

Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	yes	05/08/26
Relevant Group Head review	yes	03/08/26
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)	yes	03/08/26
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	yes	
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)	AS	03/08/26
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O'Neil)	LO	03/08/26
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	30/07/26
HR comments (if applicable)	n/a	

Stage 2

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date rec'd
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	30/07/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T.Collier	03/08/26
Commissioner engagement		07/08/26
	Delete as applicable:	No issues Comments in S. 7
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		11/08/26

Environment & Sustainability Committee

Date of meeting Thursday 10 September 2026

Title	<i>Public consultation response to proposed MUGA in “Staines upon Thames”</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services Linda Heron Group Head Corporate Governance</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Corporate Priority	Community Environment
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: 1. Consider the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Memorial Gardens, “Staines-upon-Thames”. 2. Agree that the current Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal should not progress in its present form and location, having considered the consultation outcome, site-specific issues, financial implications, legal considerations and deliverability matters; and 3. Note that any future consideration of alternative recreation provision, alternative locations or lower-impact improvements would require a separate options report, funding route, consultation where appropriate, and relevant committee or successor authority approval.
Reason for Recommendation	The consultation outcome indicates that the proposed MUGA in Memorial Gardens has not secured overall public support in its current form or location. In view of the consultation findings alongside the identified site, legal, financial, reputational and delivery considerations, officers consider that not progressing the current proposal is a proportionate response. This would not prevent the wider objective of improving recreation provision for young people from being considered separately in future, should Members wish to do so.

1. Executive summary of the report (expand detail in Key Issues section below)

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
• A public consultation was undertaken between 11 May and 21 June 2026 on	• The original proposal was intended to provide additional outdoor recreation

the proposed MUGA in Memorial Gardens. A total of 760 responses were received. The consultation indicates a substantial level of concern about the proposal in its current form: 74.47% were unsupportive or very unsupportive, 74.74% considered the proposed location unsuitable, and 79.08% said that they or their family would not use the proposed facility.	opportunities, particularly for older children and young people, and to broaden the range of facilities available within the town centre. The Committee now needs to consider the consultation outcome and decide whether the current proposal should progress, be amended, or not proceed.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
Officers recommend that the current Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal should not progress in its present form and location. This recommendation reflects the consultation outcome, and the concerns raised about green space, appearance, noise, location, safety, anti-social behaviour, value for money and the effect on the character and existing use of Memorial Gardens.	If Committee agrees the recommendation, the current proposal will not progress. Officers may consider whether a future options report on alternative recreation provision, alternative locations or lower-impact improvements is appropriate, subject to funding, resources, transition arrangements, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) requirements, Surrey Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and any necessary future approvals.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 In March 2026, the Environment and Sustainability Committee considered proposals for a semi-informal, open-access MUGA within Memorial Gardens, Staines-upon-Thames. The purpose of the March report was to consider whether the proposal should progress through further development, consultation, technical assessment, planning, and funding stages.
- 2.2 The Committee resolved that the project should only progress if, on balance, consultation feedback indicated overall support for the proposal and any issues raised could be appropriately addressed. The Committee authorised the Group Head Neighbourhood Services and the Group Head Corporate Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee to consider consultation feedback to ascertain whether this project can proceed to the next stage, i.e. planning and procurement matters. Following the close of consultation 21 June 2026, the Group Head Neighbourhood Services and the Group Head Corporate Governance reviewed the outcome against that resolution.
- 2.3 The consultation outcome does not satisfy the threshold established by the Committee in March 2026, namely that the project should only progress if, on balance, consultation feedback indicated overall support and any issues raised could be appropriately addressed.
- 2.4 The key findings were:
 - 760 consultation responses were received.

- 74.47% of respondents were unsupportive or very unsupportive, compared with 19.08% supportive or very supportive. **Question 3**
- 74.74% considered the proposed location on the green next to Riverside car park unsuitable. **Question 10**
- 79.08% said that they or their family would not use the proposed MUGA. **Question 4**
- 64.08% selected the option that they did not think a MUGA would provide any benefits. **Question 5**
- The most frequently cited concerns were impact on green space, appearance, location, and noise.

