



The Royal Parks

Sustainability Strategy 2015-2025



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Introduction

Our eight Royal Parks provide 5,000 acres of green space in the heart of our capital city, making London one of the greenest cities in the world. They are among the most visited attractions in the UK, with over 77 million visitors each year, and 98% of visitors rating their experience as good or excellent (Ipsos MORI, January 2015). Whatever the reason for the visit, the Royal Parks offer unparalleled opportunities for relaxation, exercise, entertainment and education.

The Royal Parks is responsible for managing and conserving these historic landscapes and valuable conservation areas. Our parks include 170,000 trees, important habitats for wildlife, world-class horticultural displays, 600 buildings and structures (of which 195 are listed), 100 miles of roads, paths, cycle routes and horse rides, 13 children's play areas, 28 tennis courts, football pitches and cricket pitches and 21 lakes and ponds. As some of London's largest green spaces, the Royal Parks also provide an essential function of cooling urban temperatures, reducing wind speeds and absorbing pollution and flood water.

As custodians of these unique spaces, The Royal Parks' purpose is:

“To manage the Royal Parks effectively and efficiently, balancing the responsibility to conserve and enhance the unique environments with creative policies to encourage access and to increase opportunities for enjoyment, education, entertainment and healthy recreation.”

The Royal Parks faces increasing challenges, including a reducing government grant resulting in the need to increase self-generated income; increasing visitor numbers, putting pressure on park maintenance and services; a significant and ageing infrastructure; and the impact of climate change on the park environment including extreme weather conditions and pests and diseases.

Sustainability is at the heart of addressing these challenges; ensuring that The Royal Parks continues to provide parks of the highest quality, celebrated for their history, heritage, ecology, landscapes and buildings, and with high visitor satisfaction – all of which remain freely accessible.

Purpose

The purpose of the Sustainability Strategy is to provide a structure which identifies the economic, environmental and social topics that are important to The Royal Parks and its stakeholders, and to describe the approach for delivering a high level of sustainability in everything The Royal Parks does.

The strategy is aimed at ensuring all staff and contractors working to maintain, conserve, support and improve these unique green spaces understand what sustainability means both in terms of day-to-day activities, as well as longer-term planning. Furthermore, that by aligning efforts across all of our operations and activities, and embedding sustainability as a key organisational driver, we are a UK leader in the sustainable management of parks and green open spaces.

The strategy consists of four sustainability “pillars.” **Annex A – Understanding the pillars and themes** records what The Royal Parks currently does, describes where the organisation wants to be and what areas need to be addressed to get there. The strategy will guide decision-making and support evaluation of performance against set criteria.

The strategy covers current sustainable activity within The Royal Parks – see “**The Royal Parks’ Approach**”. It balances the need to have a framework which applies to all parks, whilst respecting the uniqueness of each park and its local environment. The strategy also describes practical measures for sustainability that will aid the development of the current environmental management system and help to embed social and economic sustainability across all park operations.

Current approach

The Royal Parks currently operates a proactive management approach to sustainability, based on the ISO 14001 environmental management system (EMS). ISO 14001 sets out the criteria for an effective system and maps out a framework for an organisation to follow. Following a review, the Executive Committee (ExCom) and Board have committed to embedding sustainability at the highest level of their governance

(please see Figure 1 for more information).

The Sustainability Strategy provides the structure for achieving this, and is organised around four pillars. Together with the Action Plan, under development, which identifies how we will prioritise and implement the ideas introduced in this strategy, we have a framework for moving from where we are now, to where we want to get to, by 2025.

Background

The Royal Parks is responsible for the management and conservation of the eight Royal Parks (Bushy Park, The Green Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, Richmond Park and St James's Park). We also manage Victoria Tower Gardens, Brompton Cemetery, Canning Green, Grosvenor Square Garden and the gardens of 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street.

We have four corporate objectives, which shape our strategic direction and operations:

1. To conserve and enhance sustainably, for the enjoyment of this and future generations, our world-class natural and built historic environment and our biodiversity;
2. To engage with our visitors, stakeholders and partner organisations, and understand their views;
3. To manage the parks efficiently and secure investment in the parks' assets and services through an appropriate combination of government

funding, commercial income and philanthropy; and

4. To be a centre of professional excellence where people want to work.

The Royal Parks is currently an executive agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). During 2016, The Royal Parks and the Royal Parks Foundation (the charity that fundraises for the eight Royal Parks) will become a new single organisation (a charitable public corporation) to manage and fundraise for the Royal Parks. With increased freedoms and controls similar to a charity rather than a government department, the parks can be managed more efficiently, while maintaining visitor satisfaction. Placing fundraising and managing the parks under one organisation will also attract greater fundraising support. Growing sustainable income streams under the new organisational structure will become even more critical.

Sustainability already sits at the heart of what we do. It is reflected in our core purpose and objectives, and whilst these objectives may change over time as we become a new organisation, how we manage and conserve the parks sustainably

won't change dramatically. This strategy seeks to build on our current approach, supported by our environmental management system.

Aims

The Royal Parks aims to achieve the highest possible level of sustainability, and at least level three throughout the organisation, with level four, where attainable, by 2025. In doing so we will be recognised as a UK leader in the sustainable management of parks and green open spaces.

The Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan will help The Royal Parks to achieve this by:

- Ensuring staff, contractors and partners understand the sustainability priorities for The Royal Parks, and how they contribute to this in their day-to-day work;
- Aligning efforts and maximising resources across operations and activities;
- Embedding sustainability as a key organisational driver into longer-term planning;
- Aligning our communications to support behaviour change by park visitors;
- Engaging stakeholders to understand our sustainability

priorities and support behaviour change;

- Supporting sustainable procurement, purchasing, contracting and service delivery models; and
- Supporting the growth of sustainable income streams within the new organisation.

For many organisations achieving a truly sustainable approach involves introducing new concepts and ways of thinking through a process of change. Understanding and being able to articulate where you are now, where you want to get to, and what it will look like when you do, is critical to aligning all staff,

contractors, volunteers, partners and stakeholders around the journey. Having a model to do this is useful.

Figure 1 below represents a simplified four level model of how sustainability can be embedded into organisations over time and to different degrees. Using this model The Royal Parks can recognise its current level of sustainability and what it needs to achieve in each area of the organisation to progress up the levels.

The Royal Parks considers that overall it currently operates a proactive approach to environmental management at level two. However,

Figure 1 – Model to represent the levels of embedded sustainability in organisations (adapted from Marrewijk et al. 2003)



ExCom and the Board have committed to moving to level three as a minimum, with some areas or departments of work moving into level four. The strategy provides the structure for achieving this, and, together with the developing Action Plan, a framework for delivery.

Application

The strategy will be used to guide staff, contractors, volunteers, partners and stakeholders on the relative importance of sustainability themes to The Royal Parks, and how they contribute to improving performance against The Royal Parks' sustainability pillars.

Sustainability best practice will support the following key operations:

- Tender specifications and submissions;
- Contractual terms and conditions;
- Works contracts tendering and evaluation;
- Landscape maintenance contracts tendering and evaluation;
- Events planning, delivery and evaluation;
- Community engagement;
- Conditions for licenses and business development;
- Project evaluation criteria;
- Engaging external and internal stakeholders; and
- Learning and development.

Delivery and performance monitoring

Alongside the strategy, we are developing a Sustainability Action Plan, which prioritises activities and resources to maximise sustainability best practice across our parks. The Action Plan will be a live document and is based upon the SMART system (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) for setting targets to achieve its aims.

Central to the development of the strategy, and implementation of the Action Plan, has been the appointment of a dedicated Sustainability Manager, from November 2014. The Sustainability Manager will be responsible for the delivery of the Action Plan, with key actions assigned to individuals. Progress will be measured, and delivery evaluated, against key

performance indicators (KPIs), which will be incorporated into the existing EMS (Environmental Management System), to ensure continuous improvement. Progress will be reported quarterly to the Executive Committee and annually in The Royal Parks' Annual Report.

Stakeholder engagement

Because of our prime locations, our guardianship of these historic parks and the central role we play in London life, there are a many organisations, groups and individuals that have an interest in the Royal Parks. We recognise that with the range of challenges we face, the continued support and contribution of our stakeholders is essential. We want to continue to work with all of our stakeholders and welcome any feedback they may have on this strategy and its implementation.

The Royal Parks' Sustainability Framework

Following the work in The Royal Parks' scoping groups (described below) and a final review with stakeholders, we have identified four key sustainability pillars which form the basis of the strategy, and help ensure the long-term environmental protection, social development and economic stability of the organisation.

The four key sustainability pillars are:

- **Conserve and enhance the unique landscapes, built heritage and biodiversity;**

- **People, education, fairness and improving wellbeing;**
- **Mitigating and adapting to climate change; and**
- **Sustainable growth – providing environmentally excellent and financially viable green open spaces to the public.**

Within each of these pillars is a set of underpinning themes, which are priorities for The Royal Parks in stepping up its leadership of sustainability relative to parks and open green spaces. They provide support to the pillars, which in turn underpin delivery of the Sustainability Action Plan. The relative importance of the pillars and themes may vary across departments and operations; similarly, their weighting may depend on the contribution they make to organisational sustainability aims.

Some pillars and themes will already be achieving particular levels of sustainability performance (two, three or four) and this will be reflected in the developing

Sustainability Action Plan. There will however be potential for improvement in all areas, depending on the resources available and their relative priority. Below in Figure 4 the key pillars are broken down into their themes. These themes follow discussions with stakeholders and a review of existing plans and policies (further discussed below).

In **Annex A** each of the pillars is broken down into themes, with descriptions to clarify and explain them, as well as explaining why The Royal Parks values their proper management. **Annex A** also further develops each theme in terms of:

- **Significance** – provides context and gives its relevance on a local/national/global scale;
- **What is The Royal Parks doing now** – highlights what The Royal Parks is currently doing in these areas, as well as linking to any relevant strategies or policies; and
- **Where is The Royal Parks heading** – describes the direction The Royal Parks is heading in this area, and what could be achieved. These ideas are shaping the development of the Sustainability Action Plan.

By managing all of these themes, and aiming to improve the delivery of each relative to their importance and contribution in specific functions, operations and services, we will ensure long-term sustainability in the management of the world-class Royal Parks of London.

For more information please see Figures 2, 3 and 4 below, which summarise the relationship between The Royal Parks and sustainability.

Figure 2 shows how The Royal Parks' sustainability pillars and themes fit within the classic model in Figure 8;

Figure 3 gives a pictorial representation of sustainability using a Hyde Park example; and

Figure 4 summarises The Royal Parks approach from theory to practice.

