

The Media School



Content Analysis of Responses to Public Consultation on Poole Town Football Club's Proposed Relocation to Branksome Recreation Ground

Report to the Borough of Poole Leisure Services

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Executive Summary

This report provides a content analysis of responses to public consultation conducted by the Borough of Poole on the proposals submitted by Poole Town Football Club to relocate to Branksome Recreation Ground. The consultation covers the 3 months from 28th March 2008 to early July 2008.

The content of 176 letters and emails opposing and supporting the proposals has been analysed to determine the exact nature of, and reasons for, the opposition and support. The analysis covers all individual responses received by the Borough of Poole during the consultation period.

141 responses expressed concern about or opposition to the proposals; 35 responses were in support. The strength of opposition or support was equally strongly expressed in both cases. In addition, there were two petitions of support; one organised by Poole Town Football Club with 471 signatures and one of unknown origin with 186 signatures. 35 residents of Davis Road, near the Recreation Ground, signed a petition expressing concern.

The vast majority of opposing responses came from local residents in proximity to the Recreation Ground. Most supporters of the proposals came from a wider area of Poole and Bournemouth.

Most responses did not state the information sources used in informing the response. A letter and leaflet sent by the Borough on 28th March, an Open Meeting organised by the Poole Town FC on 19th April and a template of opposing issues circulated to local residents are some of the sources used. Responses from individuals attending the Open Meeting indicated that this meeting was not effective in providing information about the proposals.

Opposers of the proposals mentioned some 19 individual issues. The most frequently occurring are, in order of importance, parking problems, loss of open space, increased traffic, increased noise, anti-social behaviour concerns, alcohol-related issues, light pollution and public safety.

Some opposing responses combined individual issues to present them as one overall area of concern. The most frequently occurring of these combined issues related to 1) parking problems and increased traffic and 2) anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related issues.

Supporters of the proposals pointed to the benefits to the local and wider communities and highlighted the refurbishment and development of the existing facilities as key reasons for support. The need for improvement of these existing facilities is also mentioned by a large number of people expressing concern about the proposals.

The main focus of this report has been to consider thoroughly the concerns of local residents. Before the proposals can proceed further these concerns will need to be analysed and addressed in conjunction with Poole Town FC.

The analysis shows that the benefits of the proposals have not been effectively communicated and fully explored with all interested parties.

The report recommends a detailed examination of how the issues raised by opposing responses should be addressed and of how the benefits highlighted in the proposals can be assured.

There is scope for more detailed information provision around the main issues and benefits and scope for more detailed investigation of the views of particular groups, both in support and opposition, within the local and wider communities.

Executive Summary

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1. Introduction

In March 2008 the Borough of Poole received proposals for the future development of Poole Town Football Club. These proposals included the relocation of the club from its existing home at Tatnam park to Branksome Recreation Ground. The proposals also included plans to improve and modernise the existing sporting and leisure facilities in Branksome Recreation Ground, creating football pitches and multi-use games areas.

The Head of Leisure Services at the Borough of Poole sent details of the proposals in a letter and accompanying leaflet to local residents of the Recreation Ground at the end of March. Poole Town FC held an open meeting on 19th April 2008 to present the proposals and answer questions from local residents.

The Borough of Poole asked for views and feedback on the proposals in the letter and at the Open Meeting. In all, a total of 176 responses were received from individual respondents by 8th July 2008. In addition, the Borough has received petitions of support organised by Poole Town FC, a petition of opposition from residents of Davis Road and a letter of opposition from Neighbourhood Watch in 4 local roads. Branksome Heath Middle School and AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust have sent letters of support.

The Borough of Poole has contracted Bournemouth University to carry out an analysis of the responses received and provide recommendations arising from the analysis for any future consultation process.

The report, which follows, is an analysis of all 176 responses received, which may not be representative of all views held by households in the Borough of Poole, or within the local area affected by the proposals. The report focuses mainly on the concerns or opposition expressed by local residents, to ensure that these are fully explored and understood. In addition, the report considers views on the benefits of the relocation, foreseen by responses from supporters of the proposals.

2. Aim, Scope and Objectives

2.1. *Aim and Scope*

The aim of the research is to determine the exact nature of support for or opposition to the proposals from the responses to initial consultation.

The scope of the analysis focuses solely on written mail and email responses to the request for views and feedback. Details of the petitions mentioned above are contained in Appendix 7.2.

2.2. *Objectives*

1. To determine the number of responses in support or opposition
2. To determine information about the signatories to the responses
3. To identify the reasons of support for and opposition to the proposals
4. To rank the reasons in terms of importance
5. To identify any significant themes within the responses received
6. To identify sources of information referred to in responses
7. To identify the number of people requesting further information and consultation

3. Methodology

Content analysis of the texts of the 176 letters and emails has been used. This quantitative method of analysis provides a systematic and replicable approach to analysis using pre-determined categories relevant to the objectives shown in section 2.2. A sample of responses was examined to determine broad groupings, specific sub-groupings (or dimensions) and individual specific categories of content. All responses are then analysed using codes for each category.

The analysis is based on a census (100%) of all responses received up to 8th July 2008. The analysis uses the coding frame shown in appendix 7.1 to identify individual and combined issues in the content of the responses.

Content analysis has the advantages of transparency through using a clearly defined coding frame, flexibility to apply to unstructured documents, such as the letters and emails received in this case, and provides a basis for objectivity. Nonetheless, coding and analysis still involves some interpretation by the analyst to determine underlying themes and meanings.

