

Report for: Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – 15th December 2022

Title: Parks Performance Update.

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

Lead Officer: Simon Farrow – Head of Parks and Leisure – Simon.farrow@haringey.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/

Non-Key Decision: N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. The report provides the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel with an update on the current performance and work programme within the Parks Team.

2. Parks & Greenspaces Strategy:

- In September 2022, the Cabinet approved a draft set of documents for the public to be consulted on.
- The Parks & Greenspaces Strategy consultation opened on the 29th September and closed on 27 November 2022.
- As well as an online survey, pop up meetings (held in libraries), online public meetings, meetings with stakeholders and in person and online meetings with Councillors took place.
- Over 600 residents took the time to complete the questionnaire and more than 20 groups submitted formal responses.
- The next steps will include a review of the feedback and completing a summary report on the consultation exercise.
- The draft documents will be amended in January to reflect the feedback.
- In March 2023, the Cabinet will consider the final documents for approval.
- Subject to Cabinet approval, the documents will be launched at a Parks Summit in April 2023

3. Machinery

- 3.1. We are moving away from reliance on the use of petrol and diesel-driven machinery to procuring handheld battery-operated power tool equipment. We have explored the market to date and are purchasing various types of equipment and we will monitor performance of the equipment over the next two years before bulk replacement with the chosen most effective products.

- 3.2. Battery tools run quietly and do not produce harmful emissions into the atmosphere thus reducing air and noise pollution and reduction for the operator regarding exposure to HAVS (hand arm vibration syndrome). Once the batteries reach the end of their capacity, they are recyclable. The use of battery equipment will over time reduce maintenance of the machinery in comparison to regular servicing of petrol driven machinery and as technology advances over the next few years, we expect to see industry improvements around shorter battery charging times and longer machinery running times, helping to make our service more effective.
- 3.3. We are also exploring the use of remote control and robotic mowers which are semi-autonomous / autonomous machines that drive themselves, tackle slopes and awkward areas of land and eliminate any HAVS risk to the operator. We will also be investing in a football pitch line marking machine that will release staff to conduct increased maintenance on the grass pitches.
- 3.4. The next step to reduce our carbon impact is to further explore the market with larger pedestrian and ride-on battery powered machinery.

4. Weed Control

- 4.1. We have explored the current market in efforts to reduce the use of herbicides in parks and greenspaces. We are currently procuring herbicide-free technology in the form of Foamstream and Rootwave equipment.
- 4.2. The Foamstream process works by insulating hot water using biodegradable plant-based foam. It is applied to weeds whereby the heat is the active ingredient that kills the weeds. The foam acts as a thermal blanket over the vegetation and it also sterilises surrounding weed seeds. The equipment is not weather-dependent and can be used all year round. Our new Landscape Team will be able to use the equipment to remove moss and algae from our sports courts' facilities.
- 4.3. We are investing in a medium sized unit that we will transport to sites on an electric utility vehicle which we are also in the process of securing. The electric vehicle compared to our current fleet types will run quietly and produce no harmful emissions, hence zero air pollution.
- 4.4. The Rootwave process uses electricity to kill weeds without the use of chemical herbicides and is a sustainable technology that helps nature restore soils, water, and biodiversity by capturing carbon. Electricity is used to boil weeds from the root upward. It is used for spot weeding and treatment on invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and other pernicious destructive plant species.
- 4.5. We are currently working on an incremental plan from 2022 -2026 to be herbicide-free in our parks and greenspaces.
- 4.6. The industry is developing at a fast pace regarding producing new technology. As competition for supply increases, the trend is likely that we will see prices for equipment come down while options and capacity will increase. Although we

recognise that there is still work to be done to reduce our carbon footprint, we are heading in the right direction towards a cleaner, more environmentally friendly era for our service provision.

5. Project Update

- 5.1. The Parks Projects Team is currently taking forward a large portfolio of projects, the key ones of which are as follows:

Parkland Walk Bridges

- £13m+ budget to address the deteriorating state of the 7 Parks & Leisure bridges along Parkland Walk and to upgrade the existing paths and entrances.
- Two bridges have already been repaired, at Vicarage Path and Upper Tollington Park.
- Stanhope Road bridge has obtained planning permission and stakeholder engagements are underway currently to co-design the look and feel of the paths, ramps and bridge and railing materials.