2.5 Key responses and concerns from the consultation

Response	Total	Percentage of total responses
Very supportive	88	11.58%
Supportive	57	7.50%
Neutral	49	6.45%
Unsupportive	122	16.05%
Very unsupportive	444	58.42%
Concern	Total	Percentage of total
Impact on green space	575	75.66%
Appearance	435	57.24%
Location	424	55.79%
Noise	389	51.18%
No concerns	106	13.95%

- 2.6 Written comments included both support and objection, with objections representing the more frequent theme. Respondents raised concerns about the suitability of the location, loss of green space, impact on current use of the gardens, anti-social behaviour, management, safety, value for money and the availability of alternative sites such as Lammas Recreation Ground or Staines Park.
- 2.7 The consultation responses indicate that opposition was directed not only at the principle of a MUGA, but particularly at the proposed location, its impact on green space and the character of Memorial Gardens. This distinction is relevant because it suggests that the wider objective of improving recreation opportunities for young people may still be capable of further consideration, provided that any future proposal is based on a different assessment of location, impact, cost, management and community acceptability.
- 2.8 Supportive comments identified potential benefits including free recreation for young people, support for health and wellbeing, improved activity in the town centre and provision for residents of new town-centre housing. However, even some supportive comments noted the need for careful design, maintenance

and management, and a high number expressed reservations about the chosen location.

- 2.9 The Police responses supported the principle of providing a MUGA but raised important safety concerns about the proposed location. Their main concern was that the site is not easily visible to the public and is close to the town centre, where anti-social behaviour already occurs. They considered that safety measures, surveillance, access arrangements, and crime prevention design would be essential for successful and safe operation.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

- 3.1 **The preferred option is Option 3:** agree that the current Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal should not progress in its present form and location and, if Committee wishes to continue exploring the wider policy objective, request a future options report on alternative recreation provision. This approach gives weight to the consultation outcome while avoiding commitment to a proposal that has not secured overall public support.

Option	Pros	Cons/Risks
Option 1: Approve progression of the current Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal	Further technical work, procurement, and planning considerations to continue and could support the objective of improving outdoor recreation for young people.	Would be contrary to the overall consultation outcome. It would require clear, robust, evidence-based, and legally defensible reasons to proceed despite significant opposition. It could increase legal, reputational, financial and delivery risks. It should be noted that the Staines local CIL pot does not hold enough funding to support the CIL bid of £500k (see 5.1 below).
Option 2: Reject the current proposal and take no further action	Procedurally straightforward and directly responds to consultation opposition. Avoids further expenditure on a proposal without clear public support.	Would address the consultation outcome in relation to the current proposal but would not provide a route for considering whether alternative recreation provision, alternative locations or lower-impact improvements could meet the wider objective in a more acceptable way.

Option 3: Agree that the current proposal should not progress and consider if a future options report would be appropriate (preferred option)	Responds to the consultation outcome and avoids further commitment to the current proposal, while preserving the ability to consider alternative ways of meeting the wider youth recreation objective. It allows alternative sites, lower-impact options, costs, risks, consultation requirements, funding routes, transition implications and future governance requirements to be assessed before any further decision is made. Protects the Council from legal challenge and reputational damage.	Any alternative proposal would require further officer time, assessment, consultation, funding consideration and committee approval. Given Local Government Reorganisation, any materially different proposal is unlikely to be developed, approved and delivered before Vesting Day and would need to be considered in the context of transition arrangements and the priorities of the successor authority.
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4. Risk implications

Risk	Issue	Mitigation
Legal challenge	Approving the proposal despite the consultation outcome could increase the risk of challenge if the reasons for doing so are not clearly evidenced.	Ensure any decision is supported by a robust business case, clear reasoning, proper consideration of consultation responses and all relevant material considerations.
Reputational risk	Proceeding with the current proposal may be perceived as giving insufficient weight to consultation feedback.	Respond transparently to consultation findings and explain the rationale for the Committee's decision.
Financial risk	Further development work would require expenditure before certainty on planning, funding, and deliverability.	Do not commit further expenditure without a clear decision, funding route, and assessment of deliverability.
Delivery risk	Planning, flood risk, ecology, heritage, design, and management considerations may affect deliverability.	Require further technical assessment before any delivery decision and undertake relevant surveys

		if a planning application is progressed.
Community impact	The current proposal raises concerns about green space, amenity, noise, and park character.	Consider alternative sites or lower-impact recreation options through a further report, noting that future proposals are unlikely to be completed before Vesting Day and would be subject to a business case and subsequent approval of the West Surrey Unitary

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The March 2026 report identified indicative total costs of up to £500,000 for the proposed MUGA, alongside additional early-stage costs for surveys, assessments, and planning work. The project would be dependent on CIL funding. The Staines wards pot for local CIL currently stands at £293,435 and is not expected to cover all build costs. The CIL Board would therefore need to consider whether it is appropriate to make up the balance from the strategic CIL pot.

