



The Report of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Independent Parks Commission





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Introduction

The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham's Independent Parks Commission, convened in January 2020, was asked to provide recommendations on how residents can get the most from the borough's parks and open spaces, improve and protect them and make them sustainable for future generations.

As an independent commission, we are reporting our findings to the borough's Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee.

We have found that our aspirations for parks and open spaces are shared by the Council and its strategic leadership team. Our endeavour has been to examine how the Council might better achieve these aspirations, and how it might improve, protect and sustain these essential amenities so that they are available to all residents now and in the future.

In reaching our conclusions and making our recommendations, we have looked at existing policies and their application and consulted with residents, stakeholders, council staff, contractors and other UK based park and open space organisations.

Our report set out to address the [terms of reference](#) set out by the Council for the review. These include:

- What is the vision for our parks, green and open spaces?

- What is the best way to involve local people in the decisions made about our parks?
- What currently works, what could be better, and what doesn't work in the way our parks and open spaces are managed?

The work of the Commission

An open call for commissioners was advertised in the Council's newsletter, and a group of residents with mixed perspectives was appointed by the chair, the leader of the Council, and the chair of the Council's Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee.

The Commission made a call for evidence from residents during spring 2020. We engaged widely with residents, park users and local communities, despite limitations presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. Submissions to the Commission were made through an online survey, detailed letters, and online consultation with 'Friends of' parks, and tenants' groups as well as park sports and service providers. The Commission spoke to a wide range of stakeholders and is extremely grateful for the wealth of input received.

From our early engagement a set of principles emerged which underpin our recommendations. These are:

- The parks belong to the residents of Hammersmith & Fulham; they are stakeholders and, in conjunction with the Council, the custodians of parks today and in the future.
- Use of Parks should be affordable for all residents.
- Decision-making should be transparent and inclusive.
- Parks can have an overwhelming positive impact on individual's health and well-being, providing significant indirect economic benefit.
- Funding for parks should be enhanced by efficient management of facilities.
- Parks should do their best to meet the diverse needs of residents.
- There should be explicit and obvious ways for residents to engage with their parks.
- Parks should showcase the Council's support for biodiversity and achieving net zero carbon.
- Park users should be expected to respect other users.

The Commission worked with Council Officers and others to gather documentary evidence and developed its recommendations, guided by the evidence base, the principles outlined above, and the Commission's terms of reference.

Vision

The parks, green and open spaces in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham should be accessible and affordable for all. They should be funded in the same way as any essential service, so that all residents have access to space and facilities to maintain mental and physical health and wellbeing.



Headline recommendations

The headline recommendations of the Parks Commission are given below with links to a more detailed description of each recommendation, including proposals for implementation.

1. Parks Forum

In order to achieve greater resident participation in our parks' policies and planning and provide greater oversight of practices and maintenance, the Council should establish a permanent, borough-wide, resident led Parks Forum that will:

- Support local park stakeholder groups; represent the interests of parks without a resident park stakeholder group and provide a forum where those stakeholder groups can come together to share ideas and concerns.
- Consult with the Council on borough-wide strategic park plans, park improvements, maintenance and expenditure.
- Ensure wide public engagement in decisions about parks.
- Assist the Council in providing oversight of the park stakeholder groups and the refreshed memorandum of understanding to which they subscribe.
- Provide independent oversight for the implementation of the adopted recommendations from this report.

The Parks Forum will act as an umbrella body to work collaboratively with the Council, park stakeholder groups and residents to ensure inclusivity, enhance transparency, and build consistency in the decision making around parks.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

2. Park Stakeholder Groups

Parks should be encouraged and supported by the Council to have an inclusive and active volunteer-led stakeholder or Friends group to represent users and residents given the positive impact such groups can have on the surrounding community. The criteria used for recognition as a park stakeholder or Friends group should be clearly laid out through a refreshed “memorandum of understanding” and be applied consistently across the borough. Council Officers, with regular Council and Parks Forum oversight, should ensure the terms of the MOU are being met. In return, these park stakeholder or Friends groups should be supported by Council officers, and actively be consulted about maintenance, plans for use and priorities for investment in their respective parks.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

3. Park affordability and pricing policies

The Council should immediately review its charging and pricing policies for park land use to ensure that residents, in particular schools and young people, are not prevented from using park facilities because of prohibitive costs. Pricing should be simple, transparent, and consistent and offer good value for money, with some means of access for those who cannot pay.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

4. Digital Park Hub and information boards

The LBHF should create a centralised digital platform (Digital Parks Hub) that brings all information and activities around parks into one easy to access location. It should include basic information on all the borough's parks, enable users to book and pay for all facilities, provide up-to-date information on forthcoming events, help residents get involved, and allow users to report concerns and suggest ideas. This will also provide improved data on park usage for the Council and generate meaningful cost efficiencies. Large up to date notice boards at the main gates of parks should supplement the Digital Hub so everyone can access basic information.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

5. Park Wardens

Each park should have a designated and named park warden. The park warden should be the direct contact for all residents regarding all issues pertaining to their park, and provide oversight for the activities, facilities bookings and maintenance in their park ensuring any issues or disputes that arise are resolved quickly.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

6. Park Officer Team

The LBHF Park Officer team should be reviewed to ensure it contains the right capability and expertise to enable effective and efficient management of the park estate.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

7. Transparent park funding

The Council should provide transparent information on how parks are funded to all residents. This should include all sources of funding, including: money generated from the parks directly and through the annual council budget; available Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding; approved grants.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

8. Ongoing commitment to basic park funding

Regardless of total income and funding generated by and for parks in any given year, the Council should provide basic park maintenance and repairs from its annual budget on a continual, long-term basis. The Commission suggests the Council should acknowledge the many benefits of parks for residents and users and make a clear commitment to support park funding over the long term.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

9. Park strategic plans

All major parks (i.e. those that are large in size and/or have high footfall) should have a dedicated strategic plan which includes focus areas for maintenance and priorities for investment for the next several years. These plans should be written in collaboration with the local recognised park stakeholder group and the Parks Forum, and reviewed and refreshed annually. Their facilities should be reviewed and basic amenities, for example toilets; their maintenance and cleaning, should be included in strategic plans. Smaller and lower footfall parks should have a combined plan, which outlines focus areas and priorities amongst them. Decisions about investment allocation across parks should be based on these plans, transparent, and balanced.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

10. Contracts for leasing park land

Contracts for use of park land or long-term delivery of services on park land should benefit residents and the community. In particular, contracts that exclusively lease land to privately run businesses should be commercially competitive, appropriately account for the value of the land, not be linked solely to operator profit, be subject to rent review clauses and offer provisions for access to those who cannot pay (where appropriate).

[Detailed recommendation](#)

11. Policies to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation

Park and Council policies should encourage new partnership structures that support the local community and generate income for reinvestment.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

12. Powering parks

The Commissioners believe there is scope to investigate the feasibility of installing Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHPs) under land and/or buildings in some of the borough's parks and open spaces to generate carbon-free energy. We recommend the

Council consults with independent engineering consultancies and draws up a borough-wide open space green energy strategy. The installation of GSHPs should be considered whenever refurbishment projects in LBHF parks are under discussion and must be included in the Council's green energy strategy.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

13. Park activities and involvement – including apprenticeships and volunteering

In the interim report the Commission proposed that the creation of a park maintenance apprenticeship scheme as well as work placements for young people and people with disabilities should be rewarded and written into the new maintenance contract. There are also broader opportunities for developing skills, interests and social relationships in the parks. Where possible, parks should have an activities plan, addressing community needs and aspirations to help support this.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

14. Park land use

The Council should seek to better understand the range of park needs from our specific resident demographic, as well as schools and other community groups within LBHF who rely on parks. This understanding should be updated at a reasonable interval (e.g. every 5 years) to reflect changes. The resulting information should be used to make informed decisions about the fair allocation of park space. Residents and park stakeholder groups should be consulted on proposed changes to this balance.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

15. Ensure existing open space is protected

The Council should ensure that existing open space is strongly protected from encroachment and inappropriate development. The guiding principle should be that no publicly owned open space – including allotments, cemeteries and open space on school land - be lost without providing equivalent new open space in the borough.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

16. New open space creation

The Council should use planning policy to create more publicly accessible usable open space. As part of this, the Council should rewrite its planning guidelines requiring new developments to provide more usable public and public/private open space. New open

space should be environmentally friendly (in terms of layout, type of landscaping materials and planting) and provide public connectivity with other open spaces and green corridors.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

17. Biodiversity statistics

The Council should monitor and report biodiversity enhancements carried out in the Borough. The Council should use the information from the biodiversity survey it is currently conducting to inform strategy, while the Commission recommends that annual biodiversity statistics should be published.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

18. Meadow and wild habitat creation

To improve biodiversity in parks and open spaces, the Council should introduce a rolling programme of new wildflower meadows, mown twice annually with specialised machinery. This should be part of an initiative to increase and enhance wildlife habitats and support biodiversity in parks and open spaces carried out following consultation with users and local stakeholders.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

19. Tree planting

The Council should greatly accelerate its rolling programme of tree-planting to improve biodiversity and CO2 absorption. This proposal should not just include the parks but pavement and road closure sites and decommissioned car parking spaces. Usage of park land for this purpose should always be done in consultation with residents and users.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

20. Vegetative pollution barriers

With air pollution from vehicle emissions a serious problem in the borough on its six-lane highways (including Talgarth Road/Great West Road, the West Cross Route and the A40), the Council should undertake extensive tree planting to restrict the spread of pollutants and consider hedges for localised shielding of pedestrians and walkers.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

21. Best horticultural practice

The Council should aim to raise horticultural standards throughout its parks and open spaces. Good horticultural and ecological management must be specified and delivered by the maintenance contractor. The best horticultural practice notes should include soil care, best practice in tree and plant pruning, planting for pollinators, and use of integrated weed/pest management. It should also give up-to-date advice relating to the spread of newly introduced pests and diseases and new research on pollinators.

