
welcome

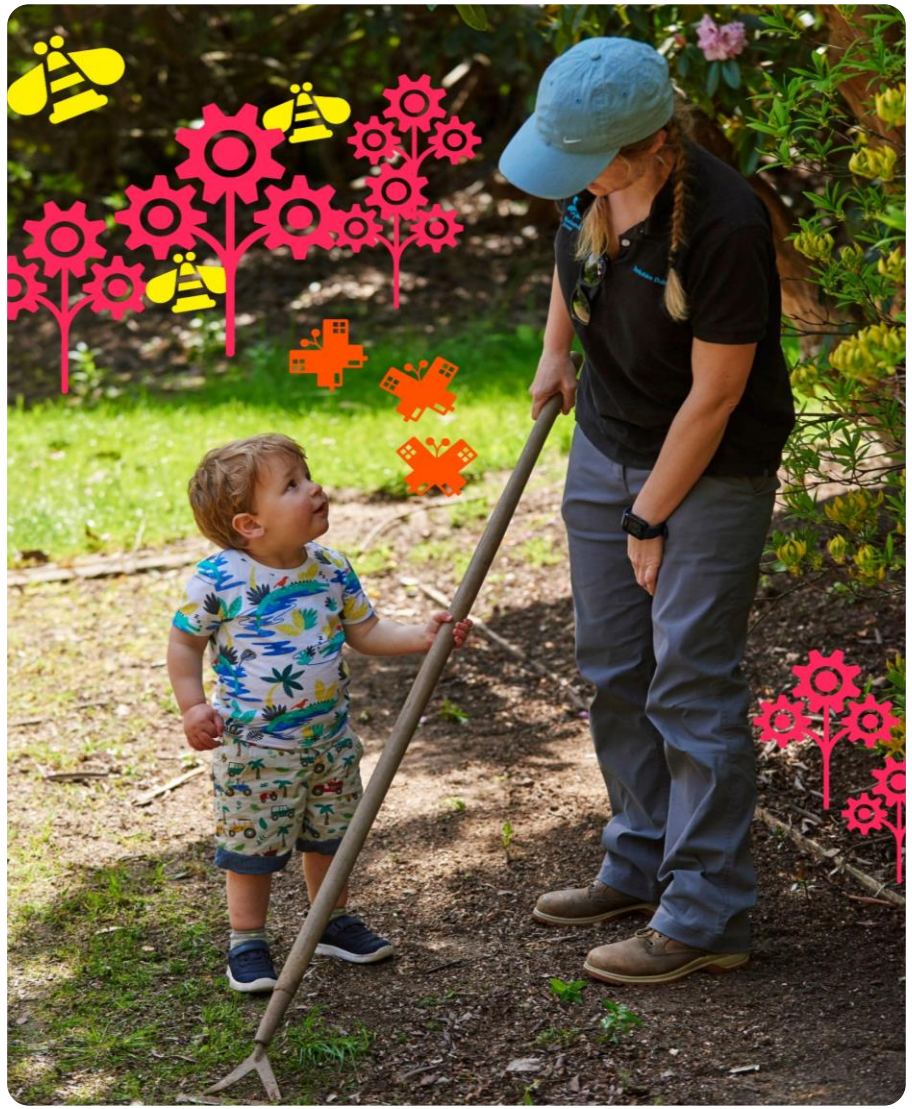
What makes a brilliant urban green space?

Matilda Cornwall-Jones, Project Manager

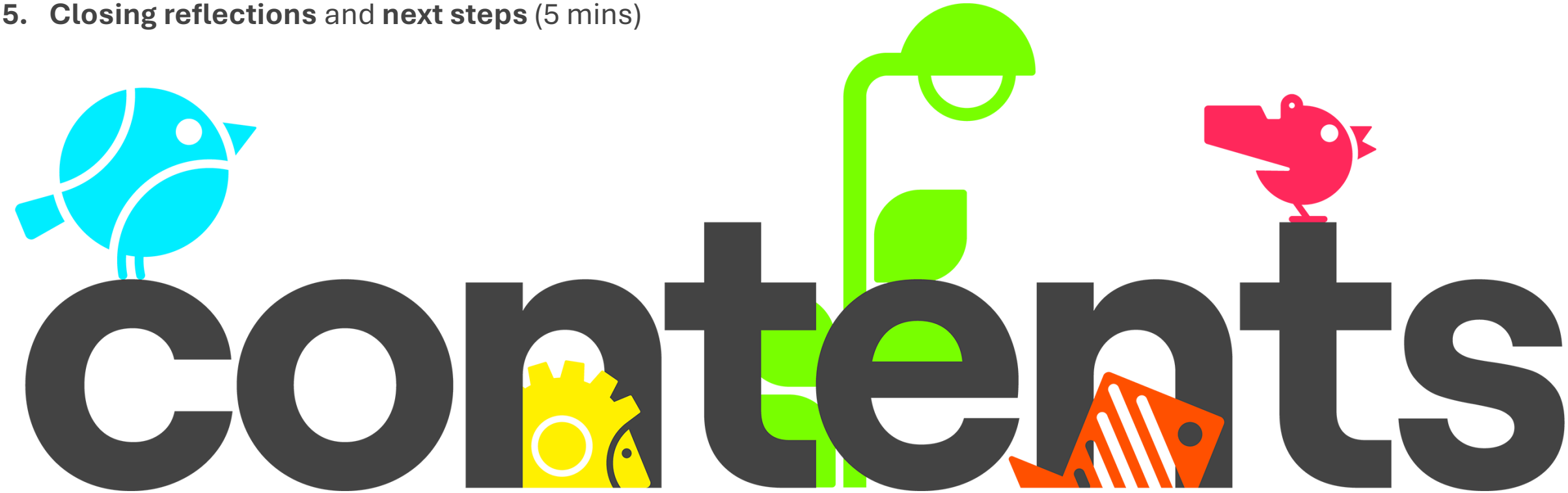
Nature Towns and Cities: **What makes a brilliant urban green space?**

The aim today is to:

- Inspire a shared vision of brilliant, equitable, accessible green space
- Show what impact it has on people and places
- Explore how to deliver and sustain it in real-world contexts



1. **Welcome** (5 mins)
2. **Why brilliant green space matters now – Phil Askew,** Director of Landscape & Placemaking at Peabody (10 mins)
3. **Case Studies** (30 mins)
    1. **Johanna Gibbons,** founding Partner of J&L Gibbons
    2. **Maddy Gunn,** Greening the Public Realm Programme Manager at Islington Council
    3. **Susannah Walker,** founder of Make Space for Girls and In Her Place
4. **Panel discussion** – What brilliant green space does and how to deliver it (30 mins)
5. **Closing reflections** and **next steps** (5 mins)



Housekeeping

- Please use the Q&A tab to ask questions or start a discussion topic
- If you need any support throughout the session please email info@naturetownsandcities.org.uk

Why brilliant greenspace matters now

People
Place
Planet

Climate change
Biodiversity loss
People

Multifunctional
Value

Phil Askew

Peabody

Olympic Park

Olympic Park

Olympic Park

Olympic Park

South Thamesmead

South Thamesmead

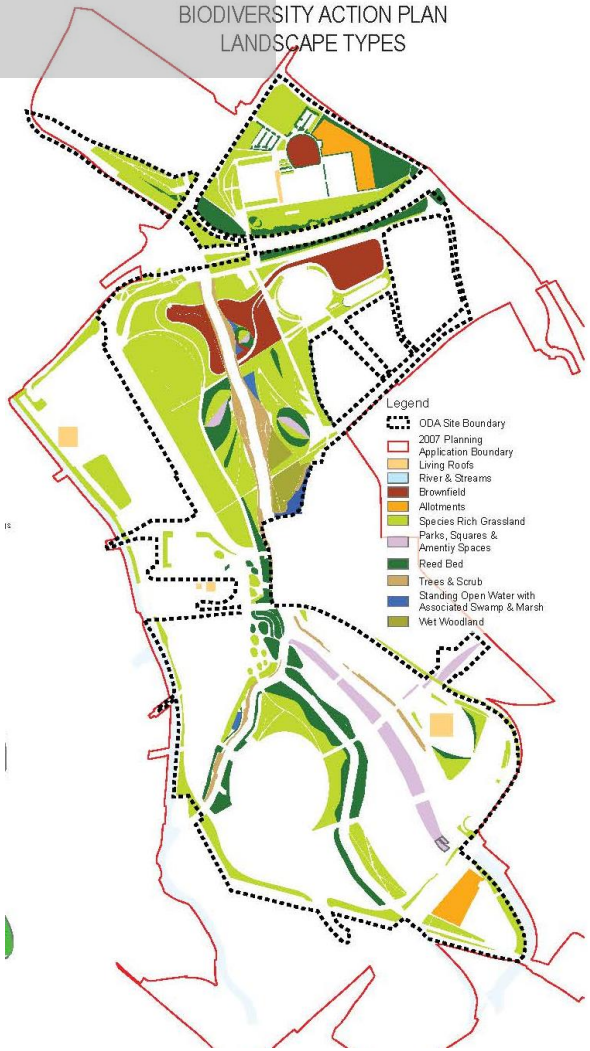

South
Thamesmead

South Thamesmead

The importance of care

OLYMPIC PARK TRANSFORMATION
LANDSCAPE TYPES

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN
LANDSCAPE TYPES



Wildlife boom in Olympic Park as dozens of new species identified

The discoveries were made during a bioblitz—an intensive one-day biological survey—and detailed in the park's new Biodiversity Action Plan

GREEN HAIRSTREAK BUTTERFLY
TOM BELLAMY

Future Gardeners / Thamesmead

Building community trust

Co-Design Thamesmead


Tump 53
Thamesmead


Working in
partnership

Community + Thames 21 Thamesmead

Community + Thames 21 Thamesmead

Community + Thames 21 Thamesmead

Community + Peabody

Community + Peabody

Our approach

The opportunities

- Responding to the climate emergency
- Enhancing habitat and biodiveristy
- Joining together to improve the landscape

Our green infrastructure strategy - themes

The big blue
Realising the full potential of Thamesmead's lakes and canals

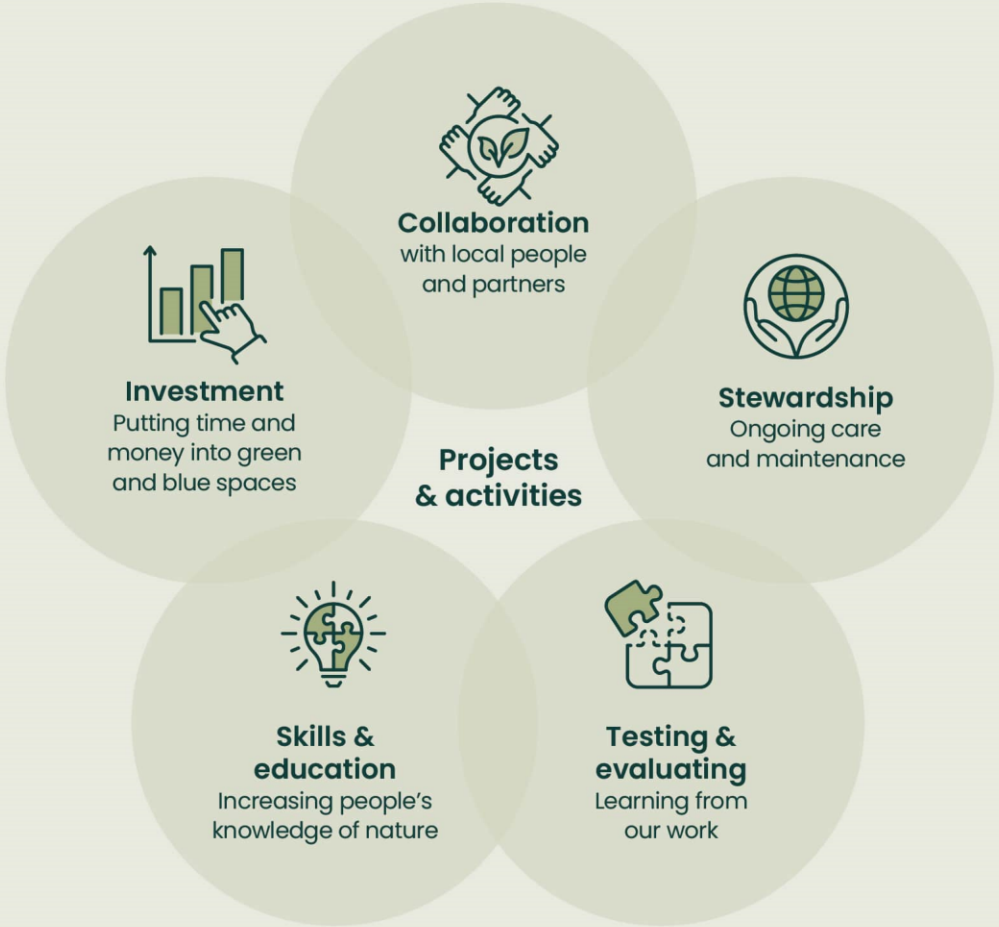
Wilder Thamesmead
Maintaining and creating habitats for wildlife

