

MDA No.: 1744

Title: *Parks: Under Pressure*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Environment Committee meeting on 15 July 2025, the Committee resolved that:

Authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with the party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion.

- 1.2 Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair agreed the Committee's report, *Parks: Under Pressure*, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. Decision

- 2.1 **That the Chair, in consultation with the party Group Lead Members, agrees the Committee's report, *Parks: Under Pressure*, as attached at Appendix 1.**

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:



Printed Name: **Léonie Cooper AM, Chair of the Environment Committee**

Date: **25 September 2025**

3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The terms of reference for this investigation were agreed by the Chair, in consultation with relevant party Lead Group Members and Deputy Chairs, on 9 July 2025 under the standing authority granted to Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees. Officers confirm that the report and its recommendations fall within these terms of reference.
- 3.2 The exercise of delegated authority approving the Committee's report, *Parks: Under Pressure* will be formally noted at the Environment Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services): *Sal Fazal*

Printed Name: Saleha Fazal

Date: 23 September 2025

Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance): Not Required

Printed Name:

Date:

Legal Implications:

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

Signature (Legal): *Rory McKenna*

Printed Name: Rory McKenna, Monitoring Officer

Date: 25.09.25

Email: rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- Zack Polanski AM;
- Thomas Turrell AM; and
- Gareth Roberts AM.

4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 **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

If yes, until what date:

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

Signature: *Richard Clarke*

Printed Name: Richard Clarke

Job Title: Senior Policy Adviser

Date: 25 September 2025

Countersigned by Executive Director:

