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# Enabling Local Leadership of Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces

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Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods

# Cooperative Parks:

## Enabling Local Leadership for cohorts of Lambeth parks

### Introduction

Lambeth's Cooperative Parks Programme is one of the council's major cooperative transformation programmes that seeks to support local communities and residents take on increased management roles and responsibilities. It is a measure of our residents' commitment that we already have a host of community groups – our parks pioneers – leading the way, seeking community-led, independent management for their local park or open space and driving this ambitious programme forward. Each has embraced innovation and proposed to pioneer new models of service delivery.

The importance of our green spaces is widely recognised. However local government faces increasing financial challenges and we want to find ways to continue to protect our parks and open spaces, despite the proposed reduction in our parks budgets. Because of this public sector climate we will see a very different landscape for our parks and open spaces by 2018. This will be a landscape where there is less reliance on council funding and a focus on community leadership, with devolution of services to a number of successful local management models.

We believe our innovative pioneer park models have the best chance of success if managed on a cluster basis. By grouping parks together we think they can achieve greater financial security – with the ability to share resources and income generated. Through this model we also hope to protect the smaller spaces that have a lesser ability to generate funds.

### Background

The Commissioning team at Lambeth Council have been awarded a national fund from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) under the Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods initiative. The support provided by this fund is geared towards enabling the transformation of public services, bearing in mind the financial challenges ahead. The fund will support the development of new approaches for delivering services at a neighbourhood level, with a focus on local innovation, leadership, and engagement with residents and communities.

Given the specialised nature of this fund, we are commissioning **four individual project studies** that describe where we have growing ambitions for community-led management of parks, as well as developing alternative staff proposals, with a view to supporting our ability to protect our smaller green spaces that have little or no community involvement.

These four studies have a significant potential impact on a number of parks across Lambeth – in helping us to achieve the required financial savings for the parks budget, in developing new as well as increasing existing income streams, and in retaining the technical expertise, experience and

knowledge across the Lambeth parks service – all of which will help safeguard our green spaces and support the implementation of successful hub and spoke models across our parks.

## **What is enabling local leadership for cohorts of Lambeth parks about?**

This project will support the delivery of our cooperative parks programme by helping us to define new ways of working and implement new management structures for our parks and open spaces. By commissioning four project studies we will explore the feasibility of management models which look at clustering parks together rather than just looking at individual parks as separate entities. This clustering approach will explore their financial viability, how we can achieve greater value for money, including looking at opportunities to generate income through both new and existing revenue streams. We will develop robust plans for how to implement these new delivery models, which include a new staff cooperative model. We have a number of pioneering parks who have stepped up to the challenge – each with different assets, facilities and opportunities.

In addition we will support the development of a Lambeth Workers Cooperative – which will include working with the Lambeth Parks Delivery Team to develop a viable business plan for the Lambeth Workers Cooperative.

## **What do we want to achieve?**

1. An understanding of the viability of clustering the management of parks together, including:
  - Feasibility studies that confirm sharing resources across parks means they are more financially sustainable
  - Feasibility studies that demonstrate financial viability within the budget available for those parks
  - Business plans that set out a clear vision for our pioneer groups, demonstrating how parks will be funded in the future through new income streams
  - Clear plans that provide a step-by-step outline of what needs to happen for our pioneers to take on successful management of a cluster of parks
  - Robust and effective governance structures that span across a cluster of parks
2. A business plan that sets out how the Lambeth Workers Cooperative will feasibly operate, including its organisational structure and governance.

## **Project Details**

Four individual project studies will be commissioned. Tenders of up to £75,000 for all four projects will be accepted. Suppliers may bid for individual project studies, or for all four. Each individual project has a maximum allocated budget.