A productive landscape
Helping connect and feed people

Active Thamesmead
Improving and activating open spaces so people want to spend more time outdoors

Connected Thamesmead
Prioritising active travel and public transport

Our approach



Thank you

phil.askew@peabody.org.uk

Peabody

DESIGN-LED APPROACHES TO GREEN SPACE CREATION

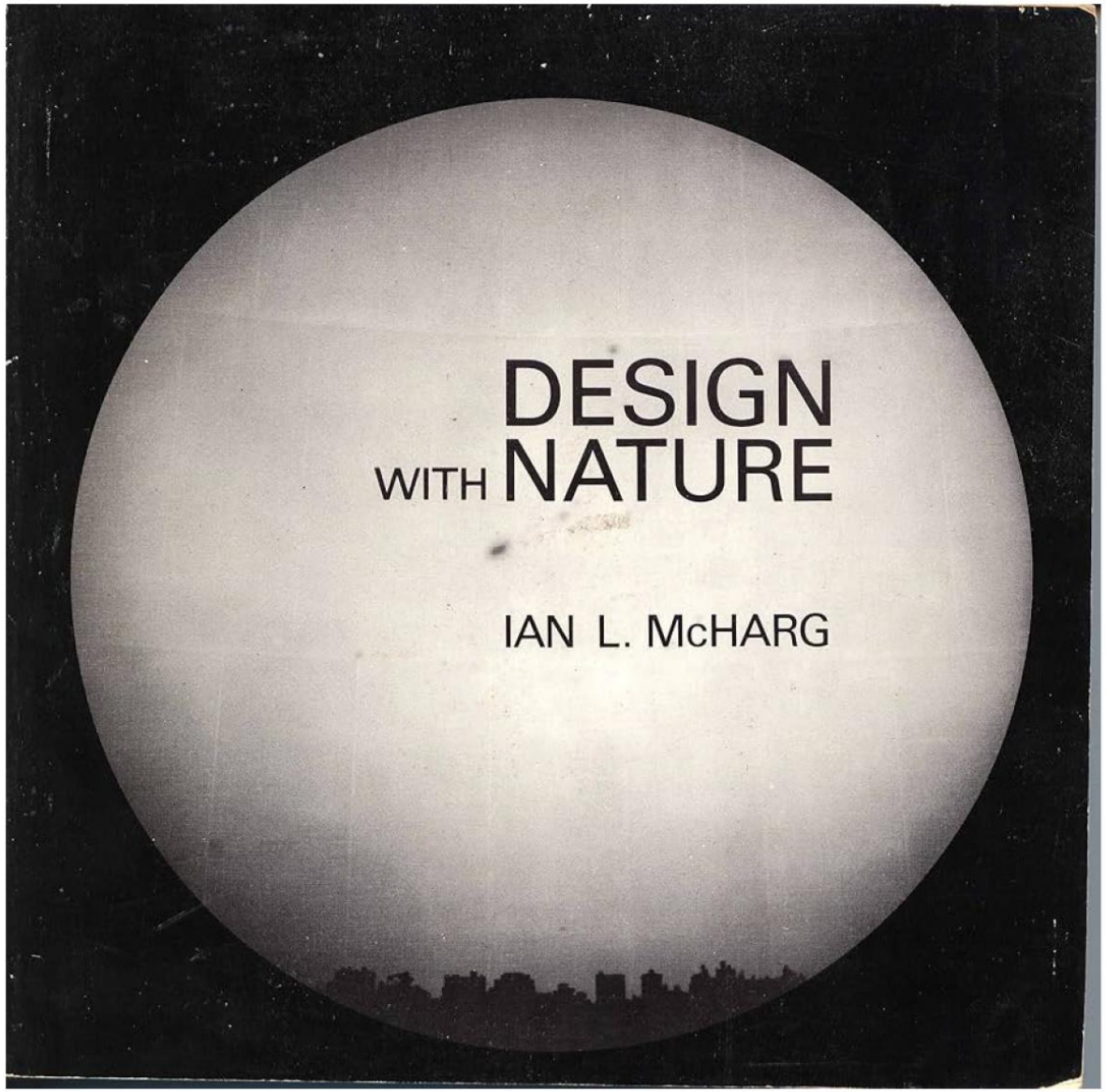
JOHANNA GIBBONS RDI | J&L GIBBONS

London - The Thames catchment

National Trust - Nature Towns and Cities

EGO

ECO

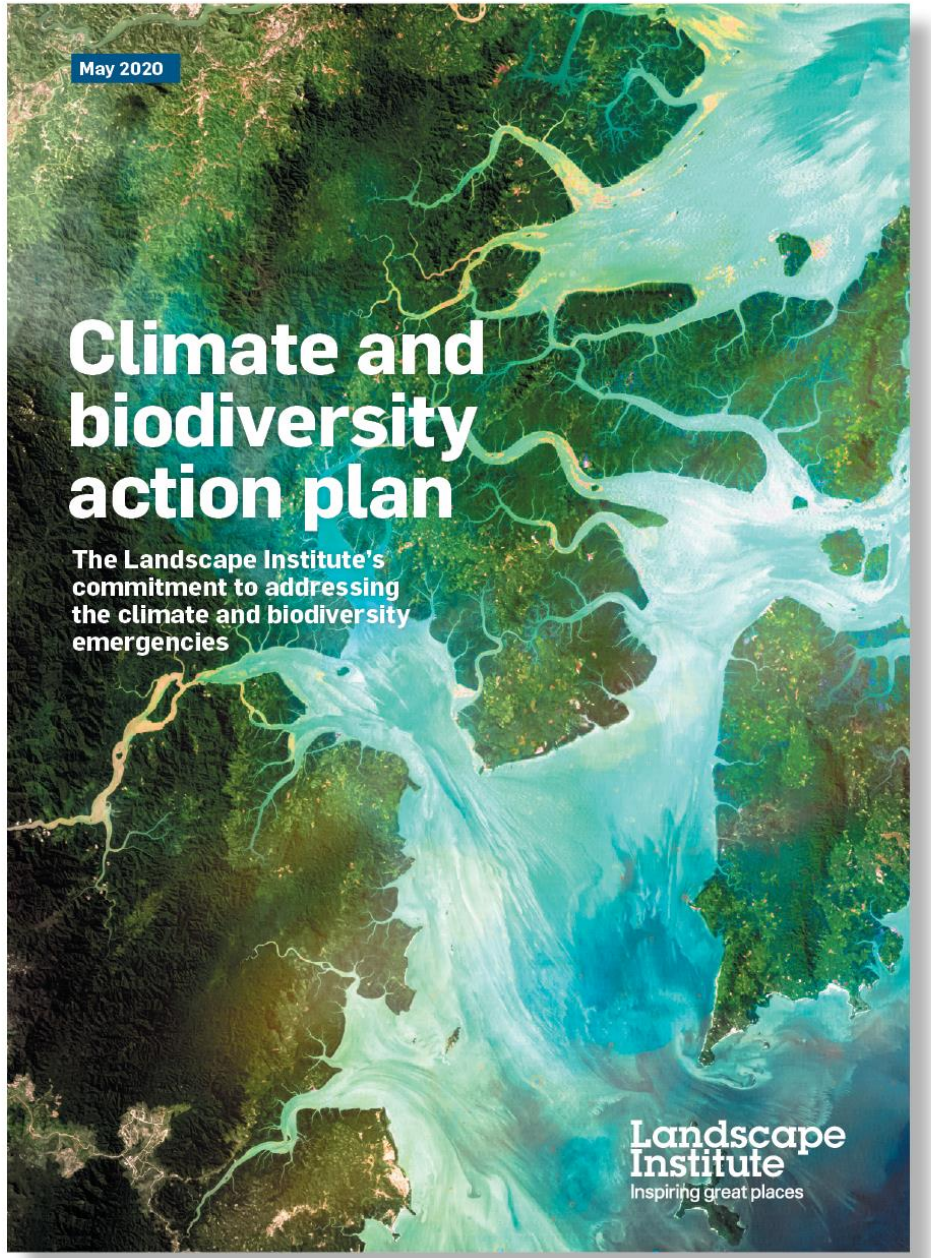


1969 DESIGN WITH NATURE

Taking care | Scything at the Munch

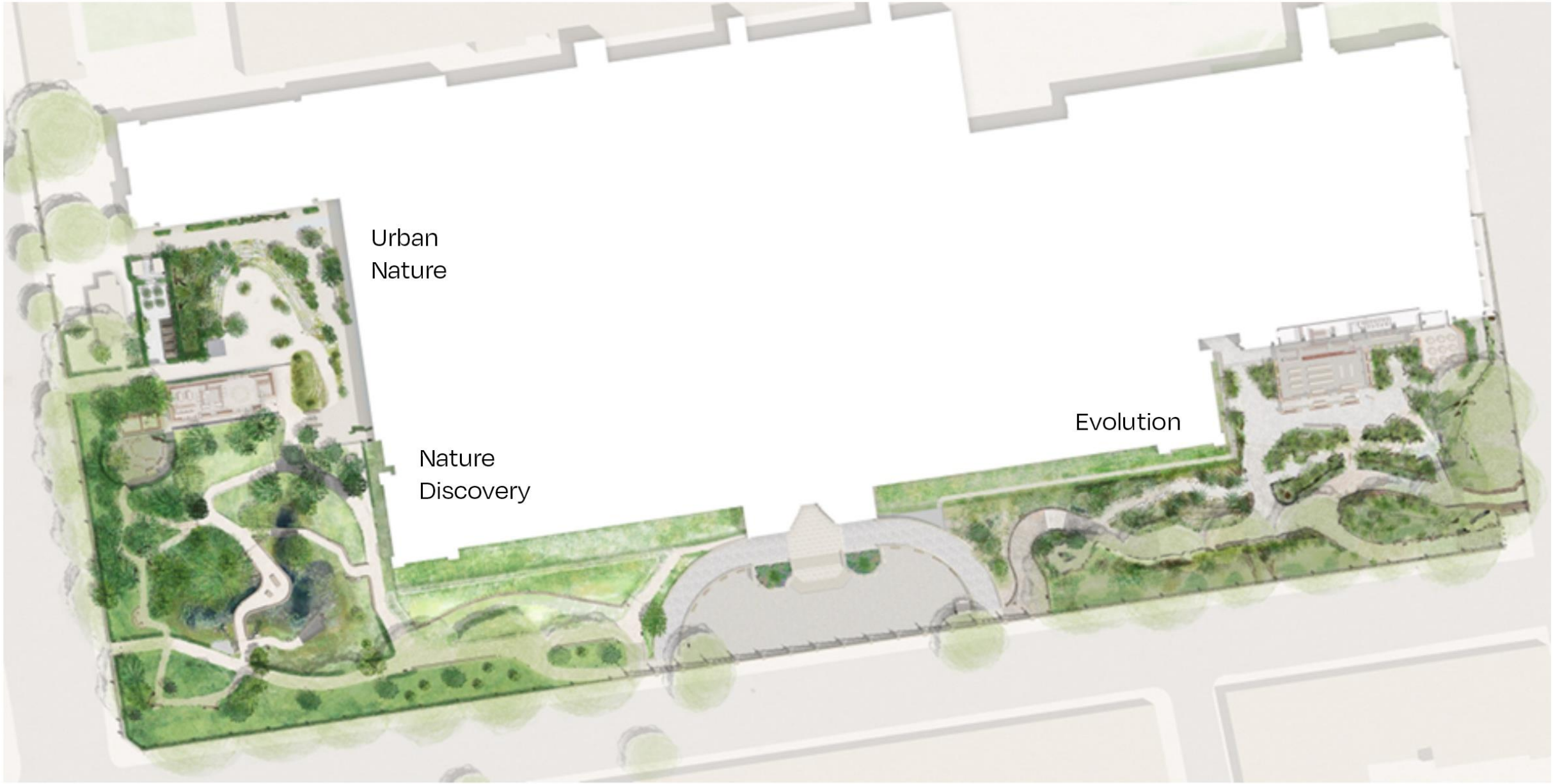
The Squirrel's Heartbeat
In conversation with Fiona Banner

