

Report for: Cabinet – 13 September 2022

Title: Approval to Consult on a Draft Parks and Greenspaces Strategy

Report authorised by: Eubert Malcolm, Interim Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Lead Officer: Simon Farrow – simon.farrow@haringey.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. Over the last two and half years, the Council and stakeholders have collaborated to identify a vision, aims and actions for the parks and greenspaces in the borough. The collective work has resulted in the development of a new strategy and a range of supporting documents which include:
- A new Parks and Greenspaces Strategy for 2023 – 2038 entitled “People need Parks” (attached at Appendix 1).
 - Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan (attached at Appendix 2)
 - Parks and Greenspaces Policy Pack (attached at Appendix 3)
 - Parks and Greenspaces Service Standards (attached at Appendix 4)
 - Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan (attached at Appendix 5)
 - Biodiversity Action Plan (attached at Appendix 6)
 - Tree and Woodland Plan (attached at Appendix 7)
 - Watercourse and Flood Risk Plan (attached at appendix 8)
- 1.2. The new documents support the Local Plan, the Climate Change Action Plan and a future Nature Recovery Plan.
- 1.3. Permission to consult is being sought to seek further input into the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and its supporting documents before bringing a final version back to Cabinet in March 2023 for adoption and implementation.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1. The development of the draft Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and the supporting documents represent a major step forward in setting out the Council and communities’ priorities for our award-winning parks and greenspaces in the borough.
- 2.2. The service has worked hard to engage many groups in the development of the plans and the drafts reflect the input received from those both actively involved

in our parks and greenspaces and those who currently feel excluded or cannot use parks because there are barriers for them. The documents reflect our 2022-26 manifesto commitments and set out how they will directly or indirectly contribute to achieving the manifesto goals.

- 2.3. The strategy sets out a clear and simple vision for the boroughs parks and green spaces to be:-

“That Haringey’s parks and greenspaces become fully inclusive shared spaces that deliver our key aims of inclusion and wellbeing, climate change and sustainability and a quality service.”

- 2.4. Whilst all parts of the vision are important, of greatest importance is that our parks and greenspaces become fully inclusive. Over the next 15 years we expect to make a significant step change in how inclusive our parks and greenspaces are.
- 2.5. We recognise that our ambition will be limited by the availability of funding, but I believe a partnership approach with all stakeholders will ensure we achieve as much progress as possible.
- 2.6. I commend these drafts to the Cabinet for approval and look forward to opening up the draft documents for wider public consultation and engagement.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 3.1. Approve the draft Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and the other plans identified in para 1.1 for consultation.
- 3.2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director Direct Services, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Life, to make minor amendments to the draft documents and to agree the final consultation materials.
- 3.3. Note that the consultation period will commence in the week beginning the 26th September 2022 and end at least eight weeks later on Sunday 27th November 2022.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1. Previous strategic documents have all expired and therefore this means the borough has no agreed strategy for the management, improvement and enhancement of the parks and greenspaces in the borough.
- 4.2. The documents have the support of many stakeholders who collaborated with the Council to identify the priorities, needs and aspirations which are embodied in the new Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and its supporting plans, policies, and standards.

- 4.3. The Parks and Greenspaces Strategy is aspirational, seeking to make the parks and greenspaces in the borough truly inclusive for the whole community in Haringey. If achieved, then everyone will have the opportunity to benefit from the uplift in their wellbeing, have spaces that have adapted to climate change and enjoy a quality experience for all.
- 4.4. Funding and sustaining the outcomes hoped for in this strategy will always be a challenge in the current local government climate. However, as has been witnessed in Haringey on numerous occasions, starting from a position of collaboration can achieve much greater outcomes.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1. The only other option would have been to not produce a new strategy or the supporting plans. This would have weakened the Council's position. There would have been no clear policy framework within which Councillors and officers could work. Decisions and opportunities would have to be weighed against their merits and not in relation to the agreed strategic aims and objectives. Without a strategy, the Council is in a weaker position to bid for external funding.

