



Wellbeing at Garon Park Report

January 2023



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List of abbreviations

WGP Wellbeing at Garon Park

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Summary

This report was compiled in January 2023. Qualitative research was used in collecting the evidence presented in the report. A total of 180 questionnaires was issued between 12th September 2022 and 10th November 2022. This report provides an overall insight into the key strategic issues at well-being at Garon park, concluding with appropriate recommendations on each insight provided.

This report provides an insight into:

- The current client profile (by age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, household income & size, location).
- Local community engagement through client visits frequency.
- Pilot Youth club programme
- Current client support and communication channels.
- Government levelling up policy and its potential implication for Garon Park
- Current user group's motivation & attraction to the park
- Impact assessment
- Physical and mental impacts associated with using the wellbeing facilities.

This report recommends:

- Examining the current user group profile, ascertaining whether these are indeed the intended target characteristics or there needs to be a modification.
- Having more activities at the youth club aimed at increasing socialisation and learning new skills will be most rewarding and enjoyable to the youths.
- Investigating the new skills that youths would be most interested in learning and offering possible qualification or certificate of completion.
- Other important recommendations are highlighted in the recommendation section.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence-based insight into the current users of the park, their satisfaction levels, insights to enrich the pilot youth club programme, insights into the government's levelling up agenda and most importantly to evaluate how well the site is aiding in meeting user's physical and well-being objectives. It is important for the site to meet its clients' goals but more importantly ensure its alignment with local, regional, and national physical and well-being goals.

This report is divided into six sections and describes the following areas:

- Background: how the mission, values, visions, and strategy of the Wellbeing at Garon Park align with national, regional, and local policies.
- Methodology: the research methods used in the report, considering factors such as cost, timescale, and the practical implications of these methods.
- Findings and Discussion: presented on a separate sheet.
- Recommendations- suggestions based on the insights from the research.
- Conclusion: summarising the study and areas for further research.
- References

Background information

Overview

This chapter aims to provide some context to the national, regional, and local level strategies on health and wellbeing, and how the mission statements of the Wellbeing at Garon Park align with those policies.

National Policy

Levelling up the United Kingdom

The UK Government's levelling up policy mainly operates with the agenda of smoothing the economic and welfare gaps in different parts of the UK by placing more emphasis on 'levelling up' the resources in places such as the Midlands or the Northern regions of UK while increasing efficiency in the delivery of the public services that are currently in place within the South-Eastern regions or London. By 2019, the UK Government has made several endeavours to enlarge and redistribute the scope of opportunities to all the different regions of the UK such as:

- Establishments of Freeports across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- £4.8 billion investments for infrastructure in towns across the UK via the Levelling Up Fund
- Enabling programmes such as Lifetime Skills Guarantee for 11m adults to gain higher levels of academic qualifications.
- Setting up of Community Ownership Funds and Culture Recovery Fund to empower local football and heritage sites.
- Relocation of Government Offices in London to different parts of the UK to reduce governing bureaucracy thereby nearing the distance with the communities they serve.

The UK Government's current levelling up policy builds on these previous endeavours by ensuring the progress and achievements are long-lived. These initiatives by the UK Government are based upon the historical Medici's Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution success stories which involves boosting and spreading financial opportunities or economic development equally across regions, boosting local morale,

and empowering effective self-sufficient administration. Therefore, the levelling up policy by the UK Government may be regarded as an all-encompassing societal boost for sustaining a continuous bloom of successful endeavours from the present to the future, in all corners of the UK.

Therefore, through this policy, the British government aims to improve its social structure by improving productivity, promoting economic growth, regional equalization, increasing job opportunities and educational achievement. The aim is to enhance local pride and community, and aid the spread of opportunities, improved public services, and productivity.

The current driver of the policy is due to the disparity in the distribution of welfare especially the contrasting growth between the Northern regions or Midlands, and London or the South-Eastern regions. This discrepancy may be associated as a byproduct of further innovative reformations to the industrial revolution with a market demand shift from technical skills to higher education levels of knowledge. It may even be formulated that further developments in 'Artificial Intelligence' or 'Digitalised' working environments may further hasten this shift which may then increase the growth discrepancy between regions especially for places that used to specialise in traditional technical work, and regions that could keep up with the technological advancements of today's world.