ADVOCACY
AND ACTION



Urban Mind

Natural History Museum
Urban Nature Project

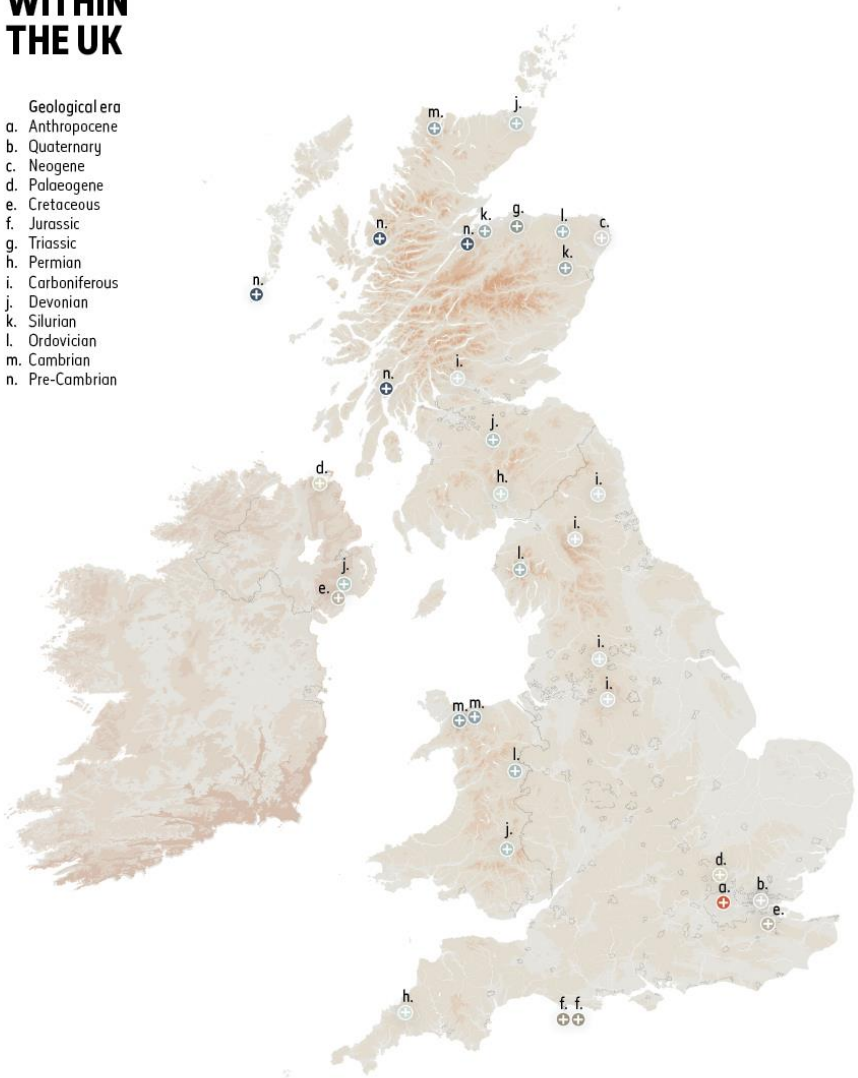


GARDEN TRANSFORMATION

URBAN
NATURE
WETLAND
GRASSLAND
WOODLAND & HEDGEROW
NEOGONE /
QUATERNARY
PALEOGENE
EXTINCTION /
RENEWAL
CRETACEOUS
JURASSIC
EXTINCTION /
RENEWAL
CARBONIFEROUS
SILURIAN
ORDOVICIAN
CAMBRIAN
PRE-CAMBRIAN

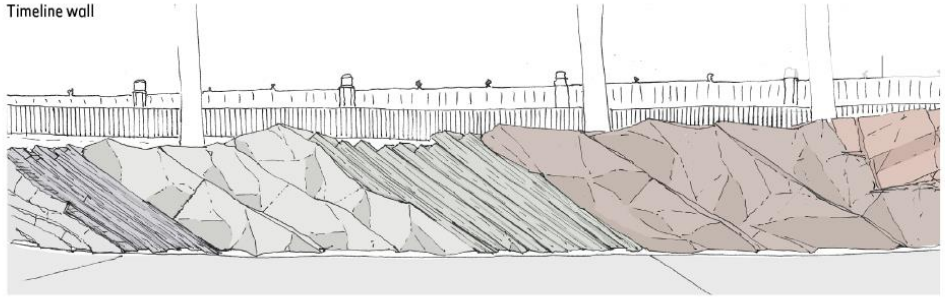
SOURCED WITHIN THE UK

Geological era
a. Anthropocene
b. Quaternary
c. Neogene
d. Palaeogene
e. Cretaceous
f. Jurassic
g. Triassic
h. Permian
i. Carboniferous
j. Devonian
k. Silurian
l. Ordovician
m. Cambrian
n. Pre-Cambrian

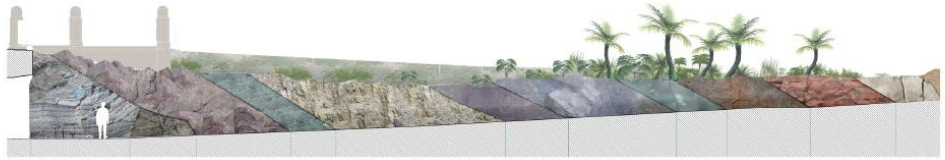


UK Geology Source Map
4,600 million years of geology sourced exclusively within the UK utilising quarry overburden to minimise embodied carbon

Timeline wall

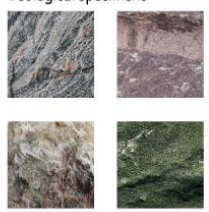


Character sketch



A step through deep time, along a new accessible ramp from the TFL subway allowing access for all

Geological specimens



Pre-Cambrian
4,600–541 million years ago (mya)

Cambrian
541–485.4 mya

Ordovician
485.4–443.8 mya

Silurian
443.8–419.2

Devonian
419.2–358.9 mya

CARBONIFEROUS

00135-10-GCE Red Prophyry

00132-10-SP Red Prophyry

00078-20-SP Red Prophyry

00102-10-GCE Park Granite

00023-10-SP Park Granite

Park Granite

p Granite

00067-10-GCE Dove Holes Lime

0019-10-SP Dove H

SPECIMEN PLANTS

Dicksonia antarctica;
large

Dicksonia antarctica;
v. large specimen & unusual forms

UNDERSTOREY DRIFTS

Osmunda regalis

Osmunda claytoniana

Matteuccia struthiopteris

Pentarhizidium orientale

LOW DENSITY UNDERSTOREY DRIFTS

Onoclea sensibilis

Selaginella braunii

Selaginella kraussiana

Pentarhizidium orientale

UNDERSTOREY HIGHLIGHTS

Lophosoria quadripinnata

Todea barbara

Osmundastrum cinnamomeum

Osmunda regalis
'Purpurascens'

MOVING TO LAND | COAL FOREST

existing evergreen vegetation
phased removal

Soil Profile 1
gravel mulch 50mm
ameliorated/decompacted soil

planting: age of the dinosaurs

Timeline Wall by architects

Primary pathway
165mm Poured concrete with
exposed aggregates
subbase by engineer

gravel edge

Bioretention swale
gravel mulch 50mm
topsoil varying 200mm
drainage gravel 200mm

cast of Diplodocus

planting: age of the dinosaurs

rock spine - Portland stone

informal geological bench

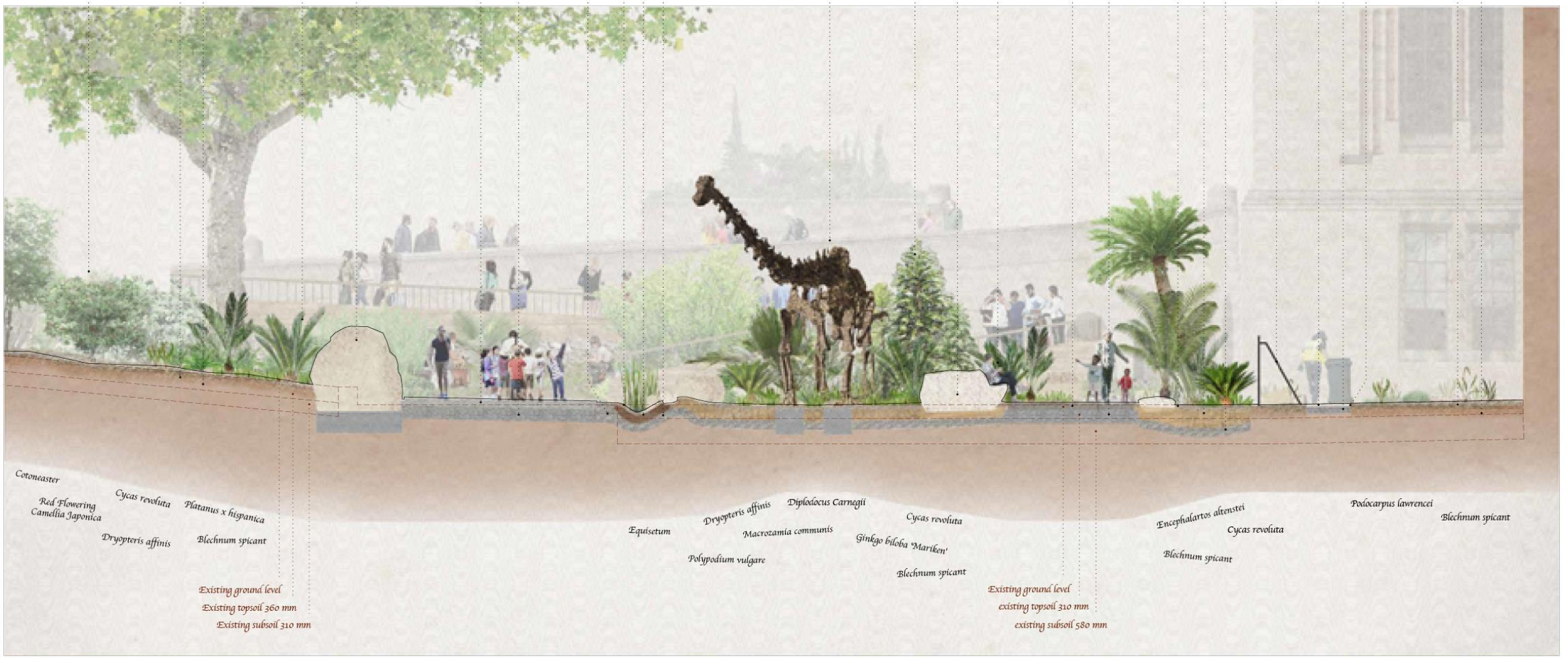
Secondary
trackway path
165mm Pre-cast concrete
paving units with exposed
aggregates
subbase by engineer

