
Improvements to Summer Road play area survey results – phase 1

The survey ran from 2 to 27 August 2024.

Distribution: signposted on site, in the Elmbridge noticeboards in the Long Ditton and Thames Ditton wards, published in the Resident Newsletter, advertised on the EBC social media channels, shared on local facebook pages and on the Shout! Holiday Activities facebook page.

Total number of responses: 163

1. Preferred age group for new replacement play equipment

2 to 5	40%
6 to 8	38%
9 to 10	14%
11 to 12	8%

2. What the new equipment should enable children to do:

Climbing	70%
Swinging	56%
Sliding	55%
Balancing	27%
Jumping	22%
Being high up	18%
Imagining and pretending	17%
Spinning	15%
Hiding	8%
Resting, laying, talking and interacting with friends	5%
Crawling	3%
Rolling	1%

Total: 163 responses

3. Comments regarding the new play equipment for Summer Road recreation ground

124 responses (full comments in Appendix – pages 3 to 8)

Insights:

22 respondents (19%) answered **playground** for this question.



4. About respondents

Number of children cared for:

162 responses

2	59%
1	27%
3	11%
4	2%
5+	1%

Age groups of cared for children:

163 responses

1 to 3	51%
4 to 6	39%
6 to 8	35%
9 to 12	29%
Under 12 months	12%
13 to 16	7%
17+	1%

Participation in phase 2 of the consultation:

73% of respondents said they would like to be involved in phase 2 of the consultation to help select the new play equipment

Appendix 1 - Comments regarding the new play equipment for Summer Road recreation ground

The equipment is outdated and needs to be completely replaced.

In real need of an upgrade. Would be great to have some equipment suitable for pre-school age children.

Please make sure the swings are big enough (deep enough) when swinging. I have a 3 year old, so she needs the toddler swing, but many are too low so she grazes her feet. It's not just my toddler :)

That there is access with a buggy from summer road via a path that can be used in all weathers. When I had a little boy and was a childminder this was my biggest bug bear

I think it would be fantastic to have a new playground here.

It is very small and could be made much bigger

Many very young children in the area. Make it suitable for young children

I would be so pleased to see this equipment be updated. I have lived close by for 6 years and my children love coming to the park but are often bored with the current equipment.

I think there could be a case for making the playground bigger as it's a bit small and limited. The table tennis area seems pretty redundant right now, so maybe changing that would be good (letting the grass grow to meadow around it seems a very odd choice too). The football pitch is excellent and a real community hub in the summer.

The equipment is very close to a heavily built up area with housing stock mainly suitable for couples or couples with very young children up to primary age. For this reason, the play equipment should be mainly encourage quiet play and aimed at the youngest age group who would be able to make use of the facilities all through the day. Having equipment that encourage older children to congregate in the playground would not be sensible as the space is quite small and could prevent the youngest children to enjoy the equipment. There is ample space for older children to play football and run around in the park already.

We visit daily and it's a key part of my daughters' exercise regime and social life. Our garden backs on to the area by the playground and we would like to discourage anti social behaviour and loitering at night.

The equipment needs to be inviting and easily accessible for little ones to do themselves. The playground at Victoria park, Balaclava Road in Surbiton is the perfect example. The sand play area is fabulous, however PLEASE provide seating at Summer Road AND full 'safe' gate that little ones can't open themselves as this becomes a huge safeguarding issue. Both the Balaclava Road & Long Ditton playgrounds have dreadful security and the gates to the playgrounds are not secure and often left open as there aren't secure safety locks attached to them, meaning children & dogs can enter/leave at leisure.

Preferable to have something safe children small children cannot fall from a height on. The current climbing frame has too many openings so it is not possible for one parent to keep a younger child safe. My own child has fallen off this

Make sure there are not sheer drops on the equipment, and age appropriate.

For example the ladder in the toddler section has very large gaps between each step, which a toddler cannot reach, and one side just has a drop off.

Larger and more climbing. Much more choice.

Nice wood frames for jumping are great and bigger slides like west Molesey rec. a climbing structure like now would be great although ideally no open sides with sheer drop (Literally this!)

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C37CGZws1eI/?igsh=MXdvaXBIMGtiamdtaA==>

Would be great to have sections more relevant for different age groups and more space for kids to run around. The entrances always get so muddy. Would be great to address that. More space all weather terrain rather than the unused grass

Need a place for picnics and to sit outside the playground

Needs to have some shade covering the area, as it's very exposed. Ideally suitable for ages 0-8 so potentially 2 different areas suited to different age groups.

