consultation Report Rev D

Background

The area has a well organised and active resident's forum, Highgate Neighbourhood Forum (HNF), that have identified areas that could be improved to include formalised play including a BMX track that has been created informally by local young people and families.

The land is leased from Transport for London on a 99-year lease. It is bordered on the east by Highgate Library and to north by residential properties.

Full site address.

Shepherd Hill,
Land next to 1 Shepherds Hill,
Highgate N6 5QJ

The project is included in the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan and this project has been an ambition for the community for several years and was part of the writing of the neighbourhood plan in 2012.

This came from initial conversations and consultation years ago and has been further developed since and is now at a stage to implement after pre-planning advice and pre-consultation with heritage.



Areal view with site highlighted

The project will be a long-term investment, transforming a currently neglected space into an attractive active pocket park. The aim is to enrich the public realm, preserve and enhance local wildlife whilst benefiting the community.

Consultations

Summary

There were three on site public consultations and creative engagement events between 2019-2022 building up on each other, as well as online consultation covering a wide-ranging age group. The consultations were advertised via the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum and the Highgate Festival Programme.

On site consultations along Shepherd's Hill and on location took place on:

Consultation 1 - 22th June 2019

Consultation 2 - 19th June 2021

Consultation 3 - 18th June 2022

In there was engagement with more than ~150 responses covering ages of ~3 years to ~70 years, with both qualitative and quantitative feedback. Even though the majority were locals, some came from Archway and there were also people coming from



Consultation on 19.06.2021, Maria Kramer from Room102 explains the project

further away, such as locals who used to live in the area, but moved further to Enfield and Milton Keynes.

Age group	3-10 years	~25%
Age group	11-19 years	~20%
Age group	20-45 years	~30%
Age group	45-70 years	~25%

Online consultation took place via the newsletter of the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum which provided a response email and the events were advertised via the highgatefestival.org website and included in the printed programmes, which were widely distributed during the Fair on the Square. In total we had approximately 20 emails of which 90% were positive and supportive of the project.

Consultation 1 - 22th June 2019

The project was introduced no was design presented. People were asked to comment on:

What activities would you like?

Summary of activities to vote for:

Scooting	10
Skateboarding	5
BMX/biking	18
Skating	6
Remote cars	9
Half Pipe	4
Bike club	3
Total	45

Activity Space Shepherds Hill

Public Consultation

Which activities would you like?

Which surface would you choose?

Asphalt

- low maintenance
- multifunctional

Dirt

- high maintenance
- monofunctional (BMX)

Lime Aggregate

- high maintenance
- monofunctional (BMX)

Wood

- high maintenance
- multifunctional

Public Consultation Engagement Event 22. June 2019 with feedback and responses

Which surface would you choose?

Asphalt	7
Dirt	12
Lime Aggregate	10
Wood	13
Total	42

Comments;

- Asphalt increases injuries
- Dirt let painful for falls, used for lots of things, can easily be modified
- local expert Patrick Laing, resident who has used the track when he was a child happy to be involved; patrick@patricklaing.com, provide kids with shovels so they can maintain track,
- 'Great idea, get the kids involved as much as possible'
- Felipe: ' Asphalt surface would be easier or Lime Aggregate looks nicer for the tracks'
- Local parent: 'serving several age groups; consider teenagers; perhaps outdoor gym?'

Other suggestions;

Basketball court

Bouldering

outdoor gym

Woodland trail + various play spaces with bug hotels, bird boxes, nature info

Wildflower edges

Public Consultation Engagement Event 22. June 2019

Need high burn at west end of site

Just tidy it up

Importance of it as a nature reserve/area for nature

Victoria Park – loop reference

Kimber Road adventure playground, Tooting for ideas

Olympic park BMX

Need for something for older kids, teens in this area



Public Consultation Engagement Event 22. June 2019

Consultation 2 - 19th June 2021

For the second consultation we provided further information including a zoning diagram of the area with the potential of developing the wildlife area.

Shepherd's Hill - BMX Track and Wildlife Area Public Consultation

We are pleased to announce that the BMX track and Wildlife Area Project, supported by Haringey Council and the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum, is getting underway.

What is it?

The BMX track and Wildlife Area Project will transform the current makeshift BMX tracks into a multi-use loop and active outdoor zone for children of all ages. The aim is to create a meaningful, site-specific design, which revives the area into a multi-generational active play space and pocket park, strengthening the local neighbourhood and community.

The project is included in the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan and we hosted a local engagement event in 2019 as part of the Highgate Festival. The project will be a long-term investment, transforming a currently underused space into an active play area. The aim is to create community cohesion within an open space, connecting with nature and promoting biodiversity, and creating a much-loved destination for visitors. We are committed to delivering a project, which will help enrich the public realm, preserve and enhance local wildlife and benefit the whole community.