Figure 2 – Showing The Royal Parks Sustainability Framework within the 3 circles of classic sustainability

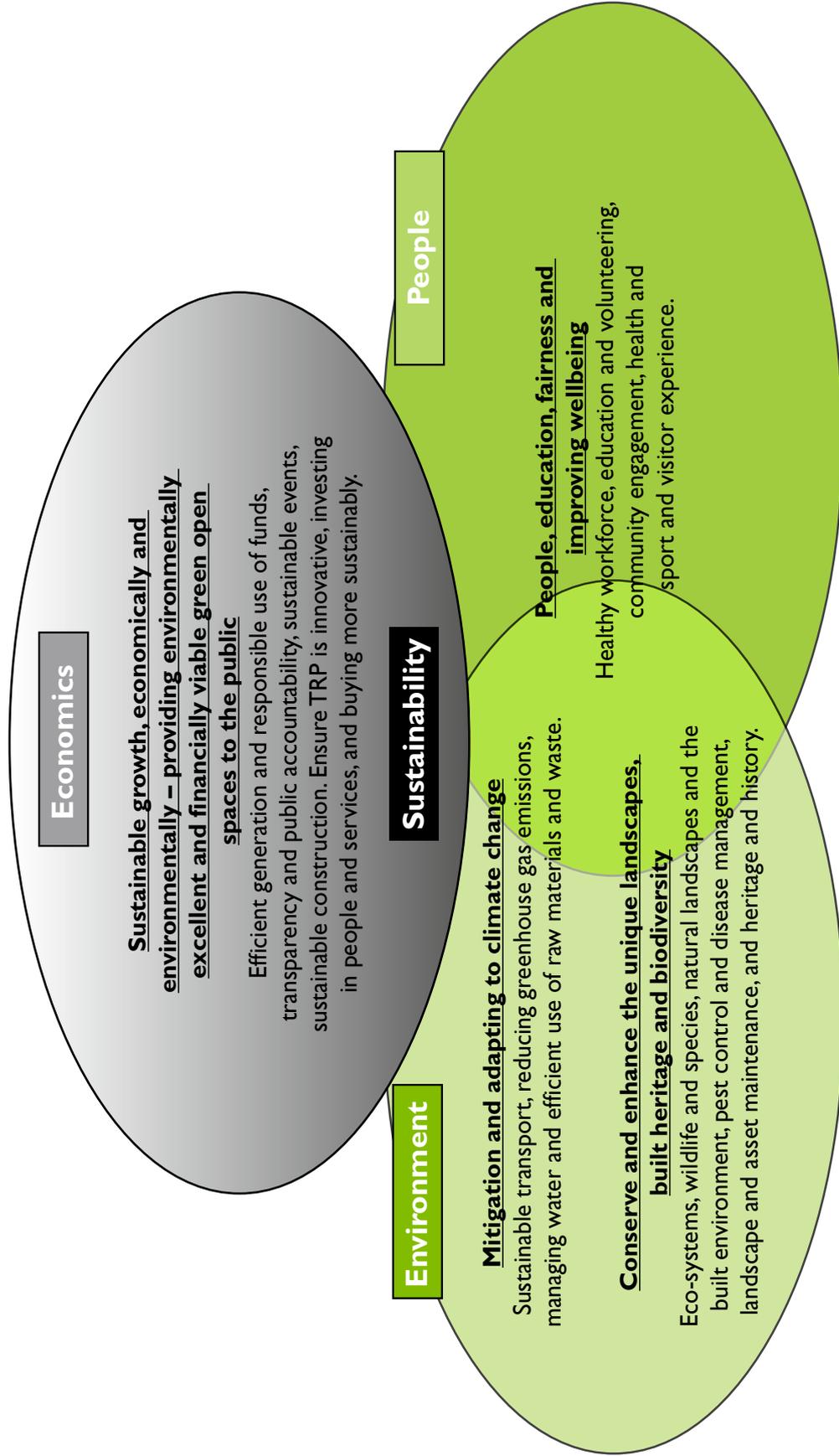


Figure 3 – An example of sustainability in action from Hyde Park

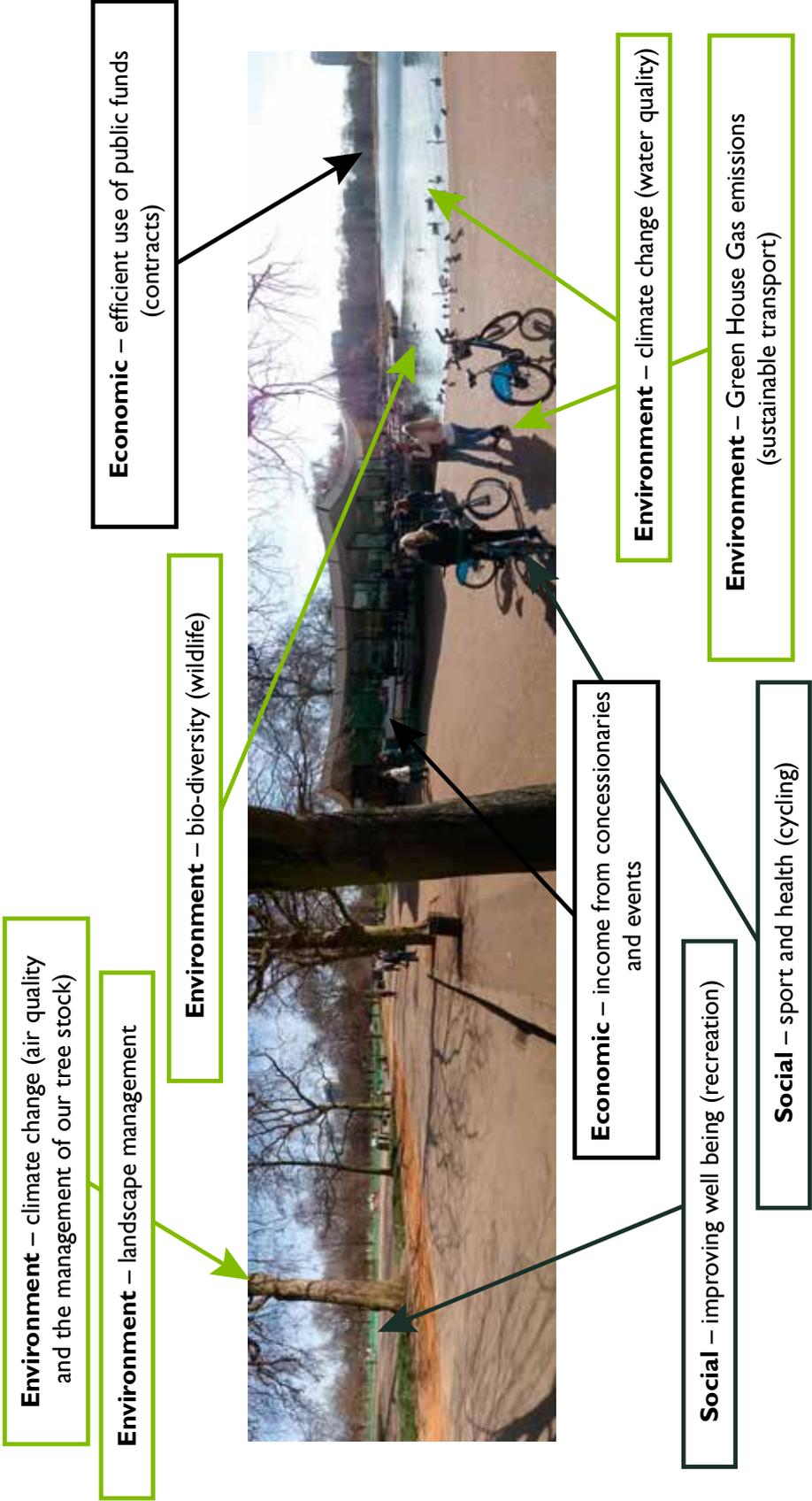


Figure 4 – Summary of The Royal Parks’ sustainability framework

Classic (World Summit 2005) Sustainability Pillars:

1. Economic stability
2. Environmental protection
3. Social development

The Royal Parks’ sustainability pillars:

- **Conserve and enhance the unique landscapes, built heritage and biodiversity**
 - Eco-systems, wildlife and species, landscapes and the built environment, pest control and disease management, landscape and asset maintenance, heritage and history.
- **People, education, fairness and improving wellbeing**
 - Healthy workforce, education and volunteering, community engagement, health and sport, visitor experience.
- **Mitigation and adapting to climate change**
 - Sustainable transport, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, managing water, efficient use of raw materials and waste.
- **Sustainable growth – providing environmentally excellent and financially viable green open spaces to the public**
 - Efficient generation and responsible use of funds, transparency and public accountability, sustainable events, sustainable construction, sustainable procurement, innovation and investment in people and services.

The pillars are timeless and consistent with The Royal Parks’ values.

We will develop a Sustainability Action Plan which will have SMART performance indicators. The plan will develop over time, depending on priorities and resources.

Weighting of pillars

The weighting of the pillars and themes will be dependent on what a project, tender or contract is trying to achieve. This is being considered in the Sustainability Action Plan.

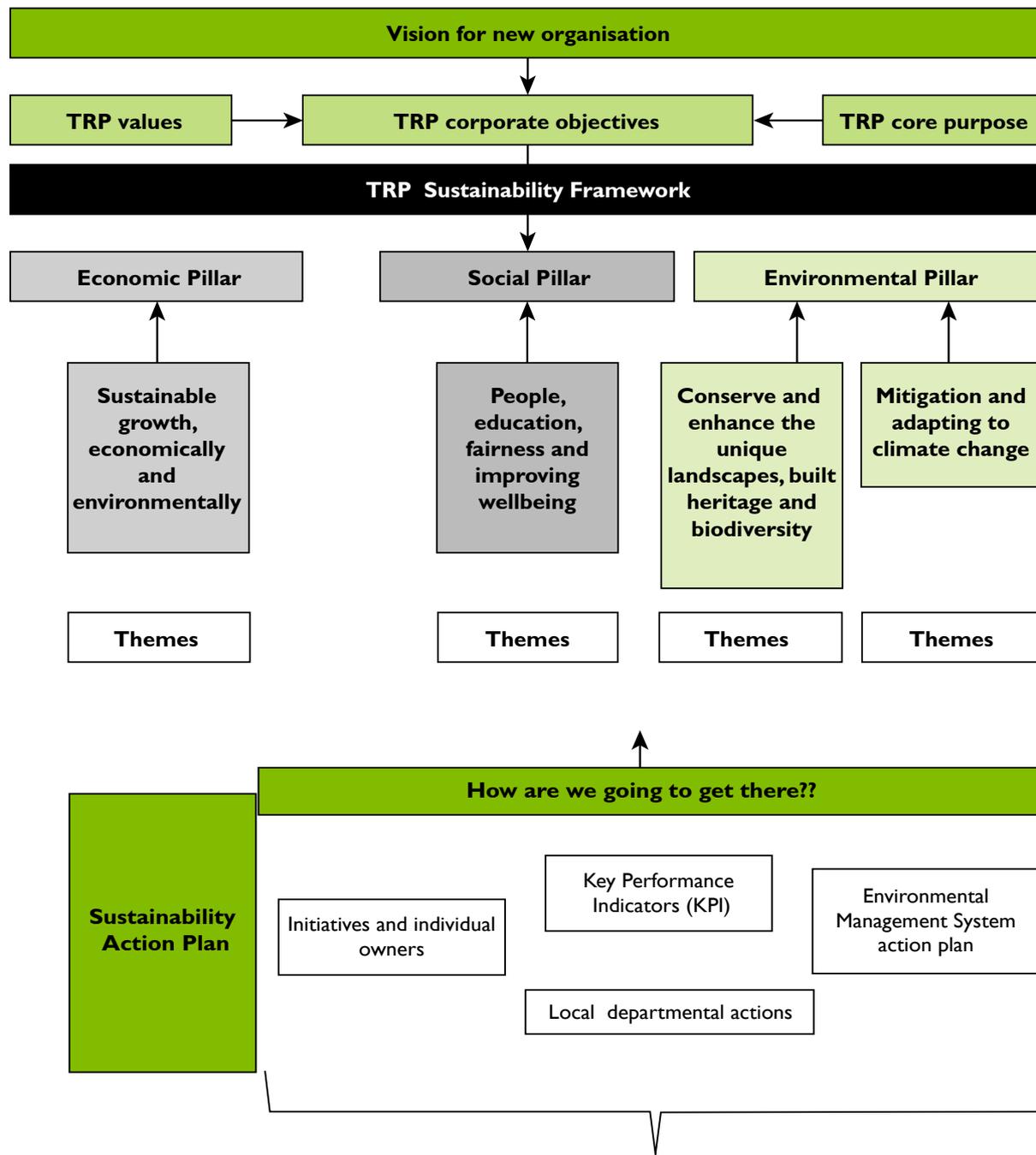
The Royal Parks’ Approach

In order to develop and deliver The Royal Parks’ Sustainability Framework, we needed to understand which elements of the organisation, and its operations, require improvement.

Figure 5 below outlines our approach to developing the Sustainability Strategy.

