

## Proposed 3G pitch in Brockwell Park

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### Summary

As part of the national Football Facilities Planning exercise, upgrading the existing Redgra football pitch in Brockwell Park to a 9x9 artificial pitch was identified as a priority project for Lambeth:

<https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/lambeth/lambeth-local-football-facility-plan/>

If planning permission is granted, the facility will be mostly funded via the Football Foundation. The total cost will be approximately £800,000, of which £200,000 will be contributed by Lambeth.

### Background

The existing Redgra/cinder pitch in the park is fifty years out of date and represents a sterile eyesore in the park, with minimal usage. The Strategic Partnership Board for Brockwell Park examined other locations in the park, but it was not possible to identify a more appropriate location; and redevelopment of the Redgra pitch is required anyway, as it is currently a wasted asset. Without development access to this area may, in the foreseeable future, need to be restricted or prevented given the deteriorating condition of the ground and retaining walls.

There are over 100 football teams based in Lambeth. An online consultation with potential users has revealed significant interest from many local clubs that have traditionally been unable to train or play in the borough. If Lambeth is to contribute to the growth in the popularity of the women and girls game and the recent success of the Lionesses it needs new and attractive facilities.

Brockwell Park originally had three Redgra pitches. One is now the BMX track and the other was turned into a wildflower meadow in 2019. There has always been the intention to upgrade sports facilities as and when funding opportunities became available and the required specification of a new 9x9 3G pitch means that the old Redgra pitch space is too small. We also need to protect the existing tree line that runs between the edge of the Redgra and the path leading from the Lido to Brixton Water Lane gate – so the new pitch needs to be set back sufficiently, outside of the Root Protection Zone.

The consultants appointed by the Football Foundation have recently submitted a planning application for the facility.

## Context – Lambeth’s Playing Pitch Strategy and Active Lambeth Strategy

Lambeth’s new Playing Pitch Strategy forms part of the Borough’s Planning Framework. Its main conclusions, based on a detailed assessment of supply and demand, are:

- There is insufficient capacity of grass football pitches to meet current demand, with a current shortfall across all pitches.
- Future demand would lead to further capacity shortfalls across all pitch types.
- There is insufficient supply of full size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand in Lambeth based on the FA training model for football and demand amongst other sports.
- Lambeth has the seventh largest population in London but the smallest number of playing pitches of all London Boroughs.

The upgrade of the existing Redgra pitch to an artificial surface is identified as an objective within the Active Lambeth strategy (adopted in March 2022), for completion within five years.

### Key points if planning approval is granted

- There will be no net loss of biodiversity. Some scrub and approximately half of the wildflower meadow would be lost and will be recreated within the conservation area immediately to the north. It is planned that the overall area created will be larger than the existing meadow. New scrub islands are also being created elsewhere in the park.
- The proposed floodlighting is low level directional LED floodlighting which will be screened behind the existing line of trees. It is designed to minimise light spillage and any impact on wildlife. The Pipistrelle bats which are observed using Brockwell Park are not disadvantaged by LED lighting and there is some evidence it is beneficial to them.
- The development of this artificial pitch is likely to reduce football play on the existing grass pitches in the park, freeing up more space for informal recreation.
- Lambeth will directly manage the new pitch, with a full schedule of programmed activities. Many of these will be provided by key community partners, primarily St. Matthew’s Project, at no or low cost to participants. There will be some chargeable slots which will generate income to cover maintenance and management costs of the facility and potentially investment for other facilities within the park.
- The planning application drawings show a vehicle track to the facility. This is purely temporary for construction vehicles. There will be no new roads built in the park and no vehicle access for users.
- We will aim to have cycle parking features installed – although Lambeth may impose this as a planning condition anyway.
- The provision of new sport facilities in partnership with existing community providers forms an important part of Lambeth’s holistic public health approach to reducing serious youth violence.
- An all-weather, floodlit facility will increase the amount of time groups can play football in the park, (The Grounds Maintenance Association recommend a grass football pitch is used for a maximum of four hours a week – an all-weather facility will support 10-15 times this usage) supporting strategic aims around reducing obesity, increasing activity levels and providing positive activities for our young people. Many more of our local young people

will have the opportunity to play football and take part in structured activities on a state of the art pitch.

- Although the BMX Club make occasional use of the existing Redgra pitch they have confirmed this is far from essential and have no objection to the proposed pitch.
- The Redgra pitch may be used for cycling by children, however the surface is very uneven and there are other level areas of tarmac better suited for learning to ride. In addition, the Sports Strategy for the park includes plans to construct a dedicated area for children to learn to skate and ride scooters.

### Visualisation of proposed facility