[Detailed recommendation](#)

22. Riverfront strategic concept

With completion of the Thames Riverside Walk and new developments increasing the popularity of the riverfront, the Council should seek to develop a unified plan for the area. It should be considered in its entirety to improve provision and biodiversity.

[Detailed recommendation](#)



Detailed Recommendations



1. Parks Forum

Headline recommendation

In order to achieve greater resident participation in the policies and planning and provide greater oversight of practices and maintenance, the Council should establish a permanent, borough-wide, resident led Parks Forum that will:

- Support local park stakeholder groups; represent the interests of parks without a resident park stakeholder group and provide a forum where those stakeholder groups can come together to share ideas and concerns.
- Consult with the Council on borough-wide strategic park plans, park improvements, maintenance and expenditure.
- Ensure wide public engagement in decisions about parks.
- Assist the Council in providing oversight of the park stakeholder groups and the refreshed memorandum of understanding to which they subscribe.
- Provide independent oversight for the implementation of the adopted recommendations from this report.

The Parks Forum will act as an umbrella body to work collaboratively with the Council, park stakeholder groups and residents to ensure inclusivity, enhance transparency, and build consistency in the decision making around parks.

Detailed recommendation

In order to facilitate better engagement, communication, and oversight of parks throughout the borough we recommend that the Council constitute a permanent, resident led “Parks Forum.” This committee of (we suggest nine to eleven) residents would be an umbrella body

collaborating with the Council and residents to achieve greater public involvement in the decisions about the parks and support better management of them.

Council staff have told us that they value the views of park stakeholder groups, park users and residents. Likewise, park stakeholder groups and residents indicate they would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the Council, communicate more successfully with Officers and general maintenance contractors, and share ideas. Some issues and policies affect parks across the borough but presently there is no forum to discuss these wider park issues or to consult on strategic goals.

Setting up an independently chaired Parks Forum, with appropriate Council Officer support, will ensure that residents' requirements and priorities across the borough are reflected in the way in which the parks are run and in helping to shape long-term strategy. It will help ensure closer collaboration with officers and Councillors on both strategic and operational decisions about our parks in order to achieve the best outcome. Alongside an independent chair, there should be equal numbers of representative park stakeholder group chairs and diverse individuals with broad skills who have responded to an open advertisement.

The Parks Forum will:

- Support, encourage and work with local park stakeholder groups and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and concerns.
- Consult with other relevant local groups.
- Consider the interests and requirements of parks without a park stakeholder group.
- Proactively seek to understand residents' and users' needs and concerns, and report these back to the Council and its maintenance contractors.
- Consult with the Council on:
 - Sources and use of income (allocations, grants, earned income)
 - Expenditure plans and priorities
 - Charging and pricing policies
- Support the council, local businesses and community groups with developing new and innovative ideas for parks, in line with resident and user needs
- Assist the Council in providing oversight of the park stakeholder groups and ensure the memorandum of understanding of and agreements between the park stakeholder groups and the Council are in good standing.

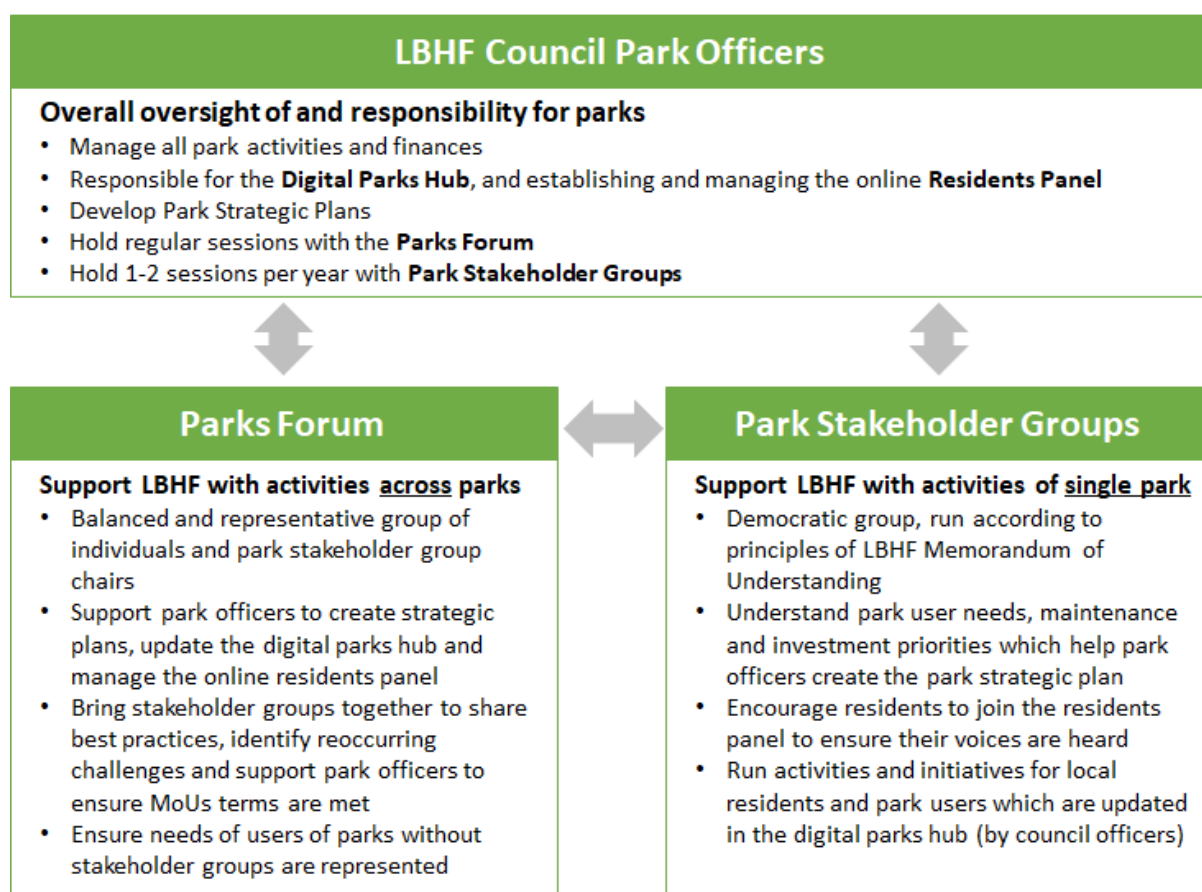
The Parks Forum On-Line Panel

Finally, in the survey we conducted, many residents requested future consultations be online; other residents expressed concern about the insularity of some of the park stakeholder groups. The Commission suggests that the Forum can help to ensure residents' views and concerns are more widely represented by setting up a residents' panel online, through which residents can feed back their thoughts to the Forum and Council.

This panel would be open to all residents of the borough. Residents would register via the new Digital Park Hub (see recommendation 4).

Implementation:

- The initial set-up of the Parks Forum, its memorandum of understanding and governance should be undertaken by Council Officers. Two members of the Parks Commission will help officers set up and establish the Parks Forum as required.
- Establishment of the Parks Forum within 2 to 3 months of the Parks Commission's report, to include appointment of an independent Chair and diverse members, including representatives of park stakeholder groups.
- Establish a minimum number of formal meetings of the Forum with the lead Council member, the Parks Department and maintenance contractor within 3 months.
- Support the Park Officer team with review of existing park stakeholder groups alongside a full refresh of MoUs within 4 months of report publication.
- Criteria for recognising park stakeholder groups agreed between Council and Parks Forum published within 6 months.





2. Park Stakeholder Groups

Headline recommendation

Parks should be encouraged and supported by the Council to have an inclusive and active volunteer-led stakeholder or Friends group to represent users and residents given the positive impact such groups can have on the surrounding community. The criteria used for recognition as a park stakeholder or Friends group should be clearly laid out through a refreshed “memorandum of understanding” and be applied consistently across the borough. Council Officers, with regular Council and Parks Forum oversight, should ensure the terms of the MOU are being met. In return, these park stakeholder or Friends groups should be supported by Council officers, and actively be consulted about maintenance, plans for use and priorities for investment in their respective parks.

Detailed recommendation

Park stakeholder or Friends groups can be an effective way to enhance public engagement in the way parks are run. Many parks in LBHF have benefitted from a group of local volunteers, made up of residents and users who support and care about their park, are inclusive and representative of local needs and have regular communication and support from the Council. Such groups have greatly contributed to the health and vibrancy of their park communities.

The Council has not always provided consistent and regular support and oversight of these groups, and our survey has shown that many residents in the borough are unaware of their existence and/or how to get involved with them.

To enable these volunteer-led groups to achieve their full potential, we recommend the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the council and the groups should be reviewed and refreshed, agreed with all recognised groups, and monitored on an ongoing basis. As part of this, a commitment should be made by Council Officers to regularly engage with recognised park stakeholder and Friends groups to encourage active involvement in decisions for their park.

Park stakeholder or Friends groups can be constituted as they prefer, for example as a voluntary committee, as a charity or as a social enterprise. Expectations of the groups should include things such as:

- Evidence that the group is able to consult and represent a wide range of residents and park users.
- Rotation of leadership with term limits.
- Easy to access contact details and ways to join (including, but not necessarily limited to the Digital Park Hub).
- Meetings open to the public with agendas advertised well in advance.

In return, the Council will make reasonable efforts to include the stakeholder group in planning for their park including (but not limited to):

- Decisions about land usage
- Maintenance focus areas
- Priorities for investment
- Creation and updates of the Park Strategic Plan
- Information and updates in the Digital Park Hub

We recognise that not all parks and open spaces in LBHF will have stakeholder representation. In these cases, the Parks Forum should ensure that the needs of their users are considered in all policy and funding discussions.