Sustainability Strategy 2015-2025 **The Royal Parks**

Figure 5 – Overview of the approach to developing The Royal Parks’ Sustainability Strategy



Stakeholders

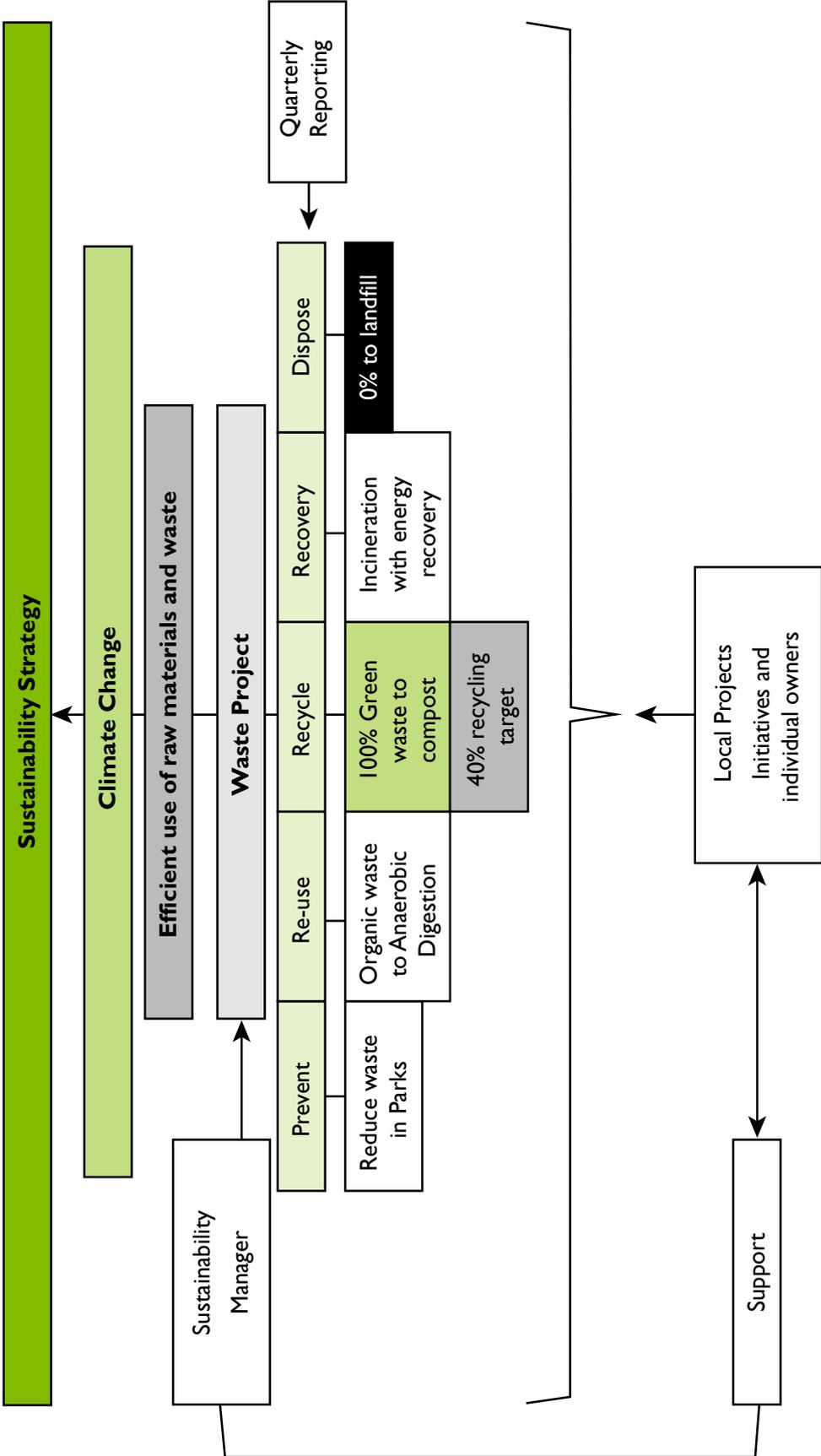
Stakeholders, both internal and external, have been actively engaged in developing the Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan. For internal stakeholders this includes:

- Park and Assistant Park Managers, park-based specialists, e.g. wildlife officers, administrators;
- Central service staff e.g. HR, ICT, finance, events;
- Education, community engagement and volunteering;
- Estates (building management, procurement, health and safety, licensing and planning);
- Park services (landscape architects, arboriculture, sustainability specialists); and
- Communications and marketing.

Stakeholders external to The Royal Parks include:

- The Royal Parks Foundation;
- Contractors (works and landscape maintenance), caterers, event organisers;
- Concessionaires, licensees and tenants;
- Volunteers;
- Park Friends' groups;
- Local residents and local groups;
- Volunteers and partners;
- Local and central government (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Historic England, Natural England, Historic Royal Palaces and Crown Estates);
- Visitors and users of the parks;
- Local authorities; and
- Park wildlife groups.

Figure 6 – Showing the interaction of the Waste Project with the Sustainability Strategy



Existing policies and plans

From discussions with the various groups it is evident that a lot of good practice already takes place in The Royal Parks. This is most apparent in specialist areas where plans and policies already exist for a variety of topics, for example the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. Owners of these existing documents were approached by the Sustainability Manager to understand their areas of focus, how they support delivery of corporate objectives and KPTs, and how in turn they will integrate with The Royal Parks' Sustainability Strategy. The better the integration, the higher the level of embedded sustainability into the whole organisation.

Going forward, and with the development of the Action Plan, we will consider how we embed the Sustainability Framework into existing policies and strategies. One example of where we have already achieved this is in The Royal Parks' Waste Project. This project sets aims and targets for all waste management across all parks. Please see Figure 6 for an example of how the Sustainability Strategy will interact with the Waste Project. The more areas of the business that take up the Waste Project (including

events, catering and contractors), the more sustainable The Royal Parks becomes in that theme (mitigating and adapting to climate change). Relevant existing plans and policies are detailed in **Annex A** with their interaction with the sustainability pillars.

Roles and responsibilities for delivering the Strategy

The strategy will be delivered through the Sustainability Action Plan, currently under development. The Action Plan will describe the measures required to achieve levels two, three and four within each pillar. Delivery will be coordinated by the Sustainability Manager, who will report quarterly to The Royal Parks Green Housekeeping Committee (GHKC) and ExCom on progress, including embedding the strategy across the organisation and its operations. The GHKC will also help set yearly programmes and report on progress. The Action Plan will supersede the environmental management action plan in the current ISO 14001 system.

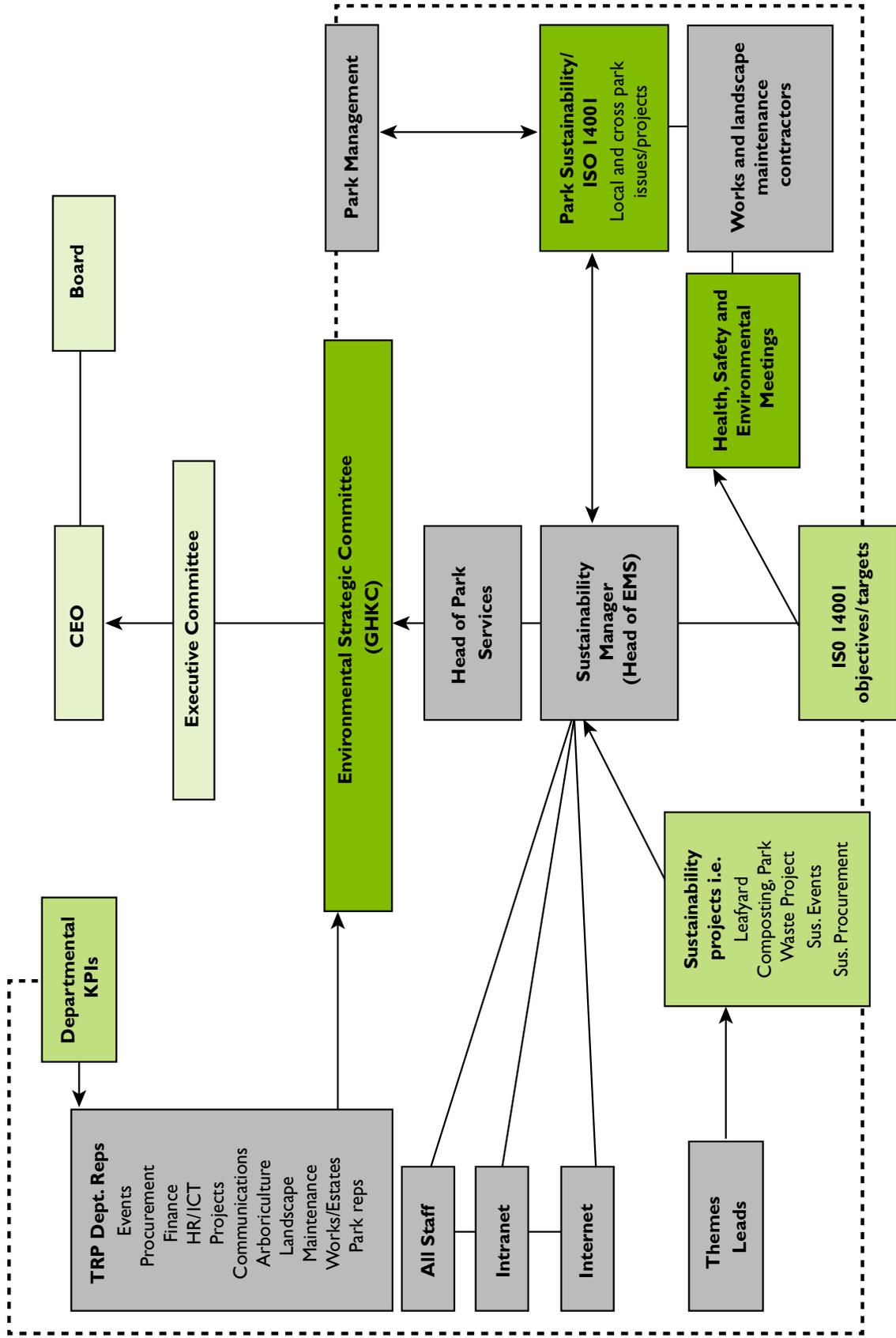
Making sustainability an organisational culture

The CEO has endorsed the Sustainability Strategy and ExCom members will lead, role model and challenge the organisation around behaviours and culture to ensure that the strategy is embedded into everything we do in support of becoming a more sustainable organisation, including working with our contractors, volunteers, partners and stakeholders. To help this, the following practical measures are being implemented:

Current measures

- All ExCom papers include a reference about how they contribute to sustainability;
- The Royal Parks' Chief Executive is the overall organisational sustainability champion and all ExCom members to lead by example in behaviours and actions;
- Each park and office has a sustainability champion to lead local sustainability, including energy and waste, through role modelling, spreading messages and building awareness;
- Champions feed into GHKC, and help to deliver programmes and embed behaviour change;
- The Project Approval Group scoring (which approves investment into large projects) reflects the sustainability pillars and themes; and
- There is a dedicated intranet page for sustainability.

Figure 7 – Current Environmental Management System reporting structure



New Measures

- The Sustainability Action Plan will replace the environmental management system action plan. It will be managed by GHKC and ISO 14001 operational meetings.
 - Delivery of the Action Plan will be managed as a programme
 - The theme lead will oversee delivery of a number of projects within the theme and KPIs will be agreed for each theme
 - Each project will be led by a project manager
 - The GHKC will agree annually the key projects and who will lead them.
- Where appropriate, sustainability will be embedded into staff performance objectives;
- There will be a dedicated internet page for sustainability;
- All staff will be encouraged to attend new sustainability training sessions;
- Sustainability pillars and themes will be used as selection and evaluation criteria for events, catering, works and landscape maintenance tenders;
- All Park Management and Operations Plans will address each sustainability pillar;
- All park communications will be encouraged to include some sustainability news;
- Annual review of the strategy to ensure organisational objectives and sustainability pillars remain aligned;
- Sustainability language to be regularly explained to ensure correct usage;
- Work with partners to align them to the strategy and Action Plan; and
- Include consideration of sustainability pillars and themes in all business cases.

