

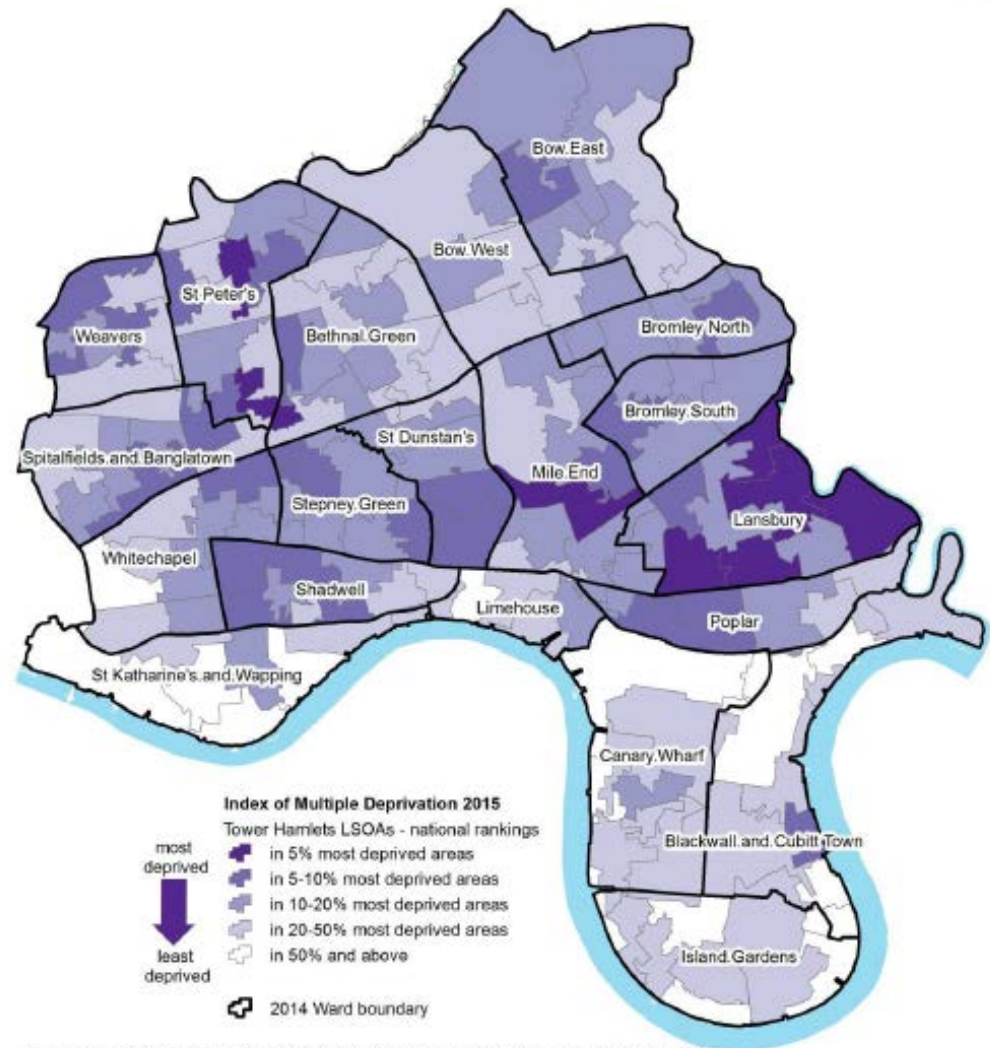
Outdoor Gyms in Urban Areas – making an impact on the health of local people



Judith St. John
Divisional Director Sport, Leisure and Culture
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
October 2018

What are the health needs on a local basis?

- High levels of deprivation
- High levels of physical inactivity
- High levels of poor health
- Requests from patients' groups and residents



How can we engage with people who are most physically inactive?

- NICE model for Community Engagement
- Logic Model
- Community engagement model for activating outdoor gyms
- Engage the community in the process so that the implementation and construction of the gym has the health promoting impact of people doing things for themselves instead of being done 'to'.