## 1. Larkhall Park

Larkhall Park has an active Friends group who are working towards independent community-led management of the park, and are recognised as one of our parks pioneers through the Cooperative Parks Programme. With potential reductions in the parks budget of up to 50% we need to look closely at how our parks are managed and funded in future, focusing on the resources and assets at our disposal and their ability to generate income. The Friends of Larkhall Park have bold and exciting aspirations to help mitigate these budget reductions and they have now reached a point where this work needs to be formalised. This project seeks to commission a business plan that sets out what the ambition and vision for Larkhall Park is. This should look at the costs associated with managing and maintaining Larkhall Park and describe how these costs will be met, bearing in mind the forthcoming reduction in budget. We know the assets in Larkhall Park have significant potential to be used differently and could provide an income stream to manage and maintain the park, and possibly other neighbouring parks, in the future. This project should include consideration of all income generation opportunities and determine the feasibility of using the park's assets in new ways. This work should also factor in the council's broader strategic asset review, which will explore the options for the development of the park's assets as well as its income sharing opportunities.

**Project aim:** Development of a business plan, which will describe the vision for Larkhall Park and outline how the park will be funded in future, including consideration of the council's strategic asset review and the potential development and income sharing opportunities.

**Maximum project cost:** £20,000

**Pioneer group:** Friends of Larkhall Park - <http://www.larkhallparkfriends.org.uk/>

### Work specification:

- Development of a business plan for community-led management of Larkhall Park, which provides a narrative for the vision for the park and reflects the aspirations of the Friends of Larkhall Park
- Consideration of the council's strategic asset review, including options for asset development and income sharing opportunities
- Working closely with the pioneer group, Lambeth officers (e.g. Planning), local ward councillors and external stakeholders to develop the business plan.
- Explore and identify alternative income streams, both new and existing (including non-asset based streams), that could support the management and maintenance of the park.
- Consideration of the proposal put together by the Friends of Larkhall Park to determine its feasibility; set within the context of the council's broader strategic asset review and options appraisal.
- Undertake a local needs analysis to determine level of demand for parks facilities.

- Recommend and feed in to the business plan a suitable governance model for the Friends of Larkhall Park that would meet the council's requirements under the cooperative parks programme and ensure the group are set up to manage income and public funds.
- Assessment of funding from external sources, e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 and other funding sources.
- Assessment of Lambeth's planning policy to ensure proposed income sharing and income generation opportunities are feasible.
- Assessment of what is required to manage and maintain Larkhall Park to include:
  - staffing requirements with roles and responsibilities
  - grounds equipment
  - utilities
  - grounds maintenance requirements
- The business plan should consider how resources and services can be shared to support financial sustainability and provide value for money, as well as identification of and engagement with other local stakeholders who may be able to provide resources.
- Detailed outline of the costs and expenditure associated with managing and maintaining Larkhall Park, with consideration of how these costs could be met, looking at possible income generation opportunities.
- Assessment of risks linked to proposals and community-led management.
- Financial modelling which sets out the financial viability of the management model within the available budget for the park, including the income that could be generated through these proposals. This should also consider the potential inclusion of other nearby parks into the model.
- The business case should take into account the priorities of the parks capital investment plan.
- Any community-led management model must also satisfy the council's formal approvals process which includes a public interest test. This project must therefore support the group to meet these assessment criteria.

## 2. Ruskin Park/Myatt's Field Park

Ruskin Park and Myatt's Field Park are two of our pioneer parks recognised through the Cooperative Park Programme. Both are historic parks with unique characteristics and heritage features, and were two of our 2014 Green Flag award winning parks. Myatt's Fields Park Project Group are working towards taking on independent management of Myatt's Fields Park in 2015. We believe the attributes and opportunities for each site, with their respective assets and well established Friends groups, lends itself to the exploration of joint management. We think there is a strong basis where complementary services and sharing of resources and income could improve their financial sustainability, and help to safeguard these parks services, in spite of the proposed 50% reduction in budget. We now need to test the feasibility of this idea and how parks assets and resources could be used to support a successful joint management arrangement.

**Project aim:** Exploring the viability of community-led joint management for two parks through a feasibility study, including assessment of income potential through use of park assets.

