



# Future Parks Accelerator Parks for Health

*Scrutiny Committee Update Report*

*October 2021*

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## Introduction

The report sets out our starting point, the journey we have been on, the achievements and the challenges we have had, our plans for the transition phase and beyond, and our belief that we will place our parks at the heart of the health agenda, enabling others to do the same as well.

Two years ago, our parks' health offer was passive. Attractive as our parks are, they were undersold by us. We did not know their full potential or engage much with others to find this out. Now, two years later, we know our vision, objectives and outcomes, and what we and our partners need to do. One of our successes is finding out who these partners are and making plans together.

We will have further challenges, but this is to be expected for a vision as ambitious as ours and making the whole system change that has not been attempted before.

## Our Parks for Health Vision

***Camden and Islington's public parks and green spaces are used, enjoyed and maintained as health assets for the whole community.***

***Everyone feels welcome in our parks. More people than ever before visit and stay for longer - enjoying nature and taking part in activities which make them healthy and happy.***

***Our parks are places where people can come together or spend time alone, be active or pause and reflect.***

***Our parks are at the heart of community life.***



## How the programme fits into borough priorities

To help achieve the cultural shift, it is imperative that the project is integrated into the wider policy landscape and borough priorities. The structural changes needed include aligning with, and embedding in, the following partnerships and priorities. We have made good progress with this during the co-design phase. For example: presentations to Islington's Fairer Together Partnership local wellbeing teams have resulted in plans for specific health-related activities in our parks to be delivered by other partnership members. By the end of the transition phase, we will be further embedded, with tangible results that will improve our residents' health.

	Environment	Focus	Target Groups
Inequalities - Challenging inequalities action plan (LBI)	Tackle widening health inequalities	The need to target activity and seek to level up outcomes through increasing access	Black, Asian and other ethnic groups, children, people living in overcrowded housing
Islington's Fairer Together Partnership	Localities through Local Wellbeing Teams; VCS through Community Partnership Board	Key route to engage with health and other sectors at local and borough level	Families, people aged 65+





# Section 1: The story so far

*The Green Social Prescribing pilot has been a wonderful opportunity to connect green spaces with patients, colleagues and the parks in general. It has opened up a dialogue and created some wonderful connections and positive outcomes already in a short space of time.*

Dr Radhika Shah, Goodinge Practice



# Original project vision and objectives

For both Camden and Islington early intervention and prevention were clear priorities. The original vision set our aspiration to situate parks as central to achieving them.

***Camden and Islington Parks for Health will transform the role of green spaces, recommissioning them as public health assets for the 21st century.***

Public parks were created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a direct response to public health needs. Building upon this legacy, we want to transform the management of parks and green spaces to ensure they continue to actively address health challenges but also improve health and reduce inequalities. We set out the following key aspirations:

- Green spaces will be transformed from passive health enablers, to take an active and central role in delivering improvements to health and wellbeing by promoting social cohesion, tackling isolation, improving mental health, and creating much wider opportunities for physical activity for people of all ages and interest.
- A strong partnership with the health and voluntary sectors will ensure benefits are focused on those with greatest need developing both a clear universal offer as well as being part of pathways of support around improved health and wellbeing.

This vision has remained true and central throughout the project as its developed. When we started this project, we could not have conceived how even more relevant this vision would be.

Three overarching objectives were defined:

**1. Create insight and innovation** to understand the current value of our parks as health assets in terms of physical and social infrastructure.

**2. Transform the workforce** and building new partnerships with the health sector and to re-focus parks staff' role to support Health and wellbeing outcomes

**3. Build sustainable infrastructure** through co-design and innovation, to maximise the current usage of parks to achieve health and wellbeing benefits.



# Objective 1 - Insight and innovation

## Main activities and outputs:

- The FPA's Parks Challenge visit of National Trust experts took place in late 2019 that looked at how our parks could be improved
- **Parks for Health Toolbox** by [Tisdall Associates](#) which provides us with a roadmap for development of greenspaces for health guided by health principles, set within primary prevention.
  - 90+ park health audits
  - Produced technical reports, ward level audits, and detailed data including health status of each park and ward, opportunities for interventions and a way to prioritise these to reach the areas with the greatest health inequalities.
- **Natural Capital Account (NCA) /Greenkeeper** completed in mid-2020
  - Additional scenario modelling e.g. modelling visitor projections in 2045, adding new greenspace amenities and administering social prescriptions to council-owned spaces, and adding new greenspaces
- Explored **options for future funding models** e.g. park foundations, social impact investment.
- Rapid **evidence review** in-kind support requested via FPA and completed. The slide deck and accompanying literature database include summary of health benefits of greenspaces and case studies e.g. green gyms and social prescribing.
- Examined **barriers to using parks** through an evidence review, and targeted engagement to explore specific barriers relating to members of the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Explored options for calculating park usage.

Together, the above **formed the basis for the development of a Strategic Business Case**, emerging future funding model, and the green space capital investment strategies. See page 19 for more, and the attached pack for further detail and outputs.

