

Parks & Green Spaces

Annual Report
2022/2023



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Cover photo: Shoreditch Park opening with Cllr Adams, Deputy Mayor Bramble, Cllr Woodley, Antonio Bergonzi and children from the Adventure Playground

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Introduction

This is the sixth Annual Report for Hackney's Parks and Green Spaces Service, and a great opportunity to review progress and reflect on the challenges and achievements of the last year.

In the 2022 local elections I pledged to make Hackney greener and healthier, and I am really proud to see this reflected in our parks and green spaces everyday. It is embedded in how we work collaboratively with local communities, make our green spaces more connected and welcoming, improve our work in nature restoration and recovery, and ensure our amenities are accessible, well maintained and sustainable.

Over the last 12 months residents' views have continued to shape our ideas and designs, with play areas, multi use games areas, and natural habitats all benefiting from local insight. We have forged ahead with transformative work on heritage buildings, made pathway and pitch improvements, supported volunteering, improved planting and hosted activities – there is always so much going on and even more to come!

I am always proud to share the dedicated work of our Parks and Green Spaces staff, and hope this report offers some insight into the great work they do day to day to meet the commitments of our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. A huge thank you to all staff and volunteers for their time and effort during a dramatic year of extremely challenging weather, and all the beautiful, fun and active days in between.



Cllr Caroline Woodley

Cabinet Member for Families, Parks and Leisure



Cllr Woodley trying out the new play area at Butterfield green

Working with communities

Hackney is a borough defined by its rich mix of cultures and communities. In our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy we committed to engaging with local people, volunteers and staff to improve our parks and green spaces, providing more opportunities for people to learn and develop skills, and establishing a comprehensive volunteering programme.

Commitment 1

Engage local communities, residents and tenants in improvements that affect their local parks and housing green spaces, with continued engagement from outset to delivery, with a special effort made to reach underrepresented groups.

Audrey Street old depot site (Haggerston Park)

This year we consulted local residents on returning the Audrey Road old depot site back to parkland, which is due to happen later in 2023.

Engage young women about their use of green space in the borough – making space for girls

In 2022/23 we spent a day with [Make Space for Girls](#) at Clapton Girls Academy working with Y8, 9 and 10 students. The day included a site visit to Millfields Park, a survey making session and a park design workshop with young female and non binary architects. The comments, insight and ideas they shared with us were analysed, and have helped inform some of the new play spaces currently being designed in Hackney.

Play areas consultations

In 2022, we set out to hear what children and park users thought about our proposals to improve the play areas in Clapton Common, Hackney Downs, Stonebridge Gardens and Well Street Common.

We ran an online survey for six weeks and directly engaged with children and families in the play areas after school, engaged with Park User Groups, Tenant and Resident Associations, Children's Centres, the Hackney Play Bus and ran sessions with children from Queensbridge Primary School and Stormont House SEND School.

In total we engaged with over 800 individuals whose thoughts and comments helped us to refine the designs of the play areas which have already started being delivered.

Commitment 5

Involve young and older people in designing and improving our parks and green spaces to reflect the recommendations of the Hackney Young Futures Commission and Ageing Well Strategy.

Shoreditch Park improvement project

We engaged local people on improvements to Shoreditch Park.

Young and older people were included throughout the consultation process including focus groups, co-design workshops with City of London Academy Shoreditch Park School Council, ELAAT College Students, Hoxton Garden Primary School students, City of London Academy Shoreditch Park Art and Design students and meetings with older people groups.

The new feature fence around the boundary of the adventure playground captures words, poems and kennings from local young people about the Park. Children from the [Ministry of Stories](#) in Hoxton Street were invited to provide words and poems to appear on the Fence.



Local children next to the new word fence in Shoreditch Park

The new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) was designed in consultation with children at Shoreditch Park Adventure Playground. They were consulted on the artist designs and made colour choices for both the MUGA as well as the outdoor gym.

Interpretation plaques were created with school children from Shoreditch Park

Primary to provide text and illustrations engraved on boulders throughout the park. A group of older people co-designed a chatty bench area to encourage conversation amongst those who use them within the new tree plaza.

