



Report to Scrutiny

Item Number:

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information

No

Subject of Report:	Neighbourhoods Outcome Review
Meeting:	Scrutiny Review Panel 2 – 2019/2020: Active Citizenship
Service Report Author:	Jackie Fisk, Senior Change and Transformation Officer, fiskj@ealing.gov.uk , 0208 825 6853
Scrutiny Officer:	Harjeet Bains, Scrutiny Review Officer, bainsh@ealing.gov.uk , 0208 825 7120
Cabinet Responsibility:	Cllr. Julian Bell, Leader
Director Responsibility:	Gillian Marston, Director of Environment, marstong@ealing.gov.uk , 0208 825 8576
Brief:	To consider how the desired shift under Future Ealing towards <u>enabling</u> residents is developing, its impact on active citizenship and culture change within the council
Recommendations:	<p>The Panel is invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider and comment on the developing approach to Neighbourhoods outlined in this report, including the implications for active citizenship• Make suggestions for further development where necessary

Neighbourhoods Outcome Review - Active Citizenship

1. SUMMARY

The report in December 2018 to the Future Ealing Scrutiny Panel outlined the rationale and findings of the Active Citizen pilot work and explained how this informed the programme of Outcome Reviews undertaken by the council last autumn. Whilst this report does not repeat the definitions, exploration of the meaning of active citizenship and detail set out in [that report](#), it updates Members on developments since then. It is also set in the context of Cabinet's decision earlier this year to cease funding and officer support for Ealing's Ward Forums at the end of March 2020.

This report includes an update at section 3 on support and promotion of volunteering, and section 4 on how active citizenship continues to be promoted in Ealing's parks and green spaces. It recognises how they play a vital role in supporting community engagement and participation in a range of activities and help to reduce isolation, improve mental health and increase physical activity.

However, the key focus of this report is on the evolving work to develop a strategic approach to Neighbourhoods which will lead to long-term transformation at a community level and across the council. It aims to enable citizens to come together to create stronger communities and, with each other, to lead and shape their local neighbourhoods and be more independent. This will involve the council shifting to an enabling role, co-designing more localised services and targeting limited resources where they can have the most impact as well as working with residents to increase local involvement.

The **early implementation phase** of the work involves delivery of the changes to libraries and Children's Centres, the public consultation for which has recently closed and the results analysed. Cabinet will shortly consider reports on the consultations and make decisions on the models and plans for implementation. In terms of libraries, the key strategic shift in the strategy involves the opportunity for community managed libraries in seven locations across the borough. This will provide the opportunity for communities to get involved as active citizens in the running of community managed libraries in their locality as part of a wider community and neighbourhood offer from the library sites.

The **longer-term** work addresses fundamental questions about the radical changes the council needs to make if it is to seek a new role and relationship with residents, given changing public expectations, shrinking resources and rising demand. During 2019, the work is focussed on the contrasting neighbourhoods of Northolt and Hanwell. It aims to co-design new approaches with residents including active citizenship and exploring how residents might wish to engage in deliberative decision-making and democratic input.

Work undertaken so far includes cross-council involvement in developing the approach, and ethnographic research in the two neighbourhoods, involving residents, local community groups and businesses and ward councillors. The findings from the research, added to other insight of the neighbourhoods, is informing suggestions for areas where prototyping activity can be trialled on the ground. It has also provided prompts to test out new approaches to local involvement in decision-making. Whilst the

prototyping and consideration of approaches to deliberative decision making remain at an early stage, the findings from this next phase work will inform the strategic approach for the council in supporting residents to lead change in their neighbourhoods and be active in their communities.

