

THE ROYAL PARKS

HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND SPORT STRATEGY 2010 – 2015

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30 March 2010

Chief Executive's Foreword:

The Royal Parks have long had a role in contributing to the wellbeing of its visitors. In the nineteenth century, around the same time that the general public was given free access to all eight parks, enlightened social reformers recognised that industrialisation and a growing urban population, required open spaces to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. Today, London's population is growing rapidly again and the rising levels of obesity in children and adults is presenting a new challenge to the health of the nation.

Some activities such as cycling, swimming and riding that were fashionable in the nineteenth century are still popular today. Over time new activities have appeared such as jogging, ball games and skating. It is right that the parks continue to evolve and respond to the needs of new visitors. It is however important that all developments are managed properly and do not undermine the intrinsic qualities of the parks.

Of course the Royal Parks are predominantly places of quiet recreation. As the pace of life becomes increasingly frenetic and our towns and cities ever more crowded, London's green spaces become even more important for the health and wellbeing of visitors. Maintaining a balance between passive and more active activities and our responsibilities for wildlife heritage and conservation is crucial.

This document provides a picture of the wellbeing related activities currently taking place across the estate and highlights issues that need greatest focus over the next five years. We look forward to working with our many partners and our visitors to develop effective wellbeing services and policies. The parks are some of London's greatest assets – let's make the most of them.

MARK CAMLEY
Chief Executive

1. SETTING THE CONTEXT

Before setting out our plans, we need to address and clarify some key questions:

- First, what is meant by health, well-being and sport?
- Second, how do health, well-being and sport contribute to the purpose and objectives of The Royal Parks?
- Third, for whom do we seek to provide health, well-being and sports opportunities?
- Why do we need a parks-wide plan for health well-being and sport, and
- Lastly, why do we need the strategy now?

What is meant by health, well-being and sport?

Health

The most commonly accepted definition of *health* is that of the World Health Organisation: “*Health is a state of complete, physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*”¹

This strategy adopts this definition of *health*.

Well-being

The strategy uses the term *well-being* to emphasise that health is not just, or mainly, about remedial actions taken to avert or recover individuals from disease, sickness or ill-health. In this definition *well-being* is closely correlated to health as a *positive* and *continuing* condition. As such, it relies at least in part on a proactive series of decisions and actions taken both at an individual and society level to maintain an enjoyment of living by individuals with all that this entails – including, for instance, the individual’s participation in society, a sense of individual control, of belonging and of influence.

Sport

The most commonly accepted definition of sport is that of The European Sports Charter: “*All forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in*

¹ Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organisation as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19June-22July 1846

competition at all levels.”²

How do health, well-being and sport contribute to our purpose and objectives?

The purpose of The Royal Parks is set down by the Department of Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) within an Agency Framework Document as follows:

The purpose of The Royal Parks

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

The benefits of healthy recreation

The evidence base for the contribution of physical exercise to people’s health - both physical and psychological health - is large and growing.

For example, there is a substantial body of evidence to show a causal link between physical activity and reduced clinically defined depression³. Exercise has also been associated with reduced anxiety or stress, enhanced mood, improved self-worth and body image as well as improved cognitive functioning³.

Similarly, studies have found that regular exercise can help prevent many major physical illnesses by:

- Promoting healthy blood sugar levels to prevent or control diabetes
- Promoting bone density to protect against osteoporosis
- Reducing the overall risk of cancer
- Increasing levels of HDL or ‘good-cholesterol’, reducing the risk of developing heart disease
- Boosting the immune system
- In combination, with a balanced diet, helping to reduce risk of obesity⁴

² The European Sports Charter 1992 revised 2001.

³ Biddle S, Fox K, Boutcher S eds. (2000) ‘Physical Activity and Psychological Well-Being’, London, Routledge p154-158. sourced from Exercise & Depression, Mental Health Foundation website – www.mentalhealth.org.uk accessed 14 March 2008

⁴ ‘Bone health for all’, National Osteoporosis Society; Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, ‘At Least 5 a Week’ April 2004; Physical Activity and your heart, Heart Information Series No. 1 Booklet, The British Heart Foundation, July 2005; ‘Why is it important to you?’

Other research from around the world – for example in the State of Victoria, Australia⁵ – suggests that, in the case of some of these benefits, exercise in the outdoors has the potential to make a greater contribution than the alternative of exercising indoors.

Furthermore, some experts in the field suggest that psychological benefits can accrue for city-dwellers who rarely or never go into urban parks – in other words, simply the knowledge that the park is available to use in the midst of the hustle and bustle of city living can help keep anxiety or stress at bay.

Public Service Agreements

As an executive agency of DCMS, our corporate objectives and targets are set within the context of the Public Service Agreements (PSAs) of the Department. There are 30 cross-government PSAs, each with supporting indicators, which set out the Government's priority outcomes over the period 2008-11. For each PSA, there is a lead Department and a number of contributing Departments.

DCMS leads on the following PSA: *"To deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport."* A key supporting indicator to this PSA of direct relevance to the role of The Royal Parks is: *"The percentage of 5-16 year olds participating in at least two hours per week of high-quality PE and sport at school and the percentage of 5-19 year olds participating in at least three further hours per week of sporting opportunities."*

In addition DCMS contributes to the following PSA owned by the Department of Health (DoH): *"To improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people"*. A key supporting indicator to this PSA of relevance to the role of The Royal Parks is: *"By 2020 to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels"*.

Planning Policy Guidance

The Royal Parks are also identified as key Historic Parks and Metropolitan Open Spaces within government Planning Policy Guidance for open space, sport and recreation.

This guidance sets out the importance of open space, sports and recreational facilities in meeting objectives, including:

Diabetes UK sourced from Diabetes UK website www.diabetes.org.uk accessed 14 March 2008.

⁵ Maller C, Townsend M, Brown P, St Leger L, 'Healthy Parks Healthy People – the health benefits of contact with nature in a park context' November 2002, Social and Mental Health Priority Area occasional paper series vol 1, report to Parks Victoria and the International Park Strategic Partners Group by Deakin University & Parks Victoria

Planning Policy Guidance (No. 17)

Green spaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity. By acting as 'green lungs' they can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality.

Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion - well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activities, they can bring together members of deprived communities and provide opportunities for people for social interaction.

Health and well being - open spaces, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness, and in the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.

Promoting more sustainable development - by ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly in urban areas) are easily accessible by walking and cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned for locations well served by public transport⁶.

The Royal Parks' Objectives and Performance Indicators

Currently, our own corporate objective designed to support DCMS and DoH in meeting these PSAs and supporting indicators and in promoting social inclusion, health and well-being in line with government planning guidance is:

The Royal Parks Objective No. 3

“ To work with other organisations and volunteers to deliver clear education, health, sport and participation offers”.