Signature: *Helen Ewen*

Printed Name: Helen Ewen, Executive Director of Assembly Secretariat

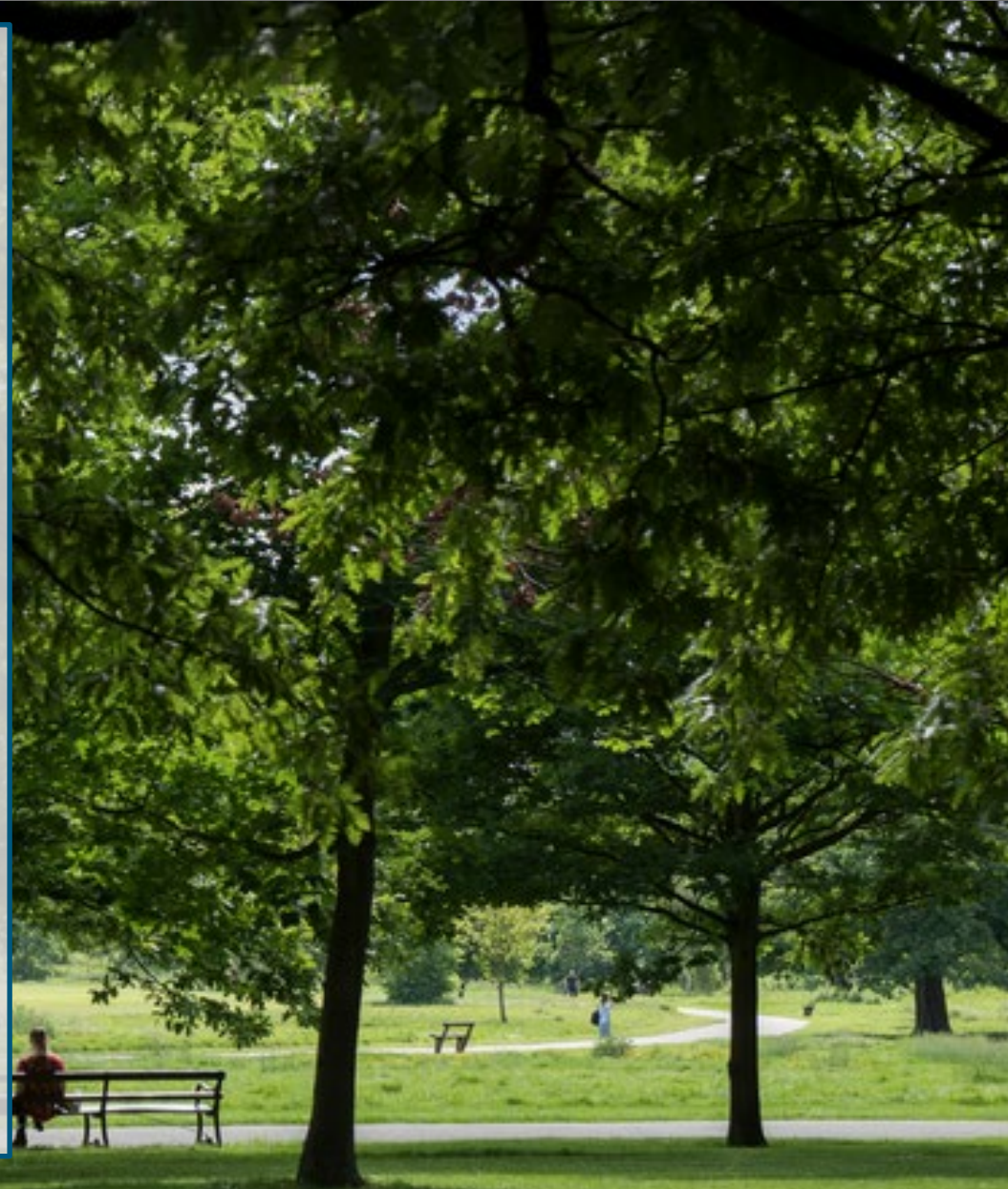
Date: 24 September 2025

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Key findings

- London's parks and green spaces are vital to the city's environmental health, public wellbeing, and community life.
- Parks play a key role in supporting biodiversity and mitigating the impacts of climate change, particularly through canopy cover supporting urban cooling and absorbing rainwater to prevent flooding.
- Increased use of parks is a good problem to have. However, alongside population growth and declining local authority funding, this has resulted in parks experiencing growing pressure.
- Strategic support and ongoing investment are needed to ensure parks remain resilient, inclusive, and accessible. This requires not just capital funding for improvements, but revenue funding for day-to-day maintenance.
- While most funding for parks in London comes from other sources, the GLA has an important strategic role to play in setting planning policy, and in providing strategic funding to ensure that access to parks and green spaces is equitable across London.
- The GLA has supported Parks for London to play a lead role in supporting knowledge-sharing and best practice across the capital. While aspects of the sector are stronger now than five years ago, many of the financial challenges remain.



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

London's Parks

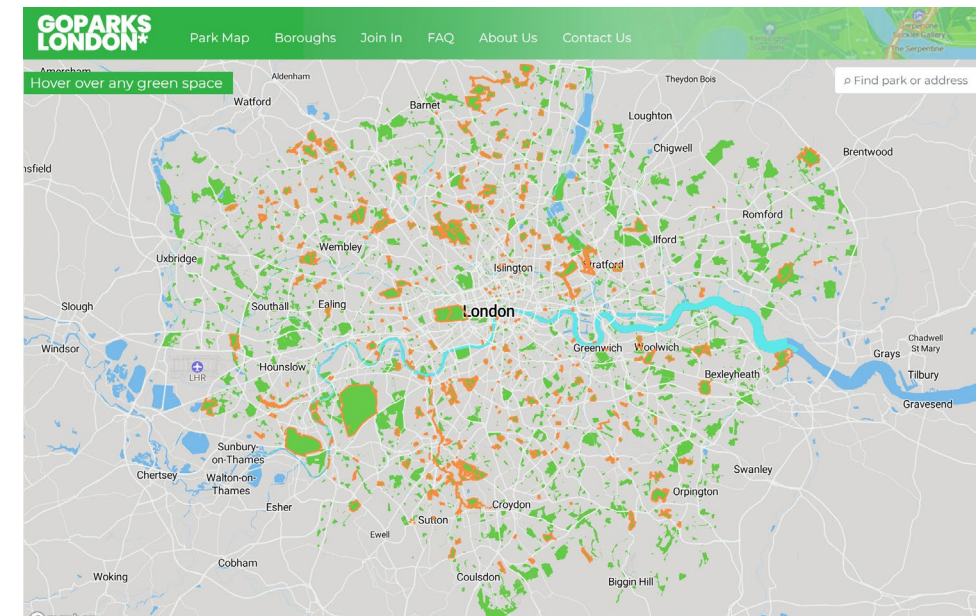
London is home to over 3,000 publicly accessible parks and green spaces – which together cover 18 per cent of London.¹ These are essential 'infrastructure' for London – and Londoners – supporting health, climate resilience, and community wellbeing. Most parks are managed by local authorities, but a significant number are managed by charities and independent trusts, including the Royal Parks, the City of London Corporation, and smaller community organisations. Parks and green spaces deliver substantial value to residents' quality of life. **According to a 2017 report produced for the GLA, for every £1 spent, parks generate at least £27 in benefits.**²

The Committee previously explored the importance of parks and green spaces in London in its 2017 report [Park Life](#). The report recommended that the GLA set up a city-wide website to improve information about London's green spaces, actively support the recruitment and retention of parks volunteers, and promote the network of 'green infrastructure' across the city.³

Since then, we have seen progress in several areas. In July 2019, the Mayor signed the charter committing London to be the world's first National Park City (see Case Study 4).⁴ The Mayor also launched the **London Green Spaces Commission** to help boroughs improve management and funding of parks, looking to sustain or increase investment amid funding constraints.⁵ The Mayor subsequently supported Parks for London to become a 'Centre of Excellence' for

London's parks and green spaces, following the recommendation of the Commission in 2021.⁶

Figure 1: The GoParksLondon online guide⁷



Parks for London, which started as a “grassroots movement of local authority parks managers”,⁸ supports boroughs through resource sharing, benchmarking, knowledge exchange, and capacity building.