The site would feature three zones: the BMX world, Play&Explore and the Wildlife Trail. We would like to invite local people and interested groups to join us for a creative consultation. The consultation will be an opportunity to share and discuss ideas and meet locals.

Connect



Visit our online Miro board to sketch some ideas



Further info:
www.room102.com/bmx-trail

Please leave your email address if you would like to be informed further and are interested in volunteering.



Shepherd's Hill - BMX Track and Wildlife Area Public Consultation



What is current skill level?

Beginner	3
Intermediate	7
Advanced	1

Which of the below do you own or would you like to be able to use here?

BMX bike	4
Road bike	3
Mountain bike	3
Skateboard	1
Scooter	5
Roller skates	0
Other	2

Which surface would you choose?

Hard surface	6
Dirt	4
Lime Aggregate	1
Wood	3



Public Consultation in June 2021

Shepherd's Hill - BMX Track and Wildlife Area Public Consultation

BMX LAND

Do you ride a bike?

Do you come here often?

Do you live locally?

Would you be interested in learning how to ride BMX?

What is your current skill level?



Beginner

• •



•



Intermediate

• • • • •



Advanced

•

Which of the below do you own or would you like to be able to use here?



BMX bike

• • •



Road bike

• • •



Skateboard

•



Scooter

• • •



Roller skates



Other?

• •

Which surface would you choose?



HARD SURFACE

- low maintenance
- multifunctional
(bike, skateboard, roller skates, scooter)

• • • • •



DIRT

- high maintenance
- monofunctional (BMX)

• • •



LIME AGGREGATE

- medium maintenance
- monofunctional (BMX)

•



WOOD

- medium maintenance
- multifunctional (bike, skateboard, roller skates, scooter)

• •

Comments:

- great idea, use the space like this
- BMX closest track, more in London (no dirt jumps left in London)
- it's too steep, nobody can use it
- more seating
- best example: Fleet in Hampshire
- great idea, not sure if it's safe
- maintenance risk for timber, drainage to be considered
- 2 routes, 'tables' on inside, 3.5 ft.
- higher fence to prevent trash falling into skatepark
- a bin, compost/recycling
- can we expand the path?
- more shelter, Odin age 8
- lighting
- something to climb on, but also good for a low skill level bike
- a bit muddy after rain
- more seating
- litter: residents complained about rubbish, bins need, not a magnet for littering
- build from the outside in
- local BMX rider + recommends dirt. It's easy to maintain
- bins+litter
- help to make it easy to use many different types of things (scooter, bike etc)
- learned to bike ride here! Bebe 4 years old



Consultation in June 2021 discussing with locals and highly skilled BMX enthusiasts the changes that have been recently made making the track less accessible

Shepherd's Hill - BMX Track and Wildlife Area

What is your favourite outdoor activity?

Panel of Public Consultation in June 2021

Which playground or park do you visit locally?

What do you choose?

WILDLIFE TRAIL

Would you be interested in exploring?

Room102.com

Panel of Public Consultation in June 2021

Consultation 3 - 18th June 2022

This consultation provided further detail in regards to the BMX track layout with a sketch being presented, please see adjacent image.

Comments:

- Sounds great!
- Really cool
- Wow! It would be awesome!!!
- Being used as an outdoor toilet
- Haggerston Park E2 bike club 2£ per session
- Feels deserted, boy 12 years old
- Lighting avoid path in the dark
- I hope the BMX track is available to all ages
- Bike clubs can compete against each other
- Hackney Bike Club with shipping containers
- Great for kids
- Hard for teenagers to find a space which constructed
- So right now!!! Has to be done, Etienne 12 years
- Hard standing for start stop skills
- Open space for children ****
- Lots of drug dealing here.
- Sounds great. Good luck! Who did the current digging?
- How can we integrate existing activity with future plans?
- This is excellent!
- Very unsafe at night. Especially at night. Put lights in.
- More vegetation to screen as much as possible
- Open space/play space, plant space, kids/teens area
- Elthlone Park has solar lighting -> works well
- Local lady lights fires at the bottom

The outcomes from the consultations was that vast majority consultees were supportive of the idea and felt a more formalised BMX Track would be a boost for young people in the community; there were concerns about littering as well as lighting;



Panels of Public Consultation in June 2022

In addition following consultees were approached:

Alistair Smith Haringey Council

Annabel Foskett MSc (EnvMan) Haringey Council

TBC Ward Councillors

Rob Head of CIL funding

Cllr Liz Morris Haringey Council

Lewis Taylor Parks Operation Manager, Haringey Council

David Theakston Head of Parks Projects, Haringey Council

Alex Fraser Senior Arboricultural Officer, Haringey Council

Alicia Pivaro Highgate Neighbourhood Forum

Christopher Riley Friends of the Miltons

Elsbeth Clements ARAG (Archway Road Action Group)