Our key performance indicators against this corporate objective are to publish strategies, including targets, for Education and for Health.

The Royal Parks Education Strategy for the period 2006-2009 was published in August 2006.

⁶ PPG17: Open Space, Sport & Recreation, DETR, 2001

Health, well-being and sport for whom?

The Royal Parks receive well over 30 million visitors annually. These include people right across the age range: children of all ages, young people, those of working age and older people. For Londoners in particular, The Royal Parks have a role to play in reducing health and sport inequalities in the capital. As evidenced by research set out in the Sport England Active People Survey⁷, those living in London's poorer neighbourhoods suffer higher levels of obesity and mental illness, have shorter life expectancy and participate less often in active recreation and sport than those living in more affluent areas. There is a common misapprehension that The Royal Parks are all located in the wealthiest areas in the capital. Some are, but most are close to areas of deprivation: Regent's Park and Greenwich Park in particular and, to a lesser degree, Richmond Park (which borders the Alton Estate for example) and St James's Park (the nearest large green space to the Peabody and Millbank estates).

Second, the Royal Parks serve as spaces for 'time out' for visitors to London whether commuters travelling into London for work or study, or visitors coming to see friends and family, to go to the zoo, to take in a show or another form of cultural experience. The Royal Parks have an international reputation and attract several million overseas visitors each year. The Royal Parks are a significant financial contributor to the £15 billion estimated total value of tourism to London each year⁸.

Why do we need a parks-wide plan for health, wellbeing and sport?

Historically, The Royal Parks has tended to plan on a park-by-park basis. This in part reflects the fact that each park is unique, with its own defining characteristics of history, ecology, and topography. Each sits within its own London communities with their different needs and priorities. Individual Park Plans – consulted on with local Councillors, residents and stakeholder groups such as The Friends – are critical to the efficient and effective management of each Royal Park.

However, in addition to these individual plans, a broader, parks-wide strategy for health, well-being and sport is also needed. This broader strategy will enable The Royal Parks as an organisation to be more than the sum of its parts for the following reasons:

- It will help ensure The Royal Parks makes the most of the standing and profile of the Parks London-wide, nationally and internationally for example international world health day to showcase best practice and to pilot new ways to address public health and sport priorities and inequalities

⁷ Active People Survey 2006, Sport England

⁸ GLA Economics for Visit London, 2005

- It will better put The Royal Parks in a position to make and sustain partnerships with national and regional strategic agencies and organisations with complementary aims. Working within powerful regional and national partnerships will help to secure the additional resources necessary to achieve our vision and aims for public health, well-being and sport. These partnerships also have the potential to develop across all The Royal Parks' aims thereby helping to develop best practice across all areas and to support these with additional resources
- It will help The Royal Parks to respond with clear and consistency policies when necessary to address management issues in relation to uses of the Parks for public health, well-being and sport.
- Financially it will enable us to benefit from access to funding for related projects from 3rd parties, enabling us to expand our offer with grants from UK, European and International agencies.

Why is the strategy needed now?

The Royal Parks has had sports and events strategies operating since 2003/04 and it is felt to be time to reflect the wider public wellbeing agenda. We have identified this strategy as a key performance indicator towards the achievement of our current corporate objectives in response to a variety of drivers, both external and from within the organisation. In summary, these drivers are as follows:

External drivers

There are a number of external issues in terms of the public policy arena which are impacting on The Royal Parks and which are likely to have an increasing impact, particularly in relation to health, well-being and sport. These make it increasingly pressing for The Royal Parks to develop a Health, Well-Being and Sport Strategy. And, because of The Royal Parks' unique regional and national position and significance, will present the Parks with many opportunities. These external drivers include:

Rising levels of obesity

Rising levels of both adult and childhood obesity are increasingly a matter of Government and public concern. Obesity is now one of the key priorities for the Department of Health and reducing obesity is one of its key targets. But obesity is no longer just a concern for the Department of Health but is a growing concern across many Government departments in particular in terms of its economic and educational impacts. Thus the new cross-government strategy for health in England states:

“Britain is in the grip of an epidemic. Almost two thirds of adults and a third of children are overweight or obese, and work by the Government’s Office for Science’s Foresight programme suggests that without clear action, these figures will rise to almost nine in ten adults and two thirds of children by 2050. This matters because of the severe impact being overweight or obese can have on an individual’s health – both are associated with an increasing risk of diabetes, cancer, and heart and liver disease among others – and the risks get worse the more overweight people become. They matter because of the pressure such illnesses put on families, the NHS and society more broadly, with overall costs to society forecast to reach £50 billion per year by 2050 on current trends.... At the core of the problem is an imbalance between ‘energy in’ – what is consumed through eating – and ‘energy out’ – what is used by the body, including energy used through physical activity.”⁹

We recognise that, working with partners, the Royal Parks are a valuable resource in the fight against this obesity epidemic.

Climate change

The London Plan Review highlights the vulnerability of London to climate change impacts particularly the likelihood of the need to plan for more frequent extreme weather conditions causing flooding, storms, issues with sewerage capacity, subsidence, overheating, lack of local energy security and limited water resources¹⁰. We need to plan for these impacts of climate change on the natural environment of the Parks, on patterns of visitor demand for sport and recreation and our ability to accommodate this demand while also conserving the Parks.

Rapid rise in population

The population of London is growing rapidly. Projections show that it could rise to nearly 8.2 million in 2021, an increase of around 870,000 since 2001⁹. This puts more pressures on parks generally but particularly for facilities and programmes for children and young people as the growth is most marked in these age groups and especially so in inner city areas. The fact that London is so built-up makes it increasingly difficult to respond to the active recreation and sport needs of these additional people with new facilities whether parks and green spaces or indoor sports centres.

Loss of public open space

A further contributory factor to the growth in demand and use of The Royal Parks over recent years has been loss of open green space in London in recent decades resulting from the pressures on land for housing and development exerted by population and economic growth. Sadly, while

⁹ HM Government ‘Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives’, a Cross-Government Strategy for England, January 2008

¹⁰ The Mayor of London, Reviewing the London Plan, December 2005

London's population and housing stock are increasing, over the last two decades London suffered a significant decline in its green spaces. Between 1989 and 1999 for example it is estimated that over 1000 hectares of open space were lost¹¹. This equates to almost 2,500 acres, roughly half the total acreage of the eight Royal Parks. Government statistics published in July 2005 indicate changes in planning policy in 1998 have been successful in reversing this trend but there is no room for complacency.