The GLA has also helped support the creation of the [GoParksLondon](#) online guide to London's parks.⁹ The Mayor included policies on green

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

infrastructure in the London Plan in 2021, including a target for addressing areas of deficiency to accessible green space.¹⁰

In this investigation, we revisited the topic to explore the ongoing funding pressures on parks, how they can become more climate resilient, and how to ensure inclusive and equitable community involvement. We also celebrate the progress, quality, and innovation across many of London's parks.



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Pressure on Parks

Since 2000, London's population has grown by over two million people.¹¹ With more than half of Londoners now living in flats,¹² public parks and green spaces are essential places for people to relax, meet, exercise, and enjoy nature.

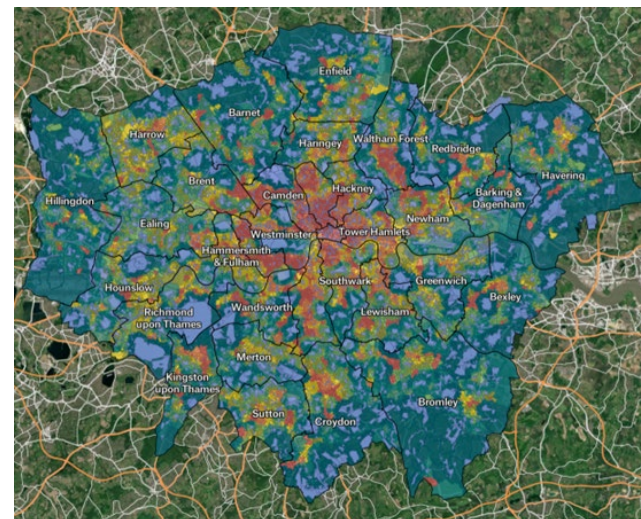
Recent analysis by the campaign group CPRE London shows that the amount of public green space per person (measured as within 400 metres of where they live), is far lower in parts of central London than many suburbs, although there are 'hot spots' of low access in other areas (Figure 2).¹³ **The growing population, and limited private gardens in new developments, means that London's parks are under increasing pressure.** This will only rise as London's housing targets increase to 88,000 new homes a year,¹⁴ unless new green space is also created, or more funding is made available for maintenance of existing spaces to ensure they all achieve consistent quality.

Andrew Bedford, who is responsible for managing parks in Islington, told us that “*pressure of use, just intensity of use*” is a major issue, particularly in central London areas, including conflicts between users wanting to use the space in parks in different ways.¹⁵

In his 2021 manifesto, the Mayor pledged to improve London's network of green spaces so that more people live within a ten-minute walk of a green space.¹⁶ The Mayor's consultation on the next London Plan indicated that the Mayor is considering how to assess the quality, use,

and level of demand for green spaces.¹⁷ This is important to ensure there is both enough space, and also that it is managed in a way that meets people's needs and the needs of nature.

Figure 2: CPRE London's Public Open Space Heat Map¹⁸ ['hot' colours show less greenspace per person within 400m]



Recommendation 1

The new London Plan should include clear minimum standards for the provision of green space per person. It should also restate and strengthen the commitment to ensuring all Londoners have access to high quality green space within 800m (a ten-minute walk) of their home.

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Parks budgets continue to be squeezed

The overall quality of parks, including day-to-day maintenance and litter picking, is important to how people experience them. This can vary between areas. Ruth Lin Wong Holmes, who sits on the national Parks Working Group, told us that in reference to delivering quality spaces, *“London is doing quite well [...] but there are inequalities that we see here.”*¹⁹

500 parks and green spaces in London have been awarded ‘Green Flags’,²⁰ as part of a national scheme run by Keep Britain Tidy, which promotes quality standards for parks – including that they are welcoming, safe, clean, and managed for nature.²¹ Parks for London also benchmarks the quality of parks services between London boroughs to share good practice and promote innovation.²²

However, parks are classified as non-statutory services, and funding has declined in many boroughs.²³ Local authority budgets for parks have fallen by approximately eight per cent since 2008, while the capital’s population has risen by over 15 per cent.²⁴ **Proposed changes to the local government funding formula could make the current situation worse for many London boroughs, potentially leading to further cuts to parks budgets.**²⁵

A major challenge facing local authorities is a lack of funding for **ongoing maintenance, such as litter-picking, grass cutting, or habitat management, which typically comes from ‘revenue’ budgets.** Andrew

Bedford, who manages green spaces for the London Borough of Islington, told us that most funding for park improvements has been sourced from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a charge that local authorities can set on new developments in their area.²⁶ This one-time funding has helped address shortfalls in revenue budgets by enabling capital improvements, which result in parks which are easier to maintain with lasting infrastructure. However, he cautioned that it isn’t possible to rely on this for ongoing parks maintenance, which means more sustainable funding is vital:²⁷

*“As development is dropping off, we are seeing a drop off in sales contributions, and so we are starting to see a bit of a slowdown in terms of that investment, which is then going to place more pressure on the revenue.”*²⁸ Andrew Bedford, Greener More Active Assistant Director, Islington Council.

