

Highbury Fields Barbecue Byelaw Consultation Report

1. What was the consultation about?

The council has consulted on a proposal to introduce a byelaw on the use of barbecues in Highbury Fields, in a move that both protects the freedom of people who want to barbecue and takes into account local concerns.

The proposal means that barbecues will continue to be allowed in Highbury Fields, in a marked barbecue area on the west side of the field closest to Highbury & Islington station. In order to better manage the situation barbecues will also not be allowed to start before 10am and will have to be extinguished by 9pm.

2. Who did the council consult with and how?

The consultation ran between the 7th February 2019 and the 7th March 2019.

Paper based consultation survey

To ensure that all residents living within a close proximity to Highbury Fields were aware of the consultation and had an opportunity to comment, the council arranged for a paper version of the consultation, to be delivered to each property within a 500m radius of Highbury Fields. This meant that approximately 12,000 properties received the paper version of the consultation.

In total the council received 218 paper responses to the consultation. 11 were spoiled responses.

Online consultation survey

To ensure that those who did not live in the immediate local area knew about the consultation and had an opportunity to comment, the council created an online survey and advertised the consultation in the following way:

- Produced a press release which was sent to local papers with stories run in the:
 - Islington Gazette
<https://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/islington-council-consulting-on-bbq-byelaw-for-extra-enforcement-powers-in-highbury-fields-1-5883759>
 - Islington Tribune: <http://islingtontribune.com/article/highbury-fields-bbq-consultation-begins>
- Put the consultation on the Islington Council website and sent out regular tweets to on the council twitter account advising people of the consultation and provided a link to the consultation form itself. The council sent out 9 tweets about the consultation which resulted in 220 clicks, 28 retweets and a potential reach of 218,000.
- The council put up posters at key points around Highbury Fields itself notifying casual users of the fields about the bye law consultation and where to find out more information.
- The council wrote to the following key local stakeholder groups to advise them of the consultation and provided them with a link to the online consultation form. The council also wrote to:
 - The Police
 - The London Fire Brigade
 - Disability Action in Islington

In total 429 online surveys were received.

3. Results of the consultations

No	Question	Number of responses	Yes	No
1	Do you support the introduction of a byelaw to provide the council with the ability to more effectively manage the impact of barbecues at Highbury Fields?	647	68%	32%
2	Do you support the introduction of a designated BBQ area?	647	61%	39%
3	Do you support the location of a designated BBQ area as per the map below?	647	47%	53%
4	Do you agree that barbecues should only be used between the hours of 10am and 9pm on any given day?	647	54%	46%

Whilst it is clear from the consultation documentation that this was not a consultation on whether responders supported the council's policy to allow barbecues at Highbury Fields or not, a large number of responders decided to use this consultation as an opportunity to comment on the policy. In total approximately 31% of all responses to the consultation indicated that they did not want barbecues

to be permitted at Highbury Fields at all. The main reasons given for wanting barbecues banned were:

- The smoke created from barbecues increases pollution levels, is bad for health and creates a nuisance for other park users and local residents.
- The barbecues cause damage to the grass.
- Those who barbecue leave large amounts of litter and do not discard the used barbecues in a safe way.
- The policy to allow them has led to an increase in anti-social behaviour at Highbury Fields.

The reason the council has highlighted this specific element is that this high level of anti-barbecue feeling in the responses has had a material impact on the overall results of the specific questions asked. Where responders voted "No" to each of the responses, the largest single reason given for voting "No" was that they did not want barbecues at all at Highbury Fields (see below table).

	Voted No
Question 1	43%
Question 2	50%
Question 3	35%
Question 4	44%

4. Results of each question and the recommendation

Question 1: Do you support the introduction of a byelaw to provide the council with the ability to more effectively manage the impact of barbecues at Highbury Fields?

Results: 69% support the introduction of a byelaw
31% are against the introduction of a byelaw

The headline result from this question is that 69% of all respondents to the consultation supported the introduction of a byelaw to provide the council with the ability to more effectively manage the impact of barbecues at Highbury Fields.

