THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF URBAN PUBLIC PARKS

Findings - Informing change

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Executive summary

Public parks are long-standing and familiar features of the urban environment. For many people, visiting parks is an integral part of everyday life in the contemporary city. Yet parks in the UK are at a possible 'tipping point', prompting important concerns about their sustainability. Parks face essential challenges over funding and management, as well as questions of unequal access and competing demands on use.

This study of public parks in the city of Leeds focused on how they have changed through time, how they are used today, and what their future prospects might be.

Key Points

- Since the Victorian era, parks have provided beneficial spaces set apart from the surrounding, rapidly developing city. History highlights the precarious nature of parks across time, as they have sought to adapt to ensure continued vitality and social value.

- Parks are a vital part of the contemporary city that serve and enable a wide range of public benefits to the environment, health and well-being, education and social cohesion.

- Parks are widely used and enjoyed by diverse groups in society. However, the most common reasons for non-use are poor health or disability, not enough time and problems of accessibility.

- Parks are valued in part because they serve a variety of needs and provide places for people of different social backgrounds to co-mingle. However, diverse interests and perceptions of appropriate use can also result in parks being experienced as contested spaces.

- Many people visit a park which is not necessarily the nearest to where they live, travelling beyond their immediate locality to access the attributes and facilities they prefer. Some well-resourced 'major' parks act as 'magnets' attracting visitors from across the city and further afield.

- Possible tensions exist between seeing and managing parks, on the one hand, as local assets which serve certain communities and, on the other hand, as city-wide, social assets.

- Commercial ventures have a long history of supporting park use and enhancing experiences, however, opportunities for income generation can alter the character of a park and promote anxieties about its future sustainability as distinct spaces set apart from the city.

- The pressures upon parks today are felt acutely by park managers, but these are not yet tangible for many park users. People's expectations about the future of parks are shaped by their hopes and fears as well as their long-standing experience of the place of parks in city life.

- Park futures are becoming more variegated as managing authorities respond in diverse ways to external pressures, including recent council budget cuts, and competing demands on use.

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Introduction

Since the Victorian era, public parks have provided beneficial spaces set apart from the surrounding, rapidly developing city. Parks are not only the product of history but also places where history is made both in the sense of major social events and in the everyday sense of people's intimate lives. People go to and revisit parks across the life-course – from early childhood through youth and parenting to later life. In the process, people invest parks with abundant, deeply-held memories, sentiments and emotions.

Spending projections estimated on the basis of planned local council budgets suggest that within the next decade local authorities will be unable to support services, like parks, which they have no legal duty to provide.[1] These much valued social assets are under considerable financial pressure as they compete for investment with other public services during a period of fiscal restraint.

Indeed, the present moment is a possible 'tipping point' in the prospects and historic trajectories of parks.[2] As park managing authorities seek ways of mitigating funding constraints by making savings and cutting costs, parks are in danger of falling into a spiral of decline, possibly with longer-lasting consequences than that which marked the 1980s/90s. There are also risks that some parks may be re-developed, heavily commercialised or even sold to private interests, in part or wholesale.

Today, the prosperity of individual parks depends on sustaining their claim to differential value – as spaces apart from (yet deeply connected to) the city – against competing claims of development.

The challenges facing parks relate not only to issues of funding, but also to the pressures of urban development, unequal access to quality green space and competing demands and use of parks. Yet, in some cases, parks and green spaces are also under-utilised assets that could be better designed and managed to maximise their value and contribution to realising a host of public benefits to society.

The report of Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into the future prospects of public parks, published in early 2017, reaffirmed the need for a sustainable park policy and appropriate resourcing that secures and maximises the diverse benefits that derive from parks for future generations of city-dwellers.

Public parks in the city of Leeds are subject to these same broad national pressures. Combining historical analysis with a contemporary study and a concern for the future, this study focused on how parks in the city have changed through time, how they are used today, and what their future prospects might look like.

This report provides an overview of our initial findings, particularly those emerging from the historical, archival research, and from a city-wide public survey.

Research overview

This two-year research project (concluding in October 2017) explores the social purpose, uses and future expectations of urban public parks, both at the time of their foundation in the Victorian era and today.

The study provides an overview of people's uses, experiences and expectations of Leeds parks and in-depth research into three case study parks, each of which was acquired and opened for public use during the Victorian era: Woodhouse Moor, Roundhay Park and Cross Flatts Park. The case studies were selected as they draw out the diverse social ideals and purposes of parks; the scale and social profile of users; and experiences of park life, from the ceremonial through to the informal.

Historical analysis using digitised newspaper collections and archival records focussed on the acquisition and early life of these three case studies, up until 1914. This approach revealed the processes by which parks were acquired, aspirations for their future during the time of their inception and people's everyday experiences of parks as spaces of social mixing.

'I think it is lovely to have such a great green space in the middle of the inner-city.' (Park user)

The contemporary study comprised a city-wide public survey (hereafter referred to as the Leeds Parks Survey) and 165 one-to-one and group interviews with adult park users, young people, 'friends' groups[3] and representatives from the Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside Department and various city services. The Leeds Parks Survey was sent to a random sample of 20,000 households and was also available online to complete between June and November 2016. We received 6,432 responses which we weighted using Census 2011 data for Leeds Metropolitan District to account for differences in gender and ethnicity. This produced a representative sample of 5,745 respondents. Of these, 5,228 were park users (i.e., they had visited a park in Leeds within the previous 12 months).[4] We also developed a photographic archive of Leeds parks (Box 1).

Leeds is a city in the north of England with a population of 751,500 living in 320,600 households. People from over 140 minority ethnic groups live in the city, representing approximately 17% of the total population.

Today, Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside Department manage 4,000 hectares and over 600 parks and green spaces. Of these, 70 are formal, 'major' parks and 63 are 'community' parks.[5] They developed *A Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds*, which contains key priorities until 2020. It sets out a vision where 'quality, accessible parks and green spaces are at the heart of the community, designed to meet the needs of everyone who lives, works, visits or invests in Leeds, both now and in the future'.[6]

Box 1: Photographic archive

As part of the project, we curated a digital archive of images of parks over time, using photographs submitted by members of the public and Leeds Parks and Countryside.

The collection is hosted by the Leeds Library and Information Service and is accessible via the Leodis website: www.leodis.net (search for 'future prospects' to access the collection).

'Really enjoy the green parklands in a large commercial city.' (Park user)

Urban parks as 'spaces apart'

Many historic parks were first acquired for public use in the Victorian era with the intention that they would be secured for generations to come. At the time, as the rapid expansion of industry and commerce transformed the city landscape, leading figures in urban public life championed the park as a public resource which would help to ameliorate the deleterious consequences of industrial growth. Public parks were meant to provide a green space for healthful and virtuous recreation, and for social mixing between the estranged rich and poor of the city. In Leeds, these were the most common arguments mobilised in favour of acquiring parks as municipal assets. According to one local social reformer, they were purchased 'for the health and recreation of the inhabitants.'[7]

Although people's uses of public parks diversified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, owing to the growing popularity of organised sports, the rationale for purchasing parks largely remained constant before the First World War. In this sense, the Victorian park movement propagated a fairly unitary model of the public park as a space of vitalising recreation and edifying association.