Really pleased this is happening! It would be great to expand the play space given how bit the field is and would be so lovely to have some natural/woodland play areas for older kids outside of the fenced area.

Please don't just make it for little tiny kids - there is so little for older ones in the local area.

Something that allows continuation of play - natural play type of area where children can smoothly transition from one activity to another rather than separate play equipment.

Natural trust play areas do this well.

Also more open ended play options. I.e Tunnels that they can climb through, climb over, play dens, use their imagination etc. Rather than just a slide being a slide.

It allows children to use their imagination, find new ways to interact with the play equipment and ultimately play for longer.

UK Summers are getting hotter- this play park is too hot to use in the afternoon on a summer's day. It needs some structures that provide shade.

A small splash pad area would be amazing.

More exciting apparatus would be a plus. There is a lot of space so it could be extended with a view to having something for all ages from 2-18. Exercise area with either bodyweight Machines or calisthenics apparatus for older teenagers and adults would be a bonus

Be great to have new equipment for the children, children love swings, slides and climbing bits. Would be great to have a mini trampoline too.

Making it look as natural as possible (e.g. wooden structures), some shaded areas, a sandpit would be great!

More suitable for toddlers

Really important to encourage children of all ages to be outdoors and physically active. Simple measures such as suggested playground group games could be put up as signs, a nature trail with wildlife/trees/fauna to spot, as well as the playground equipment. Dog owners need to be considerate as often we avoid due to dog poo. Perhaps more signs and buns for them to use? Grass should be kept short (perhaps areas for bug hotels with taller wild flowers kept separately) so again safe to see where children are playing. Markings for game sports such as tennis/basketball/netball/football are really helpful- can always use grass area.

Picnic benches always useful for outdoor socialising. At school we have a line marking the length of a one mile run, again an easy thing to place for kids to know they've run a mile. Maybe some stepping stones in the grass to mark this. Thank you this is desperately needed. It is the hub for many local children, during holidays and after school.

Very much needed. The current equipment is very tired and limited. Need a broader range.

Please make it safe for all ages (no high up things accessible to younger children etc)

I would love to retain the younger area and an older area. It would be good for the older equipment to stretch ages from 5-10 so incorporating elements beyond a slide that may be suitable for older children like a small climbing wall etc. I think it's critical we try to adopt an area that encourages older children to be outside and continue to play. Not being bored by the offer. 2 baby swings and 2 older is great and would like to see stay. Rocking items take up valuable space but under utilised and would like to see a larger climbing frame incorporating more. Seating is important but again shouldn't take space from the frames etc. Very very heavy gates currently which can shut awkwardly on younger children.

A splash pad park would be fantastic for the summer. No dangerous monkey bars please.

Robust so does not break often and then be out of use

Some areas with shade for parents and children would be nice on hot days

I asked my children: they would love a skate park and a splash park for hot days. Bigger slides, more challenging climbing frames, more swings.

Could the size of the playground be increased please?

How about a zip-wire for the older children?

The 2 zone idea should be continued i.e. a zone for toddlers and a zone for bigger kids. A toilet would be nice!

This is much needed and would be good to have something for 5+. It has very little at the moment. Please can it have a zip wire, skate park area.

Fun and inclusive for young kids.

Wooden equipment/use of natural materials would be ideal. A splash pad would be really valuable to the local community.

It would be lovely if we had some natural play areas in the field too for older kids.

My two daughters would love some more age appropriate equipment- they are 9 & 11. Such as monkey bars, climbing wall, swings, high level slide. We would use the playground very much as we live 2 roads away.

So many local residents (inc older children) are into their fitness. An addition of an outdoor gym would be amazing! We love the table tennis tables. We've always found the playground very limiting. I'm excited to hear new things are afoot!

Separate area for younger children with activities

Please also make sure it's clean and doesn't have animal fouling including foxes'.

Make it as natural looking as possible

Lots of wood

Shady areas and areas for hiding / hide and seek

Play house type elements for role play as well as swinging / sliding

Soft landing areas ie bark chip or similar

Not so much metal - useless when hot

Imaginative play a big theme

Climbing / sliding / swinging / balancing most important activity led elements

Would be lovely to have a mixture of ages to play. Older children love to play too. Monkey bars would be great, as they have been taken away from local junior school. A hooped net for basketball/ netball. A zip wire is great fun for many ages. Shade would be a healthy idea, could also help you if it rains too. What about something with a den for children to play in? An inclusive swing would be great.

The park has always been a great place to have a picnic, play football and other games.

Need a range of options that are safe. The gap is too large for the climbing frames for little ones. Could floor be soft not concrete.