Summary of headline points raised by responders:

- There is no need for any byelaw at all as people should be free to barbecue responsibly wherever they want to in Highbury Fields.
- Concerns were raised about the cost to the council for policing the new byelaw. Given the budget cuts the council is facing should the council still spending money on enforcing this?
- The byelaw does not deal with the actual issue which is the smoke generated from the barbecues themselves. There were calls to ban disposable barbecues which responders highlighted as the worst offenders for generating smoke.

Recommendation: Based on the high level of support the council recommends moving forward with the making of a new byelaw to allow the council to more effectively manage the impact of barbecues at Highbury Fields.

Question 2: Do you support the introduction of a designated barbecue area?

Results: 61% support the introduction of a designated barbecue area
39% are against the introduction of a designated barbecue area

The headline result from this question shows that 61% of all the respondents supported the introduction of designated barbecue area?

Summary of headline points raised by responders:

- Responders did not feel that a designated area was required and that they should be able to barbecue anywhere in Highbury Fields.

Recommendation: Based on the high level of support the council recommends moving forward with including the creation of a designated barbecue area in Highbury Fields.

Question 3: Do you support the location of a designated barbecue area as per the map below?

Results: 47% support the proposed location of the designated barbecue area
53% are against the proposed location of the designated barbecue area

The headline result from this question shows that 53% of responders did not support with the location of the designated barbecue area.

The main reason given by responders who did not support the location of the designated barbecue area, was that they did not support the use of barbecues at Highbury Fields at all (35%). Only 7% of all responders who commented did not feel that a designated barbecue area was required at all. A further 17% voted "No" to a designated area but did not comment as to why.

As the consultation was not about whether barbecues should be allowed or not, if the "No" comments for those that do not want barbecues at all are discounted, support for the proposed designated area increases to 57%

Summary of headline points raised by responders:

- The designated area is too small and by locating all those wishing to have a barbecue in the same area, the council would create the following problems:
 - The grass will get very damaged in the designated area from people putting their barbecues directly on the grass consistently in one area.
 - The negative effects of the smoke from the barbecues will disproportionately effect those who:
 - Live closest to the designated area.
 - Who use the area itself

- Choose to use the main part of Highbury Fields.
 - When the weather is very good, the designated area may not be big enough to hold all the people wanting to barbecue.
- The location of the area also raised the following concerns:
 - Area was too close to the children's play area.
 - Dog walkers are disproportionately affected as the top two fields do not allow dogs and the field with the designated area is the main area for walking dogs.
 - The proposed designated area is too big and too close to resident's homes.
 - The council should not allow barbecues near trees due to the risk.
- Wanted more of the designated area under the trees to allow more opportunities to barbecue in the shade on hot days.

Recommendation: Proceed with the creation of a designated barbecue area as per the proposed designated area.

Question 4: Do you agree that barbecues should only be used between the hours of 10am and 9pm on any given day?

Results: 54% support the proposed hours for the use of barbecues
46% are against the proposed hours for the use of barbecues

The headline result from this question shows that 54% of responders supported the proposed hours for permitting barbecues at Highbury Fields.

As with all other responses the main reason for responding "No" to the consultation was that they did not support the use of barbecues at Highbury Fields at all (43%).

Only 4% of all responders did not feel that there should be any time restrictions at all.

Summary of headline points raised by responders

- 10am is too early a start time and 9pm is too late. Basically means people can still barbecue all day.
- Don't think there should be any time restriction and people should be free to barbecue whenever they want.
- 9pm is too early a finish time especially in the height of summer when it is light until after approximately 10pm.

Recommendation: To proceed with making a byelaw restricting the hour's barbecues are allowed to between 10am and 9pm.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the overall feedback to the consultation, there is clear support for the implementation of a byelaw to provide the council with the ability to better manage the use of barbecues at Highbury Fields.

The council balanced the outcomes from the consultation both from responders that wanted to see barbeques banned all together with responders who wanted them to continue.

The council believes that the implementation of the byelaw is a necessary and proportionate way of providing the council with the powers to better manage the use of barbecues at Highbury Fields and minimise the impact to local residents and other park users.