Within the Victorian model, the ideal public park was an improved space, set apart from the surrounding city, which would act as an agent of physical and moral improvement in urban society. As a space apart, the public park was defined by how it contrasted with the surrounding city. First, the park was to be a green space, subject to minimal construction: referring to Woodhouse Moor, the first public park in Leeds, one local journalist observed that 'it… acts as a ventilator of the town, and should it be covered with buildings, it would be entirely lost for this purpose.'[8] Secondly, the park was to be largely free from productive activity (such as agriculture) or commerce. As Katy Layton-Jones has noted, the Victorian park provided an 'alternative landscape… of commercial neutrality'.[9] Thirdly, the park was to be a space of recreation, where visitors were to be permitted to relax, stroll, exercise and play, in contrast to the stricter regulation of behaviour in the city's streets and highways.

However, this idealised space apart was more an aspiration than a reality of Victorian park-life. The making of public parks as spaces

apart from the city was never fully accomplished – it remained forever a work in progress. The location of parks in or near to developing cities meant that Victorian and Edwardian park managers had continually to guard against the infiltration of urban problems – such as crime and anti-social behaviour – into the park. Hence, as spaces apart from (yet firmly located within) the city, parks occupied an inherently precarious position.

Today, the difficulties facing parks are exacerbating this deeply embedded instability. As continued development heightens demand for urban space, the prosperity (and, ultimately, survival) of individual parks depends on sustaining their claim to differential value against competing claims of development and the risk of chronic underfunding. Initiatives which seek to navigate the current financial restraints – such as exploitation of commercial opportunities, or situating public parks within more diffuse networks of green infrastructure – need to remain attentive to their potential consequences for parks' claim to value as distinct spaces within the city.

Use of parks

Today, public parks in towns and cities are the most popular type of open space to visit.[10] On average, 85% of people in the UK have visited their local park, reflecting the vital social role they play within contemporary cities.[11]

In Leeds, public parks are widely used and enjoyed by diverse groups in society. The Leeds Parks Survey, conducted in 2016 as part of this study, captured the views and experiences of 6,432 people. It found that more than 9 in 10 people had visited parks in the city in the preceding year.

People use parks for a wide variety of reasons. They continue to be valued by their visitors and managers as the 'lungs' of the city. While the polluting industries of the Victorian era have declined, they have been replaced by contemporary air pollution from petroleum-fuelled vehicle emissions. Indeed, the survey found that fresh air (68%) and going for a walk (59%) were the most frequently cited reasons

for visiting parks, echoing the Victorian rationale of the park as an urban 'ventilator'. They provide places set away from the hustle and bustle of the city where individuals and families can enjoy nature, relax, play and take exercise (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Reasons to visit parks

■ Percentage of park users
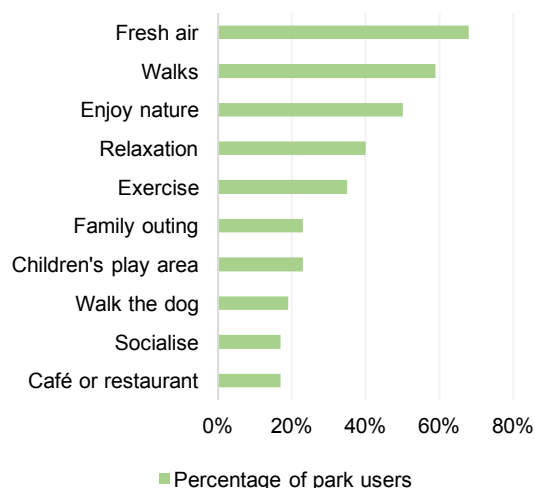
Q14 What are the main reasons for visiting your park? Tick up to five reasons.

Base: park users. Top ten most frequently cited are shown in the chart.

Park visitor preferences

Since their formation in the Victorian era, the urban park has moved from being a meeting place and venue for social activities and 'people's garden'[12] in a context in which fewer alternatives existed, to a more elective space that people select to visit in preference to alternative venues. Clearly, more urban dwellers have access to a garden than did their Victorian counterparts, albeit in cities like Leeds there are still many people living in back-to-back terraces or apartment blocks who may rely on parks as their extended gardens.

The growth of other public and quasi-public spaces of meeting and recreation mean that parks now sit within a broader set of options for urban inhabitants to choose from. Moreover, greater mobility due to transportation links and vehicle ownership renders accessing parks and other locations at greater distances easier.

'I make weekly visits to another park for parkrun. I have nothing against my nearest park but don't visit as frequently.' (Park user)

By 1910, Leeds City Council managed over 20 parks and recreation grounds. Today, by contrast, they manage some 70 parks, including 7 'major' parks and 63 'community' parks. The Leeds Parks Survey asked respondents to identify their main park of use (the park they visited most frequently). It revealed that nearly a third of park users (31%) did not usually visit their local park; instead, they travelled beyond their immediate locality to access the attributes and facilities of another park. Hence, many park users view parks as social rather than purely local assets.

Park visitors who usually visit a park outside of their immediate locality selected reasons for this (Figure 2). 36% indicated that they 'prefer other parks' suggesting that 'pull' (positive) factors were their primary motivation for visiting a non-local park. Others cited 'push' (negative) factors driving them away from their local park, including a lack of facilities, not enough things to do and insufficient size. Other 'push' factors, including safety and maintenance, were cited less frequently.

Figure 2: Reasons for not visiting local park

■ Percentage of park users who do not use their local park most often
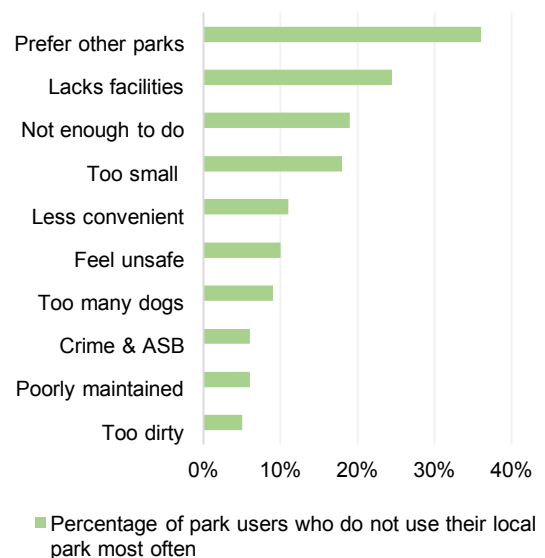
Q5 Which of the following options best describes why you do not visit the park closest where you live most often? Tick all that apply.

Base: park users who do not usually visit the park closest to where they live. Those options selected by 5% or more of respondents are shown in the chart.