**Maximum project cost:** £20,000

**Pioneer groups:** Friends of Ruskin Park – <http://friendsruskinpark.org.uk/>  
Myatt's Field Park Project Group - <http://www.myattsfieldspark.info/>

### **Work specification:**

- Development of a feasibility study for community-led joint management of Ruskin Park, Myatt's Field Park and the potential to incorporate two other nearby parks.
- Working closely with the pioneer groups, Lambeth officers, local ward councillors and external stakeholders to develop the feasibility study.
- Myatt's Fields Park Project Group (MFPP) are working towards independent community-led management of the park in 2015 – this feasibility study will address the potential to broaden the offer, generating economies of scale by adding other parks into the local management model.
- A local needs analysis to determine level of demand for parks facilities and buildings.
- Assessment of income potential from park facilities and buildings, and an understanding of the required level of income to support community-led management within the budget available for these parks and the potential income generated.
- A detailed assessment of what is required to manage and maintain Ruskin and Myatt's Fields parks – in terms of practical requirements for service provision, and the financial costs associated with providing these services, this should include:
  - staffing requirements with roles and responsibilities
  - grounds equipment
  - utilities
  - grounds maintenance requirements



- This assessment must also find solutions on how resources can be shared to support financial sustainability and provide value for money, as well as identification of and engagement with other local stakeholders who may be able to provide resources that support service provision.
- Assessment of adding in the management and maintenance of other nearby parks where it make sense and is feasible to do so.
- Understanding of the current management structure of each Friends group to provide advice on the governance, business and legal structure required to implement joint community-led management across a cluster of parks. This should include a focus on how an overarching strategic board could work with the individual park groups, including what the delineation of responsibilities would be.
- An outline of the practical steps needed to establish community-led management across the cluster of parks.
- Financial modelling which sets out the financial viability of the cluster management model within the available budget for those parks, including the income that could be generated through assets and facilities.
- The study should take into account the parks capital investment plan and priority capital investment projects for Ruskin and Myatt's Fields that require match funding to be found in order for capital improvements to be delivered.
- An understanding of the local context in light of the work underway in relation to the Minet Hub, which is part of the council's Community Hubs programme and includes Myatt's Fields Park. The supplier should explore how this feasibility study can link with and complement the work that is being developed with the Minet Hub.
- In addition the MFPP are engaging consultancy support to develop their business plans, which will include a feasibility study with architectural plans for the depot area. The supplier will be expected to liaise with MFPP to ensure that the cluster management feasibility study supports and informs the business planning work that is in development.
- Any community-led management model must also satisfy the council's formal approvals process which includes a public interest test. This project must therefore support the cluster to meet these assessment criteria.

### 3. Hillside Gardens, Palace Road Nature Garden, and Agnes Riley Gardens

Hillside Gardens, Palace Road Nature Garden, and Agnes Riley Gardens are three separate sites. Over a number of years the Friends groups have contributed to the delivery of a number of improvements for the facilities in the parks and nature garden and have supported a range of activities that benefit the communities these parks serve. The Friends of Hillside Gardens and Palace Road Nature Garden are working towards independent community led management of these sites and are in the midst of developing their governance structure and business plan in support of these ambitions, including exploring options for income generation in light of the proposed budget reductions faced by the parks service. They are now in discussion with the Friends of Agnes Riley Gardens as to whether the three open spaces could benefit from working together to develop a local devolved management model. The emerging cluster now needs support to help them implement this devolved local management model successfully as part of the next phase of their journey.

**Project aim:** Development of a plan that outlines what needs to take place for the Friends of Hillside Gardens, Palace Road Nature Garden, and Agnes Riley Gardens to achieve an operational independent community-led management model for their respective parks – from theory to practical.

**Maximum project cost:** £15,000

**Pioneer group:** Friends of Hillside Gardens and Palace Road Nature Garden - <http://hillsidegardenspark.co.uk/>  
Friends of Agnes Riley Gardens

**Work specification:**

- Development of a plan for community-led management of Hillside Gardens Park, Palace Road Nature Garden, and Agnes Riley Gardens, with the potential to include other neighbouring parks.
- Working closely with the pioneer group, Lambeth officers, ward councillors and local schools to develop this plan, including attendance at any working groups that have been established.
- Support for the development of a joint vision that encapsulates the aspirations for all three parks, whilst allowing for individual park ambitions.
- Support for establishing a formal governance model that spans these parks, sets out a clear accountability structure that includes democratic representation, and allows for other green spaces to be added into the model in future.
- Support for the development of the business plan currently in progress, which will support and inform this project.