The Committee heard that shared park services across boroughs could be necessary as boroughs seek greater efficiencies and economies of scale. Andrew Bedford told us *“There have been some tri-borough and bi-borough joint partnerships [...] We will start to see more of that going forward.”*²⁹ Any changes would need to be managed carefully to ensure that the quality of service is not affected.

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Supporting parks for the future

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the funding challenge – although clearly more funding would help. The Mayor has launched a new ‘Green Roots Fund’, which will allocate £12 million over three years to improving green spaces and waterways.³⁰

While all guests were supportive of the Green Roots Fund, Ed Stannard, Executive Director of Parks for London, recommended that this funding should be prioritised to *“try to unpick some of the challenges at that high level strategic view that affect land managers across London.”*³¹ As the GLA considers its approach to the next London Plan, it could usefully support Parks for London to **review funding approaches across London boroughs, and share guidance and good practice** to ensure lasting benefits for parks across the capital.

The funding from the Green Roots Fund is relatively small in comparison to the amount that boroughs can receive from new developments. Unspent CIL – to be spent on any local infrastructure improvements, not just parks – for example, is worth £180 million in the London Borough of Brent alone.³²

Finding ways to use funding from new developments in innovative ways could help unlock wider improvements to parks and ongoing maintenance. Ruth Lin Wong Holmes, Head of Landscape and Public Realm Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, told us of approaches where revenue funding, as well as capital funding, has been negotiated from

developers, to help deliver and maintain high-quality green spaces over time.³³

Part of this funding mix includes ensuring that developer contributions for improving nature overall (**‘biodiversity net gain’**) are used to maximise the benefits to Londoners wherever possible. Ed Stannard told us that the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is creating *“habitat banks”*, areas where new habitats are created, across council-managed nature reserve land, to *“to take advantage of biodiversity net gain and look at how they can leverage alternative funding sources into their spaces as well.”*³⁴ This is an approach that other boroughs could replicate.

Recommendation 2

The GLA should fund Parks for London to develop resources to address the strategic challenges facing London’s parks, including case studies of innovative funding for parks in London, such as habitat banks for ‘biodiversity net gain’ and ways to create stronger links between parks and NHS health provision.

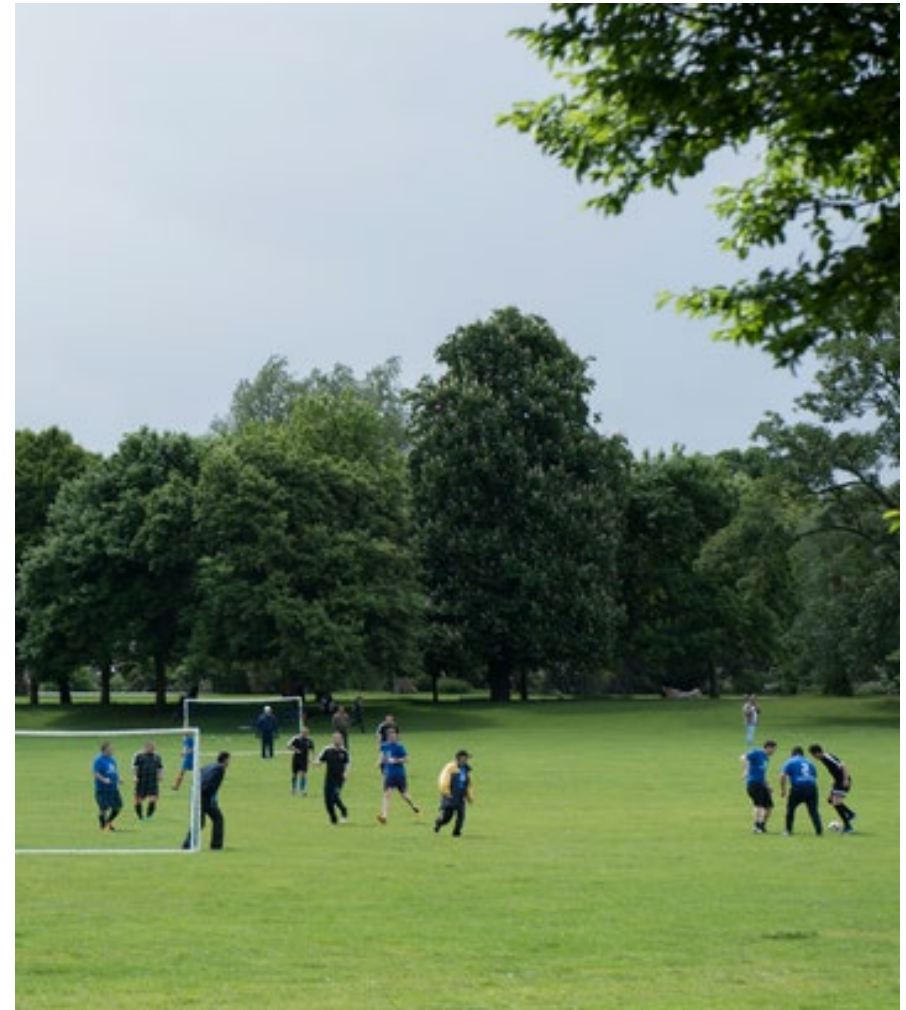
Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Parks for health