2. National Context

The traditional paternalistic mode of operating is no longer sustainable for councils, with a core challenge being how to shift a council culture of creating unnecessary dependency in areas where solutions might be better developed at a community level. Recent research – including work undertaken by [NLGN](#) - has explored how the relationship between councils and their communities needs to shift from a transactional one to a more collaborative approach. There can be a lack of understanding of the balance of council spend on mainstream services that the majority of people use versus targeted support for the vulnerable. To change this, councils are looking to build different types of conversations with residents so that there is a shared understanding of the challenges facing neighbourhoods and the roles of both the council and community in addressing them.

Some of the practical routes to creating a shift in the relationship between councils and communities include:

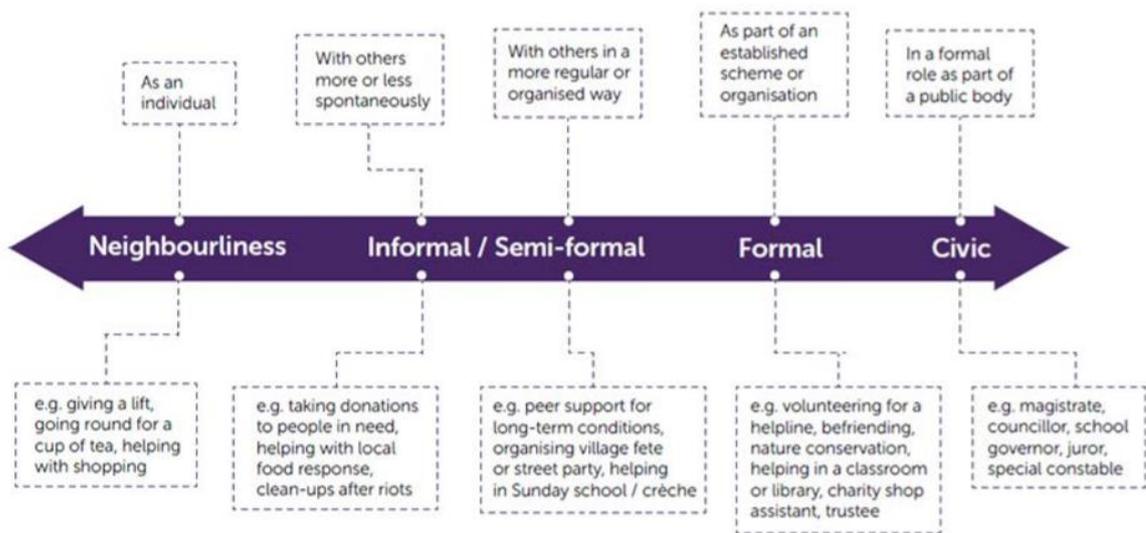
- [Wigan Council](#) has recalibrated its relationship with residents through ‘The Deal’. This wholesale change involves both the council and residents committing to system-wide goals, in addition to separate Deals in areas such as social care and health and wellness. The Deal sets out a new power relationship between the council and residents and is accompanied by initiatives that provide communities with a greater sense of ownership. This includes a Community Investment Fund, which groups and projects in the area can apply for to work towards long-term goals and ambitions.
- New ways of working within councils e.g. through recruitment processes that put more emphasis on values than specific skills or experiences, staff development in asset-based techniques, co-location to promote collaboration. For example, [The London Borough of Redbridge](#) plans to work with local people to shape and co-design six Community Hubs across the borough – integrated facilities to be designed to enhance and improve the quality of services for local people. A key part of this work is a significant emphasis on engagement and co-production to ensure that the final Hubs provide the opportunities and services that the local community wants, needs and ‘owns.’
- Participatory projects such as Barking and Dagenham’s [Every One Every Day project](#). This is a neighbourhood-led initiative, which aims to create hundreds of new projects and businesses through the sharing of resources, places and ideas within the community. The £6.4m initiative will work with 25,000 residents across the borough to improve a wide range of outcomes and develop community relationships.
- Different approaches to involving residents in decision making, such as [Deliberative decision-making](#) which gives the public a greater say in

decisions that affect communities.