The following illustrative explanations were typical of those given by people who did not select their local park as their main park of use. They include a range of 'push' and 'pull' factors involved in shaping park visitor preferences and relate to:

- Proximity to other places

'I use the park nearest to my work.'

'It's nearer to my grandchildren.'

- Facilities and amenities

'No public toilets or café, not enough seats.'

'Golden Acre [Park] is bigger and caters for my needs.'

'It doesn't have a children's play area.'

- Activities and events

'I like Cross Flatts parkrun better.'

'There are no ducks and squirrels to feed at my local park.'

'My sports team train at the park I use most often.'

- Size, design and character

'The one I visit more often is much bigger.'

'I like [Chevin] because it is relatively quiet, the dog can be safely off lead and it is hilly (this is great for my run training).'

'Kirkstall has the river running at the side of it.'

- Charges and fees payable

'I used to go to Lotherton Hall [an historic country park] a lot. This stopped when the park started to charge.'

- Accessibility

'Big road bisects it from where I live'.

- Condition of park

'Smashed glass everywhere.'

- Personal attachment

'It is the park I used when growing up and like to visit it.'

People are attracted to specific parks – as their main park of use – by diverse facilities that meet their needs. Hence, the survey found that the most popular parks to visit were 'major' city parks. The research shows that well-resourced city parks, like Leeds's flagship Roundhay Park, that are in good condition and have a range of facilities, act as 'magnets' attracting visitors from across the city and further afield (Box 2).

Parks can be elective 'destinations'. Major parks, in particular, can act as optional 'destination parks' that are sometimes preferred to local parks, where use is usually premised on the idea of routine or habitual activity.

People's decisions about which parks they prefer to use are themselves subtly influenced by the management strategies deployed by local authorities. Understanding the factors that influence judgements concerning park use will enable park managers to develop and target their strategies in ways that better inform public assessments and preferences.

Box 2: The magnetism of Roundhay Park

Roundhay Park is referred to as 'The Jewel in the Crown'. It is the most popular park to visit in Leeds, attracting approximately 60% of the city's population in 2016.

The park was part of a landed estate for many centuries before it was purchased. The official public opening in 1872, attended by a crowd of over 100,000 people, was regarded as an historic moment for the city.

The park is popular because of its impressive size and grandeur, range of amenities, major events and historic character.

It boasts over 700 acres of parkland, lakes, woodlands, and formal gardens. It is home to a major visitor attraction, Tropical World, and has multiple cafés, playgrounds, education rooms and a restaurant. It is used by many clubs and fitness groups and hosts several major events each year.

'Roundhay Park is our most visited site… it's not really a city park anymore, it's a regional park. It's pulling people from across the north of England.' (Park manager)

Given that people make decisions about the park they prefer to use – rather than simply using the park closest to where they live – understanding, monitoring and responding to the implications of these preferences is important. There are evident dangers of a tiered hierarchy of parks emerging as the trajectories of well-used and well-resourced 'destination' parks increasingly diverge from less well-used and less well-resourced local parks. A future scenario of multi-tier parks in which some parks attract greater visitors and resources due to their favourable status within a city may result in other parks being left behind and relatively neglected.

City authorities need to work to reduce inequalities in access to parks and in resources invested in parks, as well as ensure that all parks meet sufficient quality thresholds to attract discerning users. Differentiating between 'major' city parks and local 'community' parks may be one step to mitigate against such a tiered hierarchy, but only in so far as strategies are put in place to avoid reinforcing divergences in funding and quality in ways that impact upon city-dwellers' preferences and hence choices. Indeed, the *Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds* contains a target for all community parks to reach Leeds Quality Park standard by 2020.[13]

'[My main fear is that]…It will be forgotten as it is small and only used by locals, as opposed to say Roundhay which attracts people from all over Leeds.' (Community park user)

Experiences and expectations: 'major' and 'community' park users

Survey findings show significant variations in usage, experiences and expectations by people who usually visited a major park compared with those who usually visited a community park (Table 1).

For those who selected a community park as their main park of use, this park was (unsurprisingly) more likely to be the closest park to where they live; users were much more likely to walk or cycle there, although their perceived ease of access was only marginally better than users of major parks. Users of community parks were less likely to have access to their own or a shared garden, and were likely to use their park more frequently, albeit for shorter periods of time.

Those who selected a major park as their main park of use were more likely to report that their park was in 'good' or 'excellent' condition, to expect its condition to improve, and to report higher overall satisfaction. While all designated major parks in Leeds currently hold the Green Flag Award, 65% of community parks achieved this standard in 2016/17, according to site assessments conducted by Leeds City Council.[14]

There was little difference between users of major parks and users of community parks in how they rated their last experience of use, or how safe they felt. Furthermore, most users of both major and community parks perceived their park as either essential or very important to their quality of life.

Table 1: Perceptions and use by park type†

	Major parks	Community parks
Closest park to where I live*	59%	79%
Access to own or a shared garden*	87%	79%
Walk or cycle to park*	34%	70%
Use at least once every fortnight in summer months*	59%	78%
Usually visit for at least 1 hour in summer months*	77%	44%
Easy or very easy to travel to park*	96%	98%
Very or somewhat pleasant last experience*	98%	95%
Essential or very important to quality of life	58%	58%
Very or fairly safe to visit, or never thought about it*	99%	98%
Avoid park at certain times	25%	27%
Perceive park to be in excellent or good condition*	93%	79%
Expect condition of park to improve*	26%	23%
Very satisfied or satisfied overall with the park*	95%	85%

†People who selected a major park or community park as their main park of use. Base: users of major parks (49% of park users); users of community parks (51% of park users).

*Result is returned as statistically significant. Independent-Samples T-Test $p<.05$

Non-use of parks

Many people from diverse backgrounds enjoy using parks and derive benefits from them. However, certain groups of people make lesser use of such green space for a variety of reasons, including unequal access,[15] and barriers associated with ageing, poor health and disability are found in many cities across the globe.[16]

The Leeds Parks Survey indicated that approximately 1 in 12 people had not used parks in the preceding year. While there was no significant variation in (non-)use by ethnic groups, people aged over 75 and people with a disability were significantly less likely to have visited parks in the preceding year. The mean use of parks by these groups was 77%, much lower than the average of 94%.

Existing research shows that good quality, accessible green space is associated with better mental and physical health, and reduces health inequalities.[17] The benefits of parks in terms of health and well-being are balanced in public debate by concerns over access to parks. In the Victorian period, parks were frequently created at the fringes of the city, in part to preserve parks as healthy spaces set apart from the smoke and pollution of the industrial city. However, this prompted concerns as to whether people would make the journey to use distant parks. With reference to the acquisition of Roundhay Park in 1871, a local newspaper declared that, 'we could not have a park nearer Leeds with this pure air and the many advantages that this one possesses'.[18] Yet critics complained the park was too far from the centre of Leeds – especially from working-class neighbourhoods – with poor transport links.