6. Background information

- 6.1. The Council's policy framework for parks and greenspaces has a number of lapsed strategies and plans which require renewal and updating. These include:
- Open Space Strategy – 2006
 - Biodiversity Action Plan – 2009
 - Haringey Tree Strategy – 2008-2011
- 6.2. In addition, a number of new documents have been identified that either address emerging issues or support other Council plans.
- Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan
 - Parks and Greenspaces Policy Pack
 - Parks and Greenspaces Service Standards
 - Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan
 - Watercourse and Flood Risk Plan
- 6.3. Two further existing plans support and complete the strategic landscape for parks and greenspaces in the borough. These plans are:
- Outdoor Events Policy 2014
 - Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2019-2023
- 6.4. From the outset of developing the new documents, a clear goal has been to include a wide range of people in the development and definition of the vision, aims, and actions that run throughout the suite of documents. The engagement has been challenging throughout the pandemic, but it was also a period when people connected with their local park or greenspace in a new and more meaningful way. Over the course of the last two and half years, contributions have been gathered from the following parts of the Haringey community:
- Councillor Working Group

- A range of Council services
 - Haringey Climate Forum
 - Faith communities
 - Disabled people and Disability Action Haringey
 - LGBTQI Community
 - Friends of Parks and Allotment Forum
 - Primary and secondary school children
 - Older people
 - People from ethnic communities
- 6.5. The engagement work culminated in March 2022 with a Parks Summit at Alexandra Palace attended by over 70 stakeholders which endorsed the work to date. However, that engagement journey will continue and is not limited to the production of these documents but will be an ongoing part of the future work of the Council.
- 6.6. In June this year the Council brought Homes for Haringey back within the direct control of the Council. As such the strategy and its supporting plans do not currently cover the greenspaces within the Housing Service controlled areas of the borough. Therefore, a Housing Greenspace Plan will be developed with residents to ensure the housing greenspaces are developed in line with the overall Parks and Greenspace vision and aims.

7. Documents

7.1. Parks and Greenspaces Strategy – People need Parks

- 7.1.1. This is the overarching strategic document from which all of the other new plans and policies flow. It is an overall summary of the shared ambition for the borough's parks and greenspaces over the next 15 years. The strategy includes a new vision and three key aims which will help to steer the work of all involved.

Vision: That Haringey's parks and greenspaces become fully inclusive, shared spaces that deliver our key aims of inclusion and wellbeing, climate change and sustainability and a quality service.

Key Aims

1. **Inclusion and Wellbeing** - Providing inclusive parks and greenspaces that all communities in Haringey can benefit from so that usage and enjoyment of our parks and greenspaces reflects the communities living in Haringey and contributes to improved wellbeing.
2. **Climate Change and Sustainability** - Supporting the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency by reducing the carbon footprint of parks and greenspaces, protecting and promoting biodiversity, and helping educate everyone in Haringey about contributing towards saving the planet.
3. **A Quality Service** - Securing investment, improving standards, partnerships, communications, and outcomes.

7.2. Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan

7.2.1. This plan is at the heart of how the Council will work to develop its relationships with stakeholders. This could include:

- Supporting existing groups to diversify their membership, to put on activities or to help in citizen science projects.
- Encouraging groups that feel excluded or unwelcome in parks to tackle the barriers that results in those feelings.

7.2.2. This plan was produced in advance of the development of the Haringey Local Deal. Thus, it is expected that this plan will be further developed to align with the Haringey Local Deal.

7.3. New Policies for Parks and Greenspaces

7.3.1. This document seeks to codify current working policies and practices in parks. At present there are 17 policy areas set out. Over time more will be added. Policies will be updated to reflect changes in thinking, legislation, and best practice.

7.4. Service Standards for Parks and Greenspaces

7.4.1. This document sets out the service standards the Council aims to provide in parks and greenspaces. Details are provided on how the service standards alter according to three different park categories.