In terms of volunteering, the recent national report NCVO, Time Well Spent – A National Survey on the Volunteer Experience highlights the complex and dynamic nature of participation which strongly suggests that volunteering is shaped by a multitude of factors. Whilst there is no single lever that will result in more and better involvement, the report identifies several areas for organisations to think about if they want to support people in having a quality volunteer experience.

3. Volunteering – overview

As highlighted in the December 2018 report to the earlier Scrutiny Panel, active citizenship and volunteering span a wide spectrum – illustrated below:



Adapted from: Nesta – People Helping People: the future of public services

Many residents and businesses across the borough are actively involved in volunteering and play an invaluable role in the quality of life in Ealing. In terms of the role which the council plays in facilitating and nurturing such volunteering and social action, this includes:

- **Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector:**

Ealing CVS was awarded council/CCG funding for the period from April 2019 to March 2023 in two specific areas; Support for Volunteering and Social Action and Voluntary Sector Development and Capacity Building. The Volunteering and Social Action service includes a workplan demonstrating that ECVS is working with the council, CCG, local VCS groups, local housing providers and corporate bodies in all areas of local volunteering. The plan includes; specific training opportunities, supporting residents into volunteering including increasing volunteering by BMER residents, assist residents with long-term conditions into volunteering and supporting all disadvantaged groups to get involved in volunteering and social action to improve their economic, mental and social wellbeing. The service also encourages more young people (14-24) to volunteer

and get involved in local social action projects which could include crowdfunding projects.

- **Promoting volunteering:** Volunteering is promoted in many ways across the council, including a recent campaign as part of national Volunteers' Week, 1-7 June. 13 community groups/ organisations showcased their work and promoted their volunteering opportunities for council staff to get involved with. During the week, a total of 40 staff members were recruited to various roles with these local organisations. The www.dosomethinggood.org.uk website hosts a volunteer directory for both community-led projects and council service volunteering opportunities as well as a funding portal for community focused funding.

-**Recognising and valuing the achievements of volunteers;** For example, the council runs annual ROAR Awards to recognise residents who have gone above and beyond with volunteering in their community.

- **Recognising and supporting the important role of volunteers and active citizens in our parks and green spaces** (see section 4).

4. Active Citizens – in parks and green spaces

Parks make a significant contribution to the health of a local area, both environmentally and for the people who live, work by and use the parks.

Our parks play a vital role in the Active Citizen's strategy, supporting community engagement and participation in a range of activities and helping to reduce isolation, improve mental health and increase physical activity.

Active Citizens activities include food growing, community events, wildlife monitoring and habitat improvements, volunteer gardening and maintenance, litter picking, arts activities, outdoor education and forest school. It is expected that an increasingly empowered community and devolving management will mean reduced maintenance costs while aiming to maintain quality.

Litter-picking

A substantial proportion of site budget is allocated to rubbish collection, so community involvement can make a major impact on a site's day to day running costs.

We have used a range of innovative approaches to engage with communities, organisations and individuals to initiate litter-picking activities in parks and open spaces.

- A. Better Points 'Love Parks' Programme
- B. Plogolution
- C. 2 Minute Litter Pick boards with pickers
- D. One off events and partnership working: Ranger-led walks; groups and organisations leading litter-picks
- E. Rangers giving out and individuals requesting litter pickers
- F. Social media and comms. (Great British Spring Clean, Council, Do Something Good/Bubble, Facebook neighbourhood groups, LAGER Can) to promote and campaign