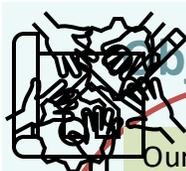
## Key findings and pivotal moments

- Parks Challenge provided independent back up that the structure of our parks are good, and informed workstreams priorities.
- Ongoing data collection and maintenance needs would be a challenge/consideration for future use of database
- Toolbox provides **invaluable database and mechanism for prioritising greenspace investment that is in line with health outcomes** and is now a key part of our new Green Space Investment Strategies.
- Based on 2045 population projections, the value of council-owned green spaces in Islington are predicted to increase by as much £10.4 million

## Key achievements

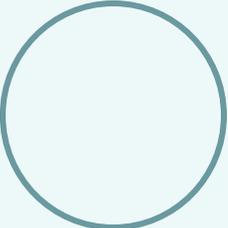
- Our Strategic Business Case has already protected budgets from savings rounds.
- Diversified funding with Islington **securing £200k/year (ringfenced Public Health)** for the Ranger Service and additional **£150k/year** for a new community gardening team (from **Housing**).





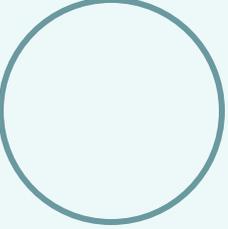
## Objective 2 - A Parks for Health Workforce

Our aim is to have a greenspace workforce so that everyone has a good knowledge and understanding of the health and wellbeing benefits that parks can offer to the community and how their role actively contributes to ensuring these benefits are realised.



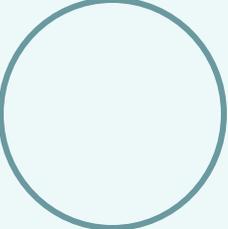
### Cultural

- Permissive, let's try and make it happen!
- Stronger VCS and health partnerships created
- All staff understand how their roles deliver health outcomes (universal or targeted)



### Structural

- Job descriptions including health outcomes/KPIs for engagement
- New dedicated role focused on communications
- New dedicated role focused on leading on the health partner development and support
- Strong relationships with existing core council programmes
- modified role from within the parks team focusing on fundraising and grant application support.



### Operational

- Staff deliver health walks
- Staff trained in health programmes
- Staff take a more active role in volunteer engagement and development.
- Peer support groups created to support staff through the changes and provide ongoing support to sustain it

### Islington - Full restructure in 2021/22

A key element of the redesign will be ensuring that parks staffing structures have clearly defined roles, responsibilities and capacity to support the delivery of the "universal and targeted" Parks for Health offer. An example of this will be the creation of Parks for Health Partnership Manager whose primary role will be to ensure we create and sustain effective partnerships with the health and voluntary sectors to deliver the targeted offer. This will be a role within the structure.

There will also be changes to existing roles to ensure more focus is placed, ensuring the best possible health outcomes for residents. Examples of these changes include upskilling park keepers to deliver more direct health and wellbeing activities and continuing to trial the static gardening model, who will look to develop support for more gardening group activities. As part of the restructure, Islington are splitting the Grounds Maintenance Service into separate park and housing teams. This will allow us to embed the Parks for Health working practices more easily into the workforce. With staff working consistently in parks it will allow us greater flexibility to further trial and test new working practices



## Objective 3 - Build sustainable infrastructure

This objective looked at how our social infrastructure could be strengthened to maximise park usage to achieve health benefits. This was tackled in a few different ways. For instance, a networks and partnerships workstream was set up to work collaboratively with key networks and partners to co-design, pilot and evaluate initiatives that explore better ways to deliver health benefits from parks for target groups.

### Green Social Prescribing Pilot

- With funding from Defra we set up a six-month Green Social Prescribing (GSP) Pilot in late 2019. The aim of the pilot was to understand the local context for social prescribing, and how we could support/enable scaling up and promotion of *green* social prescribing in the boroughs.
- A co-ordinator was appointed, and early engagement with the health sector and VCS began. Two parks were chosen as pilot sites (Caledonian Park and Talacre Gardens). Outputs included:
  - Three co-design workshops
  - Borough action plans (to embed and scale GSP)
  - Parks for Health Charter to link GP practices to their local park(s)
  - In autumn 2020 we ran a GSP pilot in the two parks designed in consultation with local GPs and social prescribing organisations. 10 activities delivered by ourselves and VCS organisations. 70 people attended 152 times; very positive feedback from participants. The pilot was formally evaluated by Public Health
  - Targeted engagement with GPs, CCG, all 7 local social prescribing organisations, local mental health trust and VCS organisations

### Key findings and pivotal moments

- GSP co-design work which included over 50 people showed that there is strong interest and commitment by partners to be involved/lead in this space.
- Recognition by health partners of the importance of parks
- Willingness by health partners to socially prescribe parks to service users
- To make GSP part of our and our health partners' work, we need to:
  - improve communications so health partners know more about our parks and the activities in them.
  - establish ways to monitor health and wellbeing outcomes
  - give quality assurance to referrers about a park's activities

### Key achievements

- **The GSP work strengthened our plans, stakeholder engagement, peer collaboration and our impact on the wider sector/nationally**
- We have been creating new relationships, learning from other sources, e.g., Health Citizen Assembly in Camden
- We facilitated a grant application to the Green Recovery Fund, bringing together partners to form a joint approach to delivering more green social prescribing activities in parks. While this application was unsuccessful, it did bring together groups who previously had not worked together. The project is part of a recent bid to the fund's second round.



## Build sustainable infrastructure (cont'd)

To maximise current use of parks, we first had to understand what was going on in and around our parks – and understand the barriers to use.