Monitoring Success

The Royal Parks will report annually on progress against delivery of the Sustainability Action Plan. The Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan will form part of The Royal Parks ISO 14001 system. Progress will be overseen by GHKG and reported quarterly to ExCom.

Annex A – Understanding the pillars and themes

This section provides background to the selection of the four sustainability pillars and themes. The Royal Parks current approach and how an enhanced future approach could deliver our aspirations. The Sustainability Action Plan expands on specific actions towards delivering change.

I. Conserve and enhance the unique landscapes, built heritage and biodiversity

I.1. Eco-systems, wildlife and species

Significance

Biodiversity refers to “the variety of life on the planet”. The significance of protecting this variety is often underestimated. With increases in global populations, changing climates and competition for resources, there are more and more pressures on nature and species that live on the planet alongside us, to provide those resources. Maintaining biodiversity is an essential part of environmental protection. The world is at a point in time where there is a significant risk of losing much of what is present³³. The conservation of eco-systems, species and their

habitats is not just about protection, it is also about maintaining nature’s capacity to provide the goods and services on which humans rely. Unfortunately, according to a technical report published by the European Environment Agency (EEA)³³, “the majority of habitats and species in Europe have an unfavourable conservation status despite significant improvements for many species in recent years”³² (EEA 2015).

The EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy sets out six key indicators to help monitor biodiversity. The two main nature directives from the EU, the Birds and Habitats Directives, also play a central role in the EU’s biodiversity and nature conservation policies. What has been apparent is that when implemented well, conservation measures work, and improve the status of habitats and species on the ground. However, such improvements remain limited and patchy, and unfortunately Europe’s biodiversity is still being eroded overall and the pressures continue³³.

These pressures and Directives have a massive significance to public parks.

In London there is growing pressure for space and the Royal Parks remains one of the largest collections of green spaces within London for the habitats of many wildlife species including bats, birds, hedgehogs and insects. Furthermore, two of the parks, Richmond and Bushy, are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and have special protection status. This means that protecting the biodiversity of the parks under growing visitor numbers and reduced funding, is a challenge that The Royal Parks will have to meet.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks has a dedicated ecology and wildlife team which support the management of biodiversity and species across the parks in line with UK and EU practices. Much of the work is carried out in distinct projects. The current focus of team is:

- Protected species surveys – great crested newts, mining bees, fish, reptiles;
- Existing ecological surveying to National Vegetation Classification (NVC) standard across all eight parks, with a five year renewal cycle;
- Ground flora survey (and additionally lichen and

bryophytes) for Brompton Cemetery – this survey will be repeated every five years using the same methodology;

- Fungi survey;
- Bushy Park Canal Plantation pond restoration;
- Water quality monitoring;
- Bat surveys – monitoring bat roosts;
- Saproxylic invertebrate survey – to establish what assemblages of ‘deadwood’ invertebrates the Royal Parks have in veteran trees; and
- Management plans – updating the ecological sections of park management plans.

Furthermore, the team works with event organisers, contractors and other third parties to educate them on the unique environment of the parks, so that they understand and prevent any damage to potential habitats, as well as ensuring that they seek professional guidance on their activities.

The team has a number of different strategies and plans to help protect a variety of wildlife from park operations, including:

- Light pollution from events policy

- Pollinator Strategy
- Bats and trees guidelines
- Bats and buildings guidelines
- Pest management
- Bio-security in water

They are also developing procedures on bio-security in arboriculture and horticulture to reduce the possibility of invasive species, pests and diseases being introduced to the parks.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The EU Biodiversity Strategy³³ sets down a number of indicators to monitor performance up to 2020. The Royal Parks will aim to align its goals with the EU KPIs³³. These are:

- A reduction in the number of species threatened with extinction. Currently almost 25% of European animal species face the risk of extinction;
- An increase in the number of species and habitat types protected under EU nature legislation and in favourable conservation status. At present only 17% of assessed habitats and species are in a favourable conservation status;
- An improvement in the state of ecosystems and the services they provide;

- A strengthening of Europe's green infrastructure. Today, nearly 30% of the EU-27 territory is considered to be highly to moderately fragmented; and
- A decline in the over-exploitation of natural resources. Europeans currently consume more than twice what the EU's land and sea can deliver in terms of natural resources.

1.2. Natural landscapes and the built environment

Significance

Not only are the Royal Parks home to protected species and wildlife but they also contain environmental features and landscapes that are unique to the parks. Many of the landscapes form the very essence of what makes The Royal Parks unique. This could be from a historic point of view or by the ongoing specialist methods of their management, which have been developed over many years to produce places of horticultural and landscape excellence. When considering any changes or improvements to the parks and their maintenance, The Royal Parks needs to consider their effect on the landscape.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

Typically all of the Royal Parks are metropolitan open land with local areas of conservation. Most of the parks are Grade I historic landscapes listed in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England (the exception being Green Park which is Grade II) and all parks are within conservation areas. Greenwich is a World Heritage Site and Bushy and Richmond are both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Furthermore, Richmond is a (European) Special Area for Conservation (SAC). These often multiple designations influence how projects are prioritised, designed and delivered.

The Royal Parks is responsible for unique historic features of the parks, many of which have vital importance to the parks status. The Royal Parks strives to protect and enhance these features through its daily operations, and for many social and environmental reasons, including:

- The views and lines of site, for example, the view of St Paul's Cathedral from Richmond Park is an important part of the park's history;

- Local species of trees, soils, grasses and plants form part of the fabric of the parks;
- Ornamental plantings need to be designed and maintained to very high standards to ensure their quality is maintained;
- We manage our nurseries within the Royal Parks to ensure plants and trees are in excellent condition when they are placed in the parks; and
- The Royal Parks manages many buildings including listed and protected buildings, lodges and estates that are used for offices and private homes. These need to consider all the elements of this strategy, including improving energy efficiency.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks works closely with its contractors and partners to ensure that they contribute to the effective management of the landscapes and built environment. The Royal Parks will maintain the current SSSI status of Richmond and Bushy Parks and conduct research into enhancing the populations of a variety of species that are important to the parks.

1.3. Pest control and disease management

Significance

Pests and diseases in the parks are an increasingly significant issue for park management. With increasing use of the parks, more waste is produced which, unless properly managed, can attract and increase pests and the requirement for pest control. Pests can lead to increased human health concerns and damage to park vegetation, habitat and ecosystems.

The Royal Parks is seeing an increase in plant related diseases. This is in part due to the introduction of invasive species into the UK as well as diseases being transmitted internationally. The management of trees for pests and diseases such as oak processionary moth, bleeding canker (horse chestnuts) and acute oak decline has greatly increased over the past five to ten years. Without proper management, there can be an increased risk to human, tree and plant health and a potential for a significant detrimental impact on landscape character and quality.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks has adopted strict phyto-security measures to help combat the spread of pests and diseases. Every year there is a program of works carried out to identify and treat pests and diseases affecting the Royal Parks. The Royal Parks also has strict criteria for planting and sourcing of new tree species to ensure they are not infected with new diseases. We are hugely grateful for the continued support of our volunteers in this programme of pest and disease management.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks is reviewing the potential use of more diverse and resilient species of trees in new plantings to maximise long-term tree survival. We have pest and disease management procedures in place and these are subject to ongoing review. Through The Royal Parks' environmental management system ISO 14001 pest control will be increased as required.

1.4. Landscape and asset maintenance

Significance

Without the proper management of Royal Parks' landscapes and assets there is a risk to the quality of important landscape features.

For example, landscapes can deteriorate or irreversibly change due to improper management or invasive species colonising an area. This may lead to many historic and significant features being lost. Not only would there be less and lower quality parkland available to the public, there would also be a loss of history and the quality of the visitor experience would deteriorate.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

Currently, The Royal Parks uses Park Management Plans (PMP) to maintain the individual park landscapes and assets. They consist of two main documents:

1. A ten year 'Management Plan'
2. An annual 'Operations Plan'

Currently the PMPs have a 100-year vision with a ten-year plan, revised every five years, and are a tool to guide strategic decision-making for the park. The PMP sets out the strategic and policy framework, the historic context of the park,

as well as the landscape character areas. The Operations Plans are used for Green Flag applications and summarise applicable annual information from the PMP. The overall aim of these plans is to set out project priorities and:

- Support the delivery of the corporate objectives and sustainability;
- Establish the blueprint for the management of individual Royal Parks, setting out why, what, when and how The Royal Parks design, manage and maintain these precious landscapes;
- Bring together The Royal Parks' diverse activities and expertise in one place;
- Link policy to delivery;
- Engage and inform 'critical friends', stakeholders, volunteers and visitors; and
- Support funding bids.

The PMPs are effectively the local park implementation of the Sustainability Strategy, and therefore embedding sustainability, and priorities from the Action Plan, into these plans will be a key priority.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks is looking to develop a Landscape Strategy to capture the common principles to be used for all Park Management and Operations Plans. This will help improve the consistency of our approach to landscape maintenance and projects, and will be developed considering the sustainability pillars. The aspiration is for PMPs to more actively engage with day-to-day park management. The Sustainability Strategy and the Management and Operations Plans will be linked together in delivery via the park's business plan. The business plan will be developed from the PMP, and will continue to be included as a whole document within the Operations Plan.

PMPs are concerned primarily with the management of parks but will need to consider the wider Sustainability Framework. PMPs set down what is significant at a local park or area level; this has a direct effect on any scoring or prioritisation criteria in that area. What PMPs highlight as significant criteria for assessing projects will include the pillars and themes from the Sustainability Strategy.

1.5. Heritage – history

Significance

Each Royal Park has a unique and varied history and most of them are over 400 years old. Over the years, the use and design of the parks has evolved. Within the parks there are important ornamental features, listed buildings, landmarks, exceptional views, historic designed or naturalised landscapes and much more, which reflect the changing nature of the parks over time.

It is important for all park operations to respect the history of individual park areas and landscapes, and to find ways to effectively maintain and improve these to protect their heritage, and for future generations to enjoy.

Research suggests that historic gardens and cultural landscapes can be valued, in economic terms, in a similar way to museums or art galleries, with permanent collections of artefacts, assets and picturesque views. But the Royal Parks also have an environmental value. Some tools, such as the green infrastructure valuation toolkits, can approximate the green value provided by the parks, but don't put a value on heritage (Holmes 2014)³⁵. However, it is clear that the Royal Parks, as

designed landscapes and cultural and heritage assets, have a significant economic and cultural value, and this contributes to the London economy and the nation's wealth.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

Each park has its own story. Some examples of significant themes of history and heritage that the parks look to enhance and manage include: archaeological finds or sites, for example, the Roman fort and Saxon graves at Greenwich Park; historic and significant monuments, such as the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens; and historic views such as from Primrose Hill.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

In addition to section 1.4 we will investigate using digital technology to bring park stories to life, particularly the heritage and history of these magnificent landscapes. We are considering running a pilot in Greenwich Park as part of this wider programme.

2. Mitigation and adapting to climate change

Climate change is a complex issue that can have a variety of impacts on and consequences for an organisation such as The Royal Parks. First, climate change refers to

changes in global temperatures and thus the subsequent change in wind, water and air patterns of behaviour (the climate)¹⁷. Second, the local, national and world climate does naturally change over the course of thousands of years, but what has become apparent is that humans can have a significant effect on their local and global climate due to the effects of emissions produced from the release of stored energy during processes such as combustion. There has been a massive influx of energy into the global system, which has led to increases in temperature and changes in climate. This can lead to a range of negative effects including water scarcity through erratic rainfall; reduced air quality from higher emissions; increasing sea levels from greater sea ice melt; and more dramatic weather patterns as the planet adapts (or reacts) to this increase in energy and emissions in the atmosphere.