A. Better Points

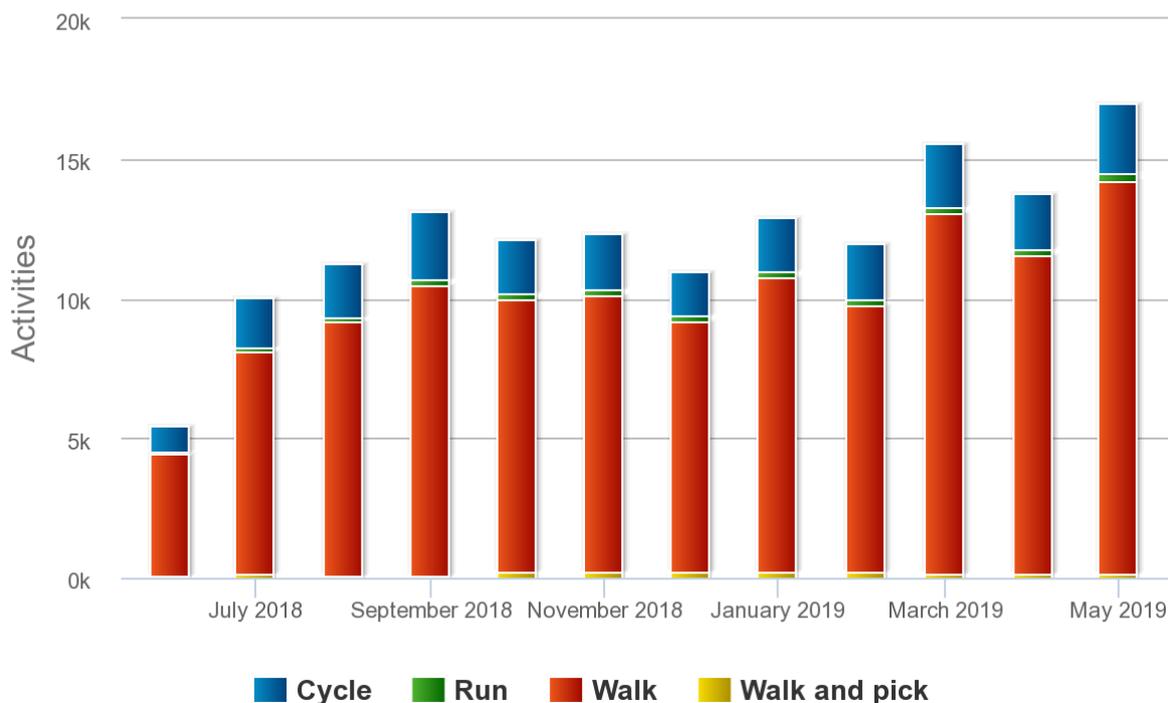
BetterPoints is a free app. that residents can download and join the *Love Your Park* rewards programme. The programme rewards residents of Ealing for getting out and about and being pro-active in Ealing's parks. It will either automatically log walk, run or cycle activity based on movement or you can manually select any of these activities plus a 'walk and pick' activity. You can also scan in a QR code on bins in 30 of our parks to Geo-tag and log your activity.

Participants can exchange BetterPoints they have earned to reward themselves with vouchers for a whole host of high street retailers, or donate them to a variety of charities, both local and national.

The Love Your Parks programme started in June 2018 and was initially intended to run for a year, but has been extended to September 2019 to establish a more detailed picture of participation trends.