The swings are already very popular so more of those would be great! Although fences around them to stop toddlers running into them would be helpful. A roundabout would be excellent. The rocker and seesaw is also a hit so anything to allow bouncing and movement like rockers or a trampoline would be good. Some sheltered areas like a Wendy house or something for role play would be good. Not sure if it would be ruined by foxes but a sandpit would be nice. Plenty of benches and tables still for picnics please.

Maintain toddler area vs the older kids area

It's very basic at the moment compared to other playgrounds in the Elmbridge area

More for toddlers than is at present, a sandpit would be amazing!

Sandpit and climbing wall, cross trainer, items for older children, to encourage being outdoors.

It is quite tired and the swings uneven. Also not much variety for older children. Would be nice to have a more natural feel with woodchip, grass or sand rather than tarmac. A zip wire on the grass bit would be amazing!!

Bigger than the current area

Slides and swings are always very popular

Would be fab if older children could be catered for as well as younger kods

This is a very well-used and popular playground - an upgrade is much needed

Nature themed wherever possible! Can you afford some basic perennial planting as well as the playground landscape? Soft bouncy entire floor for the playground would be amazing but also sand and natural materials where possible. Playgrounds we love and are popular are Wisley back to nature, Alexander Road Tolworth, Bushy Park.

I hope the playground become bigger than now to accommodate more children..

Natural ground surface protection such as wood chips. Durable, safe and hardy equipment.

Natural ground such as wood chip and sand would be preferred.

Check out Poole park, Poole. Perfect park and with a paddling pool / splash area would be great!

Please avoid unprotected openings from high platforms. Or openings for things like fireman's poles to only be accessible by older children.

Water play area would be amazing

It would be great if a larger play area catering to a wider age range of children was created.

It would ideally be along the lines of the Balaclava Road playground and maybe have themed areas. Perhaps also some water and sand play if possible.

Having worked for Contractors that have built a a number of schools and associated playgrounds, as well as visiting a number of playgrounds with my kids over the years, I would appreciate an opportunity to be involved in the design given it is literally behind our house.

You can easily make the play area bigger and not effect the park and what it's used for and cater to children. From 0 - 11. Everyone uses this park all year round and it's time it was updated so all the local kids get something from it. Similar to the one in Surbiton.

No sheer drops on climbing frames like fireman poles.

What about poles where slack lines can be set up for teenagers and young adults?

Ideally as much sustainable materials as possible. Maybe a basketball court or hoop area for the older kids and teenagers to keep them entertained. Also the playground should ideally be checked regularly as there has been some vandalism recently.

Nice new spongey surface would be great, otherwise just modernise what's there ideally

Variety of choice for all age groups not just the infants. Vibrant and sturdy equipment.

There is an opportunity to significantly improve this play area, but it needs to have greater variety and incorporate more modern opportunities for play. I'd also like to see more natural and wooden play structures, and the play area expanded. More than 2 toddler swings would be great as there is usually a line up. I'd also love to see some sand and water play opportunities.

The current concrete floor presents a lot of trip hazards for toddlers, I've seen so many accidents over the years, so could you please incorporate soft flooring that covers the whole area, not just the equipment? There is also a need to make sure there is adequate comfortable seating with some shade structures over the top, for us parents who spend a lot of time there!

More wooden equipment, easier to replace, more environmentally friendly ang less likely to crackers a head open

Ideally the equipment would provide enough interest and challenge at different levels so that it is suitable for all of the listed age groups. Children should be able to visit repeatedly and practise new skills so that they can notice themselves making progress and experiencing success.

Natural materials would add greatly to the experience for the children as well as the overall aesthetic.

A climbing wall would be great for older kids

The children swings that are there at the moment are quite short - they don't swing very far. It would be great to see longer ones!

Yes - looking forward to it very much

Would be nice to have a lido/splash pad put in

The access from Alexandra Road needs improvement by removing the steps and providing a ramp to ease entry for buggies and wheelchair users, lay paving left and right of the metal railing so that people don't have to walk in the mud after wet weather, I suggest this as the access from Summer Road stops at the field and after wet weather the field is very muddy and extremely difficult to get buggies and wheelchairs across the grass, I hope that you find my suggestions constructive.

Can you ensure that the new equipment has appropriate safety design to prevent falls.

Very glad this is being considered as the current setup, whilst adequate, is not as stimulating as others in the area

A path from summer road all the way to the play area

Look at the quali cite stuff at Bocketts Farm it's the best I've seen anywhere for all ages

It would be nice for it to be more representative of smaller kids

There is a lot of space that could hold equipment suitable for a range of ages. Some more sophisticated climbing frames would be good.