Financial item	Amount/position
Indicative total project cost	Up to £500,000
Staines wards local CIL pot	£293,435
Estimated planning application and further studies revenue cost	Approximately £30,000, (funding not identified as CIL funding cannot be used for this part of the project).
Funding position	No other identified sources of funding are available if CIL funding is not awarded

- 5.2 The current CIL bid should be treated as specific to the Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal. If the Committee agrees that the current proposal should not progress, any associated CIL allocation should not be treated as approval for a materially different scheme. Any alternative project would require a fresh or revised funding proposal, assessed through the relevant CIL and governance processes.
- 5.3 Any materially different project would need to be reapplied for. Committee would need to ask officers to submit a fresh or revised CIL bid through the proper process, and the new scheme would need to return through the committee reporting cycle before any final decision on delivery could be made.
- 5.4 The costs of preparing a planning application and any further studies are estimated at £30,000. These revenue costs cannot be drawn from CIL. A demountable MUGA has also been suggested to allow “Staines-upon-Thames Day” events to continue using the green space. This would result in a

less robust structure, create ongoing revenue costs for dismantling, storage and re-erection, increase the risk of damage, and potentially shorten the life of the facility.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 In making any decision, Members must conscientiously consider the consultation responses received alongside all relevant material considerations. If the Committee decides to progress the current proposal despite the consultation feedback, it should identify and record clear, rational, evidence-based and legally defensible reasons for doing so.
- 6.2 A decision to proceed without a clearly articulated assessment demonstrating how the benefits of the proposed MUGA have been weighed against the matters raised through consultation, including flood risk, noise, environmental impact, location, residential and public amenity, and the character and function of Memorial Gardens, may increase the risk of legal challenge. Potential grounds of challenge may include failure to have regard to relevant considerations, procedural impropriety, and/or irrationality. Any such challenge could expose the Council to the risk of judicial review proceedings.
- 6.3 A decision not to progress the current proposal would be consistent with the consultation outcome and with the Committee's previous resolution that progression should depend on overall support and the ability to address issues raised. This would reduce the risk associated with proceeding contrary to the consultation evidence without a clear and robust justification.

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

- 7.1 Commissioners have confirmed their agreement for this report to be submitted to the Environment & Sustainability Committee.

8. S151 Officer comments

- 8.1 The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been taken into account, with the report highlighting that currently there is insufficient funds in the local CIL pot to cover the potential cost of the scheme. As stated below, to press on with the current scheme following the outcome of the proposed scheme would expose the Council to a challenge of not delivering Best Value.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

- 9.1 The Monitoring Officer reiterates the importance of giving due consideration to the outcome of the public consultation. Failure to do so could constitute a breach of the Council's statutory Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999, expose the Council to the risk of judicial review, and undermine public confidence in the Council's decision-making. This Committee should ensure that the outcome of the public consultation is carefully considered and that any decision made is evidence-based, rational, and aligned with the principles of Best Value and fiduciary responsibility to its residents and taxpayers.

10. Procurement comments

- 10.1 The value of the current project proposal exceeds £25,000 and procurement advice should be obtained if the proposal is progressed.

11. Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 The proposal was intended to improve access to free outdoor recreation, particularly for older children and young people. This remains a relevant community objective. The consultation outcome indicates, however, that the current proposal and location have not secured overall community support.
- 11.2 A further options report if required would allow alternative approaches to be assessed, including whether different locations or lower-impact improvements could better balance youth recreation, accessibility, environmental considerations and the existing use and character of public open space.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 12.1 The consultation identified significant concern about the impact on green space and the character of Memorial Gardens. Any future proposal would need to consider ecological impacts, flood risk, sustainable materials, maintenance, climate resilience, and the role of public open space. Alternative options should be assessed against sustainability and climate change considerations before any future commitment is made.

13. Other considerations

- 13.1 Staines Park and Lammas Recreation Ground were identified by respondents as possible alternative sites. Staines Park includes areas protected by a Fields in Trust Deed of Dedication, although some specific facilities are excluded from the formal dedication. Lammas Recreation Ground is a well-used riverside park with a range of active amenities, but it is highly vulnerable to fluvial flooding and performs a floodplain function for the surrounding area.
- 13.2 Any alternative site, such as those outlined in 13.1, would require a fresh assessment of planning, flood risk, ecology, heritage, design, operational management, cost, and deliverability. A materially different scheme would also require appropriate committee approval, consultation, and a revised funding route.

14. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 14.1 The proposal must be considered in the context of Local Government Reorganisation and the transition to the new West Surrey Council. If the Committee agrees that the current Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal should not progress, no further procurement, planning or delivery commitment will be made in relation to this scheme.
- 14.2 Any future proposal for alternative recreation provision, alternative locations or lower-impact improvements would need to be considered against transition arrangements, available resources, funding requirements, procurement principles, contract approval requirements and the priorities of the successor authority. Given the timescales associated with site assessment, consultation, planning, funding approval and procurement, any materially different proposal is unlikely to be developed, approved and delivered before Vesting Day and will therefore require consideration by West Surrey Council before any commitment is made.

15. Timetable for implementation

- 15.1 Implementation will depend on the Committee's decision. If the Committee agrees the recommendation, the current Memorial Gardens MUGA proposal will not progress, and no further delivery timetable will apply to that scheme.

Officers will close the current proposal, update relevant stakeholders and, where necessary, address any associated CIL or project governance matters.

- 15.2 If Members wish officers to explore alternative recreation provision, alternative locations or lower-impact improvements, a further options report would be required. The timing of any such report would depend on available officer capacity, funding processes, transition arrangements, Local Government Reorganisation, any required consultation and the governance requirements of the successor authority. Any alternative proposal would be subject to separate assessment, approval and funding before a delivery timetable could be confirmed.

16. Contact

- 16.1 *Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services*

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Linda Heron Group Head Corporate Governance

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Background papers: Public Consultation for Proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Memorial Garden, Staines-upon-Thames, considered by the Environment and Sustainability Committee on Thursday 19 March 2026.

Appendices:

Appendix A-Public consultation results for proposed MUGA in Memorial Gardens, Staines-upon-Thames.

Appendix B - Summary of free text written consultation (MUGA)

Appendix A-Public consultation results for proposed MUGA in Memorial Gardens, Staines-upon-Thames.

1. How often do you visit Memorial Gardens in Staines-upon-Thames?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Daily		13.55%	103
2	2-3 times a week		35.13%	267
3	Fortnightly		19.74%	150
4	Monthly		17.24%	131
5	Rarely/Never		14.34%	109
			answered	760
			skipped	0

2. What activities do you currently enjoy in Memorial Gardens?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Walking		81.45%	619
2	Lunch break		19.34%	147
3	Exercising		13.82%	105
4	Family time		23.42%	178
5	Relaxing		53.82%	409
6	Picnics		18.82%	143
7	Attending events		32.89%	250
8	Other		6.18%	47
9	Not applicable		6.58%	50
			answered	760
			skipped	0

3. How supportive are you of plans to install a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Memorial Gardens?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very supportive		11.58%	88
2	Supportive		7.50%	57
3	Neutral		6.45%	49
4	Unsupportive		16.05%	122
5	Very unsupportive		58.42%	444
			answered	760
			skipped	0

4. Do you think you/your family would use the proposed MUGA?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		13.42%	102
2	No		79.08%	601
3	Not sure		7.50%	57
			answered	760
			skipped	0

5. What benefits do you think a MUGA could bring to the local community?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Increased opportunities for physical activity and sport		21.32%	162
2	A safe, dedicated space for young people to play		22.89%	174
3	More reasons for families to visit and use Memorial Gardens		14.87%	113
4	Better use of an underused part of Memorial Gardens		14.87%	113
5	I don't think a MUGA would provide any benefits		64.08%	487
6	Not sure		7.37%	56
			answered	760
			skipped	0

6. Do you have any concerns about a MUGA being placed in Memorial Gardens?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Noise		51.18%	389
2	Location		55.79%	424
3	Appearance		57.24%	435
4	Impact on green space		75.66%	575
5	I don't have any concerns		13.95%	106
			answered	760
			skipped	0

7. Which sports or activities would you most like to see provided at the MUGA?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Football		12.89%	98
2	Basketball		16.05%	122
3	Netball		9.74%	74
4	Multi-skills / general fitness activities		16.97%	129
5	Tennis		12.24%	93
6	Pickle Ball		13.29%	101
7	I'm not interested in using the MUGA for sports or physical activities		73.03%	555
			answered	760
			skipped	0