Today, these debates are largely framed in terms of barriers to engagement with the environment. These include barriers associated with health or disability, pressures on people's time and a concern by some that parks are difficult to get to or located at too great a distance for them easily to use (Figure 3).[19] Other concerns that may affect the use of parks, such as perceptions of poor maintenance and personal safety, were cited

less frequently as reasons for not visiting a park in the preceding year.

Figure 3: Reasons for non-use

■ Percentage of non-users
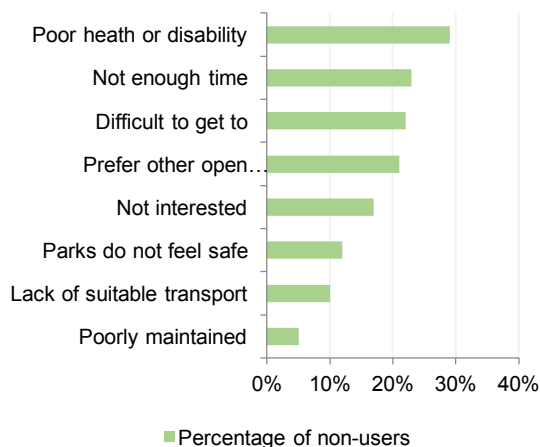
Q2 Which of the following options best describes why you have not visited any public parks in Leeds in the past 12 months? Tick all that apply.

Base: non-users of parks. Those given by 5% or more of respondents are shown in the chart.

Around 11.5 million people in the UK (18% of the population) have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their everyday activities.[20] This proportion increases to 54% for those aged 65 or over in England and Wales. A number of respondents to the Leeds Parks Survey indicated that they would like to use parks but face a range of barriers associated with poor health, ageing and disability:

'I am 86 years old, my legs are very bad at walking and I don't have transport. I used to love to go to Temple Newsam.'

'I am a disabled, wheelchair user without my own transport so access is difficult.'

Overall, 17% of park users in Leeds, when asked to select their top three priorities for the future of their park, chose the option to 'ensure the park is user-friendly for people with disabilities'.

The following comments illustrate the range of park users' views on provision within parks for those with disabilities:

'Keep it natural as possible with more considerations for old, vulnerable, disabled people.'

Competing demands and uses

The research found two main sets of competing demands and uses of parks today. The first relates to tensions between park user communities in their expectations of the social role of parks – who they are for and how they should be used. The second relates to tensions between seeing and managing parks as green spaces which serve certain local communities or as city-wide, social assets. Both sets of competing demands have historical precedents.

Tensions between park users

Besides supplying pure air, nineteenth-century advocates hoped that public parks would provide spaces where different social classes could co-mingle. For example, the acquisition of Woodhouse Moor in Leeds in 1857 occurred in the context of the shifting social geography of the city, and associated fears that the social classes were becoming increasingly segregated. Against this backdrop, parks offered the prospect of supposedly estranged groups in society observing each other, becoming familiar and forging a shared sense of 'community'.

Parks continue to be valued today, in part, because they serve a variety of needs and interests for different park user communities and provide places for people of different social and cultural backgrounds to co-mingle. However, when these diverse interests compete they may spark differing ideas about appropriate use, leading to parks being viewed or experienced as contested spaces.

Our survey findings show that over a quarter of park users (26%) avoided visiting their preferred park at certain times. Many cite tensions between park users created due to congestion or competing uses as reasons for avoidance. The following comments illustrate the range of examples people gave:

Two case studies (Box 3 and Box 4) illustrate a number of points with regard to competing uses of parks and how they are managed. First, they demonstrate that local needs and demands are diverse; parks are used by many different 'publics' each with distinct interests and (often deeply held) views about appropriate ways in which parks should be used.

Secondly, the case studies illustrate that competing demands by different user groups are not new; they were experienced in the early social life of public parks as well as today, albeit the nature of demands have changed over time. Hence, competing demands are an on-going challenge for park managers to respond to purposefully, with an appreciation of each individual park's history, spatial characteristics and social contexts.

Thirdly, the case studies suggest that social order in parks is not spontaneous but needs to be nurtured and managed proactively by park authorities. The examples illustrate that different approaches to the design and management of parks can help alleviate competing demands in different ways, but also with differing implications for social relations.

Zoning is an approach that seeks to organise competing uses of parks by distributing them across time and space – i.e. in different parts of the park, at different times of the day/week – thereby addressing problems of congestion and minimising the potential for conflict that may arise from shared use by those with differing interests. It concedes that the park cannot be everything to all people at the same time but raises questions about the social role of the public park as a social mixing place for loosely connected strangers.

Alternatively, some parks may have no areas designed for particular activities or groups of people in a deliberate attempt to foster co-mingling. In such circumstances, shared use of space may be managed and facilitated through 'codes of conduct' and proactive regulation. The Victorian city park is an archetypical example. Yet, this approach leaves open how parks are to cater for the variety of demands on their use at any one time and how 'successful' co-mingling is to be achieved in the context of contemporary cosmopolitan cities that host a diversity of cultures, ethnicities, identities and generations. Furthermore, parks that are perceived to lack clear design or management leave it to park users to determine how and for what purposes particular spaces are to be used – whether it is a space for playing football, public drinking, having a barbeque or relaxing in peace and quiet. Such an approach to parks, in a sense, evokes an idealised notion of the urban commons – unregulated and unadorned people's spaces. Yet, this approach risks one person's use impacting negatively upon other people's experiences. It arouses concerns about how public spaces can become territorialised and dominated by overbearing interests at the expense of others.

Box 3: Cross Flatts Park

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Cross Flatts Park faced issues with 'rowdies', groups of 'youths and girls' singing, shouting and 'behaving unheavenly' after dark. Local residents complained that they felt unsafe in the park and so avoided it. However, others criticised the complainants for trying to prevent young people using the park as they wished. The Council responded to these tensions by proposing an exterior fence to limit access after sunset (when the park gates would be locked). Yet, some residents objected that this would restrict their access during the day, and leave visitors 'caged in like animals'.

The conflicting needs and expectations of different user groups in this period, as well as the responses to these conflicts, threatened the park's existence as a beneficial space apart where local people could enjoy healthful and edifying recreation.

In 2017, users talked of Cross Flatts Park as a community success story of the past twenty years, in which local support groups, community festivals, influential councillors, proactive regulatory practices and boundary fencing have all led to tangible improvements in its condition and use. However, their recollections of the park in the 1980s and 1990s depicted a poorly-maintained park where inappropriate use combined with a hands-off approach by the authorities led to the park becoming territorialised by some groups, prompting patterns of widespread avoidance. Anti-social behaviour was prevalent, especially arson, joyriding and drug-taking. Some park users remembered the park in this period as a site of tensions between different ethnic groups; some perceived it as a boundary between white residents to the south of the park and the largely British Asian population to the north.

