

## **Thames Barrier Park, Consultation Response**

### **1. Thames Barrier Park**

- 1.1.** Thames Barrier Park (TBP) is a 7-hectare green space located in the Royal Docks - an area in the London Borough of Newham. The park is managed by the Greater London Authority. Opened in November 2000 it was London's largest new riverside park for over 50 years. There is abundant wildlife and picnic and children's play areas, a basketball court, visitor pavilion and cafe with views of the river and Thames Barrier.
- 1.2.** It was designed by landscape architect Allain Provost (Groupe Signes) of Paris and architects Patel Taylor of London. Remarkably, the park was created on a site that once housed petrochemical and acid works on the Thames riverbank. The contaminated soil was covered with a 2-meter layer of crushed concrete to protect the new soil laid on top. Since its opening the park has won design awards in the UK and USA.
- 1.3.** Over the past 20 years, the Royal Docks has experienced a huge amount of change, with new homes being built and an increase of residents to the area, this is expected to increase in coming years. Thames Barrier Park is the largest green space in the Royal Docks and is hugely admired for its stunning Green Dock. However, with the increase of people moving to the area, the park is not currently used to its full potential and with the park celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, we want to carry out a design review to enhance the park and increase visitor footfall.
- 1.4.** As part of the design review, during Spring 2020 we carried out an online consultation to understand how the park is currently used and how it can be improved.

### **2. Consultation**

- 2.1.** The TBP consultation material was developed with the Royal Docks Communities Team and aimed to capture a wide range of information to support future works and improvements to the space. The consultation material was available online and in leaflet format.
- 2.2.** Surveys were distributed through our mailing list to community centres, schools, doctors' surgeries, cafes, work spaces, residents' homes and landowners. The consultation was also promoted through posters in public spaces and via the Royal Docks social media channels and website.
- 2.3.** Two drop-in consultation sessions were carried out at the Siemens Crystal throughout February, including one session during half term.
- 2.4.** The consultation was open for six weeks throughout February and March 2020.

### **3. Responses and results**

- 3.1.** 491 responses were received.
- 3.2.** The majority (87%) of respondents were from the London Borough of Newham, the furthest respondent was Wallingford, 70 miles away. The park is regularly visited by locals, with 63% of respondents visiting the park at least once a week or more. Access to nature was the most

popular reason to visit the park, followed by sports, exercise and socialising. 78% of people think the park requires improvement.

### 3.3. Q5. What types of improvements would you like to see?

3.3.1. Respondents were asked about the types of improvements needed in the park. The table below details their responses.

Improvement type	%
Infrastructure improvements such as increased lighting, CCTV, pathways	19
Evening access to the café	17
More planting/trees	14
Improved access to the park	13
More events	11
Increased seating	9
Changes to children's play area	6
More information on the Royal Docks heritage	5
Public artwork	4
Increased signage/notice boards	1

3.3.2. See appendix 1. TBP. Other Park Improvements for a list of alternative suggestions.

#### 3.3.3. **Infrastructure (19%), next steps**

Improvements to infrastructure is the priority with a focus on the safety and lack of lighting at the park. Existing lighting should be reviewed, and users engaged to address concerns over park safety.

3.3.4. The paths and decking throughout the park are of poor quality and have been patchworked repaired throughout. The northern path is in a particularly bad condition with many potholes. The original path was created using Fibredex. Future repairs should be in keeping with the parks' original designs. BYUK are currently exploring costs to replace a section of the northern path as part of their remedial works following the completion of the Millet Place development.

3.3.5. The condition of the decking should be reviewed throughout the park and reinstated to original design.

3.3.6. Infrastructure for CCTV is present in the park and should be reviewed to whether it is feasible to reinstate it.

#### 3.3.7. **Evening access to the café (17%), next steps**

Before the café closed in 2018, it was only open during park hours. The consultation results demonstrate a high demand for evening access to the café. Further discussions are required with the café operator, Made Up Collective on their requirements for this and how we can support them to open the café in the evenings.