In particular, the UK seems to be more affected by geographical factors in various indicators such as productivity, wages, educational achievement, and health than other countries. These geographical differences have continued and expanded over time. The UK has large geographic differences compared to other OECD countries. There is a huge disparity between London: the most productive city, and other cities in the UK. Even London, a densely populated and productive city, is experiencing a severe gap between rich and poor. This geographical gap resulted not only in an imbalance in cities across the UK but also depleted capital in capital-rich cities, resulting in overall low growth in cities in the UK.

Factors driving the levelling up policy.

There are a total of six factors that are intended to aid bridge the geographical gap. The first is human capital. Human capital refers to people with skills, knowledge, and competence. The second is financial capital. Financial capital can be seen as a resource that supports corporate financing. In the UK, access to financial capital varies from region to region, and access to financial capital is difficult outside the southeast. This contributes to geographical differences in productivity, occupation, and living standards.

The third is social capital. This capital is distributed by communities, relationships, and trust between people. This sense of regional satisfaction and belonging shows better performance in rural areas than in cities. The fourth is physical capital. This capital is involved in many forms, including infrastructure, transportation, and digital. Transportation infrastructure can be considered the most important form of physical capital because it reduces the physical distance between places, increases accessibility to the market of workers, companies, and consumers, and increases economic benefits. The fifth is intangible capital. Intangible capital consists of forms such as intellectual property rights and patents, as well as embedded processes and practices. Income from this intangible capital is concentrated in some areas (research institution-intensive areas), and employment in STEM occupations is also concentrated in some areas. The last one is institutional capital. The influence of autonomy varies depending on the leadership, capability, and capacity of local institutions of this capital. The exercise of this autonomy determines the performance of the region. This capital also affects the ability of institutions such as LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) to promote cooperation between local authorities and businesses and to form working relationships with local authorities.

Levelling Up the UK Policy: Health, Well-Being, and “Pride in Place”.

The purpose of this section is to understand the governments mission and approach towards health, well-being, and pride in place. Three core goals closely aligned to Well-being at Garon Park’s vision.

The government has introduced medium-term targets, or put simply, track records in the form of decade-long missions, to ensure consistent guidance and proper scrutiny

towards the progress made for the cores of the policy. The mid-term targets, as laid out in the policy are as followed:

- **Health:** Increasing overall Health Life Expectancy (HLE) across all regions of the UK by the year 2035 with the more immediate reduction for the gap between areas with higher HLE and certain parts of the UK with weaker HLE by 2030.
- **Well-being:** improving well-being for every area in the UK, additionally lowering the discrepancy of well-being between areas by 2030. Improving health, education, skills, and employment prospects. Further, providing high-quality public services to support the local economy and attract new talents to the local community.
- **Pride in Place:** Increasing and restoring a sense of community to all parts of the UK, particularly in areas with poorer satisfaction levels. Subsequently increasing residences' level of content with their community by 2030. The government will take these approaches: regeneration, communities, culture, heritage and sport, to narrow the gap between the highest-performing and non-performing sectors. The revitalization of local communities will enhance the sense of pride in local communities. Finally, culture and sports are important factors in the social capital and infrastructure and will aid increase local participation within regions.

Regional Policy

Community Eatwell Programme, and Investment in regional projects.

To tackle gaps in Health Life Expectancy (HLE), the UK Government has agreed to move forward with the Community Eatwell programme and setting up more community diagnostics centre in all parts of the UK. These initiatives aim to increase or eliminate the HLE gap through the improvement of people's diet and strengthening awareness around good health.

To achieve the broad concept of decent well-being, it requires the culmination and combination of good physical health and having proper means to lead a productive life. Therefore, the government's action plan in addition to the health awareness campaigns, include Education Investment Areas, and enabling multi-academy trusts to reach out to disadvantaged areas or groups to secure future employment.