Today, although most users talked of Cross Flatts Park as a beneficial space apart which brings different parts of the community together, there are concerns that the park's improved reputation remains fragile. Tensions between park users across recent years left enduring memories and created a harmful narrative that some users fear may resurface should the park decline in the future.

Yorkshire Evening Post, 9 September 1911, p.3
Yorkshire Evening Post, 11 March 1913, p.5

Box 4: Woodhouse Moor - accommodating divergent uses

Certain proposals to change this park's design or introduce new uses have met strong resistance from vocal local interests keen to preserve (a particular image of) the park's heritage. This opposition has been a cause of frustration for some park users and managers who felt that the park could offer more to its users. The park is situated in close proximity to two universities and a number of colleges. Tensions between different park users were expressed most clearly in conflicts over students' use of the park for barbeques and parties. Some local residents opposed barbequing on the grounds that byelaws forbade fires and the extensive use of barbeques by students impacted negatively on local residents' enjoyment of the park. Responding to the popularity of barbequing, yet noting some of its negative side-effects, the Council proposed to trial operation of a designated barbeque area, to regulate this activity within a particular part of the park. The proposal was strongly opposed by numerous residents' groups and, despite a consultation providing some support for the proposal, it was dropped by the Council.

Similar tensions have been played out across time. Soon after the park was acquired, in 1857, debates arose about whether to design and regulate the park to cater for specific uses, or whether it should simply be left open for 'the people' to make use of it how they liked. Joseph Major proposed dividing the Moor into three distinct zones, each tailored to suit different uses (sports, walks and physical exercise).

In this way, he suggested, the Moor could be made 'generally useful and inviting to all classes'. Zoning aimed to maximize the efficiency and amenity of the park and its enjoyment by different user groups. Set against this was an alternative, broadly preservationist view of the park, which held that it should be kept minimally regulated, such that users could enjoy 'a free and unmolested range at will'. According to this view, the park should be a loosely regulated playground of the people. Ultimately, the Council sought to regulate particular uses of the Moor which were deemed problematic. They built a police station on the edge of the Moor in 1857, and started to clamp down on people playing dangerous games such as 'knor and spell' (a traditional Yorkshire bat-and-ball game).

Leeds Times, 13 June 1857, p.6
Leeds Intelligencer, 13 June 1857, p.5

Tensions between city and local scales

Park users today are concerned about the prospect of new development encroaching upon park space. They worry that city-wide demands for housing and schools will lead to some parks being redeveloped and that slivers of parks may incrementally be redeployed for other uses. In one case study park, expectations of the future were shaped by experiences of 'decline' and perceived 'encroachment', facilitated or permitted by the Council, in which it was believed that local needs have been superseded by city-wide interests given the opportunities presented by the space for its wider use within urban government (Box 5).

'If people don't keep their eyes open all the time and put so much time and effort into fighting it, then in ten years' time you might find that there's a road through Woodhouse Moor.' (Park user)

Box 5: Woodhouse Moor – city asset or community resource?

The key motivation for acquiring Woodhouse Moor, the city's first public park, was to preserve it as a green space and to prevent 'encroachments' on it by developers. A public campaign for acquisition was spurred by a sense of threat to the right of public access, which townspeople were thought to have enjoyed since 'time immemorial'. However, the purchase prompted tensions as to whether the Moor was to be an asset for simply the local neighbourhood, or for the city as a whole. Dispute centred on whether the cost of acquisition should be shared by ratepayers across the borough, or fall exclusively on those in the local area (situated about a mile north-west of the city centre).

It was ultimately decided to spread the cost, given the Moor's significance as the largest green space near to the city; as the 'lungs of Leeds', it would thus likely benefit the public as a whole. One councillor asserted that Leeds was 'one great community', and claimed that the Moor would 'benefit all, irrespective of townships.' Following acquisition, the Council also took steps to extinguish common rights on the land, which were enjoyed by some local residents, further underlining the view that Woodhouse Moor was a city-wide public good, rather than a local community resource.

Today, by contrast, the City Council designates Woodhouse Moor as a (local) 'community' park, rather than a 'major' (city) park. Furthermore, some local groups feel strongly that the Moor belongs to the locality, and should serve its needs rather than

city-wide interests, in part because they consider it an historic landscape apart from the surrounding city. These groups feel they have to fight to protect and defend the park against permanent or temporary encroachments, some of which are perceived to be facilitated or permitted by the Council to address city-wide needs. Indeed, the local 'friends' group was established in part as a response to a proposal by the Council to introduce a pay-and-display car park on part of the park, which was intended to serve users of the city centre and the universities. Other proposed schemes, such as the Leeds Trolleybus (designed to reduce traffic congestion between the north and south of the city), would have meant the loss of some of the park. Such proposals have fuelled the belief that local needs are frequently superseded by city-wide interests in the case of Woodhouse Moor.

Leeds Mercury, 23 June 1855, p.5
Leeds Intelligencer, 11 August 1855, p.7

There has been a long history of limited and low-impact commercial activities within parks to provide revenues that are invested to support use and enhance park-life. After opening Roundhay Park in 1872, the Council leased the mansion as a refreshment room and the lakes for boating and fishing.[21]

They also reserved the right to close the park for ten days a year to hold events, the profits from which went towards maintenance and charitable funds.[22] In the 1980s and 1990s, high profile pop acts such as Bruce Springsteen, Michael Jackson and Madonna performed at Roundhay Park. Hence, holding commercial events at parks is not new.

In response to significant reductions in their budget, Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside Department, as elsewhere, have sought to increase revenue generation from their flagship parks. Aside from making cost-savings and efficiencies, 'sweating the assets'

in terms of the opportunities they present for income generation is seen as one of the only viable responses open to park managers facing reductions in their budgets.

'Part of me wants to say really, wake up people! Wake up to the threat that your local park is under. Because… if you don't have a bit of commercialisation and make the assets work, the free access isn't going to be there.' (Park manager)

In Leeds, the main strategy has been to improve paid attractions at Tropical World (Roundhay Park), Home Farm (Temple Newsam) and improvements to the café at Golden Acre Park.[23] These commercial opportunities have been justified as enhancements to the quality of existing key attractions, especially where they offer income generating potential but do not encroach on other areas of the park or compromise the general principle that parks are free to enter. They have also taken a proactive approach to utilising parks as a venue for a small number of major events.[24] However, a site of possible tension concerns the extent to which opportunities for income generation can alter the character of a park and promote anxieties about its future sustainability as a distinct space set apart from the city (Box 6).