- We commissioned Shared Assets to map community infrastructure and build capacity for organisations to deliver activities in our parks (co-created by organisations with reach to priority groups). We cover this activity and where it has led us on the next page.
- We commissioned a marketing strategy with early work completed to assess the current communications assets and opportunities for joint campaigns with partners. One of our target groups is the Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups: findings from Islington Covid-19 work show that voluntary organisations are very effective for communications reaching this target group. Our other target group is people with a mental health condition: the local mental health trust, social prescribing organisations and voluntary organisations that work with this target group are key for effective communications
- Strategic engagement with health sector colleagues, public health, adult social care, VCS sector, senior council officers to explore ways to embed parks for health in long-term formal governance structures. We also sought to understand what commissioners needed from us to support commissioning of park-based services.

### Key findings and pivotal moments

#### Working with health:

- Structure is in constant flux, exemplified by pandemic.
- Public Health want to embed health in services, not absorb services.
- No appetite for additional (governance) structures in what is already a complex system.
- GPs and PH colleagues keen to be involved (even during pandemic) with CCG involvement in our meetings.

#### Borough structures and corporate priorities:

- Islington's structures are changing, our work to date has provided the evidence/mandate to engage on corporate priorities to lead discussion and inform strategic development.

#### Communications assets/public awareness of parks and health benefits

- Marketing strategy highlighted weakness across our communications assets and how we can change our tone and focus on the right things.
- We did not have a proactive presence.
- Refreshed website, so significant content was lost

#### Key achievements

- The project **accelerated its partnership working** with the health sector, VCS colleagues and other partners (such as children's centres) across both boroughs. Our partners, new and existing, understood the health benefits of parks and want to engage in them. Specific opportunities identified for new activity.
- **We are part of borough partnership structures** key to our work that previously we had not belonged to, and similarly we have successfully engaged with other council teams. This embeds our work.



# Community infrastructure mapping and capacity building

Working with [Shared Assets](#) we have undertaken a community mapping exercise across eight wards in Camden and Islington to explore existing activities in parks, relationships between active organisations and identify areas for future collaboration and support. The mapping work identified a number of 'cluster leads' with whom we are working to co-design a programme of support activities (e.g., training and masterclasses) as well as resources to be used through the Transition phase and beyond. These resources will include material for organisations to support their use of parks, as well as resources for parks teams to provide advice on effective ways of working with partners identified through the co-design process.

The community mapping phase identified just how broad the range of activities and interests in delivering health-related activities in parks are, and a strong enthusiasm within the sector for engaging with the Parks for Health programme. It has made visible the complex relationships among organisations and developed a stronger understanding of the VCS landscape to support collaborative working.

We are leading a series of workshops are underway to explore issues in greater depth and co-design the tools and resources that will help unlock community-led activities in parks. It is also identifying a host of exciting opportunities for specific activities and projects, ranging from health walks and gardening initiatives to innovative ways of empowering residents to develop and deliver projects, such as the Mobile Maker Space (a collaboration with the University of Arts London).

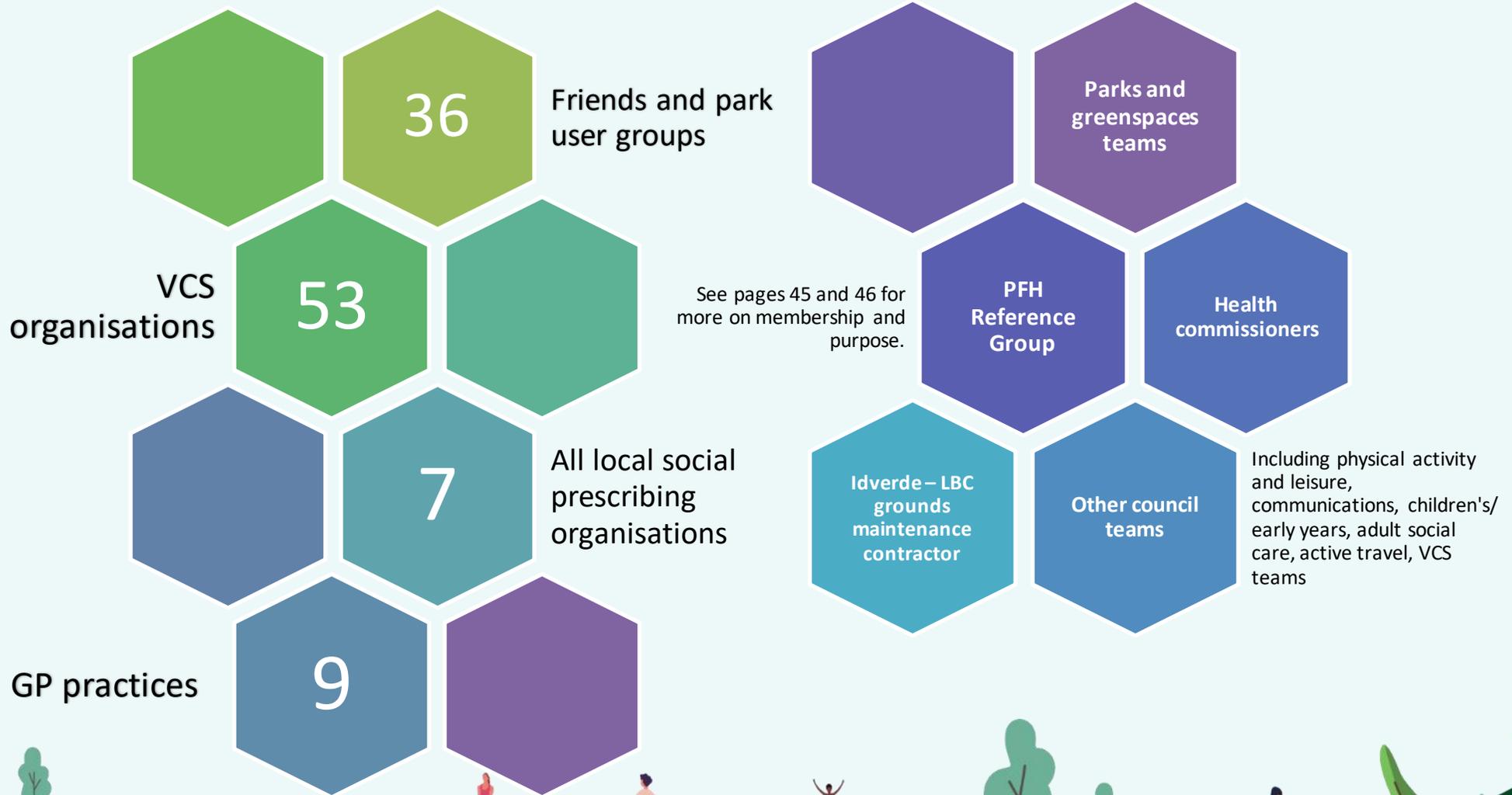
Some key themes are emerging in the workshops to inform Transition phase work:

- **Facilitation:** areas that organisations feel they need support in or how to plan an activity in a park safely
- **Confidence:** the importance of making organisations and individuals feel comfortable using parks, when doing activities in a public setting can be intimidating. 'Hand-holding' for initial activities identified as important for building confidence, as well as providing facilities that meet a range of needs
- **Inclusion and accessibility:** discussion with organisations working with specific communities has highlighted the need for parks and activities to be inclusive, and a desire among broader organisations to better understand their needs
- **Tackling barriers of bureaucracy:** the need to make it easier and clearer how organisations can go about arranging activities in parks and the potential for a more permissive approach to community-led activities



# Who we worked with

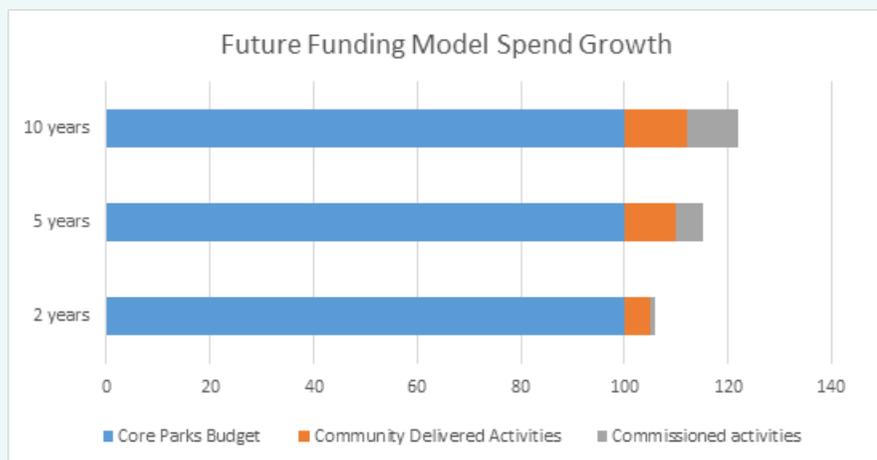
Our stakeholder engagement and communications objective for the project has been to co-design plans to deliver the Parks for Health vision, explore the changes to parks, their infrastructure, activities, marketing, referrals, workforce, and evaluation that would improve residents' health.



# Emerging future funding model

## Overall aims of emerging funding strategy

- To provide better protection for existing core funding levels of parks revenue through establishing and maintaining a strong business case across our councils and with NHS partners.
- To develop and shape strategic capital investment plans that have an explicit focus on health and wellbeing, leveraging in additional funding
- To work with Public Health colleagues to identify funding that could underpin core budgets for services directly delivering health outcomes.
- To bring added value to parks service by enabling partner organisations to secure funding to deliver activity programmes in parks
- To add value to the service by working with NHS and social care services, delivering health commissioned activities in parks that directly address health outcomes.



## Future funding model

We know all too well that there is no magic money tree and the co-design phase findings have confirmed this. Our new model looks at protecting and growing expenditure within parks in the following three core ways:

### Protect existing expenditure by the council on parks and support services

- We are the second and third highest funded (per hectare) services in London.
- Ensuring we have a very strong business case in place to demonstrate the value.

### Grow the levels of expenditure in parks by the VCS and council partners

- Building capacity and sustainable partnerships to address health and wellbeing needs. The broader project will develop and shape partnerships with wider VCS and support their role within parks, building social value. Our workforce transformation will ensure we also have capacity to capitalise on funding opportunities and provide support to our partners.
- We have supported and facilitated two bids to date.