Implementation:

- A review and refresh of MoUs including criteria for recognising park stakeholder groups agreed between Council and Parks Forum within 12 months of report publication.
-

3. Park affordability and pricing policies

Headline recommendation

The Council should immediately review its charging and pricing policies for park land use to ensure that residents, in particular schools and young people, are not prevented from using park facilities because of prohibitive costs. Pricing should be simple, transparent, and consistent and offer good value for money, with some means of access for those who cannot pay.

Detailed Recommendation

Parks should be affordable for all residents, schools and community groups to use, with fair and accessible policies in place to encourage their use, in particular by young people in the borough.

Through the research we have done as a commission over the past 18 months we have found multiple examples of schools, groups and individuals being unable to use – or being put off using - LBHF park facilities because of its pricing policies. This was both because the price itself is too high and because the quality and nature of the facility being rented does not merit the fee.

Comparing the LBHF's current fees against other neighbouring boroughs has made clear our facilities are too highly priced (with like-for-like prices from 30% to 300% higher); offer poor value for money, particularly when it comes to LBHF's unmarked "sport areas" in open grassy spaces; and that our pricing grid is too complex with least 70 different prices depending on variables such as sport, pitch type, park, user type, booking duration and time of week.

We recommend that the Council immediately undertakes a review of pricing policies and fees to deliver a fresh approach to pricing that meets four key principles:

- 1. Simple and Transparent:** Residents should be able to find and easily understand rental prices for facilities and land. Only exceptional events should need to be individually priced. Pricing should vary by as few dimensions as possible, such as facility category, time of day, number of bookings and user type.
- 2. Consistent:** Prices for rental categories (as defined above) should be the same across all parks. For example, renting a tennis court for 1 hour should cost the same as rental of a 5-a-side astroturf and an 11-a-side football pitch (at equivalent times and by equivalent user groups).
- 3. Good Value for Money:** Where fees are applicable, facilities should be good quality, well-maintained, and reflect the amount paid. For example, where groups pay to use unmarked, unspecific grassy areas in a park, fees should reflect this.
- 4. Accessible:** No one should be unable to use park facilities. Concessions should apply to particular groups e.g. state schools, time of day and/or age.

Implementation:

- **Park Officers should draft new charging policies by Q4 2021**

- The Parks Forum and park stakeholder groups should be given 3 months to validate these policies and/or suggest changes
- Pricing policies should be reviewed periodically, at least once per annum

Fulham Palace: An Ancient Site

The earliest archaeological finds from Fulham Palace are from the Late Mesolithic to Early Neolithic, around 4,000 BC, and digs have found evidence of life until the Early Iron Age, around 300 BC.

Excavations have uncovered Roman coins, pottery, building materials and evidence of paths and roadways from the occupation of Britain from AD 43 to 410. A Viking settlement later stood on the site, and prior to the late 14th century, the Palace became the largest domestic moated site in England. The first manor house may have stood close to the Thames.

Records show bishops lived at the palace from 1141. Bishop Grindal (1559-1570) is credited with establishing a botanic garden while Bishop Compton (1675-1713) collected rare plants. The site was opened to the public in 1976.



4. Digital Park Hub and park information boards

Headline recommendation

The LBHF should create a centralised digital platform (Digital Parks Hub) that brings all information and activities around parks into one easy to access location. It should include basic information on all the borough's parks, enable users to book and pay for all facilities, provide up-to-date information on forthcoming events, help residents get involved, and allow users to report concerns and suggest ideas. This will also provide improved data on park usage for the Council and generate meaningful cost efficiencies. Large up to date notice boards at the main gates of parks should supplement the Digital Hub so everyone can access basic information.

Detailed recommendation

It should be easy to find out information about the parks and book activities within them. If residents are to fully engage with the activities available, they need to know what is happening, how to book facilities, and how to provide feedback that will be dealt with. Equally, if businesses and community groups are to be encouraged to run programmes in our parks it needs to be simple and efficient for them.

Currently there are multiple ways of communicating and interacting with the Council about park related matters. Information is not always easy to find, and many things are not digitally enabled, which goes against the expectations and habits of many users and residents today.

We recommend investment in a simple Digital Parks Hub which should help everyone to engage quickly and efficiently. The Hub should be the main go-to source for all park information, supplemented with appropriate physical information devices for those who need it, including large, regularly maintained, notice boards at the main entrances to parks.

The digital platform should provide:

- Basic information about all parks and facilities including opening hours and contact details (e.g. for the park warden)
- The ability for residents and users to book all sports and other facilities (including deep links to bookings run via other 3rd parties, such as ClubSpark for tennis and PlayFootball for Hammersmith Park)
- Similarly, the ability for businesses and community groups to book park facilities for their programmes, and then for their users to book and pay for these programmes
- Ways to engage with park activities and groups, including up-to-date information on upcoming events
- Ways for residents to 'have your say', contact Park Wardens, report problems, join consultations
- Links to other sources of information – e.g. the London Gardens trust

An example of the Digital Parks Hub and the type of information and functionality it could contain is below. Where possible, the Digital Hub and information boards should be updated and refreshed in consultation with park stakeholder groups and the Parks Forum.

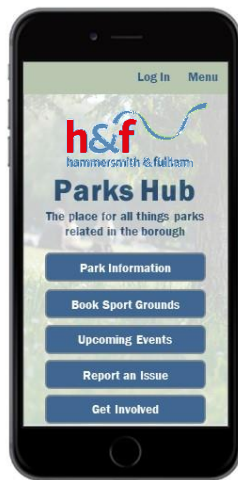
A further benefit of the Digital Parks Hub will be the extensive data that it will bring together, allowing the Council and businesses to better understand user demand (by location, time of day, etc) and pricing sensitivity. It should also make running the parks much more cost efficient for the Council, automating many processes that are heavily manual today.

It may also be possible for stakeholder groups to have their own dedicated pages within the Hub that they edit directly, replacing existing stakeholder websites. This could help overcome any perceived IT barriers for the groups.

Implementation:

- Park Officers (with Commissioner support if helpful) to draft key functionality requirements release an RFP (request for proposal) to potential partners
- Completion of a Digital Hub minimum viable product by Q4 2022
- New releases on a regular basis to continually improve functionality

We have proposed the creation of a H&F Digital Park Hub that joins together all things park-related



- 1 Provide basic information on all borough parks, including
 - Opening Hours
 - Facilities
 - Park warden contact
 - Stakeholder group details
 - 5 year park plan
- 2 Allow all sports grounds to be booked, including
 - Booking calendar & availability
 - Pricing
 - Payment
 - Cancellation
- 3 Provide up-to-date information on upcoming Events
- 4 Allow users and residents to report concerns about Parks
 - Maintenance & repair needs
 - Ideas for improvement
- 5 Help residents find ways to get involved, including:
 - Community group contacts
 - Volunteer projects
 - Crowdfunding projects

5. Park wardens

Headline recommendation

Each park should have a designated and named park warden. The park warden should be the direct contact for all residents regarding all issues pertaining to their park, and provide oversight for the activities, facilities bookings and maintenance in their park ensuring any issues or disputes that arise are resolved quickly.

Detailed recommendation

Both anecdotal evidence and the parks' Commonplace survey suggests a return to named park wardens and the oversight functions they perform would be welcomed by residents. Residents often struggle to engage with the Council on matters pertaining to their park. They feel helpless to report, repair, or improve their parks. They do not know whom to contact. A park warden for each park, or cluster of parks, would increase engagement and accessibility in parks and ensure any issues that arise are resolved quickly.

The park warden should be responsible for understanding and overseeing the full workings for each park (maintenance, facilities, usage) and become a single point of contact for residents. A warden would greatly improve park efficiency and responsiveness and give all residents a greater sense of ownership in their parks.

How Parks Help Health

The use of gardens and natural green space as a therapeutic or healing intervention in Europe is recorded as early as 11th Century monastery gardens, but recent evidence confirms humans have likely always known the benefits.

Exercise helps to develop strength, agility and aerobic fitness, and to prevent chronic illnesses often associated with stress and physical inactivity. Being outdoors in a natural setting enhances these benefits. Accessible, well-maintained, and good quality green spaces produce better health outcomes,² when enhanced with structural complexity, a natural environment and a high degree of biodiversity.

Humans have colour vision, which enhances our experience of the natural world, predominantly the green of plants and the blue of sky and water, restful colours. Exposure to sunlight, even on a dull winter day, produces vitamin D, boosts immunity, regulates sleep and improves mood. Molecules released by trees, soil fungi and bacteria can provoke immune responses to allergies, asthma and even illnesses such as cancer and diabetes.

The UK derives an estimated value of £34.2bn from visiting parks, according to Fields in Trust, calculated to save the NHS £111mn in visits to GPs.

The warden should also provide badly needed oversight for maintenance teams and service providers, such as sports groups and coaches, helping them resolve booking issues, disputes or safety concerns. They can address concerns and problems immediately.

Residents should be given a mobile phone number to call this named person to make enquiries, suggestions or report concerns.

A park warden who is a named and known figure in the local area creates a sense of safety for residents and fosters local community engagement and a sense of broader ownership of the residents' amenity. They should work with and help support and provide oversight to park stakeholder groups.

This recommendation was first made in the Parks Commission's Interim report and is amended. The Council's response and suggestions can be found [here](#).

Implementation:

- Named park wardens should be put in place by Q1 2022.
- A park warden can be assigned to a single park or a cluster of small parks depending on the size and demands of the park(s) in question.

6. Park Officer Team

Headline recommendation

The LBHF park officer team should be reviewed to ensure it contains the right capability and expertise to enable effective and efficient management of the park estate.