Box 6: Roundhay Park

In Roundhay Park, the Council have sought to increase revenue generation from investment in Tropical World, the park's major visitor attraction, and a small number of charged-entry events throughout the year. Visitor numbers to Tropical World in 2015/16 were over 400,000, which presents an increase of 45% pre-development. Most park users consider the park to be a city-wide asset. However, the Council's approach has prompted some local concerns. First, some park users and members of the Friends group argue that some of the revenue generated should be ring-fenced specifically for

Roundhay Park, rather than used to sustain the parks budget for the whole city. Secondly, some users are concerned that the revenue-generation model may lead to events and activities that disrupt the historic character of the park and put extra pressure on the local infrastructure, especially around increased traffic congestion and parking. After opposition from local residents, the Council abandoned plans to enter into an agreement with Go Ape to develop an aerial adventure concession in the park.

Tensions between the city and the local have historic precedents. When Leeds Corporation acquired Roundhay Park in 1871, the scheme was opposed by an influential collective of local surveyors, overseers and ratepayers, whose principal concern was that their local rates would increase in order to pay for a city-wide asset. They also argued that the park's distance from working-class districts in the south of the city meant it was an inappropriate site for a city park, and that other townships in Leeds were being overlooked, leading to calls instead for a number of smaller parks throughout the city serving local needs.

Expectations for the future of parks: past and present

In the early nineteenth century, parks were integral to idealised visions of an improved future city, and they became prominent symbols of Victorian social progress and civic pride. In Leeds, Roundhay Park exemplified these themes: the *Leeds Times* proclaimed that the day of its official opening would be remembered forever as 'an epoch, from which many an event in the lives of individuals, and in the history of the town, will henceforth be reckoned.'[25] For Mayor Barran, expectations of how the park might serve and transform the

future city of Leeds were framed within broader expectations of contemporary social progress. Addressing a special meeting of the Council on 13 October 1871, he argued that:

'We lived at a time when Government encouraged the acquisition of parks, museums, public libraries, and everything tending to the elevation of the people…. We were living in days when the people were much more enlightened, and would become still more enlightened, than they had been in the past, and when they would appreciate the privileges conferred by a park.'[26]

His speech repeatedly placed the city's Corporation at the centre of 'these days of progress'; his expectation for the park was that it would contribute to this socio-political movement. Similarly, the *Leeds Times* argued that the opening of the Park would 'mark a fresh advance in the progress of the town; and will contribute, we hope, to its further improvement and prosperity.'[27]

Today, this optimistic vision of the improving park that would transform the city of the future has lost much of its lustre. The Victorian confidence in acquiring parks in perpetuity contrasts with today's future prospect of parks as vulnerable assets, at risk of development or being leased for commercial use.

Expectations for the future of parks today tend to be framed in the negative, as a fear of loss: loss of specific (historic) features due to poor upkeep and ill-repair; loss of sociability due to crime and fear of crime; loss of access due to competing demands or commercialisation; or even loss of parks. If inadequately resourced, it is feared that parks could become 'bleak vacuums between buildings'[28] rather than beneficial spaces apart within the city.

Furthermore, the temporal range of expectations has shortened in recent times, to the extent that the future is frequently framed in terms of the next 5 to 10 years rather than generations to come, and largely in terms of preserving the past rather than reimagining the future. The *Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds* is largely orientated towards with preserving and maintaining these assets rather than creating new parks for the city.

That said, there does seem to be a more diffuse expectation that parks managers will 'do things differently' and that parks will 'do different things' into the future. While historically their role in providing healthful leisure and recreation has been at the forefront, at the present time, when parks are under threat, park managers feel that it is important to recognise the variety of (often overlooked) benefits that parks contribute:

'They're functioning for communities, they're providing children's memories, healthy activities, space to go and de-stress, sport, recreation, conservation, flood management, all of the things that we do that I think are overlooked in some ways.' (Park manager)

The Leeds Parks Survey starkly illustrates that present-day horizons of expectation are relatively narrow, compared with visions of parks in the public life of Victorian cities. People's aspirations are geared towards retaining and maintaining the parks they have, and sustaining the benefits parks provide. Survey respondents were asked to provide their primary hope and their primary fear for the future of parks. The most frequently cited hopes were that parks remain in a good condition or become cleaner, they continue to exist as free public spaces and that facilities and staffing levels improve (Figure 4). These were paralleled by fears that parks will decline in condition, suffer further funding and staff cuts, or be lost either in part or wholesale (Figure 5).
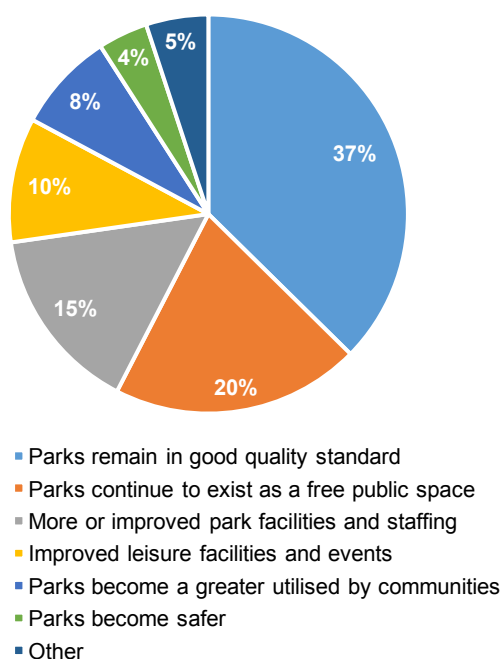
Interviews with park users delved deeper into their expectations for the future. They revealed people's attachment to parks and their essential confidence that parks will survive. Many perceive parks to be a quintessential component of the city, important in both historic and contemporary times. Alongside their positive experiences of parks in their everyday lives and the longevity of parks as public spaces in the city, this often led park users to expect that parks will still be there for future generations, even though their condition or uses may fluctuate over time. Hence, when people spoke of their hopes and fears for parks they generally consoled themselves that their fears were unlikely to be realised.

'It's been here for over 100 years already… it's certainly never going to be sold for housing is it?'

'The local authority understands the value of parks… the only evidence I have for that is that it's been there a long time, and they still… are looking after it and maintaining it.'

Other park users expected that parks will survive, but only because they are defended by active local community groups.

Figure 4: Future hopes

- Parks remain in good quality standard
- Parks continue to exist as a free public space
- More or improved park facilities and staffing
- Improved leisure facilities and events
- Parks become a greater utilised by communities
- Parks become safer
- Other

Figure 5: Future fears

- Parks will decline in condition
- Funding or staff cuts
- Loss of parks or parts of them
- Park becomes unsafe due to crime & ASB
- Introduction of charges or fees
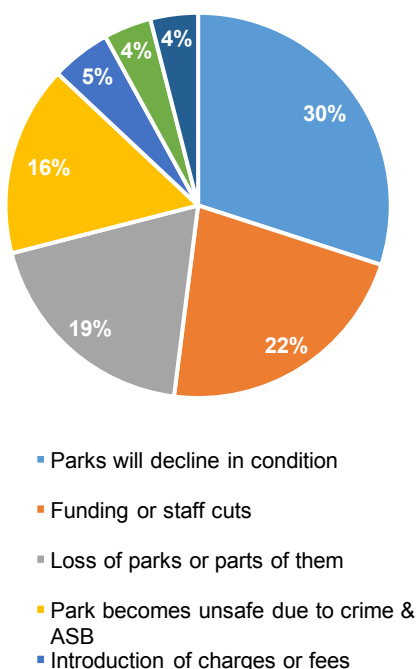
Coded responses to the following questions:
Q23 What is your main hope for the future of your park? Q24 What is your main fear for the future of your park? Base: park users.