- Undertake an assessment of what is required to manage and maintain Hillside Gardens Park, Palace Road Nature Garden, and Agnes Riley Gardens – in terms of practical requirements for service provision and the financial costs associated with providing these services, this should include:
  - staffing requirements with roles and responsibilities
  - grounds equipment
  - utilities
  - grounds maintenance requirements
- The plan should take into account the parks capital investment plan and priority capital investment projects for these parks, considering where income potential could be generated through capital improvements to support the cluster’s financial sustainability.
- This assessment should also consider where resources and services can be shared with other organisations such as local schools and business to support financial sustainability and improve service delivery for this cluster of parks.
- The project should consider:
  - a detailed listing of the required activities to achieve community-led management, including activity leads and target dates
  - an outline of costs linked to the management and maintenance activities – both start up costs and ongoing revenue costs
  - a budget and cashflow forecast that fits within the budget available for the three parks, looking at income generated from park assets and facilities
  - expected challenges and assessment of risks
  - a detailed timeframe to ensure the cluster achieve their objectives, are able to meet the public interest test requirements, and can implement successful community-led management
- Support for any local consultation and stakeholder engagement linked to future service provision, as well as identifying requirements from the council, the community and other local stakeholders such as schools, in order to progress towards community-led management.
- Any community-led management model must also satisfy the council’s formal approvals process which includes a public interest test. This project must therefore support the cluster to meet these assessment criteria.

#### 4. Lambeth Workers Cooperative

The Lambeth Workers Cooperative (LWC) is made up of a collective of existing Lambeth Council Parks Officers. Together the parks team have over 100 years experience of managing parks in Lambeth and have built up incomparable knowledge on operational management of these parks and invaluable technical experience. The proposal for LWC was developed in response to the Cooperative Parks Programme and received the green light from the council's Cabinet in December 2013 to continue to explore and develop this proposal. The LWC represent an opportunity to have a cohesive, experienced parks team at the heart of the parks programme – providing technical advice, guidance and support to those parks pioneer groups establishing new models to take on management and delivery of parks services at a neighbourhood level. The LWC would also bridge the gap between those parks with no community involvement by providing services in these areas, as well as supporting our partnership parks and exploring new opportunities to develop these partnerships further. Going forward the LWC now need to explore the feasibility of a long term business model and develop their business plan.

**Project aim:** Development of a business plan that sets out how the Lambeth Workers Cooperative will operate, including a robust governance structure and financial plan

**Maximum project cost:** £20,000

**Groups involved:** Lambeth Parks Delivery staff and Veolia staff (council contractor)

**Work specification:**

- Review of the current organisational structure for the parks service – including an understanding of the technical skills, expertise and capacity of the service, and in relation to the core programmes of work taking place across the parks service.
- Provide legal advice or guidance linked to establishing a cooperative.
- Provide advice on policy development (e.g. equal opportunities, health and safety, volunteering, or safeguarding) linked to establishing a cooperative.
- Assess the feasibility of the LWC in particular this should be in reference to the following:
  - Assessment of the feasibility with a view to helping define the scope of services the LWC could carry out, including business development, direct operational services (e.g. grounds maintenance), and project management and procurement
  - Social enterprise model options including benefits of each model
  - Benchmarking of other similar staff co-operatives
  - Income generation or funding stream opportunities
  - Estimated business start up costs
  - Estimated ongoing running costs
  - Feasibility of LWC as a long term sustainable business model
  - Provide recommendations and a project plan with key milestones for progressing with LWC
  - Development of a 5 year business plan with outline cost estimates, including revenue projections, staffing, capital requirements, and management costs.