7.5. Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan

7.5.1. The Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan documents seven key types of assets. These are: buildings; vehicles, plant, machinery & tools; underground and overhead utilities & infrastructure; sports facilities; play & outdoor gyms; furniture, fittings & infrastructure; and soft assets. Over a 20-year period, the capital replacement value of the assets is £40m.

7.5.2. In addition, there are some special assets such as bridges where the replacement cost is over a much longer period e.g., 120 years. One-off cost for this kind of asset is in addition to the twenty-year period costs. The Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan will help to inform the wider Council Asset Management Plan.

7.6. Biodiversity Action Plan

7.6.1. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has a wider role in that its applicable to the whole borough. The BAP plays an important role in supporting the planning process. The Environment Act 2021 contained new requirements for local authorities to develop 'Local Nature Recovery Strategies'. The Biodiversity Action Plan will form the platform for the borough's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The plan will support the manifesto commitment to three new local nature reserves and an increase in the number of sites of importance for nature conservation (SINC).

7.7. Tree and Woodland Plan

7.7.1. The Tree and Woodland Plan sets out the Council's aspirations to develop the urban forest in Haringey. Increasing the urban forest will help more residents

benefit from the improvements in air quality, reduced localised flooding and reduction in temperature. The Council has set out targets to increase tree canopy cover to 30% in all wards and plant at least 10,000 trees by 2030 to kick start this process. The Tree and Woodland Plan also sets out how the Council will manage its trees in a variety of settings, including the management of trees implicated in insurance claims.

7.8. Watercourse and Flood Risk Plan

- 7.8.1. This plan acts as a supporting document to the Council's approved Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The plan details the role that parks and greenspaces can play in helping to manage the risk of flooding of people's homes and businesses. Also, the plan sets out how flood mitigation measures can help to broaden the biodiversity of a park or greenspace whilst providing flooding protection.

8. Funding and Resources

- 8.1. The strategy and supporting plans span a fifteen-year period and set out the aims and aspirations for the parks and greenspaces in the borough. When the last Open Spaces Strategy was developed, no one could foresee twelve years of austerity, a worldwide pandemic and cost of living crises.
- 8.2. However, within the limited resources of the Council, parks and greenspaces are a priority. Access to resources (both people and money) will always be a limiting factor on the pace at which change can happen. The Council does have a good track record of securing external funding, developing alternative funding streams and securing improvements through development. Much of this has been achieved in partnership with the Friends of Parks network in Haringey.
- 8.3. In the last two years, the Parks and Leisure Service has been restructured to ensure more staffing resources are available to deliver the strategy. Additional capital funding has been made available to deliver key elements such as:
- decarbonising the fleet and buildings;
 - renewing the bridges along Parkland Walk;
 - tree planting;
 - depot improvements; and
 - the creation of wildflower meadows.
- 8.4. In addition, there is ongoing support for the important basics in parks such as bins, benches, fences, paths, play areas, outdoor gyms and the like. The Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan sets out the need in this area and identifies a need for additional funding which will need to be considered alongside the other priorities of the Council during the life of the strategy.

9. Proposed Consultation & Engagement

- 9.1. It is proposed to run a boroughwide consultation and engagement exercise. The period of consultation and engagement will commence in the week beginning

the 26th September 2022 and end at least eight weeks later on Sunday 27th November 2022.

- 9.2. At its simplest level, the draft documents will be published online and made available through the libraries and parks cafes for people to feedback any comments that they wish to make. Accessible versions will be available to ensure everyone can access the documents.
- 9.3. The opportunity to feedback will be promoted through the Council's website, social media channels and through banners and posters in parks and other locations. In addition, direct contact will be made with existing environmental networks and resident organisations.
- 9.4. Beyond the open feedback afforded to everyone, the existing engagement will be continued with the groups outlined in para 6.4. This will be delivered through face-to-face sessions throughout the consultation and engagement period.
- 9.5. The new strategy and supporting plans are relevant to a range of Council directorate services and partner organisations. They will be afforded a further opportunity to provide their feedback.
- 9.6. The consultation and engagement will seek to gain answers to the following key questions:
 - Do you agree with the overall vision for the future of parks and greenspaces?
 - Is there something important that has not been sufficiently considered in the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and its supporting documents?
 - How can parks be made safer and help users to feel safer?
 - What actions could be taken to help reduce tensions between different user groups?
 - Can you be a partner and work with Haringey Council in the future to help it overcome key issues and challenges and deliver against its actions and targets?

