

MDA No.	1	0	9	2
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Title: Green Spaces in London

Executive Summary

On 22 May 2019, the Committee agreed that authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion. [Green Spaces in London]

Decision

That the output on green spaces in London be agreed.

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature

Caroline Russell

Date 18/12/19

Printed Name

Caroline Russell AM, Chair of the Environment Committee

Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Notes

1. The Lead Officer should prepare this form for signature by relevant Members of the Assembly to record any instance where the Member proposes to take action under a specific delegated authority. The purpose of the form is to record the advice received from officers, and the decision made.
2. The 'background' section (below) should be used to include an indication as to whether the information contained in / referred to in this Form should be considered as exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). If so, the specimen Annex (attached below) should be used. If this form does deal with exempt information, you must submit both parts of this form for approval together.

Background and proposed next steps:

On 22 May 2019, the Committee agreed that authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion. [Green Spaces in London]

The decision will be reported back to the Health Committee meeting on 15 January 2020.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision

Signed by Committee Services



Date 12/12/19

Print Name: Lauren Harvey

Tel: 4383

Financial implications

NOT REQUIRED

Signed by Finance

N/A

Date

Print Name

N/A

Tel:

Legal implications

The Chair of the Environment Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signed by Legal



Date 12/12/19

Print Name

Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer

Tel: X 4399

Supporting detail/List of Consultees:

Léonie Cooper AM (Deputy Chair), Tony Arbour AM and David Kurten AM

Public Access to Information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? No


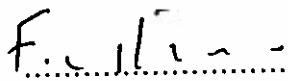
Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form - No

Lead Officer/Author

Signed		Date	18/12/19
Print Name	Lauren Harvey	Tel:	4383
Job Title	Committee Officer		
Countersigned by Director		Date	19.12.19
Print Name	Ed Williams	Tel:	X4399



London's green spaces aren't reaching their full potential

By Caroline Russell

8-10 minutes

A Green member of the London Assembly takes a walk straight through what is known as park life.

Green spaces are the heart of any city; from Central Park in New York to Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome. They are at the centre of community activity and associated with better physical and mental health, reduced stress levels and improved overall wellbeing.

London is known as a green city, with nearly half of its land being green space. But with many Londoners living in flats without access to gardens and only 18 per cent of London's green spaces accessible to the public, what are Londoners missing out on?

There are many benefits to opening up more green spaces to Londoners. There's increasing evidence that green spaces improve physical health; it is also associated with better mental health, reduced stress levels and improved overall wellbeing. Camden and Islington Council are two boroughs that have recognised these benefits and recently won grants that will be used to maximise the use of parks and green spaces, reimagining them as focal points for improving people's health.

But personal health is not the only thing that benefits from accessible green space. Green spaces also provide environmental health benefits, from helping to cool cities down during heat waves and cutting flood risk, to protecting the much-needed variety of plant and animal life that we find in London.

Green spaces also play a key-role in ensuring that London has greater community cohesion and less social isolation. In a recent survey by the *Association of Public Service Excellence*, 76 per cent of respondents felt that green spaces helped to promote community cohesion, and 67 per cent thought green spaces reduced anti-social behaviour.

However, we know that keeping green spaces open and adequately maintained and managed does not come cheap. Over the last decade, local authorities have been under increasing financial strain which has impacted the accessibility of green spaces for Londoners.

The London Assembly *Park Life* report looked at different models of financing to help maintain and manage London's green spaces. At a recent meeting of the assembly's environment committee last May, we heard about the importance of core funding, and the case for integrating park services into local authority statutory functions to draw in resources rather than overly relying on commercialisation and major events. There are a number of risks associated with commercialisation, such as large parts of parks being closed off to local residents, people being excluded by ticket prices, nuisance from noise, anti-social behaviour, traffic congestion and repair costs.

But finance isn't the only thing that is preventing the use of green spaces reaching full potential. One issue that was raised during our recent meeting is that London councils are struggling to find skilled, experienced workers for parks and open spaces. This combined with stretched budgets has left local authorities more and more reliant on the support of volunteers and friend groups.

However, in our report *Park Life*, we noted that London faces particular challenges in supporting people to volunteer. Local communities need to be enabled to play an integral role in keeping London's green spaces open, safe and attractive for everyone. The Committee called on the Mayor to continue to explore ways of promoting and enhancing Londoners' participation in local, site-based volunteer groups with the hope that this will help local authorities get the support and help needed to maintain green spaces across London.

We know that green spaces are highly valued by Londoners. We recommend that the mayor, during London National Park City week, looks at how he and his team can further support local authorities in finding financing methods and in encouraging Londoners to volunteer to help preserve and maintain the green spaces in London that we are so lucky to have.

Caroline Russell is chair of the environment committee at the London Assembly and a member of the Green party.

