

Notes from meeting between Haringey Climate Forum and Haringey Council about the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy (PGSS). 3rd November 2022

Cllr Mike Hakata and Paul Ely attended from the Council.

The Council attendees used presentation slides (attached) to provide an overview of:

- The changing role of parks in a changing climate
- The Parks and Greenspaces Strategy
- How the Council's parks service is approaching different aspects of its operations in order to reduce and/or eliminate emissions and help to mitigate climate change impacts

Discussion followed and is summarised below.

1. Wildflower meadows/stopping weeding

Noted that the Council is seeking to progress this agenda.

Interdepartmental working very important to achieve this with a joined-up approach needed between Parks, Highways, Housing, Planning and Regen.

The PGSS includes an action to establish this group.

Feedback from attendees included:

- Waltham Forest have stopped weeding
- All Council staff should have training about biodiversity, particularly the Parks team and Highways staff
- Cllr Hakata informed that the Council was piloting training to develop carbon literacy amongst Council staff
- Much better communication would help as residents often are not aware of what the Council is doing
- Noted that external funding is often available for new projects but not to address existing issues.

2. Parks buildings and operations

Feedback included:

- Targets may not be ambitious enough
- How extensively are cargo bikes being used?
- Could cafes be encouraged/compelled to stop using plastic cups?
- The major events in Finsbury Park are very damaging environmentally particularly in respect of emissions from generators. What co-production is there around major events? There was a 2,300 strong petition against major events. There were major safety issues at last year's events. Where does the money go to from these events?

3. Trees

A number of attendees expressed concerns about trees and tree loss. These included:

- Retaining existing trees is a key issue as they are storing a considerable amount of carbon and if mature trees are lost this storage capacity cannot be replaced by new trees
- The approach taken by council insurers results in trees being removed or in unnecessary works. Haringey should join with Camden and Islington to lobby insurers and if necessary take them to court.

- Concerns about developer activity potentially resulting in tree loss at St Annes Hospital and Ivatt way
- The current action plan in the Tree and Woodland Plan is sketchy
- Would like to see a firm commitment to mapping and for data to be shared with the public
- The new Environment Bill contains a public duty to consult.
- There is no data being shared about why trees are being removed.
- There should be full information sharing on tree loss as a result of insurance claims.
- Are TPO records up to date?
- What action is the Council taking to monitor the impact of heat stress on trees?
- To what extent has installing permeable paving around trees been explored?
- Street trees are possibly most important as these benefit the environment closest to where people live
- Noted/acknowledged that the Council's targets for much greater tree planting need to be considered alongside other important local priorities for housing and regeneration

Actions

Paul E will set up a meeting specifically to talk more about the tree and woodland Plan. Cllr H informed that the website is currently being improved and when completed will offer better information about trees.

4. Paved front gardens

Concern raised about the biodiversity loss associated with this being done by residents and the lack of enforcement action.

It was suggested that Haringey People be used to inform residents that removing front walls and paving over can't be done without the permission of the Council.

5. Pocket Parks in the east of Haringey.

Concerns raised that pocket parks can become dumping grounds: depressing and uninviting.

6. Other points raised

- Joe baker can be emailed for details of the Community Carbon Fund. Grants of between £1-50,000 are available through this fund Joe.Baker@haringey.gov.uk
- Also funding available from the Waste reduction Fund from North London waste
- <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/news/nlwa-launches-fund-community-groups-committed-tackling-waste-prevention>
- Where is the Climate Action Plan for schools?
- Can details of the Parks community Engagement Officer be shared when the person is in post?