10. Contribution to strategic outcomes

Building a fairer, greener borough – Haringey Labour Manifesto 2022-26

- 10.1. Following the local elections in May 2022 the Council's ambition and priorities are based on putting residents at the heart of everything the Council does. For the remainder of 2022 and into 2023, the Council will work with residents to develop the Haringey Local Deal. The Haringey Local Deal will seek to empower communities to make change, putting local people at the forefront of decision-making. The Parks and Greenspaces strategy will support the delivery of the Haringey Local Deal and in turn the manifesto commitments.
- 10.2. Below we have included extracts from the Manifesto that this strategy and its supporting plans will help to either directly deliver or support: -

Inclusion and Wellbeing Aim

Directly deliver: -

- Community gardening and tree planting on estates and trees
- Co-produce designs for pocket parks, community gardens and street side verges
- Women at the heart of designing parks
- Increase access to sports and exercise classes for disabled people
- Keep fit Haringey campaign for over 50's

Support: -

- Participatory budgeting to help the council set its spending priorities
- Contribute to the development of the Young Voices Programme
- Assist in developing a community health and wellbeing network

Climate Change and Sustainability Aim

Directly deliver: -

- Decarbonise all parks vehicles by 2027
- Plant street trees until each ward reaches 30% canopy cover
- Plant 10,000 new trees by 2030
- Invest in sustainable drainage systems to reduce flooding
- Work to create three brand new nature reserves by 2026 and introduce Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Increase recycling in parks to 50% by 2030

Support: -

- Reduce and eliminate the use of single use plastics.
- Install green pollution barriers on schools on main roads
- Explore green energy production in parks
- Identify sites for local food growing can take place
- 50% of council contracts to local business to keep more wealth in the borough

Quality Parks Aim

Directly deliver: -

- Host or support more music festivals and events
- Install more LED Parks lighting to keep people safe

Support: -

- Apprenticeships
- SEND opportunities
- Turkish and Kurdish theatre festival

11. Statutory Officers' Comments

11.1. Finance

- 11.1.1. There are no financial implications on the Parks Strategy at this stage. However, adoption of the individual plans within this Strategy could arise to financial implications and would require further work to ascertain the financial impact Any funding requirements would be subject availability of funds (Externally or Internally) and form part the bidding via the MTFS Budget setting process.

11.2. Procurement

- 11.2.1. Strategic Procurement note the contents of this report and confirm there are not procurement related matters preventing Cabinet approving the recommendations in paragraph 3.

11.3. Legal

- 11.3.1. The Council is seeking to agree a Parks and Greenspaces Strategy to better manage its public open spaces. This report seeks authority to carry out a consultation on that strategy. In carrying out the consultation the Council must comply with certain principles. These are:

- That consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- That the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;
- That adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
- That the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.

- 11.3.2. The consultation must also be carried out in line with the Council's charter on consultation.

- 11.3.3. Following the consultation, a further report will be brought back to Cabinet to agree the new Parks and Greenspaces Strategy.