We heard that another important innovation is to better connect funding for parks with their health benefits. The **Future Parks Accelerator (FPA)** project (2019-2022), funded by the National Lottery, National Trust and UK government, was designed to investigate how this can be done.³⁵ We heard how the London boroughs of Islington and Camden, which both took part in the FPA, developed a joint strategy for how parks can be used as part of the health system, and support early intervention and prevention of illnesses through activities in green spaces. This cross-cutting approach has led to ring-fenced public health funding specifically for park ranger roles in Islington.³⁶ Andrew Bedford described this approach as “**a different way of working, different skill sets, a partnership approach, and different partnerships.**”³⁷

Whilst cautioning that health is “not necessarily, yet, a magic silver bullet to help fund parks” he noted that the focus in the latest NHS plan on health prevention and early intervention could lead to more funding focused on activities in parks.³⁸ Analysis on the financial benefits of access to green space in Camden found that there were over £10.50 of health benefits for every £1 spent on parks.³⁹ Similarly, research commissioned by the GLA in 2017 found that public green spaces **saved £370m per year through better mental wellbeing – £42 per person per year.**⁴⁰



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Income from concessions and events

Income from parks themselves is increasingly important to help pay for their maintenance. This ranges from concessions (such as cafés) and car parking charges to large-scale commercial events. On the Committee's site visit to three Central London parks, we heard from independent parks managers who look after Jubilee Gardens and Waterloo Millennium Green, near Waterloo station, about their desire to increase revenue to help pay for parks maintenance (see case studies below).⁴¹ In both cases, licensing rules, or covenants, are restricting their ability to do so.

Festivals held in parks can attract a different demographic of users and generate much-needed income. This revenue can cross-subsidise free community events or fund necessary park maintenance. As Andrew Bedford told us, *"One of our regular events, Clerkenwell Design Week, now funds a full-time ranger role in the south of the borough, because*



*we have managed to get a long-term established agreement with them."*⁴²

However, hosting large commercial events can put strain on park infrastructure, compacting the ground, and temporarily restricting access for the local community.⁴³ CPRE London have called for regulations around the number of days and proportion of space that events can use in parks – pointing to a rule that limited events to using a maximum of ten per cent of a park's total area, which was followed until a legal ruling challenged this position in 2017.⁴⁴

Parks for London told us that it has developed, in collaboration with several London boroughs, guidance and a standard **Outdoor Event Policy** template to support sustainable event planning in parks.⁴⁵ It also runs workshops *"on mitigating against the operational challenges of delivering events in parks, especially around reinstatement of grassland, and how to ensure that, where sites are being used, they are being restored effectively as well."*⁴⁶ Parks for London recommends *"the ring-fencing of income that comes in through commercial events to the parks service."*⁴⁷

We support this approach, particularly when it is used to directly improve activities to help people connect with nature and improve the maintenance of parks for the benefit of the local community, and where action is taken to minimise the disruption and impact caused by commercial events.

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Inclusive Parks

Engaging the local community

Parks offer residents and visitors access to nature, recreation, and social connection, but not all Londoners experience them equally. Friends of Parks groups are volunteer-led organisations that help care for and advocate for these spaces. These groups help facilitate engagement with the wider community and play an important role in maintaining park quality.⁴⁸

“Our best parks are without a shadow of a doubt those that have strong Friends of [Parks] groups who we work in partnership with.”⁴⁹ Andrew Bedford, Islington Council

Parks for London, the London Friends of Greenspaces Network (LFGN), and CPRE London carried out a survey of Friends of Parks groups in January 2023 which estimated that there are over 900 ‘Friends groups’ in London, helping care for their local green spaces. While ‘Friends groups’ and volunteers are important in supporting parks, we heard that engagement tends to be lower in more deprived communities, where residents experiencing more acute financial pressures are less able to give time to unpaid activities.⁵⁰ This can exacerbate differences in quality between areas. Volunteer activity should also not be at the expense of proper funding and paid roles in parks management.

Ed Stannard, from Parks for London, told us:

*“One of the things that we do want to see is that the voluntary environmental groups are representative and as diverse as possible and are democratically elected and generally represent the full needs of the local community. Again, working with partners like the London Friends of Green Spaces Network and some of the other organisations that support Friends groups themselves, **we are trying to encourage representation, so that these groups are as representative of the communities they serve as possible.**”⁵¹*

We also heard about the work that the London National Park City charity is doing to establish a diverse London-wide network of volunteers who are supported to work together to create green space improvements in their local areas (see Case Study 4). To monitor Londoners’ involvement in green spaces across the capital, it is important to track this over time and share learning.