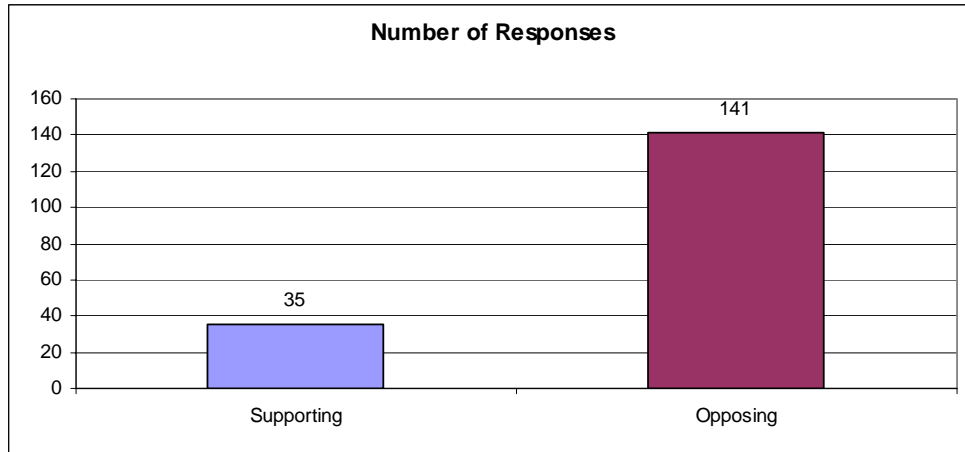
Readers of this report should note that this methodology provides a comprehensive analysis of the full set of responses received. However, these responses may not necessarily be representative of all households in the Borough of Poole, or within the local area affected by the proposals.

The analysis uses SPSS version 14 statistical analysis software. The raw data is available as a SPSS or Excel file.

4. Analysis and findings

4.1 Number of responses

Figure 1: Number of Supporting and Opposing Responses

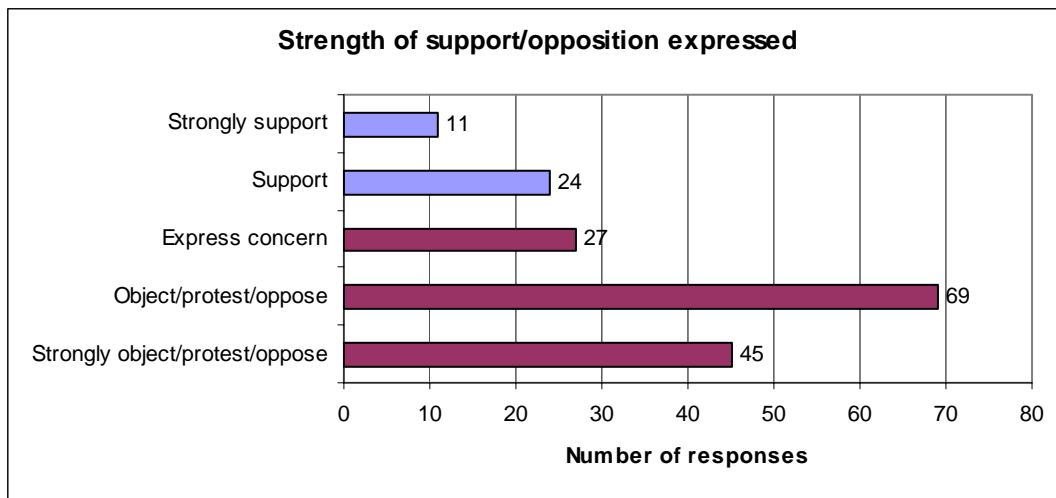


A total of 176 responses were received by 8 July 2008. Of these 141 expressed concerns about and/or opposition to the proposals in some way and 35 were supportive.

Responses were received by letter (73%) and by email (23%) sent to a local councillor(s) or to the Head of Leisure Services at the Borough of Poole. In several cases, multiple copies of responses were sent. Duplicate responses were not considered in the analysis, although sending multiple copies of responses does convey some of the strength of feeling of support or opposition. A total of 225 individuals responded, as 2 or more people signed 48 of the 176 responses.

4.2 Strength of opposition and support

Figure 2: Strength of Support and Opposition

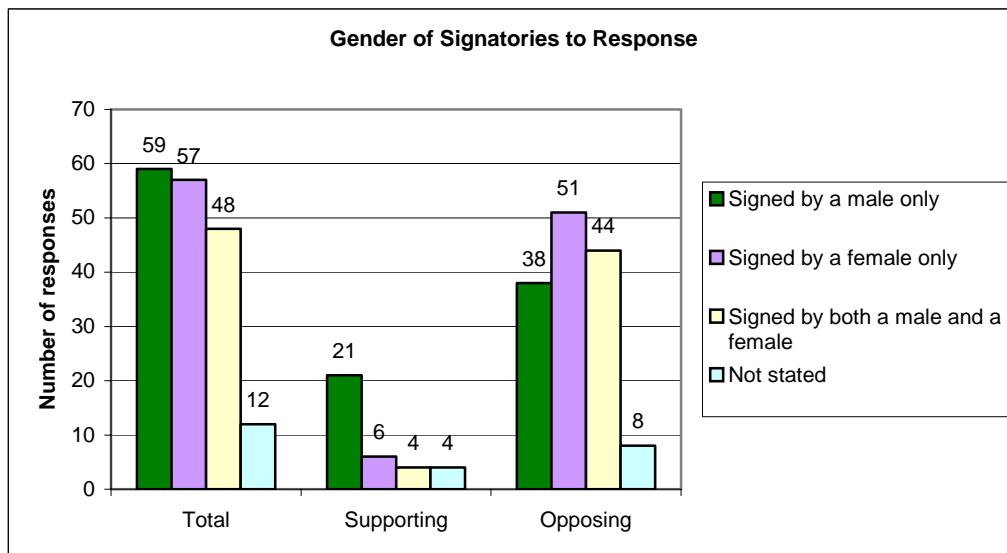


The chart above shows the strength of support and opposition as stated in responses. A third (45) of opposing responses expressed strong opposition. Equally, a third (11) of supporting responses expressed strong support.

