

Skate Area – Frequently Asked Questions

What is currently happening?

A report on the proposal is currently being written by council officers to present to the Mayor on 1st December at which the decision will be taken whether or not to allow it to be built in Telegraph Hill lower park.

Has the process been democratic? What consultation has there been?

There has been a variety of consultation taking place since the idea was first raised in 2009 including:

- Public information and consultation event in the Lower Park in February 2010, which was advertised through a 2000 door-to-door local leaflet drop.
- Presentation and open discussion at three Local Assembly meetings (October 19th 2009, June 2010, September 2010) to which all ward residents were invited to attend via a door-to-door leaflet.
- Presentation and open discussion at the last two Friends of the Park meetings.
- Posters of proposed designs sited in the local parks and placed on local websites prior to the September 2010 Local Assembly meeting.
- Working party set up in June 2010 following the Friends of the Park meeting to make a recommendation on location within the lower park, and involving local residents both for and against the proposal.
- Information has been posted on the <http://www.thehill.org.uk/>; <http://www.telegraphhilllabour.org.uk/>; <http://brockleycentral.blogspot.com/>; www.lewisham.gov.uk

What role has the Assembly had in the decision making about the skate area proposal?

The Telegraph Hill Local Assembly is an open meeting where anyone who lives, work or studies in the ward can discuss matters of local concern to help shape the future of local neighbourhoods and services. Invitations to meetings are delivered to every house in the ward. Ward councillors attend and chair the meetings. Notes are taken and posted on the Local Assembly website.

The Local Assembly has been the main forum where the skate area proposal has been debated (October 19th, June 17th, September 23rd), alongside the Friends of the Park meetings.

In September 2008 the Local Assembly agreed improving youth activities and facilities as one of five local ward priorities. At the October 2009 meeting a group of local children, supported by their mothers, told other residents about their ideas for a skate area. They were awarded a £1,000 to undertake consultation. An information and consultation event took place in the lower park on February 27th 2010, which was advertised through a 2000 door-to-door local leaflet drop.

Feedback was given to the next Local Assembly meeting on June 17th and possible locations were discussed. This meeting indicated that it did not want the facility in the Upper Park. The matter was discussed further at the Friends of the Park User Group on June 21st. A working group was formed to look into possible locations in the Lower Park and to make a recommendation on location to the Ward Assembly on September 21st. The working group recommended the location by the basket ball court. The site was proposed at the meeting, open discussion took place and a vote was taken. The Assembly voted in favour of the location For 196 votes, against 72 votes.

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How big would the skate area be?

This is a small skate board area to be positioned around 1 side of the existing ball cage play area, with a small extension at either end of the cage. It will be approximately 150 sq metres long. The pathway will be removed, the grass bank will be cut into by approx 1 metre and the ball cage facility will remain intact. Two small areas at either end of the cage will be used. The ball cage will remain intact. Designs have been showcased at the Telegraph Hill Centre and at the September Assembly.

Why do we need more facilities for young people?

Youth provision has been one of the main priorities for the Local Assembly since September 2008. 21% of ward residents are under 19 years old. There is very little provision for this age group in the Telegraph Hill area.

Will it take away green space?

The proposal will utilise the tarmac pathway area around the Easterly edge of the ball court. However, the grass bank will need to be cut into by approx 1 metre. The small grass patch to the south of the ball cage, currently unused, will also be utilised. The minimal loss of grass will be compensated for with additional green planting.

Will such a facility encourage anti-social behaviour?

There is no reason why a skate board area would increase in anti – social behaviour within the park. Skate boarding will only be allowed in the skate board area. The facility will not be lit so young people will not be able to use this facility after dark.

Will such a facility get covered in graffiti?

There will be a strict zero tolerance on graffiti. The special material proposed has an anti graffiti surface so paint does not adhere to the surface.

Will the park and surrounding areas be noisier?

The facility will lead to an increase in activity in that area of the park. However, only a few young people can use the facility at any one time and skate boarding does not involve a lot of cheering or shouting.

The skate surface would be made of free-form smooth concrete which is extremely quiet compared to other more traditionally used materials such as wood or steel. This surface is now widely used.

The only noise will be the “popping” or “clicking” of the boards. However, this noise is lessened by the type of surface proposed.

The design and location of this facility together with added planting will mitigate against potential added noise. A noise survey has been carried out by an independent specialist company and that report will be included in the decision making process.

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Could the money be better spent elsewhere?

The funding that has been allocated for this proposal has come from a Central Government fund called Positive Activities Fund (PAF). PAF contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan by "Ensuring that all children have opportunities to play and that all young people have a range of accessible leisure activities available to them". Applications were assessed and are monitored against the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework.

The fund is to benefit young people either as a universal offer or for particular groups of young people. Lewisham Council administers the fund locally until March 2011 when the fund finishes.

An application was made for a skate board facility in the Telegraph Hill area. The idea was initiated by the young people themselves who live in the 'hill area' and who were skating in local streets, putting themselves and others at risk.

The funding was given for a skate board facility in Telegraph Hill. If it is not used for this it cannot simply be transferred to any other project locally.

Is this facility just for the "middle classes"?

Use elsewhere demonstrates that skate boarding attracts many young people, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race or social background. It encourages a mix of abilities from very young toddlers on their scooters using it during the day to older children and more experienced skaters. Skate boarding encourages young people to be out of doors, engaged in physical activity and interacting with others.

Telegraph Hill ward and the streets around 'the hill' has a diverse population, a mix of housing tenure (home owners, social housing and private rental) and wide demographic which in turn reflects the needs of the young people. This facility is intended to enhance social cohesion, while addressing the direct needs of young people.