

## DEPUTATION THREE – HYDE PARK OLYMPIC LEGACY GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

MR D DAVISON: Hello, Lord Mayor and Members of the Council. My name is John Davison, I am a grassroots football coach, a teaching assistant and a volunteer. I have with me Amit Roy, who is a resident and I suppose a community organiser, Yasmin Ajib, who is a resident and parent of Hyde Park, and Rachael Ryan with young Amir. Adel, Rachael's husband, he is a football coach as well and a colleague of mine, I suppose.

I am going to talk to you about the health of the people of Hyde Park and the need for the local schools and community to access decent sports facilities.

There is great scope for increasing the health of this or any inner city population and I have a got a good idea of how to do it, but first some facts.

Some of you will be aware of the statistic that people living in inner city areas like Hyde Park, Woodhouse, South Headingley and Burley tend to die on average 10 to 12 years younger than their contemporaries in the outer suburbs. There are many reasons for this, but in my experience the quickest and most effective way to remedy a person's poor health is to get them into an exercise habit.

My father, a general practitioner of some 30 years, would agree with me that poor diet, smoking and excess drinking can be curtailed by the fact that aside from cardiovascular benefits, when you are good at a sport it motivates you not mess your body up. As a member of a team you tend to want to improve the facets about yourself that you do not have, and this flows into your general life. You become a more balanced and compassionate person. A person who cares about a sport will tend to avoid such extremes of behaviour that will be damaging to them. You develop a desire to help others, be nice to people, be carefree, and I see this in the people who work in a team or a group around me, or who I have taught.

Five of the primary schools in my immediate area are what I would term seriously deprived in terms of space for participation in competitive sport. Three of them - Quarry Mount, Rosebank and Brudenell Primary - have only access to tarmac playing pitches. These are often shared-use facilities, inaccessible for certain times of the day as PE lessons can clash with other year group's playtimes. Often these playgrounds are on slopes. School halls in primary schools are generally small and are put out of action at key times of the day as they are used as dining areas, and nearby green space can be problematic due to dog mess and litter and one head teacher has even mentioned discarded needles on a field near a school.

Limits such as these conspire to make competitive sport on these areas difficult or dangerous for fear of injury. This does not mean decent athletes cannot be produced in poorer inner city areas (Thierry Henry for example, is the initial product of good free-to-use sports facilities in inner city Paris). A person's environment and influences in their early life can set the habit, or not, to truly excel in terms of

technique, determination and athleticism, and it isn't just about producing Olympians or, for that matter, professional athletes, but just good people.

I can't legally talk about any live planning applications, but I must talk about the plans myself and an organisation that I helped to form had to change this situation for the better and, for that matter support, the agenda that the Government's new Health and Social Care Act legally infers upon you, the local Council — namely to narrow the gap in terms of this health divide.

Let us say that a playing field with an adjoined sports hall (let us say it is the second biggest sports hall in Leeds ) an additional hall area which is currently a swimming pool became available in an inner city area like ours that had previously been offered for free to a community group that could run it. Now, let us think about the model of how this site could operate if it were run as a non-for-profit enterprise by a charitable trust.

I want you to imagine a few things now. A playing pitch which was a hypothetical 90m x 63m could be an official eleven-a-side pitch, with the option of two x seven-a-side football pitches running across it, like the local-use Astroturf pitches in Spain. This meets the requirements laid out by FIFA for these pitch sizes. The use of high netting around the field would stop balls going into neighbouring gardens. The centre circle of the pitch would be interceded by a coir-mat or an artificial turf wicket, and a cricket oval of 60m x 90m (which complies with the governing body's legal requirements) could be put as the border. At least five or six local clubs could share-use these facilities and the primary schools can access them during the day. The requirement of each club that uses them is that they hire the facility for their senior teams on the condition that they are actively promoting their sport within the community, and especially to young people.

I want you to imagine a pyramid feeder system. At the bottom is your under 8s, boys and girls, your under 12s, your under 16's, your development squad and your senior squad. All of this is accessible to anyone who wants to play the sports offered. At the heart of this pyramid is a sphere. That is you. You can enter sport at any level and find a place. Above this are your exit routes (sports scholarships, semi professional clubs) and above that still are professional athletes, your Olympians. You could add to this over 35s, over 40s, playing for fun or playing for fitness. Anyone from the bottom can see the progression to the top and there are at least five different sports here running every week.

To have this beacon site that anyone can access giving encouragement, good technical coaching and a diversity of options to people in the area where it is actually needed. The site can be used by people from other more disadvantaged areas of the city where transport can be set up.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you make your final point? You have got to the end of your five minutes.

MR J DAVISON: We have set up free after school clubs at this facility between 4.00 to 6.00pm every day, a multi-sports company would do this. This helps address the particularly high rates of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular

disease in the South Asian population in this area often genetically suffered from and it would help lower the risk of cancer, improve cardiovascular health and improve community cohesion.

My last point is something which is seriously needs to be considered by those who can. If you look at a map of Leeds and pinpoint where the existing sports clubs are.

THE LORD MAYOR: I must ask you - final warning to wind up, please.

MR J DAVISON: OK, sorry. They are generally around the outskirts you do not have a lot in the inner city and in Woodhouse you have got a load of back-to-back houses and someone got stabbed there recently and I saw a guy down there and it was one of my old guys that I was coaching and I wondered maybe something could be done better between planners giving 21 days, it is like a major development which involves of green site loss Between Sport England, which is supposed to be protecting pitches in the inner city showing bias by only transporting them to the outskirts, Education Leeds, defending their position in 2008, saying the provision in primaries is adequate and the new PPG or PPS survey which cannot make any distinction between sports pitches which the public can use and which they can't, planning officers writing reports and omitting certain facts...

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for attending.

MR J DAVISON: Doing their jobs adequately – they should be doing better than adequate, we should be looking to try and make things work. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. *(Applause)* I am sorry, you have completely thrown me off kilter!

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I move that the matter be moved to the Executive Board for consideration.