Further, the government intends to build on the notion of securing employment for disadvantaged groups by providing support through the Department for Work and Pensions. With the action plan for educational or employment support, and the initiatives for eliminating HLE gap; well-being of the people in all the different regions in the UK may then be improved and subsequently the minimising of the well-being gap between these different regions.

To further supplement on the well-being of people from all parts, the satisfaction of residences towards their community may too be regarded as an irreplaceable ingredient for sustaining long term well-being. Hence, other methods utilised by the government to materialise its levelling up objectives include coordinating with Local Government Pension Funds to setup plans to reprioritise 5% of their portfolios by investing in local projects. Additionally, the UK Government has considerations to establish Community Covenants, Community Wealth Fund, initiatives to fund local football pitches and to enable more youth activities or opportunities. By doing so, the UK Government may encourage youths to engage in healthy and meaningful contributions for the community while at the same instance, empowering the local youths to steer clear from undesirable, anti-social behaviour. Ultimately, these initiatives may enhance a sense of community within locals due to residents feeling content and inclusive for their localities which may close the gap mentioned in 'Pride in Place' by 2030.

Local Policy

Alignment with the Levelling up Policy: Wellbeing at Garon Park

The purpose of this section is to find alignment between the government's policy and the current values and missions of the Wellbeing at Garon Park.

One of the missions of the Wellbeing at Garon Park is the promotion of good physical, mental and sensory health for residents of Southend-on-Sea, Essex. It additionally seeks to strengthen the residents' general health and raise awareness for ways to achieve good health. Wellbeing at Garon Park has sporting or fitness facilities and mid term initiatives to plant herbs and maintain biodiversity. This is in direct alignment with the UK Government's levelling up mission to promote overall good health, raise

Health Life Expectancy (HLE) by the year 2035, and close HLE gaps across the whole of UK by the year 2030.

Second, Wellbeing at Garon Park additionally seeks the facilitation of leisure and recreational needs of the residents, especially the disadvantaged groups. Garon Park aims to improve local wellbeing and overall social welfare for local community residents. With this mission, the Wellbeing at Garon Park is in alignment with the governments levelling up policy agenda to improve the overall well-being, and to limit well-being differences in all areas of the UK by 2030.

Third, the values of diligent care, empathetic compassion, unwavering integrity, and cooperative liaison of the Wellbeing at Garon Park demonstrates the key ingredients required for residents to take pride in their establishments, and to inspire a powerful sense of community. Hence, these values of the park is also in alignment with the “Pride in Place”: a goal in the Government levelling up policy.

Fourth, wellbeing at Garon Park has objectives to develop Workforce and Volunteer Organisation Structure, construction of Vitality Park’s facilities such as the Wellness Trail, the Garon Park Shed and outdoor fitness facilities may enhance both the resident users’ quality of life and the local employees’ or labour forces’ productive wellbeing. Therefore, these objectives of the wellbeing at Garon Park may be appraised to be similar to the UK Government’s levelling up policy initiative to boost local employment prospects and opportunities, where in Vitality Park’s case would be the contribution to the health, career and welfare ecosystem of Southend-on-Sea.

Finally, another crucial project that the Wellbeing at Garon Park has advanced is the engagement and partnership with Local Organisations to maximise the utility of Garon Park’s facilities. This collaboration with local institutions aids in strengthening the residents’ recognition of Vitality Park’s significance and contribution within Southend-on-Sea. Consequently, boosting the morale of residents, increasing their satisfaction levels and feelings of content with the localities in Southend-on-Sea.

Analysing “Garon’s well-being outcomes” and “2021 Usage Totals”.

The survey was launched to help parents/caregivers build positive relationships with their children by understanding and acquiring skills in life. It consists of a five-week course, with five teams of parents and children participating in activities such as exercise, food and bakery, and nature projects. Each week has a curriculum tailored to the purpose of each activity. So, parents wrote their ratings for the activities before and after the course. The parents' rating is given for each activity for each week, and the perfect score for each is 25. The combined average of all family scores is based on a perfect score of 10. When comparing the scores of families in 10 key areas (Physical health, Mental Health, Family relationships, Self-confidence, Healthy eating, social support, Local community contribution, Education and learning, Boundaries and behaviour, Emotional availability) before and after, the scores increased in a total of 6 areas. The six areas were physical health, family relationships, self-confidence, healthy eating, local community contribution, boundaries and behaviour, and the remaining areas had the same before and after scores. Scores in at least one area in all groups increased.