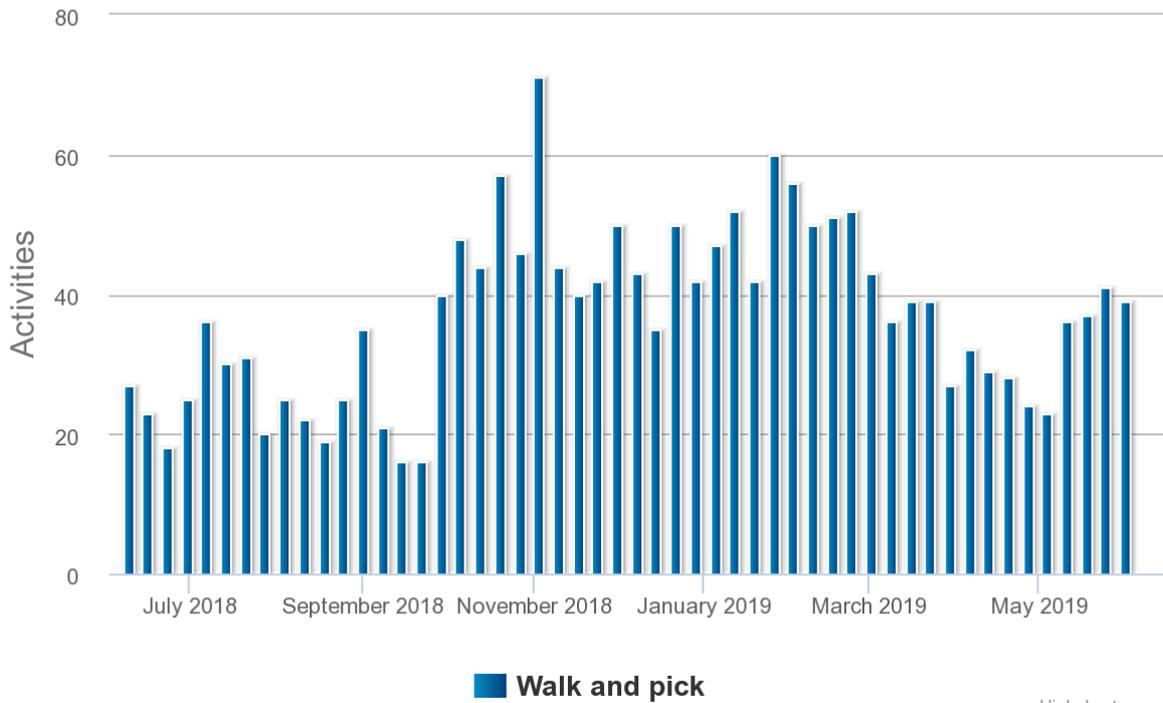
There are currently 776 users, 145 of whom have checked the Walk and Pick activity. In total there have been just under 2000 (1937) individual walk and picks over the last year. The level of total activity participation has grown since inception, with downward trends in December and April 19, which may be attributed to holiday periods.

Number of Completed Activities



From June 18 - Feb 19, Better Points ran monthly prize draws to encourage new and incentivise existing users. When we review the walk and pick activity separately, there is some, but no direct correlation between the prize draw period and increased activity, so there is no clear evidence that prizes are a key incentive to users.

Number of Completed Activities



Highcharts.com

User Join Programme



Highcharts.com

The participation in walk and picks is under-recorded as it requires the user to manually select this activity in the app, whereas other activities of walk, run and cycle are picked up automatically. Users may be forgetting or neglecting to log their walk and pick activity specifically.

Nonetheless, there has been a recent increase in both users and walk and pick activities. We expect that this may be due to recent promotion where Better Points has added local charities to the app. who can be recipients of user points donations.

For example, Ealing Mencap have recently been added as a charity on Better Points. This has been promoted through Better Points, the Council, rangers and Ealing Mencap and people who know and care about this local charity have taken up picking activity directly to benefit them. We are continuing to promote this symbiotic relationship by holding a litter pick event led by Ealing Mencap on 22 June and inviting the public to join them and earn double Better Points at this event. We are doing the same for Ealing Wildlife Group and Plogolution and their events.

This increase in activity linked to promotion of local charities supports anecdotal evidence that people engage with litter picking out of altruistic and not monetary incentives.

We will continue to monitor usage and will see if user surveys at litter pick events can garner more evidence for reasons behind participation in litter-picking and use this evidence to put our weight behind the most successful initiatives.

B. Plogolution

Plogolution is an organisation that was set up to help support and promote active and engaged communities that are dedicated to protecting the environment, getting rubbish off our streets, parks, waterways and raising endorphin levels at the same time! Plogolution have been commissioned to deliver 9 Plogs (run/walk and rubbish pick up) events around Ealing in 2019.