Commitment 9

Continue to support local groups to improve their parks and green spaces, and the Tree Musketeers to plan future tree planting in the year ahead.

London Fields User Group

The Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener Fund awarded London Fields User Group £50,000 to improve biodiversity in London Fields. This will be focused on the wildlife area next to Martello Street and the area near Lansdowne Drive.

Rewilding the Marshes

During the pandemic we saw huge numbers of people swimming in the polluted River Lea next to Hackney Marshes. The large influx of people caused significant compaction of the ground, and damaged vegetation and wildlife habitats. In 2022/23 we continued to support the Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston to undertake further

river restoration work in the River Lea – building protected log piles, planting new reed beds and creating new river habitats. The project was funded by the GLA's 'Grow Back Greener' fund, Hackney Council and the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority.

Commitment 10

Set up regular volunteer 'clean up days' in our parks and launch a campaign to reduce littering.

Volunteers made a significant contribution to our parks and green spaces during 2022/23, delivering 3,511 hours of volunteering. Volunteers undertook habitat creation, litter picking, planting, fence fixing, hedge and tree watering and mulching. We worked with groups such as East London Business Alliance (ELBA), local schools, park user groups, corporate organisations and the Community Payback Service to achieve this goal.

On World Clean Up Day 2022 we organised and supervised six separate clean-up sessions across different green spaces, resulting in the collection of 47 bags of rubbish. The enthusiastic volunteers collected various discarded items, including a tent, backpack and a skateboard.

Volunteers also cleaned Clapton Common Pond and all of the entrance signs at Clissold Park.



The new play area in Shoreditch Park

Creating more welcoming spaces

Hackney's award winning parks and green spaces are vital for both the physical health and mental wellbeing of our residents.

We continued to maintain and improve our high quality parks and green spaces. In 2022/23 we secured a record 28 Green Flags (the third highest in London), and ranked second in the Good Parks for London Report 2022. The Springfield Park Restoration Project was also nominated for a regional RIBA award:

<https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/knowledge-landing-page/ninety-two-projects-shortlisted-for-2023-riba-london-architecture-awards>

Play area refurbishment

Play areas in Butterfield Green, Clapton Square, Haggerston Park and Stoke Newington Common were transformed this year with an investment of £1 million.

The play areas have been dramatically refreshed and in some cases expanded to meet the needs of local families, helping to make Hackney a more child friendly borough: <https://hackney.gov.uk/child-friendly-spd>

More challenging play equipment has been added to make the play areas more fun for a wider age range of children and enable younger children to progress in their adventures as their skills and confidence grows.

Commitment 12

Refurbish all of our park toilets, and explore opportunities for additional toilets linked to new cafe facilities.

Clissold toilets

Last year we commissioned a series of repairs to Clissold Park toilets, as well as repainting all the internal walls, doors, and windows.

Loo of the year

We were awarded 2 Premier League Local Authority Awards from the Loo of the Year Award. The accolades were granted for the public toilets situated in London Fields and the Changing Places Toilet situated in Haggerston Park.

Commitment 16

Introduce three new food growing projects on housing estates each year.

Chart Street – Grown in Hoxton were recently successful in securing a grant of £43K to develop an improved community garden including Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) and other physical infrastructure to improve opportunities for food growing in Chart Street.

Frampton Park Estate – The garden is almost entirely built in collaboration with partner Groundwork London. The garden will feature 12 raised beds, compost bays and a shed.

Commitment 17

Expand the provision of affordable and healthy food and drink in parks and green spaces.

In 2022/23 we opened new food and drink kiosks in Clissold Park and Haggerston Park.

Local traders and businesses were invited to tender for the opportunity to run new kiosks, as we seek to provide more food and drink for local residents in our parks and green spaces.

Operators were selected on the basis of their ability to offer a combination of quality, value for money, affordability for residents, an all-year service and reducing carbon emissions.

At Haggerston Park Kiosk, we welcomed owner Rosie Hore of Clerkenwell Kiosk Ltd. At Clissold Park Pump House, we welcomed Mat Appleton and Jess Blackstone of Finks.