Detailed recommendation

The LBHF park officer team should be evaluated to ensure it contains the right capabilities and skills to efficiently and effectively manage the park estate. As part of this exercise, the team's responsibilities should be more clearly defined to include oversight of all park-related activities (including property and events) to allow for more joined up and optimised plans.

Skills on the team should include:

- The ability to work closely with and engage a diverse range of residents and users
- The ability to negotiate and manage commercially competitive contracts
- The ability to efficiently manage multiple park operators and performance criteria
- The ability to develop and update strategic plans
- The ability to set simple and transparent pricing policies based on relevant benchmarks.
- Fundraising experience and dedicated time to secure external grants

The Council's Park Officer team should have sufficient resources to work with the Parks Forum and park stakeholder groups to provide support and oversight.

The Council should also continue to employ a dedicated Ecology officer to ensure sufficient environmental focus.

Implementation:

- Refreshed park officer team responsibilities and capability requirements created within 12 months of publication
 - Revamped team fully in place within 24 months of publication
-

7. Transparent park funding

Headline recommendation

The Council should provide transparent information on how parks are funded to all residents. This should include all sources of funding, including: money generated from the parks directly and through the annual council budget; available Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding; approved grants.

Detailed Recommendation

Trying to piece together a complete view of total funds available for our parks is a challenge, with the income generated by and raised for park land and properties highly fragmented across different council departments and decision-making bodies.

There are concerns that some parks do not always receive their 'fair share' of available funds and that some money intended for parks (e.g. via S106 grants) never gets invested. This is almost impossible for residents to validate given limited or no information made available. The Council's 2017 promise to regularly publish and update S106 funds has unfortunately gone unmet.

Furthermore, commendable national innovations aiming to improve park funding, such as Space Hive, are poorly promoted by the Council.

To address this lack of transparency, we recommend the Council produces a simple annual summary of funds generated and available for parks across 5 broad areas:

- **Income generated by parks** (into broad categories, for example this may be: private land leases, individual sport bookings, group sports bookings, events, etc.. that allows anonymity to be retained)
- **Investment funding available for parks and open spaces** via S106 and CIL funds, including where the money is from and any restrictions on its use; this should indicate spend to date against
- **Grant funds approved for LBHF parks** including details on usage and restrictions
- **Other funds made available**, including via SpaceHive, community initiatives and/or donations; the Parks Forum could potentially help with the collation of these sources given their disparate nature
- **Basic funding** made available to the parks department from the LBHF budget to run and maintain the parks, as outlined in recommendation 9

The Parks Forum could play a useful role in overseeing the fair and transparent allocation of these funds.

Implementation:

- Council to create and publish annual park funding summaries, starting in 2022, outlining funding available across the broad areas outlined.
- Quarterly publication of S106 and CIL funds for park-related uses within 12 months of publication.

Palingswick Manor and today's Ravenscourt Park

Palingswick (sometimes Paddenswick) Manor, a moated manor house, is first mentioned in the Domesday Book, and then in court records in the days of Henry IV, V and VI. Granted to royal favourite Alice Perrers in 1373 by the Plantagenet king Edward III, a 1377 survey 1377 described the estate as containing "forty acres of land, sixty of pasture and one and a half of meadow" while the manor house itself was said to be "well-built, as in halls, chapels, kitchens, bakehouses, stables, granges, gates."

In Georgian times, the house was renovated and extended. In 1887, the Metropolitan Board of Works bought it as a public park. By then the grounds had become a tangled wilderness that needed landscaping by the new London County Council, with the public allowed in 1888.

The house was opened as Hammersmith's first public library in 1890. It was destroyed by an incendiary bomb in January 1941 and subsequently demolished. This shows today as a small mound in the picnic area by the lake.



8. Ongoing commitment to basic park funding

Headline recommendation

Regardless of total income and funding generated by and for parks in any given year, the Council should provide basic park maintenance and repairs from its annual budget on a continual, long-term basis. The Commission suggests the Council should acknowledge the many benefits of parks for residents and users and make a clear commitment to support park funding over the long term.

Detailed Recommendation

Parks are an important amenity for residents and users and play an essential role in the LBHF community. Over the years, investments have been made in some remarkable spaces and facilities for residents, which provide immeasurable benefits.

LBHF parks also generate a significant source of direct revenue, ranging from land used for sports to events and car-parking. Whilst such commercial activity is not unique to our borough – and the commission believes it to be reasonable to charge appropriate prices and rates to land users and lessees (please refer to recommendations 3 and 10) – parks should not be regarded first and foremost as a profit centre for the borough. In other words, parks should not be managed as an asset that *must* provide funding to support wider LBHF activities, with revenue maximised as a primary objective.

To continue to provide the many benefits, all of our parks and open spaces require basic maintenance and cyclical improvements. As the commission outlined in its interim report, management of park-related costs and income should be joined-up, so priorities and incentives can be clearly aligned and the parks run as a whole and as efficiently as possible. However, regardless of the income that may or may not be generated, the basic funding requirements of parks should continue to be met.

We would like to see the Council directly acknowledge the many benefits of parks to residents and users and make a clear commitment to their funding.

Implementation:

- The Council to introduce a statement to its vision and annual budget strategy, reinforcing their commitment to local parks and funding them into the future.
-

9. Park Strategic Plans

Headline recommendation

All major parks (i.e. those that are large in size and/or have high footfall) should have a dedicated strategic plan which includes focus areas for maintenance and priorities for investment for the next several years. These plans should be written in collaboration with the local recognised park stakeholder group and the Parks Forum, and reviewed and refreshed annually. Their facilities should be reviewed and basic amenities, for example toilets; their maintenance and cleaning, should be included in strategic plans. Smaller and lower footfall parks should have a combined plan, which outlines focus areas and priorities amongst them. Decisions about investment allocation across parks should be based on these plans, transparent, and balanced.

Detailed Recommendation

Existing park management plans are largely centred around the Green Flag award process. Whilst necessary for maintaining or gaining award status (the merits of which this Commission has not evaluated in detail), these plans do not clearly lay out park maintenance plans and focus areas for the contractors, nor do they include investment needs and priorities.

Indeed, there is no single, consistent source of park financial information and spend priorities within and across parks. Park stakeholder groups, where they exist, typically have no access to information about funding available from the Council for their park. The stakeholder groups,

along with residents and users have shared a significant number of examples of a mismatch between the investment needs of a particular park and the expenditure decisions made.

In order to bridge this divide within single parks – i.e. to have one, aligned version of park needs informed by both Council Officers and users – and also to allow for improved balancing of investment priorities across parks, the Commission recommends the creation of a simple 'Park Strategic Plan' document for all major parks in the borough. These plans should be created by Park Officers, with input from the Parks Forum and local stakeholder group. We recommend they are reviewed and refreshed (as needed) 2x a year.

Green Flags in Hammersmith & Fulham

Launched in 1996, the international Green Flag award recognises parks whose horticulture, cleanliness and facilities have reached the highest standard.

Over 1000 judges visit applicants' sites across the world and assess them against strict criteria. Within Hammersmith & Fulham, 18 have been awarded a Green Flag, while Parsons Green has also applied for Green Flag status. These include larger parks like Bishop's Park and Fulham Palace, and smaller open spaces such as Marcus Garvey and Parnell (Pineapple) Parks.

The 2000 international winners include parks in the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland and United Arab Emirates.

<https://www.greenflagaward.org/award-winners/>

LBHF Green Flag Parks: Bishop's Park and Fulham Palace, Brook Green, Frank Banfield Park, Furnivall Gardens, Hammersmith Park, Hurlingham Park, Margravine Cemetery, Norland North Open Space, Normand Park, Ravenscourt Park, South Park, St Peter's Square, Wormholt Park, Marcus Garvey Park, William Parnell Park (Pineapple Park), St Paul's Gardens, Wendell Park and Cathnor Park.

The strategic plans should include:

- An annual assessment of all park facilities and grounds, including toilets.
- A park-specific maintenance plan, with criteria and focus areas (to be shared regularly with the maintenance contractor)
- A prioritised set of investment projects, for when funding becomes available; these projects should be clearly linked to an up-to-date understanding of resident and user needs (with supporting evidence)
- A summary of specific investments made in the park over the previous 5 years
- A summary of all grounds used for commercial purposes, with clarity on booking and usage criteria (including rules for the number and frequency of events)

Smaller parks should be covered by a single, joint plan, indicating priorities for investment.

Several areas calling out for investment were consistently mentioned in our parks' Commonplace survey and in discussions with users and residents. This list should not replace a full evaluation of investment needs and priorities but may be useful in the meantime. (More detail can be found in the appendix)

- Safe, clean facilities such as toilets, play and dog-free grass areas
- Well maintained and safe pathways
- Improved litter management so bins do not overflow
- Safe, easy-access seating in mixed locations, for different users

- Improved playground equipment
- A range of refreshment outlets where footfall is high
- Improved signage on ecology and biodiversity
- More imaginative design
- Increased number of water refill points

Funding, when available, should be balanced across parks and their priority needs; no funding should be allocated that does not match an identified need within one of these plans outside of exceptional circumstances.

Implementation:

- LBHF Parks Team to produce a draft understanding of current park needs across the borough and basic standards for facilities within 12 months. The Parks Forum and Stakeholder Groups should have up to 3 months to validate and/or suggest changes.
- Draft 5 year plans for all relevant parks should then be created within 18 months of report submission.
- Biannual review meetings to monitor and refresh strategic plans with Council officer, stakeholder group and Parks Forum for all relevant parks should be implemented



10. Contracts for leasing park land

Headline recommendation

Contracts for use of park land or long-term delivery of services on park land should benefit residents and the community. In particular, contracts that exclusively lease land to privately run businesses should be commercially competitive, appropriately account for the value of the land, not be linked solely to operator profit, be subject to rent review clauses and offer provisions for access to those who cannot pay (where appropriate).