The London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

The Government Olympic Executive (GOE) is preparing its Legacy Action Plan for the Games in 2012 working closely with the cross agency Sport in London Group. High on the agenda of this plan are objectives to i) increase adult participation in active recreation and sport by at least 1% year on year, ii) to improve access to sport and recreation opportunities for disabled people, and iii) to increase rates of volunteering in sport. As one of the largest and most accessible resources for active outdoor recreation and sport in London, and as an Olympic venue, the Royal Parks has significant role to play in working with the GOE, London 2012, partner agencies and organisations to achieve these targets and in finding ways to accommodate the increases in participation that will result from the Games while, at the same time, striving to maintain the high quality of the Parks' natural environments.

Changes in public perceptions of parks

The public perceptions of parks have changed and continue to change from Victorian and pre-Victorian views of parks. These changes are leading to more pressures on parks in terms of the types of recreation and sports uses the public now expect parks to accommodate.

Social inclusion

The Royal Parks have a key role with partners in working to address health and sport inequalities of access across London, as set out in PPG17³ and the new PPS currently out to consultation, and by Sport England in its Active England Survey⁶.

Internal drivers

The need for a plan for health and sport at the present time is also driven by a number of internal issues relating to how we manage and promote these aspects of our work. Some of these issues are common to all eight Royal Parks. In most cases the issues are long-standing. The need to address them has become more pressing as the result of the steady increase in use of the parks for sport, due in part to the success of our own policies and initiatives, as well as the external factors set out above.

¹¹ 'Offside – the loss of London's playing fields', London Assembly Environment Committee, May 2006

Management and staffing

What can be achieved with dedicated management and staff time is evidenced by the success of the Regent's Park Hub team in attracting new and different users supported by a Sports Steering Group. It is also evidenced by the achievements of the Education & Community Engagement team against its strategic objectives and targets for recruiting volunteers and encouraging more use of the Parks by schools and community groups. Also by the 'Woodland Volunteers' initiative in Bushy Park where the Assistant Park Manager has a specific remit and time allocated to the project.

However, given the size, locations and high profile of the Parks, we recognise there is enormous untapped potential to achieve much more: to encourage more people to access the Parks for their health and wellbeing; to address health and sport inequalities in poorer neighbourhoods close to the Parks; and to recruit, train and support more active volunteers. The main constraint on the expansion of these activities is a lack of management and staff time. Management time is needed to identify and work with appropriate strategic partners, to build working relationships, to prepare funding bids for resources for training and equipment, to plan the activities and programmes and to evaluate their success. Staff time is needed for their delivery.

Marketing of the Parks as resources for health, well-being and sport

In recent years, we have made it a priority to find out more about who visits the Parks, what they use the Parks for and what they think about them. We have also done some work to identify those people who do not use the Parks and the reasons. Informed by this research, and by complementary research carried out with Walk London, we have invested more in promoting of the Parks and the opportunities they offer Londoners for relaxation, for socialising and for active recreation and sport.

The website has been developed significantly to include details such as guided walks, sites suitable for picnics, how to access sports facilities and sports clubs operating in the parks, volunteering opportunities etc. We have also invested in the production of high quality, full colour guides and the distribution of these throughout London in partnership with Transport for London, the GLA and local authorities, and through tourist agencies. Examples include:

- A 'What's On in the Parks' quarterly events and programme guide
- 'A Walk in the Parks' guide including maps showing public transport links, toilets and refreshment facilities, disabled access, visitor attractions, playgrounds, footpaths, bridleways and permitted cycle paths
- 'Free Wheeling – Cycling in the Royal Parks' setting out the most popular cycle routes, links to the London Cycling Network, the location of cycle parking areas, improvement plans, opportunities for 'Companion Cycling' in Bushy Park and for cycle hire in Richmond Park, and a Code of Conduct for cyclists while cycling in the parks.

In addition to these overarching guides, there are a range of full colour leaflets and brochures produced centrally providing information about Park history and features of special interest and, in some cases, opportunities for recreation and sport. These materials are in various formats and distributed via local authority tourist information and library services. There are also centrally-produced brochures for the main sport and recreation facilities we manage ourselves – for example The Hub ('Get Active in Regent's Park'), the Serpentine Lido and the Parks' playgrounds.

The main sports and recreation contractors and concessionaires operating in the Parks produce their own marketing materials, for example Glendale Golf for the golf courses and driving range in Richmond Park, Bluebird Boats and Will to Win Tennis respectively for the boating and tennis facilities and programmes available in the Hyde, Regent's and Greenwich Parks, and Central YMCA for the Hampton Lido in Bushy Park. Many sports and recreation events in the Parks are jointly promoted with the event organisers. High profile examples include 'Rugby in the Park' promoted with the RFU and their sponsors O2 and 'Outside', a summer dance project for 11-14 year olds, promoted and delivered by the Rambert Dance Company and hosted at The Regent's Park Hub. Finally, each Park produces its own notices and leaflets advertising specific local sports and recreation activities and programmes, for example: kite flying in Richmond Park, angling in Bushy Park, a Bushy Park quarterly Community Newsletter, Spring walks in St James's Park.

While much has been done to improve our marketing intelligence and promotion of opportunities for health and sport, we recognise that this is a key area we need to continue to develop if we are to encourage more people to access the Parks and, more particularly, if we are to make a greater contribution to reducing London's health and sport inequalities.

Commercial recreation and sport

In most of the Royal Parks - and in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens in particular - individuals and organisations are making regular use of the Parks for health and sports activities for financial gain. Commercial activities range in scale from personal training and one-to-one instruction in roller-blading, through to group coaching for children in football and rugby, 'Little Leagues' and organised group exercise classes and runs. At this larger scale, the activity is usually organised by specialist companies. A number of individuals and companies carry out these activities under the terms of a 'Letter of Permission' or 'Licence' as required by the Bye Laws governing the use of the Royal Parks. The permission or licence sets out both conduct guidelines e.g. to avoid endangering other park users, damaging park benches, trees etc, and to keep clear of environmentally sensitive areas. It also sets out minimum standards required from the operator e.g. public liability insurance and, if applicable, specialist qualifications, and CRB disclosure and safeguarding for children and vulnerable young people. However, the majority of commercial users of the Parks are unlicensed. We are working to address this issue in order to better safeguard the health and safety of all Park users and to protect areas of the Parks that are suffering from compaction and erosion due to over-use.

We recognise the need for a clearer, more consistent approach to licensing across all our Parks. We also recognise the difficulties of enforcement and the limited capacity of the Police 'Safer Parks Team' to do this work on our behalf. We are therefore working on a prioritised approach to enforcement.

Informal ball sports

A related management issue that, again, is most apparent in the Central London Parks but also in Greenwich Park, is the popularity of open areas in these parks for ball games (most commonly football) involving large groups of young people. These areas are particularly popular with local students and with young men working in the nearby hotels and restaurants. The players usually wear studs and, for competitive games, bring into the park goalposts and corner flags. The areas used for these games are open parkland not formally maintained pitches marked and hired for sports use. Some of the areas used for these games are less suitable than others both in terms of the impact the games have on the enjoyment of the Park by other users and on the natural environment.