Soil Profile 3
gravel mulch 50 mm
sand 300 - 450 mm
drainage gravel 200 mm

existing railing

Maintenance path
Porous resin bound paving
subbase by engineer
Metal edging to path

Soil Profile 1
gravel mulch 50mm
ameliorated/decompacted soil




BEFORE


AFTER

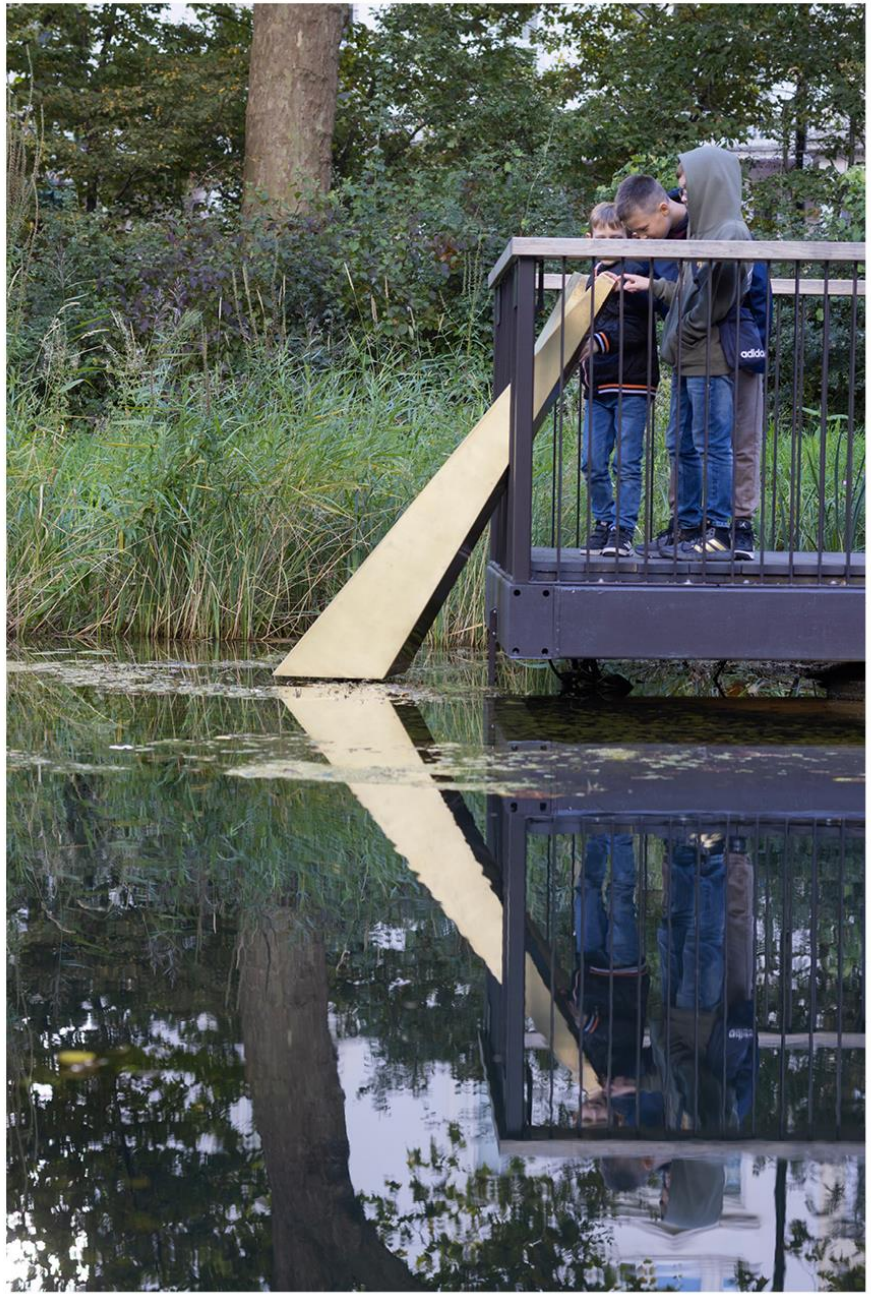

Subway opening times
Monday to Saturday 0700 - 2200
Sunday 0900 - 2200
When closed, please use the main station entrance in Thurloe Street

BEFORE


AFTER

BEFORE


AFTER



Start at home

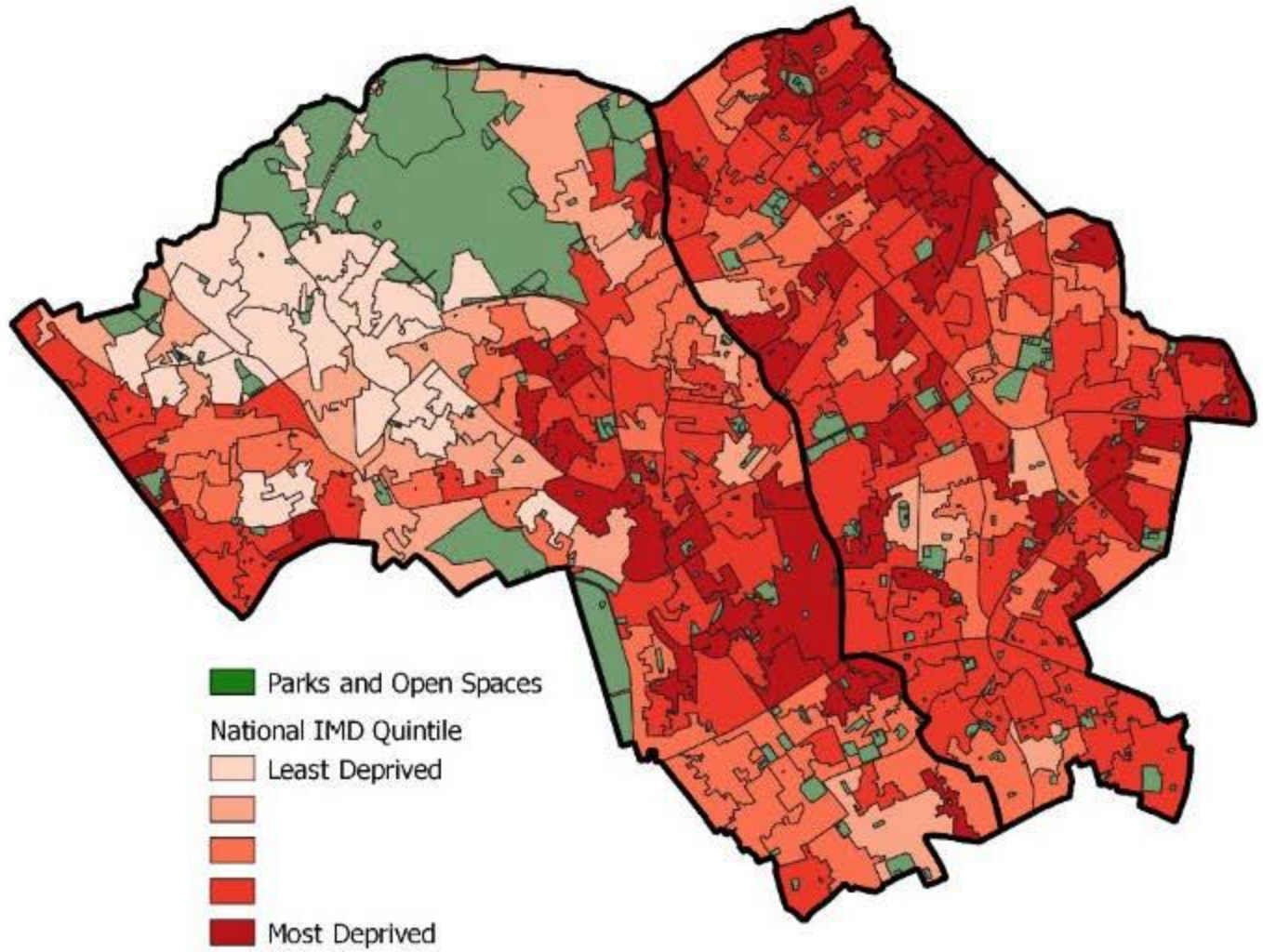
J&L GIBBONS

How to deliver great urban greenspaces

ISLINGTON
For a more equal future

The context…

Camden and Islington Parks and Open Spaces and Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles

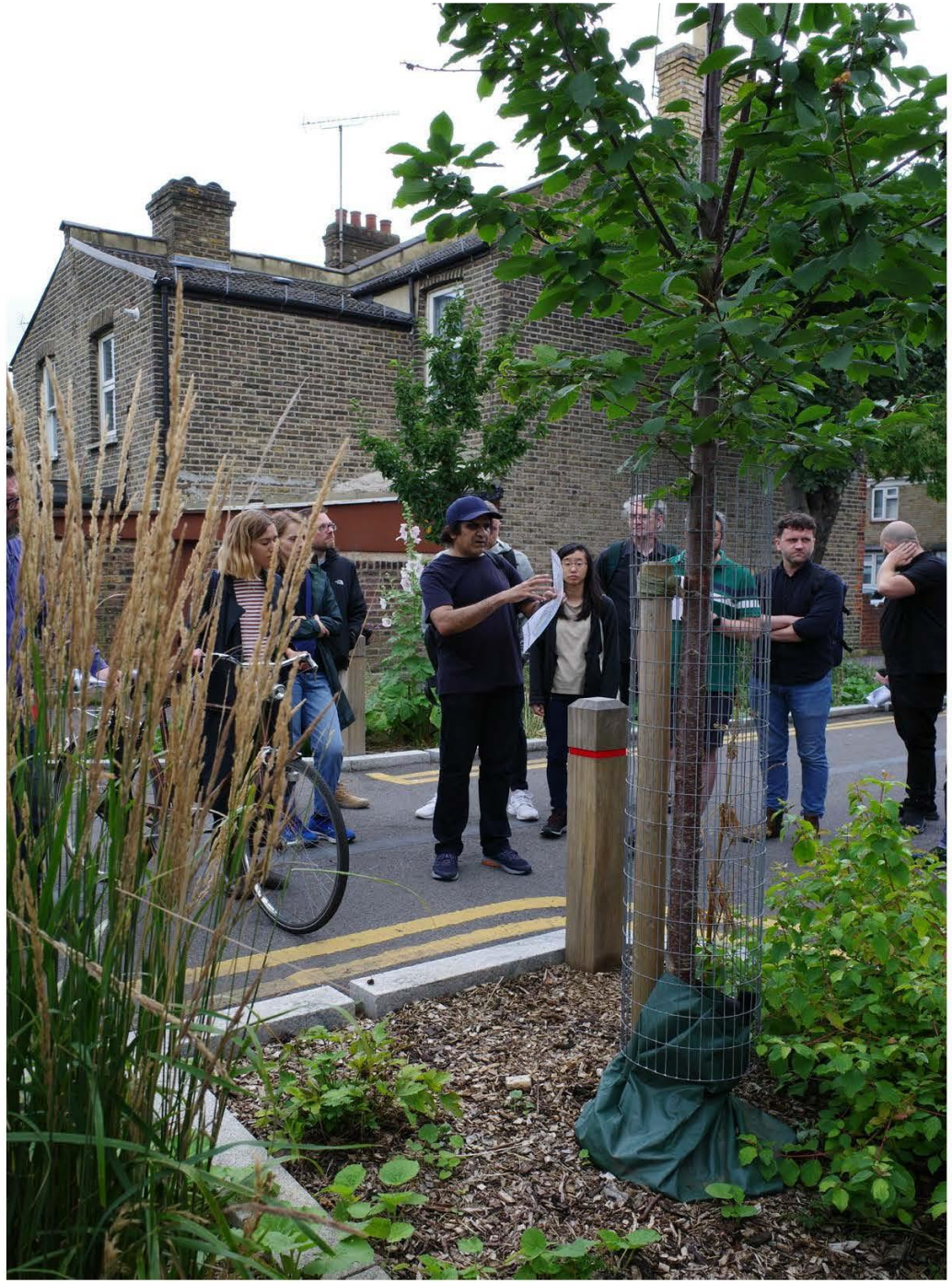



Freeling St
Google Maps

The challenge...