## Any other information?

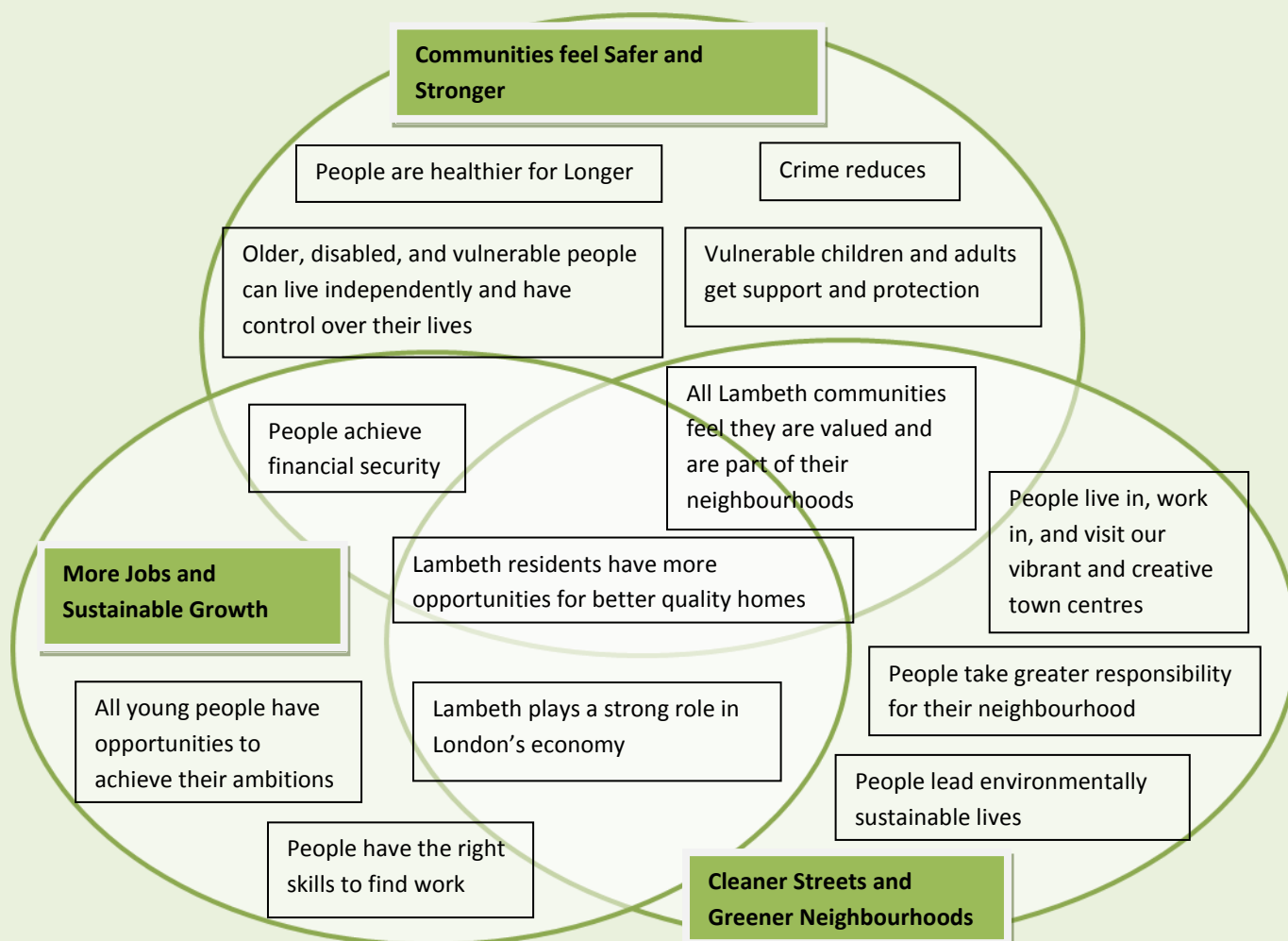
Our parks pioneers all share the following characteristics:

- are based in the London Borough of Lambeth and are working to provide or improve parks and open spaces for local people
- are working towards an independent community-led management model for their park or open space whereby the space or asset is available to, and managed on, behalf of the whole community
- aim to address the diverse needs of different park users in future service planning

The end goal that will determine the effectiveness of this project will be a number of pioneering community groups and enterprises who successfully make it through the council's formal approvals process, taking on devolved local management of clusters of parks and open spaces. Groups will have successfully met our assessment criteria and the public interest test requirements, which sit under the council's asset transfer policy framework.