4.3 Gender of individual(s) responding

Overall, there is a balance of gender in the number of people signing the responses received:

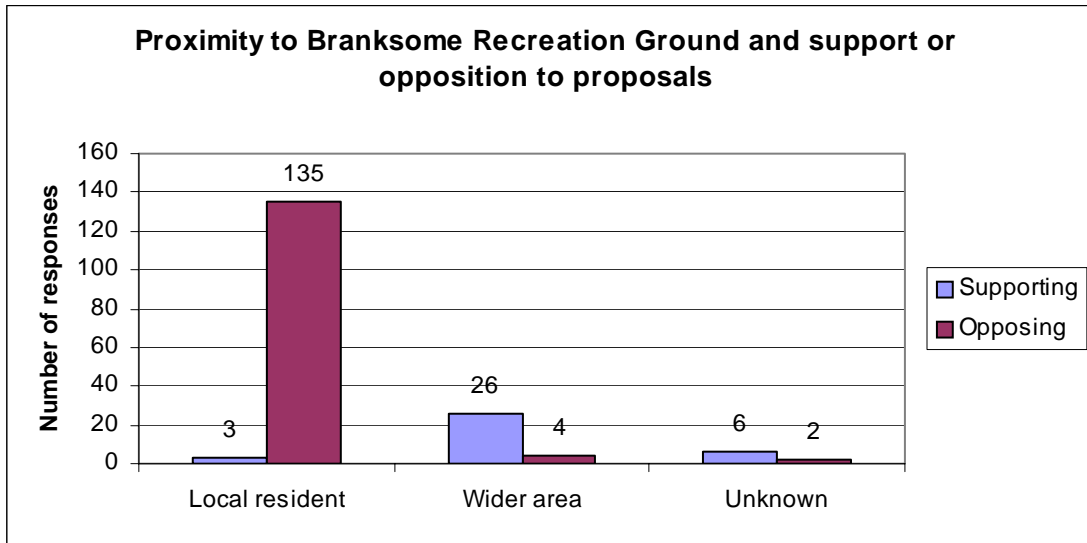
Figure 3: Gender of Signatories



51 (36%) of the opposing responses had a female only signatory, potentially reflecting the demographic in the area around the Recreation Ground. The majority (64%) of signatories supporting the proposals are male.

4.4 Proximity and expressions of opposition and support

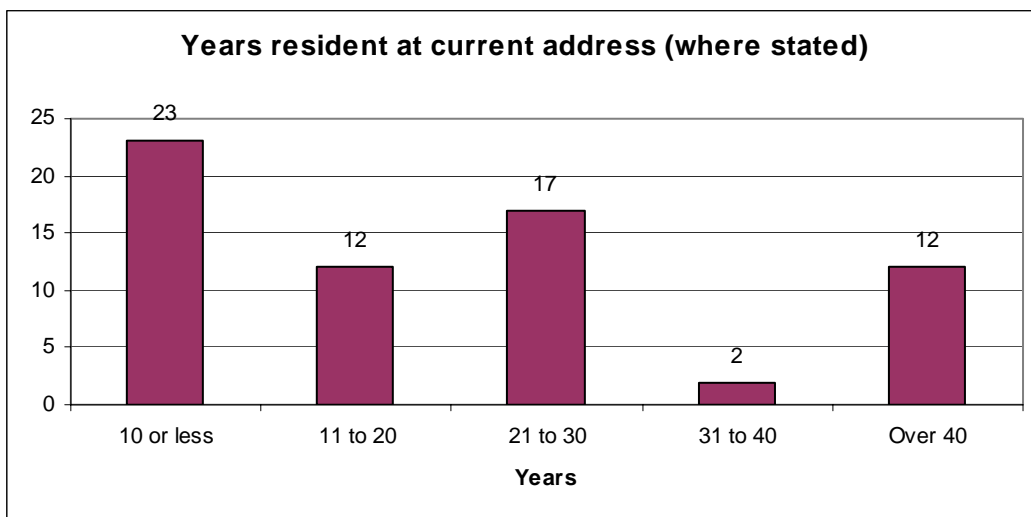
Figure 4: Proximity to Recreation Ground and Support or Opposition to Proposals



Most of the responses received are from local residents opposing the proposals (135), although there are a small number of local residents (3) in support of the proposals. Most supporters of the proposals are from outside the immediate area of Branksome Recreation Ground. Again there are a small number of people opposing the proposals in the wider area responses.

Looking at responses expressing concern or opposition, 66 responses (47%) indicated the length of time they had been resident in their current property:

Figure 5: Length of Residency at Current Address



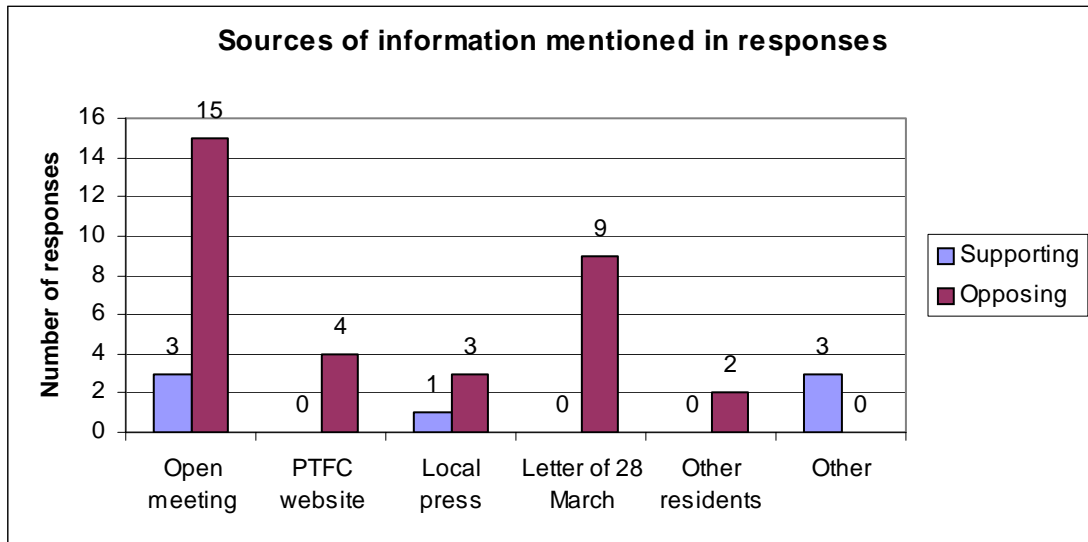
Note: Based on 66 opposing responses

Of these responses, a relatively large number of people opposing the proposals (43) have lived near the Recreation Ground for 10 years or more.

4.5 Information sources used in response

Most responses did not state where they had received information about the proposals. 40 responses, most of which (33) were in opposition to the proposal, did specifically refer to or state an information source. The letter written by the Head of Leisure Services on 28 March was mentioned, as was the Open Meeting on April 19. Accordingly it is difficult to determine how informed the residents are about the proposals in detail.

Figure 6: Sources of Information Referred to in the Response



Note: Based on 40 responses

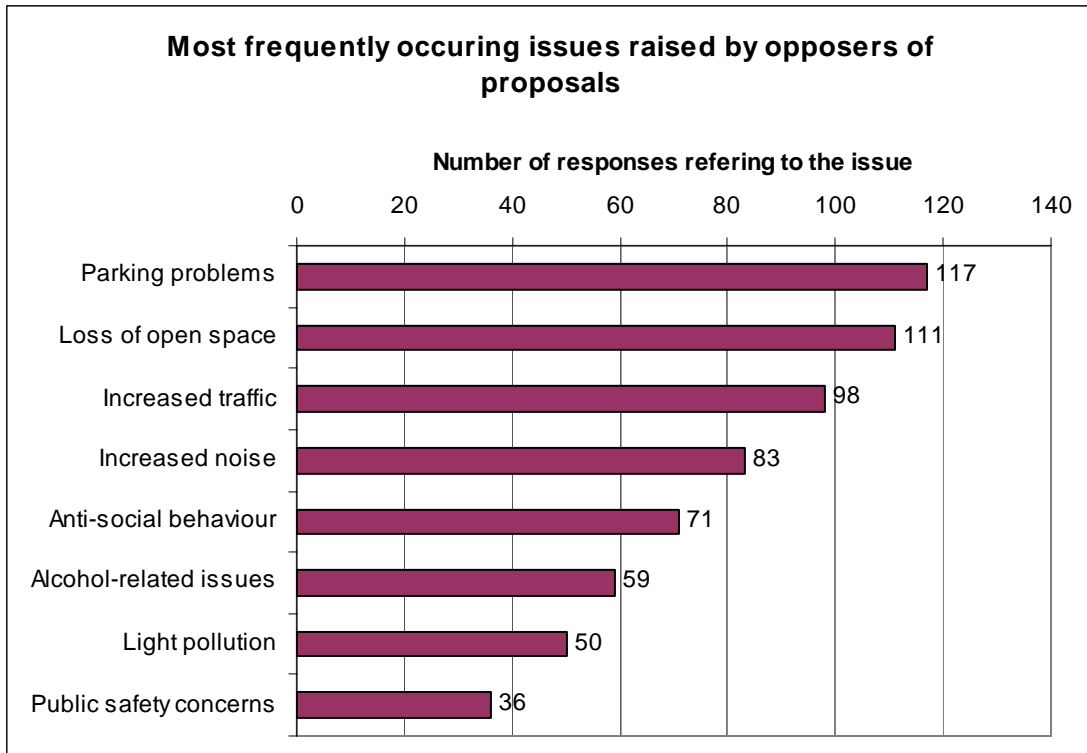
Most responses referring to the Open Meeting did not feel that this meeting resulted in a satisfactory outcome in providing information.

A template, highlighting issues of concern about the proposals, circulated to local residents may have been a key source of information for some residents; it is difficult to determine to what extent this is true. It is estimated that around a third of opposing respondents (49 out of 141) drew on this template to some extent in producing their letters of complaint and opposition. However, many responses were original and personal in tone and content. Therefore, given the detailed reasons for opposition expressed in the responses it is likely that opposers of the proposals had access to several sources of information about the proposals. It has not been possible to determine the validity and accuracy of all sources used.

4.6 Issues raised by individuals opposing the proposals

Overall, some 19 individual issues were mentioned. The most frequently occurring issues mentioned in the responses opposing or voicing concerns over the proposals are shown below:

Figure 7: Most Frequently Occurring Individual Issues Raised in Responses



Other issues raised and number of responses referring to these issues are:

Table 1: Other Individual Issues Raised in Responses

Issue	No. of Responses
Use for other events	24
Restricted access to Recreation Ground	23
Impaired outlook	22
Increased litter	22
Increased need for policing	19
Adverse effect on property value	17
Further development	12
Impact on wildlife & flora	7
Environmental concerns	4
Disruption from building works	4
Loss of rights of way	2

It is worth noting that some of the 19 issues are linked in the responses to form one combined concern or issue. These issues appear to be based on the current experience of life in the local neighbourhood and on the perceived adverse impact of the proposals on their quality of life.