Greening the grey on the public highway

- Opportunities for greening and climate adaptive infrastructure within transport led projects can be missed
- Lack of skills and knowledge around what good greening looks like
- Little in-house expertise and/or resource to deliver greening
- Challenges of delivering climate resilient and low maintenance schemes
- Budgets (capital + revenue)



Highways Greening Accelerator

A year long training and development programme for Local Authority officers in Camden and Islington

‘Making great green infrastructure an everyday part of planning and delivery’

+ opportunities for collaborative learning

100+ officers trained
12 online learning sessions
12 site visits
4 guidance documents
1 celebration event

Green Infrastructure for Streets

A practical guide to design, delivery & maintenance

UDL Camden ISLINGTON For a more equal future

Regular planned inspections of SuDS and green infrastructure by council officers and regular meetings with the local groups maintaining the planting should be scheduled to share successes, address concerns and agree actions.

Future challenges and opportunities

Counters Creek River is connected to the rivers network that goes through the north of Camden and the north-western relief sewer that runs through Camden. Therefore, any work that can be done in the north of the borough to improve SuDS will take some pressure off Counters Creek. Any drainage improvements made within Camden will benefit neighbouring boroughs downstream including Hammersmith and Fulham.

Concept design for Fleet Valley Pocket Park

Getting the details right

Camley Street

Designed by Robert Bray Asscciates and the London Borough of Camden and completed in 2020, the scheme was funded by Thames Water and S106 development contributions. Built to accommodate a 1 in 30 year rainfall event, the scheme provides 48m3 of water storage together with 142m2 of new green infrastructure including 11 new trees and 30+ plant species.

Depaving

Part of the Lost River Effra project, this depaving scheme at Milkwood Road provides street greening and improves surface water management. The scheme was undertaken by the London Wildlife Trust and funded by the London Borough of Lambeth and the GLA.

Inlets refer to places where water enters the raingarden and should be designed to capture silt and control water flow. It is important to ensure that raised kerbs inlets are wide enough to allow free flow of surface water and do not become easily blocked with silt and other debris.

In New York raingardens benefit from wide inlets. The gardens are bounded with a low railings.

Flush kerbs can also be provided between the raingarden and the footway and/or the carriageway as shown in this example from Enfield.

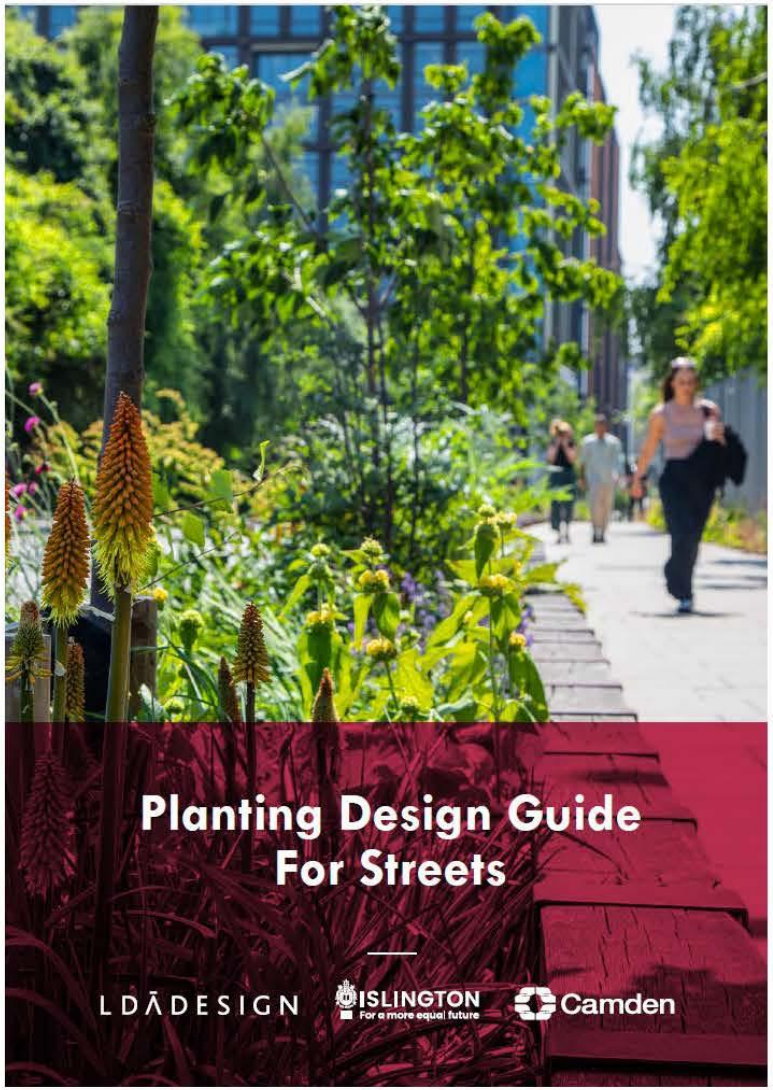


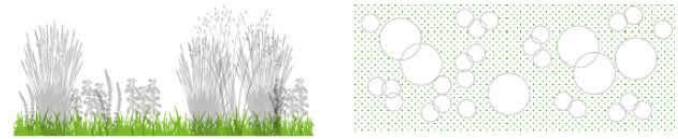
Fig. 1.0 A Layered Planting Community Approach

5 layers combined
Planting design is inspired by nature, and considered as a series of 5 layers that combine to create a dynamic planting community.

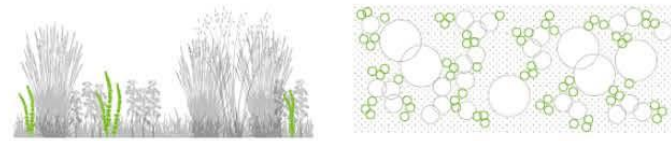
Structural planting
Larger plants providing the backbone and visual signature for the scheme through the year that can include trees, shrubs, taller perennials and grasses all with strong forms.

Seasonal theme planting
Companion plants to structural plants that visually dominate the planting for a certain period of time in the season, typically including plants that provide spectacular shows of colour or texture.

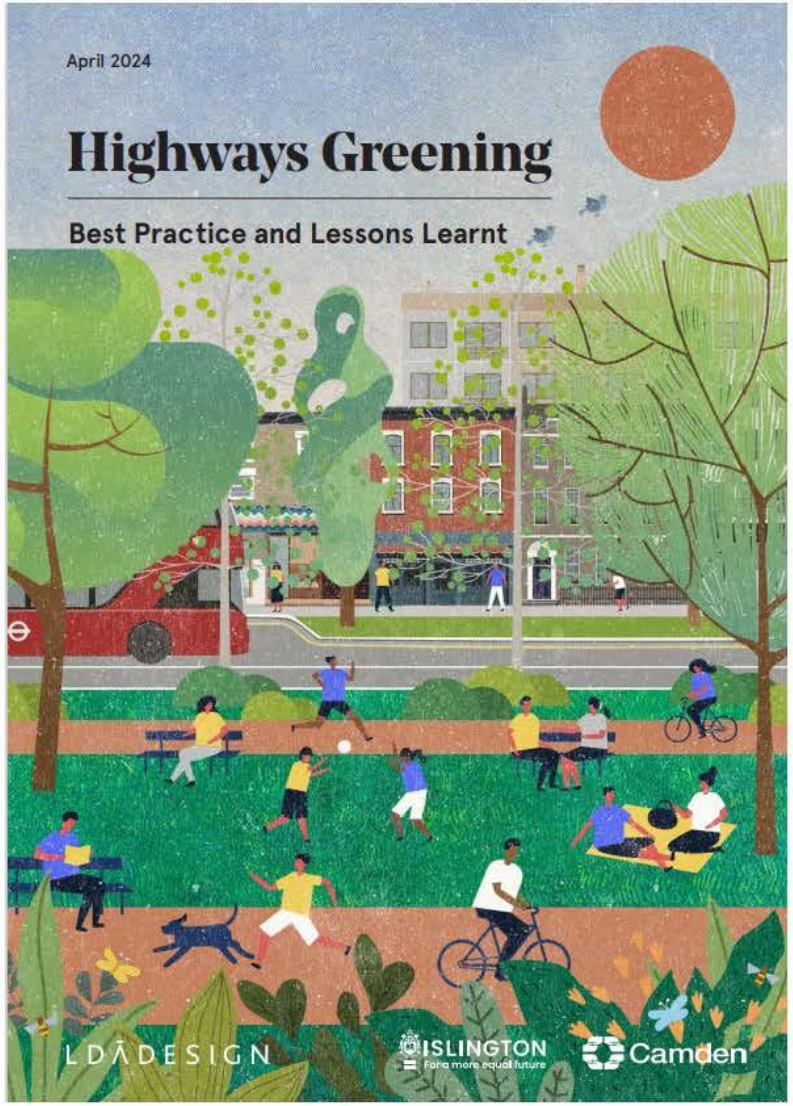
Ground cover planting
Plants creating a filler layer between the structural and seasonal theme layers that hold the planting community together; typically comprising lower spreading herbaceous and woody species that provide a variety of functions including soil coverage, nutrient retention, erosion control and phyto-remediation. Algae, lichens, liverworts and mosses can also make a valuable contribution to surface cover in moist environments.



Dynamic filler planting
Filler species usually readily establish by self-seeding to provide serendipitous accents that can fill spaces when plants die or whilst larger species are growing. These plants can also colonise environments that other species find it hard to establish, adding unexpected delight and biodiversity where it would otherwise not exist.



Bulb planting
Bulb species (tubers, corms and bulbs) provide unique accents in plant communities at certain times of year, frequently providing visual spectacle early or late in the season before some herbaceous species have grown or after they have flowered.



Project Title and Location

Marylebone High Street, Westminster, London W1

Project Team/Partners and role

Westminster City Council	Client
Cross River Partnership	Client
Urban Movement	Lead Designer (RIBA 0-3) Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, + Transport
WSP	Detail Design (Term Contractor)
FN Conway	Contractor

Funding Source/s

Mayor's Air Quality Fund

Construction Cost

£1.7m

Completion Year (including phases if applicable)

2019

Brief Description

The Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood was established by Westminster City Council in 2016 to create a healthier environment by reducing traffic and introducing green infrastructure.

The aim was to reduce emissions throughout the busy streets of Marylebone High Street, Paddington Street, New Cavendish Street and George Street study area, and improve the environment for walking, cycling and spending time.