Commitment 19

Invest in a network of new, free, outdoor gym facilities.

As part of the Shoreditch Park Improvement project a new sports hub has been implemented to the west of the adventure playground. The consultation identified a requirement for additional freely accessible sports provision to complement that already offered in the Park, as well as in the new Britannia Leisure Centre.

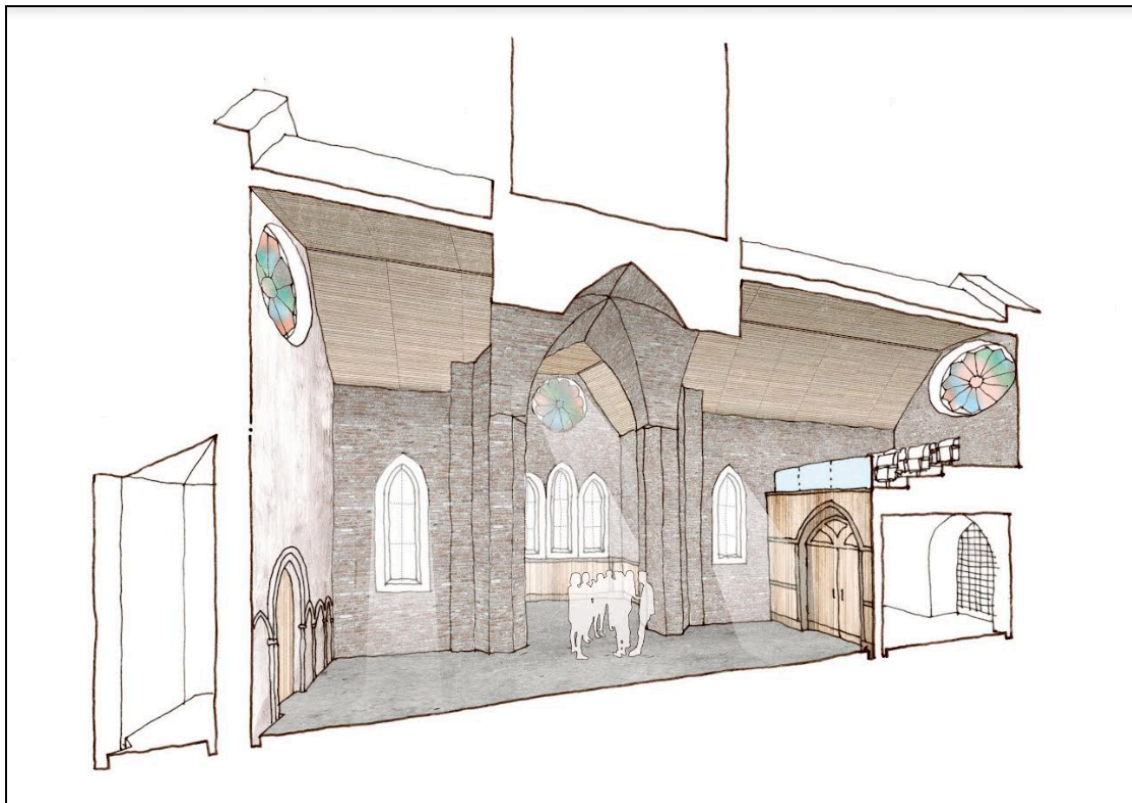
The sports hub includes an outdoor gym to the south of the new beach volleyball court, including a range of fixed calisthenic equipment and cardio machines, all set within a brightly coloured safety surface. New seating and a drinking fountain have also been installed.



The new play area in Shoreditch Park

Abney Park Restoration Project

The Abney Park Restoration Project is a Hackney Council initiative which received £4.7m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in 2019, to secure the future of Abney Park, one of the 'Magnificent Seven' Cemeteries.



Artist's impression of the restored chapel

The Abney Park Restoration Project will restore the historic buildings on site, improve accessibility and develop a vibrant programme of activities at the Cemetery in partnership with Abney Park Trust. The project will transform the Chapel from being underused, neglected and at risk of becoming a ruin, to a well-loved and well-used facility.