To date we have sought to manage this issue by cutting the grass less frequently in the most sensitive areas to make them less attractive for football and other ball games. This has been only partially successful and we recognise the need for further action in this area.

Use by schools for play and sport

A further related issue is the high level of regular use of the open grass areas and playgrounds in the Central London Royal Parks by independent schools located within walking distance. Many of these schools do not have their own playgrounds and use The Royal Parks for playtime and PE. Again, at busy times this group use, if not pre-arranged, can compromise the enjoyment of the Park by other park users. Also, in sustained periods of wet weather or drought, regular use by these school groups causes damage to some areas.

Physical infrastructure supporting health and sport activities

Lastly, increases in demand and use of some of the facilities in the Parks for active recreation and sport present us with the issue of how to keep up standards of maintenance without additional funding.

In Richmond Park, for example, this is an issue with the bridleways, the Tamsin Trail for walking and cycling, and the park benches in the most heavily-used areas. More generally, the increasing popularity of the Park for road and family cycling and picnics creates pressures on the Park's unsealed car parks and resources for their on-going maintenance.

In Regent's Park, heavy use of the Hub pitches for football can adversely impact on the quality of the summer pitches.

In Bushy and Greenwich Parks we have sports pavilions in need of upgrade or replacement.

We are reliant exclusively on fund-raising, grants and donations for this type of investment in the Parks' infrastructure for sport.

In summary, the overall context underlying this strategy is an ever-growing demand for use of the Parks for sport and the need to strike a balance between taking a lead role in providing opportunities for the health and well-being of Londoners with both the safety of users and our responsibility to conserve and enhance the parks' unique environments.

2. WHERE WE ARE NOW

This section of the strategy is not a full audit of the current opportunities for health, well-being and sport across the eight Royal Parks. Rather, it is an overview summarising our current contribution together with some key strengths and weaknesses as drawn out in consultation for this strategy, illustrated by examples.

Our contribution to health, well-being and sport in London

In London's increasingly crowded and built up environment, the 5,000 acres of open green space that make up the eight Royal Parks are a vital resource impacting positively on the health and well-being of, potentially, some 7.5 million Londoners and, to a lesser extent, the millions of visitors to London each year. The Royal Parks offer their users opportunities to breathe clean air, to escape the noise and bustle of urban living, to commune with nature, to interact socially with friends and family, to play, to take exercise or to engage in a favourite sport.

By protecting the Parks' trees, flora and fauna, wildlife and habitats, by providing and maintaining gardens, paths and benches for people to access and enjoy the natural environment, and by promoting these opportunities, The Royal Parks contributes to the health and well-being of those adults who do not participate in active recreation or sports – who, according to Sport England's *Active People Survey* account for just over half of all adults.¹²

Similarly, The Parks' informal and woodland areas, children's playgrounds and facilities such as the boating lakes and picnics areas make a major contribution to health. These areas and facilities provide opportunities for exploration, for play and for social interaction: key requirements for childhood development and for the health and well-being of people of all ages.

¹² Active People Survey 2006, Sport England. 28.4% of adults in England have 'built some exercise into their lives' - i.e. did at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport and active recreation on between one and eleven (inclusive) days in the previous 28 days. 21% of adults in England 'take part regularly in sport and active recreation' – i.e. on at least 3 days a week, moderate intensity sport and active recreation (at least 12 days in the last 4 weeks) for at least 30 minutes continuously in any one session. Some 51% of adults do not participate at all, or participate only occasionally, in sport and active recreation.

Then, for those who do take part in sports, the Royal Parks can play a key role – particularly for those living, studying or working in London. Regent's Park for example is the largest open-air sports facility in Central London. Richmond Park provides one of the largest green spaces for cycling and walking in London. And opportunities for most types of outdoor recreation and sport are available in at least one of the eight Royal Parks. These range from everyday, casual activities like taking a walk, going for a run, a bike ride or a swim and kicking or throwing a ball around, through to more specialised activities such as horse riding, in-line skating or power kiting. In terms of organised sports, the Parks provide for most outdoor sports at some level including some at the highest levels of performance, for example The London Marathon and the triathlon, pentathlon and cycling events in the 2012 London Olympic Games. In 2008 for the first time, via our charitable arm The Royal Parks Foundation, we organised our own half marathon in the Central London Parks.

Finally, the Royal Parks offer people opportunities to volunteer – whether through one of the Friends groups; helping with a sports club or league based in one of the Parks; organising, stewarding or marshalling one of the many charity runs held in the Parks; helping with The Royal Parks' education programme for local schools, or working with staff and contractors on woodland management (as, for instance, in Bushy Park). There are many ways in which people can do voluntary work in The Royal Parks. By so doing, volunteers are reinforcing their own well-being (by developing their sense of participation and belonging) while also contributing to the well-being of others (by maintenance and improvements to, and the provision of opportunities in, the Parks).

Our weaknesses

Consultation has revealed the following main weakness in our approach to health and sport and the opportunities we offer:

Strategic partnerships at international, national and regional levels -

We have a number of initiatives underway in health, sport and volunteering in partnership with national and regional agencies. For example, we recently piloted a virtual gym project using 4G technology in Hyde Park linking to Natural England. We also work extensively with RSPB on community and education projects with a health benefit, for example The Regent's Park Community Garden. We are also working closely with TfL on a range of access improvements for cycling and with Walk London on improving signage, information and interpretation of the Parks for walkers. However, generally, we need to make more of our links with government departments and national agencies and of the international profile of the Parks. We need to use these links to secure more resources, to pilot and showcase new technologies, and to share research findings and good practice in the use of parks for health and well-being outcomes, including sport and volunteering.

Strategic partnerships at local park level - As illustrated under 'strengths' below, in all our Parks, we have examples of partnerships with local groups in

health and sport and, in some cases, with local authority sports services. However, working strategically with neighbouring local authorities, community sports and recreation partnerships and PCTs to address inequalities in health and sport remains the exception not the rule.

Structure of the organisation – While the Director of Parks is the senior responsible officer for wellbeing related issues, the weaknesses set out above can be attributed, in part, to the absence of a post dedicated to health, well-being and sport within our management team. In light of the drivers for health and sport detailed in the previous section and the growing role The Royal Parks in this area, there is a need to review our current structure to address this issue.

Pressure on funding to meet the costs of growing demand for use of the Parks for sport and the expanding role for The Royal Parks in health and well-being – The Royal Parks will receive less exchequer funding per annum for the next three years as a result from the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. 2007/08 is also the final year of revenue funding support from Active England. This funding has underpinned the costs of our work on developing new health and sport programmes and activities at The Regent's Park Hub. We therefore need to ensure that new funding is secured to resource our work in health and sport over the five-year period of this strategy. This is a key task and reinforces further the need for a senior management post dedicated to this role.