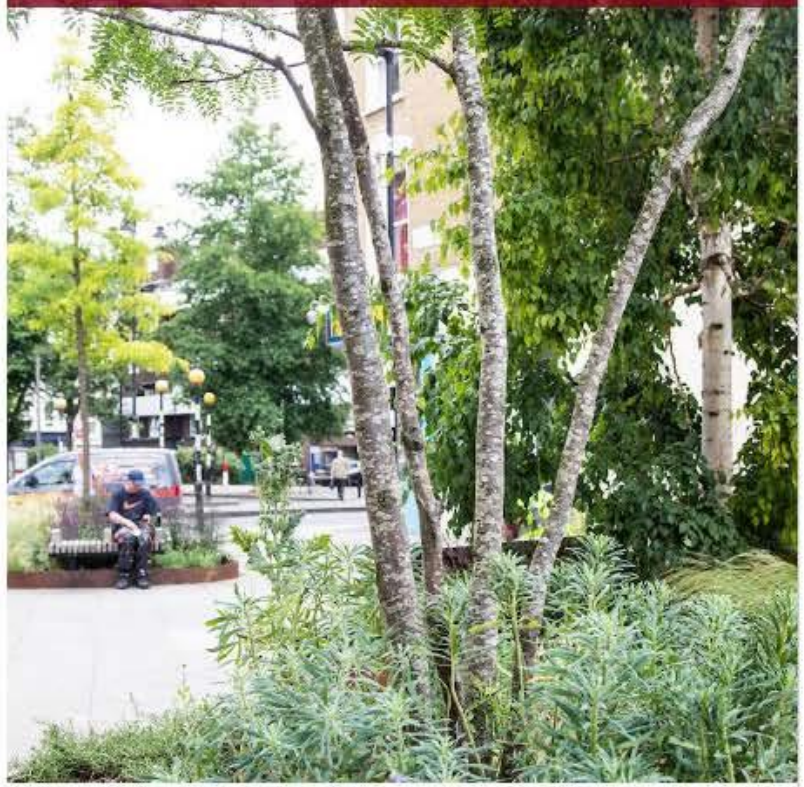
Identifying room for greer infrastructure involved a detailed engineering and landscape audit to highlight areas of 'Baggy Space' within the carriageway, or untapped potential, often where in the past movement has been prioritised above quality of place. These Baggy Spaces were used to introduce greening and surface water management in a way that would positively impact air quality along the street, with design that increases the general attractiveness and interest.

← Paddington Street Before

↓ Paddington Street After

Green Infrastructure for Streets

Recommendations for delivering at scale



UDL Camden ISLINGTON For a more equal future

Introduction

Urban Design London (UDL) was appointed in the spring of 2023 to curate and deliver a year long training programme for council officers focusing on developing skills relating to the design and delivery of critical blue and green infrastructure (GI) on borough streets. The training programme was commissioned by the London Boroughs of Islington and Camden as part of the Future Parks Accelerator programme funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, National Trust, Heritage Fund and the GLA.

The training programme is shaped by a skills audit that identified the skills and knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to help scale up the delivery of GI in borough streets in response to the climate emergency.

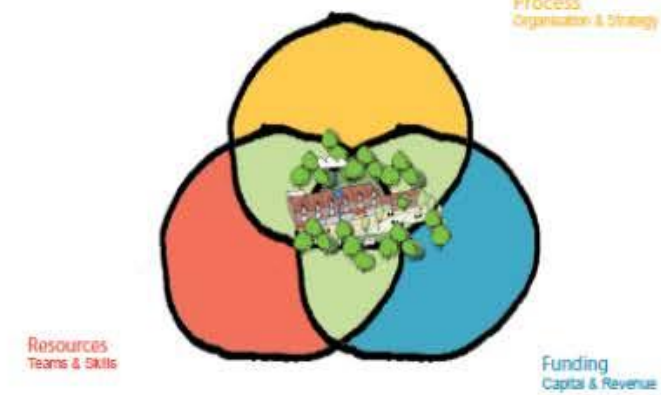
The key objectives of the training programme are to:

- Identify the core areas of knowledge that constitute important topics for street greening, and address areas of need and skills gaps through training in a format that is relevant, engaging and innovative; making use of speakers who are experts in their field
- Provide peer-to-peer learning for officers involved with street works and a shared sense of understanding and purpose in delivering GI
- Help create a collaborative, cross-departmental working culture where urban greening is celebrated and prioritised in all street improvement and maintenance projects
- Provide officers with an introduction to planning policy and examples of best practice in the design, delivery and maintenance of GI in borough streets and spaces

UDL produced a companion guide to the training programme, 'Green Infrastructure for Streets A practical guide to design, delivery & maintenance' which summarises the key themes, opportunities and challenges associated with the planning, design and delivery of critical GI. It is intended to support those officers who are charged with preparing policies and designing, delivering and maintaining new and existing green streets and spaces.

The programme identified a number of areas the planning authorities can address to improve the planning and delivery of GI. These are presented in this summary report as a series of next steps to be explored and taken forward in the next round of Future Parks Accelerator programme.

▼ Illustrative diagram showing key organisational challenges to the delivery of GI



☑ Process

Strong political leadership and the willingness to implement innovative changes will help deliver more transformational public realm projects.

- ☐ *Develop a collaborative culture that supports team working between different authority departments and rethink the roles of local authority officers, particularly those working in highway departments who should prioritise GI in all projects - both capital and revenue.*
- ☐ *Set up a project board with a specific focus on GI and climate resilience to ensure all highway and public realm schemes achieve their full potential.*
- ☐ *Bring clarity of purpose to all projects by agreeing a clear brief and objectives with all partners before plans are drawn up. At the start of each project, adopt an outcomes led approach and maximise delivery against these outcomes.*
- ☐ *Include several policy objectives - such as active travel improvements, GI and access to green space - to provide a stronger economic rationale for all projects.*
- ☐ *Projects are more successful if they are part of wider long-term strategies. Ensure all projects respond to the borough's environmental strategies and policies and provide climate resilient GI.*
- ☐ *Increase the range of quantitative and qualitative metrics for GI - including data on use and access for under-represented groups when monitoring schemes.*
- ☐ *Adopt and monitor the delivery of green space targets including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Urban Greening Factor (UGF), access to nature, and health and wellbeing. Gather data on technical aspects such as success rates for plant species, growing mediums including structural tree soils and SuDS components.*

The impact...


CLERKENWELL
GREEN


285
JEAN STOKES
COMMUNITY CENTRE


FREELING
STREET N1
PLAY
LOVE
GROW
285


THE DE BEAUVOIR WHOLEFOODS
CHAS. TAPP
THE DE BEAUVOIR ARMS
113

Highways Greening Accelerator

Partnerships and new ways of working can take time

Get outside, look around

Reach out and talk to each other – officers are often willing to share expertise and experience

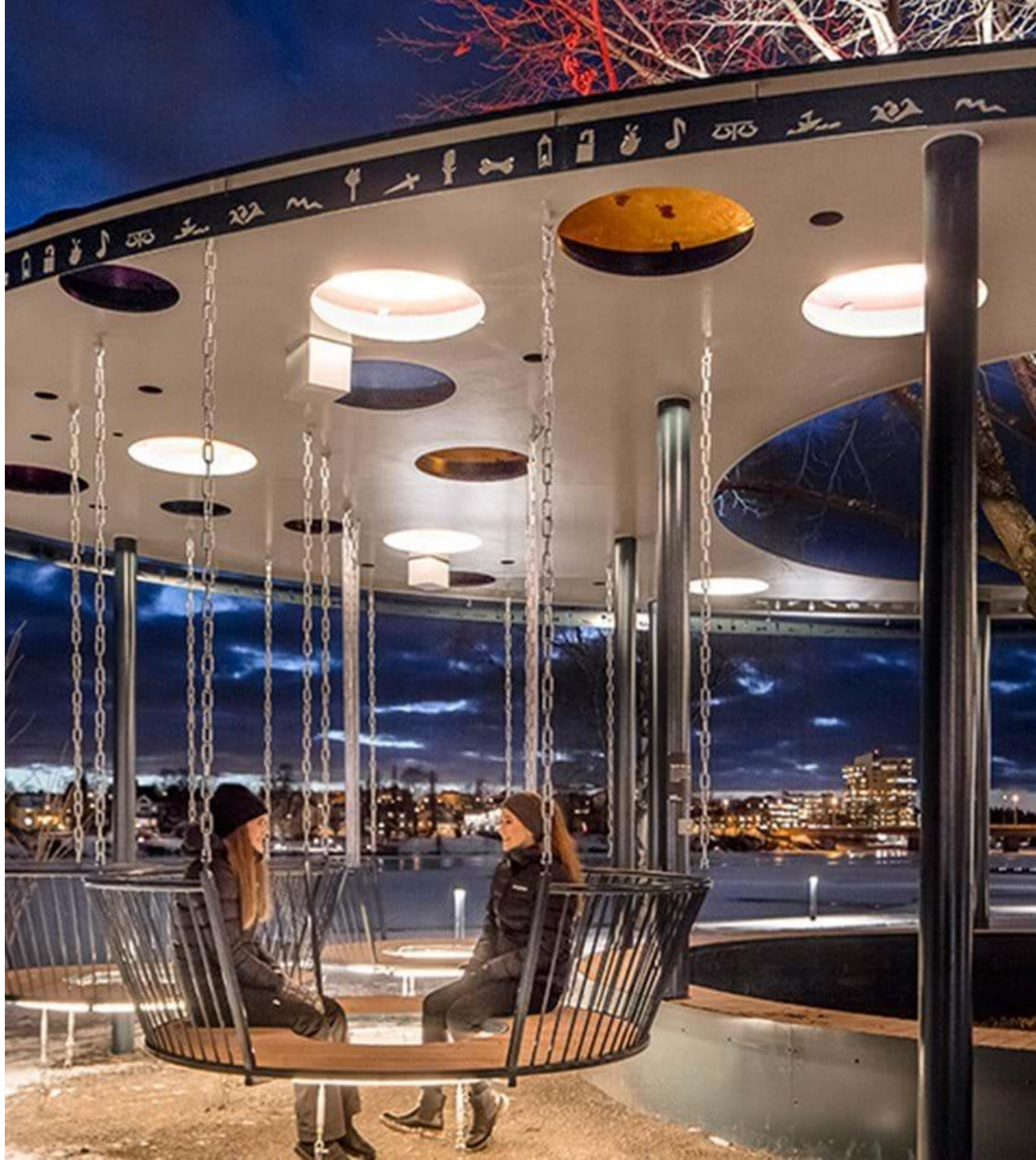
Create a dedicated role with responsibility for urban greening design and delivery