Over the last 50 years this has been called the enhanced green house effect or enhanced global warming and is predicted to increase. The Royal Parks needs to start taking measures to ensure that the environment of the park can survive the potential changes (water scarcity, a rise in average temperatures, more erratic seasons) and also contribute

towards local and national efforts to mitigate climate change by increasing carbon capture and improving air quality, as well as reducing its own emissions from things like waste and energy consumption. The Royal Parks have affectionately been called “London’s Lungs”, due to the cleaner air in the parks, and as they provide essential emissions sequestration for the wider area. We could also be called London’s thermostat, as in summer our parks are cooler than the surrounding city, providing respite from the heat, and in winter the parks can provide local residents with flood protection. The next section explores which elements of climate change The Royal Parks will focus on.

2.1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Significance

One of the biggest reasons why enhanced climate change is taking place is the amount of additional green house gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrogen oxide (NO₂) that are being released into the atmosphere. These gases can cause increases in global temperatures through the enhanced green house effect. The Royal Parks needs to ensure that it manages and considers the impact

of all its carbon and other emissions producing operations, such as the energy and fuel it uses. Energy consumption is essential to any operation and without it The Royal Parks would not be able to operate. However, the energy used should be managed in the most efficient way and steps taken to reduce the resultant emissions. Potential management measures could be through changing how, where and what energy is received, as different methods produce different losses of energy and different sources of energy create different levels of emissions.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks is aware that one of the main ways it can contribute to reducing emissions and improving air quality is through the maintenance of its tree and plant populations, as well as by aiming to minimise its energy consumption. We currently use a method of assessing trees to monitor their health through Arbortrack, and more recently through I-trees assessments. Both systems help to quantify the environmental, social (amenity) and even economic value of park trees and help to monitor decline and/or improvements. We have individual Tree Planting Strategies for areas of

the parks that contribute to PMPs. The Royal Parks recognises that trees:

- Contribute to the environmental elements of sustainability such as increased biodiversity, CO₂ absorption, O₂ production, particulate absorption, urban heat island effect mitigation and storm water mitigation;
- Have value as an amenity to park visitors, both visually and psychologically; and
- Are vulnerable to damage from environmental degradation, pest and disease damage, mechanical damage, rooting area degradation and temperature change.

The Royal Parks also seeks to ensure energy is managed as efficiently as possible. We collaborate with partners, and have commissioned specialist consultants to help monitor the monthly usage of energy, and identify areas of high consumption for improvements. We monitor all energy in and out of the park and report quarterly to DCMS on the carbon footprint of gas, electricity and water. We aim to purchase energy efficient materials and equipment i.e. boilers, insulation and windows, to help reduce energy

loss. Our buildings and lodges are also monitored for their energy efficiency. In it's of energy The Royal Parks encourages gas and electricity suppliers to use renewable energy to power the parks. We also seek to source our own energy from renewable sources, which have significantly less emissions than fossil fuel operations²¹ (Simms et al. 2003), For example the Royal Parks Foundation building in Hyde Park was built with solar panels on the roof to provide energy to the classrooms and national grid.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

In order to maintain its contribution to improving air quality and ensuring the capture of quantities of carbon to help reduce the net effect of climate change, The Royal Parks needs to ensure that its tree population is best able to respond to the increasing demands. This means a pro-active approach to identifying resistant species of trees to water and temperatures changes, as well as finding and trialling new approaches to disease management. We are also working with other organisations to monitor the air quality of the parks and will be looking at measures to improve park air quality through carbon capture and sequestration methods. Reasonable

and cost effective measures which will both save money and improve the environment for trees will be investigated and could include:

- Better protection for tree rooting environments e.g. during events and in heavy footfall areas;
- Soil mitigation e.g. changed leaf collection practices, more mulching around the bases of trees: and
- Changes to mowing regimes, e.g. increase of halo mowing and meadow management for grassland.

Finally, The Royal Parks is aiming to reduce its overall energy consumption over time and find green sources of energy with lower emissions.

2.2. Sustainable transport

Significance

Transport contributes about one fifth of green house gas emissions in the EU¹⁹ and therefore has a massive impact on air quality and enhanced climate change. The CO₂ emissions of a car are directly proportional to the quantity of fuel consumed by an engine²⁰. While there has been progress in reducing some pollutants from vehicles, there has been very

little progress in reducing CO₂ from combustion, despite improvements in engine efficiency. This means that one of the only sure ways to reduce the impact of travel is to use other non-combustion travel options or reduce the amount of travel itself.

However, travel is not only about moving people and goods from one location to another; it is also about social mobility and economic development. The main organisation responsible for transport in London is Transport for London (TfL). One result of a growing UK economy is an increase in transport demand. There are also significant demands on space within London and the transport network, which can impact on health and safety considerations relating to transport.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks directly manages the roads in the Royal Parks and works closely with TfL, local authorities and Highways England on a range of transport projects including the Cycle Superhighways and projects to improve London's air quality. We encourage our staff to use sustainable forms of transport through our green travel plan and seek to reduce the number of vehicles using park roads. The

Royal Parks have 68 miles of paths, cycle routes and horse rides. We also encourage event organisers to promote sustainable travel. The Royal Parks is developing Transport Principles to help direct future transport planning within the parks.

There are several areas of work where The Royal Parks is already making transport related improvements including:

- Reducing vehicle movements within parks by staff and contractors;
- Using low emission vehicles in The Royal Parks fleet;
- Encouraging the use of bicycles and walking between parks;
- Applying conditions to contractors to minimise vehicle use; and
- Working with TfL on supporting sustainable transport e.g. cycle and pedestrian usage.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks will continue to manage vehicles to avoid any unnecessary movements within its parks and to minimise vehicle emissions produced within the parks, particularly from our own, and

contractor or concession, vehicles. We will seek to utilise the latest technologies for our fleet and will work with park stakeholders to ensure that they are committed to the same practices. As part of our Transport Principles, we will work with TfL and others to help minimise the impact of vehicular traffic in the parks.

2.3. Managing water

Significance

Sufficient water supply and good water quality are key ingredients in the health and well-being of humans, animals and plants, and in the protection of park habitats and ecosystems. Poor water management can incur many economic costs, including the degradation of ecosystem services, wildlife health-related costs, negative effects on tourism and increased water treatment costs²² (World Water Development Report 2012). The correct management of water in the Royal Parks is essential to everything living in the parks.

There are considerable demands on the water supply in London and The Royal Parks needs to ensure stable sustainable sources, at the quality level required, to meet existing and future demands. We also need to be aware of any consequences of

inefficient management of water, for example on water consumption, land drainage and on sewage systems.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

When The Royal Parks manages water it considers a number of aspects:

- Water and urbanization
- Water resources management
- Water quality
- Water security
- Water and energy
- Water-related hazards
- Water and ecosystems

At present The Royal Parks abstracts water under an Environment Agency licence from boreholes in The Regent's, Greenwich and Hyde Parks and Kensington Gardens, and also from wells in St James's Park. The Royal Parks has developed an approach to better water management, which outlines the key pressures on water in the parks and the proposed mitigation for these, including:

- The perceived gap between water supply and demand in London of 10% by 2025;
- The need for a resilient secure water supply and reduced mains water usage;

- The proposal for more green infrastructure, green roofs, swales, more sustainable drainage, and water attenuation to mitigate severe rainfall events;
- The need to provide increased tree canopy in suitable locations;
- The need for "wet site" (more ponds and water storage) to facilitate urban cooling via the urban heat sink effect;
- The management of flood risk within the parks, with mitigation measures; and
- The reduction of pressure from the parks on London's sewers and reduction of impermeable surfacing to enable the slowing of water runoff.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks' approach to better water management focuses on analysing our current water management practices and regimes under three key themes:

- Water supply management;
- Rainfall and surface water management; and
- Lake, river and water body management.

These will inform planning to improve water management across the whole Royal Parks estate.

2.4. Efficient use of raw materials and waste

Significance

Efficient use of resources is an essential to sustainability. This applies not only to personnel and financial resources, but also to the use of raw materials. The Royal Parks uses a diverse range of products to manage its landscapes and to deliver its functions, and minimising their consumption will reduce the impact on the environment, as well as reducing the procurement and operating costs.

The Royal Parks must consider the sustainability and impact on climate change of all the materials it buys and the resources it uses to maintain its green open spaces, and how it manages all park waste. The effective management of waste is a particularly visible and important factor that contributes towards reducing the effects on climate change. Waste management can create large quantities of green house gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide and methane. Methane is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse

gas and is released as waste decomposes in landfill without the presence of oxygen (Rifkin 2009). Therefore, diverting waste from high green house gas emitting waste processes such as landfill is a key priority for The Royal Parks.

When thinking about value for money and overall sustainability of processes, the aim is to minimise total costs by purchasing the product or service with the lowest whole-life costs that is fit for purpose and meets the required specifications.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks has a number of sustainable procurement tools (discussed in section 4.6) available for the purchase of resources. These are based upon the key pillars laid down in this Strategy. More specifically, we are working to effectively manage all of our waste operations and aim to recycle all non-contaminated green waste, as well as increasing the recycling of all other waste.

The Royal Parks currently contracts out the majority of its waste operation to its landscape maintenance contractors (LMCs). The LMCs are responsible for delivering the current waste process, which includes collecting and processing the general litter in the parks, any waste

in the park bins and office waste. LMCs are required to attain a waste recycling/re-use target of 40% of total waste produced by 2016.

The Royal Parks has also created a Waste Project and is now starting to implement this across all of its operations, including events, works and landscape maintenance and catering. The Waste Project sets down a common approach to waste management across all of the parks and will help guide all of The Royal Parks' partners in their approach to waste. Progress will be monitored through delivery of the Sustainability Action Plan.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks will embed the Sustainability Strategy into the purchase of all raw materials and aim to reduce the overall impact of the associated emissions, with a focus on the management and reduction of waste. We aim to be a leader in waste management for green open spaces, and our Waste Project will help to change the way we manage our waste based upon a common approach. Specifically The Royal Parks will aim to:

- Reduce the overall amount of waste produced against a 2013/14 baseline (in relation to the number of people

entering the parks each year, i.e. kg of waste produced per person);

- Where appropriate, explore all options for the re-use of waste, including;
 - Investigating if catering and organic wastes can be sent to anaerobic digestion plants;
 - Sending ICT equipment to the appropriate re-use facility;
- Continue to compost 95% of our green material (where legally allowable);
- Increase the recycling rate for non-green waste to 40 per cent by the end of 2016, based on overall tonnage produced;
- Divert all (legally allowable) waste from landfill; and
- Improve the data available and the presentation of that data to inform management planning.

3. People, education, fairness and improving wellbeing

3.1. Healthy workforce – becoming a centre of excellence for innovation, flexibility, retention of staff and succession planning

Significance

Having a healthy and active workforce can have a number of positive economic and social factors for The Royal Parks. There can be reduced numbers of days off work due to illness and increased productivity through improved engagement. The longer a member of staff remains in post without significant time off, the better the return on investment. Therefore, in order to keep staff longer, the parks need to invest in our staff, and their lives while at work, to create a positive reciprocal cycle.

There are also a number of negative consequences for losing staff. The first being the cost to replace a member of staff; this has been estimated at six months of that person's salary²⁵ (Taylor 1992). Second, the time resource to find new staff, and the knowledge lost, when a person leaves, known as corporate memory. Some of the main factors that can reduce the likelihood of people leaving are:

- Improved communications
- Better induction processes

- Stronger selection criteria
- Improved work-life balance
- Salary and flexibility in negotiation
- Career prospects
- Associated benefits
- Office environment

The Royal Parks will work hard to improve its approach to these factors in order to keep an active workforce for longer. We will invest in the development of people to ensure an innovative and flexible workforce.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

Being a centre of excellence is one of The Royal Parks' corporate objectives and a key sustainability theme. The Royal Parks is a very varied and exciting place to work, where staff have the opportunity to shape a historic environment and work in some of the most unique environments in the world. The surrounding natural environment offers those who work in the parks a special experience in London. The Royal Parks is currently a government agency and its employment policies reflect the requirements and best practice of central government, including the key competency framework by which employees are openly and

fairly recruited and annually assessed on their performance.

