



# Crystal Palace Sport Partnership



## PRESS STATEMENT

**At a summit meeting of politicians and key stakeholders at Crystal Palace, the public consultation process for the National Sports Centre (NSC) and the evidence base used to support the proposed development concept options, was condemned as being 'totally flawed' by the head of CPSP.**

John Powell MBE, chairman of the Crystal Palace Sports Partnership (CPSP) said the proposed changes would devastate one of the most iconic sporting venues in Europe – the NSC at Crystal Palace – dating back 150 years to 1866. The CPSP called on all concerned parties to sign their petition for an extension to consultation period.

CPSP is an umbrella body formed of a diverse range of local stakeholders working to maintain multi-sports and leisure facilities at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre and to find better long term sustainable solutions for the centre in Crystal Palace Park, so members were heartened to hear widespread concern at the meeting.

Emotions ran high, from London Assembly Member representatives, local councilors, community groups and Park stakeholders. All voiced grave concern over the GLA's NSC consultation processes, and proposed departures from a 'Masterplan' developed over several years after extensive public input. Plans involved downscaling of the NSC, and loss of its intended Regional Sports Centre status – an otherwise ideal legacy to the London 2012 Olympics.

In the space of barely two weeks, the CPSP has seen the public consultation period extended from October 27<sup>th</sup> until 16<sup>th</sup> November, and has already attracted over 1400 signatures on its online petition, but Chairman John Powell MBE is still stressing the urgency of further support and action. He said:

“We still feel the public consultation period is way too short to reach the many thousands of individual and group users of the centre. The data initially submitted on use of Centre facilities is hopelessly inaccurate and paints a false picture of demand.

“The athletics facilities are actually over-used at times, making the statement that the indoor track, for example, is 'under-used', and conceptual plans that could remove sports such as diving from the agenda completely are hugely damaging to the futures of hundreds if not thousands of London sportsmen and women. The car parks are regularly overflowing weekday evenings when the centre is most busy and at weekends.

“The earlier strategic consultation with governing bodies has failed to appropriately engage with any of the major or local stakeholders, and it is disappointing that only now are we beginning to

filter through worthwhile feedback to 'CSM Strategic', the company charged by the GLA with compiling final recommendations.

"The combination of inadequate earlier consultation, coupled with GLA's chosen options presented for public consideration, and the very short public consultation stage is compromising a fair assessment of the true usage and benefits of the NSC for sports and community wellbeing in the region.

"The current conceptual proposals could see athletics wiped off the map at Crystal Palace, while other activities such as the Diving Centre of Excellence, gymnastics and football could also disappear, or have a catastrophic impact to current and long term Olympic youth training programmes in the South London areas."

John added: "Seb Coe [Executive Chair of CSM] is a world class ambassador for sport over many decades. I for one don't believe for a minute that any influence he may have over this process would ever support the total bulldozing of athletics from Crystal Palace, any more than the loss of other critical sports based at the centre.

"CPSP are aware that Lord Coe is maintaining a watching brief on developments, and do not believe he would sit comfortably with an outcome leading to anything less than that which satisfies public demand at the Palace, and I am sure that will be the message he gives me when we meet next month."

John Powell urges supporters to ensure they sign the online petition to help reinforce the strength of local feeling, and to visit the website now set up at [www.cpsp2020.com](http://www.cpsp2020.com).

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### **Further information for editors...**

Current GLA chosen plans for the National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace threaten to bulldoze the iconic athletics stadium and indoor training track, and repurpose the other outdoor spaces and indoor hall areas, with no commitment to maintain the current range of sports, diving or gymnastics and multi-use event facilities.

The impact of the proposed changes could be catastrophic. CPSP want the Olympic Legacy for South London to live on for generations to come. The CPSP is a group of stakeholders who are combining to help form one unified voice representing all interests in the future of this historic site. Their mission is simple:

**"We support a mixed-use sports and leisure centre at Crystal Palace – a sustainable facility that is shared by the local community, schools, clubs and aspiring athletes at all levels. It should be a resource that caters for the needs of recreational users as much as it provides for and supports the development of the next generation of Olympic athletes. We are concerned that the consultation by the GLA for repurposing the current National Sports Centre is way too short and has failed to identify and consider the needs and views of existing NSC users."**

The GLA are consulting on concept options for the 'repurposing' of the NSC:

- **All options include the removal of the stadium and loss of an indoor track.**
- **Complete removal of the athletics track** are options the GLA are consulting on.

- **Significantly reduce the range of sporting facilities** currently on offer within the NSC. This is considered to have a devastating impact on sports accessibility in South London, the Olympic legacy youth training for the next generation, and the loss of the area's "Regional Sports Centre".
- **Diving may disappear** as under current proposals the pool would become too shallow for training and competition purposes with a moveable floor.
- **The external pitches, multifunctional areas and large gymnastics areas may go** as there is no commitment from GLA to maintain them once the next operator is appointed (when GLL's tenure expires in 2016).
- **A new "Access" route is proposed through the park** from the new Car Park to/from Crystal Palace Park Road.
- **Loss of a separate and family pool enclosed heated area**, with an option for some "learner pool" facility co-sharing in the large main pool hall may remain.

Chaired by John Powell MBE, the Crystal Palace Sports Partnership has been set up to help safeguard the future of sports at the NSC. They request urgent support on this important matter before the rushed consultation reaches its 16th November deadline. The GLA agency who developed these options (CSM Strategic) has done so with very limited talking to the local groups, clubs and schools who use the NSC.

CPSP urge concerned parties to sign and share the following [petition](#), because there are only a few days left to the closing date to get your voice heard about these proposed NSC changes. The GLA survey is [here](#).

CPSP also want people to get in touch with them and the GLA in order to have a say on what the NSC changes mean to them, their club or school, both in terms how the NSC is used, but also in terms of sporting and health benefits. CPSP can be emailed at [Info@CPSP2020.com](mailto:Info@CPSP2020.com).

Further information available via:

**JOHN V. POWELL MBE**  
**Chairman, Crystal Palace Sports Partnership**

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CPSP email: [Info@CPSP2020.com](mailto:Info@CPSP2020.com)

The GLA survey for the NSC is [here](#)

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