Furthermore, the project will aim to build sustainability into Abney Park that preserves its future and allows the Park to continue to improve for years to come. Local people and those visiting from further afield will be able to fully engage with Abney Park and its heritage; be that as a nature reserve, a historic landscape, a place of remembrance or as a local Park.

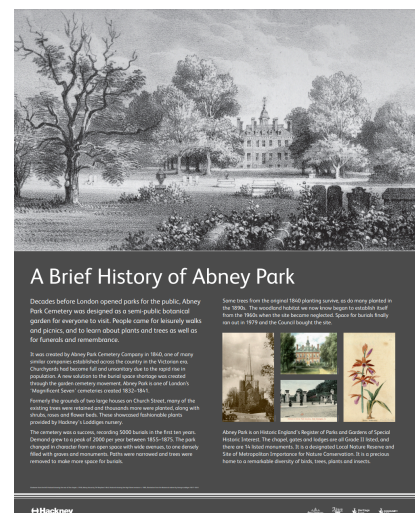
The restored Chapel will be managed by the Council's Venues Team who will take bookings for the space, including for weddings. There will be a discounted hire rate for community bookings, and Abney Park Trust will use it for certain events.



Work inside and outside the chapel

Brand new interpretation has been designed to enhance the visitor experience. This will be installed at both entrances, the café, community space, and around the cemetery. The new boards cover a range of topics, including one board written by the Salvation Army about William Booth.

The projected completion date for all works is the end of 2023.



Left – Impressions of the new cafe space
Right – An example of the new site interpretation panels

Being more environmentally sustainable

We are proud of the proactive steps our staff, partners and volunteers are already taking to reduce our carbon footprint and tackle climate change across our parks and green spaces.

Over the next ten years we will make an even bigger commitment to becoming more environmentally friendly, engaging people with nature, making our parks and green spaces more connected, increasing natural areas and supporting a healthy ecosystem.

Commitment 21

Work towards becoming a Zero Carbon service by 2031.

Assessing our carbon footprint

We recently calculated the carbon footprint of the Parks and Green Spaces Service. This involved analysing how our buildings are heated, what we do with our waste and how our staff move around the borough. The suggested actions include retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency, electrifying buildings by removing gas boilers, reducing vehicle mileage and electrifying the fleet. Other recommendations include improving data collection, collaboration across departments, developing business cases for new activities, and creating an action plan with clear roles and responsibilities.

We are now working with other Council services such as the Energy Team, Building Maintenance and Fleet and Transport to embed actions into management processes, governance structures, funding decisions and programme development and delivery. In 2022/23 we started work on an action plan outlining how we will work towards becoming a Zero Carbon service by 2031. And work has already begun:

A heat pump for Abney

As part of the NLHF funded restoration of Abney Park, a Ground Source Heat Pump has been installed to heat the new cafe and community space building. Not only are heat pumps four times more efficient than gas boilers, they also produce 6.5 times less CO². We also installed water source heat pumps at West Reservoir to heat the West Reservoir Centre and its hot water.

Commitment 22

Aim to re-use more green waste within parks and green spaces.

Composting at Clissold Park

We installed a composting unit and compost maturation bin, which will help to reduce the amount of green waste taken off site from the Clissold Park Café. It will also enable us to compost cuttings and leaf waste from the park and generate compost on-site, reducing the need to bring compost in from external suppliers. This compost will be used to propagate seeds and plants for future planting schemes in the wider Park – further reducing the carbon emissions from deliveries to the Park.

Commitment 24

Replace all single use bins with dual use recycling bins by 2031.

In 2022/23 we installed 150 new recycling bins replacing all the standard litter bins in Abney Park Cemetery, London Fields, Hackney Downs, Haggerston Park and Well Street Common. The new bins will enable park visitors to recycle on the go, reducing the amount of rubbish destined for landfill.

Commitment 26

Increase biodiversity across Hackney in line with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Plan, creating more wild areas across all parks and green spaces.