Work with GPs and patient participation groups to identify local solution



Whitechapel Patients' Participation Group

- Request from Whitechapel Patients' Participation Group (PPG) to the Mayor
- Public Health liaised with GP surgeries and PPGs or community health networks where no PPG
- Range of health centre responses:
 - ✓ texting patients
 - ✓ hosting events
 - ✓ displaying posters

How can we engage with people who are most physically inactive?

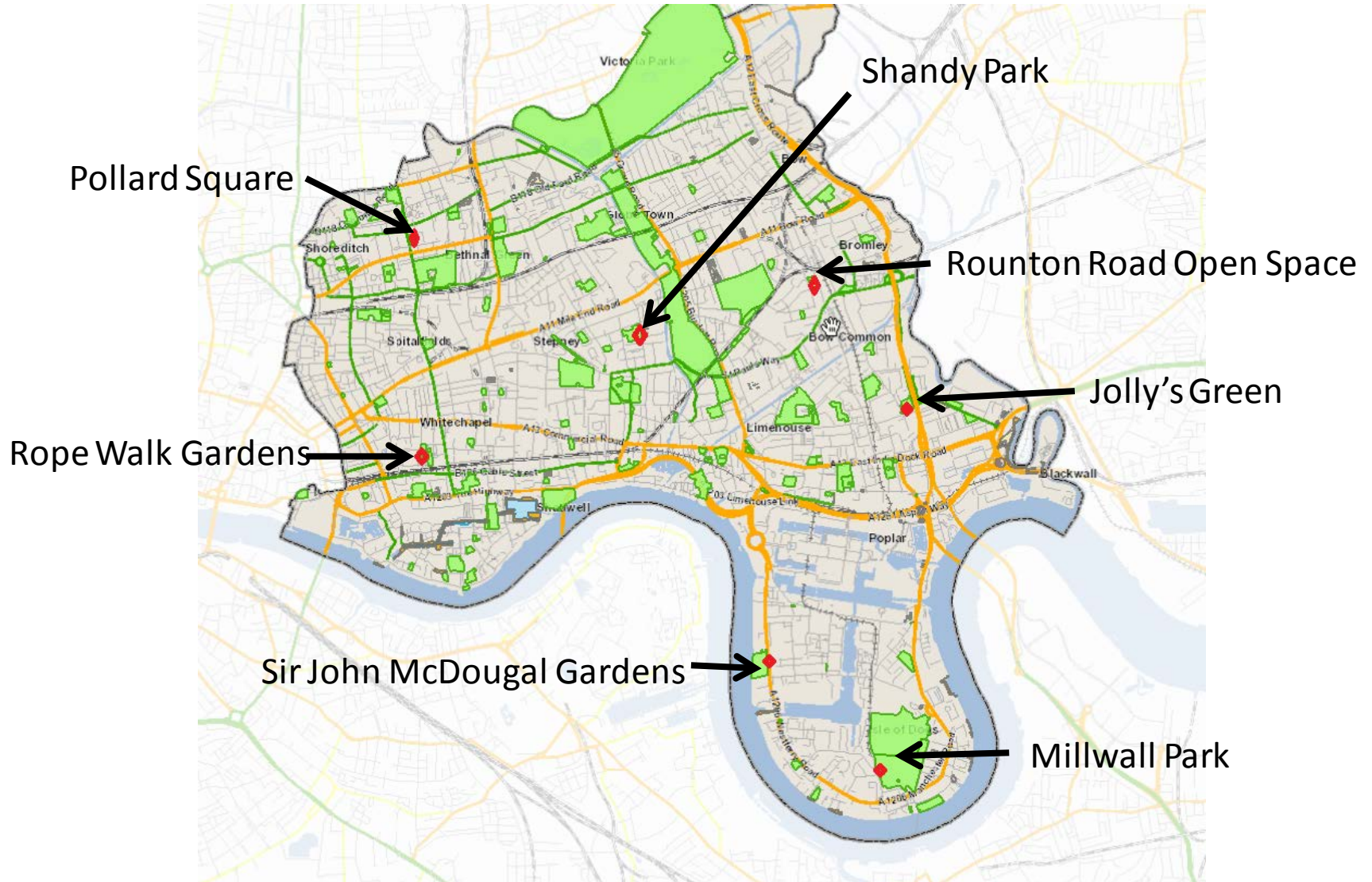
- Accessible equipment – central tender requirement
- TGOGC proposed equipment mix suitable for range of users plus pathway to fitness
- Partnership between Parks and Public Health and Sports
- Parks – location/installation (capital); Public Health – engagement (revenue); Sports - activation (revenue)
- Public health liaison with GP surgeries and PPGs / community networks at initial engagement stage
- Social Prescribers can refer
- Activation as important as installation