11.4. Equality

- 11.4.1. The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

- 11.4.2. The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

- 11.4.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

- 11.4.4. The EQIA for the previous Borough Plan identified that people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are "less likely to visit the natural

environment than White British residents and less likely to participate in physical activity...” (Borough Plan EQIA, 2019, p.33. Appendix 5)

- 11.4.5. Stakeholder engagement undertaken in the development of the Strategy has led to Inclusion and Wellbeing being identified as one of the three core Aims to be achieved through the Strategy
- 11.4.6. Officers have also investigated what takes place within other parks management and strategic organisations and what academic studies and examples of good practice exist.
- 11.4.7. Good practice examples have been found to be limited as have UK based academic studies though some examples have been found and have helped to inform the Strategy
- 11.4.8. Engagement to help inform how the Inclusion and wellbeing Aim could be actioned has been undertaken with a range of diverse groups and communities including older people, disabled people, younger people, faith communities, LGBTQI people, people with mental health conditions, Friends of Parks, and other Council services.
- 11.4.9. This engagement has taken the form of meetings and focus groups and has resulted in a series of draft actions being included in the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and in the supporting documents.
- 11.4.10. Examples of this include:
 - Over time, adapting the parks workforce to become representative of who lives in Haringey
 - Recruiting a Community Engagement Officer whose main priority is to work with seldom heard from groups to ensure that new and different voices can contribute to future service delivery
 - Developing additional open space in areas of deficiency, particularly in the east of Haringey
 - Identifying changes in the design of parks and green spaces and facilities offered by parks and green spaces to make them more attractive, safer, more welcoming, and more accessible to seldom heard from groups
 - Supporting the development of new user groups and developing a programme of activities and events that showcase and support increased usage and involvement by seldom heard from groups, including activities to involve communities in nature, to improve health and wellbeing and activities to support thoughtful behaviour
 - Communicating with key partners and stakeholders to help them understand and support the Priority of more inclusive and healthier parks in Haringey
 - Reviewing internal and external funding options to further support inclusive parks

- 11.4.11. The service will collaborate with officers within the Council with specialist knowledge and expertise to assist in progressing the Inclusion and Wellbeing Aim
- 11.4.12. This joint working will include their input and support in seeking to formalise working relationships with organisations such as Disability Action Haringey to enable the Service to incorporate the views of disabled people in the implementation of projects and the development of policy.
- 11.4.13. The service is proposing to explore options for external funding to assist with the short -medium term (years 1-3) delivery of the Inclusion Aim.
- 11.4.14. A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is included at Appendix 9. The EQIA found that overall, the impacts on groups with protected characteristics are expected to be positive because of the proposals included in the draft strategy and supporting plans. The further engagement that will take place during the consultation will help to identify any additional impacts. The EQIA will be updated with any changes following the consultation period. The proposals in the final document will be amended if required prior to the final strategy and supporting documents coming forward for approval.

12. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Parks and Greenspaces Strategy.
Appendix 2 - Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan
Appendix 3 - New Policies for Parks and Greenspaces
Appendix 4 - Service Standards for Parks and Greenspaces
Appendix 5 – Parks and Greenspaces Asset Management Plan
Appendix 5.1 – List of parks and greenspaces
Appendix 5.2 – List of parks buildings
Appendix 5.3 – List of assets by type and condition
Appendix 5.4 – A1804 Haringey CNCA report final 210412
Appendix 5.5 – Accessibility v2
Appendix 5.6 – Project management process guide
Appendix 5.7 – Haringey Outdoor Sport and Play Facility Framework Summary v2
Appendix 5.8 – Action Plan
Appendix 6 - Biodiversity Action Plan
Appendix 7 - Tree and Woodland Plan
Appendix 8 - Watercourse and Flood Risk Plan
Appendix 9 – Equalities Impact Assessment

13. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- Haringey Open Spaces Strategy 2006 - [Introduction \(haringey.gov.uk\)](http://haringey.gov.uk)
- Haringey Biodiversity Action Plan 2009 - [untitled \(haringey.gov.uk\)](http://haringey.gov.uk)
- Haringey Tree Strategy 2008-2011 - [Tree Strategy | Haringey Council](http://haringey.gov.uk)
- Haringey Local Plan 2013 onwards - [Local Plan | Haringey Council](http://haringey.gov.uk)

- [Haringey Climate Change Action Plan 2021 - final_haringey_climate_change_action_plan_-_march_2021.pdf](#)