Ufton Gardens depaving/rain garden

A project to link two parts of Ufton Gardens with new greenery and a playful stepping stone opened this year. Linking the two sides of the Park with continuous paving, planting and cycle parking, the project is one of many across the borough that seek to improve connections between green spaces, a key Council ambition to break down barriers between parks. 55m² of road space was converted into a brand new rain garden complete with 201 new plants, three new street trees and a bug hotel. This project is small, but it shows the huge potential we have to improve biodiversity, green the grey and reduce flooding risk when we link our green spaces.



Ufton Gardens rain gardens

Rewilding Hackney Marshes

Work began to deliver biodiversity improvements around North Marsh Pavilion, a project funded by the Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener fund. Rewilding Hackney Marshes is a partnership project between the Council, local ecologists and volunteers that seeks to create a new wildlife corridor across the Marshes.

Shoreditch Park biodiversity improvements

As part of the £2m improvement project at Shoreditch Park, trees have been planted in a new tree plaza and the play area. Grass has been resown to improve the informal sports pitch, Dorothy Thurtle Gardens and the play area. Relaxed grass mowing in certain areas of the Park, rain gardens, permeable surfaces, hedges, log piles, wildflower meadows and planting will all help to enhance the Park's biodiversity, and improved drainage will mitigate against climate change induced flash flooding.

Clissold Park hedge planting

With support from the Clissold Park User Group and the Woodland Trust, two additional sections of mixed native hedgerow have been planted along the Green Lanes and Church Street sides of the Park. These will help to improve habitats for nesting birds and insects, and improve the visual boundary along two busy roads.

Commitment 30

Develop and deliver an extensive training programme for staff around biodiversity and sustainability.

Gardener training at Springfield Park

In January and February 2023, Core Landscapes delivered three training workshops with a number of gardeners from the Parks and Green Spaces Service. Gardeners learnt about pruning techniques, planting design and managing parks for biodiversity.



Gardener training at Springfield Park

Accounts 2022/2023

Parks & Green Spaces capital infrastructure expenditure 2022/2023

(excluding capital related to specific projects/initiatives)

Type of work/service	Spend
Buildings	101,463
Fences & walls	134,098
Football pitches	6,750
Furniture	4,676
Infrastructure costs	22,198
Landscaping	12,410
Legal Costs	2,683
Other	118,923
Pathways	173,855
Play areas	90,867
Security (CCTV) works	105,585
Signage	8,349
Grand total	781,857

Buildings	13%
Fences & walls	17%
Football pitches	1%
Furniture	1%
Infrastructure costs	3%
Landscaping	2%
Legal Costs	1%
Other	15%
Pathways	22%
Play areas	11%
Security (CCTV) works	13%
Signage	1%

Parks & Green Spaces expenditure (revenue) 2022/2023

Budget area	Outturn
Employee costs	£4,377,835
Premises costs	£884,427
Supplies & services	£372,180
Transport costs	£237,816
Grand total	£5,872,258

Parks & Green Spaces income 2022/2023

Type of income	£
Sports bookings	£139,917
Memorials	£25,695
Grounds maintenance	£99,387
Rent	£61,785
Catering rent	£147,542
Corporate volunteering	£1,210
Grants	£134,419
Events	£143,098
Room hire	£7,500
Ground works compensation	£24,520
Grand total	£785,073

Sport bookings	18%
Memorials	3%
Grounds maintenance	13%
Rent	8%
Catering rent	19%
Corporate volunteering	0%
Grants	17%
Events	18%
Room hire	1%
Ground works compensation	3%

Future priorities

Looking ahead to 2022/23 we will be delivering the following improvements:

Working with communities

Haggerston Park

A temporary school constructed in 2017 on the edge of Haggerston Park was dismantled in 2022/23. We consulted with local residents and Haggerston Park User Group to gather their feedback and ideas for the space once it was handed back. People wanted us to increase the site's biodiversity and connect it back into the Park. The area will include several biodiversity improvements including more trees and new habitats for wildlife, and is likely to be delivered in 2023/24.