Site identification

- Sites identified by Parks and Public Health
- Near to a possible health centre partner
- Deprivation data showing high rates in IMD
- Near areas of open space deficiency
- Geographic spread across borough
- Suitable for an outdoor gym

Outdoor Gym sites in Tower Hamlets





Community consultation and engagement

YOUR VIEW COUNTS!

Come along and tell us what fitness equipment you would like to see in your local park and when it would be a good time to run sessions.

Drop-in consultation at MILLWALL PARK

(by the Childrens Centre)
Refreshments will be provided
Everyone welcome

Anytime between

1-3PM

SATURDAY 19TH MAY

- Engagement sessions held at each site ahead of installation – average attendance c. 30 people
- Raise awareness of the outdoor gym programme and seek views to ensure the gym was best positioned and accessible to the widest range of residents.



For more info please contact
Rajaa on 07445164503



Getting it Done - Implementation of the works

- Project tendered in December 2017 using the ESPO framework for outdoor play, gym and sports equipment/ facilities.
- Quality: Price 60:40 – unusual for LA but wanted good quality equipment quality – effectiveness/ robustness/ accessibility
- 5 bids received and the tender awarded to The Great Outdoor Gym Company (TGOGC)
- £200K contract covered the installation of 7 outdoor gyms and 7 years' maintenance
- Requires TGOGC to produce visuals for and participate in a consultation event at each location
- Mayor's funding provided £90K pa for 3 years to support activation



Activation Programme

- Activation as important as installation (budget) – especially to get less active people involved
- Gym Launch events during summer events period
- 4x4 introductory sessions at early-installed gyms – informed by consultation on who to target/ when to hold sessions
- Whitechapel Health Centre Patients' Participation Group organised their own community event on 30/6/18 with gym instructors
- Engaged Our Parks to run twice weekly free exercise sessions at all gyms from end of July to end of October 2018
- Installations were completed in June, so it's early days.



The poster features a vibrant blue background with various summer-themed icons: sunglasses, a paint palette, a watermelon slice, a beach ball, and a tennis racket. The word 'SUMMER' is written in large, colorful, patterned letters. The Tower Hamlets logo is in the top right corner.

FUN IN TOWER HAMLETS

Join us for a day of family fun and the launch of the new outdoor gym

**ROPEWALK GARDENS
GOLDING ST, E1 1QH**

**SUMMER FUN DAY
AND GYM LAUNCH**

Monday 30 July 11am-4pm

Come along to the outdoor gym for free classes and group workouts every Tuesday 4:30-5:30pm and every Wednesday 2-3pm (female instructor) and every Saturday 10-11am

For more information contact mileendpark@towerhamlets.gov.uk or 0207 364 5227



Is it working?

- 2,486 people attended the summer outdoor gym launches/fun days
- 183 people attended organised exercise sessions at outdoor gyms in August 2018
- Physical Activity Coordinator to run activation activities (inc. community and health outreach and training of volunteer exercise trainers) for the remaining 2/3 years
- Funding for monitoring and evaluation included in programme
- Evaluation to include data on activation, gym usage, interviews with those involved in the project as well as residents, both using the gyms and living nearby.
- Monitoring via sensor equipment to be installed at each location (in the hand bike)
- TGOGC App which can be used to measure your own activity levels



Review and lessons learned

- Contact and inform local groups such as Friends Groups ahead of any event
- Build enough time into the process for consultation/engagement – and resource it properly
- Be clear on the purpose of consultation
- Equipment selection? NO - except where there is local knowledge of nearby equipment
- Location in park? YES – users know how the park is used/ what the local issues are
- Do consultees want the gym? NO – it's the Council's role to address health needs of population – litmus test with local groups/ Friends in advance.