The Royal Parks also has a number of people in key positions who have served the parks for a large part of their careers. Ensuring that their knowledge is retained and that we have a strong corporate memory is addressed through succession planning. We also run a number of programmes for our staff in order to promote their well-being at work and a good work-life balance, and to help invest in their future. These include:

- Skills Sharing, a programme of shared learning about the parks and the management of them;
- Staff are encouraged to undertake five days learning and development each year;
- Access to online civil service learning across a variety of skills and competencies;
- A hot desk policy, which allows a more flexible work environment;
- In association with DCMS, reduced price gym membership of the Central YMCA Club;

- Offering staff free, confidential and independent support through the Employee Assistance Programme, to help them balance their work, family and personal lives;
- Encouraging staff to attend ExCom as observers and submit projects through the project approval process.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

During 2016/2017, The Royal Parks and the Royal Parks Foundation (the charity that fundraises for the eight Royal Parks) will become a new single organisation (a charitable public corporation) to manage and fundraise for the Royal Parks. With increased freedoms and controls similar to a charity rather than a government department, the parks can be managed more efficiently, while maintaining visitor satisfaction. The new organisation will be exploring how it can improve its approach to recruitment and retention to ensure we attract and retain the best talent to meet the future challenges, including around becoming a more sustainable organisation.

3.2. Education and volunteering

Significance

Education, or lack of it, can be an opportunity or a barrier, and increased education is vital for the economic prosperity of any nation. The Royal Parks should use its position as an opportunity to provide education on environmental and social topics relevant to the parks and contribute towards educational goals.

Volunteering is playing an increasing role in the delivery of educational and park services across the parks. The Royal Parks is increasingly using partners and other non-governmental organisations to assist in meeting the needs of the parks, while at the same time providing learning opportunities for people. Furthermore, offering volunteering opportunities to local people to contribute towards the upkeep of the parks helps build community partnerships and trust; it instils a sense of pride; and it helps people give something back. Volunteering can give individuals a sense of self worth and belief, and can offer benefits to developing team and work skills whilst offering quality time away from work or a busy lifestyle. It can even offer a route to employment²⁷.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

For many years The Royal Parks has engaged with its local communities to promote education and volunteering. The Royal Parks provides access to a range of lifelong learning opportunities, raising awareness and understanding of the heritage and natural world of the parks and developing activities for participation. The journey begins on the first visit to the park, maybe as a child, and continues throughout life, supporting well-being, knowledge and skills development, and increasing social interaction.

The Royal Parks' education, volunteering and community participation programmes enable people to make a positive contribution to their local Royal Park. We use a range of engagement methods and often work in partnership with others, engaging with different sections of the community based on their particular needs, and providing platforms for informing and consulting with local communities and promoting participatory activities. We work with experienced partners to deliver the environmental education services (the Field Studies Council education service, the Holly Lodge Centre and the Lookout Education Centre), all of whom hold the

Learning outside the Classroom quality benchmark.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks and partners are working to increase the number of people engaged in volunteering, as well as the amount and variety of volunteering opportunities.

3.3. Community engagement

Significance

A fundamental factor in being sustainable is to consider the impact an operation has on its surroundings. In the Royal Parks, the local community is vast and varied, ranging from palaces to private residents, to small and large businesses. There are a large number of people with interest in the parks and how they are run, because it directly affects their lives or livelihoods. Inclusion creates buy-in for projects, policies and changes, as well as helping to reduce resistance and produce better results.

Resistance can come in the form of legal objections or even through media channels which may negatively affect reputation, whereas positive engagement and meaningful inclusion can lead to the empowerment of local residents²⁸ (Turner 2012). A process of engagement can:

- Improve The Royal Parks' knowledge;
- Help The Royal Parks target its resources;
- Provide investment in the excellence of the parks – funding, volunteering; and
- Encourage mutual learning.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks regularly engages with stakeholders across a wide range of issues. Stakeholders engage with each or all of our parks in different ways, at different times and for different reasons. They provide a valuable source of insight and expertise, and their continued support and contribution is critical to our success in conserving the parks and maximising opportunities to enjoy them. The importance of stakeholder engagement is reflected in our corporate objectives.

The Royal Parks Stakeholder Engagement Strategy provides a framework to enable us to better plan, deliver and monitor the effectiveness of our engagement, and identifies the following key principles:

- To seek, listen to and consider a diverse range of stakeholder views, knowledge and experience;

- To be open about where stakeholder views have been taken into account;
- To engage with stakeholders at the earliest opportunity about issues relevant to or affecting them;
- To carry out fair, open and meaningful consultation on significant issues affecting park users;
- To communicate information clearly and through different channels to maximise accessibility and understanding; and
- To continue to embed stakeholder engagement into The Royal Parks' culture and activities.

We aim to communicate relevant and timely information to our stakeholders and use a variety of channels. We host stakeholder meetings in each of the parks twice a year, meet with the Chairs of the Friends groups for each of our parks and have regular bilateral meetings with partner organisations. We consult formally on major changes to park business, and less formally, for example through online surveys. We also engage stakeholders in the development of our PMPs.

We aim to make our stakeholder engagement as inclusive as possible, within the resources available. We host a programme of Meet the Park Team events, targeting park users who do not regularly engage with us, in an open and informal way. We continue to respond to particular areas where stakeholders have concerns. In 2013, we established a stakeholder group of residents, local Councillors and event organisers, who meet regularly before and after events in Hyde Park. This was initially created for the summer concerts but because of the group's success, it has now been extended to include other major events in Hyde Park.

Understanding how many visitors are coming to our parks, and their priorities, is invaluable information for us as guardians of these unique spaces. Visitor research, published in 2015, is helping us to plan effectively, ensure our resources are used in the right way and maintain the balance between users of the parks and the need to sustain the natural and wildlife environment.

Where is the Royal Parks heading?
We will continue to engage with stakeholders through a variety of channels, including Meet the

Park events, stakeholder meetings, meeting with the Chairs of the Friends groups and regular bi-lateral meetings with key partners. Having conducted extensive visitor research in 2013-14, we are continuing to use this information to support effective planning, including, and ensuring our resources are used in the right way and maintaining the balance between users of the parks and the need to sustain the natural and wildlife environment. We will continue to build our work to harness digital technology in support of stakeholder engagement, including improving interpretation in the parks.

3.4. Health and sport

Significance

The significance of sport as part of a healthy lifestyle in major cities cannot be overestimated. In an age where large urban cities have an ever increasing demand for space due to an increasing population, there is more and more need to find ways to exercise and stay active. In a major city like London, the Royal Parks offer a large range of spaces and sporting activities and events, both formal and informal, accessible to all. This includes football and rugby for schools, informal jogging and international sporting events like the London Marathon. Without

this, many people's lives would be negatively affected. "Four in five (81%) sports club members say they make friends through their exercising compared to just 14% of fitness centre users"²⁹ (sport and recreation UK). Physical activity programmes at work can reduce absenteeism by up to 20%²⁹ (sport and recreation UK).

A report by the British Heart Foundation shows that 44% of the UK population does no "moderate physical activity"³¹ (British Heart Foundation). The report places the UK 16th out of 28 EU countries when it comes to getting active. With the total cost of physical inactivity estimated to exceed over £900m a year, the report also found that only 10% of the UK population participate in sport "regularly", placing the UK 12th³¹ (British Heart Foundation). The issue of inactivity and its effect on the work force and people's health is only set to increase. Therefore The Royal Parks has a significant opportunity to help improve the UK's activity levels,

Furthermore, cities are re-developing their global image through sport. The Royal Parks offer important sites in which to hold and play both formal and informal sports in London. Sport is more and more being used to promote an

attractive city and helps define the image of a city³⁰ (Smith 2001). The Royal Parks can use sport to help attract people to London and the parks. There is also a responsibility to local populations for providing active and passive recreational areas. Seven out of ten teenagers believe antisocial behaviour occurs because young people are bored²⁹. Thirty eight per cent of people believe that the Government's main priority for sport funding should be targeted at using sport to reduce crime and improve education²⁹. Strengthening attachments in communities and reducing social inequalities are particularly important mechanisms for preventing violence and offending. Therefore, as the importance of the Royal Parks as a place for activity is likely to increase, we must continue to balance the enjoyment and inclusion that activities bring to the communities and visitors we serve locally, nationally and internationally, with the provision of spaces for quiet enjoyment and relaxation and to protect and conserve our parks for future generations.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks has invested in promoting health, activity and sport across its parks. For example, The

Hub, home to the largest outdoor sports facility in London, promotes a healthy, active lifestyle whilst offering iconic views over a Grade I listed parkland. It aims to engage people in a range of sports, health and wellbeing activities, and encourages wider access, and developing stronger relations with the local community.

The Royal Parks health and well-being aims are:

- To continue to engage people in sport, health and wellbeing activities;
- To develop established partnerships with other organisations to maximise facility usage;
- To promote sports bookings, events and tournaments;
- To develop partnerships with public, voluntary and private sector organisations to maximise facility usage and encourage wider access by under-represented groups;
- To develop stronger relations with the local community; and
- To encourage passive as well as active recreation as a means to enhance well being, for example, dog walking, health referral schemes and walking for health.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks seeks to maximise its role in contributing towards maintaining a healthy and active London population through the encouragement of recreation, sport, health and well-being.

3.5. Visitor experience

Improving the sustainability of the park environment will contribute to improving the experience of visitors in the parks for years to come. A measure for this is the visitor surveys, the last one of which was conducted by IPSOS Mori, published in 2015. We regularly get feedback from visitors through other channels such as social media, through our contractors who maintain our parks and buildings, through event organisers and through our catering concessions. Understanding what visitors are saying about our parks ensures that we can continue to improve their experience of them.

4. Sustainable growth – providing environmentally excellent and financially viable green open spaces to the public

The Royal Parks core purpose is to manage the Royal Parks effectively and efficiently, balancing the responsibility to conserve and enhance the unique environments with creative

policies to encourage access and to increase opportunities for enjoyment, education, entertainment and healthy recreation. Increasing visitor numbers, combined with reduced funding, bring challenges.

4.1. Efficient generation and responsible use of funds

Significance

Running the parks costs around £36 million per annum, over 65% of which is self-generated. Over the past 10 years the amount of money The Royal parks self generates has risen by 145%, while our government grant has reduced by 49%.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

Our self-generated income derives from a number of sources. Just under 40% is from events, with around 60% coming from a range of other income streams, including catering, grants, lottery funding, donors, sponsors, licences, rental income from lodges, filming and photography.

Increasing value for money is a key objective of this theme. This means, for example, purchasing the product or service with the lowest whole-life costs that is fit for purpose and meets The Royal Parks specification. Value is not always the cheapest

price, but includes tangible products and intangible services. We have also worked hard in recent years to get better value for money from our events, including tendering for our largest events and working with event organisers to improve the customer experience of events we host, thereby increasing spend, and maximising our income from a wider range of event income streams. We keep our event rate card under review to ensure that it represents best value for money for the different spaces in which events can be held.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

Bringing The Royal Parks and the Royal Parks Foundation together into a new charitable public corporation will ensure that the parks can be managed more efficiently, while maintaining visitor satisfaction. Placing fundraising and managing the parks under one organisation will also attract greater fundraising support. Growing sustainable income streams efficiently, and through responsible use of funds under the new organisational structure, consistent with this sustainability theme, will become even more critical.

4.2. Transparency and public accountability

Significance

The principles of transparency and accountability are important to all organisations and even more so when the main stakeholder is the public. In modern society responsibilities and powers are delegated on behalf of society in the form of government. A democratic society demands that there are some assurances from those responsible not to misuse the powers they have been granted. This means the right to information about how those powers and responsibilities are being used, and about the performance of the organisation against best practice and societal expectations.