Lack of awareness of our existing health and sport offers and the potential - While we have invested much time and effort in our marketing with notable results, the consultation and visitor research findings indicate that more needs to be done to improve Londoners awareness of what they can do in the Parks currently and, more critically, awareness of the health benefits of making active use of the Parks more regularly.

The benefits of healthy recreation

Scientific research into Ecotherapy provides evidence that green spaces promote 'both individual health and public and environment health outcomes (Burlis, *A People and green spaces: promoting public health and mental well-being through ecotherapy (Journal of public mental health Vol 6 – issue 3)*).

This shows it's not only the individual but society as a whole that benefits from green spaces – active participation helps develop social cohesion and further evidences the importance of investment in these spaces.

Historically the benefit of green space has been observed since the late 19th Century, eg the work of Octavia Hill: *As a teenager, [Octavia Hill] began working with slum children and became very aware of the terrible conditions they were living under and the lack of interest from their profit loving landlords. The Artisans Dwelling Act of 1875 owed much to her work. [She was]..also determined to improve people's lives by giving them access to green spaces: she campaigned to ensure that Hampstead Heath was not built on and was one of the co-founders of the National Trust in 1895.*

Our strengths

Size – all eight Royal Parks offer large areas of mainly open green space and are able to accommodate and support large number of people for general recreation, for sport, for charity walks and runs and, in the case of some of the Parks, major sporting events such as The London Marathon, the Tour de France and the Olympics.

Locations – The Central London parks and Greenwich Park are located in highly built up, densely populated areas well served by public transport and cycle routes making them easily accessible to several million people. Richmond and Bushy Parks located in suburban, less densely populated areas are less accessible by public transport. However, these two Parks are very accessible by cycle to many parts of South West London and by car to large parts of Surrey.

Variety – The Royal Parks offer an incredible range of varieties of trees, plants, birds and wildlife living in most types of habitat from formally maintained parkland and sports pitches, to managed woodland, areas of protected grassland, lakes and reed beds, wild areas and formal gardens. There are also opportunities provided across the eight Parks to take part in most types of outdoor recreation and sports at some level, all the way from angling and athletics to tai chi and yoga.

Quality and value of landscapes and wildlife habitats - The Royal Parks operate to high standards of horticultural and wildlife management. This is recognised by the award of Green Flag status for all of our parks. The quality and value of the environments is further recognised by the national planning status of several of the Parks e.g. all are Grade 1 Listed Landscape except Green Park being Grade II, National Nature Reserve and SSI status (Richmond Park).

History and cultural heritage – All of the Parks are designated Historic Parks and offer many attractions relating to the national cultural heritage. For example, Greenwich Park forms part of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. The memorial developments to Diana Princess of Wales – the Walkway, Fountain and Playground - attract many new visitors to the Central London Parks.

Public awareness and international profile - the results of visitor surveys and non-user surveys evidence that the Central London Royal Parks and Greenwich and Richmond Parks are well-known to most Londoners and to many people from elsewhere in the UK and from overseas. The visitor surveys and non-user surveys indicate that Bushy Park is less well known. Information on the range of opportunities for recreation and sport available in the Parks and how to access them is provided on the Royal Parks website which includes links to the websites of facility management concessionaires and partners. Information on health, well-being and sports opportunities and up-coming events is also made available in a range of activity or facility specific brochures, leaflets and fliers.

Skills and commitment of staff – many Royal Parks' staff, particularly on the horticultural side, have been working in the Parks for many years whether for the Agency or for its contractors and, as a result, have high levels of loyalty and commitment to the Parks. Other more recent appointments have brought in skills and experience from complementary sectors – for example project management, sports management and sports development (The Hub), ecology, wildlife management, fund raising, community engagement and education.

Support and commitment of volunteers and benefactors – each Park has an active Friends group. Overall, the number of Friends of the Royal Parks total over 8,000. Many others volunteer with sports clubs and leagues to organise events or to coach children. Others volunteer to work with disability action charities in the Parks or, in the case of Bushy Park, with woodland management tasks linking to a major restoration project grant aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Via the Royal Parks Foundation, the Royal Parks also benefit from the funding support of a large number of corporate supporters, charitable organisations and individual benefactors.

Partnership working – Increasingly, The Royal Parks are working towards encouraging greater access through partnerships with strategic agencies, for example improving cycle commuting routes with TfL, walking routes with Walk London, promotion of disability access with 'Disabled Go', and promoting good practice in park management and advocacy for more investment in parks and with the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum.

At local Park level, we offer equipped, accessible children's playgrounds in all our parks (with the exception of Green Park) and cycling (with the exception of Primrose Hill).

A wide range of health, well-being and sports partnerships and licensed sports and fitness activities are made available to visitors as well as activities and programmes lead by our own staff teams in community engagement, education, wildlife, and the Regent's Hub (sports). Examples include:

Bushy Park

- A Royal Parks' led 'Woodland Gardens' maintenance volunteering scheme is in operation supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- A mobility scheme for disabled people is hosted by the Park and delivered by charity 'Companion Cycling'.
- Group fitness sessions take place in the Park under licence organised and delivered by British Military Fitness (BMF).
- UK Time Trials are licensed to run cycling events every Saturday morning.
- Most of the Park's licensed sports clubs operate thriving junior sports sections as well as opportunities for adults to play sport and volunteer;
- Hampton Lido and Fitness Centre offers an activity programme in swimming and fitness run by Central YMCA
- Guided Health Walks promoted and led by LB Richmond and Friends
- Radio controlled model boating

- Licensed bee keeping
- Angling

Regent's Park

- A Community Garden has been established led by the Community Engagement Team in partnership with the RSPB.
- The Regent's Park Hub activity programme is developing all the time and includes: indoor and outdoor activity classes, family sports events (including a 'Summer of Sport' promotional partnership with the GLA), guided health walks (in partnership with Westminster PCT and Camden PCT), schools' cricket (in partnership with Capital Kids Cricket), junior and girls football programmes (delivered in partnerships with Camden Sports Development, QPR Football in the Community, Hampstead FC and others), children's holiday programmes (with Camden and Westminster Sports Development Services, Rambert Dance Company etc); regular football, rugby, softball, cricket fixtures and one-off events on formal sports pitches.
- Local resident and community association events take place on the athletics area.
- The Regent's Park LTA City Tennis Club run by Will to Win Tennis offering free coaching and competitive tennis opportunities to children attending local schools.
- Licenses are granted for regular and one-off running events.
- Credex system for running route

Greenwich Park

- A regular partnership is in place with the Flora London Marathon as hosts for the start of the event.
- A long-standing Artist in Residence Scheme is in operation.
- Regular school Tree Walks are organised in the Park by the Education Team.
- The Park hosts one-off major projects organised by the Education Team (e.g. The Palace for the 21st Century vocational skills project and the orchard project involving children from eight local secondary schools and local employers).
- The Park hosts free Sports Days for local primary schools.
- Licenses are granted for regular and one-off running events and for group exercise and sports activity by 'Running Mums', Charlton Athletic Football in the Community and others.
- Junior tennis coaching is offered and promoted in summer via the Royal Parks' tennis concessionaire, Will to Win Tennis.
- In partnership with the London Borough of Greenwich the Park hosts an annual festival of sport where the public can try out the wide range of sports offered by local sports clubs and associations.
- The Parks cricket pitch is fully booked throughout the season.
- Charlton Athletic Football Club run junior soccer schools every holiday, in the Park.