Detailed Recommendation

There are several types of contract that the commission has identified in our parks. This specific recommendation covers long term leases for park land and property, though many of the principles should apply to all long-term contracts the Council enters into for park land.

The Commission found some contracts to lease park land in the Council have not always been in residents' best interests. In some instances, land has effectively been given away to private operators over long (10 years+) time periods under poor commercial terms with little-to-no benefit for residents. For example:

- Under one contract, payment is linked solely to operator profit. As the business is part of a bigger group, with multi-site operations, no profit is claimed at the site leased from LBHF and therefore no payment is made. The operator effectively leases the site for free.
- In another contract, there is no community right to access and the land is effectively privatised. "Non-members" who can't pay a membership fee are only given access to bookings a few days in advance, leaving little to no access at peak times.
- One lessee pays the Council an equivalent amount for year-round exclusive use of nearly half a hectare of land as a different community sport provider pays for non-exclusive access to various sites around the borough for limited hours each week.

The Commission believes that there needs to be a far more commercial approach to contracts involving park land, particularly when it comes to negotiations with larger, for-profit organisations. This requires staff who have the appropriate negotiation skills with experience of different structures of contracts, including within the private sector, to better evaluate the best options. We recommend all contracts follow 3 principles:

1. Contracts should be commercially competitive and subject to regular review
2. Contracts should reflect the value of the land and intent
3. Contracts should ensure provision for those who are not able to pay

Existing contracts should be brought in line with new requirements as soon as legally possible. The Council must also put in place policies that ensure that personal relationships do not override value for the park under discussion.

Implementation:

- Council Officers to draft a simple set of commercial park land lease requirements by Q3 2022 and review them with the Parks Forum
- The Council should look to approve and publish the guidelines within 12 months

11. Policies to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation

Headline recommendation

Park and Council policies should encourage new partnership structures that support the local community and generate income for reinvestment.

Detailed Recommendation

The Commission recognises there are a variety of ways to raise funds for parks to supplement what is available from direct council sources, ranging from crowdfunding to specific grants (e.g. Nesta, Sports England). Given the competing demands for limited council resources and the wider economic climate in the second year of the coronavirus pandemic, the commission believes the Council should seek to broaden its funding base and longer-term income generation for park improvements through a greater focus on existing and new innovative funding mechanisms. Parks offer ample opportunities for such ventures.

Of particular interest are public-private partnerships and social enterprises that allow new expertise to be brought in and funds to be raised to create facilities, programmes and opportunities for parks and residents

Indeed, several public-private initiatives have already demonstrated success within the borough and the commission believes that by setting policies to encourage new partnership structures, LBHF can become a national leader in this space.

For example:

- **In Ravenscourt Park**, the local community group (HCGA) ran a successful campaign to raise £100,000 and refurbish two unused glasshouses. It now uses these spaces to run community programmes.
- **Fulham Reach Boat Club** was built with S106 funding from the Fulham Reach scheme and set up as a charity with a vision of “Rowing for All” to unlock the potential of young people through the sport. The initial objective was to create a sustainable and successful rowing club in all 12 LBHF state schools by 2021; it has now exceeded this expectation and opened access to neighbouring boroughs.

Yet there are likely to be further opportunities and looking further afield, there are numerous examples of innovative approaches that offer different perspectives and fresh ideas through which we can view our own park management. For instance,

- Is there a middle ground between fully privatised and fully public schemes for our many tennis facilities that could better benefit residents and finances, in a similar way to Hackney Tennis, a non-for-profit whose focus is “*Making tennis accessible and affordable for all members of the community*”? <https://www.hackneytennis.co.uk/>
- Greenspace Scotland and local councils have helped local authorities install heat pumps under larger tracts of parkland and park buildings; is there a similar opportunity in LBHF parks? [Please see separate recommendation].
- Green Estate Management Solutions (GEMS), Plymouth’s Future Parks Accelerator programme, works with several partners including Active Neighbourhoods, Poole Farm, Plymouth Tree Plan, Climate Emergency Action Plan and Green Minds as well as capital investment programmes for sports, outdoor play, and natural infrastructure. Can we do more in partnership with other bodies?

With the support of the Parks Forum and park stakeholder groups, the Council has an opportunity to champion an innovative approach to fundraising and community involvement in the running of the borough’s parks. The Parks Forum should take a leading role in supporting the Council to do this.

Implementation:

- By 12 months following the establishment of the Parks Forum, the Council and Parks Forum should outline an approach to encourage more innovation and community involvement in our parks
- The Parks Forum should support stakeholder groups in engaging with potential partners, particularly where there is scope for programmes to be multi-site

12. Powering parks

Headline recommendation

The Commissioners believe there is scope to investigate the feasibility of installing Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHPs) under land and/or buildings in some of the borough’s parks and open spaces to generate carbon-free energy. We recommend the Council consults with independent engineering consultancies and draws up a borough-wide open space green energy strategy. The installation of GSHPs should be considered whenever refurbishment projects in LBHF parks are under discussion and must be included in the Council’s green energy strategy.

Detailed recommendation

In 2019 LBHF declared a climate and ecological emergency and set a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This is an ambitious target. However, the borough's parks and open spaces could play an important role in helping to bring this about.

Green spaces and parks can be prime spaces for green energy infrastructure for two primary reasons. Most parks enjoy land, water and wind resources, all potential sources of renewable energy. Moreover, many parks and open spaces are close to other public spaces consuming large amounts of heat and electricity.

Greenspace Scotland and Powering Parks, pilot projects backed by the Rethinking Parks programme, have explored the potential of public parks to become widely used sources of renewable energy. In 2019, as part of a project led by the climate change charity Possible, Hackney Council and Scene, a local enterprise showed that [30GW of heat](#)¹ could potentially be supplied from parks and other green spaces - enough to heat 5 million British homes.

Nesta's [Harnessing Renewable Energy in Parks](#) report estimated that there are potentially 88 hectares available across the parks and open spaces in London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham which could generate a renewable heat supply of 20 MW.

While certain sites, such as cemeteries or woodland are unsuitable, other opportunities are present. The resurfacing of a tennis court, for instance, provides an ideal opportunity to install a heat pump under the new surface. The refurbishment of park cafes, halls and toilets may present others.

The most practical way to do this is through the installation of Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP)s. Already GSHPs have been in parks to create renewable energy, as at [Saughton Park in Edinburgh](#). Closer to home, at [Abney Park in Hackney](#), ground source heat pumps are being installed as part of a multi-million pound National Lottery award, which is funding the construction of a new building featuring a café and community space.

The Commission accepts that installing similar schemes will require substantial amounts of capital. A coherent energy strategy will require long-term vision and buy-in from Council Officers in many different fields; the importance of parks and open spaces as potential sources of green energy should be considered in all borough planning and redevelopment schemes - for instance, it could be included in schemes such as the development of [White City](#).

Implementation:

- Council to consult independent engineers with the view to delivering low-carbon energy where practicable from the borough's parks and open spaces and buildings and facilities within six months of this report.

¹ <https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Renewables-FINAL.pdf>

- The possibility to generate low carbon energy from open spaces should be considered in all LBHF redevelopment and development plans and in all park building refurbishment from Q4 in 2021.

13. Park activities and involvement – including apprenticeships and volunteering

Headline recommendation

In the interim report the Commission proposed that the creation of a park maintenance apprenticeship scheme as well as work placements for young people and people with disabilities should be rewarded and written into the new maintenance contract. There are also broader opportunities for developing skills, interests and social relationships in the parks. Where possible, parks should have an activities plan, addressing community needs and aspirations to help support this.

Detailed recommendation

Residents told the Commission about their different expectations and wishes for park activities. For some, just a quiet walk in the park will restore well-being, while for others it means play or physical or artistic activity. Parks also offer the chance to contribute to society by volunteering, gardening, clearing up litter, or helping to combat climate change. There is an opportunity here to develop vital local skills and knowledge to deal with the latter and to help develop a green economy. We recommend that where possible, parks should have activities plans addressing a wide range of needs and aspirations, enhancing opportunities for apprenticeships and volunteering.

Many activities are volunteer led, but still need support and facilities. Community social enterprises and park vendors can help create opportunities to engage and learn. The ecology officer can lead parks' volunteers' programmes relating to biodiversity. Young people should be encouraged to join park stakeholder and volunteer groups so that those groups can better represent a more accurate cross section of their communities.

Not all parks can have all facilities and all activities, but the Parks Forum should work with the Council parks department and local park stakeholder groups to get a balance across the borough. This should be about facilitating relationships between nearby parks, not rigidly controlling from the centre.

Urban architecture and children at play

Urban landscape architects are increasingly recognising that many children today have become divorced from the natural environment. Parks can help counter this, especially where there is the chance to collect and explore.

Studies have shown where there are trees, children will tend to move towards shady areas, which helps protect their skin from cancer. Play helps children to learn about taking turns and interaction with others. Many motor problems in young children can be helped by physical play, which also provides a counter to time spent in buggies or inside or over computer screens. All children are most mobile while they are young, even those with neurological or motor-skill impairing conditions and need tasks to solve and things to climb over to develop.

Implementation:

- Parks encouraged to have an activities plan enhancing opportunities for apprenticeships and volunteering, or a review summarising the reasons where this isn't achievable.
- Park stakeholder groups should work with the Council to create a plan of activities by Q3 2022, liaising with the ecology officer on schemes to help deal with climate change.

