



Wandle Valley

# The Future of the Wandle Valley:

## Creating Resilient Landscapes

Roundtable 2 of 5

24 September 2018

Minutes



**GREAT  
LONDON  
AUTHORITY**



Living Wandle  
Landscape Partnership

**wandle**



# WVPRT Resilient Heritage

## Roundtable 2 of 5 – 24 September 2018

### Attendees

Nicole Bickerdyke, MCHLG  
Jacqueline Bleicher, Global Urban Design  
Matthew Bradbury, Nene Park Trust; Parks Alliance  
Cllr Nick Draper, London Borough of Merton  
Rosie Hardicker, GLA  
Lysanne Horrox, WVRPT  
Peter Massini, GLA  
Sue Morgan, WVRPT  
Frazer Osment, LDA Design  
Gideon Reeve, SERT; Wandle Trust  
Jacie-Louise Riley, London Borough of Croydon  
Paulette Romain, MCHLG  
Valerie Selby, Enable  
Kelvin Shewry, London Borough of Croydon  
Neil Sinden, CPRE London  
Bridget Snaith, UEL  
John Waxman, Barker Langham  
Susannah Wilks, Cross River Partnership  
Beth Wratishaw, Barker Langham  
Bill Wyatt, London Borough of Sutton

### High Level Summary

#### Perceptions of GI

- Priorities for Londoners are 'making money' and housing; GI is of a tertiary concern for Local Authorities at best.
- There are 4 Local Authorities with councillors from 3 different political parties in the Wandle Valley Regional Park – all of whom have different ideas of what GI is and how it should be delivered
- GI advocates need to 'be nice' rather than lambasting local authorities over GI provision if they want to gain support for their ideas
- 'Green' is not necessarily the same as 'biodiverse'
- Development and GI need to be united in terms of planning for Local Authorities. However, idverde already working across the 4 boroughs.
- Members of the community often do not understand what GI is, and do not have access to the terminology/language that surrounds it

## Value of GI

- Developers are aware of the value of GI in place creation, and how place creates value; the government is less so
- GI needs to be thought of collectively in relation to planning – incorporating all aspects of biodiversity, green space, sustainability
- Nevertheless the value of GI needs to be broken down into different aspects so that the tangible benefits are more evident to both public and private sectors
- The value of GI needs to be made more visible to encourage investment
- Quantifiable evaluation and measuring the impact of GI is required to demonstrate benefits to potential funders. Also, case studies that demonstrate the real benefits of GI intervention and change
- A lot of evidence exists to show value of GI in economic terms (increased value of land and property); comparative control sites exist to provide baseline quantifiable information about the benefits of GI
- Natural Capital Accounting has a key role to play in future
- There is no method for collecting evidence regarding social impact; however there are good case studies that show the social outcomes and benefits of placemaking in deprived communities
- There is a good case study in Germany - leverages the economic benefits of having a large green space that is community managed and maintained
- Parks Action Group, Northumbria University, and a number of other organisations are currently working on drawing together the social benefits of GI into a business case
- Local Authorities are aware of the long-term benefits of GI on public health and future budget savings, but this does not fit with their short-term budgets; this would require a shift in thinking at treasury level

## GI in Practice

- WVRPT needs to have ability to intervene to lever out investment
- Strategic need should dictate what has to be done - it should not be a case of trying to fit projects in
- An agile masterplan needs a suite of policies that can be signed up to by all LAs
- An action plan needs to ensure that the Trust can access and use all available funding
- A collective vision needs to be endorsed by the Local Authorities, landowners and key stakeholders to ensure buy-in and future success.
- The four LAs need to have a list of agreed common policies on GI.
- An implementation strategy needs to assign roles and responsibilities to various stakeholders in a specific timeframe, with mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing
- WVRPT needs to integrate a strategic commitment from the Local Authorities for non-annualised funding i.e. CIL; this would need to be offered with no strings attached
- Grant money won't address the 10 year plan
- WVRPT needs to be a forum through which Local Authorities/stakeholders and community groups can unite or collaborate
- The Trust could be a repository for best practice examples of GI in the local area
- Potential need for a 'GI Opportunities Plan', a standalone document that describes the tangible outcomes of GI for the various stakeholders – distinct from the ALGG strategy as it would focus on the delivery of additional, new projects
- Need to consider how to maintain existing GI and enhance the benefits provided by those spaces
- Avoid 'ephemeral' interventions