Recommendation 3

The GLA should fund Parks for London and/or other partners to develop a regular (every two years) London-wide survey of parks users and volunteers to understand more about who is involved in parks across the city, practical barriers to volunteering, and to track progress in increasing diversity of community involvement.

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Ensuring parks are safe and welcoming for all

London's parks are not yet as inclusive as they should be. Research by the campaign group *Make Space for Girls* has highlighted that women and girls use parks and green spaces less than men and boys.⁵² It found that nationally, **only 15 per cent of teenagers using park facilities were girls.**⁵³ Ruth Lin Wong Holmes, Head of Landscape and Public Realm Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, told us:

"We know that when women and girls are more occupying a space they are better spaces for everybody."⁵⁴

Guidance produced by the University of Leeds shows how designing for women and girls can help create safer and more welcoming parks. This includes good maintenance, improved sightlines and visibility, suitable facilities, and **female-led activities, such as yoga or dance classes, and social spaces for teenage girls, such as grouped swings or seating.**⁵⁵

It is also important to understand local needs and involve women and girls themselves in design decisions. Ruth Lin Wong Holmes told us that the Olympic Park has changed its approach to consultation *"to look through a gender-informed lens and specifically try and involve women and girls in the decision-making process."*⁵⁶ This includes co-designing improvements to the park (see Case Study 3).

A vital aspect of making parks welcoming to women and girls is safety. In 2025, the University of Leeds, Suzy Lamplugh Trust, and Keep Britain

Tidy collaborated to deliver parks **active bystander training** to parks managers. The training initiative teaches park staff and volunteers to safely intervene in harassment situations in parks. Following a pilot in West Yorkshire, the project is now hosting workshops across the UK in 2025, including in a number of London Boroughs.⁵⁷

In July 2025, Parks for London released a **new Environmental Visual Evaluation ('EVE') tool**, which Ed Stannard told us is designed to *"support landowners and managers to review spaces through the lens of women and girls."*⁵⁸ **We are pleased that inclusive design, and co-design with communities themselves, as well as personal safety are being increasingly supported in London.**

Recommendation 4

Parks for London should continue to share guidance around inclusive design of parks and bystander training, and monitor uptake of this through inclusion, as a criteria of its next Good Parks for London assessment in 2026. Parks managers across London should involve a range of stakeholders, including women and girls, in co-designing parks to ensure that they are welcoming for everyone.

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Climate-Resilient Parks

As London faces increasingly extreme weather, the city's parks need to adapt. During the Committee's visit to parks in Central London in July 2025, we saw for ourselves the challenges this is causing for parks managers, particularly around the need for watering and some grassed areas becoming dusty and compacted. But we also saw examples of innovative approaches to planting to make those parks more resilient, such as creating 'rain gardens' with plants that can cope with both wet and dry conditions (see Case Study 1).

We also heard from guests in our meeting about how councils are rethinking planting strategies for trees. For example, Islington Council is taking a long-term view on increasing canopy cover and selecting tree species that are suited to future climate conditions. Andrew Bedford explained, *"We are thinking very carefully about species selection, getting the right tree in the right place."*⁵⁹

The Committee held a meeting on this topic in May 2025 and visited Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) Kew in June 2025 to see the research being done in this area.⁶⁰ Ruth Lin Wong Holmes told us that Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is in contact with RBG Kew about tree choice in the context of a changing climate.⁶¹ We are pleased this knowledge is being shared across London.



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Parks are important for absorbing water, preventing heat build-up, and contributing to shade and urban cooling.⁶² Ruth Lin Wong Homes also told us how parks managers are increasingly integrating parks into a wider network of green infrastructure across the city, including sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), such as ‘swales’, to store rainwater.⁶³ This was a recommendation of the London Climate Resilience Review which also recommended creating new pocket parks and increasing canopy cover.⁶⁴

These changes take planning and funding. Some funding is available through the GLA’s Green Roots Fund,⁶⁵ and the GLA is also developing strategic tools, such as the London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF), to provide “interactive digital mapping” to help inform where to prioritise investment in SuDS and canopy cover.⁶⁶ Parks for London also provides guidance, including a workshop on adapting parks for flooding mitigation,⁶⁷ and case studies on climate change in its 2021 Good Parks for London report.⁶⁸ We welcome these efforts, but more work is needed to transform parks across the capital.

Recommendation 5

The GLA should continue to support climate resilience by funding the creation of new parks, as well as sustainable drainage systems and planting approaches in existing ones. Work should continue with Parks for London to share good practice on adapting parks and green spaces for a changing climate.



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Case Studies

These case studies, drawn from our investigation, highlight practical examples of how design, management, and community engagement are being used in parks across London. They aim to illustrate both the challenges but also the exciting work being done in London's parks and green spaces.