### Grow the levels of expenditure on commissioned health and wellbeing activities delivered in parks

- Use the partnerships developed and strengthened as part of the Parks for Health programme to explore and develop targeted innovative health and wellbeing activities funded/commissioned. This is to explicitly meet public health and NHS/social care priorities, (building on our current exercise on referral activities in leisure centres) including:
  - Green Social Prescribing
  - Mental health prevention and treatment
  - Exercise on referral activities in parks

## Emerging future funding model continued.....

### What change will occur over the transition period?

#### Protect existing expenditure by the council on parks and support services

- **Strategic influence and profile of parks increased** by ensuring parks prominently represented in key strategic documents both within councils and the NHS to highlight value and influence, with commitments around the role and value of parks and the role that these services play
- **Strategic Business Case** socialised within both councils at a senior level, highlighting the value and benefits of parks, with practical examples
- **Better promotion of the existing health and wellbeing value/opportunities** to community and key partners through our new Communications Strategy

#### Grow the levels of expenditure on health and wellbeing activities in parks by the VCS and council partners

- The broader project **will develop and shape partnerships with wider VCS partners and support their role within parks, building social value.**
- Create additional capacity to provide **direct fundraising support for community and VCS partners** to ensure we capitalise on any grant funds that become available.
- **Create systems to receive donations for community health programmes** and improvements. We will work with Islington Giving to create ways for the community to donate to build on existing platforms

#### Grow the levels of expenditure on commissioned health and wellbeing services delivered in parks

- Work with relevant stakeholders to **develop a programme of activities** which promote health and wellbeing. This includes but is not solely limited to GSP activities
- **Further develop the Green Social Prescribing pathway/offer**
- Commission VCS organisations or CCG to support **co-ordination and embedding** of GSP as part of the whole social prescribing offer
- Work to embed **exercise on referral** activities into parks



# Green Space Investment Programme (GSIP)

Through the co-design phase we identified that while both boroughs' parks received high levels of capital investment, one borough (Camden) had an existing approach to securing and targeting investment where needed. Camden already had an excellent strategic investment framework, which considered the following criteria when deciding on where and what investment to make in green spaces. These included:

- Is it in an area deficient in access to open space?
- What is the resident satisfaction with open space within the ward?
- What is the level of deprivation within the ward (Indices of Multiple Deprivation)?
- How does the site score on overall quality using a green flag style assessment?

All these factors remain important when considering where investment is needed. However, with the addition of the learning and data in the Parks Health Toolbox, we now have another key criteria to consider to ensure that we are maximising health and wellbeing outcomes for the community when deciding where investment should be made and on what features.

The project has taken the existing Camden Investment Strategy and updated it to reflect the Parks Health Toolbox criteria. This progressive approach allows the data to be reviewed at borough, ward, park, and element level for each of the health criteria. From this analysis we are able to develop park-based health strategies guided by their key priorities and targets. This provides a roadmap for the optimisation and use of parks and green spaces for health which can be used to deliver appropriate responses to changing health priorities.

The Parks Health Toolbox provides practical steps in the identification and promotion of existing facilities, and the development of parks for health through improvements and new interventions. As such it provides a sound basis for parks to be valued as health assets, and to be delivered within the context of primary prevention, within the principles of Public Health.

The green space investment programme allocates funding, whilst the green space projects quality controls and internal design review ensures appropriate material selection, rational design decisions and a clear handover procedure, reducing the maintenance burden across the parks.

As our relationships with communities develops through the Parks for Health programme, our localised understanding of needs and barriers will also increase. The next stage in the evolution of our Investment Strategies will be to combine the strategic analysis of the Toolbox with this 'live' local insight and knowledge, to create investment programmes and projects that are even more responsive to local needs and that complement and strengthen the increasing community role within our parks.

The next stage will see the new GSIP methodology go through the formal internal adoption process (Islington).





# Marketing and Communicating the Parks for Health Offer

Islington Council operates a corporate communication model; this creates excellent channels that have a strong following and are well curated. It does, however, mean park priorities are pitted against a whole host of political and operational priorities, so exposure has traditionally been challenging.

Stakeholder engagement and the Parks Challenge told us we need to improve communications. Parks for Health provided a core priority – health – and the buy-in of corporate communication teams who worked within the workstream to review existing messaging and channel use.

The pandemic has had three significant impacts:

- Communication colleagues have been highly prioritised elsewhere, often with very little notice
- Public awareness of the value of parks to all our health has never been higher
- Our narrative is part of the next chapter following the pandemic

As our communication colleagues had less time than expected, we commissioned WYS Communications to carry out a Communication Strategy for Parks for Health, with emphasis on:

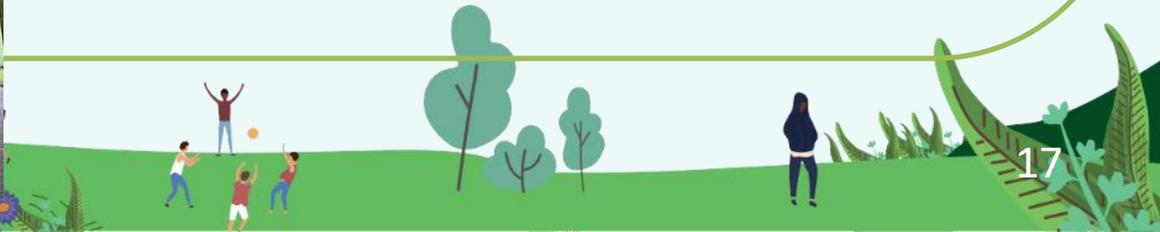
- Creating engaging communications around parks, linking to key milestones throughout the year
- Ensuring communications around parks are positive and inviting
- Delivering accessible communications that reflect and target all of Islington's diverse communities
- Highlighting and promoting parks as essential community spaces for relaxation, socialisation and enjoyment. This is especially vital against the backdrop of Covid-19 and as we emerge from the pandemic.

Our key VCS colleagues agree with the strategy. We are now talking about their needs to fully participate in sharing this communication strategy and engaging with their channels: delivering on this is part of our transition plan.

