Parkland Walk Co-design – summary of Session 1

1st November 2023

This record was written up by the facilitator, a draft shared with group participants and this final version produced following input from participants.

Representatives from the following organisations were present

- CASCH Residents Association
- Council officers from Parks and Major Projects
- Crouch End Neighbourhood Forum
- Haringey Wheelchair User Group
- Friends of Parkland Walk
- Public Voice
- Ward councillors (Stroud Green, Crouch End, Muswell Hill and Highgate wards)

We began with the following session programme outline:

TIME	TOPIC
18.45	Welcome and introductions
19.00	**The process:** defining *co-design* and deciding how we want to work together as a team
19.30	**The project:** hearing from the council and the project consultants; clarifying what's in scope; exploring what we already know, your concerns and ambitions
20.00	**The starting point:** main messages from the consultation plus concerns, ambitions and ideas in the room
20.30	**Looking ahead to the next session:** what do we want to cover and what resources (people, examples, materials?) we would like in the room?
20.45	Finish

INTRODUCTIONS

Participants began by introducing themselves and the organisations they represent, and their ambitions for the process.

THE PROCESS

Rob the facilitator introduced the co-design process and how this differs from other types of consultation and engagement **(see Appendix 1).** Participants proposed the following ground rules for us all to uphold during our work together:

Be kind to each other	Be polite and respectful	Make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate
Be honest	Respect confidences and be able to trust each other within the group	Listen to people's whole points without interruption
Be transparent	Consider all abilities	Agree how and what to feed back to our groups
Be positive	Respect differences of opinion	Agree actions before leaving each session

How can we communicate the group's work to people in our constituent organisations and in the wider community?

- The group agreed that we would share details of which organisations are represented in the room.
- We had a discussion about balancing transparency with respecting confidences in the group and people feeling free to share ideas freely within the group.
- The facilitator invited the group to see themselves as a design team working through a design process and argued that we should capture the main messages from each session and any decisions made in that spirit, rather than producing line-by-line minutes as in a traditional meeting.
- It was proposed that we should share a summary of each session which highlighted the range of views and ideas discussed and recording any decisions by the group, actions or any other outputs that would follow.

THE PROJECT

Sam Neal from Haringey Council talked about the aims of the project on the Parkland Walk and what was in scope.

1) Parkland Walk Accessibility Project aims:

"The Council has a responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to and can enjoy our open spaces, including the Parkland Walk."

Based on that commitment, the Council seeks to…	
Explore accessibility at each entrance to see if there are opportunities to improve access or re-install more suitable access.	• The work at this stage will go no further than to identify the issues and opportunities at each entrance.
Identify and agree a suitable surface material for the walk that facilitates easier wheelchair/ pushchair use.	• Any new material **must consider**: the look and feel of the Local Nature Reserve; comfort to use on foot / with a child's buggy / using a wheelchair; and installation and maintenance over time. • The material **must not** create a path on which cyclists or powered scooters can ride at speed.

2) Why is the Council looking at this now?

- As areas of the surface become worn, more trip hazards are being exposed and there is increased puddling along the path
- This in turn leads to more people walking along the edges of the path and encroaching further onto the verges, which over time will impact the habitat and biodiversity of the Nature Reserve
- Through the Stanhope Road Bridge project, council and independent access audits, the limitations of wheelchair and pushchair access up onto and then along the Walk were highlighted and funding was secured within the council to develop improvements.

3) As such, what topics are within the scope of this co-design work?

Access onto the Parkland Walk

- How good is it now? Is access better at some parts of Parkland Walk than others? Is this sufficient or do we want to change any of this?

Surfacing along the Parkland Walk

- How good is it now? Are there issues that need addressing? If so, how can we best address them, balancing the needs and priorities of different people and the environment?