1. Climate-Resilient Parks: Waterloo Millennium Green

At the Committee's visit to Waterloo Millennium Green in July 2025, we were shown drought-resilient planting schemes and a nature trail, encouraging ecological engagement for local residents. The park, in a densely populated area of the London Borough of Lambeth, was built on the site of a former central London car park with limited access to nature. Opened in 2002 and managed by Bankside Open Spaces Trust since 2014,⁶⁹ the Trust aims *"to ensure that local people still take the lead in deciding what happens at the Green, ensuring that the Green stays safe and feels looked after"*.⁷⁰ A former pond has been adapted to serve as a rain garden, with planting that is tolerant of dry and wet conditions, an example of flexible use of existing features of the park to cope with a changing climate.⁷¹

The site has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in recognition of its significant biodiversity value despite its smaller size.⁷² The Committee was also shown how recent

planting has focused on more climate-resilient plants, and planting in shallow dips to capture water.



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

2. Pressure On Parks: Jubilee Gardens

Jubilee Gardens on London's South Bank, next to the London Eye, is a very popular park and green space, with approximately 5.5 million visitors each year to its compact 1.73-hectare site.⁷³

The park was opened in celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee in 1977 and redeveloped following an international design competition in 2012.⁷⁴ Part of the Southbank Centre estate, it is managed by Jubilee Gardens Trust and owned by the Arts Council. Since then, the park has undergone continual improvements, including the opening of a new playground in 2022, and has received a Green Flag award every year since 2021.⁷⁵ We observed on the Committee's visit how maintenance workers tend to the park throughout the day to ensure that litter is removed, and plants are looked after to a high standard.

There are plans to extend Jubilee Gardens onto adjacent land that was formerly a car park.⁷⁶ We learnt at the Committee's site visit that there are a series of practical hurdles that are currently delaying the scheme, some of which have been ongoing for several years. We were also told about the challenges of generating funding to maintain the park, including securing ongoing contributions from nearby developments and a covenant that precludes commercial activity on the existing gardens. The Trust has stated that its finances are "far from secure" and has criticised the fact that just £50,000 was allocated to the park from the redevelopment of a nearby office block, out of nearly £40 million of total funds available from developer contributions.⁷⁷

Given how well it is already used, expanding access to green space in this part of central London should be a priority – but finding sustainable funding for the site is an ongoing challenge.



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

3. Inclusive, Safe and Equitable Parks: Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

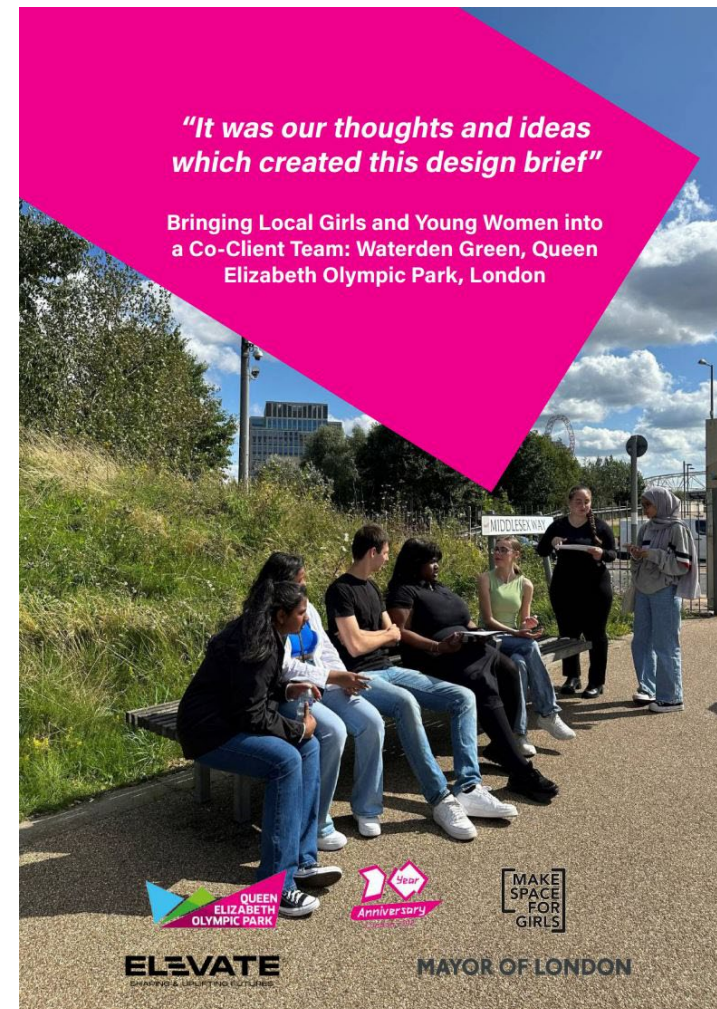
When redesigning Waterden Green in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) experimented with new ways of working with local girls and women (aged 12-18) to understand their needs and preferences – taking a ‘co-clienting’ approach for the design of ‘pods’ in the park.