Creating more welcoming spaces

More play areas

We have secured planning permissions to progress our plans for 4 more play areas in 2023/24 with an expansion to the play area in Hackney Downs and transformations of the play areas in Clapton Common, Stonebridge Gardens and Well Street Common.

Abney Park

The Abney Park Restoration project is due to be finished by the end of 2023, with a launch event planned for Spring 2024.

Fairchild's Garden

Work is due to start to make a more welcoming entrance at Fairchild's Garden, improve the planting and install a brand new Kiosk in 2023/24.

Daubeney Fields improvements

We are planning further improvements to Daubeney Fields as part of the Kings Park Moving Together project. We have opened up the main entrances to make them less cluttered and more welcoming, and we are preparing to install a new outdoor gym in 2023/24.



Artist's impression of proposed outdoor gym in Daubeney Fields

Being more environmentally sustainable

Charles Square

We will be undertaking improvement works in Charles Square in 2023 to make the site more welcoming, introducing an accessible ramp and more biodiverse planting.

West Reservoir

We are working to open up the banks of West Reservoir to the public for the first time, along with the replacement of an old bridge, the creation of a new accessible bridge in the north, resurfacing New River path, improvements to West Reservoir Centre and the installation of new habitat in and around the reservoir.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of our staff and volunteers for their hard work looking after Hackney's parks and green spaces in 2022/23.

Parks staff

Trinity Adomako
Joe Ahvee
Steve Akinwale
Clement Allen
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Rudolph Bartley
Mick Beanse
Curtis Bent
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Wendy Bowes
Marvin Brady
Anthony Brown
Georgie Brown
Delroy Bryn
David Burdis
Stanley Chapman
Andrew Clifford
Modo Colley

Cihan Cosgun
Romeo Cupee
Norman Dacosta
Jason Deweyleader
Michael Dixon
Raymond Dixon
Darren Dorsett
Leanne Douglas
Christopher Easton
Freddy Ehikhamem
Somia Elmartaoui
Hillay Fairman
Obed Gambrah
Stella Garman
Quinten Geurs
Roy Glaze
Malachi Gokhul
Lemory Grenyion
Ignacio Gutierrez
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Jerone Haywood
Peter Harman
Rasa Harman
Daven Hastings
Kishrow Heath
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Ian Holland
Robert Hughes
Toby Ingrey
Bruce Irving
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Lloyd Jackson
Martin Jarman
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Emily Jost
Selim Kelmendi
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Francisco Lopez
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Aytac Mehmet	Delroy Pink	Katie Tomkins
Hassan Miller	Anna Pisney	Marco Trevisan
Edison Mongolo	Jon Price	Leon Vernon
Gilbert Mulewa	David Proll	Amarah White
Martin Mwachrio	John Purcell	Mark White
Aaron Myall	Stephen Reeves	Jonathan Williams
Daniel Nevill	Lino Rivis	Terry Woodroffe
Teddy Ngade	James Rogers	Abubakar Yasin
James O'Donnell	Sam Samuals	
Peter O'Reily	Francesco Sforza	

User Groups, Friends Groups and Interest Groups

Albion Square Residents Association, The Biodiversity Partnership, Butterfield Green User Group, Cassland Road Gardens User Group, Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group, Clissold Park User Group, Daubeney Fields Forever, De Beauvoir Gardeners, East and West Bank Nature Reserve Group, Hackney Downs User Group, Hackney Marshes User Group, Friends of Fairchild's Garden, Hackney Parks Forum, Haggerston Park User Group, Friends of Kynaston Gardens, London Fields User Group, Mabley Green User Group, Millfields User Group, Robin Hood Community Garden, Shoreditch Park User Group, Springfield Park User Group, Stoke Newington Common User Group, Tree Musketeers, Well Street Common User Group, Niall Weir and Sam Silverlock, West Hackney Recreation Ground, Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston

Dashboard of Park Strategy Progress in 2022/23

Each year we will monitor and chart our progress towards achieving all 30 commitments in our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. The progress we have made in 2022/23 can be seen below:

Theme 1 – Working with communities 5/10

Theme 2 – Creating more welcoming spaces 4/10

Theme 3 – Being more environmentally sustainable 6/10



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