14. Park land use

Headline recommendation

The Council should seek to better understand the range of park needs from our specific resident demographic, as well as schools and other community groups within LBHF who rely on parks. This understanding should be updated at a reasonable interval (e.g. every 5 years) to reflect changes. The resulting information should be used to make informed decisions about the fair allocation of park space. Residents and park stakeholder groups should be consulted on proposed changes to this balance.

Detailed Recommendation

Research done by the Commission has indicated a clear tension across residents, schools and community groups over the use of open spaces for sports and for instance, skate parks or outdoor gyms as well as quiet areas, wild meadows and trees.

Whilst the Commission undertook qualitative research with residents and user groups, limited detailed data was available on which recommendations could be made about land use and priorities.

In some instances, the use of park land has been changed without a full, transparent consultation process. For example, a consultation in Hammersmith park offered 4 options for the future of a dedicated sports ground where the bowling green was but none involved sport and the list of options appears to have been generated without consultation. Since this consultation, the LBHF has since reneged on its original commitment and given away a portion of the land for a Corporate tiny forest initiative, without consultation.

The commission recommends the following three steps to manage and involve residents better in critical decisions:

1. **The Council needs to understand usage needs:** The Council, supported by the Parks Forum, should conduct representative, quantitative study on the needs for open spaces in the borough, covering the balance of demographics and school / community groups in LBHF. This study should be repeated on a regular basis (for example every 5 years) to account for changing needs and demographics.

2. **Data should inform the allocation of space for different uses:** The results of this study should be used to inform park plans and land use allocation at a total level across the borough.
3. **Consult with residents & users on substantial changes:** Any proposed changes that result in a significant change to park land usage (such as the removal of a dedicated sports ground, or the change of land from open meadow to a forest) should be done in open consultation, with residents and the park stakeholder groups generating options for change of use with the Council. There must be clear information about the impact of such decisions

Implementation:

- Council Officers should seek to understand the broad range of LBHF park user needs by Q1 2023.
- The process for consulting regarding park land use changes should be revised by Q3 2022, with clear indications as to how park stakeholder groups and the Parks Forum will be involved.

15. Ensure existing open space is protected

Headline recommendation

The Council should ensure that existing open space is strongly protected from encroachment and inappropriate development. The guiding principle should be that no publicly owned open space – including allotments, cemeteries and open space on school land - be lost without providing equivalent new open space in the borough.

Detailed recommendation

In 2014 the administration made a commitment in their ‘The Change We Need Manifesto’ that if elected they would seek to afford the Borough’s parks and open spaces with better protection. ‘The Council should be a trusted custodian of our parks, put our parks in a residents’ trust to prevent them being sold off.’

From 2014, Council Officers looked at the various options to deliver this commitment, such as Individual Parks Trusts and a Borough-Wide Parks Trust. A number of local authorities have set up Arm’s Length Management Organisations (ALMOS), some of which include parks and open spaces. However, following Council Officers recommendations, the Council decided not to proceed with these options.

'In order for such a trust to operate successfully it needs a certain amount of autonomy as well as a board of trustees....Potential objectivity, including political neutrality could be lost and the works of the trust could be subject to individual and political influence.'

The History of Bishops Park

From the late 13th century until 1973, Fulham Palace was a residence of the Bishop of London.

In 1884 Bishop Jackson persuaded the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to donate Bishop's Meadow, a two-hectare strip of land between the moat, the south-west boundary of the grounds of Fulham Palace, and the River Thames. The meadow was to be laid out as a recreation ground and maintained in perpetuity.

By the late 19th century, the formerly picturesque osier and grazing ground had become a refuse tip. The low-lying land was marshy, flooded regularly by the river. On the proviso that an embankment was added, the bishop offered additional land. There was space for exercise, paths and seats and a tree-lined river walk. The park's name was changed to Fulham Park in 1902 and then back to Bishops Park four years later. The remainder of the meadow was used, as now, for sport. In 1902 a nursery and greenhouses were built next to the lodge, and the Pryor's Bank pavilion opened in 1900.

As London County Council sought to create more space for sport, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners donated the meadow between the park and Craven Cottage in 1899. The western section was turfed for a cricket pitch. In the 1920s, the bishop of London filled in the moat, and offered the land between the King's Head pub and Bishops Avenue, while a children's playground was added. Part of the garden became school in 1954 and in 1971 an adventure playground was opened.

There is a hierarchy of protection relating to parks. Metropolitan Open Spaces (eg Wormwood Scrubs) are defined by Acts of Parliament, Common Land, (eg. Eel Brook Common, Brook Green, Parson's Green) have a certain level of protection as do Historic Parks and Gardens (eg. Bishop's Park, Fulham Palace and St Peter's Square). Others have no such protection.

In 2017 the Council set up a Parks Commission, and subsequently approved the Commission's recommendation to enter Deeds of Dedication with Fields in Trust (FIT). These act like covenants to protect public open space in perpetuity without impinging on the Council's ability to carry out day-to-day management, continue investment and provide a range of recreational facilities and activities.

Since 2017, three Borough parks and open spaces have received FIT

protection. These are Wendell Park, Lillie Road Recreation Ground and Shepherd's Bush Green. In 2019, the Council made the decision to first concentrate on the largest unprotected parks (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith Park, South Park, Wormholt Park and Normand Park).

The view of this Commission is that progress has been too slow, and a target should be set for each year.

Reference: In 2011, Glasgow City Council took the decision to safeguard its 27 parks and open spaces with FIT protection and completed the process within five years.

Implementation:

- Four Fields in Trust to be completed each year, including Ravenscourt Park in 2022.

16. New open space creation

Headline recommendation

The Council should use planning policy to create more publicly accessible usable open space. As part of this, the Council should rewrite its planning guidelines requiring new developments to provide more usable public and public/private open space. New open space should be environmentally friendly (in terms of layout, type of landscaping materials and planting) and provide public connectivity with other open spaces and green corridors.

Detailed recommendation

Research has found that the distance residents have to travel to parks and open spaces is a major consideration in how much they use them. The Borough has a high population density, particularly in the north of the borough where it is rapidly growing. The provision of parks and open spaces throughout the Borough is comparatively low, except close to Wormwood Scrubs.

New public provision within the Borough can be provided by:

1. Community access to private land (e.g. rooftop gardens, private sports facilities).
2. Housing estate land repurposed for community use ((possibly Bayonne Road Estate).
3. Parklets (tiny open spaces created from former car parking bays – e.g. Hammersmith Grove)
4. Road closures (creating small open spaces – e.g. Bridget Joyce Square)
5. New public open space created over railway lines (e.g. Olympia and Beadon Road)
6. Linear Open Space.
7. The development of large brownfield sites and the creation of public/private open spaces (e.g. Westfield and St. James's developments on Wood Lane).

Items 1-4. These are within the direct control of the Council, and some have proved to be successful initiatives. They are, by nature, comparatively small in scale.

Item 5. Olympia. This could be a public/private initiative using Section 106 and Community Infrastructure levy funds from the redevelopment of Olympia, and contribution from the developer, to create a new park over the adjacent railway lines. A major development costing £30 million+

Item 5. Beadon Road. The Hammersmith Business Innovation District sponsored a competition in 2019 to create a Hammersmith Hi-Line with public/private funding. The winning entry proposed building over the railway lines between King's Mall and the Glenthorne Road car parking and residential development. A major development costing £10m+

Item 6. Linear Open Space. See 23. Riverfront Strategic Concept.

Item 7. Brownfield Sites and the creation of public/private open space.

The quality and standard of provision of these spaces vary considerably. Some, such as 245 Hammersmith Grove and the Helios Courtyard at the Television Centre provide high quality environments that meet the needs of those who use them, and are environmentally friendly in terms of layout, materials and planting. Other developments are disappointing, particularly those where public access appears to be discouraged and there is little provision of park facilities.

It is the considered view of the Commission that insufficient guidance is given to developers, and that the planning guidelines need to be strengthened, particularly in view of the increased concerns relating to biodiversity and ecological sustainability. Planning decisions should be evidence-based.

In addition, developers should be held to account. In some cases, design proposals put forward at public exhibition have been substantially diluted, and in others the planned provision of trees has not been carried out and the Council has taken no action against the developer.

Implementation:

- [Planning guidelines to be rewritten by Q1 2023, referencing LBHF Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2008-2018, the Local Plan 2018 and Supplementary Planning Documents.](#)



17. Biodiversity statistics

Headline recommendation

The Council should monitor and report biodiversity enhancements carried out in the Borough. The Council should use the information from the biodiversity survey it is currently conducting to inform strategy, while the Commission recommends that annual biodiversity statistics should be published.

Detailed recommendation

In 2020, the Council accepted the recommendations of its [Biodiversity Commission](#)'s report. The Commission's main findings relating to parks and open spaces can be summarised as:

1. Improving horticultural practice for wildlife, minimising harm from pesticides and incorporating biodiversity as a key deliverable with clear targets as part of ongoing maintenance contracts.
2. The appointment of an ecology officer and establishment of an Ecology Centre.
3. Promotion of volunteering initiatives led by the Ecology Officer.
4. Promotion of good biodiversity practice in parks, open spaces and cemeteries including the provision of 'wild areas.'
5. Replacement of unused areas of asphalt with planting.
6. Avoidance of artificial turf.
7. Incorporation of biodiversity recommendations in the new parks maintenance contract.

Recommendations 2-4 are specifically addressed in another section of this report – 19. Meadow and wild habitat creation.

Recommendations 5-6 are good practice, and recommendation 6 has already been implemented.

This is an issue that has generated considerable public interest, and the Commission considered that there was a need for the annual publication of biodiversity statistics that include the number of new trees planted, replacement trees planted, new areas of meadow, new orchards, 'grey to green projects', hedgerows, bulbs, bird and bat boxes and swales in parks with drainage issues. The Council is currently conducting an audit which will enable it to put together the appropriate statistics.