4.6.1 Parking problems and traffic-related

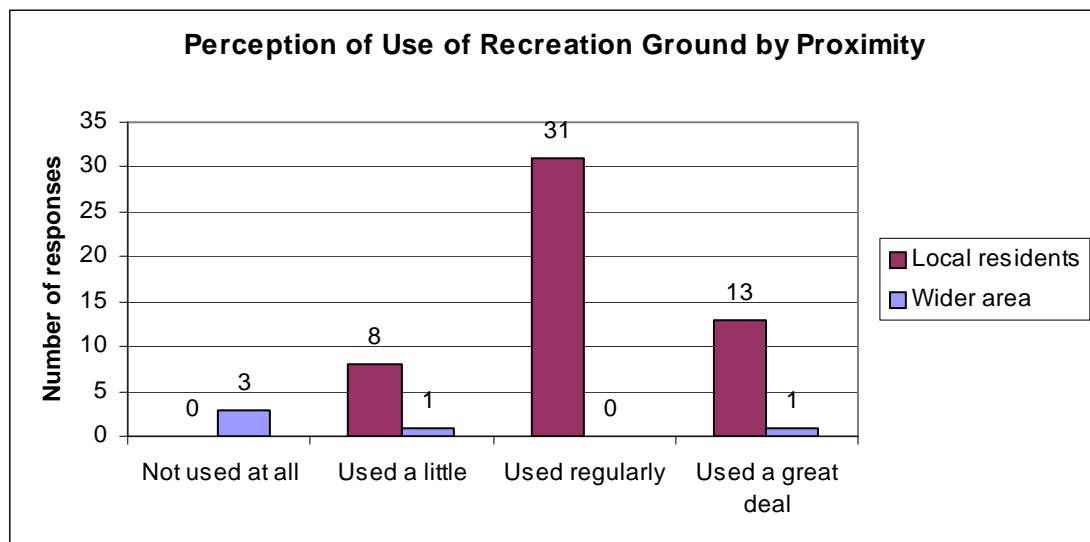
These issues were referred to individually as shown above and together they were referred to by 91 out of 141 opposing responses (65%). Responses supported the concerns on this issue by reference to experience with traffic and parking during school runs in the morning and afternoon, traffic calming measures and the difficulties experienced when the Circus makes its annual stop at the Recreation Ground. Many expect these problems to be exacerbated by the increased number of visitors (home and way supporters) attending the proposed stadium for matches.

4.6.2 Loss of open space

This was the second most mentioned issue by opposers of the proposals. Many responses referred to the area as one of dense residential housing and were concerned over the loss of a green, open space. This issue was coupled in some cases with a concern that certain parts of the Recreation Ground would be restricted in access or would be difficult to use because of other activities. A small number of opposers (5) referred to the use of the area by a commercial organisation for profit and 2 responses queried the use of the land for this purpose under perceived terms of its intended use. There was general concern over a potential loss of an amenity and of quality of life.

In support of these views, 48 responses mentioned the current use of the area for a variety of activities, including dog walking (7), walking (20) and other family activities (21). Where it was referred to, the perceived use of the Recreation Ground by others was seen to be “regularly” or “a great deal” by most local residents (44 responses):

Figure 8: Perception of Use of Recreation Ground



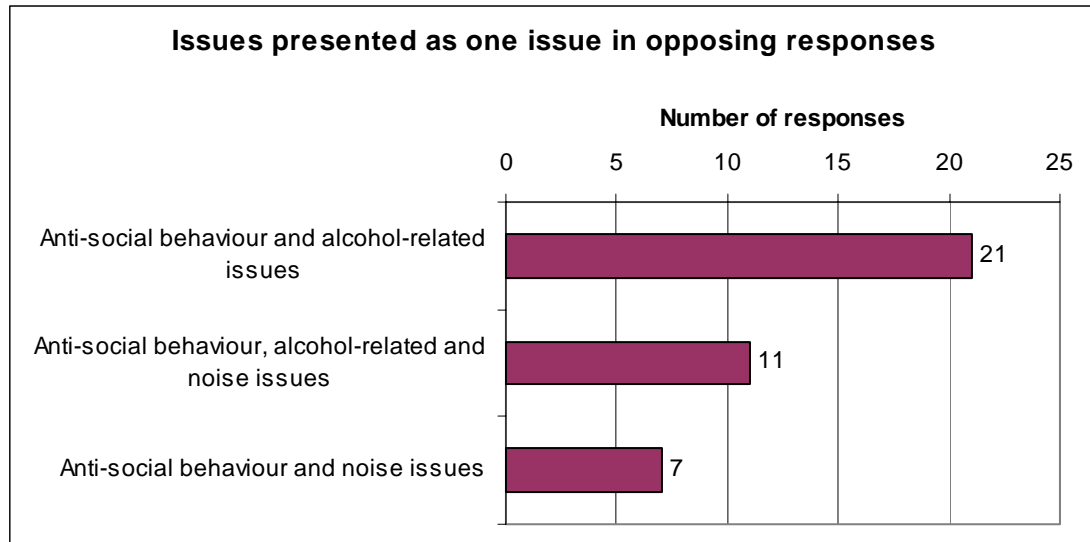
Note: Based on 57 responses

There were 2 references to loss of Public Rights of Way across the Recreation Ground.