A range of background information as listed below will be provided for suppliers to review prior to submitting tenders.

Suppliers should be aware of the council's priority outcomes as set out in Lambeth's Community Plan 2013-2016 and listed below.



## Any other criteria?

In carrying out the project studies as listed above, the supplier must also take the following factors into account;

- **Community services in parks:** alongside the required grounds and facilities maintenance, how will the quality and range of community services and activities already provided to the local community in those parks be maintained and/or extended?
- **Attracting business:** what are the opportunities and possibilities for income generation? This should look at opportunities from use of assets as well as other sources such as events and activities.
- **Capital cost:** how costly will the capital costs of any proposal be to implement? Is there potential for external funding to support the proposed capital requirement? Does it align with the parks and open spaces capital investment plan?
- **Revenue cost:** what are the operating costs for the management model across the clusters of parks? Who will take management responsibility? Will the cluster management model be able to operate within the available council budget and income generated?
- **Community needs and priorities:** to what extent do the parks management proposals under consideration address community needs and aspirations?

## Quotation and bidding process

Please read through this project brief and the request for quotation form carefully before submitting your tender documents. Tender opportunities will also be advertised on the Lambeth website.

You must ensure that your tender documents meet all the requirements as set out in the quotation form as well as fulfilling any other criteria requirements set out in this brief.

Details of who to send your tender documents to can be found on the request for quotation form.

## Draft Project Timeline

A draft outline timetable is indicated below and this will be agreed with the supplier following tender evaluation and appointment. It is expected that the projects will be delivered 15 weeks following appointment.

Key project study tasks	Indicative timeline to be confirmed (maximum 15 weeks duration)
Project briefing and confirmation of timeline. Providers meet with pioneer groups and Lambeth parks service and start to map out vision, aspirations and options for parks management and business models.	Weeks 1-2
Gathering and assessment of all relevant information,	Weeks 2-4

including information from finance, planning, the parks service, policy and community sources.	
Assessment of parks, including assets and facilities of each site (as well as building/facility conditions, adaptability and development potential where applicable). Assessment of existing income streams. Assessment of governance structures of groups and LWC.	Weeks 2-4
Undertake local needs analyses, benchmarking and market testing	Weeks 2-4
Providers meet with external stakeholders and partners relevant to each project, to further define pioneer/stakeholder/parks service aspirations in developing each project, informed by information review.	Weeks 4-6
Generate initial proposals for community-led park management, development of business plans and feasibility studies. Exploring feasibility of project proposals including the best means of setting up, managing and enhancing cross-parks management structures and a workers cooperative model.	Weeks 6-8
Continued development of studies and plans following regular engagement with pioneers and LWC. Work up financial modelling for budget and income projections.	Weeks 8-10
Produce feasibility studies, plans and business plans including financial modelling	Week 10-12
Initial findings presented to client and pioneer group	Week 13
Finalisation of reports following client/pioneer group feedback	Week 14
Final reports presented and submitted to client/pioneer group	Week 15

## Fees

The schedule of payments for the project studies will be confirmed following appointment of the successful supplier/s. It is anticipated that payment for each project will be provided in 3 stages as below.

Activity	Payment Schedule
Project inception	Payment 1
Interim reports	Payment 2
Completion of reports	Payment 3

## Background Documents:

- Cooperative Parks Cabinet report - December 2013
- Cooperative Parks Information Booklet - July 2013
- Culture 2020 consultation booklet
- Cooperative Parks Programme Plan
- Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces Capital Investment Plan
- Lambeth Council Community Plan 2013-2016
- Heritage Lottery Fund (July 2014) The State of the UK's Public Parks