We know the future is uncertain, so we are trialling two approaches to improve outputs, responding to our services' strengths:

- **Islington** – recruit to a specific role that is hosted within the corporate communications team, thereby embedding parks in the team and strengthening links to Corporate Communications

We are currently working in fortnightly sprints which includes Public Health Communications to refine and deliver our strategy.



Natural spaces and wildlife have a positive effect on mood, stress and concentration 🌹🐝🌳

Help us to make sure they continue to thrive now & in the future - have your say on our biodiversity strategy 🗣️

[...enbiodiversitystrategy.commonplace.is](https://enbiodiversitystrategy.commonplace.is)  
#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek #ConnectWithNature



11:00 AM · May 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

As we deliver a communications campaign for Parks for Health, we have identified many ways in which our parks work links in with existing and upcoming key priority areas and ongoing work. Our immediate priorities include:

- **Covid-19 roadmap:** Continuing to support the vital role of parks in the government's roadmap out of lockdown. This includes promoting government guidance in parks and open spaces and highlighting parks as safe places to meet as we head into the summer months.
- **Building on momentum:** Parks have been a key lifeline for many during the Covid-19 lockdown. Communications will use this momentum to build on the positive health and wellbeing benefits of parks, creating opportunities to profile them as spaces to visit, socialise, exercise and enjoy. This work will also link to the boroughs' summer programme, encouraging residents to use parks for sports and summer activities, and our work around mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- **Embedding parks into council workstreams:** We will work to ensure that parks are linked to key council work, such as Islington's Fairer Together agenda
- **Embedding parks into partners' work:** We will work to ensure that partners in the health and voluntary sectors, and other council teams (such as children's centres), promote parks, their activities and their health benefits
- **Branding:** Developing a brand to give our parks a consistent look and feel.

The first 3 stages, to be undertaken in transition are:

**Inform:** Raise the profile of parks with residents and partners through an engaging strategic plan of communications, linking to key milestones and priorities across the year. We are using the unique summer season of 2021 to make the connection of health and parks a clear message

**Invite:** Welcome all audiences to parks through accessible, clear and consistent communications. We are aligning with both boroughs' priorities to support those disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, who suffer significantly worse health outcomes.

**Discover:** Raise awareness of activities and volunteer opportunities in our parks. Communications will highlight nature, wildlife and other parks features to enjoy. Our messaging with parks works. We have a calendar of activity to maximise the impact of this strength and now we have corporate communication support, and resourcing resolved, we can make the impact we need.



# Section 2:

## Our roadmap to change

*Walking to Camden's green spaces with a group of local residents I had never met before four weeks ago has changed my life and changed me.*

Green social prescribing pilot participant

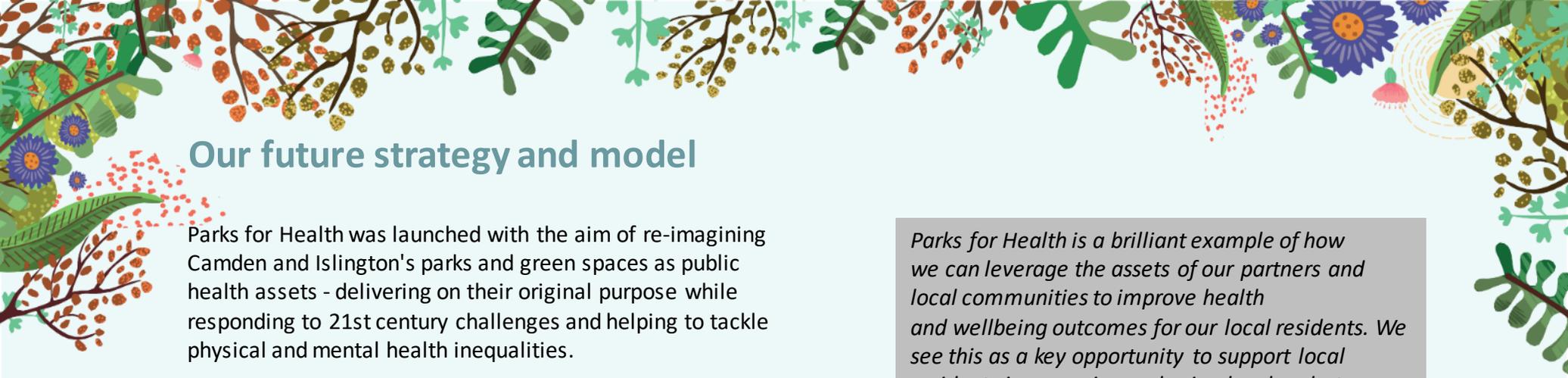
*At 81 and through the first lockdown I wondered how I was going to take pleasure in my remaining time on earth. These walks opened up a new lease of life and the start of a new community which I could embrace.*

Green social prescribing pilot participant

*Tackling the wider determinants of health is a core part of our clinical strategy, and our local parks can play an important role in addressing these. As a trust, we are closely involved with the Camden and Islington Parks for Health project and would like to continue this collaboration to help improve outcomes for people locally.*

Dr Vincent Kirchner, Medical Director for Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust





## Our future strategy and model

Parks for Health was launched with the aim of re-imagining Camden and Islington's parks and green spaces as public health assets - delivering on their original purpose while responding to 21st century challenges and helping to tackle physical and mental health inequalities.