Tracks for bikes would be great.

At the moment the park is constantly full of fog mess so we avoid it

A splash pad would also be wonderful

We need it

Please put as much as possible in there

More up to date play equipment would be amazing. Also more equipment catered for little ones

More of a variety of activities would be good, we like that there are currently two climbing frames for smaller and older children too

Something similar to Victoria road in surbiton would be amazing, lots of imagination play, sand and splash pads

I believe wood and natural products should be used as much as possible.

Instead of concrete the floor should be rubber compound not bark chippings.

High up camera surveillance should be installed to stop the vandalism recently occurred by teenagers.

I love the idea of play equipment kids can do make believe / pretend play with rather than just the usual slides and swings - eg a boat to climb on / pretend sailing, or pretend shop / cafe - they can be quite basic but with enough to allow kids to use their imagination

Please make the most of the space

Please leave seating for adult carers.

Plenty of bright colours & maybe hopscotch etc on the ground too. Perhaps numbers & alphabet following around the play area too.

An adventure playground is desperately needed in Thames Ditton. Wooden structures - walkways, climbing frames, rope bridge, stepping stones, teepees, zip wire, slides, swings. Farnham park has a fantastic area suitable for lots of ages and I think a similar structure (on a smaller scale) would be great.

Bushy park is also a good example.

There's nothing in Thames Ditton for older children to do. Please can we see something put in place to keep 10,11,12 year olds entertained so they stay off phones & roaming the streets! A skate park would be amazing!

Please cater for the older children as well as toddlers

The play area should really be much bigger. There is so much potential in this large park that isn't being fulfilled. Ideally there should be a long zip line and a sand pit.

All local playgrounds seem very samey with equipment, with little to no imaginative role play items such as housing, boats, fire engine etc.

Really good to have a playground

The area could be extended and a small football/basketball area could be added for rainy days and also for alternative play area

Please make it safe. Currently it feels very dangerous for toddlers to play on.

Soft surface throughout.

Would be great to have some areas creating more shade for sunnier days

Safe, variety, stimulating

Have been wanting the Summer Road recreation ground to be redeveloped for a long time now. The local children deserve a much better play area. We've been really impressed with other parks in Claygate, Imber Court etc. When there is much more inventive play equipment and much better level of safety.

Have a theme - a pirate ship climbing frame or similar. They are always the most loved play equipment. And don't use wood that breaks quickly and is never maintained, leaving areas of equipment out of use. I was on a playground refurbishing committee in Clapham and this was a key consideration. And no sandpit. It's so difficult to keep clean.

Have two sections - one for younger kids and another for older kids, and make them challenging whilst of course being safe.

Consideration to materials so they're sustainable, attractive and hard wearing.

Given it's a small space, thinking about the versatility of play areas so that they can be of interest and fun for a variety of ages.

Please May any climbing frames be tall

This is fantastic news. It is a lovely location for a park but the equipment is definitely dated and due an upgrade! I think due to the size of the playground, it would be difficult to make it for older children. Unless the actual perimeter of the playground could be increased and sections segregated for different ages.

The current set up with a small area for younger kids is ideal, but mainly making sure there is a slide, swing, and roundabout would be great for a lot of kids. There also should be a balance trail (like in grovelands in Molesey) around it.

Please ensure swings and slides are part of the new equipment, and suggest these are really fun colours. I'd also like to see some additional safety considerations - for example some padding on metal steps on slides etc. and to have the full area of the playground covered in the rubber flooring material, or grass. Any areas of asphalt pose a risk to safety to younger children. Having the full area covered in the rubber material or grass also gives parents confidence that children can play without the need to be shepherded from one activity to another, whilst the children are within the fenced area.

There should be a good mixture for all ages. And you should enlarge the play area

It'll be good if can have CCTV or lights or locking fences to keep away unwanted gangs / criminals/ destructive people.

Bright and colourful more structure on main climbing frame for children to play & hide

Avoid too many steep drops

Stuff for the older kids and that also adults can use. Monkey bars would be great. Also it could be larger and needs to include areas of shade.

It's currently aimed at very young children so some activities suited to 7-11 would be great. Inclusion of water/swimming activities would be good.

New flooring needed as it's currently uneven and a trip hazard. Keep the picnic benches/add more.

A bit bigger than before would be good

My daughter would be keen for some monkey bars if that is being considered at all!

We love this playground, I think it would be good to have some higher slides and climbing equipment for older ones and to make everything more wooden and eco friendly