4.6.3 Noise, anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related issues

Individually, these issues are amongst some of the most mentioned issues in the responses, ranked 4, 5 and 6 respectively. In addition, these three areas of concern were linked together in a number of responses opposing the proposals, highlighting an area of overall concern for some. The chart below shows the number of responses, which mentioned these in a way, which combined at least two or all of these issues together:

Figure 9: Individual Issues Presented as One Issue



Opposing responses were unclear about the attendance figure at Poole Town FC home matches and there is a perception that there will be large crowds at games and consequently increased visitors to the Recreation Ground area. There are concerns that this will lead to increased noise levels, increased anti-social behaviour and increased incidents of alcohol-related problems. A number of responses (30) referred to the proposals for bar facilities at the stadium as a source of potential problems with alcohol-related issues.

The concern here may arise from past experience; again, a number of opposing respondents (22) referred to the Recreation Ground being made an “alcohol-free zone” to combat previous problems. These perceptions appear to raise issues around an adverse impact on public safety in the area (mentioned in 36 responses). These concerns give rise to the perceived need for extra policing to control crowds and behaviour, mentioned in 19 responses.

A number of opposing responses (21) expressed strongly negative perceptions and fears over football crowds in general.

4.6.4 Adverse impact from construction and use of stadium

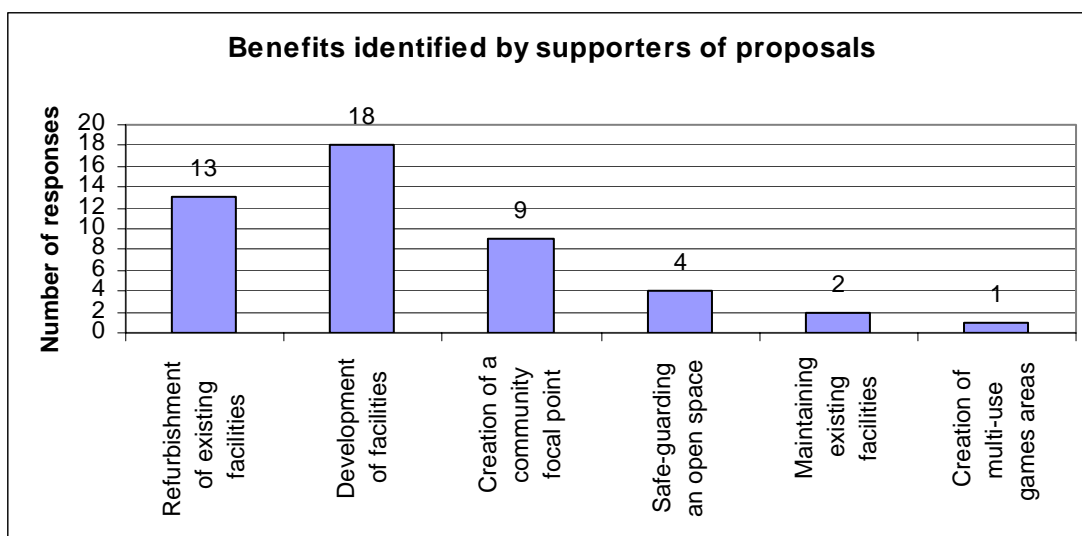
Light pollution from floodlights used in evening matches was the 7th most mentioned issue by opposers. Related to this were concerns over the loss or impairing of outlook from some residents overlooking the Recreation Ground and the impact that this and the proposals in general could have on property values. Only 4 responses mentioned the impact from construction work. There were relatively few mentions of the impact of the proposals on the environment of the Recreation Ground (flora and fauna) and the potential for increased flooding with greater use.

4.6.5 Other adverse impacts from the use of the stadium

A relatively small number of responses mentioned concerns over the use of the stadium for other events such as music concerts and charity events. These concerns would link into those covered above around parking, traffic, crowds and noise. A few responses mentioned concerns about future development if Poole Town were successful in climbing to higher divisions.

4.7 Benefits identified by supporters of the proposals

Figure 10: Benefits identified by Supporters



28 of the 35 supporting responses came from people describing themselves as Poole Town FC supporters. Overall, supporters of the proposals tended to see the benefits in terms of benefits to the local community through the improvement of facilities at the Recreation Ground and their subsequent development for the good of all. Surprisingly the benefits of relocation to the football club were not stated as often as the perceived benefits to the local community, and to Poole in general:

Table 2: Reasons for Support

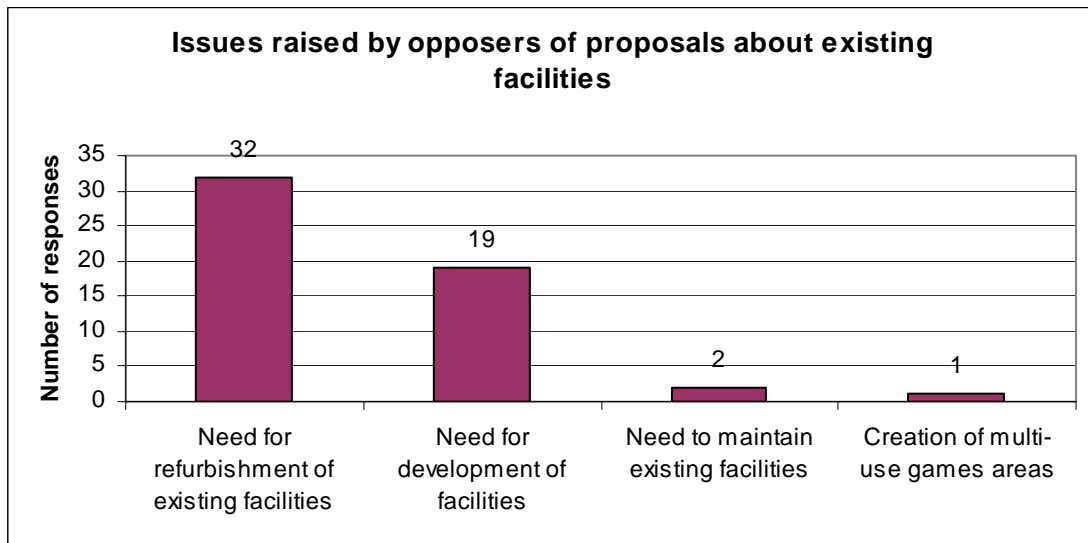
Reason given for support	Number citing reason
Benefit local community	16
Create pride in the town	4
Put Poole and PTFC on the map	2
Will benefit Poole Town FC	1
Prevent denial of promotion	1
None given	11
Total supporters	35

This finding fits with the arguments of the supporting petition organised by Poole Town FC (Appendix 7.2), which received 471 signatures and states:

“... We believe the wider community will benefit immensely and that the facilities will enhance the lives of all that use them....”