The breadth and depth of our collaboration with council colleagues, health sector partners and the voluntary and community sector have resulted in:

- a shared vision for parks in both boroughs
- a strategic framework for making the vision a reality.
- substantial progress in developing our new funding model and strategy, workforce development, understanding the potential of our social and community infrastructure, and realising the potential of parks-based green social prescribing.

In this section, we outline how we are embedding change through place-based leadership and mainstreaming. We describe our refined vision, what we want to achieve and how we will measure progress, as well as setting out our plans for building on the foundations of our grant-funded co-design and transition phases.

Overall, our approach is based on a combination of cultural, structural and operational factors – none of which would be sufficient on their own.

*Parks for Health is a brilliant example of how we can leverage the assets of our partners and local communities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our local residents. We see this as a key opportunity to support local residents in accessing and using local parks to improve their physical and mental health through connecting with nature and their local community. GPs are seeing unprecedented demand but also recognise that many patients would benefit from green social prescribing, and we are thrilled to be working with Islington Council and their partners in support of this project.*

Clare Henderson, Director of Integration,  
Islington Directorate, North Central London CCG

Collaboration is critical to our success, and we describe this in further detail in sections five and six.

# Our strategic framework: making our vision a reality

Our strategic framework comprises the following elements:

## 5 priority health impacts

- The contribution of our parks to the prevention of ill health, early intervention and promotion of wellbeing over the longer term.

## 4 Programme strategic outcomes

- The ways in which the Parks for Health programme itself will contribute to these health impacts, reflecting our ambition and driving innovation.

## 5 strategic objectives

- A suite of measurable programme-wide strategic objectives for delivery which will continue in some form beyond the grant-funded period but increasingly embedded in mainstream business.

## 8 workstream objectives

- The focus for each area of delivery to ensure everything we do is directed towards the programme outcomes and, ultimately, mainstreaming for improved health.
- These objectives will be achieved through two overarching priorities:
  1. Our parks experience
  2. Green social prescribing.



# The changes by the end of the project

Our logic model details the changes we will see at the end of the transition phase and how these take us further on our journey towards transformation and our vision.

We will be poised to embed the project's vision and work in our parks' services, structures, other council teams and partners in the post-transition phase.

Residents	Partners	Embedding in structures and councils	Parks' Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make greater use of parks to improve their health, and so are less isolated, more active, with improved health and wellbeing, and more engaged in their community; particularly our target groups</li> <li>• Feel there are parks that meet their wants and needs, and use them accordingly</li> </ul>	<p>Our partners in the health and voluntary sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remain engaged and have ownership of the development and delivery of this work</li> <li>• Increase the number of activities they offer in our parks</li> <li>• Feel supported by parks teams with both capacity and fundraising to pay for the activities</li> </ul>	<p>Senior officer buy-in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Parks for Health strategy has been agreed by Islington's Executive</li> <li>• Our senior councillors and officers remain fully committed to our work and vision.</li> </ul> <p>Parks and their health offer are fully embedded in our borough partnership structures and strategies, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islington's Fairer Together structure and tackling inequalities group</li> <li>• Borough's Covid-19 recovery plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islington council has restructured its workforce to help deliver our vision</li> </ul> <p>Parks staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are supportive of the health-related changes to their roles and to parks</li> <li>• Are willing to engage with partners, and have a greater awareness of the specific needs of our communities</li> <li>• Identified skills training delivered</li> </ul>



# The changes by the end of the project phase.....

Residents	Partners	Embedding in structures and councils	Parks' Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The health sector recognises the health offer of parks and “socially prescribes” parks to residents</li><li>• Evaluation of referrals to parks show that the health has improved of residents who took up the referral</li></ul>	<p>Our partners in the health and voluntary sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know what is happening in parks and promote this and our vision to their service users</li><li>• Friends of Parks groups have greater capacity and confidence to deliver activities in parks</li></ul>	<p>Other council teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognise the health offer of parks</li><li>• Refer service users to parks</li><li>• Where possible deliver activities in parks, such as by Islington’s children centres</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Islington Green Space Investment Programme agreed</li></ul> <p>The future of our parks and their funding is strengthened.</p>



# Our priorities for delivery 2022-26: building on into normal business

Our work during the transition phase will shape and refine our delivery plans for the medium term. However, we have identified a number of priority areas/themes for focus. These will contribute to the five-year outcomes in our logic model and take us significantly further along the path to transformation and our vision. Our priority themes are:

## **The parks experience/quality of our parks**

We will continue to develop, appraise and refine the physical and social infrastructure of our parks to maximise health and inclusion.

## **Wider green infrastructure**

We will take every opportunity to mainstream the Parks for Health vision and approach by influencing planning and policy and delivery of our green infrastructure as a whole.

## **Sustainable investment and resourcing**

We will use the power of health as a priority to secure greater and more diverse investment and funding for our parks and green spaces over the long-term.

## **Ways of working**

We will ensure our strategic partners, parks teams and delivery partners maintain the motivation, skills, knowledge and capacity to deliver the Parks for Health vision.

## **Green social prescribing**

We will continue to evolve the GSP offer in order to meet identified needs more effectively, tackle health inequalities, and shift the balance towards early intervention and prevention via widespread parks usage.

## **Leadership and excellence**

We will foster a culture of continuous improvement while also helping and influencing others across London and nationally to transform parks into sustainable health assets.