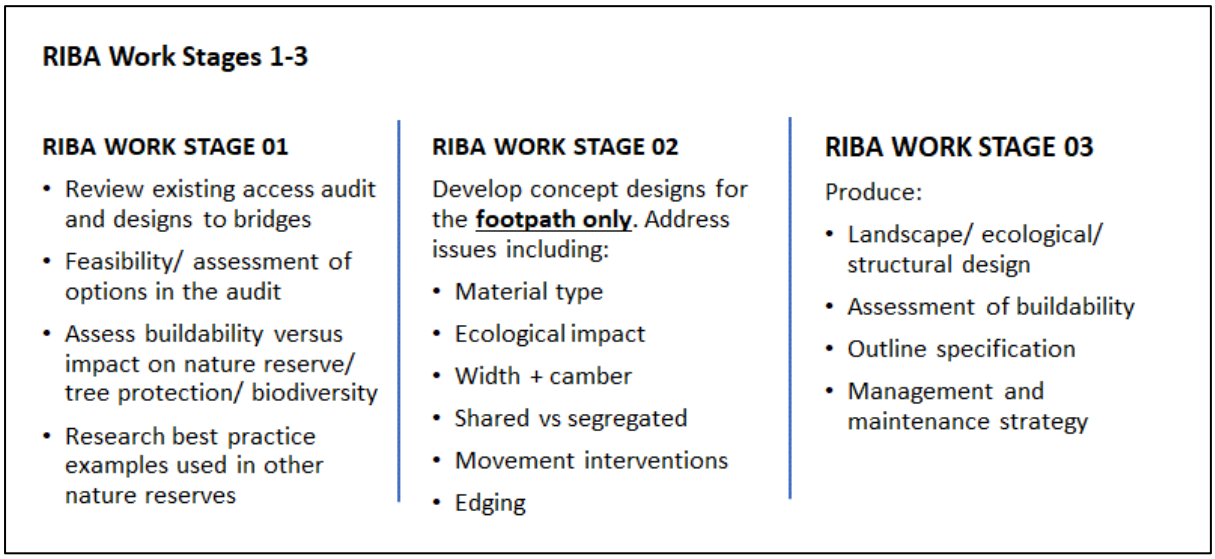
Other potential accessibility needs such as signage and wayfinding

- A chance to raise this too, with future discussions looking at this in more detail with those who are interested

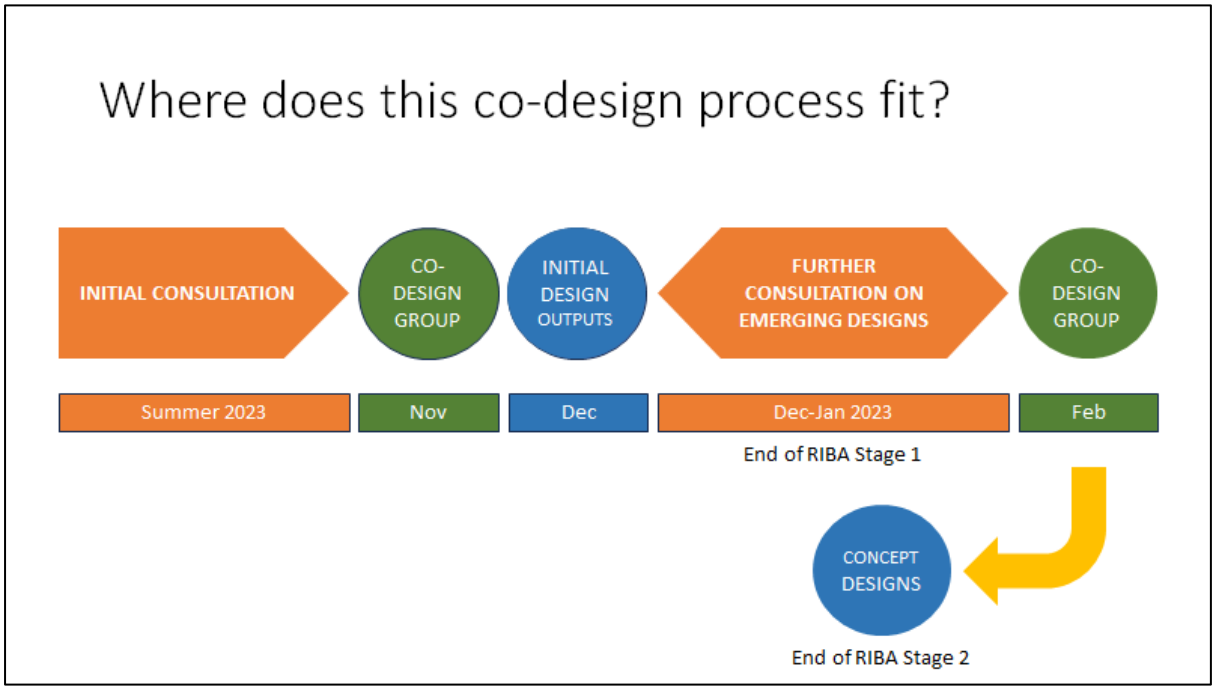
Participants made the following points:

- We need to be clear what is on the table and what isn't – for instance, is it an option just to repair damaged areas of the surface?
- It would be helpful to see examples of similar work undertaken in comparable locations, including other nature reserves.
- It would be essential for the group to have access to all the hard facts relevant to the project options – e.g. data on use of Parkland Walk, potential materials, their properties and their costs etc; and to distinguish these from views and perspectives. We returned to this point near the end of the session.
- The Friends of Parkland Walk wanted their fellow participants to know they have never advocated for full resurfacing of the nature reserve. They also wanted to make the point that the Parkland Walk should be referred to as a nature reserve and not as a route because of the connotations that could have for how it is managed.

Beth Bagnall introduced Sustrans, their brief from the Council and the work they would be doing as part of the different formal RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) phases:



Participants asked for some clarifications about what activity would be included at the different stages and how the work of the co-design team would align with this. Beth shared an indicative timeline for the work:



DRAFT TIMELINE: in light of discussions about rescheduling the next meeting, this will need to be revised and the overline timeline extended to allow for the co-design process to take place.

The following points were raised:

- A key focus should be on enhancing and improving the nature reserve rather than just maintaining.
- A representative of the Haringey Wheel Chair User Forum had visited sections of the Walk with a Friends of Parkland Walk representative. They found that some areas were more accessible than others.
- It was noted that useability input from members of the Haringey Wheel Chair User Group would be useful in future discussions.
- Information to be presented at meetings and which group members need to digest in advance should be shared in good time prior to meetings.
- A plan of the Walk would be useful for discussions.
- A survey of the condition of the path across the length of the Walk would also be useful, with information on what the surface material appears to be and width.
- The feasibility work should include the consideration of a 'repair and maintain' options.
- The programme for the workshops is to be considered again in the light of the information required before the next meeting.

THE STARTING POINT

Rob shared some headline messages from the consultation findings. Participants made the following points:

- Were consultation respondents aware what 'accessibility' meant? Did they know that it could be filling in the potholes and repairing the existing footway? Sam responded that whilst this wasn't specified in the questions a lot of the responses mentioned in the text the desire to have the potholes filled in.
- The data showed that almost all respondents already use the Walk, therefore they already as able to access it. So we need to make sure we're hearing from people who could be using the nature reserve but currently don't find it very accessible.
- Getting to the Parkland Walk access points in the first place might be a limiting factor for some people – although it was noted that this was a much wider scope than within the remit of this group.
- We need to consider different types of disability and conditions, making sure we don't inadvertently make access harder for some users (such as those with visual impairments or dementia) by providing a more accessible surface for those in wheelchairs or with mobility issues.

WHAT RESOURCES WOULD WE LIKE ACCESS TO IN READINESS FOR THE NEXT SESSION?