Equal Places:
Gender and green space

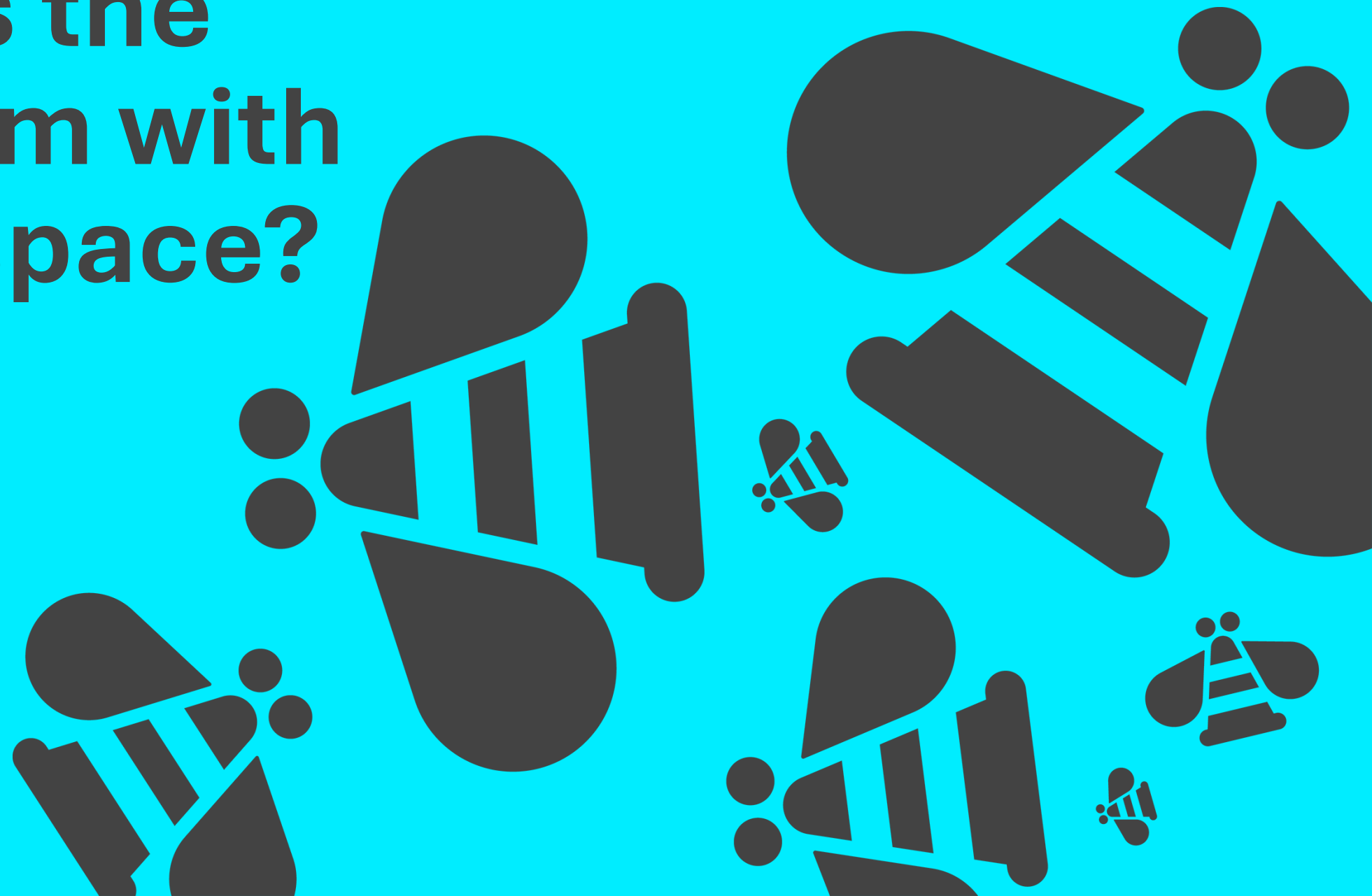
Frizon, Umeå

Co-designed with teenage girls.

- Designed to be used not just in day
- Ergonomics for them
- Feels safe – good sightlines.

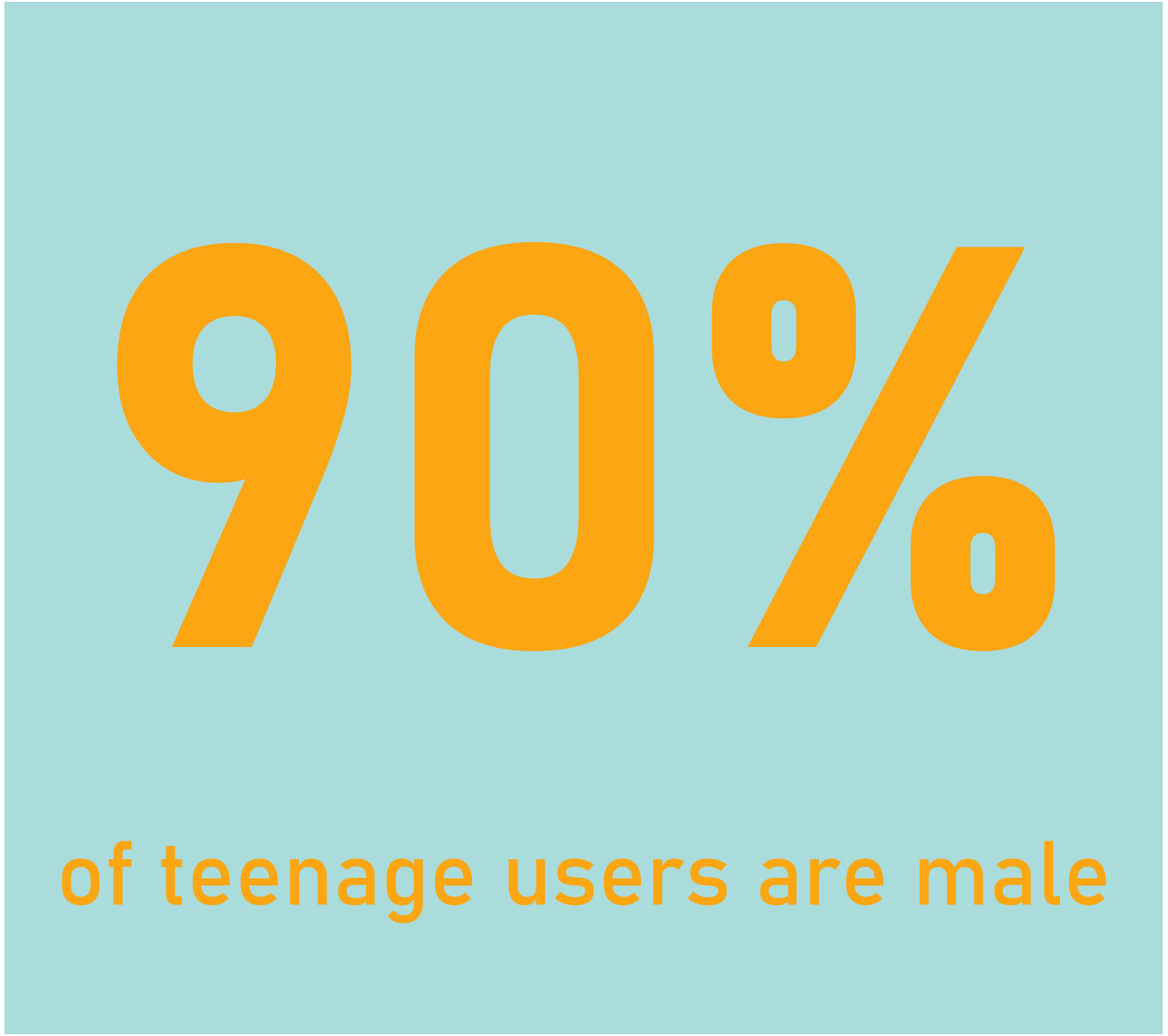


What’s the problem with greenspace?



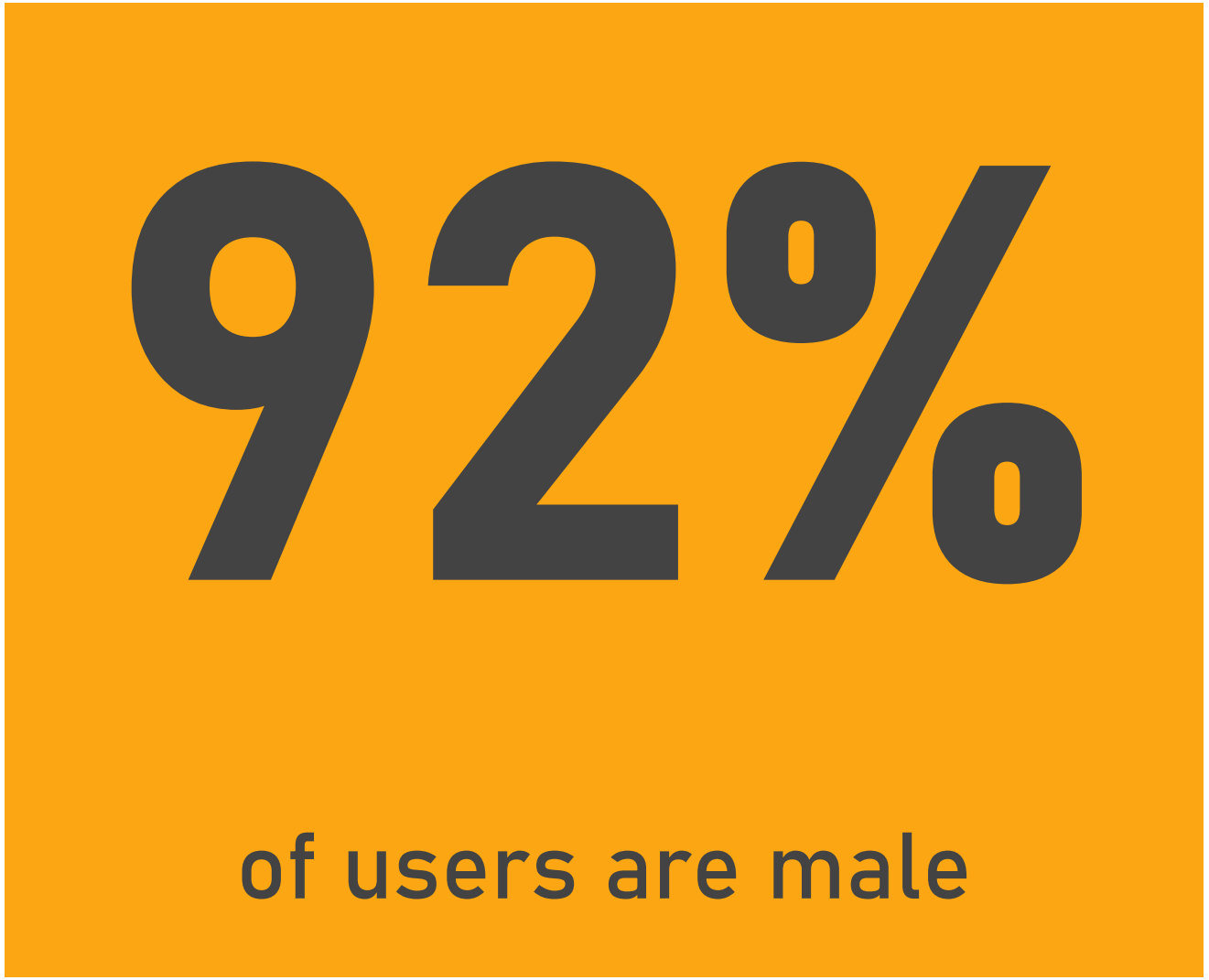
Teenage girls and parks

- 90% of the teenage facilities in parks are skateparks, BMX tracks and MUGAs.
- These are 90% used by boys and young men.
- 68% of girls felt there was nothing for them to do in parks.
- 59% felt unwelcome because the spaces were dominated by boys.