For The Royal Parks, transparency and accountability means accountability to the public and its parent department, DCMS, as well as central government, for the powers The Royal Parks have been granted to manage the parks. The Royal Parks also has responsibilities to its stakeholders for the management of the parks, including visitors, interest groups, staff, partners and many more. The Royal Parks shares relevant information and is transparent in its decisions in order

to build an economically stable park and to build trust with those that support The Royal Parks.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks reports annually through HM Treasury. The Royal Parks also holds regular stakeholder meetings where information is shared, and seeks to engage or consult on new projects and new operations. Progress against the principles of stakeholder engagement set out in The Royal Parks' Stakeholder Engagement Plan are reported annually, Please see more on stakeholder engagement in **Section – 3.3**.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks will also start to report on progress against the Sustainability Strategy from 2016/7.

4.3. Sustainable events

Significance

The Royal Parks currently hosts a large number of events of all sizes each year. Events provide a vital source of income, allowing us to continue to maintain the parks to high standards against the backdrop of declining Government funding. We also host events to provide cultural, social and sporting activities in the

open space, to mark ceremonial, unique and one-off events of a national or historic importance and to promote a wider appreciation of the parks to a diverse range of visitors. Events also benefit the wider London economy, in particular the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors, which benefit from spending from those attending events.

In terms of major events, we host around 30 of these each year. Events in recent years include Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday, the Golden and Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Her Majesty the Queen, and the hosting of 11 sporting competitions across six of our parks as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We also host hundreds of small events in our parks every year, many of which are enjoyed by our local communities, from sponsored walks and runs to picnics and school sports days.

We ensure that event organisers respect the environment and heritage that they are working in, and the constraints that these bring, and put in place measures to protect the park fabric and ecology. We work with event organisers to deliver a successful event and to ensure that they appropriately engage with stakeholders, and

maximise safe access for park users. We ensure our parks are fully restored after events have taken place, funded by event organisers.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks was one of the initial members that helped shape and create the National British Standard 8901 (now updated to ISO 20121) on sustainable events. Currently we require major event organisers to manage their events in accordance with the principles of ISO 20121 and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) and to not only meet, but go beyond all applicable health, safety and environmental legislation. The Royal Parks requires event organisers to be responsible for their waste, energy consumption and to mitigate any negative impacts an event has on wildlife and biodiversity. Any environmentally hazardous materials must be appropriately controlled and any environmental incidents managed in accordance with best practice and legislative requirements. We encourage the use of re-useable consumables and work with organisers to minimise their impact.

The Royal Parks expects event organisers to consider the guiding principles and park-specific criteria set out in **Hosting Major Events in The Royal Parks** when submitting an event application. As described in the stakeholder engagement section, The Royal Parks, together with event organisers, works with local residents and councillors to make sure that they are aware of the events we are hosting, and to address any issues or concerns.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

In future we will require all event organisers to make efforts to align with The Royal Parks Sustainability Strategy, and are developing a Sustainable Events Best Practice Guide. For example, events should minimise their consumption of finite resources in the construction process and limit the number of consumables they use. Furthermore, they should take steps to minimise their energy and water consumption in the production of events and help maintain the air quality of the park by limiting their emissions of pollutants. Where possible, event organisers should also use renewable energy sources or low emission fuels in vehicles and generators.

The Royal Parks expects event organisers to manage and control all waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy (Eliminate, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, and Dispose) and The Royal Parks' Waste Project. There are significant benefits at events to develop closed loop supply chains where recycling rates of more than 70 per cent can be achieved if a strong grip is maintained on the materials coming on site. We will expect a minimum 40 per cent recycling and re-use rate for total waste generated at an event, including construction materials. We expect that no event waste produced will go to landfill, except in exceptional circumstances. Suitable waste management records must be kept, including waste transfer and consignment notes.

Event organisers must ensure all discharges are appropriately managed, with necessary consents from The Royal Parks and relevant authorities. Events should consider life-cycle thinking in their selection of materials, taking into account the environmental and social costs of products, and ensuring they are from sustainable sources as much as possible.

Event organisers should also promote the sustainable behaviour of attendees, for example encouraging the use of public transport, and promoting a healthy and active lifestyle and the recycling of waste. All events should minimise their impact on park vegetation and infrastructure by protecting park surfaces and by taking steps to protect park wildlife and habitat. This includes the maintenance and protection of soils and trees.

If food is served at an event, the event organiser should consider the sourcing of that food as well as promoting a balanced diet. Events should also take into account, and where possible support, the local community. For example, event organisers may wish to consider how it might provide any programmes for recruitment and engagement of local people, or vulnerable groups.

4.4. Sustainable construction

Significance

The UK is aiming to be an exemplar in sustainable construction¹⁴.

Therefore, when considering any construction project The Royal Parks needs to consider all elements of this Sustainability Strategy.

Sustainable construction has some

large overlaps with procurement. In the UK, government has produced strict criteria for the operation of the construction industry due to its high impact on people's lives, the economy and the environment.

The UK strategy for sustainable construction (2008) and the Sustainability in Construction Procurement Action Plan 2012-2015,¹⁵ highlighted several key pillars and principles for the construction industry when considering sustainability. These were:

- Re-use existing built assets;
- Design for minimum waste;
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change (minimise energy in construction and use);
- Do not pollute (air quality);
- Preserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Respect for people; and
- Innovation.

Therefore all those planning and undertaking construction in The Royal Parks need to consider this strategy and the pillars it highlights.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

Every year The Royal Parks spends millions of pounds on works and building maintenance and improvement projects within the parks. This requires a substantial amount of construction work. The Royal Parks ensures that every project engages with the UK strategy on construction, relevant health, safety and environmental legislation.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

Construction regulations are only set to increase and The Royal Parks will build new regulations and best practice, as well as this Sustainability Strategy, into its construction projects. Construction and procurement will need to work more closely in order to establish environmental and social criteria for working with The Royal Parks. We also need to be more commercially aware of changes to the rental and property market and the demands they place on our asset portfolio. For example, we need to revise our lodge's programme where internal research suggests lodges need midlife refurbishments (after around eight years) to increase their value and meet current rental expectations and trends.

4.5. Ensuring The Royal Parks procures more sustainably

Significance

Sustainable procurement is a key element of sustainable development for central government. It has close ties with sustainable construction and sustainable events, in that when The Royal Parks tenders and purchases goods and services, it will take into account the whole life-cycle cost of each product or service, based upon economic, environmental and social criteria. The scoring of those criteria will be challenging, and influenced by the type of service or product being procured. The Royal Parks will evaluate its suppliers against its Sustainability Framework in order to achieve its aims.

The landscape maintenance contracts are some of the biggest service contracts that The Royal Parks has, and we will ensure we procure these services in line with this strategy.

Some of the biggest global areas for concerns with regard to procurement are food, waste and water. Water and waste are discussed in previous sections and below we consider the global food concerns that relate to The Royal Parks' activity.

The issue of food supply and scarcity around the world is growing in significance. With the increasing pressure to develop new fuels, such as bio-fuels, more and more land is being dedicated to producing fuels for vehicles. Growing populations, human conflicts, political instability and environmental issues are also affecting land availability and food supplies. This is leading to price increases in food and the resulting competition for land and water has led to food being likened to the new "oil"¹⁶ (Vidal 2012).

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

At present The Royal Parks uses a number of tools and scoring assessments to procure products and services. These are:

- Pre-qualification criteria, usually set by central government;
- Invitation to tender (ITT). Where appropriate we may include sustainability questions as part of the ITT. This will depend on the nature of the tender and the value of the contract;
- Selection of proposal criteria, used by the procurement panel;

- Sustainability clauses may be added to the standard terms and conditions of contracts;
- Provisions in contracts to provide information, for example, on working practices, energy, waste or water;
- Parks maintenance and management plans;
- The Government Buying Standards, which set out best practice for certain products or services; and
- Environmental management certification. All suppliers should plan to be externally certified to an ISO 14001 standard or similar.

The procurement of goods and scoring of tenders or suppliers is subject to procurement rules and a scoring panel. However, not all of the issues and values highlighted in this strategy are considered in procurement decisions and the weighting of scoring is a challenging topic. Furthermore, there can often be different decision routes for projects and other investments, using different scoring criteria.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks has a number of sustainable procurement policies and guidance for when purchasing

resources. The more the pillars in this strategy are embedded into these processes, the higher the level of sustainability that can be achieved. The scoring and weighting of tenders will vary dependant on the process and type of project being carried out. Critically, the life-cycle costing of the relevant sustainability themes will need to be considered. We need to ensure that partners are made aware of the Sustainability Framework and working towards embedding this in their operations.

4.6. Innovation and investment in people and services

Significance

Under budget pressures and increasing visitor numbers, The Royal Parks must look to innovation and to new technology and services to continue to efficiently manage parks to the highest standards. This should include in the areas of park management, hosting events, HR, ICT, finance, horticulture, construction and maintenance.

The Royal Parks will need to identify those organisations that are willing to be innovative and look to push the boundaries in our core service areas in order to ensure The Royal Parks continues as a number one provider of world-class parks. We

will need to continue to invest in our people, through training and career development, as well as to ensure an excellent health and safety record. Please see section 3.1 for more information about staff. Investing in innovation and new services can help free resources for other areas of the business and set examples to other organisations.

What is The Royal Parks doing now?

The Royal Parks currently runs a Skills Sharing programme, which encourages staff to learn more about the parks they work in, and the people and partners they work with. The Royal Parks takes health and safety very seriously and prioritises the safety of all those who work in or visit the parks. We encourage our concessionaires, contractors and stakeholders to think of new solutions and methods of working in order to optimise our operations.

Where is The Royal Parks heading?

The Royal Parks has conducted a review of its terms and conditions for staff, engaging staff throughout the process. This review is feeding into planning to become a new charitable public corporation. The Royal Parks is working alongside innovative technology organisations on projects in the parks around air, soil, water and species monitoring and behaviour in relation to waste. The Royal Parks capital investment programme will continue to consider projects that drive efficiency.

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Annex B – Definition and context

Definition of sustainability

Sustainability is a vast subject that evokes different reactions in different people. In defining sustainability, most people would correctly point out a number of different challenges that society, business and government are faced with, but without grasping the true complexity of the issue.

The classic definition of sustainability is “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹ (Brundtland 1987). For most, this definition can be vague and difficult to understand and can have very different meanings to different organisations and people.

More recently, it has been summarised as what has become known as the three “Classic Sustainability Pillars.” The World Summit on Social Development (2005) identified these pillars as the balance between economic stability, social development and environmental protection. They are most often presented as three