Review and lessons learned



- Be prepared to address opposition and consider responses in advance
- Be clear that this is a facility strategically planned to address health needs of surrounding population (role of Council)
- Be clear on the weight given to the views of those who turn up to consultation events and to the views of a small number of vociferous complainers against the majority of quieter supporters.
- Think about how staff respond to comments
- Think about addressing widespread concern re. attracting antisocial behaviour – when research has shown increased use actually reduced it – plan how to advise on this

GP Support

“Many of my patients still ask me for a free referral to a local gym so the demand for this type of exercise is there but exercise on prescription is no longer available, so this outdoors gym would help to meet this need without the £40pm cost of other local gyms. The fact that the gym is outside means that it will increase time spent in the fresh air in green space which has been proven to improve mental health and reduce stress, as well as improve exposure to sunlight and the ability to make vitamin D naturally in the summer months. The outside space also engenders a sense of community as there is no barrier to using the equipment, and allows neighbours to talk to each other. There are also no mirrors in an outside gym which is a relief those intimidated by traditional gyms.”

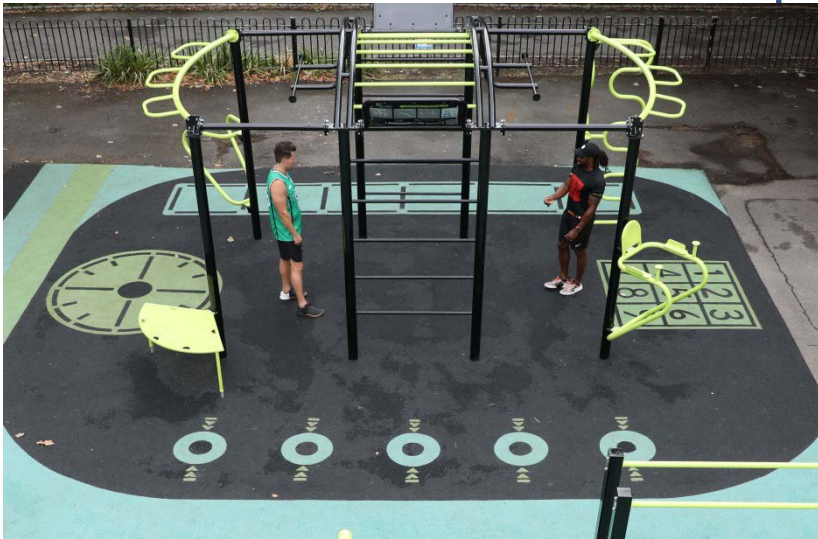
GP Support



“I am very supportive of the plans to have an outdoor gym in Pollard Square because it will give free access to gym equipment to everyone in the Bethnal Green community without having to travel far from home. The ability to spend time outside in a green space doing physical exercise will improve the mental and physical health of local residents and workers, as well as top up Vitamin D levels to boost immunity due to being outside in the summer.”

What the people say

“I have lived opposite Jolly’s Green since 2007. It has always been a drab, underused piece of green. You avoided the area unless you were walking your dog for their daily runs and ablutions, the road next to it, you avoided as a driver to park your car, in short the space was unwelcoming.”



What the people say



“Since the park Gym (and children's park) has been in place, families are gathering inside the park making use of the amazing facilities on offer. Children are experimenting with exercise and when they get tired of this, they continue to play in the park. The park has become a place for local residents to relax, get fit and socialize. I have met people who I would not necessarily have met and it all down to the park being activated as a friendly family space.”

What the people say



“My son loves the park, he visits at least twice a day in the weekends and regularly during the week after school. He has a place nearby where he can play, be fit and make friends his age. We now have a local and visible community rather than a hidden one!”