- The public consultation report has already been shared but make sure everyone has this link.
- The 2021 Access Audit – this was shared over email after the meeting.
- SINC review
- Footfall surveys
- Rationale from the council on why they think hoggin is not an appropriate / viable option.
- Information about all the access points onto the Walk.
- Map of the Parkland Walk and grading the condition of the path at different points – this may help identify priority areas for work.
- Information on approaches taken at other nature reserves in London or elsewhere.
- The budget for Parkland Walk accessibility works, in as much detail as possible – this is currently bundled up in an overall Parkland Walk budget so the council will need to find a way to disaggregate it in a meaningful way.
- Information on what the council has previously agreed with Sustrans regarding surface material and maintenance.
- Information on any specific areas of concern where action may be more urgent.
- Clarity on the council's legal obligations around access on the Parkland Walk – what is essential and where is there flexibility.
- Details of other Parkland Walk projects that are currently live, e.g. relating to the bridges.
- Technical specification e.g. gradients, surface types, step count, signage.
- Clarity on aims and objectives of the project from its origin and why now – this was shared as part of the opening presentation, so we need to understand what more people need to know.
- Footfall research undertaken by the Friends of Parkland Walk.

As it will take time to pull together the information discussed it was proposed by council officers that we postpone the next session so that this information could be assembled. It is now looking like the next meeting will be early in 2024, date to be discussed via email with the workshop members in due course. It is proposed to continue using the Union Church hall for future sessions unless it is unavailable on our preferred dates.

Appendix 1: presentation on process used during workshop

THE PROCESS

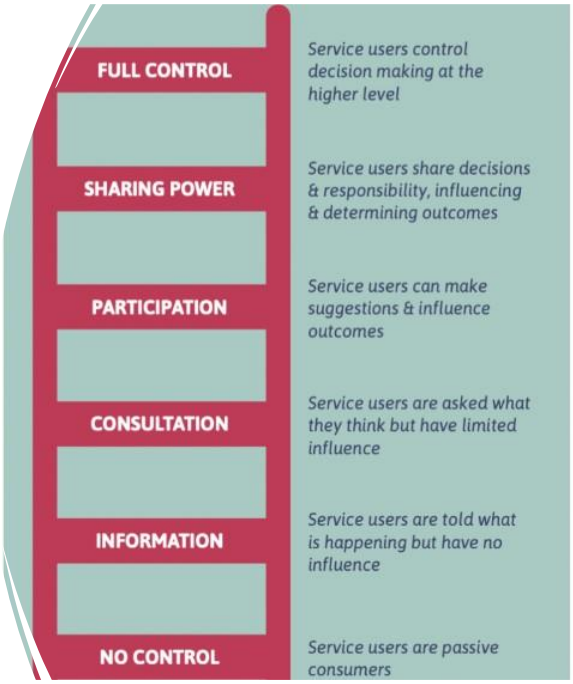
The co-design approach and deciding how do we want to work together

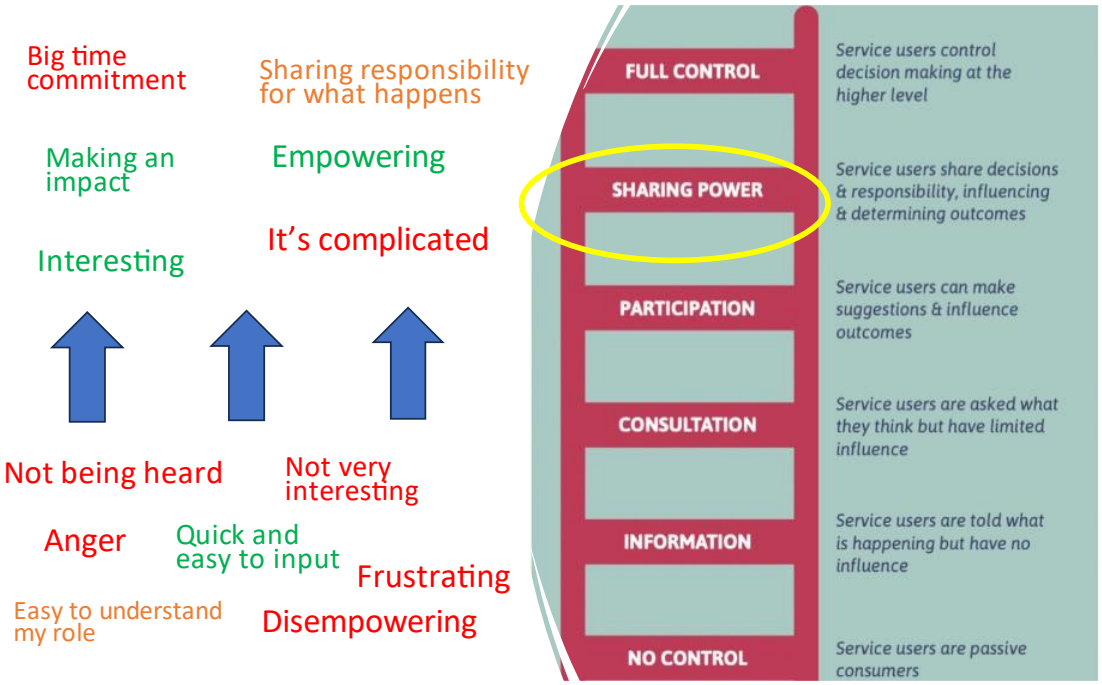
Different levels of involvement and influence