8. What age groups do you feel would benefit most from the MUGA?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5-11 years		10.92%	83
2	12-17 years		27.11%	206
3	18-24 years		14.87%	113
4	25-49 years		5.39%	41
5	50+ years		2.50%	19
6	All age groups would benefit		15.26%	116
7	I don't think the MUGA would benefit any age group		53.68%	408
			answered	760
			skipped	0

9. Are there specific design features you think are important?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Fencing height		31.05%	236
2	Surface type		26.84%	204
3	Accessibility		28.95%	220
4	Not sure		54.34%	413
			answered	760
			skipped	0

10. Do you believe the proposed location in Memorial Gardens (on the green, next to Riverside car park) is suitable?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes, the location is suitable		11.71%	89
2	Yes, broadly suitable, but with some reservations		7.76%	59
3	Unsure		4.87%	37
4	No, the location is not suitable		74.74%	568
5	No opinion		0.92%	7
			answered	760
			skipped	0

Appendix B - Summary of free text written consultation (MUGA)

MUGA Consultation Responses: Summary of Key Themes

The consultation free text responses show a clear and frequent concern that Memorial Gardens is not considered the right location for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), even where some respondents support the principle of improving free or low-cost sports and activity facilities for young people. The most common view is that the riverside green space should be retained and enhanced as a peaceful, open, inclusive area for relaxation, picnics, walking, informal play, community events and enjoyment of the River Thames.

Most frequent comments and concerns

- **Protecting green space:** Many respondents described Memorial Gardens as one of the few remaining quiet green spaces in Staines town centre and felt that replacing grass with a fenced hard-surfaced sports area would reduce open space available to everyone.
- **Wrong location, even if the idea is supported:** A frequent comment was that a MUGA may be beneficial in principle, but should be located elsewhere, such as Lammas Park, Staines Park, Knowle Green, the leisure centre area, or on underused brownfield/car park land.
- **Anti-social behaviour and vandalism:** A very common concern was that the facility could attract or intensify existing issues around drug use, drinking, littering, graffiti, intimidation, noise and vandalism unless it is actively managed, monitored and maintained.
- **Loss of peaceful riverside character:** Respondents repeatedly referred to Memorial Gardens as a calm, reflective and scenic riverside space, unsuitable for fencing, noise, lighting, ball games and hard surfacing.
- **Impact on events:** Several comments highlighted that the space is used for Staines-upon-Thames Day, outdoor cinema, concerts, performances and other community events, and that a MUGA could restrict or prevent these uses.
- **Existing sports provision nearby:** Many respondents pointed to nearby facilities, including Lammas Park, Commercial Park, Staines Park and the new leisure centre, saying these should be used or upgraded before creating a new facility in Memorial Gardens.
- **Cost and long-term maintenance:** Respondents questioned whether the scheme represents good value for money, particularly given concerns about council finances, ongoing maintenance costs and the risk of the facility falling into disrepair.
- **Safety concerns:** Some comments raised concerns about the proximity to the river, road and car park, including risks from balls entering the river or road, unsupervised young people, poor lighting, lack of toilets and potential flooding.
- **Wildlife, trees and environmental impact:** A number of responses referred to wildlife, nesting swans, mature trees and the ancient mulberry tree, as well as the wider environmental value of grass, trees and riverside planting.
- **Need for better management of the existing area:** Many respondents felt the current gardens should be better maintained, cleaned, landscaped and policed before any new facility is considered.

Alternative suggestions raised

- Locate the MUGA at Lammas Park, Commercial Park, Staines Park, Knowle Green, the leisure centre area, or another existing recreation site.
- Use brownfield land, disused car parks or underused built areas rather than taking riverside green space.
- Enhance Memorial Gardens as a garden and riverside destination with better planting, seating, picnic tables, bins, lighting, toilets and general maintenance.
- Provide a kiosk, café, pop-up food offer or refreshments point to encourage positive use of the riverside.
- Consider a small children's play area, accessible playground, natural play features, splash park, outdoor gym, table tennis, stage/performance space or community/event area instead of a full fenced MUGA.
- Improve links to the river, town centre and Thames Path, and make better use of the riverside setting through events, markets, arts, music, family activities and wildlife/nature features.

Supportive and conditional comments

A smaller number of respondents supported the idea of a MUGA or improved sports provision, particularly as a free, accessible facility for young people, families and residents who may not have private outdoor space. However, even supportive comments often included conditions around careful design, long-term maintenance, CCTV, active supervision, anti-social behaviour controls, opening hours, accessibility, landscaping and ensuring the facility does not undermine the character or wider use of Memorial Gardens.