4.8 Issues raised by opposers about existing facilities

Figure 11: Issues raised about Existing Facilities



Note: Based on 54 opposing responses

Opposers of the proposals identified in their responses ways in which they considered the Recreation Ground could or should be developed, irrespective of the outcome of the proposals. From the comments, there was a sense that these actions were needed to build on improvements made in recent years.

4.9 Responses requesting information or consultation

A relatively small number of responses (11) stated that they considered there should have been more consultation at an earlier stage in the process and only 4 responses posed specific questions, requiring a response from the Borough of Poole. However, given the large number of responses received, petitions raised and signed, there is clearly much public debate on these proposals and many areas where more information is required.

5. Conclusions

The request for views and feedback on the Branksome Recreation Ground proposals by Poole Town FC produced 176 responses in total with 35 responses expressing support and 141 expressing concern or opposition. This mix reflects the responses received and may not be representative of all views held on this subject in the Borough of Poole. As a result, the main focus of this report has been to consider thoroughly the concerns of local residents.

The extent of support and opposition was equally strongly expressed by supporters and opposers alike. The responses were equally distributed by gender overall. There were a relatively large number of opposing responses signed by a female only. Virtually all of the opposing responses came from people within the local area of the Recreation Ground. All but 3 of the supporting responses came from people from a wider area.

A number of responses (40) stated the sources of information used in informing their view on the proposals. These were the letter from the Borough of Poole, the Open Meeting and the Poole Town FC website. There was a general view that, for those attending, the Open Meeting had not satisfactorily answered questions about the proposals.

A template of opposition sent to local residents seems to have informed around a third of opposing responses. However, the vast majority of responses are original, detailed in content and personal in tone, suggesting access to several sources of information. It has not been possible to determine the validity and accuracy of all sources used.

The most frequently occurring issues mentioned by opposers of the proposals are in order of importance:

- Parking problems (occurring in 117 responses)
- Loss of open space (111)
- Increased traffic concerns (98)
- Increased noise concerns (83)
- Anti-social behaviour concerns (71)
- Alcohol-related issues (59)
- Light pollution from floodlights (50)

In all some 19 different and individual issues were mentioned in the responses. Some of these were mentioned in a way, which combined several issues into one. The most frequently occurring of these issues were:

- Parking problems and increased traffic (occurring in 91 responses)
- Anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related related issues (21)

Supporters of the proposals mentioned benefits relating to the refurbishment and development of existing facilities and the creation of a facility of benefit to the local and wider communities. 471 signatories to a petition organised by Poole Town FC also supported this viewpoint. The benefits to the local community tended to be placed ahead of the benefits to the football club. The benefits of the proposals do not appear to have been fully communicated and explored by all interested parties.

A number of local residents expressed the view that refurbishment and development of the Recreation Ground was desirable, whatever the outcome of the proposals.

6. Recommendations

The analysis has provided detailed information on the reasons for support and the issues and concerns raised by those opposing the proposals. As a result, the next step for consideration is to determine how the issues should be addressed and any potential benefits foreseen in the proposals assured.

There is scope to provide more detailed information about the proposals as the Open Meeting does not appear to have met that objective and because of the relatively small number of responses mentioning the main information sources relevant to the proposals.

There is scope to investigate the extent of support for the proposals with the local area of Branksome Recreation Ground, because the low number of supporting responses may not be representative of all local residents.

There are also groupings within the opposing responses, which could be investigated to determine the exact nature of the concerns and issues raised. These could include females living alone, residents of many years and families with younger children likely to be using the Recreation Ground.

The exact nature of improvements to and development of the Recreation Ground desired by local residents could also be established.

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21st July 2008

7. Appendices

7.1. Coding frame

Grouping	Dimension	Category	Variable
Details of responses	Gender of signatory	Male (1); Female (2); Both = more than one signatory (3); Unknown (4)	1
	Number of signatories	Number recorded	2
	Number of years residing at current address	Duration recorded	3
	Communications method used	Mail (1); email (2)	4
	Proximity to Branksome Rec	Neighbourhood (1) = within an area likely to be affected by proposals; Wider area (2) = outside of neighbourhood; Not given (3)	5
	Postcode (where given)	Recorded	6
	Poole Town FC supporter	No (1); Yes (2)	47
Nature of response	Type of response	Supporting the proposals (1); Balanced -Neither supporting or opposing (2); Opposing or objecting to proposals (3)	7
	Strength of support or opposition stated	Scale 1 to 5; 1 = Strongly support and 5 = strongly oppose/object or protest	8
	Extent to which response draws on personal references	Scale 1 to 5; 1= Highly impersonal and 5 = highly personal	15
Information sources used or referenced in response	Sources specifically referred to in the response	None referred to (0); Open meeting of 19 April (2); Borough of Poole (3); local press (4); C Smith letter of 28 March (5); other residents (6); Other (7)	9
	Extent to which response appears to be based on a pre-written template of support or objection	Scale 1 – 5:1 = Completely based on template to 5 = Highly original response	14