BOATHOUSE.
ROUNDHAY PARK.
LEEDS

'[I fear] that funding cuts lead to too much use of sections of the park for commercial activity / corporate events etc. I appreciate that a balance needs to be struck between the needs of different users and the park needs to be financially viable.' (Park user)

Possible park futures

In place of a broadly unitary and relatively consistent Victorian vision of the park as an agent in shaping the city's future through public improvement, a more varied and variegated set of expectations for the management and governance of parks appears now to be expressed.

Extrapolating from historic trends and existing pressures and developments, the research has distinguished seven models of how parks of the future might be governed, notably as park managers respond in different ways to the unfolding challenges that parks face (Figure 6). Interestingly, none of the following are without some historical precedent.

These models are illustrative ideal-types: most parks may not conform directly or exclusively to any single type, and multiple models may infuse how individual parks are governed. The seven models differ along three main dimensions and the characteristics of each model are described below:

- The funding and associated rights of access and (contractual) conditions of use;

- The design of the park as a 'crowded public good'[29] and how it facilitates use;

- The ways in which competing needs and uses are managed.

City magnet park

A city-wide public asset, integrated within an urban strategy to host major events or a resource to manage social issues, trumping local interests.

Club park

A club good or 'managed commons' whereby parks serve local interests and needs, drawing on funding through a local levy/tax or volunteer upkeep.

Theme park

A residual public good hosting commercial activities and amenities (entertainment, leisure or services), paid for to subsidise park-wide upkeep.

Laissez-faire park

A public good with minimal design or management – a form of 'cultural playdough' – whereby conflicts over use are left to users to self-regulate.

Variegated park

A differentiated public good, organised to accommodate a range of users at different times/places whereby conflict is managed through 'zoning'.

Co-mingling park

A public good in which social interaction among diverse users is encouraged on the basis of 'codes of conduct' to regulate behaviour and use.

For sale park

A private good, sold (whole or in parts) for commercial development or as a green space asset, accessible by invitation or membership, governed by property rights.

City magnet parks

City magnets are parks managed as city-wide public assets; the wider needs of the 'city' in which it is located trumps those of local communities and users of the park. It may be used to host city-wide events that cannot be held elsewhere. Alternatively, city magnets may also serve the needs of the city by attracting people and activities/behaviours that are deemed problematic elsewhere (i.e. skate-boarders, the homeless, public drinkers, etc.) City magnets may turn into 'dumping' grounds. The 'magnetism' of the 'city park' may skew public resources away from other parks.

Club parks

Club parks are 'a club good'[30] or club-managed commons; 'quasi-public' goods that are available to members but restricted in some form to non-members. Club parks are funded through a local levy or tax, or through

volunteer upkeep. A membership model pools resources and eases congestion at peak times. Competing demands on use are reduced by excluding non-members and by imposing conditions of use on members. As the residue of public spaces diminishes or is sold off, increased demand upon remaining public spaces may incentivise various forms of 'clubbing'.

Theme parks

Theme parks are residual public goods that host 'club goods'. The park is open to all but the amenities – which may include various forms of entertainment and leisure – are purchased. These may be amusement activities ('Go Ape' style, 'funfairs', animal rides), food and drink concessions, ticketed concerts, sports facilities, or more usual playground access. The park becomes a commercial marketplace where customers are drawn to the attractions and where the revenues from these various activities are either wholly or partly reinvested in the park. Theme parks raise questions about the relative balance between the amount of public space that is taken up for income-generating activities and that which is left over for everyday public use.

Laissez-faire parks

Laissez-faire parks have no clear 'design' or articulated vision. Park users determine how and for what purposes the space is used. The park is a place of minimal regulation. In this sense we may regard them as a form of cultural 'playdough' to be moulded by its users and then left for others to mould. That said, it prompts concerns about colonisation or territorialisation by some interests over others. Hence, they may suffer a 'tragedy of the commons'.[31] One of the fears to be mooted in light of cuts to park budgets is that city authorities may be forced to take a hands-off approach to regulation or even to withdraw from some parks completely.

Variegated parks

Variegated parks are purposefully designed, organised and planned to accommodate a broad range of park uses through zoning.

Variegation seeks to address problems of congestion and minimise the potential for social conflict that may arise from the shared use of space. However, in doing so, parks become fragmented internally. Variegated parks have specific spaces allocated for particular uses, such as children's playgrounds, skateboard parks, multi-use games areas, dog walking zones, barbeques and picnics, boot camps, allotments and so forth. Whilst the park is open to everyone, some parts of the park will, by design, become inaccessible to all at any one time. Effective variegation may alleviate pressures towards 'clubbing'.

Co-mingling parks

Parks offer important points of connection between diverse communities which variegation may impede. Unlike the variegated park, co-mingling parks have no areas reserved for particular activities or groups of people. It foregrounds the social purposes co-mingling may facilitate – in terms of social cohesion, the promotion of other-regarding values and the potential civilising effect (the latter prominent in Victorian social thought). Co-mingling parks require a deliberate effort to manage and facilitate the shared use of space through 'codes of conduct' and proactive regulation. The failure to facilitate harmonious forms of co-mingling may increase tendencies for variegation or 'clubbing'.

'For sale/hire' parks

The park that is 'up for sale' is threatened existentially as a space apart. Here, the park – or more likely parts of it – is a commodity or city asset that can be sold off or leased by authorities (notably in times of austerity) to businesses or land-owners for commercial use or development. The 'sale' or hiring of parks thereby enables authorities to invest in or sustain other public services. This may be used to justify selling a proportion of a city's park assets – those with crime/anti-social behaviour problems or which have little value to the broader needs of the city – in order to maintain the remaining stock of public parks.

In for sale parks, public access is dependent on private invitation and land use. Such parks may be designed to facilitate commercial or business uses of the site, they may become a 'club' accessible to members only, or they may become a type of quasi-public 'mass private property'. Private governance of these spaces however means that access and use are subject to laws of private property,[32] facilitating exclusion.

Tipping points and interaction effects

The above typology draws attention to the possibilities for 'tipping points' within particular models, whereby certain incremental, small-scale changes might become transformative, with the potential to undermine erstwhile values, ethos and characteristics. For example, the point at which a 'theme park' hosting commercial events tips such that open access is undermined or to the extent that this alters its character as a space apart, as the park experience becomes dominated by a consumer imperative. Another example includes the stage when a 'laissez-faire' park becomes *de facto* dominated by certain groups or interests to the point that it is unwelcoming of others.