In building a relationship with these stakeholders (Figure 3), LLDC aimed to ensure that the voices of young women were able to influence the design process, so that the space is more likely to meet their needs.⁷⁸

The LLDC has since published a handbook on ‘Creating places that work for women and girls’ to share its experiences⁷⁹, based on the broader inclusive design Her City toolbox.⁸⁰ Parks for London has also published new guidance to help landowners and managers identify interventions to make green spaces feel safer for women and girls.⁸¹

On our visit to Waterloo Millennium Green in Southwark, we also heard how Southwark Council is involving people living in the housing estate bordering the park to review recent changes and “*guide future work to make the space even more welcoming and useful for the whole community*”.⁸² This highlights the importance of assessing the impact of any changes to parks and engaging people who don’t currently use them, as well as those that do.

Figure 3: Make Space For Girls report



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Inspiring Londoners: London National Park City

London was officially designated the world's first National Park City in July 2019, when the Mayor of London signed the National Park City Charter. The National Park City Foundation aims to support local nature recovery in communities across London.⁸³ It partners with community groups, the GLA, and other organisations with the aim of making London "greener, healthier and wilder".⁸⁴

London's parks play an important role in supporting biodiversity. Mark Cridge, Executive Director of London National Park City, told us that Burgess Park in Southwark has *"some incredibly important scrub habitats and different mosaic habitats for different types of species **you would not have assumed would be sitting there right in the centre of London.**"*⁸⁵

The London National Park City 'Rangers' programme connects people across London and supports them with skills, resources, and training to run community events, lead nature walks, share knowledge about nature and sustainability, and connect residents with local environmental projects.⁸⁶ There are now approximately 130 rangers in the programme, with a long-term ambition to reach 700, and a plan to expand borough by borough.⁸⁷

Mark Cridge told us that the GLA had allocated £100,000 from the Green Roots fund to a small grants programme for Rangers, enabling 'microgrants' to help inspire change across different areas of the city.

"What we do is provide grants between £250 and £1000, mainly for projects led by Rangers. [...] It streamlines our ability to push out relatively small amounts of money to those Rangers for impactful projects."⁸⁸



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Rochelle Shanthakumar, Programme Manager at London National Park City, told us that the application process aimed to be “as accessible as possible” and actively encouraged “applications from under-represented groups”.⁸⁹ She gave the example of how the grant had funded Black Growth, which she described as “a Black-British led grassroots organisation in Croydon that is doing urban farming and has a community garden”. She added that Black Growth has “created a local vegetable box scheme with a pay-it-forward model. There are amazing people who are already doing this work and are engaged with those communities and have the trust.”⁹⁰



Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

Environment Committee



The Environment Committee examines and reports on matters relating to the environment in London and leads on scrutiny of the Mayor's Environment Strategy. For more information, [please visit our website](#).

Guide to pictures:

Page 1 – Regent's Park, Camden. Credit: GLA – Caroline Teo

Page 3 – Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Newham (left), Regent's Park, Camden (right). Credit: GLA – Caroline Teo

Page 7 – Clissold Park, Hackney. Credit: GLA – Caroline Teo

Page 8 – Black Pride event, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Newham. Credit: GLA – James O Jenkins

Page 11 – Committee visit to Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond upon Thames

Page 12 – Committee visit to Waterloo Millennium Green, Lambeth

Page 13 – Committee visit to Waterloo Millennium Green, Lambeth

Page 14 – Committee visit to Jubilee Gardens, Lambeth

Page 16 – Accessibility in Nature event, Chiswick House and Gardens, Hounslow. Credit: London National Park City

Page 17 – Earth Day event, The LightHouse and Gardens, Stratford, Newham (left); Composting community workshop, Denmark Hill Estate Allotment, Southwark (right). Credit: London National Park City.

Meeting guests

The Committee's meeting on 15 July 2025 can be viewed [here](#). Guests were:

- Ed Stannard, Executive Director, Parks for London
- Ruth Lin Wong Holmes, Head of Landscape and Public Realm, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and LLDC Developments
- Andrew Bedford, Assistant Director Greener More Active, Islington Council
- Mark Cridge, Executive Director, London National Park City and National Park City Foundation
- Rochelle Shanthakumar, Programme Manager, London National Park City

The Committee also conducted a site visit organised by Parks for London on 17 July 2025 to Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park in Southwark, and Jubilee Gardens and Waterloo Millennium Green in Lambeth, which also included a representative of Walworth Garden. The Committee are very grateful to everyone who supported this.

Committee staff

- Richard Clarke, Senior Policy Adviser
- Anita Zivkow, Policy Officer
- Saleha Fazal, Committee Services Officer
- Thomas Hall, Committee Assistant
- Anthony Smyth, External Communications Officer

Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

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Parks: Under Pressure

September 2025

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