*Parks for Health information, workshops and meetings, and green social prescribing pilots, are really helping to change minds and present a different view of how residents can use and benefit from their local parks. This is really useful for our social prescribing work where you can encounter a lot of resistance to doing things outdoors!*

Donna Turnbull, Voluntary Action Camden



# The long-term changes

Our logic model includes the outcomes we want to achieve by 2031. Like the NHS long-term plan, which has helped to shape our own planning, it lasts for ten years. By 2031 Camden and Islington's parks will be part of life as normal for our residents and business as usual for our partners, and health will run through everything we do.

Residents	Partners	Parks' Services
<p>Camden and Islington residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through park usage are less isolated, more active, with improved health and wellbeing, and more engaged in their community</li><li>• Use our parks as a matter of routine, particularly our target groups who do not wait for a referral through green social prescribing</li><li>• Feel there are parks that meet their wants and needs, and use them accordingly</li><li>• Are involved in the design and delivery of parks themselves and the activities in them</li><li>• Use parks such that it matches the diversity of our communities</li></ul>	<p>Our partners in the health and voluntary sectors, and other partners such as children's centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are engaged in parks as part of their mainstream work</li><li>• Recognise that parks are an active health asset, referring service users to them, advocating for them, and delivering activities in them that contribute to the universal, targeted and GSP offers</li><li>• Have sustainable funding to deliver activities in parks</li><li>• Influence the management and investment in parks</li><li>• Feel that they have a shared ownership of parks as health assets</li></ul>	<p>All parks' staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand their role in supporting parks to be an active health asset</li><li>• feel confident and motivated to support the health and wellbeing of park users</li></ul> <p>Health is central to changes and improvements to park infrastructure.</p> <p>The future of our parks and their funding is safeguarded.</p>



# Section 4:

# Sharing the learning



# Sharing what we have learnt

Our status as an FPA project and the only one solely about health has helped to bring our work to a wide audience.

## Collaboration with others

- We are promoting our work and sharing our learning through corporate programmes, such as:
  - Camden Participation team work on We Make Camden, Camden Renewal Commission, Community Connectedness, Diversity in the Public Realm
  - Islington's localities and VCS work in Fairer Together, Islington Time to Change mental health initiative and Islington mental health partnership board
  - And social prescribing organisations across both boroughs
- Participating in The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, University College London research projects: Making better use of urban green spaces for public health; How park users in North London derive wellbeing from greenspaces
- Worked in partnership with local CCG to submit a joint bid to be a GSP test site and with local VCS organisations to the Green Recovery Fund rounds 1 and 2, bringing together organisations that had not collaborated before
- Provided a venue in Camden and hosted a site visit for the Improving Mental Health through Green Social Prescribing event organised by the Dept of Health and Social Care (National Leadership Centre!)
- Shared article with the Centre of Excellence on the impact of Covid and the integral role of parks in the response

## Our evolving practice, learning and practice we have shared

### Publications:

- A case study in:
  - [Public Health England: Improving access to greenspace, A new review for 2020](#)
  - [Parks for London Good Parks For London 2020: Parks and the Pandemic](#)
- Feature heavily in the [Mayor of London's Green Spaces Commission Report \(2020\)](#)
- Article in ACES Terrier – [Association of Chief Estates Surveyors and Property Managers quarterly magazine](#)

### Presentations:

- Keynote speaker at the Health and Green Spaces Workshop held by Parks for London Centre of Excellence
- Speaker at PHE Healthy Places Webinar #6: Natural Environment and Health
- London Greenspace Commission
- Nesta/FPA event: [Rethinking the Future of Parks](#)
- Show and tell events with council staff
- Mental health awareness week, May 2021:
  - Presentation at event for staff of Islington council and partners about Black men and mental health
  - [Thrive London panel discussion](#)
- Shared learning with Hackney Local Delivery Pilot and Brent Parks Forum
- Presented to the London Environment Directors Network (LEDNet) workshop

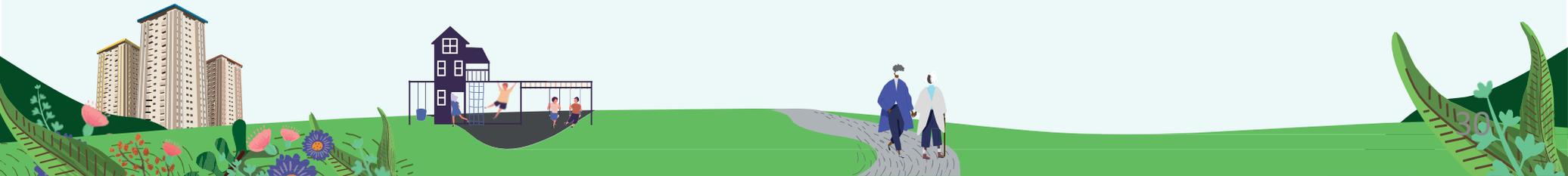
Follow our journey at:

[www.futureparks.org.uk/Camden-Islington](http://www.futureparks.org.uk/Camden-Islington)



# Examples of success and changes so far:

- Work with Bright Start to deliver environmental education activities for under fives plus a training programme to skill up the Bright Start Team with accredited forest school training.
- Diversified funding with Islington securing £200k/year (ringfenced Public Health) for the Ranger Service and additional £150k/year for a new community gardening team (from Housing).
- Worked with Public Health and a variety of council departments to bid for and secure, funding from Public Health England for Prevention and Promotion for Better Mental Health. This will lead to a range of targeted health and wellbeing activities taking place in our parks over the next 6 months.





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