Formal Consultation Findings

The consultation generated a substantial volume of responses and provides a clear indication of the principal issues raised by residents and other stakeholders in relation to the proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Memorial Gardens. While there is recognition in a number of responses that improved free-to-access sports and recreation facilities can be beneficial, the dominant theme is that Memorial Gardens is not considered by many respondents to be an appropriate location for this type of facility.

Overall response

The responses indicate a strong level of concern about the proposed siting of the MUGA within Memorial Gardens. A recurring position from respondents was that they were not necessarily opposed to the principle of a MUGA or enhanced youth and sports provision, but objected to the proposed location because of the character, function and value of the existing riverside green space.

Key themes identified

Protection of open green space: The most frequently raised issue was the potential loss of open grassed space in a town centre location where respondents felt green space is already limited. Memorial Gardens was repeatedly described as a valued area for informal recreation, picnics, relaxation, dog walking, lunch breaks, family use and quiet enjoyment of the River Thames.

Suitability of the location: A frequent finding is that respondents consider the proposed location to be inappropriate for a fenced, hard-surfaced sports facility. Many responses referred to Memorial Gardens as a peaceful, reflective and

scenic riverside setting, with concerns that a MUGA would be visually intrusive and inconsistent with the purpose and character of the gardens.

Anti-social behaviour, safety and management: Concerns about anti-social behaviour were raised repeatedly. Respondents referred to existing issues in and around the riverside, including littering, vandalism, drug and alcohol use, intimidating behaviour and noise. There was concern that a MUGA could become a gathering point unless there were clear arrangements for supervision, security, CCTV, opening hours, maintenance and enforcement.

Impact on events and community use: A number of respondents highlighted the current use of Memorial Gardens for wider community activity, including Staines-upon-Thames Day, outdoor cinema, performances, informal play and seasonal events. The consultation responses indicate concern that a permanent sports facility could restrict the flexibility of the space and reduce its ability to host events which serve a broad section of the community.

Existing local provision and alternative locations: Many respondents questioned the need to locate the facility in Memorial Gardens when other sports and recreation facilities already exist nearby. Frequently suggested alternatives included Lammas Park, Commercial Park, Staines Park, Knowle Green, the leisure centre area, the former leisure centre site, existing car parks, brownfield land and other parks or recreation grounds.

Environmental, heritage and amenity considerations: Respondents raised concerns about the impact on trees, wildlife, riverside character and the environmental value of grass and planting. Specific comments referred to nesting wildlife, the ancient mulberry tree, mature trees, flood risk, heat and drainage benefits of green space, and the importance of retaining a calm setting appropriate to a memorial garden.

Cost, value for money and long-term upkeep: Several responses questioned the cost of the proposal and whether investment should instead be directed toward maintaining existing parks, improving the condition of Memorial Gardens, providing security and cleaning, or upgrading existing sports areas. Concerns were also raised about the long-term cost of maintenance, repair, supervision and management if the facility were to be damaged or misused.

Supportive and qualified support

There were some responses in support of the proposal, particularly where respondents saw value in providing free, accessible opportunities for young people, families and residents without access to private gardens or paid sports facilities. However, much of the supportive feedback was conditional.

Respondents commonly stated that the facility would need to be well designed, carefully managed, accessible, secure, properly maintained and supported by measures to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Alternative suggestions

Respondents put forward a range of alternative uses for Memorial Gardens, with a strong emphasis on enhancing the existing riverside setting rather than replacing it with a fenced sports facility. Suggestions included improved planting, more seating and picnic tables, better bins and lighting, toilets, a café or kiosk, a small children's play area, accessible play equipment, outdoor gym equipment, table tennis, a stage or performance space, community events, markets, natural play features, wildlife improvements and better maintenance of existing features.

Conclusion from consultation feedback

The consultation findings indicate that the principal issue is not solely whether a MUGA would be beneficial, but whether Memorial Gardens is the right location. The balance of comments identifies significant concern about loss of green space, impact on the riverside character, anti-social behaviour, event use, environmental considerations, safety, cost and long-term management. If the proposal is progressed, the consultation responses suggest that these matters would need to be addressed in detail. If the proposal is reconsidered, the feedback provides a clear basis for exploring alternative locations for a MUGA while developing options to enhance Memorial Gardens as an inclusive, attractive and well-managed riverside green space.