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth from mammals, birds and reptiles to plants, fungi and micro-organisms. The term is broader than wildlife since it also encompasses the variety and complexity of communities of organisms or *ecosystems*, the specialised habitats or *niches* in which they live, and even genetic diversity within species.

A thriving, biodiverse site will be beneficial to human health and social wellbeing, resilient to environmental stresses like flooding and heatwaves, cost effective to maintain, contribute to the local character of a place and support familiar well-loved wildlife like blackbirds, foxes, mallards, frogs and bats, as well as thousands of species of invertebrates, plants, fungi and bacteria.

Dynamic, changing landscapes tend to improve biodiversity, such as trees of different ages, including dead or decaying wood, as well as indigenous plants, and humble species such as weeds which provide forage for butterflies and pollinators.

Reference: London Borough of Ealing, the winner of London in Bloom's 2017 Biodiversity Award (best practice example) publishes such biodiversity statistics.

Implementation:

- Biodiversity statistics published annually by the end of 2022.

18. Meadow and wild habitat creation

Headline recommendation

To improve biodiversity in parks and open spaces, the Council should introduce a rolling programme of new wildflower meadows, mown twice annually with specialised machinery. This should be part of an initiative to increase and enhance wildlife habitats and support biodiversity in parks and open spaces carried out following consultation with users and local stakeholders.

Detailed recommendation

There is a popular movement towards more natural planting in parks and open spaces which is perceived as increasing biodiversity and reducing CO2 emissions in response to the climate and ecological emergency.

A radical approach to park management is proposed that would see:

- The introduction of wildflower meadows and natural habitat areas wherever there is scope in parks and open spaces, based on areas of lesser usage and the aesthetics of each park. In addition, other wild habitats such as hedgerows around fenced areas and rain gardens, swales and ponds to help manage heavy rainfall in parks should be introduced where possible.
- These are to be balanced by continued careful mowing of perimeters, grass lawn areas and pathways. Mowing machines should be updated to ensure minimal damage to wildlife.
- Conversion of areas of annual bedding to perennial planting, leading to reduced levels of maintenance.
- Creation of a 'Volunteers in Parks' programme under the supervision of the Ecology Officer.
- Support for bee and other pollinator populations in parks.

It is important to note that unmown grass areas in parks are not meadow. Removal of the hay crop is required twice in summer by specialised small-scale mowers. This allows wild flowers to seed and proliferate, greatly increasing both the flowering season and the biodiversity.

This approach to park maintenance has been shown to reduce park maintenance costs, encourage greater community involvement and allow limited staff resources to maintain high horticultural standards.

Public response has been very positive, and few complaints have been made about the aesthetic changes in the parks, moving over from areas of formal grass to wildflower meadow. It is the next logical step up from 'No-Mow May.'

Reference: www.burnley.gov.uk 'Go to the Park' and various conversations with Simon Goff, Head of Green Spaces and Amenities, Burnley Borough Council.

Implementation:

- The Council should identify appropriate areas, following consultation with residents and local park stakeholder groups, by the end of 2022 and make necessary arrangements for implementation.



19. Tree planting

Headline recommendation

The Council should greatly accelerate its rolling programme of tree-planting to improve biodiversity and CO2 absorption. This proposal should not just include the parks but pavement

and road closure sites and decommissioned car parking spaces. Usage of park land for this purpose should always be done in consultation with residents and users.

Detailed recommendation

The Council's vision is to be the greenest borough by 2035. The most effective way to meet this target is by greatly accelerating the rolling programme of tree planting including pavement and road closure sites and decommissioned car parking spaces.

Planting trees has many benefits including:

- storing carbon.
- soaking up carbon dioxide,
- cleaning the air of other pollutants and toxins,
- keeping cities cool,
- providing a habitat for wildlife,
- benefits for mental health and well-being of residents and visitors.

The Borough has approximately 16,000 trees, of which 20% are in parks and open spaces, and 80% roadside within residential and commercial areas. The principal varieties are plane, lime, ornamental cherry, rowan, birch, whitebeam and ornamental pear.

Counters Creek flows north-south through a low-lying water catchment area in the Borough, where the presence of underlying impermeable London clay causes the combined sewer network to be overwhelmed at times of peak flow.

Trees draw moisture from the water table and can help protect against flooding, therefore contributing to surface water management objectives. Some locations already have comprehensive schemes combining permeable paving, planted basins, rain gardens, tree planting and downpipe disconnection. In street locations, permeable paving to street parking bays, combined with water retention systems and rain gardens can make a significant difference.

Wormwood Scrubs – a habitat for wildlife

Wormwood Scrubs is the largest open space in the Borough and is designated Common Land and Metropolitan Open Space. It is protected by the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866 and several later Acts of Parliament.

The western portion is part of Old Oak Common, much of which was taken over by the railways prior to 1866 Act. Stamford Brook ran between the two Commons, marking the old boundary between Acton and Hammersmith. The combined area is 42 Hectares. The east of the Scrubs is mostly sports field. Along the southern edge are a variety of sports facilities, including the Linford Christie stadium, a BMX cycling arena, street workout and children's play equipment. Further play equipment stands on the western edge. Wormwood Scrubs has an area to fly model aircraft with its own runway.

Wormwood Scrubs provides a valuable nature reserve. Half of the Scrubs, to the west and north and along Scrubs Lane is managed as woodland and rough natural grass land. The wooded areas are designated Local Nature Reserves. Over 100 species of bird have been spotted on the Scrubs. There are 250 species of native plants and about 20 species of butterfly.

There are also many species of other insects. Common Lizards are found on the Scrubs, originally near the railway embankment but have since spread south. The Scrubs are a winter roosting site for Red Necked Parakeet whose arrival at dusk in winter is a remarkable sight.

New sites for pavement and street trees can be identified by electronic trackers for telephone and broadband in pavements, and gas, electricity, and water utility plans in roads. Residents can request a street tree to be planted by going to treesenquiries@lbhf.gov.uk.

However, the Commission recommends that high density planting should be only carried out in parkland following full consultation with local residents and weighed against other potential uses of the land.

In many cities, 22-27% of the total urban area is private gardens, representing half of urban green space, and although the Borough's average garden size is only 30 sq.m – one of the smallest in London - residents should be encouraged to plant trees of an appropriate size. Next year marks the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Commission recommends that the Council marks a new era of tree planting by playing a proactive part in The Queen's Green Canopy, the scheme inviting people across the UK to plant trees in Autumn 2022. It would be fitting to plant 70 across the borough to mark this perhaps with a signposted trail between each tree.

Implementation:

- Details of new tree planting and their sites published annually by end of 2022.
- The Council should mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 by planting an initial 70 trees across the borough to mark each year of Her Majesty's reign during Q4 2022.



20. Vegetative pollution barriers

Headline recommendation

With air pollution from vehicle emissions a serious problem in the borough on its six-lane highways (including Talgarth Road/Great West Road, the West Cross Route and the A40), the Council should undertake extensive tree planting to restrict the spread of pollutants and consider hedges for localised shielding of pedestrians and walkers

Detailed recommendation

Unlike greenhouse gases which are principally carbon dioxide and methane, pollution from motor vehicles is nitrogen dioxide and particulates from brakes and tyres. Children who attend schools or live close to roads with high pollution levels are particularly at risk of developing asthma, and in one landmark case a child's death has been attributed to this cause. Some 80% of traffic on the main six-lane arterial roads in the borough is through traffic – not locally generated.

The introduction and proposed extension of the Central London Ultra Low Emission Zone has the potential to reduce overall volumes of traffic. Electric cars do not reduce levels of particulates.

Vegetative pollution barriers are of three types – green hedges, green walls and trees, or a combination of all three. Green roofs have little effect on dispersal of pollutants and a minor effect on deposition.

Deposition: When pollutants land on leaves they are removed from the air. Certain leaves are more effective than others, such as hairy leaves, large leaves, and ivies. However, compared to the benefits of dispersion, deposition is of minor benefit, and deposition of nitrogen oxide on leaves is partially cancelled out by subsequent NO₂ emissions from soil.

Dispersal: This is of primary importance, and the most important way of dispersing pollutants is to keep traffic moving. Sequencing of lights can play a part, but at peak times traffic is reduced to a crawl, and pollution levels soar.

Urban vegetation can be used to contain traffic pollutants reducing transmission to adjacent areas. For example, a 10m high barrier can protect up to 27m downwind, and a 2m high one 3m downwind. Densely planted avenues of trees and localised hedges are recommended.

The Commission proposes a report by environmental consultants advising on the location of trees and hedges, resistance of species to salt spray, drought, high wind turbulence, and that soil conditions ensure successful long-term growth.

Implementation:

- The Council should commission environmental consultants to produce and publish proposals to combat air pollution from traffic fumes by the end of 2022.



21. Best horticultural practices

Headline recommendation

The Council should aim to raise horticultural standards throughout its parks and open spaces. Good horticultural and ecological management must be specified and delivered by the maintenance contractor. The best horticultural practice notes should include soil care, best practice in tree and plant pruning, planting for pollinators, and use of integrated weed/pest management. It should also give up-to-date advice relating to the spread of newly introduced pests and diseases and new research on pollinators.

Detailed recommendation

The appearance and biodiversity value of planting in parks is a high priority for many residents. Good design and maintenance are crucial for many of the social benefits of parks: creating a comfortable, relaxing environment and a sense of connection with nature. Volunteer involvement benefits participants and the wider community.

Threats and risks include climate change, plant pathogens and incompetent maintenance. Unavoidable damage caused by heavy use, anti-social behaviour and dogs has an impact which must be managed.

Most horticultural work is carried out by the grounds maintenance contractor, therefore contract monitoring is essential for raising standards and ensuring value for money.