- The Park is promoting sporting excellence through its hosting of the Olympic and Paralympics Equestrian events and Olympic Modern Pentathlon in 2012.

Green Park & St James's Park

- As at Greenwich, through the Events Team, a regular partnership is in place with the Flora London Marathon as hosts for the finish of the event.
- St James's Park has hosted for the 3 years the successful 'Dig for Victory' allotment garden education and volunteering project organised in partnership with The Cabinet War Rooms and Heritage Lottery Fund.
- A programme of Guided Park Walks is organised by the Community Engagement team.
- There is a reed bed volunteering project in St James's in partnership with one of the national nature conservation organisations.
- Licences are granted for regular and one-off running, cycling and orienteering events (e.g. Freewheel, Rat Races) and for group tai chi activity in St James's Park.

Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

- Most types of outdoor sport are played in Hyde Park via concessionaires (tennis, lawn bowls, boating), the lido in summer (Parks managed), via licensed groups and clubs (e.g. BMF, riding stables, Serpentine Running Club, swimming club, tai chi), and through informal use.
- Hyde Park is the main venue for large-scale fund-raising events to support the work of all eight Royal Parks.
- In addition to major commercial events – some of which have a health or sport theme - Hyde Park also licences regular and one-off running, cycling and triathlon events both competitive and charitable.
- Both Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are popular for unlicensed commercial activity e.g. in line skating instructors, personal trainers and 'little league' group coaches.
- Paths in Kensington Gardens are popular with parents teaching children to cycle. Certain hard landscape areas are also popular for skateboarding.

Richmond Park

The size and topography of Richmond Park and its status as a National Nature Reserve, Special Site of Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation, makes it very different in character to the other Royal Parks.

This Park is particularly popular for:

- Picnics and associated informal games of football and cricket;
- Horse riding including riding for the disabled (a number of stables are licensed to use the bridleways in the Park);
- Cycling (road racing / training by London Dynamos and others, and off-road cycling on the Park's trails and paths supported by a bike hire concession);

- Walking (including Nordic walking, Monthly Guided Walks organised by Friends and Health Walks organised by Richmond Council);
- Jogging, cross country running and orienteering (both competitively and for general recreation and health, including group exercise classed organised by BMF, Roehampton University 10k fun run etc);
- In-line skating.

Tamsin Trail cycle route supported by the Richmond Charitable Trust and TfL through green corridors funding.

Richmond Park also hosts a range of other more specialist sports via concessions, partnerships and licenses. These include:

- Golf (a programme for local schools and for golf for disabled people is planned to be delivered by partner GlendaleGolf)
- Power kiting
- Bee keeping
- Rugby (Rosslyn Park RFC junior games)
- Polo (Ham Polo Club)
- Angling (Pen Ponds).

3. WHERE WE WANT TO BE – A draft vision & priorities

Our Vision for Health Well-Being & Sport

By 2015, The Royal Parks will play a leading role in encouraging more people to access the Parks for their health and well-being. We will do this by working with partners to promote healthy, outdoor pursuits and sports in the Parks – including information on health benefits - while ensuring the high quality of the natural environment of the Parks is maintained.

Our Priorities

In taking on a leading role in this area of work, our priorities will be:

1. To maintain and conserve the high quality and biodiversity of the Parks - critical to their unique status and appeal, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
2. To promote the existing health, well-being and sport opportunities available in the Parks, both generally and by targeting the inactive and people living in areas of health and sport inequality close to the Parks.
3. To work with strategic partners at regional and local levels to identify new opportunities in the Parks to improve the health and well-being of all Londoners, but in particular people living in areas of health and sport inequality close to the Parks.

4. To ensure all new health and sport programmes and activities are provided to a high standard, are safe, sustainable, and do not impact significantly on the natural environments of the Parks.
5. To use the national and international profile of The Royal Parks, to pilot new ideas and technologies in health and sport, to showcase good practice and to learn from good practice by others.
6. To advocate and work towards securing greater investment in parks and green spaces for their health benefits, generally, and for the Royal Parks in particular.

4. HOW WE WILL GET THERE – draft recommendations

Parks-Wide Actions

We propose to carry out the following actions on a parks-wide basis:

Marketing and Promotion

Website – we will update information on health and sports opportunities on the site more frequently. We will improve the links to related sites and provide more information about the health benefits of using the parks for those activities and facilities where we have capacity, for example children’s play, walking and cycling, use of the indoor areas of The Hub in Regent’s Park.

Health Maps – we will secure sponsorship, provide and distribute ‘health maps’ for each Park, building on work completed for Hyde Park. These maps will show commuting routes, distances, calorie consumption and other health information to encourage more people to use the Parks more frequently as ‘outdoor gyms’ and for active travel.

Signage and interpretation in the Parks – we will continue a programme of improvements to the quality and consistency of signage in the Parks, to include cycling signage and markings, walking routes and distance markers, and interpretation for walkers. (Active Walks Programme)

Targeted activities and programmes

We will work more closely with local authorities, PCTs and community sports partnerships to identify areas of health and sport inequality close to the Parks and to develop strategies to encourage more people from these areas to access the Parks.

We will look to target new activities, programmes and promotional activity on the obese and low exercisers in the short term, and mental health

organisations in the longer term. In so doing, we will promote those forms of activity that contribute to health and wellbeing and have relatively low impact on the peaceful environment of the Parks, the wildlife and the infrastructure – e.g. walking, running, cycling, picnicking and other activities that people can take part in as individuals, with a partner, as a family or in small groups, as opposed to high impact, noisy activities such as large scale ball games and organised sports.

We will consider the health and well-being promotional benefits of events as a criterion in determining our overall Events Strategy.

We will use our status as an Official Olympic Venue together with secondary branding opportunities (e.g. 'Inspired by the London 2012 Olympic Games & Paralympic Games') to promote existing and new activities and events as part of our community engagement education, health and sport offers.

Organisational Structure

We will review existing management and staffing arrangements for health and sport to reflect the growing importance of this area of our work.

We believe the focus of this role should not be the activity of sport, rather a strategic approach to community engagement towards the desired outcomes of improved health and wellbeing of Londoners.