## Community Engagement

- Community groups across the Wandle Valley are fragmented, and require a central forum through which they can connect with each other and have a more cohesive approach – though they would need to understand that they do not have direct influence over the regional park
- The WVRPT could be this central forum, and needs to also represent BME and religious groups
- WVRPT could hold a range of workshops that are tailored to different audiences: community groups, councillors, stakeholders
- A useful way of engaging the local community is through the assessment of projects in a hands-on workshop, with the cost, value and return of each project idea judged according to the same criteria; this way, the community can take ownership of what is achievable
- Working with local schools is crucial to educating the younger generation about GI; children will then take home what they have learnt and pass this on to their parents
- Need to elevate understanding of what GI actually is, through education and through the use of accessible terminology
- Need to be able articulate what the Trust wants to be in ‘twelve words or less’ and more accessible language
- Communities want to deliver GI projects but are not using that language, so these projects are not being captured or reported as GI
- Strategic statement for WVRPT and end product/masterplan needs to use language that everyone can easily understand, to ensure the community can understand and take part in the organisation’s future and emotionally own the Trust’s mission

## Summary of Discussion

A primary concern for WVRPT is the somewhat fragmented political landscape across the Wandle Valley: the four Local Authorities are controlled by three political parties with differing perspectives and priorities. This issue needs to be resolved through a collaborative agreement covering the jurisdiction, capacity and funding of the WVRPT. It is important for the Trust and other GI advocates to nurture a good relationship with councillors and Local Authority leaders in order to make significant progress. This may also have a positive impact on transforming the relationship between development and GI planning which are currently quite divorced.

The key priorities for people in London are, broadly speaking, earning a living and finding somewhere to live. GI is currently at a level of tertiary importance to policy makers and planners, and often biodiversity is considered as a separate, even less important issue. Thus any attempt to make the case for GI based solely on ‘green values’ is likely to be unsuccessful. A different approach is needed to persuade decision-makers that Green Infrastructure matters. The case for investment must be built in a different way.

Reframing GI to meet the primary focus of stakeholders is key to gaining traction. For example, the benefits of GI for health and wellbeing and mitigating inequality should be highlighted, as should the link to global issues such as delivering sustainable development goals. A ‘GI Opportunities Plan’ could function as a very useful additional document to describe these tangible outcomes for the various stakeholders. The use of new ‘natural capital accounting’ methodology will undoubtedly assist the development of robust GI business cases in future, focusing on the financial benefits of GI development. Case studies can also be persuasive: precedents exist in other jurisdictions that illustrate the benefits of GI. For example, the Emscher Landscape Park in Germany has leveraged the economic benefits of a large green area that is community managed and maintained.

Strategic need should dictate what happens on the ground. The Trust needs to avoid 'ephemeral' interventions and trying to make existing projects 'fit' if in fact they don't. Grant money has a role to play in 'adding value' but will not deliver the 10 Year Plan. To deliver its strategic aims, the Trust will need access to non-annualised sources of funding such as CIL. As well as seeking to integrate new GI into the Regional Park network, the Trust must give some consideration to how existing GI can be maintained and enhanced.

Local communities can play a key role in delivering the vision but across the Wandle Valley, community groups are fragmented. Currently, there is no central forum that serves to connect these various groups of people who have a distinct interest in the Wandle Valley, and there is an increasing sense of disenchantment. The WVRPT could serve as a forum through which these community groups can convene and gain an understanding of the 'bigger picture' in the Regional Park. This will help to propagate a sense of collective purpose and being part of a something greater. There is however a need to use more accessible language in future to ensure everyone understands what the Trust is going to do and how it will do it.