The above models are not fixed, nor are they intended to be understood as projected end-points of emerging processes of change in park management. The models may interact, whereby different logics compete or complement each other, producing novel effects or feedback loops that result in various 'emergent patterns' (Box 7).

While all are *possible* futures, public dialogue and debate is needed about whether they align with the *preferable* futures – that is, with desired pathways of development, informed by moral and ethical choices. The varied nature of the models presented highlight uncertainties and ambivalences over the social role and purpose of parks and how they might best be valued and utilised as social assets.

Box 7: Possible futures of Roundhay Park

There are multiple possible futures for Roundhay Park, which are manifest in its current use, and which have certain historical precedents. In hosting major concerts and sporting events with city-wide appeal and attraction, such as the ITU World Triathlon, Roundhay Park currently has clear tendencies towards the 'city magnet' model. Likewise, in the late-nineteenth century, the park was used for civic galas and sporting regattas, the proceeds of which were donated to the city's hospital fund.

Roundhay Park also demonstrates elements of the 'theme park' model, in its cafés, novelty land train, paid fitness sessions and occasional ticketed events and funfair rides. There are historic parallels here in the provision of boating, swimming and weighing machines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Given the renewed public enthusiasm for rowing and the demand for outdoor swimming captured in the Leeds Parks Survey, there is the potential for the park to move further towards a theming model in order to subsidise park-wide upkeep.

Due to its size and the different landscapes within it, Roundhay Park is also well-suited to the 'variegated park' model. There are distinct areas for organised sport (Soldier's Fields), horticulture (the specialist gardens), leisurely strolling (the paths and lakeside walks), hiking and mountain biking (the woodlands).

These different futures can co-exist particularly in a large park like Roundhay, though there may be tendencies toward one model: temporally, spatially or indefinitely. For instance, Roundhay Park is more likely to follow the 'city magnet' model during the summer months, when the weather is more appropriate for major outdoor events. There are also potential effects as different models interact or collide. For example, if Leeds City Council decided to increase the number of revenue-generation opportunities through major events (the 'city magnet') or commercial activities (the 'theme park'), this could severely disrupt variegation by limiting the times and places that could be effectively 'zoned' to manage competing uses.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Victorian park movement arose out of threats to green space and a determination to act for the benefit of future generations of city-dwellers. Within this movement, public parks were accorded a clear social value and purpose as agents of physical and moral improvement in the city, specifically as sites of healthful recreation and edifying social mixing. Today, public parks in the UK are at a critical juncture with regard to future sustainability. Key findings from this research urge conscious consideration of decisions and actions taken today that will have long-term implications for future generations of park (non-)users. A host of contemporary issues coalesce to highlight uncertainty about how the park as a social asset confronts present-day challenges of constituting a genuinely public space, which is welcoming of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and which enables them to co-mingle confidently in a healthy, safe and convivial environment set apart from (but

deeply implicated and embedded within) the city.

Based on the research, we make the following recommendations for parks policy and practice:

- There is a need to engender a full public debate about the role and purpose of urban parks and to articulate a new vision for parks of the future as social and cultural assets that will secure their sustainability as spaces set apart from the city for future generations.

- We believe that the best way to guarantee the long-term survival of public parks will be served by the introduction of unifying, proactive legislation that commits central and local governments to their protection and management as spaces apart that remain open to all.

- To support this vision, a dedicated national agency should be established to provide leadership and coordination, representing the interests of urban parks managers and park users and to secure the value and contribution of parks to the well-being of cities and their diverse populations.

- The diverse public benefits of parks should be acknowledged, maximised and valued by central government and local authorities.

- In assessing the value of parks attention should be given not only to the quantifiable benefits to the environment, health and well-being, education and social cohesion, but also to the personal, affective, diffuse and intimate benefits of parks that may be less amenable to measurement.

- In line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 11.7,[33] there is a need to better understand the accessibility and inclusivity of parks and green spaces for those groups in the population who are low-frequency users or who currently do not use parks.

- Understanding the factors that influence the judgements, behaviours and patterns of park use by citizens will better enable park managers to develop and target their strategies in ways that inform public assessments and preferences which

themselves have social and environmental consequences.

- The finding that park users are discerning in their choice of park and willing to travel to access a park that meets their preferences has implications for management and funding policies based on locality alone, such as proposals that local residents contributing to a parks levy.

- There is a need for park managers to develop innovative, practical solutions to manage competing use at different times of day and in ways that sustain parks as vibrant, welcoming spaces that attract diverse users and foster co-mingling among lightly-connected strangers.

- New commercial ventures need to ensure they do not erode the essence of the park as a distinct space set apart from the city. There has been a long history of limited and low-impact commercial activities within parks to provide revenues that are invested to support use and enhance park-life.

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[2] House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee (2017) *Public Parks.* Seventh Report of Session 2016-17, p.4.

[3] Although 'friends' groups take different forms, they are broadly understood as groups of people who voluntarily work to maintain, improve and promote a park or other green space.

[4] Specific questions contained missing data and we report valid percentages herein.

[5] In 2011, Leeds City Council conducted an *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment.* In this report, they define 'major' (city) parks as those 'Providing a wide range of opportunities for the city's residents and visitors. The range of attractions, natural and formal landscapes and facilities provided will attract users from a wide catchment area

willing to undertake longer visits'. They define 'community' parks as 'Providing for the local community as a whole. They usually provide multiple facilities for active and passive recreation with areas of formal landscaping', p.225.

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[12] In 1850, Frederick Law Olmstead described Birkenhead Park with great admiration as 'this People's Garden', which he went on to emulate in New York in the form of Central Park, opened seven years later.

[13] Leeds City Council (2009) *A Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds*, Leeds: Parks and Countryside Department, p.31.

[14] Leeds City Council (2017) *Leeds Quality Park Assessments – 2016 Results,* Leeds: Parks and Countryside Department, p.2.

[15] There are a range of factors that contribute to unequal access to parks and green space, including socio-economic disadvantage. The report of the Select Committee inquiry into public parks, published in 2017, cited evidence from the Department for Communities and Local Government acknowledging that 'the most affluent 20 per cent of wards in England have five times the amount of green space as the most deprived 10 per cent', p.38.

[16] World Health Organization (2007) *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide,* Switzerland: WHO.

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[19] At a national level, the Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment consistently finds that pressures of time, or being too busy, are among the most frequently cited barriers to visiting parks.

[20] House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2017) *Building for Equality: Disability and the Built Environment*, Ninth Report of Session 2016–17, p.8.

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[24] There are around 800 events each year in Leeds parks most of which are community run. Proposals to host major events and activities in parks that are commercial in nature are considered following consultation.

[25] Leeds Times, 21 September 1872, p.4.

[26] Leeds Intelligencer, 14 October 1871, p.6.

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[33] In 2015, the UK was one of 193 countries to adopt the United Nations *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals requires that states will: 'By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities'.

Image acknowledgements

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