The Community Development Officer (sport) will also operate across all eight Royal Parks already achieved at Regent's Park.

Licensing Commercial Sports Activities

We will highlight this issue on the website and produce a leaflet for use in the Parks encouraging traders to apply for an annual licence by a fixed date. After this date, we propose a prioritised regime of enforcement in partnership with the Police Safer Parks Team. We will set the licence fees at a level to cover the additional costs (administration, allowance for additional maintenance etc) as opposed to using sports licensing as a means to raise income. By so doing, we will continue to encourage the provision of opportunities for health and sport in the Parks while ensuring minimum standards and protecting the infrastructure of the Parks.

Ball Games

We will establish a clear and consistent Code of Conduct to apply to ball games on informal grass areas. We will also provide portable signs to promote the policy and to direct people to the most suitable areas. The policy will also be promoted on the website and in leaflets. To ensure we continue to encourage access, we will word the Code positively, as opposed to seeking to prohibit activity. In other words, not '*No Ball Games Permitted*'. Rather, '*You are welcome to use this area for ball games but please do not wear studs as*

they compact the ground and erode the grass. When playing, please show due consideration for the safety and enjoyment of other park users including the elderly and young children.'

Daily use by schools

We will identify those schools using our Parks on a daily basis and establish a contact with a key individuals in each of these schools. This will enable us to raise awareness in the schools of the management issues that can occur, to introduce the Code of Conduct and to seek their co-operation in keeping off sensitive and recovering areas of the Parks as necessary.

Funding for physical infrastructure for health and sport and new activity

We will continue to raise funds for maintenance and renewals and for new activity through working in partnership with government departments and agencies, Friends and user groups, local authorities, and with supporters and corporate sponsors as appropriate.

Procurement

We will continue to seek ways to work in partnership with contractors and concessionaires to achieve community engagement, education and health, outcomes e.g. healthy food, schools' tennis and golf and junior clubs.

Advocacy

We will continue to take a leading role in The London Parks and Green Spaces Forum to share in best practice and to seek to use our links with government and national agencies to advocate additional investment in parks for health, well-being and sport.

Park Specific Opportunities

At appendix B we set out a long-list of possible opportunities identified in the consultation with respect to individual Parks.

5. NEXT STEPS

Appendix A lists all the stakeholders consulted in the preparation of this strategy.

Appendix B provides the 5 year action plan illustrating projects and activities where resource and funding are identified and aspirational pieces of work where partnership resources will need to be secured before activities can go ahead.

Appendix A

Partner and Stakeholder Consultees

TRP Health Well-Being & Sport Strategy Steering Group members:

| Name | Role | email |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Mark Camley | Chief Executive | mcamley@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| David McLaren | Head of Policy & CEO Support | dmclaren@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
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| Nick Biddle | Regent's Park & Primrose Hill Manager | nbiddle@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Beth Andrew | Sports Manager (The Regent's Park Hub) | bandrew@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Ruth Holmes | Landscape Development & Design Manager | rholmes@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Adam Curtis | Richmond Park Asst Park Manager | acurtis@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| David Ellis | Community Development Sports Officer | delis@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Lloyd Gale-Ward | Policy Officer | lgaleward@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |

Park Managers and other Royal Parks' stakeholders:

| Name | Role | email |
|----------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Colin BATTERY | Director of Parks & Deputy Chief Executive | cbattery@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Dennis Clarke | Head of Parks Services | dclarke@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Simon Richards | Richmond Park Manager | srichards@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Steve Edwards | Hyde Park & Central Nurseries Manager | sendwards@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Mark Wasileski | St James's Park & Green Park Manager | mwaseleski@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Derrick Spurr | Greenwich Park Manager | dspurr@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Ray Brodie | Bushy Park Manager | |
| Tom Jarvis | Kensington Gardens & Brompton Cemetery Manager | tjarvis@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Mark Bridger | Bushy Park Asst Park Manager | mbridger@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Nigel Reeve | Community Ecologist | nreeve@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Hitesh Patel | Project Manager Major Projects | hpatel@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |

External Partners and Stakeholders:

| Name | Role | email |
|---|--|---|
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| Kate McGavin | DCMS Government Olympic Executive Communications Manager | Kate.McGavin@Culture.gsi.gov.uk |
| Liz Mullins | DCMS Government Olympic Executive Legacy Delivery Manager | Liz.Mullins@Culture.gsi.gov.uk |
| Becky Furnell | Consultant to TRP on 2012 Games | |
| Grant Pettitt | GLA Senior Policy Officer, Policy & Partnerships | Grant.Pettitt@London.gov.uk |
| Rebecca Smith | GLA Senior Policy Officer Health | Rebecca.Smith@London.gov.uk |
| Darren Letford | GLA Senior Policy Officer Olympics | Darren.Letford@London.gov.uk |
| William Bird | Strategic Health Adviser Natural England | William.Bird@intelligenthealth.co.uk |
| Barney Larkin | British Military Fitness Marketing Director | Barney@britmilfit.com |
| Steve Riley | Manager Director Will to Win Tennis Ltd | Steveriley@willtowin.co.uk |
| Alistair Mcleod (Operations Manager, Regents Tennis Centre) Diane Culligan (Hampstead FC) Anthony Doherty (QPR) William Greaves (Capital Kids Cricket) | Members of Regent's Park Sports & Physical Activity Steering Group | Via contacts list held by: dellis@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk |
| Malcolm Kafetz | Chairman of the Friends of Regent's Park & Primrose Hill | Malcolm@Kafetz.co.uk Cc Pietermorpurgo@blueyonder.co.uk |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| | /Chairman of The Royal Parks Friends Forums | |
| Alison Sleet | Sports Health Exercise & Fitness Adviser YMCA England | Alison.sleet@ymca.org.uk |
| Ian Pickup | Director of Wellbeing & Health Roehampton University | i.pickup@roehampton.ac.uk |
| Peter Durrans & Paul Foster | Sport England London = Planning & 2012 | Peter.durrans@sportengland.org Paul.foster@sportengland.org |
| Tony Leach | Director London Parks & Green Spaces Forum | Tony.Leach@London.gov.uk |
| Charlie Peacock | Richmond Park Golf Manager Glendale Golf | Charlie.Peacock@Glendale-Services.co.uk |
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| Jonathan Couves | LDA Legacy Manager | jonathancooves@lda.gov.uk |
| Colin Cooper* | Richmond Environment Network | Colin@richenvironmentnet.org.uk |
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| Paul Stonebrook* | DH Obesity & Physical Activity Manager | Paul.Stonebrook@dh.gsi.gov.uk |
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| Tasha Hunt | LB Richmond Ecology Officer (ex BTCV) | T.Hunter@richmond.gov.uk |