Cindy Blaney Wood Keeper Highgate Woods, bat ecologist,

City of London

Paul Ashley, Local bike enthusiast

Simon Olley, Friends of Parkland Walk/Wildlife Trail

Mat Pendergast, TCV – The Conservation Volunteers

Appendix: Consultation - Feedback

On 20 Jun 2021, at 13:32, Paul Domjan wrote:
Hi Maria,

Our discussion yesterday certainly prompted an evening of conversation in the Domjan household! Here are our thoughts:

While John and his group certainly seem keen and committed, they are also very dogmatic about building something big and in dirt that very few local people will be able to ride. We would enjoy part of it--Rafael could probably ride the first gap--but we can only think of one person we know in Highgate (actually N19, Whitehall Park) who could ride the whole thing.

With respect to the dirt section, as well as my own experience of going there with the kids, there are many more mountain bikes than BMX bikes there--indeed before meeting John yesterday, the only real BMX I had seen there was my own, although Rafael has seen a couple once! I worry that the gaps are too close together to be easily ridden even by a skilled mountain biker. If we build something advanced (black or 2-3 dot depending on the trail grading system) out of dirt, it needs to be equally accessible to BMX and MTB to ensure that it's useful to as many local people as possible. The transitions between the sections of what John's built are definitely too short for mountain bikes to ride.

The space is really small for three routes, but John's idea of a row of tables, which can be either rolled or jumped, with an optional gap jump at the end, is a good one. John had thought about this for the intermediate middle ring, but I really think that should be the most advanced set of features in the outside ring, especially given the limited space available.

We think that it's important to build something with a concrete surface that can be used by everyone in the local community with sufficient ability (e.g. scooters and skateboards as well as MTB and BMX). I appreciate that John and his friend were saying yesterday that it hurts to crash on concrete, but they also weren't wearing any safety equipment (e.g. helmets or pads). We worry that while dirt would be a good material for the outer tables, with concrete in the middle, that these two won't coexist well because the dirt will get scattered onto the concrete making it muddy, loose and unsafe to ride.

For the inside, or indeed perhaps for the entire area, we think that something like [this pump track at Edenbrook Country Park](#), near Fleet, would be an excellent model. It's built in a figure of eight, with one loop being easier than the other, so the people have the option to ride the whole thing for a longer track or the easier or the harder by themselves. Everything is rollable, and rideable on scooter and skateboards, but you can also jump between the rollers on a bike or scooter.

We could either build something like this that takes up the whole area, or have a more advanced loop going around the sides, but we're concerned that the space is too small for a more advanced loop around the outside, especially given the need to get sufficient speed from a flat, standing start. If they want an advanced loop, it would make more sense to integrate it with the pump track so that you can gain speed on the pump track, ride the advanced loop, and then lose speed again on the pump track.

The Edenbrook track I referred to above was built by [Velosolutions](#), which is the biggest builder of pump tracks and mountain bike trails in Europe. [This is their UK subsidiary](#), and they have built more than 20 tracks in the UK. In my view, it would be great to get them involved as soon as possible. I'm also happy to introduce you to the project manager for the Fleet track, who has been happy to discuss their experience with other councils. If you wanted another potential builder, [B1ke](#) are based in Surrey, and are an award winning trail builder. However, I would definitely prefer Velosolutions because they have much more experience with, and some proprietary techniques for, building hard surfaces that work and are challenging for MTB, BMX, scooters and skateboards.

Also, I do hope that we can also explore building some more natural mountain bike trails in the woods going down the hill, which would give more options, including potentially building some big gaps like John built away from the main area that younger kids will be using.

Finally, once the facility is built, I wonder whether it's worth engaging with a BMX and MTB coach who could help local kids develop the skills to get the most out of it. Otherwise, the advanced features really won't be a benefit to the local community.

I hope that this is helpful and look forward to supporting the project.

Best wishes, Paul

Consultation BMX Loop/Outdoor Zone:

TCV volunteers re maintenance

TCV – The Conservation Volunteers

Alice Evans and Mat Pendergast, Senior Projects Officer

TCV Haringey and BAT North

Meeting on 24th January 2020 on site

- happy to be involved in this project and they maintain similar sites like this and would need to be discussed with the council
- can organise regular workshops with local residents
- are involved with the Parkland Walk Nature Trail and helped set this up and would be happy to advise and potentially support us with construction
- tree survey required
- clear dedicated zones for play and wildlife

Meeting on 8th June with Mat Pendergast

- discussed procurement, scope of work they can do, surface materials options, wildlife recreation, maintenance

Simon Olley,, 28th May 2021, Friends of Parkland Walk/Wildlife Trail

Advice on how to increase recreation of pond, reduce Sycamore Trees,

Consultation with the BMX/cycle organisation

Paul Wheeler from Lordship Loop BMX:

- being very clear on what the goals of the track are: what kind of riders (race bmx? freestyle? scooters? ability? age group?) Pretty obvious, but they were somehow missed in the planning stage of our track. Or, rather, the track was planned for one kind of rider (mountain bike) but it wasn't envisaged that this might change, (which it did, to race BMX, which was far more relevant to the local community)

Our current track is inappropriate for our needs because:

- it's single track only (so you can't race, or practise riding close to other riders)
- you cannot see the whole track at one time as it winds through trees. Aesthetically lovely, but makes coaching and safeguarding very challenging, and requires a lot of volunteers to ensure safe sessions.
- there's no fencing to keep non-riders off the track (which further hampers coached sessions plus increases likelihood of damage)

Also, no one thought to allocate a budget for maintenance of our track. This might not be so relevant to you if you are going for a fully tarmaced track. The majority of bmx tracks are made of limestone gravel/aggregate with tarmac on the berms (corners). This requires a) funds to buy the aggregate for patching the track b) somewhere to store the aggregate; and c) volunteer labour to do the regular maintenance. This can be avoided by having a completely tarmac track — and many pump tracks are — but there may be disadvantages to this.

K's Bicycle Workshop, 248 Archway Road, N6 5AX (www.ksbicycleworkshop.co.uk) near site:

- fixed pump would be good - they have these along the bike highways in the city.
- would be open to the idea to offer maintenance workshops
- repair station: needs to be clear about responsibilities and needs to be on chains

Consultation with the Police - security matters

Summary meeting on 24th January 2019 with

Martin Nicholls, Police Constable 748YR,

Allan Greig, PC456YR, Highgate Safer Neighbourhood Team

Hornsey Police Station, 98 Tottenham Lane, Hornsey London N8 7EJ

- Highgate Safer Neighbourhood Team thought it was a good idea to upgrading the area and tracks
 - the more open and visible it is, the better and the more people that use it, the better
 - security camera coverage would be good - as part of Haringey's current review of security cameras, they have asked for one at Jacksons Lane - this would cover the BMX area so could we ask the Parks people to put in an extra plea to the people in charge of security cameras at Haringey (this would also have the advantage of being monitored by Haringey, so we wouldn't have on-going monitoring issues)
- Note: CCTV cameras for Highgate had been approved on approved 13th March 2019, Police Safer Neighbourhood Panel, Cllr Bob Hare This includes one on Archway Road near the tube station - this is the one the Police were keen to be there to help police the BMX track
- lighting, also for path down to tube.: there seems to be pros and cons i.e. lighting would increase safety but also make it a more attractive place to hang out
 - only concerns re attracting suspicious people because young people hanging out there e.g. drug dealers, muggers - don't want to encourage this
 - in favour of adding a small skateboard area as this would attract more people to the site
 - wild area (North/towards Priory Gardens): liked the idea of this being properly set up as a trail for small children, including the area at the bottom having a small 'forest school' area, as this would bring supervising adults to the area during the day; emphasises the cross- generational aspect of the project.

Feedback/Quotes

Jo Taylor, joblerona@btinternet.com, (local resident with children regularly using the makeshift tracks)- meeting on site 17th January 2019

It's a unique opportunity, we could not think of any other ones in the area (beside the Olympic Park's BMX track).

It is quite invisible from the street and most people don't know it exists, so it would be good to make it more visible to the street so there is awareness in the community.

Current tracks work quite well, however:

- a little small, could be enlarged - I went there today and one could have a longer run towards library and down towards Priory Park
- some curves don't work so well
- the berm at the end of the track would need to have a higher outer edge
- more bumps/double bumps
- starter ramp for speed

Other:

- it would be good to integrate a bike repair station (e.g. screw drivers etc. attached to chain).
- requires seating
- we did discuss that perhaps one could consider a small hard landscaped feature, so it could become more multifunctional and also have an interest for skateboarders

From: Ashley Gilbert <agilbert@yahoo.co.uk>

Date: 18 September 2019 at 21:58:19 BST

To: info@forhighgate.org, Subject: Highgate BMX track

Hi there,

My name is Ashley and my family has been a resident of Highgate (North Hill) for almost 10 years. Our two kids go to St Michael's primary school and our eldest boy (Cass - 9yrs) is into BMX...much like his dad...

About 2 years ago we discovered the long-lost BMX track next to Highgate station and have been spending increasing amounts of time there in recent months (as well as visiting other pump tracks around London).

The other day we came across an article which spoke about the consultation and potential funding/rebuilding via Haringey council of (our much loved) Highgate track...and we got very excited indeed.

Our question is, what can we do to help make this a great, all year round, community spot where bike-loving and skating kids (and a few adults) can come and hang out, as there's definitely potential within that pocket of land to create something good and of longevity?

Yours expectantly, Ashley Gilbert