Grouping	Dimension	Category	Variable
Issues raised in objection to the proposals	Traffic and parking related	Parking problems	18
		Increased traffic	19
	Impact on use of Recreation Ground	Loss of open space	21
		Restricted access to parts of Recreation Ground	30
		Loss of Rights of Way across part of Recreation Ground	32
	Adverse impact of building and use of stadium	Loss of outlook from nearby property	20
		Disruption from building work	34
		Light pollution from floodlighting (impact of evening matches)	22
		Loss of property value	36
	Adverse impact though crowds and perceived behaviour of crowds	Increased noise (from crowds, matches and traffic)	23
		Increased levels of anti-social behaviour (hooliganism, vandalism, damage, unruly behaviour)	25
		Increased litter and graffiti	27
		Increased incidents of alcohol related problems (drunkenness, use in the alcohol free zone, rowdiness)	26
		Concerns over public safety ("hidden" areas, loss of safe play area for children, impact of increased traffic, large crowds)	24
		Increased need for policing and cost of policing	28
	Adverse impact on environment	Impact on wildlife, trees and flora and fauna in general	31
		Environmental concerns e.g. flooding	33
	Adverse impact through extended use of new facilities	Use for other events	35
Further development if Poole Town FC is successful		37	
Issues raised in support of proposals	Perceived benefits	Refurbishment of existing facilities	38
		Modernisation and development of facilities	39
		Creation of multi-use games areas	40
		Safe-guarding of a green area from building development	41
		Maintenance of facilities	42
		Creation of a focal point for the local community	43

Grouping	Dimension	Category	Variable
Use of Rec Ground	Current use by respondent	Dog-walking (1); Walking (2); Multiple uses (3)	44
	Perceived level of use by others expressed by respondent	Scale 1 to 5; 1 = Not used at all to 5 = used a great deal	45
Further information or action	Specific questions raised or information requested		10
	Expression of need for more consultation		11

7.2. Petition Analysis

7.2.1. Petitions in support organised by Poole Town FC

Petitions received from Poole Town FC by letter to Head of Leisure Services, Borough of Poole on dates shown:

Letter dated	Number of signatures	Pages
28 April 2008	93	4
20 April 2008	44	2
6 May 2008	29	4
7 May 2008	28	3
19 May 2008	58	4
30 May 2008	119	6
11 June 2008	27	3
18 June 2008	67	4
Not dated	6	2
Total	471	

The text of the PTFC organised petition is as follows:

“ We the undersigned support wholeheartedly Poole Town Football Club’s proposals for Branksome Rec. We believe the wider community will benefit immensely and that the facilities will enhance the lives of all that use them. We believe the modes change of use of open space is justified by the added value to the people of Poole that the scheme brings with it.”

7.2.2. Petitions in support from an unknown source

A further 186 signatures on 6 pages were also obtained in response to the petition “The go ahead fro the redevelop on Branksome Rec”. These include the name and area of Poole and/or Bournemouth, but few addresses. It is not clear who has organised this petition.

7.2.3. Petitions expressing concern from residents of Davis Road

A letter signed by 35 residents was received on 3 June 2008. The letter expressed concerns about the proposals and asked for these views to be taken into account.

7.3. SPSS Data Tables

7.3.1 Cross tab: Tone of response and Strength of opposition/support

Count

		Strength of support/opposition expressed					Total
		Strongly object/protest/oppose	Object/protest/oppose	Express concern	Support	Strongly support	
Tone of response	Supporting	0	0	0	24	11	35
	Opposing	45	69	27	0	0	141
Total		45	69	27	24	11	176

7.3.2 Cross tab: Tone of response with Gender

Count

		Gender				Total
		Male	Female	Both	Unknown	
Tone of response	Supporting	21	6	4	4	35
	Opposing	38	51	44	8	141
Total		59	57	48	12	176

7.3.3 Cross tab: Tone of response with Proximity

Count

		Proximity to Recreation Ground			Total
		Local resident	Wider area	Unknown	
Tone of response	Supporting	3	26	6	35
	Opposing	135	4	2	141
Total		138	30	8	176

7.3.4 Cross tab: Tone of response and Source of Information

Count

		Source of information							Total
		None	Open day	PTFC website	Local press	Letter of 28 March	Other residents	Other	
Tone of response	Supporting	28	3	0	1	0	0	3	35
	Opposing	108	15	4	3	9	2	0	141
Total		136	18	4	4	9	2	3	176

7.3.5 Cross tab: Tone of response and Originality of response

Count

		Originality of Argument					Total
		Completely based on template	Partially based on template	Not evident either way	Original	Highly original	
Tone of response	Supporting	0	0	13	18	4	35
	Opposing	17	32	20	60	12	141
Total		17	32	33	78	16	176

7.3.6 Cross tab: Tone of response and Use of Recreation Ground

Count

		Current use of Recreation Ground				Total
		None	Dog walking	Walking	Multiple	
Tone of response	Supporting	32	0	2	1	35
	Opposing	93	7	20	21	141
Total		125	7	22	22	176

7.3.7 Cross tab: Tone of response and Perceived Use by Others

Count

		Perception of current use					Total
		None	Not used at all	Used a little	Used regularly	Used a great deal	
Tone of response	Supporting	29	3	2	0	1	35
	Opposing	90	0	7	31	13	141
Total		119	3	9	31	14	176

7.3.8 Cross tab: Gender and Perception of Football

Count

		Perception of football		Total
		None	Negative	
Gender	Male	55	4	59
	Female	48	9	57
	Both	40	8	48
	Unknown	12	0	12
Total		155	21	176