It was reported that participants experienced improvements immediately after attending those events. The areas of focus with the most improvements, as extracted from the same table, are ‘Physical Health’, ‘Self Confidence’, and ‘Healthy Eating’ with all three of these focus areas having an average increment rating of 0.6 respectively.

Various programs and events are provided in the event/activity area, and in the case of soccer, there are soccer schools and universities where systematic soccer training is conducted as well as soccer-related programs and games. In addition, many clubs can build rapport with people of that age by enjoying soccer. In the case of cricket, there are clubs of the same age and gender as soccer. Event types include programs and events for various purposes. Programs for education, art, sports, charity events, training, music, etc. are organized, and there are programs for families or disabled people or infants. As the Garon Park aims to promote and protect residents' mental and physical health and improve social welfare and living conditions, many programs are organized focusing on residents' physical activities.

In addition, most of the programs are technical training programs for disabled children or those seeking employment, activities, and meals for young students during vacation, various play programs that can utilize infants' senses, and club activities at the same age. Therefore, it is designed to help residents participate in social activities and to enjoy various leisure activities. There is also a program for pets. Most of the available program age groups remain for children and adolescents, but there are already programs available for all ages.

Wellbeing at Garon Park, Missions, Values, Visions and Plans, 2020

As established earlier, the objectives of the Wellbeing at Garon Park largely reflect the strategies associated with the national and regional policies, as well as local policies determined by Southend Borough Council.

The mission as stated is to:

- “Promote and protect the good physical, mental and sensory health of the residents; and/or
- for the recreation or other leisure time occupation of those residents who have need of such facilities by reason of their health, infirmity or disablement in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving their conditions of life.” (Badger, 2020)

The Wellbeing at Garon Park report documents the purpose of the park and its intentions, the way in which the park operates in relation to values, the vision for the wellbeing site and how practically this will be achieved. The long-term development strategy shown in the form of a timeline on the Wellbeing at Garon Park website documents the planning and progression objectives for the period of 2017-2023, detailing what has been achieved and what potentially will be developed in the future. This report acts as a tool in the strategic development strategy of WGP. It provides evidenced-based insight into the outcomes of current strategies being employed and provides recommendations for modification where necessary to keep the park aligned with its mission and value statements.

The authorities plan to innovate life services for families by establishing a network of family hubs. Therefore, they try to expand family support programs and improve childcare and special education services. They provide differential grants based on

poverty rates to help children avoid falling in learning outcomes and care about their health, preventing them from hesitating to challenge or being put in dangerous situations in vulnerable environments. Therefore, according to the authorities' plan, we help children acquire various skills through various activities and intervene in each family's difficulties through counselling with children or counselling with parents to help them receive appropriate support from the authorities.

Methodology

The study was a quantitative design, consisting of a questionnaire, with most of the questions being multiple choice responses. A pilot study was completed prior to commencement of the main study. It is a fundamental phase used in examining the feasibility of an approach that is intended to be used in a larger scale study. The pilot study was important in shaping the main study by confirming that the research questions asked were correctly interpreted and understood and that it was fit for purpose. From the review of the pilot study, minor adjustments were made to actual questionnaires used for the main study. This was done so that the study would be more concise, to maximise participation, to cover all elements of the research questions, and ensure completion in the timeframe provided.

The questionnaire was handed out to current user groups of Garon Park in person. A total of one hundred and three questionnaires were received via in-person distribution. Additionally, there was an online version distributed by email. A total of seventy-seven questionnaires were completed online. One hundred and eighty questionnaires were received in total. The questionnaire aimed at understanding how different groups make use of the facilities, their experiences of using the park and whether using Garon Park had, had any impact on their health, wellbeing, or social behaviour. Additionally, there were questions aimed at understanding the experiences of youths who attended the pilot youth club. Also, there were questions aimed at having a better understanding of the demographics of the user groups. These questions were predominately multiple choice.