So far we have held 3 plogs: January in Northala (60 participants); Brent Lodge Park (25 participants); Pitzhanger Park (22 participants), with plenty of rubbish collected at each event. This is a total of 214 hours of picking by 107 people.

The number of runners was highest at Northala, which may be due to this being a Parkrun venue, so the Plog was cross-promoted to this group. We can capitalise on this by informing key park user groups of Plog events, for example Ealing Eagles in Walpole Park and junior Parkrun in Acton Park. However, having their buy-in on the day does not guarantee ongoing litter-picking activity.

We used these events to speak to participants and promote our other initiatives, Better Points and 2 Minute Litter Pick and to garner interest for self-led walk and picks and future participation. There was very positive feedback at events and interest in future self-led and group participation.

C. 2 Minute Litter Pick boards

We have installed 2 Minute litter Pick Boards into 30 parks associated with the Better Points Love Your Parks programme. The boards are stocked with pickers and after receiving feedback on social media that there were no bags provided (we preferred that users bring their own bags), we are now stocking with a few compostable bags at a

time. There are social media prompts on the board to encourage users to share their activity across different platforms.

The feedback on social media has been mixed as often we hear about when a board has no picker and bags and not about the positive everyday use. However, anecdotal evidence from Pitzhanger Park and Walpole Park café staff has noted that the picker in the board is used very regularly, especially by dog walkers and Pitzhanger staff requested another board at the other end of the park, which we are installing.

The Park Rangers are responsible for re-stocking the boards, although they generally do not manage to do so more than once a week. We have been monitoring where pickers are going missing with higher and quicker frequency and where theft is deemed problematic we are moving to another site or location. We are also adding notices to the boards stating that if there are no pickers, to contact ranger/customer services so we can replenish and/or give an interested individual their own picker.



D. One off and repeat events and partnership working

We have held a number of litter-picking events during 2019, often in partnership with other organisations and groups, including Greenwayers; Canal Rivers Trust, Thames 21, LAGER Can, Ealing Mencap, Southall Transition, Southall Alliance, corporate volunteers, Good Gym, Scouts, Friends of Horsenden Hill. Some of these groups are now programming regular litter-picking into their activities or corporate social responsibility actions.

- **More than 480 participants (including plogging and individual self-led picks) generating more than 2,750 hours of litter picking in 2019**

E. Rangers giving out and individuals requesting litter pickers

Rangers have face-to-face, regular contact with park users and we have used this knowledge and experience to target regular park users (e.g. dog walkers) to litter pick and giving pickers to people who have shown interest and commitment. We have used Council, partners (e.g. South West London Environmental Network, LAGER Can Litter Action Group for Ealing Residents – Facebook group) and social media comms. to promote self-led litter picking (and volunteering) and encouraging people to become litter Community Champions, taking care of their own patch and encouraging others to do so.

To date we have given out 40 individual pickers, which we approximate to around 1,500 hours of picking from Jan – June 2019 (averaged at 30 mins, 3 times a week). These self-led picks are garnering a steady and substantial number of volunteering hours by these individuals. This is undoubtedly an avenue we will continue to pursue contributing to successful litter reduction and positive community action.

F. Social media, promotion and communications

We have used both national awareness campaigns and local communications to raise awareness and increase participation in litter-action activities and events and volunteering.

We link to national campaigns such as The Great British Spring Clean, National Rivers Week and Volunteers Week to cross-promote clean up events and volunteering.

Events and activities are promoted through the Council's and Ranger's social media, Ealing News Extra and comms. mailing lists, Do Something Good website and Facebook, Facebook neighbourhood and partner organisation groups' Facebook and Twitter e.g. Southall Community Alliance and LAGER Can.

LAGER Can ran a borough-wide poster competition for under 16s to enter with the aim of encouraging behaviour change. The posters are being made up into signs and posters to install in parks across the borough. We are also working with LAGER Can to get the message out there that local people can affect change, by getting stickers up (which individuals can put on the bags of litter they collect) and bags made – highlighting the message that local people picked this litter.