Park users and stakeholder groups have detailed knowledge of the changing situation on the ground and are an important resource for monitoring, planning, fundraising, and co-ordinating and carrying out volunteer work.

The objectives of good horticultural practice in parks should include:

- aesthetics
- serving the needs of park users
- good value for money
- planting that is resilient and sustainable in itself,
- and contributes to wider environmental resilience and sustainability in the context of climate and ecological crisis.

The contemporary movement towards naturalistic and ecological horticulture provides examples, evidence, advice and inspiration.

Park managers must keep abreast of the latest information, particularly relating to developing threats like climate change and new plant pathogens, and ensure that contractors and volunteers are aware of current best practice.

We recommend the Council sets out a series of evidence-based guidance notes. These can also be used to promote sustainable wildlife-friendly gardening to residents and commercial landowners.

These notes should cover:

Planting - species selection, planting methods and aftercare

Soil care - conserving soil carbon, composting, mulch and no-dig

Integrated pest and weed management

Pruning of shrubs, trees and perennials

Pollinator conservation - key points are planting a diverse range of flowering plants across all seasons, understanding the value of self-seeded and wild plants, pruning flowering shrubs and trees at the correct time.

Implementation:

- New good practice notes to be published by the Council by the end of 2022.

22. Riverside strategic concept

Headline recommendation

With completion of the Thames Riverside Walk and new developments increasing the popularity of the riverfront, the Council should seek to develop a unified plan for the area. It should be considered in its entirety to improve provision and biodiversity.

Detailed recommendation

It is noted in the LBHF [Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2008-2018](#) that the Council 'shall, in partnership with Thames Strategy (Kew to Chelsea), coordinate a programme of open space and green corridor improvements to improve Stevenage Park, Rowberry Mead, Furnival Gardens and Upper Mall.....and with a large proportion of the borough 10 minutes from the Thames establishing a network of green links to this space is very important to increase use and enjoyment of this space. Removing barriers to access will also address identified deficiency areas as described in "Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2008-2018", item 6.4g.

In 2017 the remaining section of the Riverside Walk was completed, and this has since become one of the most vibrant open spaces in the Borough. Public use has greatly increased by dog walkers, runners, cyclists, public access to the soft landscape areas of Fulham Reach, customers to riverside pubs and restaurants, small local shops, the Riverside Studios and usage of the Fulham Rowing Club. Heritage credentials have been enhanced by the statue to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

We recommend that the Council, working with the Parks Forum, should appoint landscape architects to envision and produce proposals that might include:

- Upper Mall (repaving, planters, possible summer sand beach in the promontory)
- Furnival Gardens (improved pollution screening to the Great West Road)
- Hammersmith Bridge/Queen Caroline Estate (improvements to raised area, possibly summer beach).
- Draw Dock (improved levels of clearance of river debris)
- Fulham Reach (tree planting)
- Betfair site (LBHF lease arrangement for the sloping grass bank)
- Rowberry Mead (improved access from the Riverside Walk)
- Stevenage Park (improved access and redesign)
- Improvements to hard landscaping, seating and planting to the connecting sections of the Riverside Walk, with particular emphasis on encouraging green corridor biodiversity.

Implementation:

- [The Council should appoint landscape architects to envision and produce proposals by the end of 2022.](#)



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Independent Parks Commission

Commissioners and acknowledgements

Commissioners

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Acknowledgements

***The Independent Parks Commission
would like to express its enormous gratitude to Council Officer
Stephen Hollingworth, Assistant Director Leisure, Sport & Culture, for his
assistance, insight, and clarity in providing information to the Commission
and explaining the challenges that he has inherited, Council Officer Peter
Smith, Head of Policy and Strategy, Public Services Reform and Jim
Cunningham, Climate Policy & Strategy Lead, Environment Department for
their guidance and help in facilitating the work of the Commission.***



Photos courtesy of Richard Jackson; the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, and the Friends of the Walled Garden in Ravenscourt Park.

Implementation Chart - Suggested schedule

For action by:
Council
Planning/Environment/other
LBHF Parks
GM Contractor
Park Stakeholder Groups
Park Forum

LBHF Parks Commission

		2021		2022		2023				2024				
Recommendation	Implementation	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Report approval by Council														
Publication of Report														
1. Parks Forum	Establish the Parks Forum and appointment Chair and members													
2. Park Stakeholder Groups	Review existing park stakeholder groups, memoranda of understanding and criteria for recognition													

		2021		2022		2023				2024				
Recommendation	Implementation	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Complete the recognition process for new and current park stakeholder groups.													
3. Park Strategic Plans	Audit park facilities and areas of need across the borough, validate findings with forum and stakeholder groups													
	Draft 5-year plans for all relevant parks, meet biannually to review													
4. Digital Hub	Create a digital hub for sports bookings and to provide centralised accessible information about parks													
5. Park Wardens	Deploy named park wardens													
6. Parks Officer Team	Refresh park officer team responsibilities and competencies, revamp team by Q4 2023													
7. Park funding	Publish annual park investment summaries covering operational and maintenance expenditure, priorities for capital funding, and allocations from S106 and CIL funds.													
8. Ongoing commitment to basic park funding	Reinforce the commitment to parks and their funding in the Council's vision statement and annual budget strategy													

		2021		2022		2023				2024				
Recommendation	Implementation	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9 Park Affordability and Pricing	Draft new charging policies, validated by the Parks Forum and stakeholders													
10 Contract for leasing park land	Draft a simple set of commercial park land lease requirements, reviewed by the Parks Forum.													
11 Policies to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation	Outline an approach to encourage innovation in fundraising, partnerships and community involvement and provide ongoing support to stakeholders													
12 Powering Parks	Consult independent low-carbon energy engineers to appraise feasibility and incorporate this option for consideration in all future development plans													
13. Park activities - apprenticeships and volunteering	Prepare volunteer action plans including projects to tackle climate change													
14. Park land use	Revise the process for consulting stakeholder groups and the Parks Forum on changes to use of land.													
15. Existing open space protection	Complete four Fields in Trust deeds each year, including Ravenscourt Park in 2022.													

		2021		2022		2023				2024				
Recommendation	Implementation	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
16. New open space creation	Rewrite Planning guidelines to strengthen requirements for new public open space.													
17. Biodiversity statistics	Publish annual statistics on biodiversity enhancements.													
18. Meadow and habitat creation	Identify appropriate areas for establishing meadows and purchase the required machinery													
19. Tree Planting	Publish details of new tree planting and their sites annually. Plant 70 trees in 2022 to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee													
20. Vegetative pollution barriers	Commission environmental consultants to produce plans to combat air pollution with suitable planting													
21. Best horticultural practice	Publish best practice guidelines to improve horticultural standards													
22.Riverside strategic concept	Appoint landscape architects to generate proposals for a unified Thames Riverside Walk													

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Biodiversity	The variety of plant, animal, and other species present within a particular location. The Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, and aims to increase the biodiversity of the borough.
CIL / Community Infrastructure Levy	Funding obtained from developers through planning agreements, to be spent on specified local improvements – see also Section 106 .
Facilities	The range of physical furniture and services offered to residents in parks, such as benches, toilets, play areas, water fountains, and sports facilities. These include free and charged facilities, including those run by private operators .
Fields in Trust	A charity and scheme to protect green spaces for people to enjoy in perpetuity.
‘Friends of’ groups	Voluntary organisations involved with particular parks and open spaces.
GM / Grounds Maintenance	Works to maintain and improve green spaces. The main contractor currently responsible for this work in LBHF is idverde.
Green Flag	An award scheme that recognises well managed, publicly accessible green spaces.
GSHP / Ground source heat pump	A low-carbon, electric heat source used to heat buildings as an alternative to gas boilers or other fossil fuel heat source.
Horticulture	The cultivation and management of plants in parks and open spaces.
MOU / Memorandum of Understanding	An outline agreement between two or more parties, such as those currently in place between the Council and ‘Friends of’ groups.
Net zero carbon	This refers to the Council’s ambition to reduce the borough’s greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, and emit no more than it removes.

Open spaces	See Parks and open spaces .
Operators	Businesses and organisations with commercial contracts to provide revenue-generating services in council parks, such as the hiring of sports facilities.
Parks and open spaces	In this report either term refers to any publicly accessible open green space for which the Council is responsible, including cemeteries. The Council does not in practice distinguish between parks and other green open spaces that it manages.
Parks Commission	An independent, temporary body of Hammersmith & Fulham residents, tasked with making recommendations to the Council for how to improve, protect and sustain our open spaces; the authors of this report.
Parks Forum	A proposed body to enhance transparency and support the Council and park stakeholder groups to set priorities and make decisions about parks – see recommendation 1 .
Park Officers	Council Officers responsible for the strategic management of parks, and park projects and improvements.
Park Stakeholder Groups	The proposed generic term for the single lead voluntary organisations involved with particular parks and open spaces – see recommendation 2 .
Park strategic plans	Proposed plans for each park which set out focus areas for maintenance and priorities for investment over several years – see recommendation 3 .
Park users	All individuals and organisations who make use of parks and park facilities, including residents and schools.
Park wardens	A proposed role to be a direct contact for all residents regarding particular parks, and providing oversight of activities, bookings and maintenance – see recommendation 5 .
Public-private partnership	A collaboration between a public body such as the Council, and a private company, to deliver facilities or services.

S106 / Section 106	Funding obtained from developers through planning agreements, to be spent on specified local improvements – see also Community Infrastructure Levy.
Social enterprise	A business with specific social objectives as its primary purpose, whose profits mainly fund initiatives to achieve these.
Stakeholders	Any individuals or organisations with an interest in a park or parks, such as residents, schools, other park users, contractors and operators.
ToR / Terms of reference	An agreed purpose and approach to be taken by a group. The Parks Commission's terms of reference is at appendix 1 .