Attached to each questionnaire was an information sheet and consent form explaining the aims of the study, and the role of the participant. The participants were informed that they would not be individually identifiable in any reports or publications and all information collected would be kept securely and only accessible by the research team. It was estimated that the questionnaire would take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Data collection started on 14th December 2020 after the easing of second lockdown on 12th September 2022 and was completed by 10th November 2022.

Findings and Discussion

*Please find all findings and discussions chapter in the separate document attached.

Recommendations

This report recommends:

- Examining the current user group profile to determine whether these are the intended target characteristics of WGP or there needs to be a modification that is better aligned to core values, mission, and vision.
- There is a significant shift in the leading age-group profile of park users. From age group “36 and above” in March 2021 to age “17 and below” in December 2022. Additionally, there is a noticeable increase in the percentage of the park’s non-working population. Whilst the park is in the right direction in alignment with its set objectives in this regard, it may be worth discussing the implication on the costing, and membership cost structure in the future.
- There is an opportunity to attract more woman by conducting:
 - (a) women-only activities,
 - (b) targeting more women community groups and offering discounted services.
- The range and type of activities matter, and will be significant in the decision-making for youths, in determining whether to join the youth club.
- For the youth club, youths are most interested in having youth sports, music studio, fundraising for charity, and arts and craft club.

- Having more activities at the youth club aimed at increasing socialisation and learning new skills will be most rewarding and enjoyable to the youths.
- Investigating the new skills that youths would be most interested in learning and offering possible qualification or certificate of completion.
- Decreasing the cost of the youth club, having more game consoles, increased time for football will increase the current satisfaction levels of the youth club.
- There is an opportunity to concentrate efforts at driving usage to other aspects of the park, beyond the 3G pitch. Whilst 76% of current park users visit the park weekly. This is heavily skewed towards the 3G Pitch area, accounting for 77.8% of the current visits to the park. There is an opportunity to allow users experience and explore the other facilities that the park offers, beyond the 3G pitch.
- Signposting of the park can be improved. An overwhelming majority, 66.2% of current users, stated that they do not have any difficulty navigating the vitality park. This is indeed great feedback regarding the signposting of the park now, in comparison to the research conducted in March 2021, where users expressed that this was an issue. However, also significant is the approximately 31% of users, who expressed that they "sometimes" have difficulty navigating the park or agreed that it could be better signposted.
- Keeping user groups continually happy on six key WGP characteristics that they most appreciated. Those characteristics are:
 - 3G pitch area
 - Large green outdoor space
 - Professionalism of staff
 - Security and privacy at the park
 - Park trails
 - Sensory Garden
- Park users would like more physical and mental well-being workshops, and family bonding activities. This will help increase the quality of time spent at the park.
- Users would additionally appreciate the opportunity to volunteer and learn a skill.

- Impact Assessment: Including customer testimonials in newsletters, noticeboard on site and social media. 91.21% of users reported positive impacts following repeated visits to the park.

Conclusion

This research provides an insight into the current user groups at the Wellbeing at Garon Park, an evaluation of the pilot youth club, and provides an impact assessment.

Overall, current users are predominately satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities available and were attracted to the park because of the 3G pitch, large outdoor space, professionalism of staff and the privacy and security the park provides.

Using evidence from clients of the well-being at Garon Park, we have made constructive recommendations. These recommendations have ranged from the range of activities that would garner the most interest at the youth club, to concentrating efforts to other aspects of the park beyond the 3G pitch, modifying its target characteristics where needed and necessary etc.

We appreciate the progress the park has made since March 2021, and this research highlights in part the impressive progress. We recommend that future research is important in continually measuring progress and ensuring alignment with the organisational core values, mission, and goals.

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Appendix

The following forms have been attached separately:

- A. Participant Information form**
- B. Consent form**
- C. The online questionnaire.**