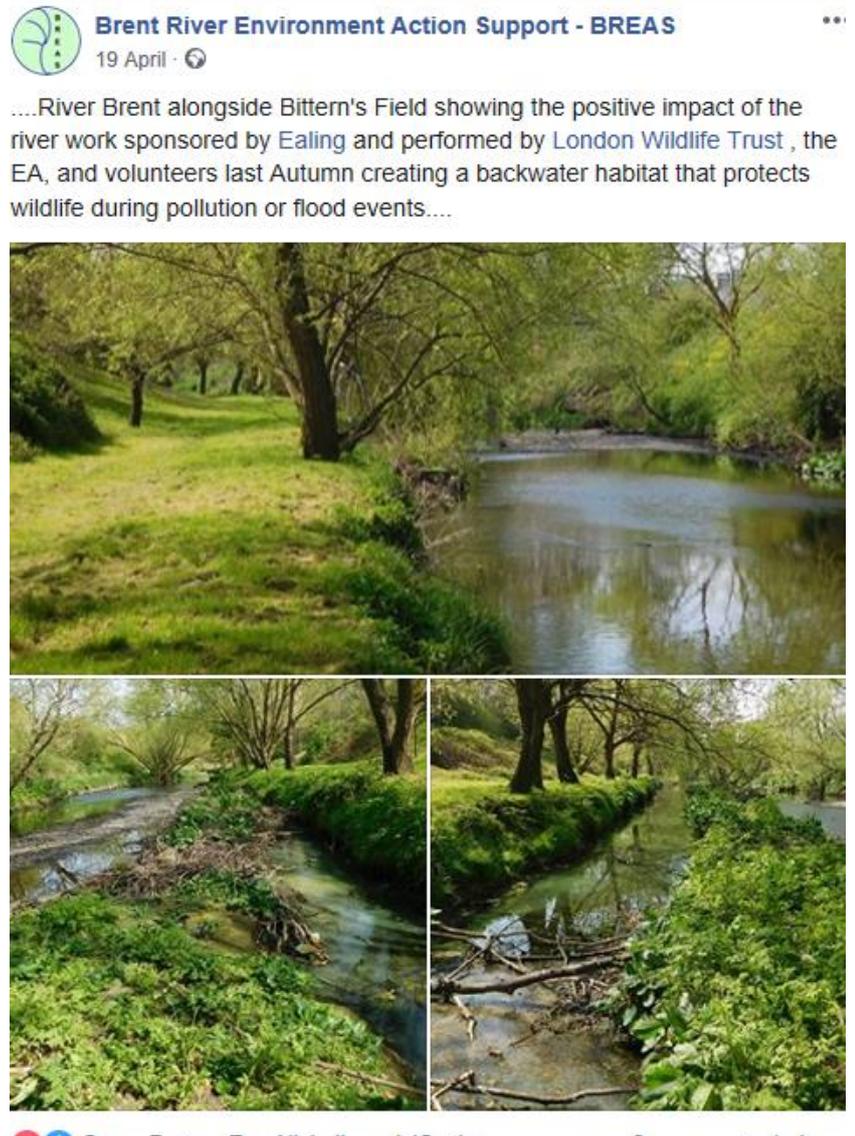
Volunteering in Parks

The Parks Team already have a good record of volunteering, particularly at sites where there has been dedicated staff for example Walpole Park and Manager where there is approx 5,000 hours of horticultural and wildlife volunteering per year and Horsenden Hill, where there is strong, motivated Friends Group producing around 3,000 hours of volunteering per year.

We do not have a previous year's baseline for comparison, however we are now recording participation numbers and hours. In 2019, we have recorded around 10,000 hours of volunteering from over 950 individuals.