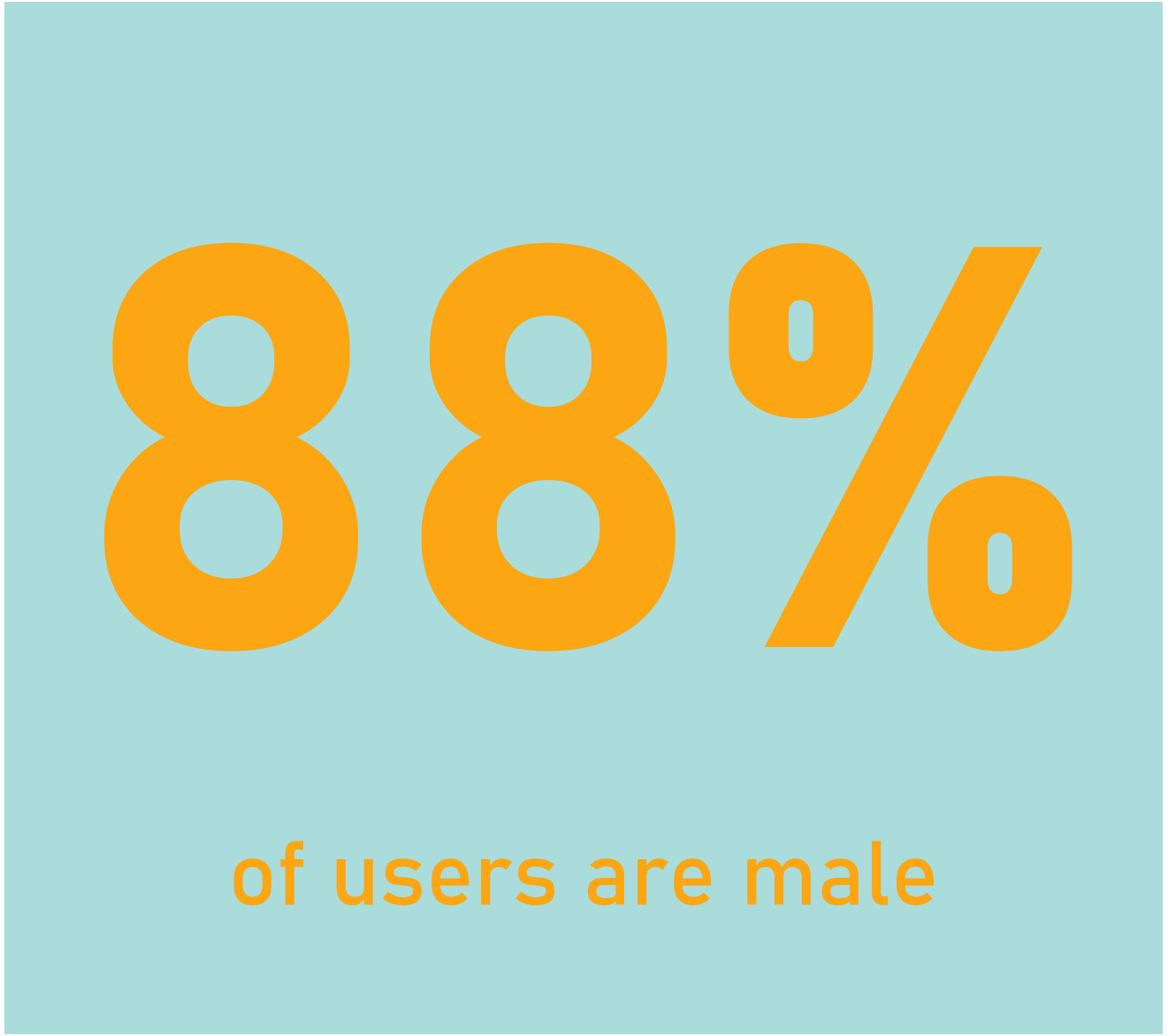
MUGAs

- The most common provision for teenagers.
- 92% used by boys and young men in our survey.
- Fencing and narrow entrances mean they do not feel safe to girls.
- Studies show that girls play more actively in a playground without a hard pitch.



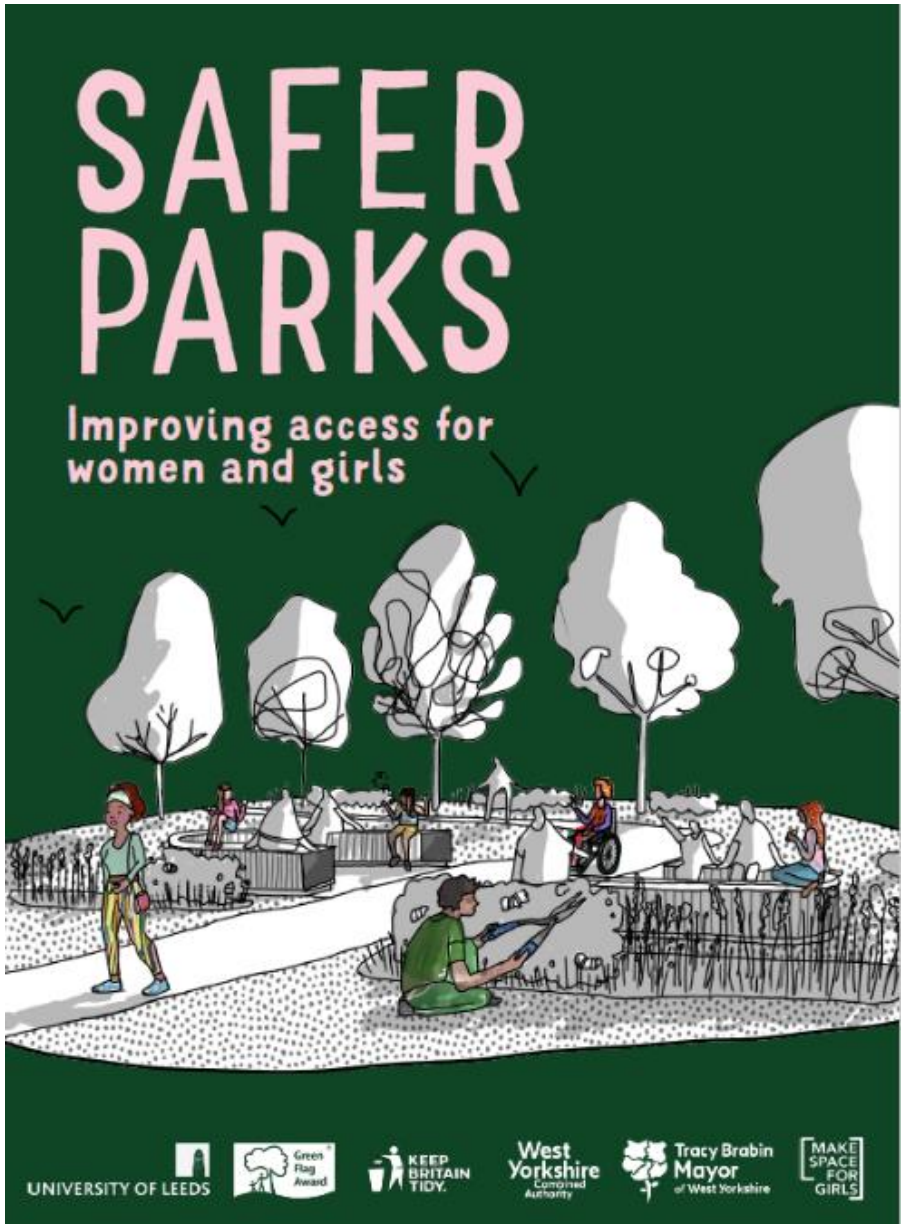
Pitches

- Women and girls' teams are just 12% of pitch users in England.
- In NI men are 15 times more likely to play football.
- Written into planning and other policies.
- Can result in recreational areas which are almost entirely geared to the needs of men and boys.



Safety

- One of the key barriers keeping women and girls from using facilities.
- Needs to be front and centre of all open space, play and sports strategies.
- Safer Parks good place to start



Why does this matter?

Fairness: Why shouldn’t women and girls have spaces and places designed to meet their needs.

Health: Barriers impacts both mental and physical health.

The law:

Laws against direct/indirect discrimination: Equality Act 2010

Public Sector Equality Duty: Equality Act 2010

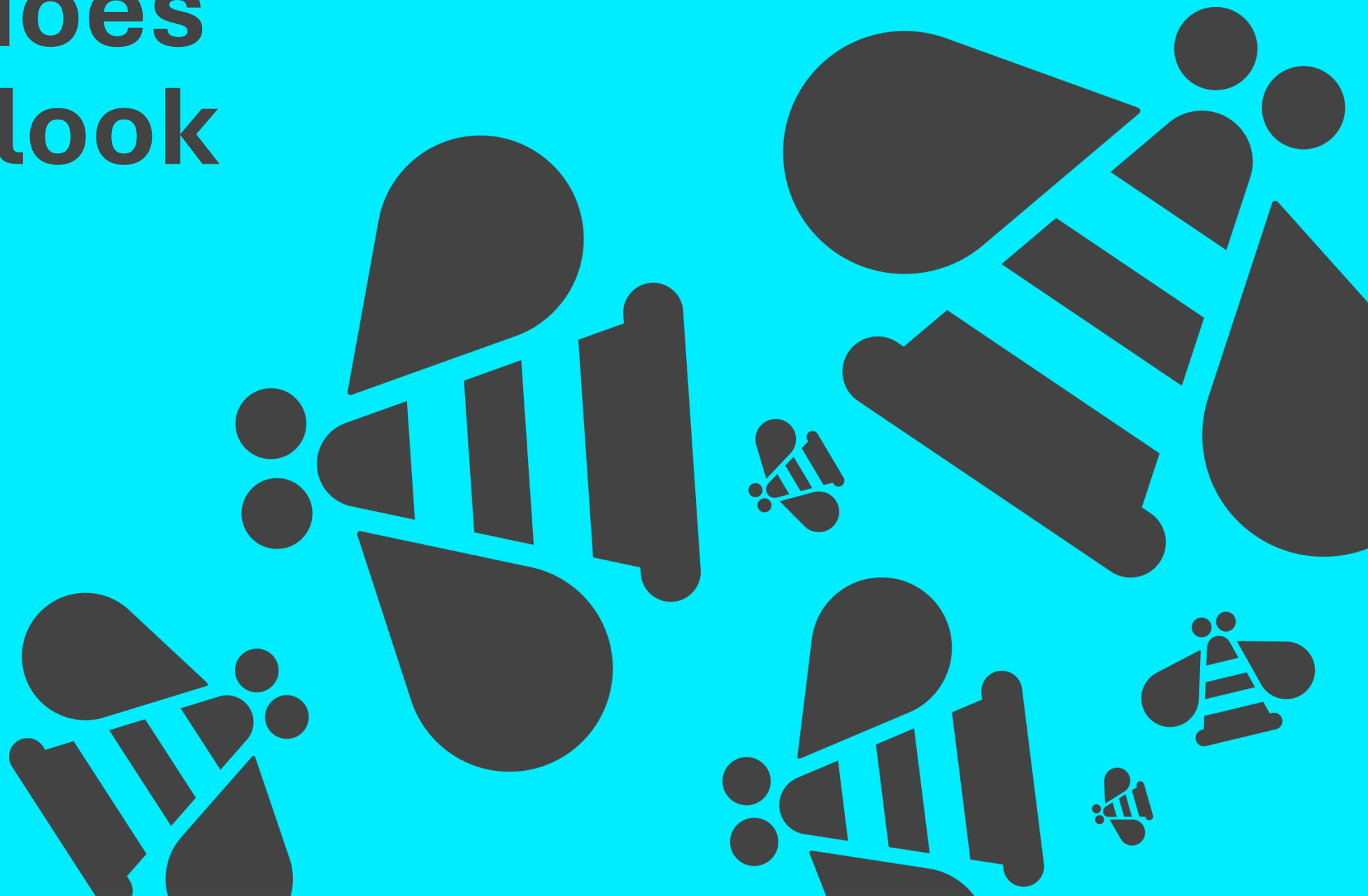
Indicator species

"Otters signal a thriving ecosystem, and women who feel safe make for a city that, well, actually functions properly. 🦦 ”

Elise Moeskops

Amsterdam councillor

What does better look like?




STARBUCKS
19

Good practice

Within UK as well

Engagement

- Need to seek people out – not just talking to the usual suspects.
- Women and girls are experts in their own spaces.
- At the same time they need to understand the possibilities.
- Identify barriers and problems at the very start.

Equitable green spaces

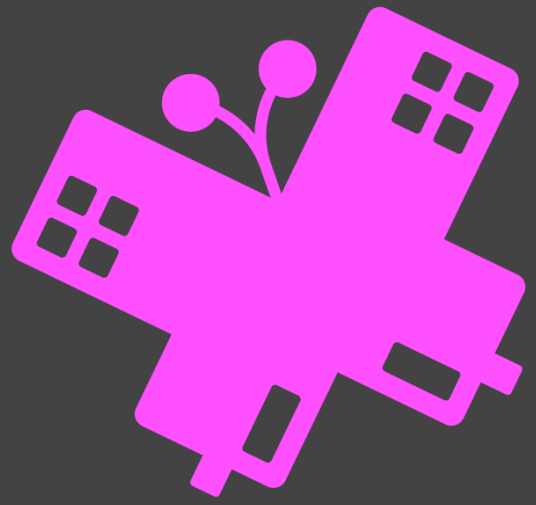
- Busyness is key
- Designing for safety and incidental exercise.
- Consider caring responsibilities.
- Walking paths.
- Swings.
- Outdoor gym weighting.

susannah@inherplace.co.uk

Panel discussion

Please use the Q&A tab to ask a question

Next talk: **Growing community power through green space,**
Monday 1 December, 11:00-12:30



thankyou