

Mr Mike Costin
Chairman
Millwall Rugby Football Club
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Tower Hamlets Council
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
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Dear Mr Costin,

Rugby Pitch at Millwall Park - Petition

There is currently junior rugby provision at Millwall Park that was set up on a trial basis in 2006 and is still in regular use on Sundays 10.30 – 12.30.

In 2006, the Council offered a number of the disused arches in the viaduct within Millwall Park via an open tender process for community and related uses; the Millwall Rugby Club successfully bid for the use of one of these as a clubhouse. This is currently on a lease agreement between the Council and the MRFC.

Quite naturally, the MRFC is now taking the view that to have an adult rugby pitch located adjacent to their clubhouse would be an ideal solution for them rather than journeying to Victoria Park where games are currently played

We are in the process of preparing a Playing Pitch Strategy in compliance with Sport England guidance to better inform the allocation of scarce pitch space within the context of an open space supply well below national standards and for which there are many competing demands. Millwall Rugby Club has had the opportunity to put their views forward to the initial process of developing the strategy, which will be further developed this year ready for approval by December 2009.

In December 2007, Colin Stuart (Parks and Open Spaces Manager) wrote to Mr Mike Costin the then Development Officer of Millwall RFC advising him of the Playing Pitch Strategy process and advised him that the determination of whether to locate a permanent rugby pitch at Millwall Park (at that time it was junior rugby under discussion) would have to await the outcome of the agreement of the strategic proposals through the normal Council processes.

Parks and Open Spaces have, in the interim, investigated whether an adult pitch is possible (it will have to be full size and allow a larger area around it for players "running out"), or if this will have an adverse impact on the adjacent football pitches. I can confirm that it would be physically possible to locate an adult rugby pitch and three junior football pitches within the Millwall Park site.

However adding the adult pitch will have an impact on the number of football pitches which can be in use at any one time, the changing accommodation is only sufficient to permit three pitches to be in use at any one time (we will not permit use of pitches without changing) therefore on Sundays if adult rugby is being played football provision will be reduced. The limited number of football pitches available for Isle of Dogs residents to use has historically been a significant issue for local people and the cause of some serious local tension between different Island communities. Borough wide we simply do not have sufficient open space to cater for all of the competing demands placed upon it.

In view of the above, it would be inappropriate to authorise adult rugby at Millwall Park in advance of the Playing Pitch Strategy and propose that for the 2009/10 season games are played at Victoria park, following the current arrangements. However as I have stated it is feasible for adult rugby to take place in Millwall Park and we will ensure that this is included as an option in the new playing Pitch Strategy, a draft of which will be available in September this year.

Yours sincerely



Jamie Blake
Service Head – Public Realm
Communities, Localities and Culture



2007 - 2008
School Improvement
2003 - 2007
Winner of 5 previous
Beacon Awards



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Jamie Blake
Service Head Public Realm
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