The language we use – engagement, consultation, participation etc – can get muddled, with different people using it to mean different things.

The **ladder of engagement** is one way to think about the different ways in which people can be involved in decision-making.

Co-design happens towards the top of the ladder.



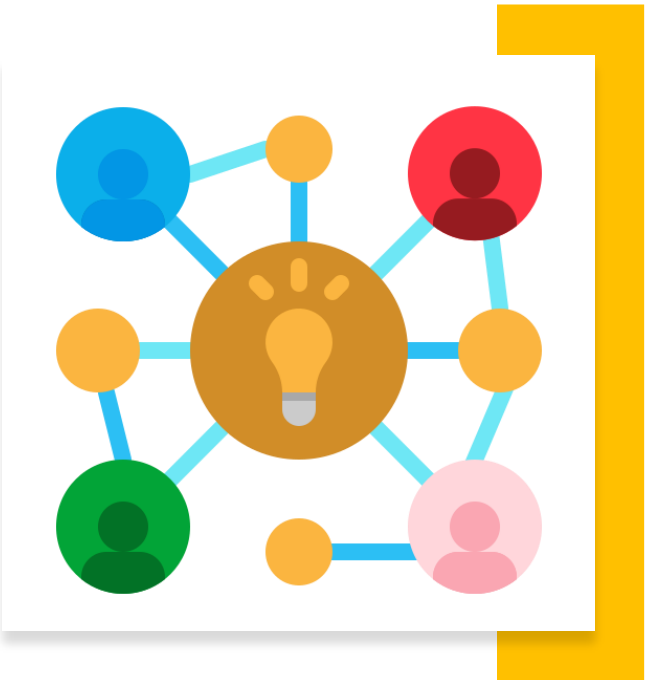


About co-design

Co-design is about doing more than consulting; more than showing people some plans and asking 'do you like them?'

Co-design is designing with, not for. It's about making things and learning together.

The 'co' bit (cooperation between a range of people) and the 'design' bit are both important as neither has all the answers.



Some important ideas in co-design

VALUING MANY PERSPECTIVES

Hearing and understanding different (sometimes opposing) views
Appreciating how different experiences can shape what we see as important

BEING CURIOUS

Listening to different views and ideas with curiosity

"That's interesting, tell me more" instead of "I think that's wrong"

ELEVATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Creating conditions where people feel able to lead – it's about more than being a *workshop participant*

WORKING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Willingness to be unclear and impatient while we discover things together

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

…for how others in the team feel
… for coming to solutions, not just stating your position

Adapted from Beyond Sticky Notes
www.beyondstickynotes.com



Creating the right environment

Co-design works best when the people participating feel like they are working as a team

All of us have a role in creating and maintaining the environment that makes that possible

How do we want to work together?

Talking to the person next to you, jot down some principles you would like us to follow during our sessions together