* No response to date

Appendix B

Health Wellbeing & Sport – Potential Opportunities by Park

The following park-specific opportunities were identified in consultation:

Hyde Park / Kensington Gardens

- *Serpentine Boating Lake and disused Boat Houses* – potential identified for use by schools and youth groups for introduction to sailing and/or kayaking. (If considered feasible, identify potential delivery partner via Active Westminster).
- *Lido changing rooms* – potential for use in winter to support running events organised by Serpentine Running Club and others.
- *Bowls* – develop links with day centres etc with a view to setting up a pilot programme in partnership with the contractor, Will to Win.
- *Parade Ground* – continue to investigate feasibility of a hard-standing area to support major events also suitable for use by schools for PE and games during periods of wet weather.
- *Beach Volleyball* – consider potential for a site in vicinity of Serpentine. (2012 legacy contribution).
- *Promotion* - improve promotion of those facilities/clubs with low awareness and available capacity (e.g. Lawn Bowls, Serpentine Swimming Club)
- *Jogging and running* - explore feasibility (including commercial sponsorship opportunities) for a pilot 'virtual running' project (i.e. to replace a section of path in an area where there is significant grass erosion caused by runners and joggers with a purpose-designed surface for running using micro-chip technology to facilitate virtual races, monitoring of run time data etc.)

Green Park / St James Park

- *Health/Sport Inequalities* - further community engagement with nearby housing estates (eg. Millbank, Peabody) and secure resources with view to introducing appropriate active recreation and sport programmes for residents (e.g. martial arts, streetdance for young people, gentle group exercise classes and walks for older people etc)
- *Tai Chi, Yoga and similar activities* – promote existing licensed activity and expand through licensing additional instructors

- *Promotion* - improve promotion and availability of information about long distance walks taking in the Royal Parks (e.g. Diana Memorial Walk, Jubilee Walk)
- *Green Park / Victoria active travel route* - promote active travel use and health benefits of this route (e.g. Health Maps, website, signage)
- *Extend access to The Mall for recreational and active travel*– continue to work with City of Westminster and TfL on a pilot scheme to extend closure of The Mall to traffic from Sundays and Bank Holidays to include Saturdays
- *Extend access to Australia Gate Spur Road for recreational and active travel* - continue to work with City of Westminster and TfL on traffic studies to assess feasibility of closure to traffic
- *'Dig for Victory' Allotment Education & Volunteering Project* –secure resources to transfer learning and resources from this successful pilot to a suitable permanent site in another site (e.g. Regent's Park Nursery)
- *Outdoor Classroom* – investigate feasibility with potential partners and stakeholders (e.g. Duck Island)
- *St James's Park Children's Playground* – implement improvements for disabled access in consultation with PHAB

Richmond Park

- *Car Parks* - secure funding for rolling programme to upgrade unsealed car parks for ease of access and improved safety of visitors
- *Visitor Centre* - long term aspiration to provide a Visitor Centre to provide information, interpretation, classroom
- *Golf Courses*– implement the current improvement project and continue to work with partner to develop and monitor community engagement work with schools and Alton Estate and disabled access
- *Roehampton University* - develop partnership links with Roehampton University's Sport & Well-Being Strategy Development Group to consider joint projects where there is a strong fit between TRP objectives for health and sport and those of the University (i.e. i) community engagement, ii) sporting excellence, iii) physical activity for health, iv) facility improvements, and v) 2012 engagement).

Bushy Park

- *Walking Routes* - continue plans with Walk London for 'The London Loop' project (e.g. marked walking routes)
- *Restoration project* – complete phased implementation of the Heritage Lottery funded restoration (e.g. Welcome Centre café, toilets, education and community room; new cycle path alongside Keepers Road; improvements to the Stockyard Education Centre for education work and work with community volunteers; upgrading of paths, park furniture and signage; restoration of the Arethusa (Diana) fountain).
- *Garden workshops and walks* – develop programme in partnership with The Friends and other volunteers as guides
- *Sports Clubs and pavilions* - re-establish sports forum meetings to explore opportunities for infrastructure improvements, for joint promotion of the junior sports development opportunities provided by the clubs with TRP and LB Richmond, and for ensuring junior development and schools use can be sustained and developed in the long-term (e.g. potential for revisions to licenses).

Greenwich Park

- *Tennis and Cricket infrastructure improvement project supported by London Marathon Charitable Trust* – complete Business Case for improvements to include liaison with contractor, LB Greenwich, Friends Forum and users, and implement.
- *Ranger's Fields* – consider cost-neutral opportunities for extended community use of the sports field (e.g. cricket outfield by local schools in partnership with Capital Kids Cricket and other potential opportunities in liaison with Greenwich Sports, Physical Activity & Health Partnership).
- *Dwarf Orchard* – consider feasibility of horticulture, ecology, education projects in partnership with Greenwich Society and Friends and LB Greenwich schools once TRP Licence to Occupy comes into force (April 2008).

Regent's Park

- *Sports Steering Group* – continue to co-ordinate this group to review facility management issues and pricing policies and to plan school and community sports activities and development opportunities.
- *Junior sports clubs* – continue work to develop and host junior clubs in sports where there are suitable facilities and capacity and following the Regent's park Junior Cricket Club model of good practice.
- *Use by local state schools* – continue to work closely with Westminster Schools Competition Manager and develop new opportunities for daytime use of the Hub facilities where there is space capacity with the Camden School Sports Partnerships
- *Non-sports recreational use of The Hub* – continue to develop use of The Hub where there is spare capacity, particularly the indoor areas (e.g. arts groups, targeted health promotion classes) working in partnership with local arts groups and the Camden and Westminster PCTs.
- *Development of volunteers* – continue to identify opportunities with Active Westminster, Camden Sports & Physical Activity Partnership, The Prince's Trust, Street League, BTCV, RSPB and other wildlife and conservation organisations for use of The Hub facilities for volunteer training courses and related activities.
- *Community Engagement & Sports Events* – continue to identify opportunities to develop and host events at The Hub and The Tennis Centre aimed at reducing local health and sport inequalities and at increasing participation. Make full use of branding opportunities to support and promote these events (e.g. The Mayor's 'Summer of Sport', the forthcoming 'Inspired By London 2012' branding, a state schools Tennis tournament with support from British Tennis, an international community tennis tournament promoted by the ITF and linking with Central Park, New York).
- *Hub staffing* – complete review of options for reception duty staffing to maintain service levels and to facilitate community engagement and health/sport work.
- *Holford House/Athletics Track* - Review options for the Holford House / Athletics Track Project and the restoration of former Golf and Tennis School site in light of planning refusal and local opposition to the proposals submitted
- *Virtual Outdoor Gym* – Host public pilot of the CredX virtual outdoor gym concept at The Hub and Tennis Centre in partnership with Intelligent Health (Dr William Bird).