We are building on this by expanding the number and type of opportunities for volunteering, combined with better marketing and support for community and partner-led volunteering projects. A project that has successfully epitomised this ideal is the Greenwayers, a community-led group that has received training from Thames 21 to safely lead their own river clean up events. We support them by providing promotional and logistical support and waste collections following events.

We are also investing in 4 containers to act as satellite bases and tool storage for groups such as the Greenwayers. These bases will ensure that organisations and groups, including corporate volunteer and community payback can easily access the resources they need to run their own events, from litter picking, gardening to conservation and habitat creation.



Devolving Parks and Open Spaces Management

We are working with the organisations SWLEN and Shared Assets to progress the creation of new Friends groups and supporting existing groups to take on elements of devolved management, including the Blondin Consortium and Friends of Horsenden Hill.

Horsenden Hill continues to develop and attract new artisan craftsmen (creating the Horsenden Crafts Collective), Forest School provision, workshops, corporate volunteers and partners to generate income and become a fully self-sustaining group. They are also working with Shared Assets to develop their governance structure and develop a sound business plan in order to take on the renovation of the old ranger base.

We are working with the organisation Shared Assets in the process of developing Friends Group toolkit and guidance, which will be uploaded to Ealing's Do Something Good page by end of June to support the process to becoming a Friends group and the devolved management process.

4. Developing an approach to Neighbourhoods in Ealing

Building on the Active Citizen work in 2018, the Neighbourhoods Outcome Review has started working closely with two neighbourhoods (Northolt and Hanwell) to develop new ways of working with citizens at a local level, to determine how and what might need to change, and to prototype some new ways of working. Concurrently, it is building understanding within the council of what the changes might mean for the council culture and working practices. The draft vision for Neighbourhoods, which will continue to iterate in collaboration with residents, is 'Strong and involved communities, shaped by citizens.'

An 8 week ethnographic research exercise was undertaken in the two neighbourhoods during March and April 2019, the findings from which are attached as a background paper. In distilling some themes from the findings, and in discussion with relevant ward members, areas for initial prototyping are being developed and will be co-designed with residents. These include neighbourhood level activities, as well as starting to explore with elected Members the options on approaches to local decision-making, how these could work in Ealing and the implications for Members' Community Leadership role.

5. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The approach to Neighbourhoods, including implications for active citizenship, remain at a developmental stage and legal implications will be considered as the policy direction crystallises, including legal implications for any prototyping activity.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. Other Implications

There are no other implications at this stage.

8. Background Papers

Attached: Neighbourhoods Research, Year Here report, June 2019

[NLGN, The Community Paradigm – Why Public Services need radical change and how it can be achieved](#)

[NCVO, Time Well Spent – A National Survey on the Volunteer Experience, January 2019](#)

[Nesta, Evidence vs Democracy – how ‘mini-publics’ can traverse the gap between citizens, experts, and evidence, January 2019](#)

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Department	Date Sent to Consultee	Date Response Received from Consultee	Comments Appear in Report Para:
Internal				
Gillian Marston	Director of Environment	11.06.19	12.06.19	
Carole Stewart	Assistant Director, Libraries	11.06.19	-	
Kieran Read	Director, Strategy & Engagement	11.06.19	-	
Chris Bunting	Assistant Director, Leisure	11.06.19	12.06.19	Section 4
Helen Harris	Director of Legal and Democratic Services	19.06.19	25.06.19	
Ross Brown	Chief Finance Officer	19.06.19	19.06.19	
Stephen Meah-Sims	Head of Strategy and Performance	25.06.19	25.06.19	Section 3
Cllr. Julian Bell	Leader	26.06.19		

Report History

Decision Type: For Information	Urgency item? No		
Authorised by Cabinet Member:	Date Report Drafted:	Report Deadline:	Date Report Sent:
XX.XX.19	11.06.19	08.07.19	08.07.19
Report No.:	Report Author and Contact for Queries:		
	Jackie Fisk, Senior Change and Transformation Officer, fiskj@ealing.gov.uk , 0208 825 6853		