

Appendix A - Update to Barnet Scrutiny: Outdoor Gyms and Outdoor Gym Activators

Background

The Sports and Physical Activity Needs Assessment identified that levels of physical activity are lower in Barnet in comparison to the London and England average.

The recent consultation showed that cost and access to facilities are the two main barriers for people being active. Hence the majority of Barnet residents would prefer to do exercise in outdoor spaces.

Outdoor Gyms are unique in that they are free to use, suitable for varying fitness levels and provide a more local and sustainable form of physical activity which encourages people to be outdoors and use their local green spaces.

Outdoor Gyms will contribute to the achievement of the aims of Council's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy – by delivering an environment conducive to physical activity in a manner that is as cost neutral as possible to the public purse.

Evidence

There is developing literature which suggests that both passive and active exposure and access to natural open spaces and well-designed green spaces can have a wide range of social, economic, environmental and health benefits¹. More specifically, the natural environment can provide many opportunities for increasing levels of physical activity². There is some evidence to suggest that modification of the natural environment may promote and change levels of physical activity³.

Locations

The overall Project aims to provide a total of 12 Outdoor Gyms across Barnet – (1x Existing at Oak Hill Park and 11x New).

Phase 1 All new seven outdoor gyms have now been fully installed. The table below shows the location of each of the gyms.

¹ Morris N (2003) Health, Well-being and Open Space: Literature Review. OPENspac:Scotland.

² Henwood K (2001) Exploring linkages between the environmental and health: Is there a role for environmental and countryside agencies in promoting benefits to health? A report for the Forestry Commission.

³ NICE (2008) Promoting and Creating built or natural environment that encourage and supports physical activity. NICE PH8.

Table 1. The locations for each of the Outdoor Gyms

Park	Ward
Watling Park	Burnt Oak
Childs Hill Park	Childs Hill
Friary Park	Coppetts
Oak Hill Park	East Barnet
Edgwarebury Park	Edgware
Mill Hill Park	Mill Hill
Barnet Playing Fields	Underhill
Hendon Park	West Hendon

Phase 2 There are plans to complete a full review of the current locations and the use of gyms. This will then inform the Phase 2 consultation which will be used to inform which sites will be delivered.

The proposed locations (**indicative at this point only**) for the Outdoor Gyms are including: Sunny Hill, Windsor Open Space, Lytton Playing Fields, Hollickwood Park, Riverside Walk, Victoria Recreation Ground and Ducks Island. Please note that this list is subject to change pending evaluation and consultation.

Who is targeted?

Outdoor gyms are installed in the areas of low participation in physical activity which coincide with areas of deprivation in Barnet.

The launch event

The Outdoor Gyms and Outdoor Gym Activators programme will be launched **on Monday 30th June 2014.**

The Outdoor Gym Activator programme

The Outdoor Gym Activator programme train and use volunteers to increase participation levels through:

- Encouraging use of the outdoor gyms, highlighting availability for all residents
- Encourage the correct use and technique of the Outdoor Gym equipment

- Signposting local people to active health (exercise) possibilities
- Identifying and targeting groups in the community that are the hardest to reach – peer activators will be encouraged and supported to use their local contacts to engage peers in their own communities. This will include local community groups, community centres, leisure centres and GP surgeries

Middlesex University has been commissioned by Public Health to train the Outdoor Gym Activators. The volunteer activators are coming to the end of their training and will be available to support the residents in the outdoor gyms during the week beginning 16 June.