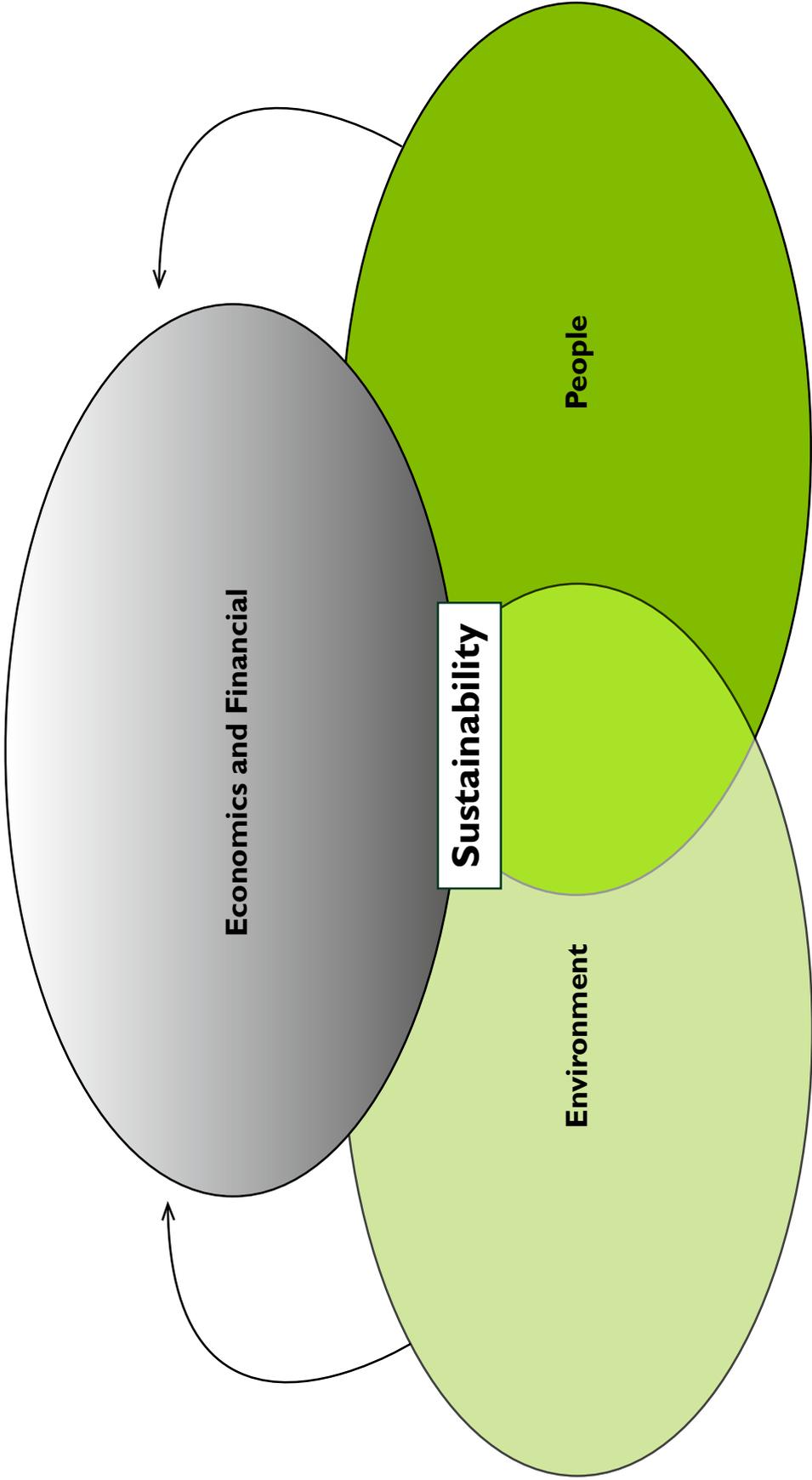
overlapping ellipses indicating that they are not mutually exclusive and can be mutually reinforcing² (Wang 2014). Furthermore, sustainability consists of balancing the local, national and international efforts without losing the significance of, or sacrificing one scale for the other. Herein lays the challenge for sustainability: you can only become truly sustainable by equally balancing the interests and relationships between all of these three, sometimes competing, factors.

Table 1 – Understanding definitions and language in the Strategy

Phrase	Explanation
Classic Sustainability Pillars	These are the three pillars defined by the Brundtland report of 1987 and the World Summit in 2005. They consist of environmental protection, social well-being and economic stability.
The Royal Parks Sustainability Pillars	Building on the classic definition, and applying it to The Royal Parks, we have developed our own four pillars for sustainability
The Royal Parks Sustainability Themes	Each of The Royal Parks Sustainability Pillars is broken down into themes which explain the pillar, and act as criteria against which to evaluate park operations and the performance of suppliers and partners.
Sustainability Framework	Provides the structure for development and delivery of The Royal Parks priorities for Sustainability.

Given the diverse nature of estate, it is important to align the efforts of staff, contractors, volunteers, partners and stakeholders around what sustainability means to The Royal Parks in practice. The Sustainability Strategy, including the Pillars, sets a framework for doing this, including the relative significance or weighting that will be given to each pillar, and ensuring potentially competing elements do not dilute the overall results.

Figure 8 – Three overlapping and mutual re-enforcing areas that represent the classic definition of sustainability



Wider context of sustainability

Sustainability is a truly global concept that impacts at both local and national levels. The Royal Parks must consider its role in this wider context; in particular, to be aware of the best practice set by the UK Government in order to align itself with national and international goals. Furthermore, the UK, as part of the European Union has to adhere to a broad network of environmental and social legislation, aims and goals. This has to be carefully considered when developing The Royal Parks Sustainability Framework as what is important to The Royal Parks must appropriately reflect what is important to local and national government, as well as contributing to help address global sustainability issues.

At present the UK Government's vision for sustainable development focuses on six core areas:

1. Sustainable growth, economically and environmentally
2. Climate change
3. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
4. Fairness and improving wellbeing
5. Operations and procurement commitments

6. Transparency and public accountability

The Royal Parks needs to ensure these areas are appropriately embedded in its own operations.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is responsible for implementing the UK Government's strategy for achieving its environmental aims. Many of these aims have a direct relationship with The Royal Parks including:

- **Greening Government Targets** – which set binding targets on departments to achieve environmental KPIs on a number of issues.
- **Business planning and annual reports and accounts** – The Royal Parks must report against sustainability criteria annually in order to be transparent and accountable.
- **Embedding sustainable development into policy** – for example, the Government's approach to sustainable construction and The Royal Parks annual construction projects.
- **Sustainable procurement** – affects the Government

frameworks and standards The Royal Parks uses for suppliers and how The Royal Parks interacts with third parties

- **Sustainable food and catering procurement** – The Royal Parks has a number of catering concessionaires in the parks and needs to be aware of the Government Buying Standards (GBS) for catering.
- **DEFRA’s Sustainability indicators (July 2013)** – there are a number of Key Performance Indicators that DEFRA monitors for Government. The Royal Parks will directly contribute to some of these KPIs, including social capital and social mobility, green house gas emissions, wildlife, water use and healthy lifestyles.

There are also other important organisations and departments like the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Environmental Agency (EA) whose work The Royal Parks has considered in developing this Strategy. The key pillars of The Royal Parks Sustainability Strategy therefore reflect this wider context and take into account Government targets.

Drivers for change

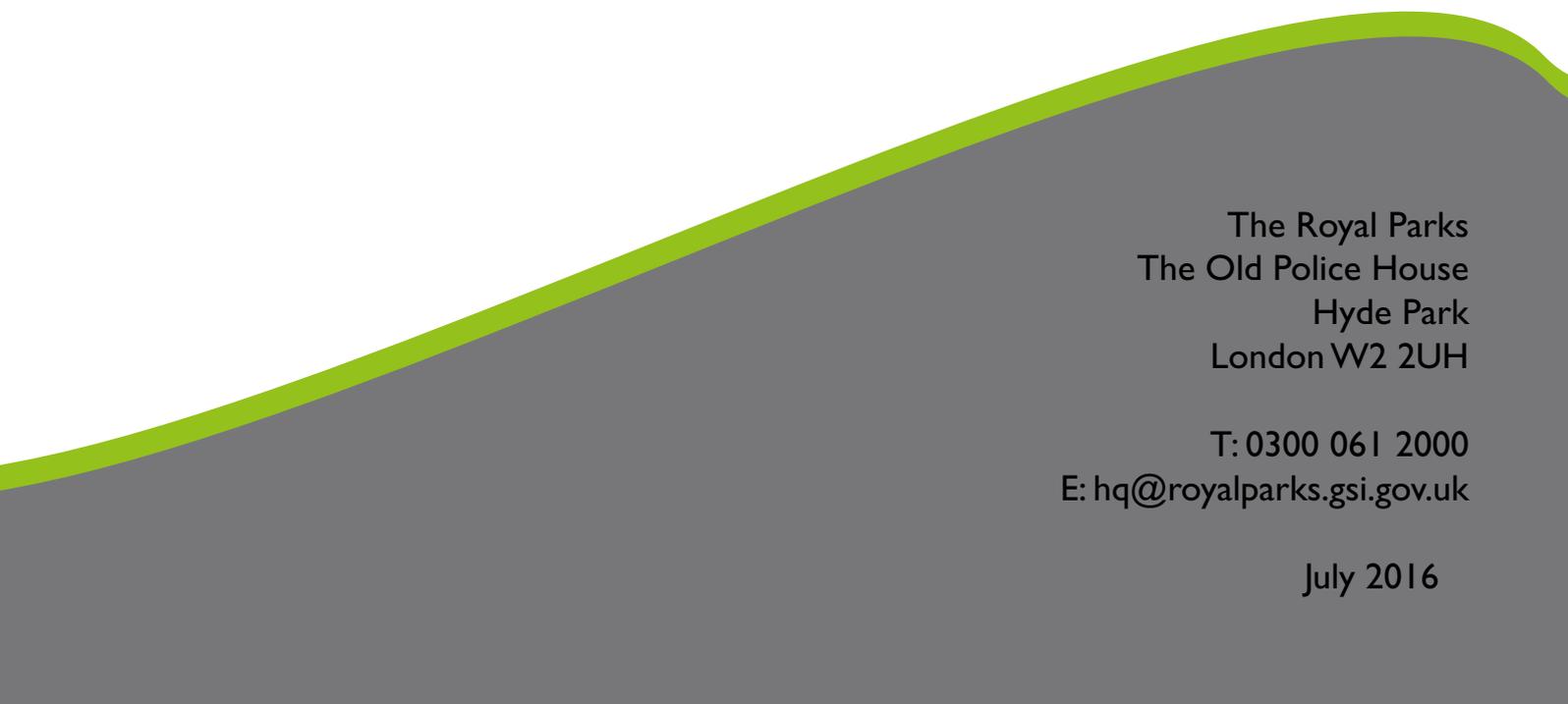
This section describes of some of the main drivers behind why The Royal Parks needs this Strategy, as well as highlighting some of the changes to which The Royal Parks must respond, particularly in the areas of environmental protection and social development.

Table 2 – Showing the main drivers for The Royal Parks Sustainability Strategy

Reason	Main Driver	Impacts
European drivers		
Legislative Agreements	The Climate Change Act 2008 ⁴	In 2008 the UK passed the Climate Change Act which sets out a framework for reducing green house gas emissions by 80% (based on 1990 levels) by 2050.
Legislative Agreements	The Waste Framework Directive ⁵	The Waste Framework Directive prescribes the hierarchy for reduce, reuse, recycle, and sets binding targets for waste management. The Royal Parks needs to align with best practice for waste and the national targets for household recycling (50% by 2020 and 70% by 2030), as well as landfill diversion (to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to 35% by 2020).
National drivers		
Political Commitment	Greening Government ⁶	Meeting Government targets, for example reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste and water consumption.
National Policy	DEFRA reports	Green Capital reports and action. DEFRA Natural Capital Committee, Offsetting. Green Infrastructure reports.
Greater London authority drivers		
London Policy	Strategic documents	The Royal Parks has been an active member of the Greater London Authority (GLA) Green Infrastructure Task Force and contributor to the Natural Capital report and London Infrastructure Plan.
London Policy	London's strategies and plans	The Royal Parks works closely with the GLA on many projects. The GLA has policies and key environmental strategies on air quality, water, waste, transport, climate change; key economic strategies (London: a leading world city); and key social strategies – health and sport, art & culture, equality, schools and education. The Royal Parks should align its operations with these goals as part of London's commitment to the sustainability of the UK.

Sustainability Strategy 2015-2025 **The Royal Parks**

Reason	Main Driver	Impacts
Local authority drivers		
Local Policy	Planning and development action plans	Planning gains section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy development plans and funding opportunities.
The Royal Parks drivers		
Economic	Increasing costs	Costs of resources such as waste and energy are forecast to continue increasing so The Royal Parks needs to use innovative means to reduce energy costs and help protect the environment.
Leadership and Reputation	Staff and stakeholder expectations	There is an ever increasing demand from staff and public to develop and maintain The Royal Parks reputation within the community. The Sustainability Strategy will help communicate The Royal Parks commitment to sustainability.
Leadership and Reputation	Flagship themes – waste and energy	If The Royal Parks wants to be a leader in sustainability it needs key overarching aims. Current flagship development themes are energy and waste, included in The Royal Parks Waste Project and park waste projects.
Leadership and Reputational	EMS standards - New ISO 14001 standard	ISO 14001 has long been a vessel for ensuring environmental management. The new standard will look to improve upon this and increase the focus on socio-economic needs as well as taking a life-cycle perspective on all issues.



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July 2016