3.3.8. We need to consider how evening access to the café can be maintained whilst restricting access to the wider park once it closes at dusk. There might be an option to install a new

fence line and gates linking the entrance from Millet Place to the café, to prevent access into the park in the evening.

- 3.3.9. It is possible that by enabling evening access to the café, additional storage space will be required to accommodate an increase in events and resources. Options to support this should be considered; with potential to create a storage container in keeping with the park to sit alongside the café.
- 3.3.10. **More planting and trees (14%), next steps**  
The existing planting plan and Royal Docks Tree Planting Masterplan should be reviewed to assess where more planting can be incorporated into the park. The maintenance costs of any additional plants and trees should also be considered.
- 3.3.11. **Improved access to the park (13%), next steps**  
The report completed by AD H&S details improvements to enhance access to the park, including cutting back foliage to widen access points, these should be considered to enhance access.
- 3.3.12. The development in front of the park, Millet Place was completed in April 2020 and has created a new main entrance to the park, including a DDA compliant ramp. There is now direct access from Pontoon Dock DLR station into the park.
- 3.3.13. The cost implications of extending the opening hours of the park should be assessed.
- 3.3.14. **More events (11%), next steps**  
Discussions with the Royal Docks Events, Royal Docks Communities Team and the café Operator Made Up Collective are needed to progress the programming of more events at TBP. Made Up Collective, have extensive ideas for delivering events and increasing community engagement and over the coming months, a delivery programme will be established. The RD Team will work closely with Made Up Collective to ensure the infrastructure required is in place.
- 3.3.15. Popular exercise classes are already carried out in the park three times a week by One Element.
- 3.3.16. **Increased seating (9%), next steps**  
The seating distribution should be reviewed and relocated and or increased if needed.
- 3.3.17. **Changes to the children's play area (6%), next steps**  
The existing play equipment will be upgraded in 2020. However, responses also referenced the need for a play area for older children. This is dependent on the space available within the park and the impact of increasing infrastructure. Alternative options for older children could be explored, such as nature trails or events.
- 3.3.18. **More information on the Royal Docks heritage (5%), next steps**  
Recreating the heritage information from the BYUK hoardings elsewhere in the park has previously been discussed, however, as demand is low for this, it will not be progressed at this stage.

### 3.3.19. More art work (4%), next steps

The interest in having art work at the park is low. However, the pump room at the front of the park is a blank canvas and could be used in the future for art work or wayfinding.

### 3.3.20. Increased signage (1%), next steps

There isn't a requirement to increase the signage in the park. The existing signage should be updated with the RD branding.

## 3.4. Q6. If you're interested in seeding more events and activities in the park, what type would you like to see?

3.4.1. Performances are the most popular type of event for users of the park. As mentioned above, event planning and programming will be explored further with the RD Events and Communities Teams and also Made Up Collective to ensure we respond to users' requests. Park Zaryad'ye in Moscow was mentioned as a good reference to build on for TBP.

Event type	%
Performances, including music, plays	28
Food	19
Health and exercise	15
Events for families	14
Art and culture	11
Festivals	10
None	2

## 3.5. Q7. When is the best time for events to take place?

3.5.1. The weekends are the most popular times for events, with the top three options being weekend afternoons (32%), weekend evenings (18%) and weekend mornings (17%). Only 5% of respondents chose not to have events at the weekend.

## 3.6. Q8. How safe do you feel in the park?

3.6.1. 83% of respondents feel safe in the park. However, the respondents feeling unsafe, raised the same concerns surrounding lack of lighting, lack of security, issues with dogs and ASB. These will be reviewed as part of the improvement works detailed above.

## 3.7. Q9. Do you think the opening hours of the park should be extended?

3.7.1. The response on opening hours were equal at 50:50 yes and no. Extending the café opening hours in to the evening should be explored first and if this proves to be successful, the opening hours of the park should be reviewed.

## 4. Next Steps

4.1. The RD team will explore the feasibility of the improvements discussed in this report and will work with consultants to develop initial designs and interventions to address the issues raised

and to enhance the space. Following this, a further round of consultation will be carried out with local users to establish a programme of works to be delivered during 2020/2021 financial year.