Down Lane Park

- A joint Regeneration/Parks project to co-produce a new masterplan for the park and the community hub is well under way, supported through the creation of a Park User Forum and a Community Design Group.
- A wider consultation process has been undertaken over recent months; the outcome, taking community-generated two options down to one, will be fed back to local people in February 2023.
- Work to co-design the community hub has commenced and will continue through January, leading to various design stage board approvals in February, March and May, with planning pre-app discussions in April 2023.

The Paddock

- Cabinet approved in November 2022 the planned works to deal with the invasive species and land quality issues.
- These works will commence in January 2023, prior to which further communication will be undertaken on site and online, including on Commonplace.

CIL-funded projects

- A new playground at Chapman's Green has recently been completed.
- A new playground at Woodside Park has just started on site.
- A series of play elements are currently being agreed on Parkland Walk to increase play opportunities in Highgate.
- A new BMX track at Shepherd's Hill will go to Planning Committee in March or April and commence on site later in 2023/24.

Tennis improvements

- Tennis improvement works, part-funded by the LTA, are proposed for 5 sites.
- Works have commenced on engaging key stakeholders, understanding site constraints and required works, and the next steps are to commence

consultations including via Commonplace, and prepare planning applications and briefs for contractors, with a view to phased implementation in 2023.

- The project includes improvements to playing surfaces, equipment, fencing, digital gate controls, lighting, and access arrangements.

Paddling Pools

- A consultation, including via Commonplace, will go live mid-December concerning the future of paddling pools at Bruce Castle, Lordship Rec and Priory Park.
- The pools are revenue-heavy to maintain and manage and an alternative such as splash play is proposed instead, subject to the consultation outcomes.
- Works, following detailed specifications and procurement actions, will take place in 2023/24.

Levelling up/Somerford Grove Open Space

- The Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) has provided £85k to improve Somerford Grove Open Space.
- Consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders and a scheme is currently being prepared for implementation on site by the end of March 2023.

Meadows

- Meeting Friends in December to finalise the core phase 1 sites.
- Waymarker posts will be installed in January.
- Seed sowing and community training via The Community Volunteers (TCV) will commence from March 2023 onwards.
- Consultation to identify phase 2 sites will commence in February and works to those sites will be from September 2023.

Page Green Common/Page Green Terrace/Rangemoor Road Open Space

- Phase 1 works are currently on site at Page Green Common, with phase 2 works planned for when TfL has finalised the route of CFR2.
- Works to create a new meadow have been undertaken at Page Green Terrace.
- Works to improve Rangemoor Road Open Space will commence on site on January 2023.

Wood Green Common/Barratt Gardens/Caxton Terrace

- Consultation & engagement activities have already taken place, and works to improve Tower Terrace have already commenced on site, with works commencing on site for Caxton terrace in January 2023.
- Works to Barratt Gardens and Wood Green Common are planned to commence in September 2023, subject to finalising budgets/value engineering.

Finsbury Park boundary review

- Sustrans has been commissioned to consult and engage a wide range of people about the future of the park's boundaries, with a view to making them more permeable

- A consultation, including via Commonplace, will commence in April 2023 and eventually lead to design options for the park's boundaries.

Russell Park

- Working with Noel Park Big Local to improve the site with Big Local money.
- NPBL already operate their Changing Gears project from the site and intend to open the kiosk café at the site once they have recruited a cafe manager.
- RIBA Stage 3 designs are in the process of being signed off by Parks, then a phased approach subject to budgets will be procured and implemented by Parks, with a first phase focussing mainly on play.

Elizabeth Place

- Commonplace consultation will be live from the end of December with further play and path and landscape consultation commencing in January and works likely to commence on site after March 2023, subject to budget availability.

Lighting

- Upgrading all parks lighting to LED linked to a central management system for better controls.
- Being implemented over two financial years working from the east of the borough to the west of the borough.